Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

NEWSLETTER

EDITION 17 October - December 2013 ICN 268



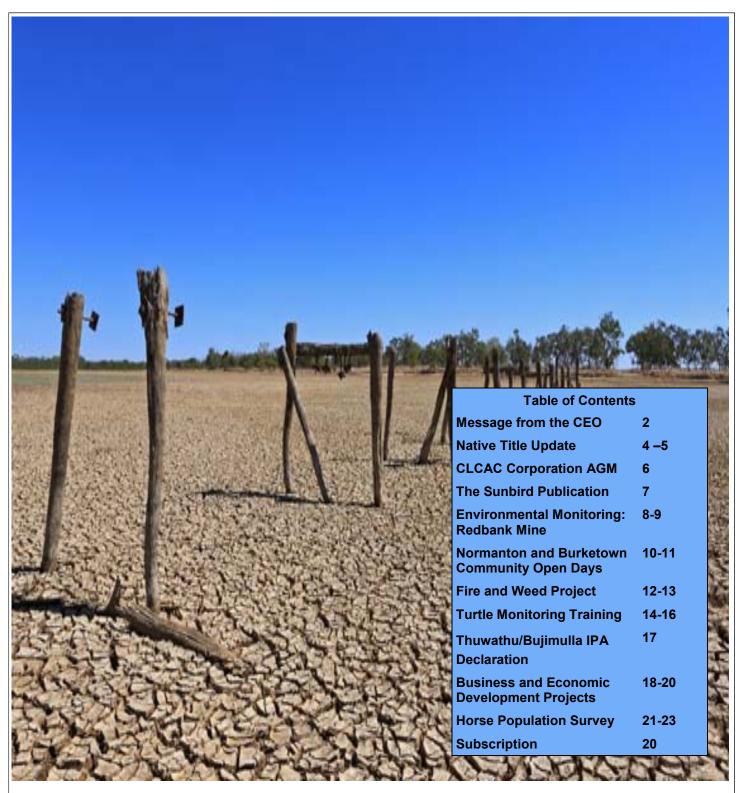








Disclaimer: Whilst every effort has been made to respect cultural traditions, Indigenous readers are advised that the publication may contain images of people who are deceased



CLCAC is a not for profit Aboriginal Corporation incorporated under the CATSI Act 2006 (Cth) and primarily funded by State and Commonwealth departments and agencies.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the following departments agencies for their continued support:











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Message from the CEO

Dear Members, Claimants, Stakeholders and Subscribers,

2013 has been another busy and very successful year for the CLCAC Directors and staff. Our Newsletters have captured many of the highlights throughout the year and electronic copies are available on our web page (www.clcac.com.au) and via our subscription service.

Thuwathu/Bujimulla Indigenous Protected Area Declaration

The 24th of November 2013 marked the declaration of the Thuwathu/Bujimulla IPA Plan of Management at Gununa. This day was a very special day for the Lardil, Yangkaal, Kaiadilt and Gangalidda Peoples. The Thuwathu/Bujimulla IPA Declaration marks another significant achievement for the traditional owners, which follows the determination of non-exclusive native title over the seas surrounding the Wellesley Islands in 2004 and the determination of mostly exclusive native title over the islands in 2008.

This day was especially chosen by the traditional owners so as to commemorate the tragic day when the community lost five Elders in the plane crash in 1999. A beautiful memorial service and tribute to the Elders who passed was held prior to the declaration to commemorate this special day.

Following the memorial service the community moved to the Festival Grounds where the Thuwathu/Bujimulla IPA Plan of Management was officially declared. The plan represents the agreed position of the Traditional Owners on the management of sea country within the proposed Thuwathu/Bujimulla Indigenous Projected Area (IPA). It is based on extensive discussion and agreement of Traditional Owners to identify key management problems and opportunities, visions for management of sea country, management objectives and the actions needed to achieve these objectives.

