

**Bonye Buro**  
(bon-ye) (boo-roo)

**Booburrgan Ngumunge**  
(boo-barra-gaan) (num-oonge)

*Bunya Mountains Aboriginal Aspirations  
and Caring for Country Plan*



**Warning.** This plan includes the names, photographs and views of deceased Aboriginal people.



*Bunya Painting By Cynthia Willmot*

“Bonye Buru are two different language names meaning Bunya Mountains. Booburrigan Ngmmunge is a deeply spiritual place (translating as ‘mother’s breast’). It is a place where people from many different tribes from around Australia can gather to review spiritual connection and revitalise their spirits by drinking their mother’s milk (bunya nuts).”

# Acknowledgements

This Caring for Country Plan is dedicated to all the old people who made it possible. Only through their vision, commitment and leadership could this plan have come to fruition.

Many of the old people have since passed away. But their memories remain strong in the minds and hearts of all Aboriginal people associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge. Their memory is honoured through this plan.

We would like to acknowledge all the Aboriginal people who have participated in Bunya Mountain forums and planning meetings, in particular those meetings relating to this plan. The following people have provided significant contributions to this plan: Rosie Dodd, Merv Johnson, Jacynthia Ghee, Thomas Daniels, Edward Fuller, Robert (Bobby) Bond, Lillian Colonel, Phyllis Colonel, Wendy Colonel, Beryl Gambrill, Mal Collinge, Lurlene Henderson, Clare Tanna, Grace Johnson, Kevin Bond, Cynthia Willmot, Thomas Willmot, Yvonne Chapman, Ida Chapman, Neville Chapman, Clorinna McDonald, Faye West, Brian Tobane, Sam Bonner, Ethelyn Bonner, Patrick Jerome, Lyn Johannessen, Bob Lacey, Harry Hill, Hope Bond, Reg Little, Derek Latham, Sandra Bauwens, Nai Nai Bird, Deidre Daylight, Charles Chambers, Selina Hill, Jimal Willmot, Dillon Bonner, Lillian Mickelo, Morris Mickelo, Eddie Ruska, William Bond, Daniel Crouch, Gavin Costello, Norman Clarke, Darren Burns, Dylan Charles, Phyllis Mill, Ronald Cora, Lyndon Davis, Will Davis, John Davis, Lucy Davis, Gidarjil Rangers, Cyril Bligh, Vincent Law, Scott Bligh, Maurice Mickelo, Jim Newman and Ken Riddiford. Thanks also goes to those family members who have enabled the above to attend and participate in meetings.

The Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) for providing contract management, leadership and expertise. The Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water Heritage and the Arts (DEHWA) for funding the plan and the Working on Country Rangers. The Queensland Department

of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and the Western Downs Regional Council.

The following agencies and their staff for specialist advice and support: South Burnett Regional Council, Southeast Queensland Catchments (including the Southeast Queensland Traditional Owners Alliance), Condamine Alliance and the Queensland Regional NRM Groups Collective.

The following people for providing strategic/ technical advice and guidance on projects and activities: David Brown, Rachel Lyons, Chris McCarthy, Sue Sargent (BMRG), David Calland, John Locke, Roger Davis, Holly Ahern, Rod Fensham (DERM), Kelvin Quinn, Martin Berrier, Geoff Brittingham, Stephen Price, Mark Cody, Peter Tierny (QPWS), John Hunter, Elizabeth Wren, Caroline Crawford (DEHWA), Russell Fairfax (Queensland Herbarium), Jody Gunn (Fauna and Flora International), Vanessa Hounsell (Southeast Queensland Traditional Owners Alliance), Delyna Baxter, Malcolm Connolly (Powerlink), Dan Fidler (Clear By Design), Corie Leslie, Andrew McCartney (Condamine Alliance), Cuong Tran and Lucy Halliday (Griffith University), Denise Whyte (South Burnett Regional Council), Todd Summerville (Western Downs Regional Council), Daniel Mconnell, Sue Unwin, Ann Kennedy (Bunya Mountains Conference Centre), Leanne Peterson and Brad Lewis.

Luke Barrowcliffe from Goorie Vision for recording all meetings and interviews with community. Except where indicated all photos (including those used in the front and rear covers) are courtesy of Goorie Vision.

Under the instruction and guidance of Traditional Custodians and other Aboriginal people, Ken Markwell from Markwell Consulting for facilitating, developing and producing the Plan.





# About This Plan

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**Written and Developed:** Markwell Consulting

**Design:** Clear By Design

**Print:** Printing funded by Burnett Mary Regional Group



*My name is Cynthia Willmot nee Murray, I was a Murray. I'd just like to tell you about my painting.*

*This is all about being up on the Bunya Mountains. I'm from the Wakka Wakka tribe, the white cockatoo is our emblem (totem) he's a Wakka Wakka symbol for the whole Wakka Wakka tribe and the tree in the middle represent the bunya tree with the nuts on it.*

*On the left hand side there the men, they're the hunters, they hunted, and they did the hunting for the tribe. They hunted emu's, kangaroos and porcupine. The circles represent the bora rings and the tracks go from one Bora ring to another they didn't just walk around they went to specific parts/places and*

*the waterhole and watercourse.*

*And on the right is the women's business, they dug yam and fished, got turtle, witchetty grubs and eggs they collected in their bowls. The women they were separated from the men they had their own business and the women stayed away from the men's business they were separated sort of thing.*

*And the bottom part that's our emblem the goanna, that's my clan and that's our emblem (totem). My grandfather, he was born there at Maidenwell just down the bottom of the hill from the Bunya Mountains and that was their emblem that they used; the goanna.*

*It was my first time painting on canvas!*

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# Part 1: People and Country

## 1.1 Vision

To care for our country - Traditional Custodians working in partnerships to manage, maintain and protect the unique cultural, spiritual and natural values of Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

To work together to ensure we achieve protection, recognition, understanding and respect for our culture by all people.

To invigorate relationships with stakeholders to give our people hope, encouragement and security, now and into the future.

## 1.2 Objectives of this Plan

To articulate the caring for country values and aspirations Traditional Custodians and other Aboriginal peoples have for Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

To seek financial and other support from our partners to assist in delivering this plan.

## 1.3 The Area

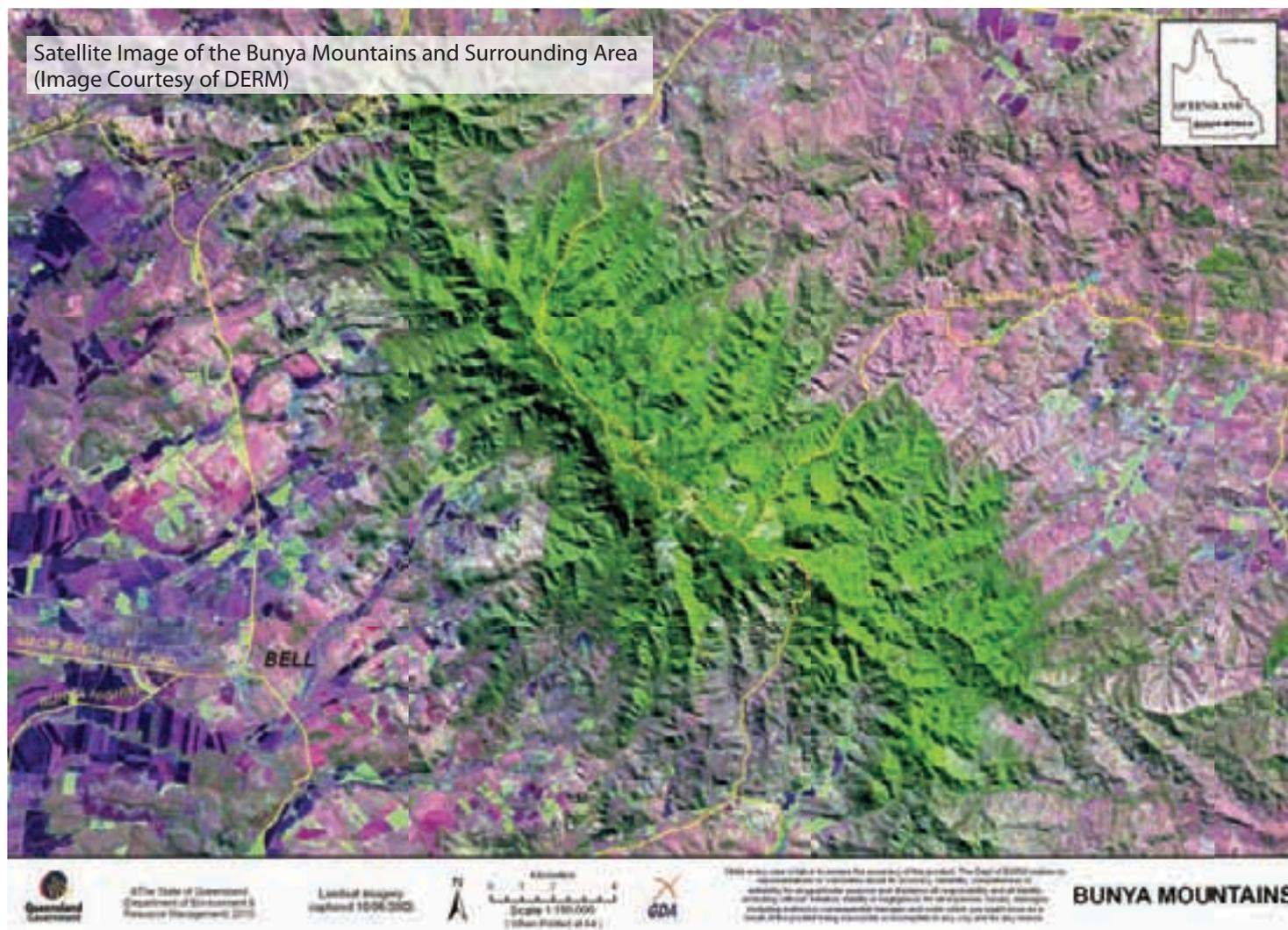
The Bunya Mountains is a unique cultural landscape with immense spiritual significance to its Traditional Custodians and many visiting Aboriginal groups.

*...[The Bunya Mountains] means a lot to me because you know this is where we learn about sharing and caring about others in Queensland, not only in Queensland but in different states because of the Bunya festival... Aunty Beryl Gambrill (Wakka Wakka Elder)*

The Bunya Mountains is located 250 kilometres north-west of Brisbane, Queensland. They form an isolated section of the Great Dividing Range which rises abruptly from the surrounding countryside to an average elevation of 975m. The highest point is Mt Kiangarow at 1135m. The area contains the largest natural Bunya pine forest in the world along with a number of unique features such as natural grassland 'balds' (themselves composed of rare grass and fauna species) and both wet and dry rainforests. The Mountains sustain a rich biodiversity including many rare and threatened species.

This Plan covers the Bunya Mountains and surrounding area. It includes all the Bunya Mountains National Park and adjacent Russell Park. The surrounding area is defined in this Plan to include all the watershed areas originating from the Bunya Mountains. The lower country is not covered by the Plan.

The term Booburrigan Ngmmunge will be used instead of Bunya Mountains throughout this plan as it is a traditional language term used by many Aboriginal people to describe the Bunya Mountains.



## 1.4 Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians

The Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians have been directly associated with the Bunya Mountains area since time immemorial. They are the Aboriginal groups most closely located to the Bunya Mountains and surrounding area.

They have primary lore, customary and cultural rights and obligations to the Bunya Mountains and surrounding area. These rights and obligations for the Bunya Mountains and surrounding area include but are not limited to:

- Management of all resources (hunting, gathering, burning, camping, ceremony, movements);
- Establishment and maintenance of lores/laws for occupation and use;
- Preparation of the country for the Bunya Feasts (i.e. burning off to establish and maintain grassland balds, spiritual cleansing and healing);
- Sending of invitations to other visiting Aboriginal groups to attend the Bunya Festival;
- Welcoming and hosting the Bunya Feasts; and
- Ownership and responsibility for individual Bunya trees.

*...The Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians want all Aboriginal groups to share and care for the Bunya Mountains... Uncle Mal Collinge (Djaku-nde Elder)*

## 1.5 Reciprocal Rights

After each Bunya Feast, occurring every 3 years, much of the natural resources were depleted. As a result of this, Traditional Custodians also had 'reciprocal' rights to visit neighbouring Aboriginal groups after the Bunya Feasts. These rights included the temporary occupation and use of their neighbour's resources. These lores/laws are based on sophisticated environmental and cultural management processes which enabled resources on the Bunya Mountains and surrounding areas to replenish and be maintained over thousands of years.

### Wakka Wakka

The Wakka Wakka peoples country includes Nanango north to Mount Perry behind the Coast Range; west to Boyne River, upper Burnett River, and Mundubbera; at Kingaroy, Murgon, and Gayndah.

*...My country [Wakka Wakka] is in the South Burnett which includes Cherbourg, Kingaroy, Nanango, Yarraman, Blackbutt, Blackbutt Range and it goes around, follows the Mary River along until it comes to Woolooga and Miva and then it cuts off there because then it becomes the Gayndah people the Gayndah Wakka Wakka people there area then after that. And it goes out to Proston, Bye, Silverleaf, Wondai all those areas and Boubyjan, Goomeri. It includes the Bunya Mountains down to Cooyar...Yarraman... Aunty Beryl Gambrill (Wakka Wakka Elder)*

### Jarowair

Jarowair country includes the western slopes of Great Dividing Range from Crows Nest to Dalby; north to Bell and south to Oakey. It includes the towns of Bell, Crows Nest, Dalby and Oakey.

*We are the Jarowair from Dalby...to Bell...Bunya Mountains...down to Crows Nest. Crows Nest to Highfields,*

*...to Mount Kynoch [near Harlaxton]...Just down from Toowoomba... come back to Oakey then to Dalby. Uncle Brian Tobane (Jarowair Elder)*

### Djaku-nde

The Djaku-nde occupy the upper Boyne and Auburn rivers; north to Hawkwood; south to Dividing Range and vicinity of Kum-bia.

*...Djuk-unde country...thats up the Auburn River area up west of Mundubbera there and Eidsvold...that traditional country comes down and joins up to the Bunya Mountains where the Boyne River originates at the Bunyas. So it's basically my traditional country, or what I see as my traditional country is west of the Boyne River, and East of the Auburn Range... Uncle Mal Collinge (Djaku-nde Elder)*

### Barrungam

People of the riverine region on the Condamine River. Barrungam country occurs on the red soils south and west of the Dividing Range. It includes the headwaters of Condamine River east of Jackson to about Dalby; north about Charley Creek to Dividing Range and west to Wongorgera and Woleebee; south to Tara; at 165 Chinchilla and Jandowae (AIATSI, 1994 and Tindale, 1974).

*...We are Cobble Cobble from Warra...Our families care for that Country...We share the songlines to Bunya Bunya. Gurin ina narmee - shared songline - we still sing today - a Bunya Bunya song. We paint up that Bunya Bunya when we sing...From Mau Baulan (Mount Mowballan) you can see out over our Country...Mau Baulan - bald head is where our Warra mobs meet. At the times of the festivals we would follow the songlines - follow the waterways up to Mau Baulan... John Davis (Warra; Cobble Cobble clansman; Barrungam speaking Country)*

## 1.6 Other Aboriginal groups with strong connections to Booburrangan Ngmmunge

*...There was message sticks sent out with messengers to the tribes that they knew the language of so that they could all come and enjoy the festival as well and bring whatever goods they had to trade or be part of the competitions or just come and enjoy the Bunyas... Aunty Beryl Gambrill (Wakka Wakka Elder)*

Booburrangan Ngmmunge was arguably host to one of the largest and most significant gatherings of Aboriginal people in Queensland and possibly Australia (Bond, Gambrill, Colonel and Bonner 2010; Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians 2003 and Jerome in Kidd, 2000:12). These visiting groups came from across southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. In fact, current Elders and knowledge holders, attest to the Bunya Mountains being visited by Aboriginal groups as far as South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory (Willmot and Bond, 2010). Groups were invited by the Bunya Traditional Custodians to review their spiritual connection, revitalise their spirits, conduct Aboriginal business and share the rich resources of Booburrangan Ngmmunge (Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians, 2003). Generally, these visits occurred every 3 years, coinciding with when the Bunya nuts were most plentiful.



# Part 2: Mechanics of the Plan

## 2.1 Scope of the Plan

The Bunya Mountains Caring for Country Plan (the Plan) outlines Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians aspirations and values for Booburrigan Ngmmunge. It also includes significant input from visiting Aboriginal groups from northern New South Wales and southern Queensland. It is therefore a collective product and voice from Aboriginal people with custodianship for and associations with Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

The plan is not a legal document nor is it an assertion of native title.

Although historical records have also been used to inform the plan, these accounts are considered secondary sources of information. For the most part, historical records were mostly written by non-Indigenous people often during colonial times in Queensland. The record of the Bunya feasts were often "cut adrift from the intricate race relations history of these districts, its aura of 'romantic reminiscence' conveniently unsullied by surrounding patterns of colonialism, racism and violence which punctuate the extended process of European intrusion and displacement" (Chisholm, 1920 in Evans, 2002).

The following examples provide an insight into the health of Aboriginal people as well as the attitudes of many non-Indigenous people during colonial Queensland times:

*We are all anxiously looking for the return of the natives from the Bunya-Bunya [festival]. Our town seems quite desolate without them, and we must confess that they are our only wood and water carriers (Moreton Bay Courier, 26/3/1853, in Lowe, 1994).*

*You literally could not kill an Aborigine with an axe. (Toowoomba Chronicle (1919)*

*...for six years', a gentleman squatter of the Upper Brisbane Valley wrote that 'patrol parties' of Native Police were 'moving in every direction near the Bunya scrubs' with the result that:... every settler feels now that the great Bunya season will end without any great damage being done to ... stock or property ... It is the general opinion ... in Wide Bay and Burnett districts that war is at an end (Evans, 2002).*

Uncle Neville Chapman (2010), a Wakka Wakka Elder from Eidsvold describes the impacts of colonial times in Queensland had on language and culture retention:

*...No. I've tried. The old fella used to try and teach us when I was a kid, but it was tough because they stopped us from that when we were kids...They was stopping everyone from using the old lingo. Now you can't get it back and see all them old clever fellas, you find graves around, you know, in old scrubs. That's where they chased them real clever fellas. They were frightened of them. They used to chase them 'til they got them, then they shot them. We had a couple out this way here in the scrub...*

This is not a plan of management for Booburrigan Ngmmunge; rather it is a starting point from which improved and increased Aboriginal involvement in Booburrigan Ngmmunge is articulated.

## 2.2 Informing the Plan

This plan has been informed in a number of ways including:

- Specific planning meetings with Traditional Custodians to provide guidance and input into the plan. These meetings occurred in December 2009, February 2010, June 2010 and August 2010.



- Interviews with Traditional Custodian elders and knowledge holders in 2009 and 2010.
- Previous interviews, consultations and discussions with Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians and other visiting Aboriginal groups, including specific information from:
  - 'BOOBURRIGAN NGMMUN (Bunya Mountains) Traditional Custodian Aspirations developed in 2003 as part of the South East Queensland Forest Agreement (SEQFA) tenure allocation and planning process; and
  - 'Bringing Traditional Fire Management back to the Bunya Mountains, Meeting Notes Forums I-III.





# Part 3: Caring for Country

Since time immemorial Booburrigan Ngmmunge has been under Aboriginal management and leadership. Booburrigan Ngmmunge is therefore as much a cultural landscape as it is a natural landscape.

The Aboriginal knowledge of land and water management has been acquired and refined over many generations resulting in a unique relationship and understanding. This understanding is often referred to as 'Caring for Country'. Many of the rights and obligations associated with Aboriginal connections to country are neither documented nor detailed in formal legal titles. Individual clans 'speak' in different capacities for particular areas of land and generally have a responsibility to protect and look after sites of cultural and religious significance, known as creation stories, dreaming and sacred sites.



Murri Rangers Maurice Mickelo and Scott Bligh Removing Invasive Wattles from Grassland 'Balds'

Over the years, as people moved around their traditional homeland estates, tracking shifts in the availability of important resources, they actively managed the country, largely through a prescribed burning regime handed down from their ancestors.

Aboriginal people maintain a special relationship to Booburrigan Ngmmunge that is different to the majority of non-Aboriginals. It is not a commodity to be bought and sold. This relationship has survived intact despite the destructive impact of European settlement, which began in



Vincent Law and Cyril Bligh Performing Track Maintenance (Photo Murri Rangers)

earnest more than 150 years ago.

Caring for Country, in a contemporary context, incorporates a cultural maintenance and management of fire, feral weed and animal control, management and conservation of heritage values and places; and also enacts the preservation of traditional knowledge for future generations of Aboriginal people. It includes the active protection and management of all natural and cultural resources (Kerins, 2008).

