



DHIMURRU

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

2014 – 2015



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DHIMURRU VISION STATEMENT

Dhimurru's vision statement honours the memory and wisdom of those elders who inspired and founded Dhimurru.

Dhimurru continues to be motivated by the commitment and passion of its leaders and elders.



VISION STATEMENT IN YOLŊU MATHA BY THE LATE ROY DADAYŊA MARIKA MBE

From dhawuru dhanu naya yaka wāna ga hundred or more than one hundred years dhanu dhāruk naru dhāya wekarram. Mā nhān yaka naru yolŋuyu bāki, banhaya naye generation ga generation ga generation. Naye yaka naru dhāya, mā dhanal naru nhāma banhaya naye, banha yakan nhalpiyan dhanal nyenan nātjil dilak. Ga nhalpiyan dhanal yakan gatjpu'yuwan nātjil dilak. Yo - Dhuwa Yirritja, Yothu ga Yindi.

Bukmak naye malanyinha yaka dhāya manikaymi, rommi, dhulanmi, dhāwu'mi. Banhalan nayeina, dhanalingu nuku djalkiri. Bitjan nhan yaka nayim malanya dhāya ganjuna Land Rightsja dhāruk bilanya bili. Yo, decision maker nhanbayi yana landowner.

Naru nhan naru, narrunam gonmurrum nhumalin gurumuru, Conservation Commission or Rangerwurumuru, Dhimurruwurumuru. Bukmak naye malanyinha djākawu gonja Dhimurruwura. Yirritja ga Dhuwa naru warkthun dhanal further development bilanya bitjan Conservation ga dhal yun naru protecting nhānuru developmentjuru.

Dhanu naye yolŋuwu yana, Yolŋuyu naru warkthun dhāruk nhanbayi Yolŋuyu yana. Djinaku nayiwu narakawu, yaka Gapmandhu wo bilan yolthu waripunyu nayinharrayu yolŋuyu. Nhanbayi yana naye-watanuyu, rom-watanuyu, wanjarr- watanuyu, gamunungu-watanuyu wo madayin-watanuyu.

Naru dhārukma dhanu gunyanda bayikuŋ nalapalmiyu banha narrunan ga dhanu badak nyena yaka. naru dhārukma dhanalingu ga gatjpu badak wānja. Djinaku Dhimurruwum self developmentkum, ga self-managementkum.

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 māri-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 STAFF

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Djami Marika

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Steve Roeger

SENIOR CULTURAL ADVISOR
Djalinda Ulamari Yunupingu

EXECUTIVE SUPPORT OFFICER
Thomas Amagula

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICER
Libby Rayner

BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER
Juliet Perry

PROJECT FACILITATORS
Vanessa Drysdale
Paul Augustin
Lisa Roeger

LOC COORDINATOR
Jonathan Wearne / Stuart Kellaway

SENIOR RANGERS
Daryl Wänuṇ Lacey
Yupunu Marika
Gathapura Mununggurr
Anthony Crafter

RANGERS
Banula Marika
Wulwat Marika
Rakrakpuy Marika
Grace Wunungmurra
Nyinganyinga Yunupingu
Daniel Hick
Georgina Gellett
Shane Pitt
Milika Marika
Tyson Wangurra
Datji Mununggurr
Yanthlawuy Marcus Marawilli

DHIMURRU BOARD 2014 - 2015

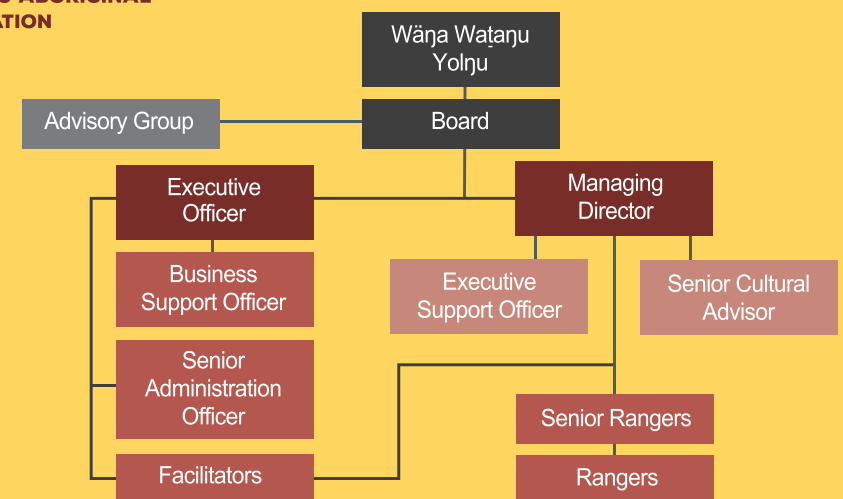


CHAIRPERSON
Rartjiwuy Herdman

DEPUTY CHAIR
Deturru Yunupingu
Räriwuy Marika

BOARD MEMBERS
Deturru Yunupingu
Daylulu Yunupingu
Boyan1 Yunupingu
Djawa Yunupingu
Dhumudal Dhamarrandji
Rartjiwuy Herdman
Natjinga Marika
Bawuli Marika
Djarrambal Marika
Räriwuy Marika

FIGURE 1.
ORGANISATIONAL
STRUCTURE OF
DHIMURRU ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DHIMURRU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION AND IPA MANAGEMENT

Through the wisdom of our Elders, the direction set by the Dhimurru Board and Executive, and through the planning and management of our Rangers in collaboration with relevant agencies, we are committed to the following principles in managing our land and sea country within the IPA.