The plan is intended as a living document to guide management actions and will be updated over time to suit changing circumstances and take advantage of new information. It is supported through the Commonwealth Government's IPA Program. It is not a government plan however, rather it is designed to inform stakeholders of the need to approach natural resource management in this region in a culturally appropriate manner and in a way which ultimately benefits the environment and rich natural and cultural resources of the Wellesley Islands. To view a copy of the IPA Plan of Management please visit the CLCAC web page: www.clcac.com.au

This event would not have occurred without the support and assistance of several key people and agencies. In particular, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank:

- Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation Chairperson Ms Delma Loogatha and CLCAC Chairperson Mr Thomas Wilson for their support and assistance in making this event a memorable occasion for all of those who attended:
- Mr Dermot Smyth who assisted traditional owners to develop the Thuwathu/Bujimulla Sea Country Plan which set the foundation for the IPA Plan of Management;
- Our Ms Kelly Gardner who worked with the traditional owners to facilitate discussions and negotiations with Government and non government stakeholders and making this plan a reality; and
- the Australian Government's Indigenous Protected Area Program and staff for funding the development of the Plan of Management and their support over the past five years.

For further details regarding the Thuwathu/Bujimulla IPA Declaration please refer to pages 16-17.

Kind Regards





Native Title Update

GANGALIDDA AND GARAWA PEOPLES QUD84/04 & QUD66/05 AUTHORISATION MEETING

An authorisation meeting for the Gangalidda and Garawa Peoples was held at the Moungibi Office 15 October 2013 to consider, and where necessary, make decisions regarding the conduct of their claims and to consider future act developments. The group also met with representatives from Burke Shire Council and various exploration companies who are proposing to conduct work on their country. The meeting was well attended and future meetings will be scheduled in the next reporting period.

GANGALIDDA AND GARAWA NATIVE TITLE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION AGM

An Annual General Meeting was held for the Gangalidda and Garawa Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (GGNTAC) at the Moungibi Office on 15 October 2013 for all members. At this meeting elections were held for the Director positions, the following Directors were elected to the GGNTAC (PBC) Board of Directors:

Director Name

Murrandoo Yanner - Chairperson

Terrence Taylor

Vernon Yanner

Marion Joe

Martin Evans









Native Title Update

Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation AGM and Native Title Holders Meeting 17 October 2013

The Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation (GRAC) AGM was held 17 October 2013 at the Mornington Island Council Chambers at Gununa. At this meeting elections were held for the 12 Director positions for the Kaiadilt, Lardil, Yangkaal, and Gangalidda Peoples.

The following Directors were elected to the Board of Directors:

Language Group	Director	Director	Director
Kaiadilt	Delma Loogatha	Gerald Loogatha	Andrew Binjari
Lardil	Thomas Wilson	Farrah Linden	Kyle Yanner
Yangkaal	Michael Wilson	Roberta Felton	Lawrence Burke
Gangalidda	Murrandoo Yanner	Terrence Taylor	Vernon Yanner

The Directors elected Ms Delma Loogatha as the GRAC Chairperson. Leah Brown was nominated as the Contact Person. If you require any further information regarding GRAC or membership please do not hesitate to contact Leah Brown on 0438 539 139.

Following on from the GRAC AGM, a GRAC Members and Native Title Holders meeting also took place. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update and to consider any future act developments. Marjorie Grant from the Office of Indigenous Affairs gave a presentation about Indigenous Protected Areas and David Crea from Working on Country spoke about a host Organisation for Rangers.

The meeting was well attended and future meetings will be scheduled in the next reporting period.





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CLCAC Annual General Meeting

The Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (CLCAC) held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Burketown Shire Council Hall on 16 October 2013.

The meeting was well attended and the CLCAC Members resolved to schedule a Special General Meeting on 26 November 2013 for election of the Directors. Unfortunately due to the wet season and road closures the SGM was cancelled and will be rescheduled following the wet season on a date to be confirmed.