## 3.1 Aboriginal Leadership

Aboriginal society is a pluralist society that did not experience dominance and leadership in the Western sense. While some group members may exhibit greater powers and rights than others, these differences were due to seniority of age and knowledge such as that gained through initiation. In many cases, Indigenous knowledge was re-interpreted through Western ethnocentric scientific communications, based on a language and an audience that was non-Indigenous. This resulted in many misunderstandings of Indigenous knowledge, including its links to power and leadership (Foley, 2007).

Aboriginal community structures allow for many leaders with specific skills to lead the community. Decisions are made by consensus after lively debate that calls on the expertise of the leaders in their field.

Leadership in the Aboriginal community is not a foreign concept. Leadership is earned with skills and knowledge and often a fair amount of debate. Aboriginal concepts of consciousness and responsibility demand that the responsibility for managing relationships is taken by all parts of the kinship system, to differing degrees, because all of the parts regulate each other. Leadership in the singular did not exist; it was actually stratified through various senior clan members. The concept of 'a leader' within Aboriginal society is misunderstood in some oral histories, in much anthropology and within colonial and later history.

The term Elder in the Aboriginal community does not mean a person of age - you can be an elderly Aboriginal person without being an Elder and you can also have the term bestowed upon you when you are quite young. Leadership



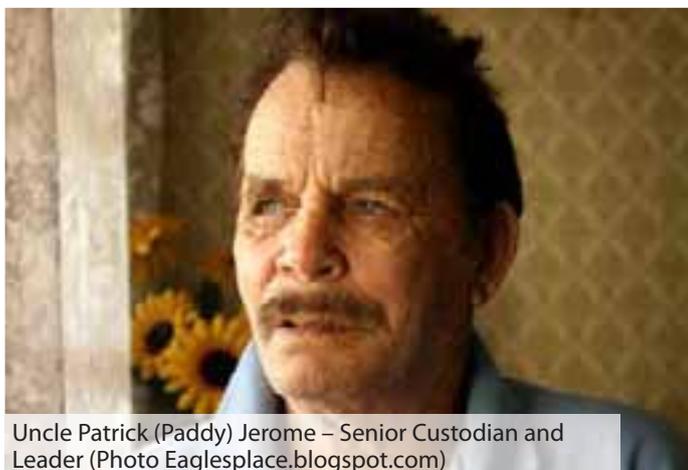
Elders Leadership (Photo David Calland DERM)

can change by the hour or minute in Aboriginal community meetings according to the subject discussed. Aboriginal people find it easy to adapt but often people outside the community find this very confusing (Anderson, undated).

The Bunya Traditional Custodians have their own Elders, knowledge holders, leaders and lore people whom are responsible for asserting and ensuring their culture, lores/laws and country are managed. The leadership values inherited since time immemorial continue to be observed and practiced today. These values and responsibilities have been applied to all Aboriginal business on Booburrigan Ngmmunge, including Caring for Country projects and activities.

We, as Aboriginal people, are now beginning to publicly assert our custodianship of Booburrigan Ngmmunge through public meetings with environmental and other planning authorities; native title claims; plans to revive the bunya festivals and to establish related economic enterprises. We are reopening channels of sharing, but our exchanges remains somewhat of a guarded process given previous appropriation of resources and knowledge by non-Aboriginal groups. This story of the survival of the bunya forests ends with the reclaiming of Aboriginal custodial rights. This was the powerful message delivered by Uncle Paddy Jerome, Jarowair elder and custodian of Booburrigan Ngmmunge, to a symposium on the bunya pine held in Brisbane in 2002:

*Now we are trying to keep all of our ways alive. It is very important that we revive the bunya festivals and our people are talking about this. We are already reviving the initiations. ... But first we need to reconcile with our Aboriginal ancestors. ... My people believe that every living thing on this earth was linked spirituality and each and every one of us must respect the earth and each other as equal. ... My ancestors walked through this land, the land speaking to them ... We belong to this land, the land is our Mother. We are part of a spiritual structure. That's Aboriginal culture. That is Boobarran Ngummin, the Bunya Mountains, our Mother (Jerome 2002: 4-5 in Haebich, undated).*



Uncle Patrick (Paddy) Jerome – Senior Custodian and Leader (Photo Eaglesplace.blogspot.com)

### 3.1.1 Aboriginal Governance

*...Well that's where we should get this Circle of Elders going... if we had a Circle of Elders going well we all would take a part in that and that makes us a bigger voice stronger. Uncle Kevin Bond... (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder)*

Aboriginal Governance is a broad concept describing how Aboriginal communities are governed: that is, how decisions are made, who has the authority to make those decisions, and how decision-makers gain legitimacy and are held accountable to stakeholders – both within the community and to external stakeholders such as government agencies and corporate partners (Reconciliation Australia, 2006).



Bunya Mountains Elders Council Formation Meeting 2010

Booburrigan Ngmmunge, being a place where many groups visited and shared, creates a set of unique complexities for Aboriginal governance arrangements. Despite these challenges, we – the Aboriginal people associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge – have demonstrated remarkable leadership, integrity and resolve in establishing Aboriginal governance arrangements for Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

The Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians established an Elders Council to provide Aboriginal leadership and direction over all matters affecting Booburrigan Ngmmunge. The Traditional Custodians are acutely aware of the need to involve other visiting Aboriginal groups in business on Booburrigan Ngmmunge and have moved to ensure their involvement in the governance arrangements.

A Bunya Mountains Partnerships Coordination Group comprising Traditional Custodians, visiting Aboriginal groups, partners and key stakeholders has also been established to provide strategic advice and guidance on projects and activities on Booburrigan Ngmmunge. This group, or earlier versions of the group, have been meeting since 2007. Collectively, they have acted as a driving force behind many of the recent initiatives on Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

All governance structures require access to training and a range of professional opportunities to ensure their success. While governance training can be very useful, capability development is preferred by the Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians as it relates to a great deal more than formal training.

Governance capability development within organisations works best when it is place-based, work and goal oriented; based on self-assessed governance priorities, in a relevant form and delivered in ways that reflect local community realities; and is sustained and reinforced over the longer-term. This can involve strategies such as 'learning by doing', group learning, job shadowing, volunteering, mentoring, coaching, and community development projects (Reconciliation Australia, 2006).

### 3.1.2 Protocols and Lore

Previous government policies and practices prohibited Aboriginal people from asserting their Traditional rights and interests to their lands and waters, practicing their culture and speaking their languages. Over the past 150 years, land use and management has significantly changed, so much so that Aboriginal people have been excluded from owning and managing Booburrigan Ngmmunge - including attending Bunya feasts and returning traditional fire burning practices to Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

Despite these past practices, we, as Aboriginal people have maintained much of our history and culture and wish to ensure its survival and prosperity into the future. Critical to this is ensuring Aboriginal protocols and lores/laws are continued. This is particularly important for us, as Aboriginal people, but it is also critical non-Aboriginal people respect, understand and acknowledge our unique responsibilities and rights for country.



Mt Mowbullian Smoking Ceremony  
(Photo Rachel Lyons BMRG)

Leadership asserted to date by Aboriginal people associated with the Bunya Mountains, follows traditional protocols and lore, and delivers the following services to stakeholders:

- Establishment of the Elders Council as the peak Aboriginal group to lead and facilitate engagement on business associated with the Mountain. This provides all stakeholders with a singular entry point to discuss business pertaining to Booburrigan Ngmmunge.
- A unification of groups with rights and interests associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge. This enables a culturally appropriate authorisation process that accesses Aboriginal networks and allows nominated people to talk on behalf of their communities. It provides all stakeholders undertaking business across Booburrigan Ngmmunge with a service of cultural assurance.
- Development of professional management tools,

such as the Bunya Mountains Caring for Country Plan; BOOBURRIGAN NGMMUN (Bunya Mountains) Traditional Custodian Aspirations document; engagement protocols; cultural heritage assessments and surveys; traditional knowledge recordings and flora and fauna assessments on culturally significant species. These tangible products may inform stakeholders on Aboriginal knowledge, interests and rights associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge and forms part of best practice management of the area. It is important to note that these tools do not replace a proper, culturally appropriate consultation process to engage with Aboriginal people on matters relevant to Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

- The practice of traditional governance and leadership by the Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians provides a critical service to their own communities - strengthening social connectedness; providing a defined social network of roles and responsibilities; enabling participation in services for the betterment of community life and providing a space and ability to build individuals and communities capacity. These are important outcomes being delivered for Aboriginal people by their nominated leaders. The provision of these services are particularly valued by the Aboriginal community, and are of interest to the Australian and State governments under the Closing the Gap campaign and National Social Inclusion Agenda.

### 3.1.3 Relationships and capacity

Aboriginal people associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge have identified a strong desire to reconnect with each other and to Booburrigan Ngmmunge. The re-establishment of the triennial Bunya festival is central to these reconstructions.

Building capacity within all stakeholder groups will be critical to achieving these aspirations. It is important that support continues for the Bunya Mountains Elders Council and other engagement mechanisms to enable participation and foster social connectedness.

*...I remember my Dad (Alf Davis) telling me yarns about Countrymen and women from all over meeting on my grandfather's (Fred Davis) land at Hervey Bay and yarning 'Business' connected to our Country (Warra). When I asked Dad what they would yarn about he would say 'All kinds of business from sorry business to healing business to 'THEIR' business...' Even though we weren't directly related to some of these mobs we were connected through the songlines that linked us all back to the Bunya Mountains. Now after my many trips back on country I can feel the healing spirit that exists around the Bunya Bunya Mountains - it's our business... Lucy Davis Banu - Cobble Cobble (Barrungam) Speaking People*

### 3.2 Living Culture

Culture – its expression, maintenance, protection and management is central to our aspirations - as Aboriginal people. It is therefore also at the core of this plan and its implementation. Aboriginal culture includes relationships with each other, spiritual connections to country and particular places, physical cultural heritage, important stories, lores/laws and traditions. Most importantly it is living, dynamic and evolving.

*...Message sticks are wooden, like a bit of a plank, you know, like a bull roarer really, but bigger, you know and they'd write it, do it in their lingo to people who were coming on the country... Aunty Lillian Colonel (Jarowair Elder)*

The Bunya Feasts were one of the largest if not the largest gathering of Aboriginal people in Australia. Seasonal and annual gatherings of Aboriginal people for food and ceremonial purposes were common throughout Australia. Places like the Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps (Ngunnhu)



Malcolm Burns Jnr Teaching Next Generation of Butchulla

Traditional Custodians and visiting Aboriginal groups have a strong desire to ensure Aboriginal culture is revitalised and continued on Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

#### 3.2.1 Bunya Festival

Aboriginal people of southern Queensland and northern New South Wales have a special kinship with the Bunya Mountains and Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*). The trees are sacred to us and their edible seeds (or nuts) are a ceremonial food of great significance. They are the focal point of major seasonal ceremonial gatherings that in the past brought us together, in our thousands, from a wide area. This usually happened every third year when the bunya nuts were in abundance (Huth and Holzworth, undated). Representatives carrying sticks from the Traditional Custodians of the trees travelled through surrounding districts to invite selected groups to attend the ceremonial feasts.

in north-west New South Wales, the Australian Alps (New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT) for the Bogong feasts and many coastal areas for seasonal fish (Tailor, Sea Mullet) and marine animal (Dugong) migrations provide other examples. The Bunya Feasts however are unique as:

- they were generally triennial rather than annual or seasonal – demonstrating a complex system of conservation practice;
- the supply of Bunya nuts was vastly larger than could be consumed by Aboriginal groups; and
- specific fire management regimes were employed in preparation for the feasts (Flood, 1976 and Fensham and Fairfax, 1996)

The scale and timing of the Bunya gathering, together with the unique reciprocation rights observed as part of neighbouring relations, sets the Bunya Festival apart from other Aboriginal ceremonial gatherings.

Smoke signalling was also used to communicate to visiting Aboriginal groups. Mount Mowbullam, Point Turbayne and Coyne's Lookout in the Bunya Mountains were three points where smoke signals were sent (Humphreys, 1992). Visiting Aboriginal groups would also send up smoke signals at



**Illustration.** A Message Stick From Boulia Qld In Roth 1897:137-38.

points along their journey to alert Traditional Custodians of their impending presence. In Aboriginal lore and tradition it is not appropriate to 'sneak up', attend uninvited or surprise other Aboriginal people (Bond, 2010). Smoke signalling is a visual way Aboriginal groups show their presence through another person's country. Fires would be lit, generally at higher points on the country, and green leaves and or vegetation used on the fire to dampen the fire and generate smoke. The topography of Booburrigan Ngmmunge and surrounding areas is such that fires lit on the Bunya Mountains can easily be seen by groups in the lower country and vice versa.

*...you could tell where each group come from because we had our own call out signs and it happened to me a few times now, you yell out in a different town you go to and yell out just give a cooee sign you know, yachai and you hear across the street, yachai you know that part of your mob there, well that made all, the Bunya's made us all come from one another we*

*agreed, well our group agreed, I can only speak for my clan we look after that part of the Bunyas that what it meant to us... Uncle Kevin Bond (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder)*

Visiting groups would paint themselves in their specific colours and patterns identifying which clan they belonged to, their status within their group and where they were from (Bond, Colonel and Gambrill, 2010).

*...They'd learn em all at corroboree and all that, and each corroboree had a certain respect. You could always tell where that come from at corroborees, like you'd get the inland mob that imitate animals, then you would get the sea fellas that do fish and all that thing, then you'd get the rainforest mobs when they'd come down they'd dance like butterflies they wave them hands and all that so, you could always tell which group come from. It was very great that way... Uncle Kevin Bond (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder)*



Bunya Panorama



Cherbourg People Conduct Ceremony at Brisbane Exhibition Grounds (Photo Queensland State Library)

These feasts were times of great spiritual significance. It was a time when we as Aboriginal people gathered to review spiritual connection and revitalise our spirits. They were also times for:

- arranging marriages;
- settling disputes;
- sharing dances and songs;
- trading goods; and
- developing and enforcing laws.

There would be reciprocal visits, with bunya seed being traded for goods such as baskets and fishhooks and intellectual property of story, song and dance.

Bunya feasts often terminated with a battle (Mathew, 1910 and 1926), where disputes were settled between Aboriginal groups.

*...you see that tree, Bunya tree, in our tribal way, old people reckon that its mothers milk, numoo, that milk, see and old people say that the roots of the tree, the roots of the tree, thats you fellas making babies when the leaves fall... you want to know and the milk, that's our food, our spiritual plums and all that, wild plums and that, our medicines are here, it was taught .... natcha goombehere that means fight, they probably got to fight for them (should I say it) they got to fight for their mook mook [wonga pigeon]... and before they got onto land they got to fight for that woman ... goombehere they had to fight for, nachau [man] they got to stand up, another tribe had to come in and fight that fella, that the best fight of the lot... Auntie Yvonne Chapman (Wakka Wakka Elder)*

Political affairs and alliances would be consummated and law matters discussed and finalised (Kerwin, 2007). Not only were the meetings for sharing of resources but for legal council where deputies would be legally tried by councils of Elders and a warrant for the execution of justice would be issued. Kerwin (2007) also describes our meetings as a 'triennial Parliament' involving 'the Senate of assembled tribes'. Bonner (2010) draws parallels between the Bunya Mountains and Canberra, as a place where laws are made and the future of the Aboriginal nation was discussed. Bonner also describes how the 'old people' knew white people were coming and the impacts that they were going to make on their people and country well before white people arrived. Although the Bunya gatherings were sites of strategic strength for our peoples, unfortunately they rapidly became target zones for the Native Police's concerted attention (Evans, 2002).

In more recent times we have begun to renew our connections with Booburrgan Ngmmunge and with each other. Meetings on Booburrgan Ngmmunge have included Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians and representatives from other visiting Aboriginal groups. Traditional Custodians intend to revitalise the Bunya Festival every 3 years.

The re-establishment of the Bunya Festival is a key deliverable within this plan. The Festival will aim to tell the stories of our Aboriginal communities and the heritage of the Bunya, Country and People. We will investigate cross media arts projects such as visual arts/crafts, literature, dance, music, drama or theatre, as well as providing a cultural space for many Aboriginal groups and stakeholders

to interact and share experiences and knowledge. The Bunya Festival will be developed in a creative environment and contribute to the cultural identity and well being of Aboriginal individuals and communities connected to Booburrgan Ngmmunge.



The bunya pine is found in two broad geographic regions: a large area in south-east Queensland and two smaller areas in far north Queensland. In both regions it is found in rainforest, often growing in association with hoop pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*). In South-East Queensland there are five main areas where the bunya pine occurs naturally: in the Blackall Ranges to the west of Nambour, in the upper Mary River Valley, in the ranges in the upper reaches of the Brisbane River, in the Yarraman-Blackbutt area and on the Bunya Mountains. The Bunya Mountains is considered to have the largest Bunya forest in the World (South Burnett Tourism, 2010). In North Queensland the two small stands are on Mt. Lewis and at Cunnabullen Fall. However, the bunya feasts were traditionally held in two main areas, the Blackall Ranges (in the Sunshine Coast hinterland 100 kilometres north-west of Brisbane) and in the Bunya Mountains (Huth and Holzworth, 2002).

*...Bunya trees have been planted by Aboriginal people all over the country – they are not just naturally occurring. An example of this is all the Bunya Pines at Cania Gorge... Uncle Kevin Bond (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder)*

Bunya cones sometimes attain a great size, the maximum diameters being as large as 40 x 22cm. The seeds are 2.5-4cm long and up to 2.5cm thick at the thicker end. The tissue is like that of a potato. When the seed is young, it is juicy and soft and it is eaten entire and raw. As it matures the embryo assumes a more definite form and is rejected, the surrounding tissue, at the same time, becomes drier and less palatable. When mature, the seed is preferred roasted.



Bunya Cones (Photo Australian Plants Online)

Before being roasted, each seed is partially bruised with a stone. When it has been in the fire for a minute or two it gives a crack, the signal that it is cooked. The seed can also be pounded into a meal called nyangti which is like flour for making scones etc. The seeds

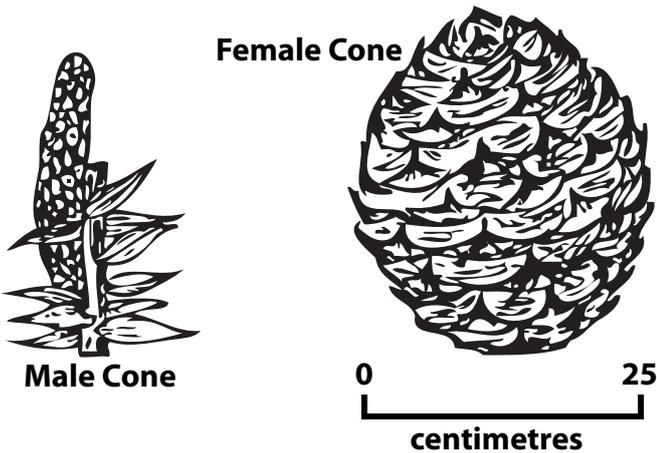
Bunya Nuts in Husk



or not and how the 'toe hole' marks came to be.

The nuts are eaten raw, roasted in the ashes or on coals, or ground into flour for making scones, Johnny cakes and the like (Colonel, 2010).