Yolŋu control and empowerment

Yolŋu make decisions for their own country. Activities should maximise opportunities for Yolŋu as active participants in the management of their country

Respect for Yolŋu values

There are extensive and all-embracing values of all sites in the IPA for Yolŋu and the preservation of these sites is a primary focus of management

Conservation and enhancement of natural and cultural values of the IPA

The use and management of the IPA must be sustainable and must protect the ecological and heritage values that are the result of generations of Yolŋu management

Both-ways management

Maximising opportunities for Yolŋu to devise strategies through a mutual investigation of Njapaki (non-Indigenous people) and Yolŋu systems of knowledge

Collaborative relationships

Continued development of collaborative relationships with government agencies and other organisations in programs and research to support sustainable use and management of Yolŋu land and seas

Njapaki recreation values

The goal of visitor management will be to encourage an appreciation of the cultural and natural values of the IPA by Njapaki to promote an enjoyable experience and to ensure minimal environmental impact

Caring for Dhuwa and Yirritja clan estates

Holistically in Dhimurru land and sea country consistent with our cultural values, rights, practices, and obligations

Sacred sites protection

Protecting sacred sites and song cycles that contain our creation stories and which link our land and sea environments together

Ecosystem maintenance

Maintaining healthy terrestrial and marine ecosystems in which all species and associated cultural values can thrive

Sustainability

Ensuring that dugong, turtle, fish, and other culturally and economically important species are harvested sustainably for the generations to come

Recognition of Yolŋu rights, interests and responsibilities

Ensuring that Yolŋu rights, interests and responsibilities in land and sea country are recognised and respected, together with the rights and responsibilities of other groups and organisations with a legitimate interest in our land and sea country and its resources

Maintenance of Yolŋu knowledge

Ensuring that Yolŋu knowledge and practices are maintained and transmitted from one generation to the next

Application of Yolŋu knowledge and practices

Applying Yolŋu knowledge and practices to the management of our land and sea country

Best practice management

Ensuring best practice management of our land and sea country long into the future

Development of Yolŋu Enterprises

Support for environmentally and culturally sustainable enterprises

DHIMURRU INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA (IPA)

An IPA is an area of land and/or sea country voluntarily dedicated by Traditional Owners as a non-legislated protected area. The terrestrial component of an IPA is recognised by the Australian government as being part of the National Reserve System of Protected Areas (NRSPA).

In 2000 Yolŋu Traditional Owners made a voluntary IPA declaration over approximately 101,000 ha of their traditional country. This included 92,000 ha of their land and about 9,000 ha of their sea country, incorporating previously registered marine sacred sites. This declaration established the first IPA in the Northern Territory and the first IPA in Australia to include both terrestrial and marine areas.

At a memorial ceremony in Arnhem Land in April 2013, Yolŋu Wanga Watangu (Traditional Owners) formally dedicated additional areas of their land and sea country to the Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area. This increased Dhimurru's IPA to approximately 550,000 ha and extended the IPA's sea country boundary out to 40km from the coastline.

An Indigenous Protected Area is managed by Indigenous Rangers and partner organisations according to protected area guidelines set by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Dhimurru's Vision Statement sets out Dhimurru's commitment to:

- Support Yolŋu Traditional Owners in the management of their land and sea country
- Manage recreation areas designated for visitor use

In collaboration with partner agencies our Rangers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the IPA, supported by the continued hands-on involvement of the Yolŋu community taking care of their traditional country. Traditional resource management practices such as the use of fire are critical to the maintenance of the natural and cultural values of the IPA.

The Dhimurru IPA is supported by the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Protected Areas Program and the Working on Country Program, which provide assistance in funding, planning, and management.

Many other government and non-government partners share their expertise and resources to help us achieve the conservation and sustainability goals of the IPA.

Our IPA is one of 60 Indigenous Protected Areas across Australia. Together they contribute about forty percent of the total area of the NRSPA, which includes all of Australia's national parks and conservation reserves.



WORKING TOGETHER: DHIMURRU'S PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Dhimurru has developed and sustained partnerships with a wide variety of organisations over the years.

We work together with Yolŋu organisations, government agencies, educational institutions, researchers, NGOs and corporate businesses on a range of programs, sharing knowledge, expertise and resources, investing in activities, and providing training. By extending and strengthening these partnerships Dhimurru seeks to develop mutual understanding and commitment in looking after country; Njilimurru bukmak djäka wäŋawu – All of us together looking after country. This is often referred to as Dhimurru's "Both Ways" approach where contemporary Njapaki expertise is sought to help inform Yolŋu decision making.



DURING 2014-15 DHIMURRU'S COLLABORATIONS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA)
Aboriginal Benefit Account (ABA)
Amateur Fishermans Association Northern Territory (AFANT)
Australian Border Force
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Education
Bunuwal Group
Charles Darwin University (CDU)
Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C)
Commonwealth Department of Environment
Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Border Security (DIBS)
Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA)
Department of Business (DoB)
Ghost Nets Australia (GNA)
Gumatj Association
Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)
Jawun Indigenous Corporate Partners
Laynhapuy Aboriginal Corporation
Lirrwi Aboriginal Corporation
Marngarr Aboriginal Corporation
Nhulunbuy Corporation Ltd (NCL)
Northern Australia Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAISMA)

Northern Land Council (NLC)
Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF)
Northern Territory Department of Land Resource Management (DLRM)
Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (NTDPIF)
Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NTEPA)
Northern Territory Fire and Rescue / Nhulunbuy Fire Service
Northern Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM)
Northern Territory Police
Northern Territory Seafood Council (NTSC)
Rio Tinto
Parks and Wildlife Commission NT (Parks NT)
PEW Charitable Trust
Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation (RAC)
Tangaroa Blue
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Yambirra Schools Council (Yirrkala School)
YBE(2) Pty Ltd
Yirralka Rangers
Yothu Yindi Foundation

Additionally, Dhimurru would like to recognise the volunteers and members of the general public who regularly give their time and expertise for little or no reward, and sends a heartfelt thanks out to those individuals.