The Sunbird Publication

Over the past five years waterbird breeding colony surveys have been conducted by the Normanton Land and Sea Rangers and a lot of data has been collected in this time. CLCAC engaged renowned Ornithologist (bird expert) Mr Roger Jaensch to assist the Rangers to collate and publish this data.

This is the first ever large scale documentation of waterbird breeding colonies in the lower Gulf of Carpentaria and is a great achievement by our Normanton Rangers. It also demonstrates the uniqueness of the Gulf Country during the wet season and securely places the Gulf on the map for bird lovers.

There is still a lot of work to be done over the next couple of years on waterbird breeding colonies, covering the gaps in between major river systems. This work will include:

- picking three accessible sites to get a more accurate count on how many species at each
 of the colonies;
- identifying how many breeding pairs in the colony;
- identifying the nest layers in each colony; and
- Identifying the period from when eggs are laid, when they hatch, and the time until the young leave the nest.

Once the additional research has been completed we expect to have a better understanding about the waterbird breeding colonies here in the lower Gulf, and what keeps bringing these birds back during the wet season.

We remain hopeful that 2014 will bring a good wet season and allow the Normanton Rangers to start filling in the gaps about waterbird breeding colonies in the lower Gulf of Carpentaria.

The result of these surveys has now been published in Sunbird, a specialist bird publication, in an article co-authored by our very own Paul Richardson, Normanton Head Ranger. Congratulations Paul on this outstanding achievement! For a copy of this article please visit: www.clcac.com.au.





Environmental Monitoring: Redbank Mine

As reported in the last issue, environmental monitoring by the Gangalidda-Garawa Rangers has provided first hand evidence of copper sulphide pollution from the Redbank Mine, flowing downstream into Settlement Creek and over the Queensland border. The water within this creek system is so polluted that rocks have been bleached and there appears to be not only a lack of aquatic life, but an overall lack of life in the vicinity.

This pollution has been occurring for over 20 years in the form of leaching and has raised new concerns about the health of the Wild River Declared Settlement Creek system, especially with the Northern Territory Government granting a Waste Discharge Licence on 23 of December. This two year long licence allows Redbank Cooper Ltd to discharge waste into Hanrahan's Creek, which flows into Settlement Creek.

Traditional Owners are very concerned that this heavy metal pollution will extend further into the Wentworth Aggregate wetlands (which are listed as nationally important) and into the Gulf, where endangered turtles and dugongs exist.



Above: The small warning sign at Hanrahan's Creek were it crosses the main road. A perfect example of the pollution downstream of the mine site

Environmental Monitoring: Redbank Mine

Traditional Owners have raised concerns that, as a result of the pollution, they can no longer fish or swim in these local rivers. They are also concerned about future generations who will suffer the long term impacts of this pollution.

Prior to the granting of this licence, the Gangalidda-Garawa Rangers Unit delivered a powerpoint presentation to stakeholders at a meeting about the proposed reopening of the mine, which included the Northern Territory Minister for Mines and Energy and the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment. This presentation showed the environmental impacts observed during a patrol over Settlement Creek Wild Rivers protected area.

Guarantees were provided by the Ministers at the September meeting that the cleanup of Redbank would be a priority under the Legacy Mine Program (a NT government program charged with rehabilitating derelict mine sites). The grant of the permit to continue to discharge waste into Hanrahan's Creek does not bode well for the delivery of this commitment.



Further examples of the pollution caused downstream of the mine site. The falls area in the photo at left is a registered sacred site under Northern Territory legislation.

Normanton Ranger Open Day

While 2013 was a very successful year for the Normanton Land and Sea Rangers we were saddened by the passing of several elders who have contributed a lot over the years and will be sadly missed by all.

We also wish to thank everyone who has worked with and supported the Rangers in 2013. As a special thank you and in giving back to the community for their support throughout the year, the Normanton Rangers held a community BBQ for Traditional Owners and community members and provided an update and video presentation highlighting the Normanton Rangers 2013 achievements.









The Normanton Rangers are looking forward to an even better year in 2014. Once again a big thanks to everyone, and we hope you had a safe and festive holiday season.