*...My grandmother always talked about the Bunyas and what happened here and my father did too as well he spoke about how his uncle, my grand uncle, used to climb the Bunya trees when there was a competition on and they told me about the competitions they held here, they told me about the trading that was done here and also the sharing and caring that was done... Aunty Beryl Gambrell (Wakka Wakka Elder)*



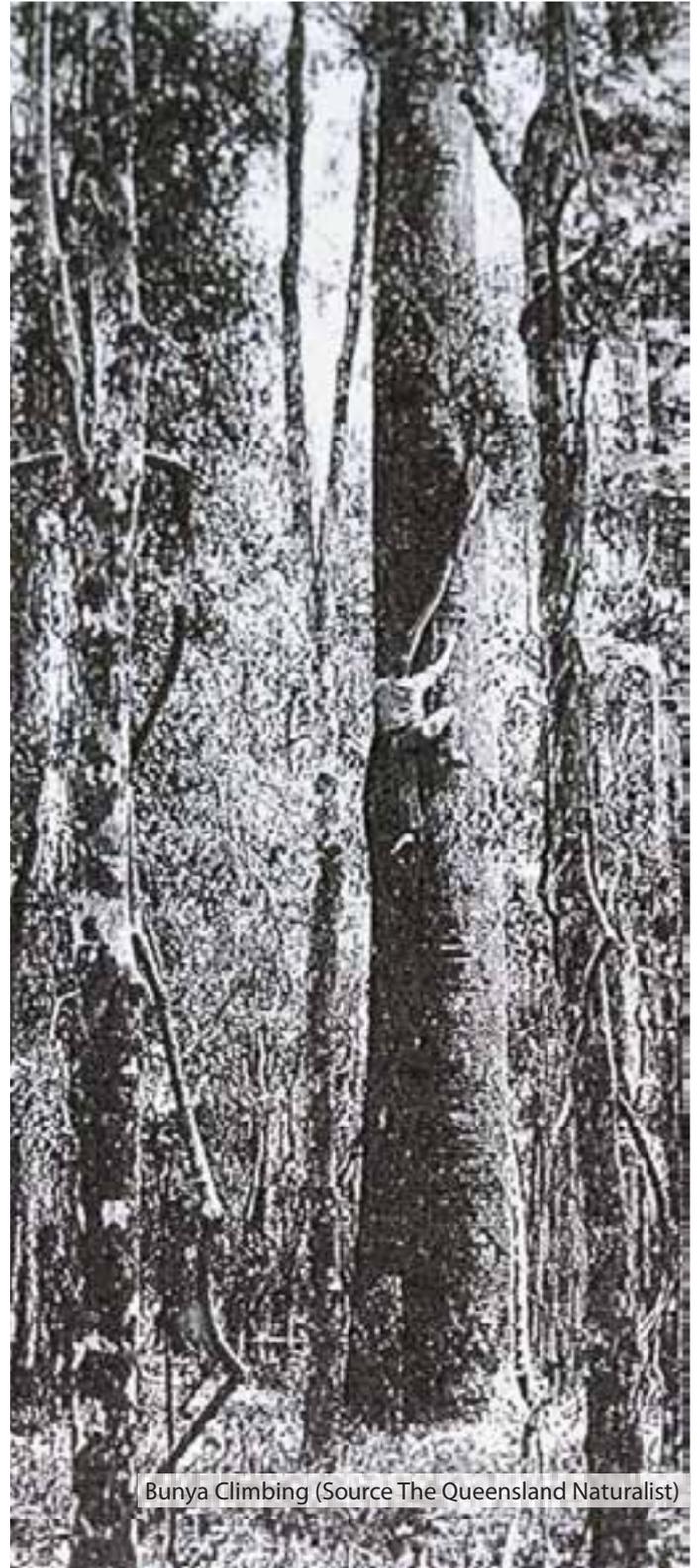
**Illustration:** Male and Female Bunya Cones  
(Photo-Australian Plants Online)

Bunya Leaves



were also collected into dilly bags and buried in the beds of the creeks ready for future consumption. Bunyas removed after being stored in this manner have a very offensive smell, however they are as good as the day they were picked. The ripe seeds have a resinous flavour when roasted, which is more obvious when they are boiled.

The Bunya Traditional Custodians have cultural responsibility for particular areas and trees. Bunya cones were collected by climbing the trees and knocking the cones off with a stick or stone tomahawk. There is some debate on how the trees were climbed. One tradition is that toe holes were cut into the bark using stone axes. However, some early observers recorded and some present-day Elders' state that Aboriginal people would not damage the bunya trees for they were considered sacred and that if the trees were climbed at all it was done with the aid of vines that encircled the tree and the climber. Present day elders and knowledge holders have different views on whether trees were climbed



Bunya Climbing (Source The Queensland Naturalist)



forms one of the critical pathways to informing the understanding and management of Booburrigan Ngmmunge as a cultural asset.

There is a range of cultural heritage values and places associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge. Some of these we would like to share in our plan include:

- **Aboriginal pathways** - ridges, waterways, and clearings used to traverse country. These are particularly important to us as they are the places that we would use on our journeys to and from Booburrigan Ngmmunge.
- *...When they travel in them days they follow the water course, well that speaks for itself see, you get that mob that come down from Rocky, they'd hit the Three Moon, The Three Moon runs into the Burnett, they follow that way, they come down the Dawson, around the Callide and all that sort of thing. That's what them old fellows tell you... Uncle Kevin Bond (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder)*
- **Meeting places** - places where our people gather for specific reasons- for social, cultural, spiritual and economic purposes. Ban Ban springs near Eidsvold is a particularly significant meeting place north of Booburrigan Ngmmunge where our brothers and sisters travelling to Booburrigan Ngmmunge would gather. Some meeting places associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge include: Ban Ban Springs; Dykehead/Auburn Falls (near Mundubbera); Cattle Creek (near Bell), Jimbour, Maryland (near Stanthorpe), Bracker Creek and Toolburra (Warwick), Gummingurru (near Toowoomba), South Brisbane (Musgrave Park), Mount Archer (near Woodford), and Goondiwindi (Bonner, Bond, Chapman, Collinge, Colonel, Tobane, 2010; Jerome in Ross, 1998; Gilbert 1992; Petrie 1904: 16; Ross 2008:93; Thompson 2004, Willmot, 2010).

*...Ban Springs was a central point, it was a big, it was a big reserve and all that sort of thing, food was handy there, old Burnett River was there, fish and all that but all this... Because on Ban Ban Springs is a very sacred place and people used to they believed in the rainbow serpent which lived in Ban Ban Springs, that eel. They'd throw stones in there to throw a circle of water out, you know how you put stones in, ripples of water so they made sure that people danced in there you had a group there from round that area Wakka Wakka or whatever they dance, they danced in the middle of the circle and you had other groups all around the circle and they'd challenge them they dance out to them and challenge them in lingo. And when they danced they'd bring them into the circle and the whole lot would be brought in from all around there and before you know it that circle would be full and that's how they did their dance... Uncle Kevin Bond (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder)*

These meeting places were often associated with travelling routes and trading pathways. For instance, groups travelling from the west and south of the Bunya Mountains also used specific meeting places and pathways. Tom Petrie's father travelled with a group of Aboriginal people from Brisbane to the Bunya Mountains in the early 1840s:

*They travelled from Brisbane, a party of about 100, and camped the first night at what is now Enoggera. The third night they camped at Caboolture (a place of the carpet snake) and the next day started for the Glass-house Mountains. On the fourth day of this at about 4pm the party arrived at Mooloolah....The party apparently arrived at the beginnings of the Blackall Ranges on the fifth day. Another days travelling took them to where the tribes were all assembling from every part of the country. Some hailing from the Burnett, Wide Bay, Bundaberg, Mt. Perry, Gympie, Bribie, Fraser Island, Kilcoy, Mt. Brisbane. (Petrie, 1981:11-17)*



**Above:** Ban Ban Springs Painting By Malcolm Brown



Ban Ban Springs Story Plaque



Ban Ban Springs Today

- **Burial grounds** - Traditional and historic burial of our ancestral remains. These are located in open areas, rock shelters, at the base of old trees and in rock holes. The repatriation of human and material remains is often associated with burial places. Over

the last 150 years our people's human and material remains were inappropriately collected and used for scientific and other purposes. These remains are now being provenanced and repatriated to their original location. Where this is not possible Traditional Owners may choose to repatriate remains and items to another nearby culturally appropriate and safe location.

- **Spiritually significant places** – these places are generally 'unmodified landscapes' like waterfalls, lakes and mountains imbued with high meaning and value in accordance with our tradition. They often include places and stories associated with creation.
- **Plants and animals** with particular significance to us, as part of our environment, may include Aboriginal Yurries<sup>1</sup> (totems), specific food or medicine plants and plants or animals associated with creation. Importantly, the cycle of Aboriginal existence comprises the three main life forms: the spirit, the human, and the animals and plants. If one form breaks down, co-existence deteriorates, so too does our culture.

*...Yeah our totem was the goanna...my mother took another one the plover, because it was a family bird it protected its young...A lot of fellas said to me once without the white man, when the white man come here they brought the church here...We had our own religion here, because ah we believed in a creator the same as you fellas did, when you talked about saints we had our totems, I said the only difference between your religion and our religion, the Murri religion, is that you put a name to yours you called yours Catholic church or Church of England or whatever, I said we never done that...you belong to this tribe that's where the totems come in, you couldn't marry a girl what's a different totem to, if a totem didn't suit your totem and that well you dare not look at them...Uncle Kevin Bond (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder)*

- **Increase sites** can be associated with particular plants and animals. These places are where Aboriginal ceremony assists with the increase in abundance of plants or animals.

Further to the Bunya fest other sites for 'mutual feasting' would occur in various locations along the Brisbane River. Shane Coghill, a Goenpel man from Stradbroke Island and an archaeologist, spoke about the trading and economics of his people on a trip to his country in 1999.

*We were a sedentary mob, we had a varied diet. Not only did we have the vegetation on the island, but the rainbow lorikeet, when gathering on the Brisbane River would mean the mullet have come. We would travel across the bay and meet with the mob over on the mainland and catch the mullet and partake in festivals. In our calendar we have the movement of crabs, shellfish, tailor, and bunya nut to add to our diets. (Coghill pers. Comm., 1999 in Kerwin, 2007)*

- **Bora rings** – Earthen or stone rings used for initiation of boys into young adulthood. Large gatherings were also associated with these

important places. There are several bora rings associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge, including Maidenwell.

*...cause the Bunya trees used to go from there right to the Glasshouse and at Mount Archer (at Woodford) there you find there's 20 Bora Rings there because that is where most of the tribes used to meet there like where our lot used to meet over here, theres a big Bora Ring at the bottom of the Bunyas over here as big as the football field and that is where the tribes from around this area used to get together there... Uncle Thomas Willmot (Wakka Wakka Elder)*

### 3.2.3 Involving our Youth



Uncle Thomas Daniels and His Daughter  
(Photo David Calland, DERM)

*...The young people, the more they can learn, I reckon the elders would want to teach them a little bit more about their culture so that they can look after the Bunya's, so they can fight for it. Fight to keep it, you know, natural, the way it is and don't have any more developers taking over the place clearing timber. It should be looked after... Uncle Sam Bonner (Githabul Elder)*

Our youth are our future. It is critical that our young people are engaged in caring for country business, with Elders and knowledge holders and with each other.

Elders and knowledge holders are only as effective as the young people supporting them and vice versa. Together they form a critical relationship that supports the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and culture.

Our young people will be actively involved in the business

<sup>1</sup> Yurie is an Aboriginal word used by several Goorie groups in Southeast Queensland to refer to their Aboriginal Totems. Many other Aboriginal words are used across the region like Julabeel and Magula.

of Caring for Country: in the on-ground activities, decision making and at political levels. For instance, young people will be members on the Bunya Mountains Elders Council. As members on the Council they will be required to provide advice to the Council on its business and support their Elder members.

Young people will participate in on-ground Caring for Country works both as volunteers, rangers and for the youngest of our people as junior rangers or culture camps. This will provide a pathway for our youth into Caring for Country business.

Young people will also act as advocates within their own communities and across the State and country at forums, events and meetings. Participating in youth forums, culture camps and traditional knowledge collection and use. These are some of the practical ways our young people will hone their emerging expertise.

*...I feel privilege[d]... to be sitting around with Elders and with people like yourselves and people that are educated, people out there doing stuff that are working, not in jail, not in rehab, not out in the street drinking in the gutter, I feel privileged to be around you because of male role models in indigenous communities they are never there, they are never there, and if they are there the best working ones they are alcoholics themselves or drug addicts, drug users and its just like that. I'm privileged to be around because I can see, if I see you what you are doing right now interviewing me that makes me want to be on the other side of the camera, one day when I get older to get another little young black fella from the next generation kind of going how do you feel brother you know... Ronald Cora*



Our Young People are the Future  
(Photos David Calland DERM)



### 3.3 Managing Country

Aboriginal people have managed Booburrigan Ngmmunge since the beginning of time and form a part of the landscape – that is - it is a cultural landscape, imbued with cultural significance, meaning and use. Aboriginal people with connections to Booburrigan Ngmmunge continue to be reliant on the natural environment for spiritual, social and economic well-being.

Our views and aspirations on managing country can be quite different to non-Aboriginal and scientific views. As Aboriginal people, we have a spiritual affinity with Booburrigan Ngmmunge that is inherited through our ancestry and passed onto our descendents. There remains a strong belief that our ancestral spirits form part of the living landscape, creating a situation in which spiritual and physical aspects cannot be altogether separated.

We, as Aboriginal people, have a responsibility to care and protect our mother (Booburrigan Ngmmunge) for future generations. A whole of landscape approach is applied to managing our country. All country is important and all country has meaning. Every plant and animal through to the smallest grain of sand along a creek bed is afforded respect and significance. Individual species may have specific value because of their relationships to people through a complex process of Yurries [totems], lores/laws and stories - not because of their frequency, distribution or abundance. Specific places and objects may also be afforded particular significance. These places might be shared, restricted or avoided depending on the nature of the significance. We are Booburrigan Ngmmunge and Booburrigan Ngmmunge is within us - the Aboriginal people with connections to her. The two are intrinsically and symbiotically connected. The health and wellbeing of Booburrigan Ngmmunge and Aboriginal people are therefore dependent on each other.

#### 3.3.1 Co-management of Protected Area Estate

Despite potential differences in management approaches, we as Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians, have aspirations to co-manage the Bunya Mountains National Park and adjacent Russell Park with the current landowners.

Development of formal co-management arrangements that recognise Traditional Custodian rights and interests are now what we seek.

The Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) is responsible for the management of the State's National Parks through the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). The range of partnership options currently offered to Aboriginal people asserting country based management aspirations over traditional Country, irrespective of tenure, are limited and don't include the level of innovation needed to adequately address co-management options for the Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians.

As the Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians, we are interested in exploring further steps needed to strengthen Aboriginal governance and management of our area. As cultural leaders we are looking for the potential to substantially increase the participation of our Aboriginal people with custodianship rights in the social, economic and political spheres of protected area management.

The significance of the Aboriginal contribution to 'caring for country' has been recognised elsewhere in Queensland and as a consequence positive structural changes to park management practices in these areas have been made. One example is greater Aboriginal power<sup>2</sup> in decision-making processes through an Aboriginal majority on boards of management (Craig, 2009).

A Board of Management model is preferred - where the Board or steering committee has a majority of Aboriginal Custodians along with community and government/ land management representation. This would take a country-based approach to exploring the extent to which protected areas are looking after all the cultural and natural values of Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

A key deliverable sought through the implementation of this plan is to explore strategies, such as those offered through the Indigenous Protected Areas (Consultation) funding, that resource us to evaluate all partnerships, relationships, decision-making and agreement-making processes occurring across Booburrigan Ngmmunge,

Appendix B provides an outline of other opportunities offered by the State and include the ability to initiate new arrangements or to build on existing ones, depending upon the particular circumstances existing on the protected area, the collective capacity to resource them, and the aspirations and capacity of Traditional [Custodians] to engage in them (QPWS, 2009).

The landowners and or managers relevant to Booburrigan Ngmmunge protected area estate include:

- The Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians;
- The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (Bunya Mountains National Park); and
- The Western Downs Regional Council (Russell Park).

Co-management applied in this context may enable the establishment of a legal partnership and management structure which reflects the rights, interests and obligations of the Aboriginal Custodians, as well as those of the relevant government[s], acting on behalf of the wider community (Smyth, 2001).



<sup>2</sup> Power in this context could mean influence, participation and/or control'

### 3.3.2 Potential Benefits of Aboriginal Co-Management

Beneficiary	Potential Benefits
Aboriginal people with a cultural association with a park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition of cultural association with the land or traditional ownership</li> <li>• opportunity to sustain spiritual and cultural activities</li> <li>• participation in park management decision making</li> <li>• protection of cultural sites and heritage</li> <li>• opportunity to educate people about Aboriginal culture and contribute to reconciliation</li> <li>• training and employment opportunities</li> <li>• opportunity to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage</li> </ul>
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Western Downs Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunity to protect and interpret cultural heritage, and recognise cultural and historic dimension to conservation</li> <li>• opportunity to access and apply Aboriginal knowledge in land management and the conservation of cultural and natural values</li> <li>• contribution to reconciliation and 'Close the Gap' initiatives.</li> </ul>
Biodiversity Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition of the cultural values associated with the park's biodiversity</li> <li>• improved protection and management of biodiversity values through application of Aboriginal knowledge and practices</li> </ul>
Park Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appreciation of the cultural values of the park</li> <li>• opportunity to communicate with Aboriginal owners and/or employees</li> <li>• participation in the process of reconciliation</li> </ul>

(adapted from Smyth, 2001).

Although regarded largely as sole management of protected areas rather than co-management; Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) statistics generated from over 10 years of internal reporting offer the following improvement to social outcomes:

- 95% of IPA communities report economic participation and development benefits from involvement with the Programme;
- 60% of IPA communities report positive outcomes for early childhood development from their IPA activities;
- 85% of IPA communities report that IPA activities improve early school engagement;
- 74% of IPA communities report that their IPA management activities make a positive contribution to the reduction of substance abuse; and
- 74% of IPA communities report that their participation in IPA work contributes to more functional families by restoring relationships and reinforcing family and community structures (Gilligan, 2006).

### 3.3.3 Health of our Country: Health of our People

Collectively, as Aboriginal people and the Custodians of the Bunya Mountains, we feel that ensuring the ecological health of the land through appropriate management arrangements, will afford direct and indirect benefits to our social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing.

We know that projects, such as the Healthy Country Healthy People project, conducted in 2007 by Stephen Garnett and David Bowman (Garnett and Sithole, 2007) in the Northern Territory, explore the relationship between landscape health and Aboriginal health, with

highly encouraging results. Results from these types of scientific research are showing others what we already know. Investment in programs that help Indigenous people undertake work maintaining the environmental health of their country has benefits for the environment as well as the physical, mental and cultural health of the Indigenous people involved (Garnett et al, 2009).

The Australian and Northern Territory Governments have since implemented a Healthy Country Healthy People Schedule to the Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs (2008) as a commitment to support the effective engagement of Indigenous people in the sustainable management of land and seas. Supporting this Schedule provides opportunity for increased health outcomes of Aboriginal people and better biodiversity outcomes in the Northern Territory. This Schedule also demonstrates the range of environmental, socio-cultural and economic benefits provided by the engagement of Indigenous people in the management of their traditional country. We support this type of coordinated policy approach and seek the application of similar resource support here in Queensland - at the State and Regional (Booburrigan Ngmmunge) levels.



Uncle Mal Collinge Demonstrating Traditional Use of Grass Tree Nectar (Photo Aunty Lurlene Henderson)





Aunty Joyce Smith and Aunty Nai Nai Bird Sharing Traditional Knowledge with Kids

governance structures and processes) is crucial to an understanding of Aboriginal knowledge systems and their contexts and dynamics (Smallacombe, Davis and Quiggin et al 2007).

Despite previous government policies which controlled all elements of our lives, Aboriginal people associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge have maintained significant traditional knowledge. During colonial times, this information had to be transmitted and discussed amongst our people in secret or code, often under oppression and fear of punishment.

Discussion and oral recordings with our Aboriginal Elders, knowledge holders and community members over the last 10 years attest to the level and extent of traditional knowledge. Traditional Custodians and other Aboriginal people with connections to Booburrigan Ngmmunge have identified the recording and use of traditional knowledge in the management of Booburrigan Ngmmunge as an important aspiration.