FOREWORD



Rarrtjiwuy Herdman
CHAIR 2014-2015

Nhamirri bukmak,

Another successful year for Dhimurru and its board!

I would like to start off with thanking the Rangers and staff of Dhimurru for their continuous hard work. The work you put in is visible and appreciated by all communities in this region.

This year has been tough for Dhimurru with the loss of one of the first Rangers Mr Wunungmurra. The contribution and guidance that he gave to Dhimurru was invaluable. We remember him as always actively being involved with the development of what we are today.

With this we stand strong and know that what our elders envisaged for us in the vision statement is always what will guide us in how we manage our land and sea country.

The 2015-22 Management Plan has been one of this year's highlights. The completed plan gives us all an understanding of the direction Dhimurru will endeavour to go in the future. I would like to thank everyone involved in the development of this plan: Vanessa Drysdale, Dr Dermot Smyth, Steve Roeger, Prof Nancy Williams, Greg Wearne, Dhimurru staff and our Yolŋu consultants.

I'd also like to recognise Paul Augustin for his work in progressing much needed care and

maintenance on the Daliwuy track. This is one of the most popular areas for tourists and Nhulunbuy residents, but also a significant place for the Traditional owners, the Gumatj, it was a great achievement to see the work completed.

The two cyclones that crossed the peninsula had a big impact on access to a number of areas within our Indigenous Protected Area and across the homelands.

The debris saw a lot of people coming together and helping each other. For us, this meant clearing tracks, assessing the damage caused and making sure that recreational areas were safe for people to use.

Some of the most affected areas were on Elcho Island homelands. Our Rangers went over to lend a hand with cleaning up these areas. I would like to thank those Rangers for the extra effort they put in and also for leaving their duties here to assist in the recovery of Galiwin'ku community.

Another highlight was the success of the first full year of our online permit system and website upgrade. The new Visitor's Guide has also been exciting to work on as it's culturally informative but also provides readers and visitors guidance on what to expect from our recreational areas.

The Learning on Country program has continued to be great. The interaction and engagement of the younger generation is something that is rewarding for us, because we know that the knowledge of our land, sea and animals is being maintained and carried into the future.

Thanks to both schools, Yirrkala ga Laynhapuy, for a fantastic year. We look forward to the continuation of this collaboration.

The board would like to take this opportunity to reflect on and stress the importance of caring for this land and sea country, to maintain it the same way our elders saw it.

All of the new, exciting, challenging things that have happened and the achievements by Dhimurru would not have been such a success without the contributions and hard work of the Executive Officer, the Managing Director and the Dhimurru staff.

We look forward to another year of achievements and challenges.

Ngilimurru Bukmak Djaka Wangawu Rrambangi

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



WEED MANAGEMENT

The Dhimurru IPA plant and animal communities are vulnerable to the impact of introduced weed species that have the potential to substantially modify our natural ecosystems. Weed management is therefore a priority for Dhimurru Rangers. This year Dhimurru reviewed and updated its current weed management strategy.

The main weed species of interest in the IPA are Coffee Bush, Perennial and Annual Mission Grass, Hyptis, Sida, Candle Bush, Caltrop and Mossman River Grass. Coffee Bush and Perennial Mission Grass are regarded as the most serious - if not controlled these weeds have the potential to drive significant landscape-scale ecological degradation. In the case of Perennial Mission Grass this can mean high fuel loading and changes to fire regimes. Coffee Bush impacts bio-diversity because it forms dense stands where nothing else can grow.

From February to May Rangers treated known areas of Perennial Mission Grass (2ha) and a variety of other weed species at Yalangbara and Bawaka as well as at all the recreation areas. They used a quick spray unit, backpacks, cut and swab or hand pulled the weeds.



FIRE MANAGEMENT

Dhimurru's main role in fire management has been to carry out hazard reduction burns around the recreation areas early in the dry season and to assist the Nhulunbuy Fire Service with burning around the town lease area. Any other burning around the IPA has been done by community on their own areas.

Over the last 4 years Dhimurru has been involved in a fire/biodiversity project which, using tradition and western scientific knowledge, aims to discover the 'right way to burn country' in terms of cultural aspiration and good biodiversity outcomes.

On its completion in 2017 it will clarify Dhimurru's fire management role and will mean a more active and planned approach to fire management in the region as we work with traditional owners and custodians to manage their country.

As part of this project photo monitoring sites located at 27 sites around the IPA were photographed in October 2014 and May 2015.

CYCLONE REPAIR

In February and March of 2015 the Dhimurru IPA was in the path of two tropical cyclones, Lam and Nathan. The impact of these cyclones was severe across the region and the clean-up operation was extensive.

The most pressing issue was that over 50km of our access tracks were blocked by large numbers of fallen trees. Access to our recreation areas was severely limited and we estimate it took approximately 24 days of Ranger time to clear the bulk of this debris. Datjala Correctional Camp and Jawun provided additional bodies to help us with track clearance and beach clean-ups, and we also contracted heavy machinery from Levai Civil Engineering and Laynhapuy.

There was substantial work to be done at the recreation areas themselves, repairing barbeques, tidying fallen debris within campgrounds and checking for damage. Unfortunately this did have an impact on community access to our recreation areas for a short duration. It will be a while before some of the areas fully recover in terms of vegetation and natural shade and there is still work to do with regards to area rehabilitation and final tidy-ups.

The time this work took also had a knock-on effect for Dhimurru as a business, as we had to sideline and delay other timetabled projects in order to reopen areas for paying permit holders. We are still feeling the effects of this reprioritisation.

As part of the broader regional clean-up project we also sent Rangers to Gäwa near Galiwin'ku and Mooronga Island near Milngimbi to offer their support and expertise - something our staff found both rewarding and beneficial.