Normanton Land and Sea Rangers



EDITION 17

Gangalidda & Garawa Ranger Open Day

On 6 December the CLCAC's Gangalidda and Garawa Rangers held an open day at the Burke Shire Hall in Burketown.

The girls sang up a storm with their rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody whilst preparing a healthy selection of salads much to the "delight" of the Rangers who were busily setting up for the event with Brenton Yanner cooking up a hearty selection of meat on the BBQ. As per their usual standard, the Rangers regaled audiences with tales of their exploits throughout the year and the anticipation of the new year to come.

After the formal part of the proceedings was concluded, Rangers and other CLCAC staff mingled with the crowd, further impressing on those younger souls in attendance not only the importance of the Ranger work, but the confidence it instils in its participants. The exciting afternoon was topped off with an impromptu game of AFL with Burke Shire Council Deputy-CEO Phil Keirle proving to be the dark horse of the event and providing a stellar performance with the footy.

Right: Burke Shire Councilor Paul Poole and Head Ranger, Billy Jackson

Below: Rangers yarning with some of the event's younger attendees





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Indigenous Fire and Weed Project: Late Season Rubber Vine Eradication

In November the Gangalidda and Garawa Rangers carried out late season fire work on Rubber Vine along the coast from the Massacre Inlet to Moonlight Creek. Normanton Rangers carried out late season fire work on Delta Downs from Karumba to the Gilbert River.

The Rangers surveyed areas of Rubber Vine infestation to determine the priority target areas to get the best results and reassess previous target areas for reinfestation.



This is an old survey spot showing all Rubber Vine has been eradicated (Lime green flag tape showing survey plot in middle of photo) Moonlight Creek

Perfect example of a backing fire carried out on Delta Downs



To complete the project we require at least 50 mm of rain to fall a week before the fire application, which will give us the required soil moisture and dampen the mulch layers. This methodology helps the quick return of grasses, resulting in less stress on trees and helps them recover quickly. The fire is placed as a backing fire which is slow moving and gives enough cooking time to dry and split the bark on the Rubber Vine, allowing fungus to penetrate, infest and eradicate the plants.

Indigenous Fire and Weed Project: Late Season Rubber Vine Eradication

To apply the fire, the Rangers used an R44 helicopter which had a gel torch suspended underneath controlled by the pilot allowing us to use spot fires or lay out a line of fire as required. The Rangers fly in the helicopter as navigators to spot for the pilot and record data.





Gel torch in operation

Paul Edwards looking at gel torch with pilot

The fire application was a great success in both regions with plenty of great photos and film footage taken showing great fire management. Pilot Craig Gifford commented on how smooth the operation was and was very impressed with results. In particular, Craig was impressed with the destruction of thousands of Rubber Vine plants and how quickly the country has opened up and regenerated.

Congratulations to both Ranger groups for their hard work and commitment with what can sometimes seem a relentless and endless task. We look forward to having a look at the results of this work in the scheduled post surveys in 2014.



Rubber Vine after it has been treated with fire on Delta Downs





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Turtle Monitoring and Training



From 21 to 24 October 2013 Gangalidda & Garawa Rangers hosted a visit from Queensland Parks and Parks Wildlife with renowned turtle expert Ian Bell conducting training for our Rangers. Ian first trained the Rangers on the methodology behind why and how the monitoring processes are developed and how important it is to combine both best-practice western scientific knowledge along with Traditional Knowledge.

In return, the Rangers provided Ian with an overview of their Traditional Knowledge on turtles and also discussed issues they thought could cause problems for the turtle population into the future.



Renown Turtle Expert Ian Bell training Rangers to tag turtles

lan trained the Rangers on how to monitor temperatures in the nest along with handling and counting the eggs, tagging and survey methodology. Ian stressed on how important temperature was to the development of the egg as it determines what the sex of the turtles will be and if it is too hot or too cold that could harm egg development. During the four day camp the Rangers were lucky to witness two turtles nesting, one being a Green turtle and the other a Leatherback turtle. Both turtles were tagged, one with the usual front flipper tag that most people would be familiar with, and the other a digital tag placed under the soft skin near the neck.