### 3.3.5 Access to Country

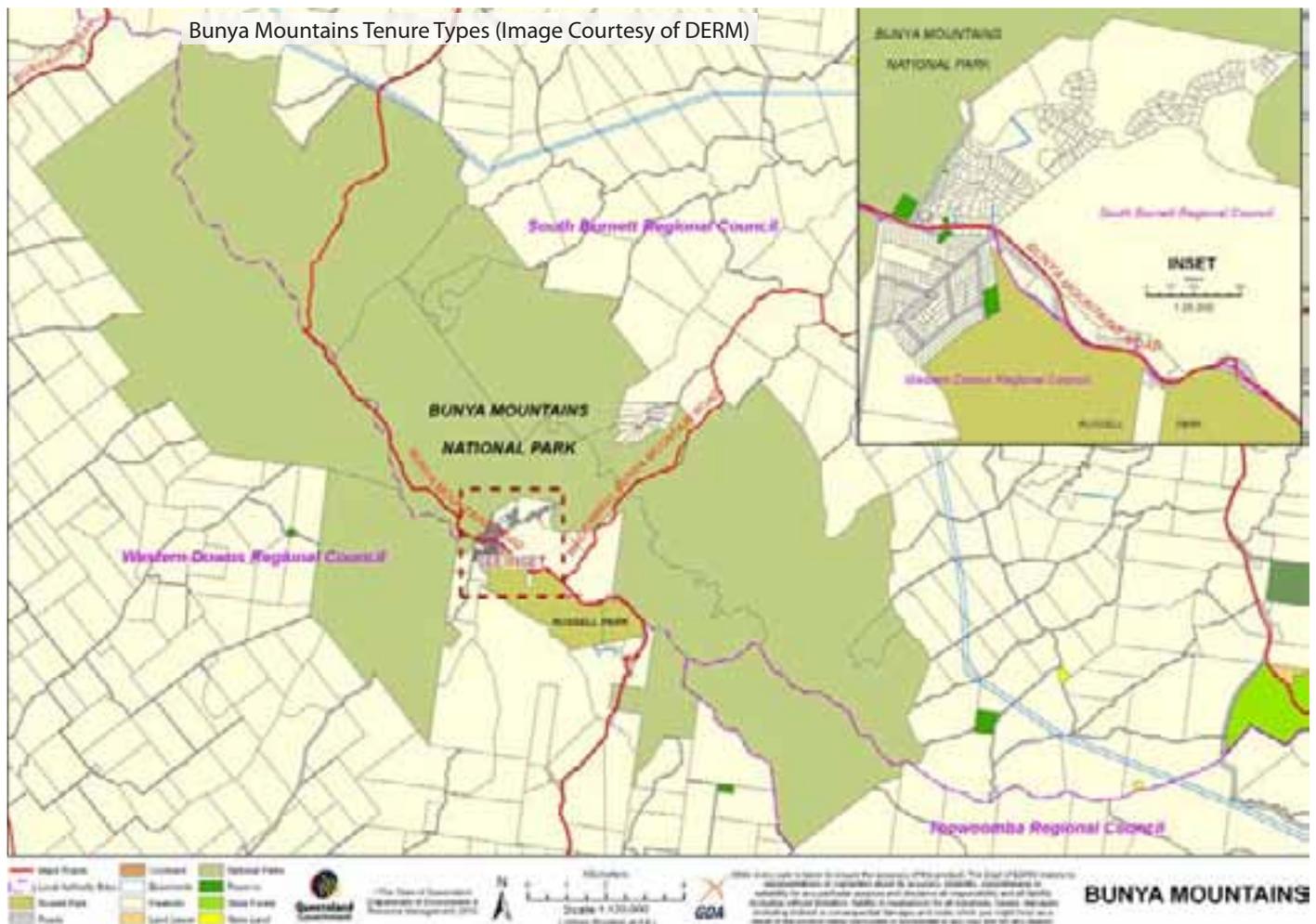
Booburrigan Ngmmunge and surrounding area consists of a myriad of different land types from National Park, Regional Council Reserves to private lands.

Aboriginal people currently do not own land on Booburrigan Ngmmunge, nor do we have any agreements granting us access and rights to specific land on Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

This presents a challenge for Aboriginal people in reconnecting with our country and cultural heritage, particularly on privately owned lands. This issue is highly significant for us, as Aboriginal people associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge. It is at the core of our inherent obligations to care for country and is critical to continuing and preserving our cultural heritage.

It is our aspiration to develop dialogue with landowners on and around Booburrigan Ngmmunge. It is hoped these discussions will lead to agreements (including access agreements) with landowners and we submit the following principles to begin this conversation:

- Aboriginal people with interests in Booburrigan Ngmmunge have the continuing obligation, responsibility and right to use, protect, maintain and manage country in partnership with land managers;
- Aboriginal people should be supported in maintaining their cultures through ongoing association with, and management of, their country in partnership with land managers;
- Access by rightful Aboriginal people to Booburrigan Ngmmunge, as a cultural landscape, should be considered a basic right. It is our desire to see this written into management documents (such as





The grass land and woodlands are direct results of Aboriginal burning practices. Due to the cessation of traditional burning practices the grasslands are being rapidly colonized by rainforest trees and/or woodland species. Between 1996 and 2006 a total of 14% 332 hectares has been lost, while 26% of the balds/grasslands disappeared between 1951 and 1991. Further threatening the cultural landscape and the rare and endangered species it supports.

It has been shown that burning can reduce the number of adult trees colonizing the grasslands to maintain the grassland balds in the interim, but burning alone will not stop the re-sprouts and the eventual loss of the cultural landscape, therefore additional weed and plant removal in conjunction with burning is essential to stop the loss of the cultural environment.

One hundred and nineteen grasslands, known locally as "balds", are dotted across the Bunya Mountains. One of the grasses, the blue grass *Bothriochloa bunyensis*, was first discovered in the Bunya Mountains and grows only in the eastern Darling Downs. It is considered vulnerable to extinction.

Swamp rats, brown quail, red-backed, variegated and superb blue fairy-wrens live in the grasslands, as do other animals that would not survive inside dense forests. The rare skink *Lampropholis colossus* is only known from the Bunyas' balds.



Superb Fairy Wren



Female Brown Quail  
(Source Wikipedia)

The balds are an endangered regional ecosystem. A quarter of the area of grassland on the Bunya Mountains was invaded by woodland and rainforest between 1951 and 1991. Scientists believe that grasslands covered more of the Bunya Mountains during the last ice age (18,000 years ago) than now, and that the grasslands (which contain temperate plant species preferring cooler, moister climates) are gradually disappearing under forest in response to Australia's warming climate. The rapid invasion of the balds by woody plants could be because regular fire events undertaken as part of past Aboriginal land management no longer occurred during the 1900s (Fairfax and Fensham, 1996).

These balds have important cultural heritage significance because they form part of an Aboriginal landscape for the region. Traditional fire management practices and natural resource management practices are important to retain these Aboriginal landscape values.

Regular fire is being re-introduced to the grasslands through experimental burns of varying frequencies and intensities. Researchers and rangers are working to find the right fire regimes to maintain the open character and species diversity of the balds before they are lost forever. It is important to integrate Aboriginal fire management practices to this regime.

Grassland 'Bald' Little Mowbullan 1912  
(Photo Queensland Herbarium)



Grassland 'Bald' Little Mowbullan 2003  
(Photo Queensland Herbarium)



Grassland 'Bald' Near Big Falls Lookout in 1959  
(Photo Queensland Herbarium)



Grassland 'Bald' Near Big Falls Lookout in 2000  
(Photo Queensland Herbarium)

### 3.3.7 Culturally and Ecologically Significant Species

Booburrigan Ngmmunge is particularly rich in biodiversity and supports a diversity of species and plant communities, including some which are rare or threatened. These are ecologically significant and may require special management under State and Commonwealth laws. A list of legislation that applies to the Bunya Mountains is at Appendix C. All plants and animals within the cultural landscape are important to Aboriginal people with connections to Booburrigan Ngmmunge, but some species are of more importance than others and are culturally significant.

Central to the success of Aboriginal engagement in managing Australia's biodiversity is the need to acknowledge and resource adequately the commitment made by Australia to the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly Articles 8(j) and 10(c) that refer to the need to resource and support the in-situ conservation of Indigenous Knowledge. Of relevance to this is a subset of this knowledge system- referred to as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). It is our view that without a long developed knowledge set, Australia's biodiversity including Booburrigan Ngmmunge, at the time of colonisation would have been lesser than what it was. Therefore the important role that we as Traditional Custodians play is globally significant. (Morrison et al, 2010).

Strategies to manage ecologically significant species and ecosystems are outlined in many planning documents including:

- The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Bunya Mountains Draft Plan of Management (1996);
- Burnett Mary Natural Resource Management Plan (2005);
- National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia Biological Diversity (1996); and
- Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2020 Consultation Draft (2009).

This plan, sits equal to other plans, written by governments about Booburrigan Ngmmunge. All plans should be taken into account when managing Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

For many Aboriginal people, the significance of land and water is intimately bound to the spirituality surrounding the origins of landscapes and seascapes, and the animals, plants and peoples that inhabit them (Smyth, 1994).

From our eyes, many geographical features visible today provide reminders of the creation journeys of our ancestral beings. Animals and plants are an integral part of ancient spirituality and contemporary kinship systems. These creation spirit beings gave us our Yurries (totems) as they changed from one form to another.

Most of the plants, animals and places around us are known as Yurries and apply at different scales within our communities depending on our kinship systems i.e. individuals, clans, nation. These Yurries are relations for us. They are our Old People, they are our past and they are our future. Because we are related to most things around us and because we are surrounded by Yurries, we must respect and care for our environment according to our lores/laws.

*...my totem is the night owl, there's a story to that too, how I found out about that, we were camped on school holidays up around Mannambah which is near the Blackbutt Ranges, and it was raining and my dad built this big fire outside the tent because the tent was all wet from the water running through it, he didn't build any trenches to stop the water and to dry the tent out he built this big fire. While this fire was blazing up...high... this owl came and sat on the front of the tent pole and it cried out twice, and my dad said that there is something wrong at home, because he watched the owl, after it cried out twice it just took off back towards where Cherbourn was, and my dad said there's something wrong at home. Next morning, early in the morning my cousin came up on the horse and he said to my father you're wanted home, Granny Black who was my fathers Aunty, isn't expected to live. So he took the horse off my cousin, left my cousin to pack us all up and took off on the horse back home, got to the hospital, she was on her death bed you know, then she must have waited for all of us to get there because as soon as we all got there to the hospital we stood outside the ward and as soon as that happened she just passed away... Aunty Beryl Gambrell (Wakka Wakka Traditional Owner)*

Various species are placed in the world by our ancestors to provide food for us. This link between our ancestors, food species, and the Aboriginal people with connections to Booburrigan Ngmmunge is revealed through sacred signs in the landscape, known as cultural indicators. We do not share the Western notion of environmental conservation. We believe that food animals are released into the landscape by the ancestors as needed, so long as proper relations are maintained with them through ceremony, art, and song. The use of animal species are controlled by our laws established by our ancestors during creation. As a result, most food species were only harvested seasonally (i.e. winter sea mullet season for coastal communities). If hunters harvested animals out of season, they could be punished by the people responsible for maintaining ritual relations with that species. These ancestral lores/laws served to assure a steady supply of plants and animals every year without causing population collapses.

Many plants and animals were also traditionally used to manufacture a variety of tools, weapons, and implements. For instance Booburrigan Ngmmunge:

*...it was a meeting place, kept things going and also they learnt a lot and different paintings and all that sort of thing. They did a trade, they had their own trade it was like a flea market you can go through... And each group would have their own stuff there, shells from the sea and bangles and all that sort of thing, it was something that the inland Murris had never seen, ...a lot of it was adopted especially the didgeridoo was adopted and all that sort of thing, and then you had your own coolamon and all that sort of thing, ...different tribes had different coolamons and you knew by looking at the stuff they had there, spears whatever, where which one they come from cause each one had their own contact... Uncle Kevin Bond (Wakka Wakka Jinda / Willi Willi Elder).*

The following table is a list of some of the culturally significant species associations with Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

Species	Traditional Name(s)	Significance
Bunya Pine <i>Araucaria bidwillii</i>	Bonye, Bunya Bunya, Bonje	Important food source associated with major triennial gatherings Leaves and bark have medicinal uses Spiritually significant Booburrgan Ngmmunge 'mothers breasts'
Night Owl		Yurrie (totem) for some Traditional Custodians
Echidna	gayu(y)ara, giirunraa, gira.nya, djumbe.yn, gawa(r), gar, buniiyn, djena-djena, djina-djina	Important food source
Rope, Vine	bugur, buggerumbil	Waguy, for climbing trees
Freshwater Crayfish (Blue Claw)	Nhinyuuwen, yil, yiil (giil?), newin-newin	Food source
Bush or Scrub Turkey	wuyan, wawun (wowan), wayun, waaruun, wayuwin (wayuwen), waan, wawun, wohwan, guguwin	Yurrie (totem)
Willie Wagtail	ginder ginder, gindir gindir	Messenger bird
White Cockatoo	gera, geyarr, giyaa, gayr, gayira, gara	Yurrie (totem), related to important lore and stories
Carpet Snake	Wakka Wakka, Kabul, Guju	Yurrie (totem) for Warra, Cobble Cobble (Barrungam) Speaking Peoples

Source: Leslie and McFadden 2006

We worry about some of our plants and animals on Booburrgan Ngmmunge, and many of our people, and believe that we will all become strong again by renewing our connections to country.

Strategies to revive our culture and reconnect us to our special plants and animals include:

- continuing our critical Traditional Knowledge Recording Project;
- host triennial Bunya Festivals;
- support our Murri Rangers;
- undertake a comprehensive fauna survey with Traditional Custodians and other Traditional Owners and document the cultural value of recorded species;
- engage our Youth through Culture Camps and other activities;
- educate others about our culture through publications;
- use of knowledge recording to make brochures about particular cultural species, calendar's, cookbooks, storybooks.

We also aspire to work jointly with our partners, currently managing our country, in future planning activities/arrangements.

### 3.3.8 Pest, Weed and Animal Management



Feral Pig Captured by Rangers (Photo Murri Rangers)

*...See its bad enough now that the wild pigs have got into them up there because the trees are not growing now because pigs are going around eating the pods that are falling onto the ground, the pigs have been getting stuck into them... Uncle Thomas Willmot (Wakka Wakka Elder)*

Weeds and vertebrate pests remain a threat to the natural and cultural values of Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

Environmental weeds, are found in most, if not all plant communities within the protected area estate. Once established, weeds may compete with, and prevent the establishment of native plant species. Although in some circumstances, such as in the absence of an appropriate fire regime, native species can also be invasive to the natural and cultural landscape. For example species such as wattles (*Acacia spp.*) have been found to colonise our native grasslands and impact on the health of bald communities.

*...near the campground there... you're getting all different sort of matters in there... Why can't youse clean up all that weed and that, you know reed and that I said... This isn't from this country. That's why it's clogging up the bores, you know... That water bub, it used to be beauty, you know... Aunty Lillian Colonel (Jarowair Elder)*



Weed Control is a key role of our Murri Rangers (Photo Murri Rangers)

The Traditional Custodians identify invasive species, such as the Kikuyu grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*), as being of most concern for its threat to grassy balds.

**Feral Animals** including pigs, cattle, dogs, cats, introduced house mice and rats have been recorded in the area. The Traditional Custodians will work with all stakeholders to assist eradicate and minimise the effect of environmental weeds and feral animals on Booburrigan Ngmmunge. The employment of the Murri Rangers presents a unique management opportunity for all land managers to consider maximising efforts in addressing these types of land management issues.

### 3.3.9 Rights to harvest, use and manage resources

The flora and fauna resources of Booburrigan Ngmmunge, in particular the Bunya tree, are integral to the culture, economy and diet of Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people seek recognition and support of our traditional harvesting both on and off protected areas. On protected areas Traditional Custodians wish to negotiate with the land managers for access, use and harvesting rights that are ecologically and culturally sustainable.

On non-protected area estate Traditional Custodians wish to investigate harvesting (possibly commercial) opportunities with respective landowners.

*...We have got to stop the white man getting control of the Bunya nut, because they have already taken the Bauple nut, so we don't have any rights on the Bauple nuts anymore, that belongs to the overseas whoever... Bunya nut harvesting we want rights to that... But the Bunya nut its gonna, its getting too big, some horticulture is going to come in and just take that whole right off us unless we claim it, cause they done it with the Bauple, the Macadamia's, they grafted them... its American now...! Aunty Nai Nai Bird (Butchulla Elder), Aunty Lerlene Henderson (Gubbi Gubbi Elder), Aunty Yvonne Chapman (Wakka Wakka Elder) and Selina Hill (Willi Willi/Wakka Wakka Traditional Owner)*



### 3.4 Business Ready – economies for our people

Past government policies controlled all aspects of Aboriginal people's lives, including their wages and savings. For generations Aboriginal people were unable to generate and pass on wealth to our children. This plan provides our people with an opportunity to reinforce our desire to participate in economic development within our region. In particular to actively pursue a range of business, employment, innovation, partnerships, research and wealth<sup>3</sup> creation to improve our people's economic and social opportunities related to Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

Across Australia our participation in the labour force is low according to a number of measures:

- Labour force participation for Indigenous males aged 25 to 54 is 55.6% - well below the non-Indigenous rate of 93.6%.
- The unemployment rate is three times higher amongst Indigenous people compared to non-Indigenous people.
- More Aboriginal people do not participate in the labour market which tends to mask the unemployment statistics.
- The rate of self-employment is significantly lower for Indigenous people compared to non-Indigenous people.
- Labour force participation for Indigenous women is lower.

Notwithstanding this information, our people have a diverse range of experience and knowledge, and work at a range of jobs from low skill requirements through trades and small business to professional and managerial positions that require graduate or post-graduate qualifications, or their equivalents. In the past, it has been difficult for our people to access full time jobs with good pay, on or near Booburrigan Ngmmunge. We wish our people to increase access to skilled positions around Booburrigan Ngmmunge. Our preference is 'jobs first then training'. This is why we supported the Working on Country Program and applied to have our own Murri Rangers on Booburrigan Ngmmunge because it was based on proper wages with ongoing training and development provided.

Recent studies (Hughes, H and Hughes M, 2010) investigate employment, unemployment, and work participation of Indigenous and other Australians to determine to what extent high Indigenous unemployment and low labour participation are demand or supply caused. This is in response to the Council of Australian Governments aim to 'halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade' as one of the six Closing the Gap targets. Irrespective of these types of debates being held at all levels between governments and scholars, our aspirations are driven by a desire to provide future generations with a choice to actively participate in the economy, resulting in self esteem and self-determination.

The emerging 'Aboriginal environment economy' has immense potential to support Aboriginal employment and economic development, particularly in areas like the Bunya Mountains where other mainstream labour markets are limited.

In addition to the services provided by QPWS to manage the protected area estate for conservation, Booburrigan Ngmmunge is an important tourist destination, attracting both local and interstate visitors. As such, the area provides supplementary economic benefits to many local communities. For example at Dandabah there is a Visitor's Centre, QPWS park campground and a number of privately run guest houses, a kiosk and a restaurant.

The Traditional Custodians will work with all stakeholders in order to fully investigate the business opportunities available to our communities. A preliminary assessment suggests the following business and industry opportunities for Aboriginal people within the region include:

- Tourism
- Forestry, horticulture and biological resources and agribusiness
- Natural and cultural resource management
- Pastoral
- Mining
- Arts and creative Industries
- Knowledge and culture, including interpretive information
- Government and community services
- Retail and cottage industries

Community controlled land management enterprises address several of the items listed above and work well under co-management arrangements. There is significant potential on Booburrigan Ngmmunge for our people to negotiate with current land owners and managers on 'fee for service' and 'preferred tender' status to contract out elements of protected area management. Examples include: walking track management, camping ground and visitor management, and some elements of fire management, like fire break maintenance and construction. In relation to Russell Park, potential exists for the Western Downs Regional Council to contract most, if not all, aspects of the reserve management to Aboriginal people. The existing and potential long term presence of Aboriginal Rangers, established through the Australian Government's Working on Country program, provides a cost effective solution to deliver immediate outcomes through a partnership approach.



<sup>3</sup> The definition of wealth in an Aboriginal context also encompasses connection to land, family and holistic health (physical, spiritual and emotional).

### Case Study Example

Wreck Bay Enterprises Limited (WBEL) is an example of a community controlled enterprise contracting key park management services (i.e. visitor and camping ground management) from the Booderee National Park (BNP), Jervis Bay, ACT. WBEL is an enterprise of the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council (WBACC).

In this arrangement, WBEL have a multiyear service agreement with Booderee National Park to deliver these services. It enables staff to be employed with certainty within WBEL - an Aboriginal owned organisational structure. More than half of Booderee's staff are Indigenous. They also manage Australia's only Aboriginal-owned botanic gardens and work in every area of the park, from park rangers to visitor guides. A further 35 WBACC members employed by WBEL delivering contract services to the Park. These contract services include:

- managing and staffing the entry station;
- maintaining roads throughout the Park;
- cleaning visitor facilities and Park buildings;
- grounds maintenance services at Booderee Botanic Gardens operations;
- building maintenance [Bauman and Smyth, 2007].

What the Wreck Bay community are finding is that there are now two land management employment opportunities in the area: Booderee National Park and WBEL (McLeod, pers. comm. 2010).

Culture-based industries, such as Murri Rangers and eco-tourism, create employment opportunities that allow Traditional Custodians of the land to continue cultural responsibilities while advancing environmental, economic, social and cultural imperatives. Working towards financial autonomy will provide our people with the opportunity for independence, options and choices leading to enhanced cultural health.

Our Murri Rangers have already entered the mainstream labour force, with an opportunity to increase skill levels while working. Over a period of time, we expect that our Murri Rangers will be operating at a higher skill level and become qualified in land management (achieving a Certificate IV and higher). It is important for our community that we are able to establish proper career pathways for our youth in all positions, including culture based jobs. In this way, all of our jobs - from school teachers, Murri Rangers, retail, trades and office workers - inspire and motivate our people, especially our younger generations.