BĀRU (CROCODILE) MANAGEMENT

Dhimurru has continued to support traditional owners in looking after bāru in the Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area. Bāru are a very important totem for Yolŋu and as the apex predator in our ecosystem a high level of community awareness is needed to help keep the community safe and minimise likely interactions.

In the past Dhimurru has enjoyed a very close working relationship with Parks and Wildlife NT in helping to maintain community awareness and in risk management activities. Unfortunately with the NT Government's decision to withdraw its full time Ranger position from the region Dhimurru has found ongoing community needs difficult to meet. Dhimurru is not funded to provide bāru threat management services and because of the high costs involved our Board is seeking to establish a user pays approach to this issue.

Nonetheless Dhimurru's Board recognise that threat management services are essential to ensure community safety and to help in the protection and care of this important icon. On this basis Dhimurru has developed a threat management plan with protocols for identifying high risk animals. Dhimurru has continued to trap bāru identified through this process as needed.

A meeting of all stakeholders was conducted in June wherein a proposal was circulated seeking contributions from all parties aimed at ensuring sustainable delivery into the future. It is hoped that necessary commitments will be confirmed in the coming year.

TRACK IMPROVEMENTS

On Monday 27th of April 2015 work began on the Daliwuy track project funded by the Department of Business

This was a welcome piece of work considering this particular track had suffered bad erosion, was severely washed out in places and had last been graded in 2008. As an organisation we were aware of community discussions around the bad access to the coastal recreation areas and were grateful for permit holders' patience while we worked through the dual ownership and governance issues surrounding this project.

This scope of work included track repair from the Daliwuy recreation area turn-off down to the boat ramp and across to Turtle Beach. The Turtle Beach access track was also shortened and improved, and the old track was decommissioned to allow rehabilitation and incorporate natural rain run-off.

Dhimurru would like to extend its thanks to The Department of Business, YBE (2), Gumatj, Department of the Chief Minister, Rio Tinto, the NLC and local Traditional Owners for their assistance and contributions in getting this work done.

RECREATIONAL AREA MANAGEMENT

Dhimurru Rangers have continued with the regular maintenance of our recreation areas throughout 2014-15.

We installed new signs at six of our recreation areas, replacing stolen signs from earlier in the year.

Rangers continued with planting and the installation of erosion control structures at Latram River. Two new campgrounds were installed as part of the Conservation and Land Management training module on fencing, site rehabilitation and restoration. Extensive fencing work was also done at Wirrawuy as part of this CLM module.

Unfortunately, cyclones and bad weather have meant that some of the work we had intended to do had to be delayed.

A new composting toilet and accessories have been delivered and - due to time constraints as a result of the cyclone clean-up and poor weather - construction will commence in the next fiscal year.

This year Rangers began work on corduroy replacement and installation at Wanuwuy. This vehicular access system allows locals and tourists to traverse sensitive erodible coastal habitat without causing long-term damage. The new corduroys made from recycled plastic are long-lasting and effective, and work to prevent track erosion.

Corduroy work in the second half of year was postponed to the next fiscal year due to cyclone clean-up and poor weather.





VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND PERMITS

People management is one of the key priorities for Dhimurru because of the potential threat recreational use poses to the cultural and environmental values of the IPA and the increased tourism push in North East Arnhem Land.

To enhance visitor experiences in the IPA and minimise any cultural or environmental negative impact Dhimurru operates an access permit system providing legal access and incorporating important advice, information, and conditions. This is a major component of Dhimurru's management strategy.

A delegation from the Northern Land Council enables Dhimurru to issue recreational access permits on Traditional Owners' behalf.

Anyone wanting to visit Dhimurru's Recreation Areas must first obtain a General Permit from Dhimurru. In addition Special Permits are also required for specified sensitive areas.

This financial year we issued 3,365 General Permits. Thanks to an increased number of tourists we have seen an increase in the number of Special Permits issued: this financial year we issued Special Permits for 974 vehicles (compared to 799 in 2012/13).

Traditional Owners continued to donate all funds raised from delivering access permits to assist with Dhimurru's operational costs.

These funds compliment other sources of income to facilitate Dhimurru's operational costs, but only provide a small percentage of Dhimurru's total turnover.

This year locals and visitors have been able to purchase General Permits and Special Permits from the Dhimurru website. The website is regularly maintained and is now receiving 4,400 page views a month. We are maintaining our blog regularly and are active on Facebook used as a means of communicating with the public on things like bāru management, Ranger activity, and the availability of, and access to, designated recreation areas. We also stay in touch with the local community through announcements on Gove FM and the local paper, The Arafura Times.

Because of staff reduction since the closure of the Rio Tinto refinery and as we have seen a decrease in the number of in-house visitors, this year the Dhimurru front office hours were reduced. The front desk is now open from 9.30am to 1.00pm for visitor information, permit purchases and any other general enquiries.

Additionally we have completed work on a new Visitor's Guide that gives tourists and locals an overview of our activities, information on our recreation areas and some background to Yolŋu culture and practice.

STAFF PROFILE

**SEA COUNTRY FACILITATOR
VANESSA DRYSDALE**



Ness Drysdale has held the position of Sea Country Facilitator at Dhimurru for nearly eight years, in which time she has worked tirelessly to develop the organisation's capacity to look after both land and sea.

As a skilled diver and coxswain Vanessa is passionate about the water and everything in it and this passion has reaped many rewards for Dhimurru.

In 2013 Dhimurru's sea country estate became the first nationally recognised marine IPA, and this year finalising the Dhimurru Management Plan 2015-22 will help to consolidate the organisation's reputation nationally - and internationally - as a model for collaborative, effective marine management. The success of these projects, both managed by Vanessa, is testament to her motivational and organisational abilities in our workplace and her ability to make the most of external support when the opportunity arises.