Turtle Monitoring and Training



lan and the Rangers also buried four thermometers at various points along the beach. They place them in the sand at a depth were you would find eggs and in twelve months they will retrieve them and download the data. The thermometers were placed in shaded and non-shaded areas which will give some insight whether our turtles are hatching as mostly male or female.

The Rangers thoroughly enjoyed the training and are looking forward to the nesting season in 2014 where they can put their new skills into practice on a larger scale to help protect the turtle population for the future.





Thuwathu/Bujimulla Protected



Thuwathu/Bujimulla(Wellesley Islands) in the Gulf of Carpentaria was recognised as an Indigenous Protected Area on Sunday 24 November 2013, supporting Traditional Owners to conserve cultural and natural heritage and to support the sustainable use of natural resources.

Covering more than 1.7 billion hectares, the Thuwathu/Bujimulla (Wellesley Islands) Indigenous Protected Area encompasses 30 Islands, and includes extensive mangrove forests, vast salt pans, estuaries and beaches in the area.

Indigenous Affairs Minister, Nigel Scullion congratulated the Lardil, Yangkaal, Kaiadilt and Gangalidda Peoples on this achievement, which was celebrated on Sunday 24 November 2013 at a declaration ceremony on Mornington Island.

"This declaration is a credit to the work of the Traditional Owners, the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation," Minister Scullion said.

"You have all worked hard to realise your vision for your country, which joins a further 60 Indigenous Protected Areas protecting natural and cultural values right across Australia".

"The management of this area will help protect 6 of the world's iconic species of marine turtles, including Flatback and Green Turtles which nest on the Islands, as well as Dugongs and Seabirds".

Traditional Owners will play a leading role in the ongoing management, and protection of the country, including monitoring the Dugong population, scientific research and working with local industry and authorities on Land and Sea Management. The Chair of the Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation Delma Loogatha recognised the contributions involved., "The Elders, together with the Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation, have worked hard to get to this stage of the declaration of the Thuwatha/Bujimulla IPA is critical for protection of our culture and environment and it is an opportunity for Traditional Owners to step up and manage country".

Chairperson of the Carpentaria Land Aboriginal Corporation Land Council, Thomas Wilson stated that, "The Land Council proudly supported the Traditional Owners of the Wellesley Islands to gain exclusive Native Title and assisted them to develop an IPA Plan. This declaration will ensure that the Islands are managed sustainably for future generations".

The Australian Government is investing \$78.3 million over the next 5 years to 2018 to support Indigenous groups across the country to declare and manage Indigenous Protected Areas as part of Australia's National Reserve System. Indigenous Protected Areas now cover 46 million hectares or over 35% of the National Reserve System, Australia's network of protected areas.

The Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation will now apply for IPA Plan of management funding to implement the Plan going forward.



Thuwathu/Bujimulla IPA Declaration







Top right: Cedric Scholes signing the declaration certificate.







Top left: Marjorie
Gant, Commonwealth
IPA Program;
Delma Loogatha,
GRAC Chairperson;
Robbie Katter,
Member for Mount
Isa; and Tommy Wilson, CLCAC
Chairperson.

Centre: right: Woomera Dancers take centre stage in the celebration.

Left - CLCAC Chairperson Thomas Wilson with the Woomera Dancers.

Business and Economic Development: Tourism Destination and Product Development

Welcome to the last Business and Economic Development update for 2013. The year is ending with a degree of uncertainty in relation to Commonwealth Government funding and priorities for Indigenous Economic Development. Let's hope that in 2014 there is rapid clarity around these issues so that economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities are not lost or fall off the radar.