It is our aspiration to build our capacity and acquire a significant skills base to (over time) develop and implement sound business strategies and increase ownership and participation in sustainable economies. We wish to do this to gain a high degree of financial autonomy and re-invest in building capacity for Aboriginal people with connections to Booburrgan Ngmmunge. To achieve our goals we require access to the following tools:

- Literacy and numeracy
- Economic and financial literacy
- Land access and tenure
- Commercial partnerships
- Business support
- Work readiness
- Culture support

### 3.4.1 Aboriginal Employment and Training

Aboriginal employment needs to occur at all levels and across all areas, not just the lower levels. This has, and continues to be the case for Aboriginal employment in many organisations. Those organisations working with the Traditional Custodians to implement this plan can work with Aboriginal people in the region to develop and implement Aboriginal employment and economic development plans for their respective organisations. In addition, one of the most effective strategies organisations can do is to look at their tendering processes with a view to changing their policies to ensure a percentage of all tenders, in particular those relating to caring for country, are provided to Aboriginal people. This can lead to increased economic participation by Aboriginal people.

On 4 January 2010, our five Working on Country Rangers commenced on the Bunya Mountains National Park and Russell Park. These rangers are the product of much work and dedication from Aboriginal people, stakeholders and governments. Not since Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from their traditional homeland estate (Booburrgan Ngmmunge) has there been a permanent Traditional Custodian presence on the Mountain. The rangers therefore also represent a highly symbolic a practical cultural outcome for Aboriginal people.



The Commonwealth Government's Working on Country Program currently provides all the funding for the rangers including their wages, on costs, equipment, training and development. Although the Working on Country rangers are based on multi-year contracts, the funding is classified as ongoing. It is critical however that the State and Local government landowners who are benefiting from the outcomes delivered by these rangers contribute real funding for their continuance and expansion into the future. Over time the Commonwealth anticipates Traditional Custodians will develop agreements with other landowners and organisations to deliver environmental and cultural outcomes, in particular the State Government's Department of Environment and Resource Management.



Murri Rangers Developing GPS Skills  
(Photo David Calland DERM)

The emerging Forrester’s Beach co-management project at Warrell Creek in NSW reports enhanced negotiation skills and confidence to operate in the business world devised by non-Aboriginal people. Greater acknowledgement of the flow on benefits should give rise to better linkages and funding support from relevant government programs in social, education, training and employment areas and those targeting assistance to regional economies (Gilligan, 2006).

Traditional Custodians also wish to be involved in the recruitment and career development of mainstream Council and QPWS Rangers working on the Bunya Mountains. Having Traditional Custodians involved in the development of positions descriptions, on interview panels and in policy discussions on ranger numbers and levels, empowers Aboriginal people in these critical processes. It also provides cultural authority to the recruitment and development processes, including the provision for Aboriginal mentoring and support to mainstream staff.

Aboriginal people wish to explore the following employment and training opportunities on and around Booburrigan Ngmmunge:

- Fee for service contracting with QPWS, Western Downs Regional Council and over time other landowners and NRM bodies.
- Women’s and Junior Ranger programs.
- Involvement of Aboriginal community as Caring for Country leaders and volunteers.
- Involvement of Aboriginal people on community service orders. Having Aboriginal people complete their community service orders ‘on country’ is a preferred alternative to them serving their time in the criminal justice system or elsewhere.
- Cultural Advisors to Working on Country Rangers, QPWS Rangers and staff, Western Downs Regional Council staff and other agencies and their staff working on Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

*...So you know we had our art now we have got graffiti, we had our dance, our corroboree now I have got break dance I have got hip hop we had our singing now I have got rapping we had didjeridoo playing I’ve got beat boxing I have just adapted to this generation these days to what I can use, I have adapted, I want to get myself A grade get myself up here to a certain level where I can say stuff and people will listen, so what I am going do is educate myself in the meantime while I’m building this*

*up... Ronald Cora young Yurumpil Traditional Owner and Leader*

### 3.4.2 Cultural Centre

As Traditional Custodians of Booburrigan Ngmmunge we feel that our culture and connection to country has remained strong. The history of the Mountains as an important place is told in the stories of our people, and demonstrated in the many remaining artefacts and places of cultural significance. Although connection to country is deeply engrained in our people, it is necessary for us to continue to work with the Queensland Museum, QPWS and other agencies, to officially document our cultural heritage and gain recognition of the importance of the area from the wider community.

It is our belief that all living things have a right to exist in the community and have a place in Booburrigan Ngmmunge. It is important for our people to find ways to continue cultural activities to promote recognition for our dreaming, awareness and understanding for the significance of this sacred place.

Establishment of a cultural centre to use as a meeting place is another important way in which we can educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about our culture. Booburrigan Ngmmunge represents a good opportunity to promote our culture on country (outside city environments) and encourage recognition, respect and understanding by every one of all ways of life’ (Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians, 2003). This includes using a cultural centre/ keeping place for educational purposes encouraging visits from tourists, schools and universities.

A cultural centre could incorporate both historical and contemporary culture including art dance, song, stories and artefacts. It could also include an accompanying workshop and sales outlet.

The cultural centre would act as a multi-purpose centre delivering on the following:

- Educational and interpretive centre;
- Keeping place for important cultural materials and remains;
- Meeting place and conference centre for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; and.
- Place of business for Elders Council, rangers and others.



Uncle Brian Tobane at the Banda Cultural Centre – Gummingurru Cultural Site Near Toowoomba

### 3.4.3 Land Ownership

Currently Aboriginal people do not own any land on or near Booburrigan Ngmmunge. Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians have aspirations to own and manage land on and around Booburrigan Ngmmunge for cultural and economic purposes.

#### *Land for Cultural Purposes*

Owning and managing land on or near Booburrigan Ngmmunge would provide a cultural base for Aboriginal activities on country. It would enable Aboriginal people to come together for cultural business, including culture camps with young people, art, dance and meetings.

Land Ownership also affords a culturally appropriate and protected place for the repatriation of cultural materials and human remains. This is particularly important where materials and remains cannot be accurately provenanced or if their proper location is no longer secure or culturally safe.

#### *Land for Economic Purposes*

Aboriginal employment in land management, businesses and enterprises on Booburrigan Ngmmunge is a significant aspiration for Traditional Custodians. Land ownership would provide a significant asset for Aboriginal people and a place to establish:

- an Aboriginal cultural and educational centre for the safekeeping of Aboriginal cultural material, stories and values;
- an interpretive and information centre for other Aboriginal people, visitors and tourists;
- an Aboriginal accommodation and conferencing centre for hosting meetings, functions and events for Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people.

Land ownership, whether it be for business or economic purposes, must precede the establishment of any Aboriginal owned and managed cultural centre.



### 3.5. Sharing Country

This plan's development and implementation is dependent on relationships and collaboration between Aboriginal people associated with the Booburrigan Ngmmunge and other key people and organisations.

Aboriginal people associated with Booburrigan Ngmmunge wish to continue and build on their existing relationships with landowners, partners and stakeholders. They also wish to develop relationships with new stakeholders to ensure this plan's implementation.

This section articulates how Aboriginal people wish to share their country and seek support for the management of Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

representatives;

3. Contracted park management services to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council;
4. Contribute to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council governance arrangements; and
5. Contribute to the establishment of a Booburrigan Ngmmunge Caring for Country Trust.

#### Partners

Partners are identified in this plan as those organisations with specific interest and/or responsibilities for Booburrigan Ngmmunge, whether legal, strategic or operational. These organisations include the Burnett Mary Regional Group, the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts and the State Government Department of Environment and Resource Management. It is



Stakeholder Meeting October 2008

#### 3.5.1 Working with our stakeholders

For the purposes of this plan, and its implementation, the Bunya Mountains stakeholders are categorised into the following:

##### Landowners

The two key 'protected area estate' landowners: the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Western Downs Regional Council. They have primary responsibilities for managing the Bunya Mountains National Park and Russell Park for all Queenslanders.

Traditional Custodians seek support from these agencies for the following:

1. Agreement to investigate a formalised co-management arrangement, through a consultative process, such as that supported by the Australian Government Indigenous Protected Areas Program;
2. Contribute to the operation of the proposed Bunya Mountains Board of Management, including the involvement of Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodian

acknowledged that the QPWS is a particular area within the portfolio of the Department of Environment and Resource Management.

Traditional Custodians seek the following support from BMRG over the next 3-5 years:

1. Continue to act as contract manager, auspicing the Working on Country and other Aboriginal Caring for Country funding on behalf of the Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians until these responsibilities can be transitioned to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council or alternative arrangement;
2. Provide support to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council to establish their own organisational and business systems;
3. Provide Secretariat support to Bunya Mountains Elders Council until such responsibilities can be transferred to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council; and
4. Contribute to the establishment of a Booburrigan Ngmmunge Caring for Country Trust.



### **Aboriginal Business and Governance**

The Bunya Mountains Elders Council will work through its Terms of Reference and governance structure to pursue **appropriate protocols** with Aboriginal groups and people about Aboriginal business on Booburrigan Ngmmunge.

The Bunya Mountains Elders Council will build capacity to take a lead role in managing caring for country business relating to Booburrigan Ngmmunge. We seek a **capacity building agreement** with the Burnett Mary Regional Group, and others, to articulate and transition existing administrative responsibilities to the The Bunya Mountains Elders Council by 2013. This includes the management of financial, operational and governance arrangements.

#### **Other Land Owners**

Traditional Custodians wish to enter into **access agreements** with other landowners within Booburrigan Ngmmunge. These agreements will assist Aboriginal people reconnect with their country but also assist landowners to understand and manage Aboriginal culture on their properties.

#### **Other agreements**

Traditional Custodians wish to enter into other agreements with businesses, research and educational institutions, philanthropic organisations to assist in implementing the aspirations and values of this plan.

### **3.5.3 Communication Strategies**

Critical to the success of the Plan is the communication of its progress and achievements to Aboriginal people and stakeholders. Some of the strategies we intend to employ are as follows:

#### **Communication Strategy.**

We will develop a **communication strategy** for the Bunya Mountains Elders Council and Booburrigan Ngmmunge projects that will guide communication to our people and stakeholders. Some of the elements of this strategy include:

- **Bunya Mountains Elders Council website.** The website will provide regular updates on the Elders Council, Bunya Mountains Caring for Country activities and events. Key documents and strategies like this caring for country plan, the Elders Council Strategic Plan (when developed) will all be accessed from this website. The website will provide a mechanism: for comment and feedback on Bunya Mountains caring for country activities; and to attract sponsorship support and donations.
- **Bunya Mountains Caring for Country Newsletter.** The Working on Country Murri Rangers will develop this regular newsletter. It is an important way of informing their people and other stakeholders on their progress, upcoming opportunities to be involved with the rangers and other key messages.
- **Meetings.** A range of meetings will be conducted in relation to this plan, they include meetings of the Bunya Mountains Elders Council and the Bunya Partnerships Coordination Group. It is expected other meetings and forums will also stem from this plan. The Bunya Elders Council and representatives of this Council will participate in all of these boards, committees and reference groups for Booburrigan Ngmmunge. The BPCG will continue to support the Elders Council, with its focus now shifting to assist

implement the plan.

- **Events.** Re-establish the Bunya Festival on Booburrigan Ngmmunge. With over 100 years of absence and dark history of colonisation, the 2012 Bunya Festival will provide necessary cultural healing, revival and reconciliation. Other events like major launches will also be an opportunity for Aboriginal people to interact.

### **3.5.4 Research**

#### **What has happened**

Substantive research and study has occurred on Booburrigan Ngmmunge and about our people over the last century, including:

- Fire management - in particular the occurrence, distribution and future management of the grassland balds (Fensham and Fairfax, 1996 and 2006);
- The Bunya Pine - its morphology, use and distribution (Burrows, 1992 and 1994, Francis, 1928 and Huth, 2002);
- Threatened species: their distribution and conservation like the rare skink (*Lampropholis colossus*), grasses such as the vulnerable Bunya Mountain bluegrass; (*Bothriochloa bunyensis*), mountain brushtail possum (*Trichosurus caninus*) and the vulnerable tusked frog (*Adelotus brevis*) (Lindenmayer et al., 2002 and Turbill, 2006);
- Anthropological research on our peoples in the region (Kelly, 1935, Koeppling, 1976, Mathew, 1910 and 1926, Mckenzie, 1973 and Tindale, 1974);
- Geology and soils (Willmott et al., 1995); and
- Historical accounts of the Bunya feasts (Evans, 2002; Groom, 1949, Humphreys, 1992, Meston, 1892, Moynihan, 1901, Petrie, 1904 and Sullivan, 1977).





# Part 4: Implementing the Plan - strategies

In implementing this plan it was important to consider a number of factors:

- Traditional Custodians aspirations for the plan's implementation;
- How successful or unsuccessful other caring for country plans across Australia have been implemented;
- The whole of government closing the gap agenda and other key government and industry frameworks (i.e. Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2009-2012, QLD NRM Investment Strategies).
- The nature and extent of stakeholders in the Bunya Mountains Region.

We see this plan as a starting point to focus efforts for increased Aboriginal involvement in Booburrgan Ngmmunge. We acknowledge this will be achieved over time through the dedication of all people, working in partnership with a range of stakeholders.

There is mixed results for the implementation of other caring for country plans across Australia. For most of the plans their implementation strategies rely on what could be referred to as the 'stakeholder investment strategy' approach. This is where a number of key stakeholders (government, community and industry) are identified as having responsibilities or an ability to deliver elements of the plan. The plan's implementation is often reliant upon the contributions from these stakeholders over the life of the plan and beyond. Governments are usually at the core of these stakeholder investors.

Although this type of approach has worked in some circumstances, it has a number of limitations - particularly it does not afford financial autonomy for implementing the plan holistically by Traditional Custodians. It leaves the plan's implementation at the mercy of program specific funding - in many circumstances offered annually, categorised by themes and objectives (set by governments and not Aboriginal people). It requires a series of applications submitted against program criteria, during set funding timeframes. This often creates administrative pressure on many communities and most importantly disconnects many of our objectives that are required to be viewed as a whole to retain cultural appropriateness. We have seen many other plans date quickly as government, community and industry constantly restructure, change their names, funding programs and contacts.

Caring for Country is an emerging business. As identified, there are clear social, economic and health benefits of Aboriginal involvement in natural and cultural resource management. It is therefore critical that Caring for Country must play a prominent role in the whole of government agenda for closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous outcomes.

This plan provides our partners with a 'template' for applying funding and support to Aboriginal people's involvement in caring for country business on Booburrgan Ngmmunge, effectively providing a significant roadmap to reduce the

gap in Indigenous disadvantage for our region.

Most importantly, as these strategies are realised, the spirit of our people strengthens.

For this plan, Traditional Custodians learnt from their brothers and sisters in other areas of Australia and intend to adopt 2 broad strategies in its implementation:

1. Immediate strategies (<5 years)
2. Enduring Strategies (1-50 years - and beyond)

For the first 5 years both strategies will work in parallel. Beyond this timeframe the immediate strategies will be subject to a review of our caring for country priorities and the longer term strategies will continue.

*...[The Bunya Mountains project] is progressing well providing that what we ask for is implemented. We have got the Rangers now so that is a step in the right direction... Aunty Beryl Gambrill (Wakka Wakka Elder)*

## 4.1 Immediate Strategies

Over the next five years the actions listed in the following tables are the identified immediate strategies. They relate to, and should be read in conjunction with, the discussion under sections 3.1-3.5. These strategies are the actions, aspirations and values Traditional Custodians have for Booburrgan Ngmmunge.



Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.1.1	Establish a Bunya Mountains Elders Council to provide Aboriginal leadership for all business affecting Booburrgan Ngmmunge	(A) Appoint members to the Elders Council through culturally appropriate methods (B) Develop a strong governance framework, including the following policies and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• terms of reference;</li> <li>• strategic plan;</li> <li>• communication plan;</li> <li>• 12 month work plan.</li> </ul> (C) Visiting Aboriginal groups are invited to participate in the Elders Council (D) The Elders Council maintain strong communications with visiting Aboriginal groups through networks, such as reciprocation circles, newsletters, and access to the Elders Council website (E) All Elders Council members undertake governance capacity development (F) Key partners contribute to a fund to support Aboriginal governance on Booburrgan Ngmmunge (G) Elders Council becomes incorporated. (H) The Elders Council is fully resourced, including all meeting, operational and Secretariat (including Executive Officer) expenses.	(a) Aboriginal people with rights and interests in the Booburrgan Ngmmunge are engaged in its management, care and celebration (b) The cultural landscape is healthy and prospers through connections to Aboriginal people with relationships to Booburrgan Ngmmunge (c) All stakeholders with rights and interests in Booburrgan Ngmmunge engage with the Elders Council in a culturally appropriate manner (d) The Bunya Mountains Elders Council strengthens capacity through relevant development activities (e) Relationships with visiting Aboriginal groups with rights and interests in the Booburrgan Ngmmunge are restored, maintained and nurtured (f) Elders Council receives funding for operation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remuneration for Elders attendance and leadership</li> <li>• Meeting venue and catering costs</li> <li>• A resourced and dedicated support position (Executive Officer)</li> <li>• Professional advice, facilitation and support</li> </ul> (g) The Elders Council positions itself to independently manage Caring for Country contracts for Booburrgan Ngmmunge	Established 2010 Aboriginal leaders to coordinate and implement the plan for their people. Assisted by an Executive Officer
3.1.2	Support Aboriginal Leadership on Booburrgan Ngmmunge	(A) Aboriginal leaders, particularly young leaders, participate in leadership and mentoring programs and activities (B) Seek support from partners and stakeholders to sponsor Aboriginal leaders' attendance and participation on leadership activities and programs	(a) Aboriginal leaders for Booburrgan Ngmmunge attend and participate in leadership activities and programs (b) Aboriginal leaders for Booburrgan Ngmmunge achieve some level of leadership qualification (c) Aboriginal leaders for Booburrgan Ngmmunge inspire their people and peers by demonstrating their leadership qualities	Immediate and ongoing

4 Bunya Mountains Elders Council will comprise representatives from the 4 Traditional Custodian groups with primary responsibility for the Bunya Mountains, as a shared space

Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.1.3	Ensure cultural protocols and lores/laws are observed and maintained on Booburrgan Ngmmunge	<p>(A) Conduct men's and women's cultural camps to reinforce and reconnect young people with their country, lores/laws and Elders</p> <p>(B) Develop a cultural protocol for all Aboriginal business conducted on Booburrgan Ngmmunge (includes Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country, Cultural Awareness and Protocols)</p>	<p>(a) Aboriginal traditions, culture and lores/laws continue to be expressed and celebrated</p> <p>(b) All non-Aboriginal people and organisations associated with Booburrgan Ngmmunge are culturally aware and capable by developing their own Aboriginal specific policies and plans (e.g. Indigenous Employment, Recruitment and Retention Policies, Reconciliation Action Plans, Cultural Capability Frameworks)</p>	Established 2013
3.1.4	Ensure relationships within and between Aboriginal Custodians and visiting Aboriginal Groups are enhanced and maintained	<p>(A) Develop Traditional Owner agreements<sup>5</sup> between 4 Traditional Custodian groups</p> <p>(B) Develop Traditional Owner agreements between the 4 Traditional Custodian Groups and visiting Aboriginal groups</p> <p>(C) Ensure visiting Aboriginal groups are involved in Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(D) Establish and maintain communication between Bunya Mountains Elders Council and their respective Traditional Owner Groups</p> <p>(E) Establish and maintain communication between Bunya Mountains Elders Council and visiting Aboriginal Groups</p> <p>(F) Seek support from partners and supporters to ensure communication within and between Aboriginal groups associated with Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p>	<p>(a) Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians work in partnership to protect, conserve and celebrate Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(b) Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians are supported to be engaged in the management of Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(c) Visiting Aboriginal Groups and Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians work in partnership to protect, conserve and celebrate Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(d) All Aboriginal people associated with Booburrgan Ngmmunge are informed and involved in the management of Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(e) Partners and stakeholders contribute resources and funding to support relationships within and between Aboriginal groups associated with Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p>	Visiting Aboriginal Groups agreements with Bunya Traditional Custodians established by 2015
3.2.1	Hold a triennial Bunya Festival	<p>(A) Identify suitable funding bodies and programs in the government, private, corporate and philanthropic sectors</p> <p>(B) Develop and submit funding proposals to support the festival</p> <p>(C) Hold the inaugural festival in early 2012</p> <p>(D) Identify, through appropriate communication protocols, a Group (Elders Council/ Coordination Group, etc) to oversee festival coordination</p> <p>(E) Engage a festival/events coordinator</p>	<p>(a) Traditional Custodians secure sufficient funding for the festival to successfully reconnect people with country and each other</p> <p>(b) Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians together with other Traditional Owners agree on the best group to coordinate the Festival</p> <p>(c) Festival coordinator is engaged at least 6 months in advance of each Festival</p> <p>(d) First inaugural Bunya Festival is conducted in early 2012</p>	<p>All funding secured by 30 November 2011</p> <p>Agreement by 30 June 2011</p> <p>Coordinator Engaged by June 2011</p> <p>Inaugural Festival held January-March 2012</p>