For the last eight years Vanessa has also managed annual marine debris clean-ups and turtle recovery programs. Through collaboration with Ghost Nets Australia, Tangaroa Blue, Territory NRM, Conservation Volunteers Australia, NT Department of Land Resource Management and the NT Parks and Wildlife and others, the programs have consistently achieved hundreds of kilometres of beach clean-up every year and rescued countless stranded marine turtles. The logistics of both these projects are considerable but thanks to her drive, enthusiasm and ability to motivate Rangers

and volunteers these programs have been a continued success, culminating in Dhimurru being awarded the national Clean Beaches Award by Keep Australia Beautiful in 2014.

Vanessa's work coordinating fisheries, dolphin and other marine surveys has also helped position Dhimurru as a key player in the field of regional marine science research. The consequent upskilling of our Ranger force and open collaboration of Yolŋu and western methodologies has made Dhimurru an invaluable operational asset for a number of different stakeholders and contributed to the confidence levels and personal development of many of our staff members.

In her spare time this mum of two likes to spend time with her family, run marathons and take photographs - many of which are regularly exhibited in Dhimurru's publicity. More recently she has taken to sewing skirts and bags, proving that hard graft outdoors doesn't mean you have to compromise on style.

SEA COUNTRY



MARINE DEBRIS MANAGEMENT

Marine debris consists of any man-made material that has been discarded in the ocean. This can include tiny pieces of plastic, broken down over time, or huge ghost nets, some of which may have been drifting at sea for years.

Throughout the year Rangers and Facilitators make it a priority to ensure this debris is cleaned up from the IPA's beaches.

Dhimurru has undertaken an annual marine debris clean-up survey at Wanuwuy (Cape Arnhem) since 1996. This is the longest running continuous marine debris survey in Australia.

Over five days of work in the field, over 1,000kg of marine debris was removed from approximately 3.5km of beach - half the weight collected over the same period in 2013. In particular, the number of large ghost nets was well below historical averages and not consistent with the number of nets observed more generally across the IPA coastline in 2014.

This indicates that although the survey area may adequately represent the marine debris trends across the IPA, the spatial area of the survey site may not be sufficient to indicate trends in the frequency of ghost nets.

In 2014, the annual Wanuwuy Marine Debris Survey Project was supported financially by the Commonwealth Government and Conservation Volunteers Australia who supplied the works crew to complete the job. Sodexo provided meals for the volunteers while they were on the ground, Rio Tinto Alcan Gove supplied accommodation for the volunteers through their Community Assistance and Partnership (CAP) program and Dhimurru undertook co-ordination of the project and supplied Rangers, vehicles and other logistical input.

Although they did not directly contribute funding to this particular event, the ongoing in-kind support from both Ghost Nets Australia and Tangaroa Blue is significant.



DOLPHIN RESEARCH

Dolphins are a very strong symbol in north east Arnhem Land. The strength, speed and intelligence of the dolphin are seen as admirable traits, and to be named after the dolphin is a privilege and honour. The connection of people to the land and sea is no more evident than the connection people have with this particular species. People talk of hearing the dolphin gurraykurrayun dhangguryun (cry) and some Yolŋu being able to communicate with them. Others tell of hearing a mother and father dolphin speaking to their youngsters, teaching them and showing them how to hunt, swim and survive.

This year Dhimurru Rangers have continued working with western scientists to survey the resident populations of inshore dolphins in Gurkuwuy (Melville Bay) and Bawuka (Port Bradshaw).

This ongoing collaborative research project between James Cook University and Dhimurru aims to address the gap in scientific knowledge surrounding the occurrence and distribution of both dugongs and dolphins within our Sea Country Indigenous Protected Area. The research integrates indigenous and western scientific knowledge of four species; snubfin, humpback and bottlenose dolphins, and dugong.

Surveys are conducted on board the Dhimurru vessel with Rangers recording the details of each sighting using an electronic unit which is then downloaded in the office for collation and interpretation. The technology allows Rangers and university scientists to quickly and effectively collect robust data on the inshore dolphins and rare species living right on our doorstep.

As part of this project eight days of boat-based surveys were undertaken in June 2015 throughout Melville Bay and along the northern coast in front of the refinery in collaboration with Giringun Rangers (Cardwell, QLD) and Alexander Brown from Murdoch University. A total of 15 dolphin groups were sighted from a variety of species including humpback, bottlenose, and snubfin. Additionally, a total of 14 groups of megafauna were sighted during these surveys: stingrays, flatback turtles, green turtles, hawksbill turtles and turtles of unknown species. At-sea biopsies were also conducted, a total of seven shots were fired resulting in three successful biopsy samples of bottlenose dolphins. The overall project objectives are now due for review.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Build capacity of Dhimurru Rangers to conduct marine mammal surveys
- Develop a standardised survey methodology using appropriate data collection tools that will enable Indigenous ranger groups to independently monitor inshore dolphins and dugongs in sea country
- Obtain information on occurrence of inshore dolphins and other marine megafauna in Dhimurru Sea Country
- Obtain information on inshore dolphin distribution, abundance and habitat preferences in Melville Bay
- Raise local community awareness of the status of marine megafauna in Dhimurru Sea Country



TURTLE RESCUE

Dhimurru has conducted marine turtle rescue surveys since 1996. In this time, the number of marine turtles entangled has fluctuated from year to year. During the very early stages of the dry season, the trade winds swing from a predominantly north westerly direction to a south easterly.

These first few weeks of the easterly winds, or Dhimurru winds, are when the Rangers find the highest number of turtles washed ashore entangled in nets.

Ghost nets are a particularly destructive form of marine debris and are defined as derelict or abandoned commercial fishing nets that are drifting at sea unattended. Marine sea turtles are particularly affected by these nets.