The CLCAC has engaged Rick Murray of Middle Star Pty Ltd - Tourism Business Development Services to undertake the next critical phases of our Indigenous Tourism development project. We're very fortunate to have Rick on board as he has many years of experience in this sector. Rick is currently the Deputy Chairman of Ecotourism Australia Ltd and the Chairman of Savannah and has served on the Board of Management for Kakadu NP since 2002. The majority of the Board members in this jointly managed park are Aboriginal people from all of the various clan groups of the area. Rick is also a Director of Nitmiluk Tours Pty Ltd, which is wholly owned by the Jawoyn Association, the Traditional Owners of the region and of Nitmiluk National Park. He was a Director (the only non-indigenous one) of Aboriginal Tourism Australia Ltd for several years and has experience working with very small organisations right through to medium sized aboriginal corporations.



Murrandoo Yanner and Rick Murray yarn about tourism, fishing and the Southern Gulf in December 2013.

Business and Economic Development

Review of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)

In December 2013 the Commonwealth Government announced a review of the Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) . The CLCAC welcomed this review and will be making a formal submission to the review process.

The Government states the review into IBA and ILC is about looking to see if improvements can be made to achieve better outcomes and improve economic development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The review will make recommendations to Government about how improvements could be made to the effectiveness of these two principal land and economic development statutory bodies. It will also explore the optimal structures for Government efforts to drive Indigenous economic development, and how duplication and overlap can be avoided.

The review terms of reference indicate an amalgamation of the IBA and ILC is highly likely. The CLCAC is supportive of this on the basis that black tape is reduced, administration is reduced and resources saved are directed to grass roots organisations and initiatives that are creating real economic participation opportunities. Our support for the amalgamation of IBA and ILC is qualified on the basis that any such amalgamation must result in:

- 1. Greater efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery;
- 2. Savings from reduced administration, process refinement and program alignment being re-directed to 'on-ground' initiatives; and
- 3. The implementation of a more regionally and client focussed service delivery model. The CLCAC holds the strong view that regions and communities share many similarities but also have contrasting differences, especially in relation to economic participation issues, employment opportunities and regional economic / business profiles.

The next edition will provide a summary of our submission and key issues. And we will endeavour to keep you informed of progress in relation to this critical issue. Alternatively you can visit www.ilcibareview.dpmc.gov.au for updates on outcomes of the review and progress.

Business and Economic Development: Carbon Farming

Since the last update a lot has changed in the world of carbon in Australia. Unfortunately the Commonwealth Government has cut all future funding to the Indigenous Carbon Fund.

This won't affect our current project however obviously it will have an impact on any future plans.

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, also released the long awaited Green Paper on implementing the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) on 20 December 2013.

The paper talks about three key issues moving forward:

- •lowest cost emissions reductions
- •genuine emissions reductions
- streamlined administration

The CLCAC is scheduled to receive a briefing from its project consultants, Select Carbon, in February to better understand the implications for our Savannah Burning Business Feasibility Project.





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For further information or to enquire about support for your business idea, contact Charles at the CLCAC:

economic@clcac.com.au T: 07 4041 3833



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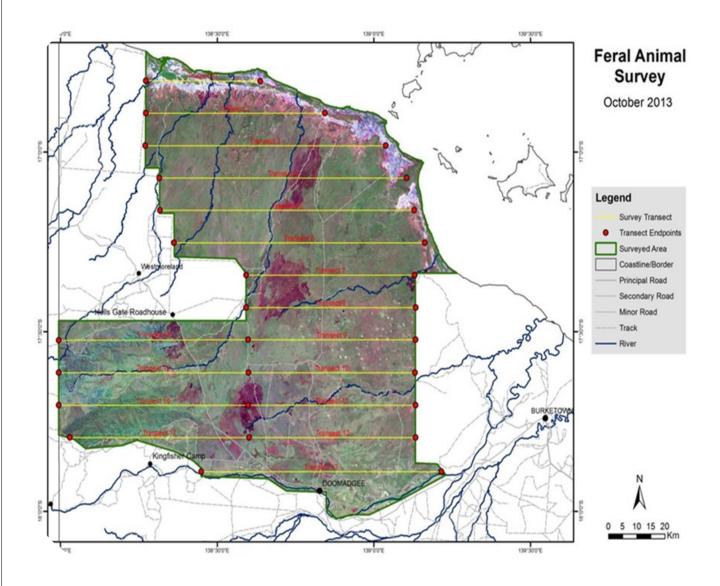
Horse Population Survey

An aerial survey of Gangalidda and Garawa country, west of Burketown was undertaken from 8-10 October 2013. The survey was conducted by the CLCAC Gangalidda and Garawa Rangers and Steve Eldridge of Desert Wildlife Services.