<sup>5</sup> A verbal but preferably written agreement between two or more Traditional Owner groups outlining their rights, interests and working relationships as it affects their people and country

Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.2.2	Undertake a Comprehensive cultural heritage assessment and management plan for Booburrgan Ngmmunge	(A) Engage suitably qualified consultant(s) to work with Traditional Custodians to assess the cultural heritage values of Booburrgan Ngmmunge (B) Complete traditional knowledge recording of Traditional Custodian and other visiting Aboriginal groups Elders and knowledge holders (C) Develop a Traditional Custodian cultural resource database for the storage, dissemination and use of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge (D) Develop a Booburrgan Ngmmunge cultural heritage management plan	(a) Traditional Custodians in conjunction with other Aboriginal Traditional Owners establishes appropriate protocols surrounding the collection, storage and use of culture, heritage and its associated knowledge by 2011 (b) A suitably qualified consultant(s) is agreed by the Traditional Custodians to work with them on the assessment of the cultural heritage values of Booburrgan Ngmmunge (c) Cultural resource database is established by 2011-12 (d) Traditional knowledge recording is completed by 2013 (e) A Booburrgan Ngmmunge cultural heritage management plan is developed, based on the cultural heritage values assessment and oral history recordings	Protocols developed by 2011 Assessment completed by 2012 Database established 2011-12 Traditional Knowledge completed 2013 Management Plan completed by 2014
3.2.3	Involve our young leaders	(A) Identify suitable funding bodies and programs in the government, private, corporate and philanthropic sectors (B) Develop and submit funding proposals: a. To hold a youth forum about Booburrgan Ngmmunge; b. To establish a Booburrgan Ngmmunge Junior Ranger program; c. To undertake language and culture work with our youth (C) Support young Aboriginal people associated with Booburrgan Ngmmunge to attend appropriate leadership programs and training (D) Ensure young people are involved in cultural activities and camps associated with Booburrgan Ngmmunge (E) Ensure young people are involved in decision-making and leadership roles affecting Booburrgan Ngmmunge	(a) Appropriate funding support is identified (b) Traditional Custodians and other Traditional Owners associated with Booburrgan Ngmmunge lead the development of high quality funding proposals targeting appropriate youth programs (c) Young people identify their aspirations and expectations for Booburrgan Ngmmunge (d) Aboriginal and (where appropriate) non-Aboriginal youth participate in Booburrgan Ngmmunge Junior Ranger Program (e) Young people are involved in cultural and business activities (i.e. Positions on Elders Council) (f) Young people participate in leadership activities and programs that support their personal and professional development. (i.e. Young Indigenous Leaders program)	2011-12 funding Established by 2010-11 Established by 2011 Established by 2013 Ongoing Ongoing



Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.3.1	Establish a consultation process around formal co-management arrangements for the Bunya Mountains National Park and adjacent Russell Park	<p>(A) Develop and submit a funding proposal to the Australian Government Indigenous Protected Areas Program for a Consultation Project</p> <p>(B) Establish a Bunya Mountains Board of Management to provide strategic direction on the Management of the Bunya Mountains and Russell Park. The Board of Advice should include senior representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians</li> <li>• Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (Department of Environment Resource Management)</li> <li>• Western Downs Regional Council</li> </ul> <p>(C) Develop a robust and enduring governance framework for the Board of Management, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• terms of reference;</li> <li>• strategic plan;</li> <li>• communication plan;</li> <li>• 12 month work plan;</li> <li>and</li> <li>• resourcing, including remuneration of Aboriginal people's participation.</li> </ul> <p>(D) All non-Indigenous members of the Board of Management to undergo cultural awareness and capability training</p> <p>(E) All members of the Board of Management to undergo governance capability development</p> <p>(F) Investigate opportunities for Aboriginal people to contract elements of the parks' management from the landowners</p>	<p>(a) A Bunya Mountains Board of Management is established for the Bunya Mountains National Park and adjacent Russell Park</p> <p>(b) Aboriginal people are more involved in the management of Booburrgan Ngmmunge.</p> <p>(c) Aboriginal perspectives and cultural values are more prominent in the management of Booburrgan Ngmmunge.</p> <p>(d) Land Managers and Aboriginal Custodians provide advice, direction and leadership on the management of Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(e) Traditional Custodians contract elements of the park's management from landowners</p>	<p>2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2014</p>



Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.3.6	Develop an Aboriginal Fire Management Plan for Booburrigan Ngmmunge	<p>(A) Under the direction of Traditional Custodians and with the advice of scientists and land managers undertake Aboriginal burning to manage the grassy balds and other areas of Booburrigan Ngmmunge for cultural and ecological purposes</p> <p>(B) Bunya Mountains Rangers host and/or attend other Aboriginal Ranger groups fire management programs and burns</p> <p>(C) A Bunya Mountains Fire Forum is conducted with Traditional Custodians, land managers, scientists and other key stakeholders to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inform the development of an Aboriginal Fire Management Plan for Booburrigan Ngmmunge</li> <li>2. Provide advice on fire management on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</li> <li>3. Discuss the establishment of an Aboriginal Fire Management Committee for the Bunya Mountains.</li> <li>4. Hear Aboriginal views on fire management.</li> <li>5. Outline strategies and actions for Aboriginal engagement in fire management (open days, men's and women's business, how and when to burn country, recording traditional fire knowledge)</li> </ol> <p>(D) Investigate the establishment of an Aboriginal Rural Fire Brigade on the Bunya Mountains</p> <p>(E) Protected area managers contract Traditional Custodians (incl. Aboriginal Working on Country Rangers) to some fire management works under contract</p>	<p>(a) Aboriginal people have increased and improved involvement in fire management on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(b) Information is exchanged between the Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians, Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers, Bunya Mountains QPWS and Local Government staff and Rangers, other Traditional Owners across the country and their rangers on effective fire management</p> <p>(c) Aboriginal people, scientists, landowners and other key stakeholders collaborate on most effective fire regimes and management of Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(d) An Aboriginal Rural Fire Brigade for the Bunya Mountains is established</p> <p>(e) A number of practical and deliverable strategies and actions are developed to ensure improved and increased Aboriginal involvement in fire management on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(f) Traditional Custodians provide fire management services (i.e. prescribed burning and firebreak maintenance) to protected area managers on a multi-year fee for service contractual basis</p>	<p>Immediately and ongoing</p> <p>Immediate and Ongoing</p> <p>Immediate and Ongoing</p> <p>Established by 2014</p> <p>Immediate and Ongoing</p> <p>Contracts commence by 2015</p>

Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.3.7	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of Aboriginal environmental values for Booburrgan Ngmmunge	<p>(A) Engage suitably qualified consultant(s) to work with Traditional Custodians to assess the Aboriginal environmental values of Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(B) Complete traditional knowledge recording of Traditional Custodian and other visiting Aboriginal groups Elders and knowledge holders</p>	<p>(a) A suitably qualified consultant(s) is agreed by the Traditional Custodians to work with them on the assessment of the Aboriginal environmental values of Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(b) Traditional knowledge recording is completed by 2013</p>	<p>Assessment completed by 2012</p> <p>Traditional Knowledge completed 2013</p>
3.3.8	Aboriginal people are involved in the management of pest plants and animals	<p>(A) Protected area managers contract Traditional Custodians (incl. Aboriginal Working on Country Rangers) to provide pest plant and animal removal</p> <p>(B) Under the direction of Traditional Custodians, in partnership with land managers and with the advice of scientists, undertake the removal and management of feral and pest plants and animals on Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p>	<p>(A) Protected area managers contract Traditional Custodians (incl. Aboriginal Working on Country Rangers) to provide pest plant and animal removal</p> <p>(B) Under the direction of Traditional Custodians, in partnership with land managers and with the advice of scientists, undertake the removal and management of feral and pest plants and animals on Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p>	<p>Immediately and ongoing</p> <p>Contracts commence by 2015</p>
3.3.9	Negotiate Aboriginal access and harvesting rights with landowners	<p>(A) Initiate discussions between Traditional Custodians and other visiting Aboriginal groups to formalise their aspirations and expectations for use of natural resources for cultural, economic and dietary purposes</p> <p>(B) Initiate discussions between Traditional Custodians and senior protected area estate landowners to negotiate use of natural resources for cultural, economic and dietary purposes</p> <p>(C) Initiate discussions between Traditional Custodians and non-protected area estate landowners to negotiate use of natural resources for cultural, economic and dietary purposes</p>	<p>(a) Aboriginal people have a collective and informed view of Aboriginal use of natural resources for cultural, economic and dietary purposes</p> <p>(b) Aboriginal people and landowners develop an agreement on the Aboriginal use of natural resources for cultural, economic and dietary purposes</p> <p>(c) Aboriginal people and non-protected area estate landowners develop an agreement on the Aboriginal use of natural resources for cultural, economic and dietary purposes</p>	<p>Discussions completed 2011</p> <p>Agreement reached by 2012</p> <p>Negotiations commence in 2013</p>

Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.4.1	Secure Aboriginal employment and business opportunities for Booburrigan Ngmmunge	<p>(A) Seek funding to strengthen and expand the Working on Country Ranger Program</p> <p>(B) Seek support for a comprehensive analysis of business, employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people on and around Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(C) Seek support from State and Local Government to fund sustainable industries on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(D) Ensure Traditional Custodians are involved in the establishment, recruitment and retention of QPWS and Regional Council Ranger Staff operating on the Bunya Mountains and Russell Park</p> <p>(E) Seek support from business and corporate sectors for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• business analysis</li> <li>• business champions</li> <li>• sponsorship and partnerships</li> <li>• training and development</li> <li>• contribution to Booburrigan Ngmmunge Caring for Country Trust</li> </ul>	<p>(a) An increase in the number of Aboriginal people employed in Caring for Country related activities on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(b) Traditional Custodians actively participate in recruitment and retention processes for all mainstream and Aboriginal specific (Specified) rangers on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(c) A comprehensive business analysis is conducted on and around Booburrigan Ngmmunge to inform and establish sustainable industries</p> <p>(d) Business and corporate sectors support Aboriginal business and employment opportunities on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p> <p>Immediate and ongoing</p> <p>Analysis completed June 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
3.4.2	An Aboriginal Cultural Centre is established on Booburrigan Ngmmunge	<p>(A) Submit funding applications for the design and development of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre that includes the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational and interpretive centre;</li> <li>• Keeping place for important cultural materials and remains;</li> <li>• Meeting place and conference centre for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; and.</li> <li>• Place of business for Elders Council, rangers and others.</li> </ul>	<p>(a) An Aboriginal owned and managed Cultural Centre is established - providing a permanent Aboriginal presence and cultural focal point for Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p>	<p>Established by 2015</p>
3.4.3	Seek funding for Aboriginal owned land for conservation, cultural, economic and social purposes	<p>(A) Hold discussions with conservation groups (i.e. Worldwide Fund for Nature, Fauna and Flora International, Australian Rainforest Foundation) to discuss funding support for purchasing of land</p> <p>(B) In partnership with conservation groups and NRM bodies, undertake an assessment of potential land for purchase for conservation, cultural, economic and social purposes</p> <p>(C) Submit applications to the Indigenous Land Corporation, National Reserve System (Indigenous Protected Area) and others (philanthropic, corporate, private) for the purchase of land on or around Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p>	<p>(a) Potential lands identified for purchase for conservation, cultural, economic and social purposes</p> <p>(b) A collaborative funding submission is developed and submitted for Aboriginal held lands on Booburrigan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(c) Land on Booburrigan Ngmmunge is handed back to Traditional Custodians for cultural and/or economic purposes</p>	<p>Commence 2011</p> <p>Submit by 2015</p> <p>Acquisition by 2020</p>



Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.5.2	Working in Partnership with Bunya Partnerships Coordination Group	<p>(A) Bunya Mountains Elders Council in collaboration with the Bunya Partnerships Coordination Group develop a coordinated approach and work plan to deliver on this plan</p> <p>(B) Bunya Partnerships Coordination Group terms of reference are amended to reflect their revised role</p>	<p>(a) Actions and strategies outlined in this Caring for Country Plan continue to be implemented through the assistance of the Bunya Mountains Traditional Custodians and the Bunya Partnerships Coordination Group</p> <p>(b) The Bunya Partnerships Coordination Group's objectives compliment the Bunya Mountains Elders Council's terms of reference and the outcomes of this plan</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p> <p>By February 2011</p>
3.5.3	Key agreements are reached with stakeholders	<p>(A) The QPWS (DERM), WDRC and the Bunya Mountains Elders Council enter into appropriate agreements on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal rights and interests in Booburrgan Ngmmunge;</li> <li>• Landowner and Traditional Custodian responsibilities;</li> <li>• Governance arrangements for the partnership, including support;</li> <li>• Key objectives, deliverables and timeframes; and</li> <li>• Review and conflict resolution processes.</li> </ul> <p>(B) BMRG enters into an agreement with the Bunya Mountains Elders Council to transition responsibilities from them to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council</p>	<p>(a) Traditional Custodians and protected area estate landowners formally agree to work together to manage Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(b) The Bunya Mountains Elders Council is a legally incorporated organisation, able to manage and administer grant funding</p> <p>(c) The Bunya Mountains Elders Council builds strong capacity to confidently manage major contracts for the betterment of Booburrgan Ngmmunge and Aboriginal people</p> <p>(d) BMRG successfully transitions administrative responsibility to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council by 2013</p>	<p>Established 2011</p> <p>30 June 2013</p> <p>Immediate and Ongoing</p> <p>By 2013</p>

Strategy number	Strategy	Activities	Desired Outcomes	Timeframe
3.5.4	Communicates with influence	<p>(A) With the assistance of BMRG and the Bunya Partnerships Coordination Group, the Bunya Mountains Elders Council develops a communication strategy for Booburrgan Ngmmunge.</p> <p>(B) Bunya Mountains Elders Council implements own communication strategy</p> <p>(C) A range of communication activities are initiated and/or maintained (website, newsletter, events)</p>	<p>(a) A culturally appropriate communication strategy is developed to guide important business for Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(b) Bunya Mountains Elders Council develops own communication collateral as a community asset.</p> <p>(c) Aboriginal groups and stakeholders are informed and engaged in Caring for Country activities relating to Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p>	<p>December 2010</p> <p>December 2010</p> <p>Ongoing and immediate</p>
3.5.5	Aboriginal leadership in research over Booburrgan Ngmmunge.	<p>(A) Traditional Custodians host a research forum and invite participation from scientists, universities and research bodies.</p> <p>(B) Seek funding support for research on Booburrgan Ngmmunge.</p> <p>(C) Establish a Bunya Mountains Research Hub</p>	<p>(a) A research forum is hosted by Traditional Custodians on Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(b) Aboriginal people have an increased and ongoing role in all research affecting Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(c) An Aboriginal research hub is formed for Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>(d) Aboriginal people inform research questions and methodology</p>	<p>November 2010</p> <p>Ongoing and immediate</p> <p>Ongoing and immediate</p> <p>Ongoing and immediate</p>



## 4.2 Enduring Strategies

The Traditional Custodians want to work together with other visiting Aboriginal groups, landowners, stakeholders and supporters to establish and invest in a 'Booburrgan Ngmmunge Caring for Country Trust' (the Trust). This strategy will be developed concurrently to the immediate strategies, but will exist far beyond them and is a major aspiration for our self-determination.

The Trust will provide a long term, secure and independent funding source for advancing caring for country outcomes on Booburrgan Ngmmunge. It will stand as a legacy to the vision of our people and their supporters. The Trust can continually grow over time with other contributions. Moreover, the Trust funds can be strategically used to lever matching contributions from philanthropic and corporate sectors.

The purpose of the Trust would be to:

- Provide long term financial autonomy to Aboriginal people in relation to advancing caring for country activities on Booburrgan Ngmmunge;
- Support involvement of Aboriginal Elders and young people in Aboriginal decision making, governance and leadership on Booburrgan Ngmmunge; and
- Sponsor culturally appropriate research and educational opportunities for our young people.

The Trust can be established immediately with small-medium investments from multiple sources. For the Trust to become operational, initial investments will be required to reach a significant capital base. The interest earned from this capital would operate the Trust.

We would work with our stakeholders to identify and action the most appropriate investment strategy. Depending on the investment strategy adopted and financial climate over time, it is expected that interest earned from the capital may vary between 3-10% per annum. For example, based on \$2m capital and an average 5% interest, the Trust may receive \$100,000 income for distribution each year.

The capital would be maintained from the interest to ensure its market value over time. Generally, the capital would not be available for distribution. However there may be exceptional circumstances where this is required and provisions can be made for this in the Trust Deed.

A Trust Deed will be developed outlining the objectives, rules, legal obligations and governance arrangements of the Trust. A Board of Advice will provide recommendations over the distributions of Trust Funds and will likely comprise Traditional Custodians and other key stakeholders with expertise in financial, legal and administration skills. Patrons could be appointed to the Trust by the Trust's Board. Generally Patrons will be people who can act as champions for the Trust in a range of contexts. They can be Elders, industry CEOs and Board members, current and former politicians and other influential people and dignitaries.

## 4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Bunya Mountains Elders Council, in partnership with the Bunya Partnership Coordination Group, and with the support of the Burnett Mary Regional Group, Condamine Alliance and SEQ Catchments will review the plan annually and report publicly on its progress.

Progress on the implementation of initiatives included in this plan will be reported to the Bunya Mountains Elders Council biannually. The Bunya Partnership Coordination Group will provide input where appropriate.

The plan will be reviewed annually on the anniversary of its implementation. A full and complete review of all components of the plan will be undertaken at the end of the implementation phase by the Bunya Mountains Elders Council. In doing this work, the Elders will commission a review of the Aspirations and Caring for Country Plan against a set of relevant Performance Indicators.

The main attributes of Performance Indicators are data that:

- causally relates to things that the plan is expected to directly control and deliver upon
- relates to explicit performance specifications which make it clear what is expected – typically defined in terms of how much was done; how well was it done; and did it achieve what was expected at the end of the project
- will be used to make a judgement about project performance.

The following Performance Indicators have been developed to contribute to the effectiveness of the monitoring system by assuring that comparable data will be collected on a regular and timely basis.

### **Bonye (Bon-yee) Bu'r (Boo-roo) – Strategic level deliverables (project goals)**

- Traditional Custodians care for Booburrgan Ngmmunge.
- Culture is protected, recognised, understood and respected.
- Our people exhibit hope, encouragement and security, now and into the future.