The coastline around Gove is very rugged and remote. The best way for Rangers to access and check the entire length of the beach is to fly in a Jetranger Helicopter.

Along with releasing turtles Rangers collect vital data on these flights, including species, curved carapace length, GPS coordinates and a skin sample to determine DNA. In 2015 over 7 flights the Dhimurru team found 30 turtles in nets. Sadly it was too late to save a high percentage of these.

Dhimurru is working closely with scientists at Charles Darwin University and Northern Australia Marine Research Alliance to better understand the ghost net phenomenon, where the nets are coming from, where the turtles are getting entangled and how we can stop the nets from becoming lost at sea.

This year we have also put satellite trackers on two turtles which has enabled us to monitor their progress on release.

STAFF PROFILE

DJALINDA ULAMARI YUNUPINGU



Djalinda Ulamari Yunupingu is a Gumatj miyalk and she has been working as Dhimurru's Senior Cultural Advisor since 2013.

Djalinda has a teaching diploma, specialising in Aboriginal schools. She has spent most of her working life in education working with the Yirrkala Community Education Centre and the Yirrkala Homelands School, and now her focus is on the Learning on Country programme.

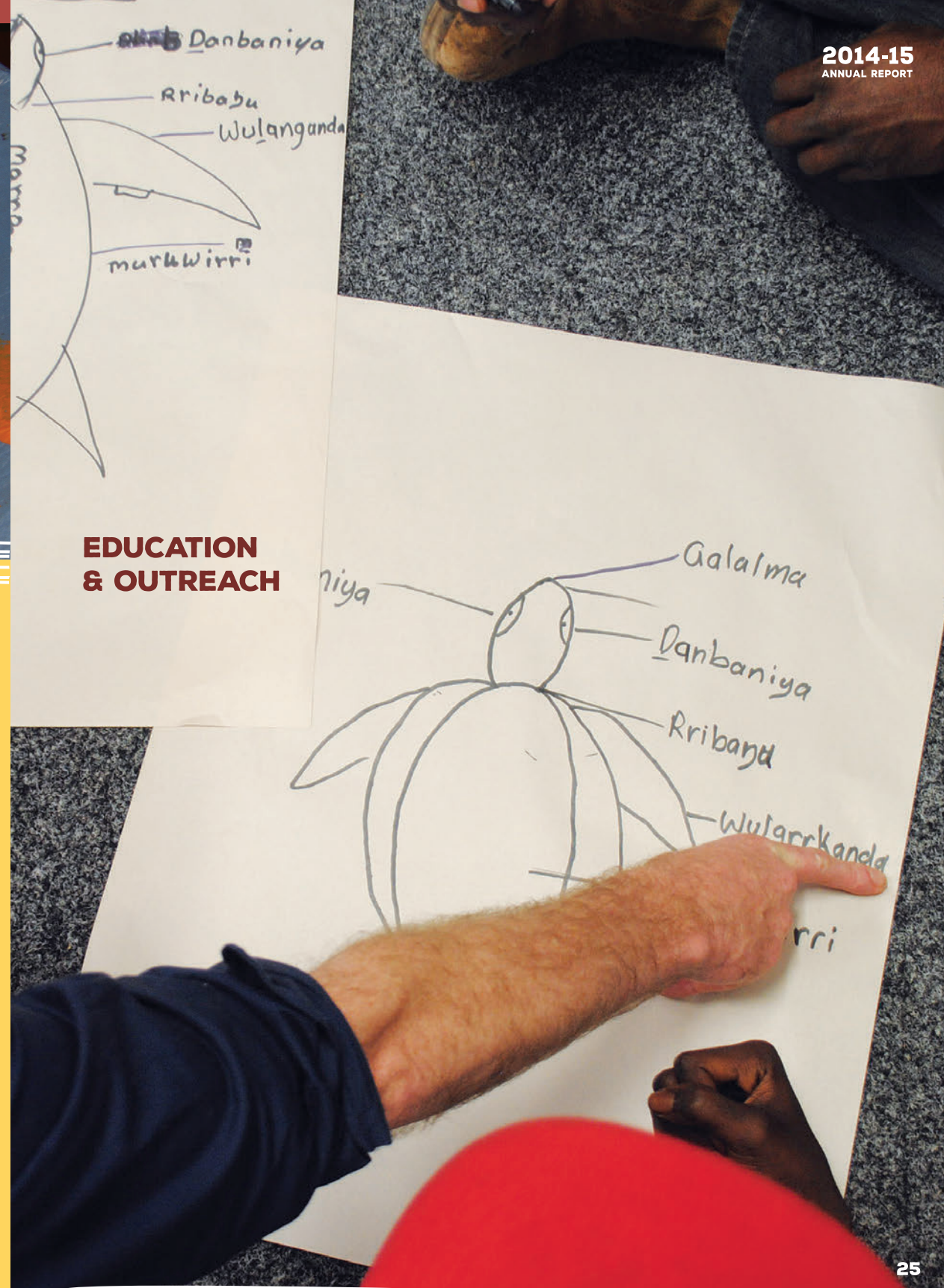
She feels passionately the importance of passing Yolŋu knowledge on to the next generation. Her goal is to help the young ones realise the significance of being a Yolŋu individual, and what that means for their identity, their culture and who they really are.

Djalinda works to instil a sense of pride in the next generation of Yolŋu and encourages the younger Rangers to fulfil the role of mentor. Her aim is to see more Year 12 students pass through the Learning on Country programme and graduate into a range of professions, including Ranger work with Dhimurru.

Djalinda is also registered with the AIS (Aboriginal Interpreter Service) as a Yolŋu interpreter and has been called upon to assist with the police, justice system and Centrelink. She also plays an active part in the community, mainly translating Yolŋu to Njapaki.