The aims of the survey were to:

- map the distribution of feral horses and cattle;
- •estimate the size and density of feral horse and cattle populations in the survey area; and
- •train Gangalidda & Garawa Rangers in aerial survey population methodology.

The survey area is situated between Burketown and the Northern Territory border and encompassed an area of approximately 11,600km² (Fig 1). The area supports mainly open Eucalypt woodland habitats intersected by the riparian corridors of several major river systems. The sparsely woodled coastal areas were also included in the survey.

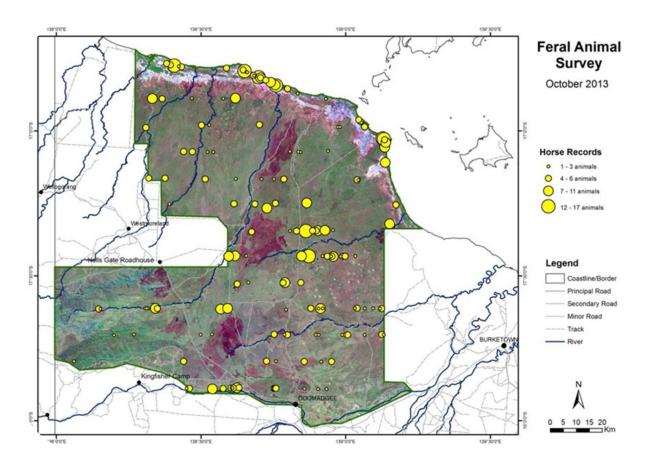


Map showing the survey area and transect (flight) lines

Horse Population Survey

Thirteen east-west strip transects (each separated by a distance of 10km, were surveyed by plane flying at 100 knots (185km/h) at 150m off the ground. Three Rangers acted as observers, counting animals located in a 1km strip (500m either side of the plane) as the aircraft flew along each transect. Effectively, this method covered 10% of the total survey area. Additional data was collected during a fight over coastal areas which tracked along the shoreline at approximately 2km inland over the salt flats, river flood plains and sand dunes

Survey records were mapped to illustrate the distribution of horses within the survey area. Distribution maps with density contours were produced to identify the most heavily populated areas where impacts are likely to be greatest.



Map showing the survey results. The yellow circles indicate where horse populations were found.

Species	Coastal Records	Woodland Rec- ords	Total Records	Population Esti- mate
Horse	225	525	750	12003
Cattle	30	264	294	4765
Pig	0	36	36	734

Population estimates from the entire survey area.

Horse Population Survey

On 15 October 2013 a Gangalidda and Garawa meeting was held at Moungibi where Terrence Taylor Gangalidda and Garawa Head Ranger delivered the findings of the survey work.

Terrence also spoke about the impact on country with such large numbers of horses providing alarming photographic evidence where you could clearly see damage to the natural wetlands and the resulting erosion issues created from the hard hooves and high numbers.

At this meeting a decision was made by the Gangalidda and Garawa Peoples to instruct the CLCAC Rangers to take steps to reduce the number of horses on country to protect not only the biodiversity of the region but cultural aspects as well.

This project is being supported by the Australian Government's Working on Country Program and the Queensland Governments, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. CLCAC has received funding from both of these Departments to carry out the horse population survey in 2013 and to implement a reduction of the horse population in 2014.

Further details regarding this important project will be provided in the next edition.







Images from the aerial horse population survey



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