Assessing Progress	Performance Indicators	Measured By
How much was done?	Percentage and number of Aboriginal people engaged in caring for country activities on Booburrgan Ngmmunge  Number of youth involved in caring for country activities on Booburrgan Ngmmunge  Number of youth specific activities  Number of women involved in caring for country activities on Booburrgan Ngmmunge  Number of Traditional Custodians commenced and completed leadership or other accredited training  Number of meetings convened by Elders Council, or others, to provide leadership for Booburrgan Ngmmunge  Number of community events held on Booburrgan Ngmmunge to strengthen culture	Number of people  Number of people  Number of activities  Number of people  Rating by Elders Council (achieved, partly achieved or not achieved) against agreed activities  Rating by Elders Council (achieved, partly achieved or not achieved) against agreed activities  Number of events held; and Satisfaction of event by participants (highly satisfied, partly satisfied or not satisfied)
How well was it done?	Number of partnerships created and maintained  Rating on satisfaction of existing partnerships  Number of Aboriginal people employed on Booburrgan Ngmmunge  Number of Aboriginal enterprises commenced on Booburrgan Ngmmunge  Health of Country	Number of partnerships  Rating by Elders Council (highly satisfied, partly satisfied or not satisfied)  Number of people  Number of people  Rating by Elders Council (achieved, partly achieved or not achieved) against agreed activities
Did it achieve what was expected?	Number of sites/places within Booburrgan Ngmmunge where caring for country works conducted  Rating of achievement against caring for country activities  Rating of achievement of project goals	Number of sites/places  Rating by Elders Council (achieved, partly achieved or not achieved) against agreed activities  Rating by Elders Council (expectations fully met, expectations partly met, expectations not met) of achievement against Project Goal



Data source	Success looks like	Comments
Performance Assessment Report	<p>5% of the people engaged in the management of Booburrgan Ngmmunge are Aboriginal people</p> <p>20 young people are engaged each year in activities on Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>At least 3 youth specific activities are undertaken each year by the Elders Council</p> <p>At least 15 Aboriginal women are engaged each year in activities on Booburrgan Ngmmunge</p> <p>At least 10 Aboriginal people achieve some level of leadership qualification. At least 10 Aboriginal people achieve some level of accredited training</p> <p>4 meetings convened by the Elders Council a year to advance strategic plan</p> <p>Bunya Festival held every 3 years; and 2 community events held each year to celebrate Booburrgan Ngmmunge and people</p> <p>3 partnerships maintained 3 new partnerships created</p> <p>70% of partnerships achieve highly satisfied or partly satisfied ratings by all parties</p> <p>At least 10 Aboriginal people in either full time or part time employment</p> <p>At least 2 Aboriginal enterprises commenced during the life of this plan</p> <p>At least 5% improvement to the overall health of Booburrgan Ngmmunge each year for the life of this plan</p> <p>At least 5 priority places are cared for appropriately by Aboriginal people</p> <p>70% of activities achieved or partly achieved</p> <p>70% of expectations partly or fully met</p>	<p>Performance Assessment Report template encompassing assessment criteria, to be developed</p> <p>Assessment template (survey) to be developed</p> <p>Data source may include scientific (quantitative) data as well as qualitative data</p> <p>Assessment template (survey) to be developed to identify level of achievement</p>



# Part 5. References and Resources

## 5.1 References

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## 5.2 Appendices

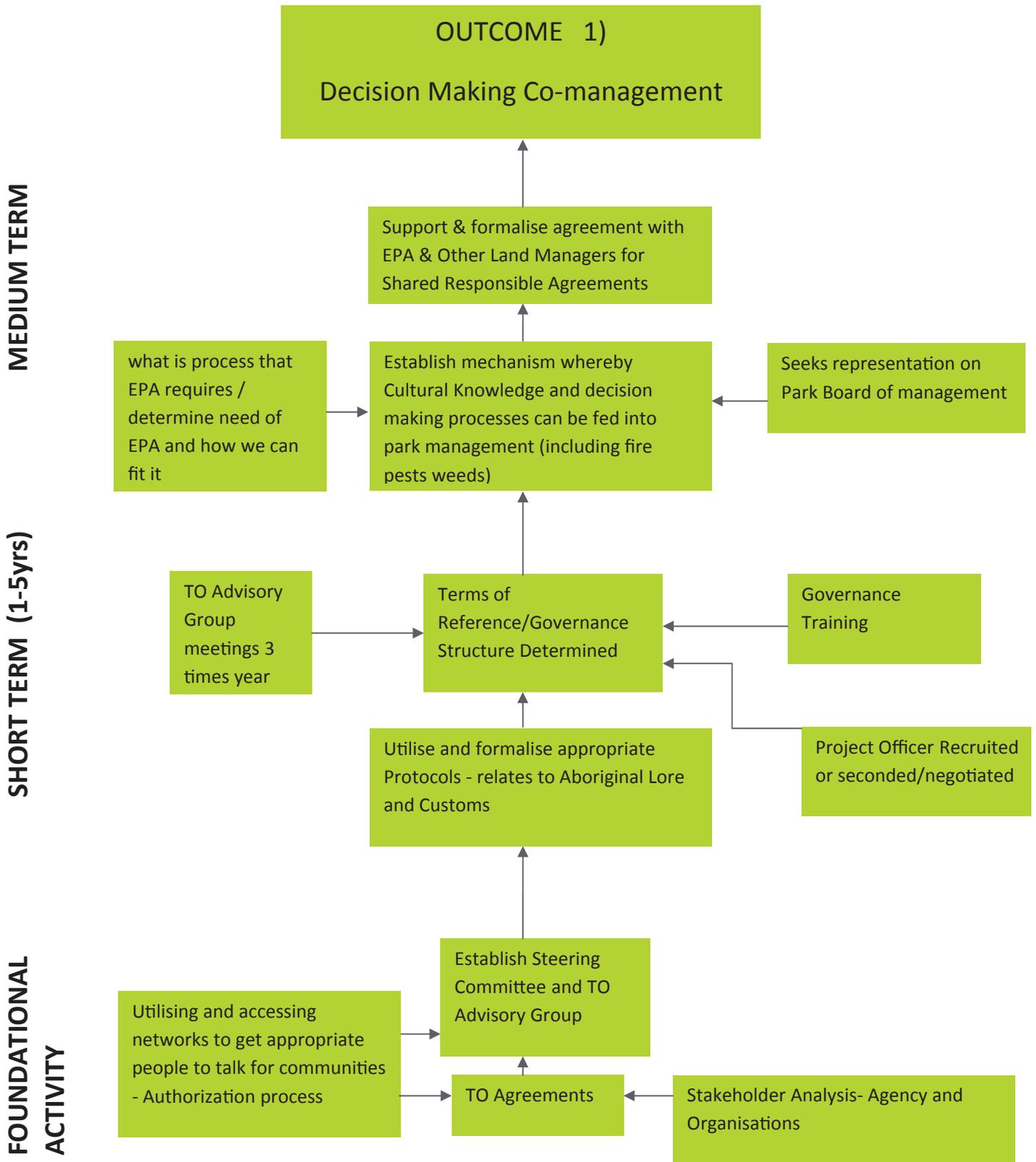
Appendix A – Program Logic Outcomes 2009

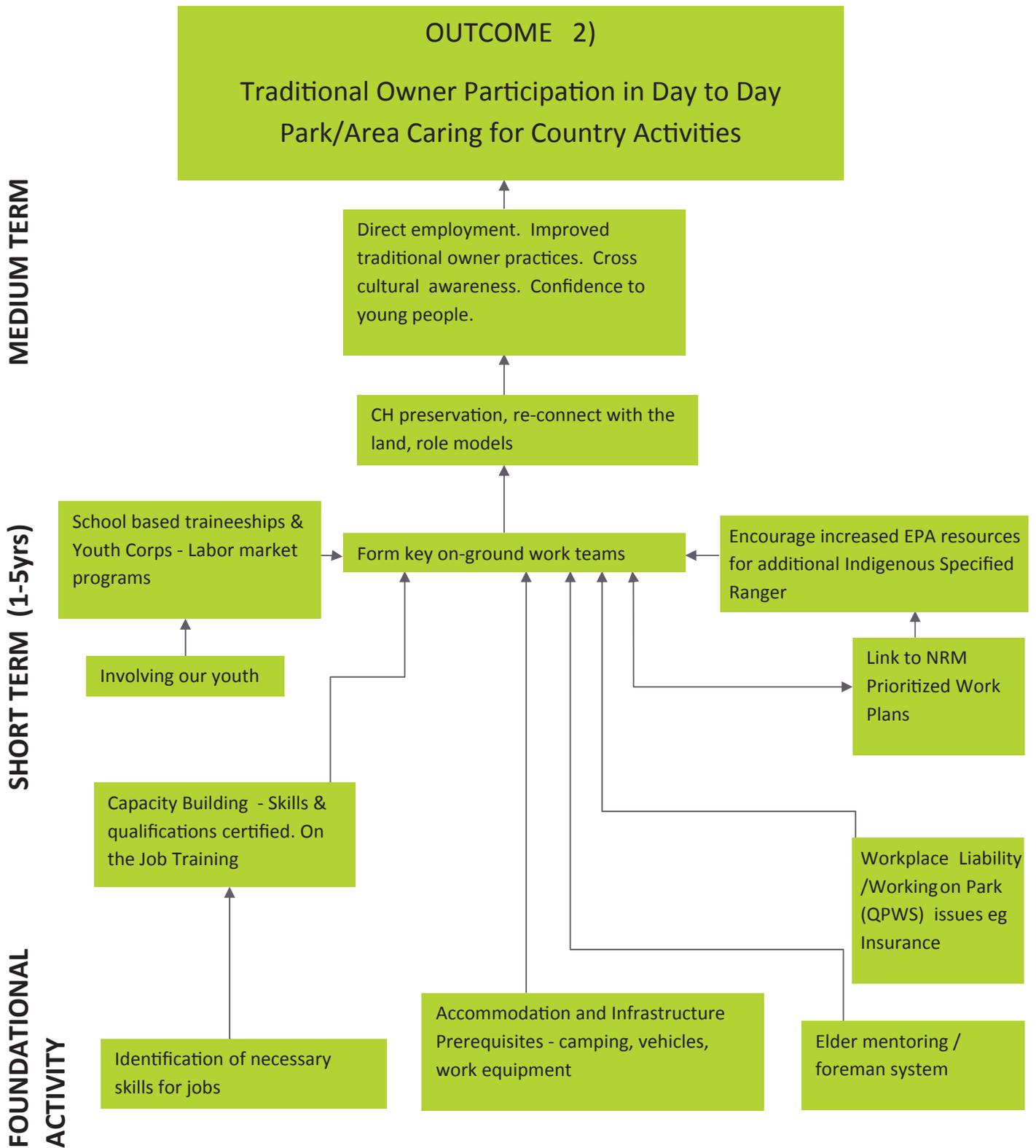
Appendix B – QPWS Operational Policy: Indigenous Partnerships in Protected Area Management

Appendix C - Legislation that applies to the Bunya Mountains

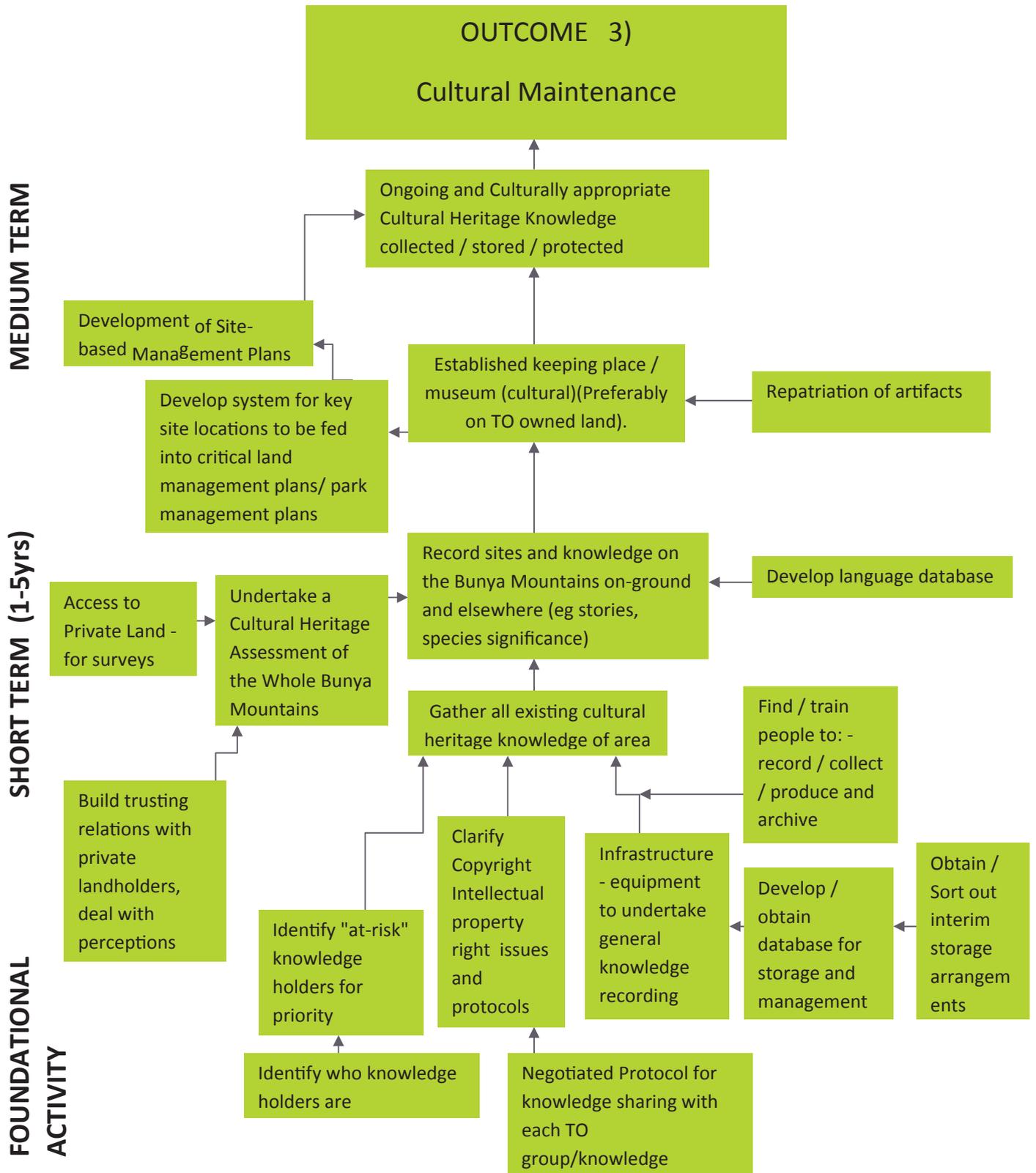


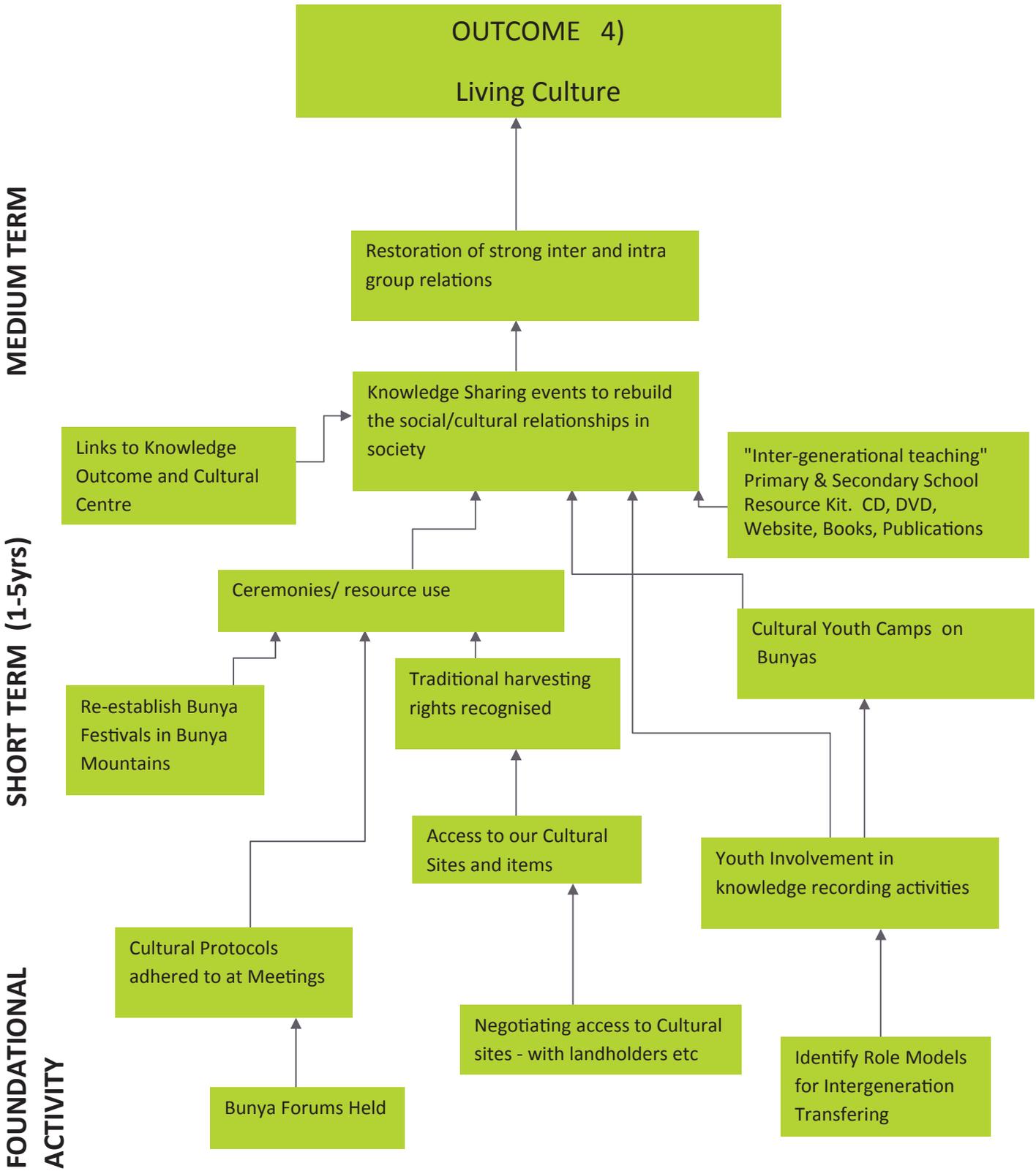
OUTCOME 1 - Decision making/Co-management