In her own time Djalinda is a successful artist. She most loves to paint yathiny, the turtle food. Turtle love to eat them so when yathiny appear washed up on the shore you know it's time for turtles. Painting them also reminds her of her mother's sister, and she feels connected to her although she lives far away.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH



LEARNING ON COUNTRY

The Learning on Country (LoC) Program commenced in 2013 and the last year has been one of progress and development. The LoC program is an educational initiative that meets the aspirations of Yolŋu communities as well as supporting older students to complete their senior secondary qualification.

The program engages highly respected Rangers and Yolŋu Elders who use Yolŋu knowledge and management of their land and sea as an inspiration and a resource for literacy, numeracy, maths, English, and science subjects.

Students in the program study these subjects through the practical and relevant land and sea management activities of the Rangers and a series of Galtha Rom 'both ways' workshops that build a foundation from Yolŋu knowledge, skills and understandings. This year Dhimurru project managed and contributed to four Galtha workshops that took place on country and in the classroom, on subjects ranging from miyapunu (marine turtle) and WWII sites of significance, to climate change.

The program is improving school attendance, the readiness of students to take up satisfying and rewarding careers and is preparing the next generation of Yolŋu land owners to care for their internationally significant estates.

The students are also completing Certificates II and III in Conservation and Land Management with the support of Dhimurru Rangers. These are courses of study taken by Ranger staff at Dhimurru.



The benefits for the Dhimurru Rangers are equally as compelling as those to the communities and students. The program provides Rangers with leadership and mentoring experience, public speaking in English and the Yolŋu language, improved project management and organisation skills, and the opportunity for them to meet their obligations for knowledge transfer to the next and future generations.

The program is also providing Rangers with an opportunity to be leaders and role models, making a real difference within their communities and to the future of their own children.

The Learning on Country initiative is supported by the Australian Government and Northern Territory Governments and has received continuing funding via the Australian Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

CULTURE COLLEGE

This year saw the launch of The Hooker Foundation's residential 'Culture College', bringing secondary students from schools in southern states to Nhulunbuy in two week blocks.

Project partners include Rio Tinto, the Northern Territory Government, Lirrwi Tourism, Sodexo

and Dhimurru. The program offers a two week cultural, environmental and outdoor education program with a focus on leadership. It aims to contribute to Yolŋu well-being and the local economy and promote both ways learning.

Dhimurru Rangers conduct a Welcome to Country and lead the Gayngaru lagoon walk.

TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

We have a strong reputation as a Yolŋu organisation committed to training and professional development. This begins by supporting Yirrkala School senior secondary students in the Learning on Country program with their Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management. This is an important pathway to employment at Dhimurru.

This year we completed a framework for matching the needs of the organisation with the aspirations of individual staff. This training needs review has identified units of study (accredited and non-accredited) that cover the mainstream skills we need at Dhimurru to meet our obligations and aspirations. We are progressively using this framework to guide our training agenda.

Intensive teaching blocks and on the job Conservation and Land Management Certificate II training continues for early career Rangers and progresses through Certificate III and IV for senior Rangers.

So far in 2015 one Ranger and a Facilitator have already undertaken two intensive training blocks working towards a Certificate III in Fisheries Compliance and they will be fully trained to a Fisheries Compliance Officer level in the next 12 months.

Two further blocks of training will be completed by the end of financial year and Dhimurru will host several visits from Fisheries Police in order to undertake practical training in compliance on the job 'on country'.

This programme is co-ordinated collaboratively by the NT Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, Australian Maritime and Fishing Academy (AMFA), Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia and is funded by the Commonwealth Government.

At Dhimurru our professional development is not just about mainstream Ranger skills. We sponsor formal introductory studies in Yolŋu matha and consider both-ways learning to be essential. Our Non-Yolŋu staff learn everyday about Yolŋu traditions for caring and managing country, and about how Yolŋu culture, kinship and country



are the foundation of Yolŋu well-being and identity.

The Learning on Country program and the Yolŋu directed Galtha workshops at the heart of the program are proving to be an excellent way to support and deepen this both-ways learning.

GARMA FESTIVAL

The Yothu Yindi Foundation are important partners and we continue to participate in the annual Garma festival.

This year we provided an interactive display covering the range of Dhimurru's activities, with Rangers available to discuss Dhimurru's work.

As part of our Learning on Country program we conducted guided interpretive walks for Garma guests and contributed to the youth program.





VOLUNTEERS, VISITS AND EXCHANGES

Rangers continue to assist schools in the Nhulunbuy area: this year we gave talks on local environmental issues, undertook beach clean-ups and participated in the annual careers expo. Rangers have also gone further afield to share their expertise - contributing to discussions on ghost nets, turtles and land management across the country and working with other Ranger groups in Coburg and Galiwin'ku.

In November 2014 our Executive Officer, Steve Roeger, and Senior Ranger, Daryl Lacey, travelled all the way to Canada to discuss IPA land management practise and share their experiences with our Canadian counterparts. The experience was a cold one but despite these environmental contrasts they discovered a number of parallels with issues encountered here in East Arnhem Land. This trip was sponsored by the PEW Foundation.

Geographically closer to home but a world away culturally, Senior Ranger Anthony Crafter also represented Dhimurru internationally this year at a diplomacy training workshop in Myanmar.

We have also seen a number of visitors this year. September 2014 saw the arrival of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Indigenous

Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion, both of whom were interested in our activities and role in the community, and a group from northern Canada also keen to explore our approach to IPA management. On the ground we've received assistance from visiting Ranger groups based in Cairns and the Torres Strait, and have benefited hugely from Conservation Volunteers' Australia who once again provided the manpower for our annual marine debris clean-up at Cape Arnhem. Locally we have been very grateful for contributions from the Datjala work camp and work experience students from Nhulunbuy High and Yirrkala School.