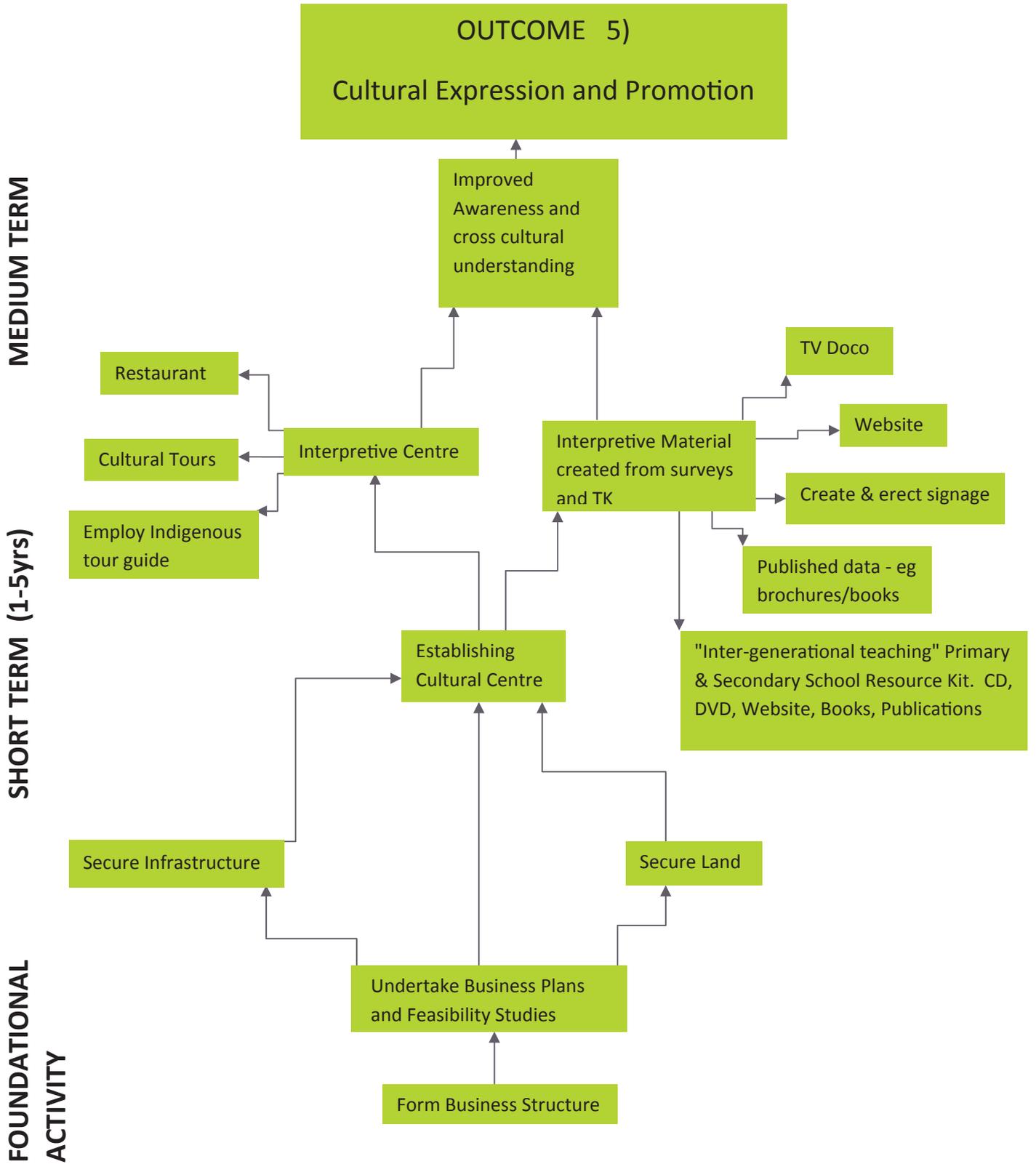


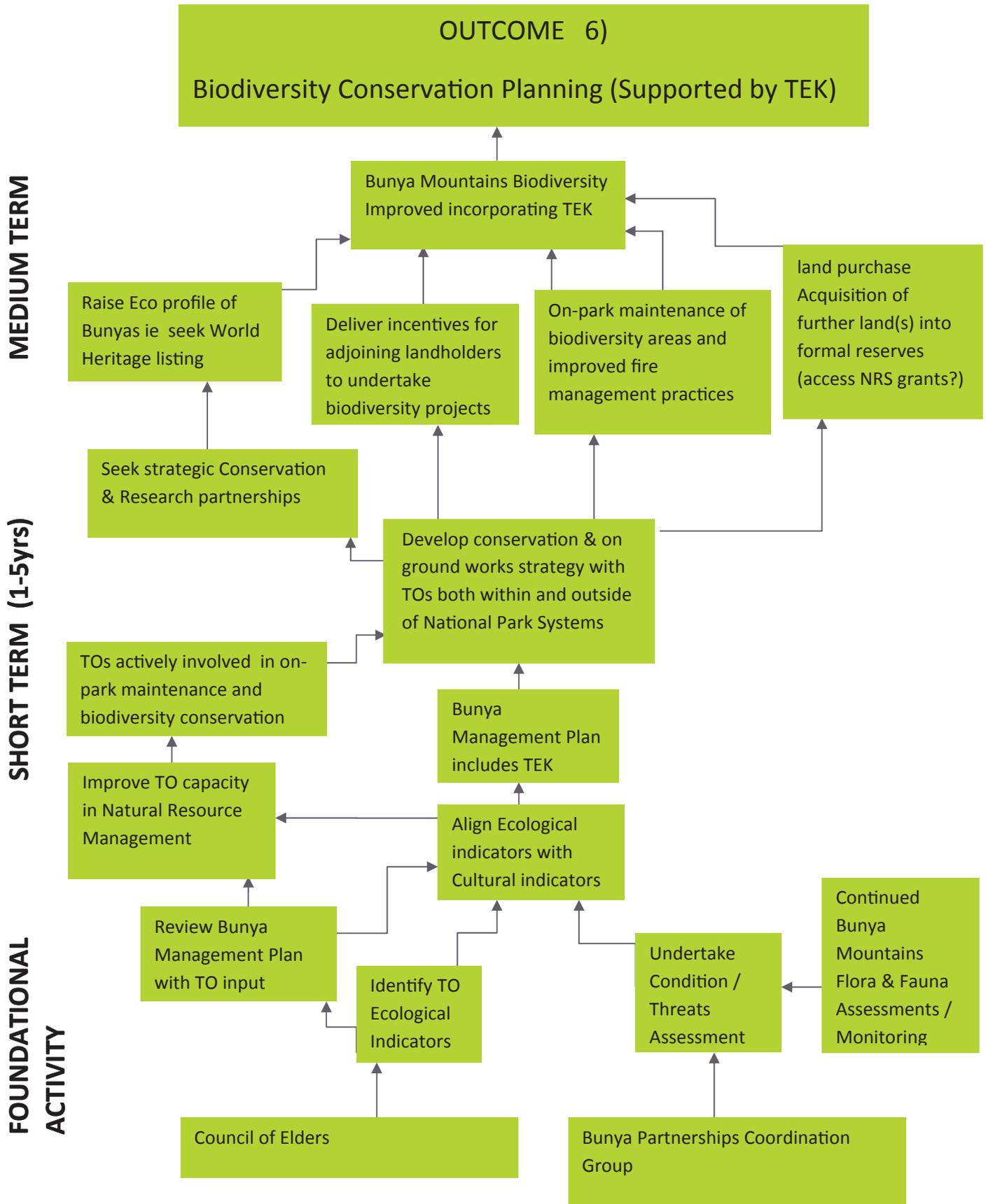
**OUTCOME 3 – Cultural Maintenance**



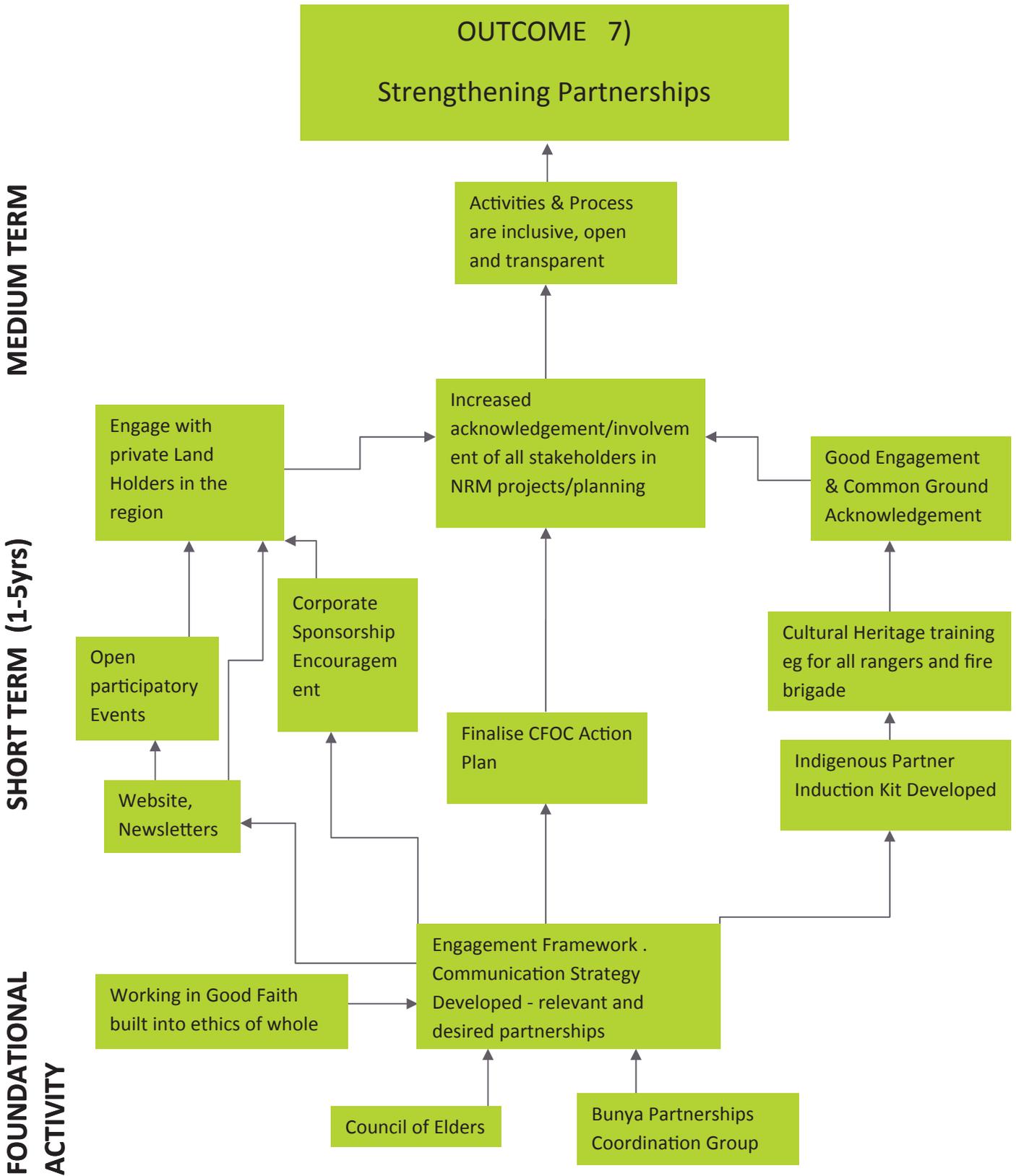


**OUTCOME 5 – Cultural Expression and Promotion**





**OUTCOME 7 – Strengthening Partnerships**





# Operational policy

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

## Indigenous Partnerships in Management of Protected Areas

*Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) of the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.*

### Purpose

QPWS has a range of partnership arrangements with traditional owners across Queensland. This policy is designed to give guidance to QPWS operations in selecting the best form of partnership arrangements to meaningfully involve traditional owners in management of national parks.

### Background

Both the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) (s5 and s6) and the Master Plan for Queensland's Park System (principle 4) set out requirements to form active partnerships with traditional owners and co-operatively involve traditional owners in management of protected areas and the conservation of nature. In addition, the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* (NTA) provides a legislative framework for recognising and protecting native title rights and interests. Where native title rights and interests exist, the State must deal with them in accordance with the NTA. High Court decisions made in 2002, specifically *Yorta Yorta* and *Ward*, have clarified the meaning of native title rights and interests, some of which may have survived on protected areas.

Day-to-day protected area operations requires close liaison with traditional owners in order to consider existing rights and interests as well as to build strong working relationships that will benefit protected area management.

Issues where liaison with traditional owners may need to occur include:

- National park management planning
- Transfer of forest areas and other tenures to protected areas
- Planning and management of capital works
- Dedication of proposed new protected areas
- Arrangements for traditional owner involvement in natural resource management
- Development of commercial nature-based tourism ventures in protected areas
- Settlement of a native title claim over a protected area
- Management of cultural heritage places on protected areas.

There is general recognition that partnerships with traditional owners can achieve conservation outcomes that benefit the parks system. QPWS seeks to establish partnership arrangements with traditional owners in a mutually appropriate and agreeable form. Additionally, some traditional owners have demonstrated a wish to initiate the development of partnership arrangements to enhance estate management and meet their aspirations.

The process of developing meaningful and workable arrangements for the involvement of traditional owners in protected area management will be dynamic, and different approaches will be required depending on the individual circumstances of each case. QPWS will seek to establish robust Indigenous partnership arrangements that are mutually appropriate to each circumstance.

## Policy statement

### 1. Native Title

Native title is founded on the traditional laws and customs of an indigenous community that existed at the time of European settlement. Native title rights and interests may be exclusive (to the exclusion of all others) or non-exclusive (where the rights of others co-exist). For native title to survive, traditional laws and customs must have been acknowledged and observed since European settlement without substantial interruption. In the High Court decision in *Mabo and others v State of Queensland (No.2)* (1992), Justice Brennan said “..when the tide of history has washed away any real acknowledgement of traditional law and any real observance of traditional customs, the foundation of native title has disappeared”.

Native title may exist over a protected area. QPWS will manage protected areas assuming native title rights and interests exist until a determination of native title is made by the Federal Court or alternatively, extinguishment of native title is established. Protected areas in Queensland where the Federal Court has made a determination of native title include Barron Gorge National Park (Djabugay), Grey Peaks National Park and Malbon Thompson Forest Reserve (Mandingalbay Yidinji), Wooroonaran National Park (part) and Topaz Road National Park (Ngadjon Jii), proposed additions to Daintree National Park and Cedar Bay National Park (Eastern Kuku Yalanji), and Piper, Quoin and Forbes Islands National Parks (Kuuku Y’au). In each case of a determination of native title over a national park, an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) has been negotiated to regulate how native title rights and interests will be exercised on the park.

An application to the Federal Court for a determination of native title must pass a registration test. A determination of native title may be made by consent if negotiation has worked and all the parties agree. If the parties have not been able to agree, then a determination may be made by the court as a litigated determination. All the determinations of native title over protected areas in Queensland have been consent determinations. **QPWS will endeavour to settle native title claims over protected areas through mediation and by consent.**

Section 211 of the NTA exempts native title holders from obtaining a permit to exercise their native title rights if a permit is ordinarily required. Some traditional owners may assert that native title rights and interests exist on a protected area before there has been a determination by the Federal Court. In these circumstances, s211 of the NTA may not be a defence if it is subsequently found that native title does not exist.

Native title work procedures set out the classes of activity that require native title notification. Formal notification procedures should be followed regardless of any specific discussions with native title claimants relating to protected area management. Discussions with native title parties may provide opportunities to discuss issues that trigger notifications, but cannot replace formal notification requirements.

ILUAs are legal contracts that validate certain actions affecting native title. Once an ILUA is registered, any future acts that are subject to the ILUA are valid (s23EB(2) of the NTA). An ILUA binds not only the signatories to the agreement, but also all native title holders who are not already parties to the agreement. **If robust partnerships can be achieved through other types of agreements when native title is not affected, such as a Memorandum of Understanding or a s34 agreement under the NCA, then these other types of agreements should be utilised.** QPWS negotiated an ILUA with Ma:Mu people for the construction of the Mamu Canopy Walk in Wooroonoaran National Park, and with Erubam Le and Wuthathi people for the dedication of Raine Island National Park (Scientific). QPWS also negotiated ILUAs for the establishment of new



national parks in Cape York Peninsula including Melsonby (Gaaraay) National Park, Annan River (Yuku Baja-Muliku) National Park, and Jack River National Park. **Beginning negotiations of an ILUA should not start without prior approval of the Assistant Director-General QPWS.**

## 2. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places

Aboriginal cultural heritage places on protected areas are protected by both the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s17). **A cultural heritage assessment should be undertaken as part of capital works planning for any new capital works projects on protected areas.** The cultural heritage assessment may give rise to the need for a cultural heritage management plan under part 7 of the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*.

Native title rights and interests are separate and distinct from traditional owner's knowledge and responsibilities about cultural heritage places. Generally even where native title rights and interests have been extinguished, the rights and responsibilities of traditional owners as custodians of cultural heritage places continue. Section 34 and s35 of the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* make a connection between a native title party (which includes a registered native title claimant) and an Aboriginal party for the purposes of defining an Aboriginal party. **QPWS will seek to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage places on protected areas in accordance with the operational policy and procedural guide *Management of Cultural Heritage Places on Protected Areas*.**

## 3. Claimable National Parks Under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*

Section 24 of the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (ALA) provides for national parks to be available State land that may be declared by regulation to be claimable land. Outside of Cape York Peninsula only three national parks have been declared by regulation to be claimable land - Cedar Bay National Park, Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park and Simpson Desert National Park.

A claim over a national park under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* is referred to the Land Tribunal and is considered on either the grounds of traditional affiliation, historical association or economic or cultural viability. If the claim is established, the Land Tribunal must recommend to the Minister (administering the ALA) that the land is granted. The Minister administering the ALA must appoint trustees for the benefit of the grantees (the Aboriginal people concerned). If the grantees of the land and the Minister (administering the NCA) agree on a proposal for the lease of the land to the State for the purposes of being managed as a national park, a management plan must be prepared. The dedication of a national park (Aboriginal land) cannot be made until a management plan has been approved by Governor in Council. To date no dedications of national park (Aboriginal land) have been made, despite the successful establishment of claims before the Land Tribunal, because claimants have not agreed with leaseback arrangements. **While leaseback arrangements are unacceptable to claimants, national parks declared to be claimable land will be managed under the management principles of s17 (not s18) of the NCA.**

## 4. National Parks (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land)

The *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007* introduced measures to protect the natural and cultural values of the Cape York Peninsula Region, provide economic opportunities for Indigenous communities, and ensure future development is sustainable. It contains specific provisions plus amendments to a number of existing Acts, in particular the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) and the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (ALA).

The Act provides for an innovative model for tenure resolution by creating a new class of protected area under the NCA called *National Parks (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land)* (national parks (CYPAL)). National parks (CYPAL) may be created over an existing national park, Aboriginal land, and Unallocated State Land (USL) in the Cape York Peninsula Region (which is defined by reference to a map held by DERM).

Traditional owners (represented by a land trust) are formally recognised as the owners of the land through granting of Aboriginal freehold title, provided they agree to the area being managed as a national park (CYPAL) in perpetuity under the NCA. Thus national parks can co-exist with Aboriginal freehold land, without the need for a leaseback arrangement.

**Joint management arrangements for national parks (CYPAL), between the land trust and QPWS, will be established through the development of an Indigenous Management Agreement (IMA).** The IMA will provide the framework that establishes the ongoing relationship between the parties for the management of the national park (CYPAL) and describes their respective roles and responsibilities and strategic management directions. An IMA is attached as a schedule to an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) so that the ILUA provides consent to the provisions on the IMA that may affect any native title rights and interests. Two national parks (CYPAL) have been declared (Lama Lama and KULLA (McIlwraith Range)).

## 5. Protocols for Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People

Two general protocols for all Queensland Government officers exist and should be used as a general guide.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet promulgated a protocol for all Queensland government officials on December 2005 for the *Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners*. This protocol makes the distinction between acknowledgment of traditional owners, which should be done by all Queensland government officials, and a *Welcome to Country*, which is performed by traditional owners to open a significant event or formal function.

*Protocols for Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People* was promulgated in May 1998 as a guide to Queensland government officers who at some time need to consult with Indigenous groups, individuals and communities. This protocol articulates a definition of Aboriginality as a person of Aboriginal descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal person, and who is accepted as such in the community in which they live. **QPWS officers should use these protocols for the acknowledgement of traditional owners for a definition of Aboriginality.**

## 6. Ministerial Advisory Committees

The provision under s132 of the NCA to establish a Ministerial Advisory Committee offers a workable alternative to informal working groups, providing a statutory acknowledgement of the role of traditional owners in managing protected areas. Currently there is one Ministerial Advisory Committee for Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park. **Negotiation of establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Committee should not be started without first obtaining prior approval of the Assistant Director-General QPWS.**

## 7. Indigenous Protected Areas

The Australian Government has, in recognition of the significance of the natural and cultural values of land held by Indigenous people, introduced a system whereby Indigenous landholders can enter into a voluntary agreement with the Commonwealth to manage the land for conservation. These Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) thus add to the overall national conservation estate, although they are not protected by law and are dependent on self declaration by the Indigenous landholders. In this sense, IPAs do not fulfil the National



## Indigenous Partnerships in Management of Protected Areas

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Reserve System definition of a protected area as formally protected by law and managed in perpetuity for conservation. The Australian Government provides funds for IPAs for the development of a management plan and ongoing implementation.

IPAs are most effective where a tripartite agreement is established between the Indigenous land holders, the relevant State agency and the Australian Government. A Conservation Agreement under s45 of the NCA over an Indigenous Protected Area would establish a nature refuge and provide for its formal protection. **QPWS prefers tripartite agreements with IPAs between the Australian Government, the State Government and the Indigenous land holders to ensure the land is formally protected by law and managed for conservation in perpetuity.** Indigenous rangers funded under the IPA program, and employed by Indigenous organisations, may be appointed as Conservation Officers under the NCA following successful completion of appropriate investigation officer training. A separate Procedural Guide *Defining the role of QPWS ranger staff employed in Indigenous specified and identified roles* should be used regarding the role of Indigenous rangers employed by QPWS.

### 8. Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements

Marine park zoning plans under the *Marine Parks Act 2004* provide for Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs). A TUMRA is defined in the zoning plans as an agreement that:

- is prepared by a traditional owner group
- provides for traditional use of marine resources in part of the marine park
- includes the prescribed matters for a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement

The zoning plan provides for the chief executive to accredit a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement.

**If native title rights and interests have not been determined for the marine park, QPWS officers should not negotiate a TUMRA that is inconsistent with the provisions of the NCA and NC regulations.**

### Policy Statement

#### Partnerships with Traditional Owners on Protected Areas

While each protected area will differ, the following components cover the range of initiatives that QPWS may discuss with traditional owners in structured negotiation of partnerships. Note that these are presented as a range of partnership options and are not absolute requirements for every situation.

1. Working groups may be established to address specific management outcomes over a defined timeframe. These working groups may negotiate protocols for issues such as fire management, pest plant and animal management, visitor and commercial activities, and cultural heritage management.
2. A management plan working group may be established to specifically address the development of a national park management plan.
3. Employment opportunities may be explored using Indigenous identified and specified positions, casual positions and permanent appointments. Additionally, there may be a commitment to explore commercial opportunities for traditional owners through their involvement in management and presentation of the protected area's natural and cultural resources.
4. Living areas and hunting on protected areas may be considered, but will require considerable discussion and negotiation on scope and procedures, depending on the area's size and location and the extent of visitor use of the area.

5. Park names and names of sites within protected areas may be drawn from Indigenous languages to recognise traditional owner's connection to land.

These components can be used singly or in combinations. They can be used to initiate new arrangements or to build on existing ones, depending upon the particular circumstances existing on the protected area, the collective capacity to resource them, and the aspirations and capacity of traditional owners to engage in them.

The approval of the Assistant Director-General QPWS is required prior to negotiating initiatives outside of these partnership components. Joint management of national parks in Queensland is a term that is confined to the area covered by the *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007*. For other areas in Queensland outside of Cape York Peninsula, the term co-operative involvement in management of national parks is consistent with legislative and policy settings.

## Reference materials

Queensland Government Native Title Work Procedures  
Guidelines for Negotiation of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (2006)  
Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2008-2030  
Master Plan for Queensland's Parks System (2001)  
Protocols for Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People (1998)  
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners (2005)  
Procedural guide – Indigenous partnership arrangements

## Authorities

*Nature Conservation Act 1992*  
*Aboriginal Land Act 1991*  
*Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*  
*Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007*  
*Marine Park (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004*  
*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*

## Disclaimer

While this document has been prepared with care it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Resource Management should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.



**Approved by**

Andrea Leverington

Signature

14/09/2009

Date

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## Appendix C

### Legislation that applies to the Bunya Mountains

**State**

*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*  
*Environment Protection Act 1994*  
*Nature Conservation Act 1992*  
*Queensland Heritage Act 1992*

**National**

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*  
*Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