GOVERNANCE

BUSINESS PLAN

A new Business Plan was completed in December 2014, covering the period 2015 – 2022. A new Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan is scheduled for release in August 2015 and the two plans will complement each other.

The 2015 - 2022 Business Plan acts as a dynamic blueprint for running and expanding our business, describing in detail the financial considerations and foundations upon which we plan to achieve our goals. The Business Plan reflects on why Dhimurru was started in the first place, what our original goals were and how business changes will assist us to maintain our vision.

Dhimurru's Business Plan is an important document from a marketing, financial and operational viewpoint, containing strategies to continue to grow the business as we operate under the significant changes in our regional economy following Rio Tinto Alcan's 2013 decision to curtail their Alumina refinery on the Gove Peninsula.

Our plan contains Dhimurru's basic business concepts, our strategies and how we plan to implement these, our products and services, our markets, the background of our management team and key employees, as well as our financial operating needs.

This plan will take us on a sustainable journey for the next seven years as we continue to honour Dhimurru's founding vision.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT

Dhimurru's housing project aims to alleviate stress caused to our Yolŋu staff by living conditions in housing that is overcrowded, unsuitable and ill-maintained.

Due to the unsuitability of and overcrowding in some community houses, a number of our Rangers have been forced to move to more suitable accommodation and pay rents ranging up to \$355 per week for housing in Yirkala and Nhulunbuy. Dhimurru has for the past few years provided accommodation assistance of 35 percent for eight staff members who currently pay rentals of over \$100 per week.

Following a meeting in February 2015 Rirritjingu Aboriginal Corporation agreed to provide significant support to this end.

RAC have contributed accommodation assistance of 15 percent of rents paid by indigenous staff for the 2015/16 year and together Dhimurru and RAC will strive to access and maintain better living conditions for our Yolŋu staff.

This generous contribution for the coming year will assist in continuing the work Dhimurru and its Yolŋu employees do, for the community, the land and its people.

2015-22 MANAGEMENT PLAN

This year Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation worked towards a new Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Management Plan for 2015-2022.

The land and sea management plan for 2015-2022 will be a management tool providing a framework and structured basis with which Dhimurru aims to protect the natural and cultural environment of the region and support local sustainable jobs for Yolŋu. It will be the first of its kind to incorporate both land and sea.

The plan will provide an overall management framework that will help guide Dhimurru in its management of Yolŋu country and offer information to collaborators and partners to help them understand how they can best work with us.

Extensive research has been done in consultation with lead consultant and IPA expert Dr Dermot Smyth in formulating the long-term strategy goals. Additionally an operational plan is being developed to aid and assist staff members on a day-to-day basis. Finally the planning outputs will include graphic posters to help illustrate Dhimurru's different working areas to those less familiar with our processes.

The posters will cover the breadth of Dhimurru's work. The IPA Timeline poster will tell the story of Dhimurru from the early days of Yolŋu country and culture through to modern day. The Governance illustration will explain our work structure and the variety of partners we collaborate with. The Heritage Values component will display the different cultural elements at play and how they interweave, while the Livelihoods graphic will explain the different manner in which people make a living within the IPA. Finally, the graphic on Conservation and Threats will take people through the IPAs significant biodiversity and the number of issues we have to consider as a natural and cultural resource management organisation.

FUTURE PLANS

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEAGRASS MONITORING PROJECT

We are aiming to develop an easy and useful seagrass monitoring tool with the help of the Northern Territory Department of Land Resource Management. Seagrass is an important indicator species, giving us early warning if something is not right with the marine environment. It's also an important food source for dugong and green turtles, two cornerstone species in Yolŋu culture.

NEW PATROL VESSEL

We are working towards the design and purchase of a new patrol vessel and aim to have secured a boat builder by the end of 2015, with a view to having the vessel built and on the water by the end of the 2015-16 financial year.

TRAINING OF NEW COXSWAINS

We will be running a coxswains course in Nhulunbuy early 2016 in order to train up staff who can be at the helm of SR1.

PROPERTY PURCHASES TO BE FUNDED BY THE ABA

Up to 3 properties will be purchased by Dhimurru, significantly building on our capacity to provide affordable staff housing.

USER PAYS ARRANGEMENTS FOR BÄRU THREAT MANAGEMENT

Stakeholder meetings will be conducted seeking contributions to a sustainable and appropriately resourced threat management program which Dhimurru is offering to lead.

VIABILITY ASSESSMENT OF A BUSINESS ARM TO PROVIDE GUIDED TOURISM RELATED SERVICES

Dhimurru is investigating options for delivering a range of tourism products.

LAUNCH OF THE DHIMURRU MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015 TO 2022 AT GARMA 2015

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS SUMMARY

DHIMURRU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION INCOME 2014-2015

INCOME SOURCE	PROJECT	AMOUNT
DPM&C	Working on Country Program	\$897,860
Dept. Environment – DPM&C	Indigenous Protected Areas Program	\$312,500
DPM&C	Biodiversity Fire Management Project	\$29,300
Dept. Environment – DPM&C	Plan of Management	\$70,000
TNRM	Bremer Island Coffee Bush Project	\$ 9,000
TNRM	Coastal Management Dhambaliya	\$ 9,000
DoB	Visitor Guide	\$8,400
ABA	Tipper Truck	\$155,000
Dept. Environment	Stone Pictures Celebration	\$10,000
NTDPIF	Dhimurru Sea Ranger Program	\$94,350
RAC	Ranger Affordable Housing Project	\$35,000
NTEPA	Latram River Toilet	\$16,000
DoB	Repair Tracks	\$60,000
Gumatj	Repair Tracks	\$10,000
NTG	Tropical Cyclone Lam clean up	\$9,713
TOTAL		\$1,726,123



DHIMURRU

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