

KOWANYAMA LAND OFFICE NEWS

Fourth issue

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KOWANYAMA LAND OFFICE NEWS

Fourth issue June 2012

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Post Box 32, Kowanyama QLD 4871**

Editorial
Viv Sinnamon
viv@klco.org.au
Telephone 07 40605187
Facsimile 07 40605250
Photos, graphics and stories welcome



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Cover: Cabbage Palm (*Corypha elata*) clump on the
edge of *Thakuluw* wetland near Topsy Creek mouth

**A COMMUNITY MAGAZINE
PRODUCED FOR THE
KOWANYAMA COMMUNITY
AND FRIENDS**

**The opinions and views
expressed in this magazine
do not necessarily
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From the editor

Well winter has arrived with some very overcast weather. Oriners Mob reported some rain of about 100 millimetres at the house which has slowed plans for an early burn program for forest country. As I write this editorial fishermen are anxious about road conditions through from Chillagoe for the opening of our *Recreational Fishing Season* on the first of June.

Good news for Top End mobs with the approval of funding for the Alice Mitchell area of *Errk Oygangand* National Park boundary fence. Oriners Mob will build it with other TO's. The project is Federal Government funded through their *Caring for our Country Program* which will also fund the development of a management plan for Errk Oygangand by the Land Office with TO's into 2013.

In the past plans were developed by the State so this is a very real change in which *Oygangand* Mob get to do the plan with their own management agency. The plan will then go for final approval at the negotiation table with the *Joint Management Steering Committee* for the park.

Things have been hectic with changes in staff, and my being away on leave for surgery but we have made it through. Applications are in to fill the vacant Land Office NRM Coordinator's position, and our new rangers have hit the ground running with Garth and team.

We are proud to say that it has been possible to get people on the ground at Oriners ready for what will be a busy year for them. Thanks for your help Aaron.

This issue will be interesting to everyone with the Shelfo bomber story and the fantastic photographs taken by the American pilot who flew the plane back to Charters Towers. We thank our new friend in Brisbane, Roger Marks for providing the historical material back in 2009 from his 1994 publication, and also to Land Office staff who have stuck with it while I have been on leave.

Thank you also Gary Drewien for coming all the way from South Australia to be here to fill in my spot when I got back from hospital and to do early preparatory work for our *Coastal Wetlands Program* activities this dry season.

Enjoy the 4th issue of Kowanyama's very own magazine.

Viv



LAND OFFICE ADMIN OFFICER JOINS OUR NEW COUNCIL

Teddy Bernard the Land Office Administration Officer, and Chair of *Abm elgoring ambung*, the Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate, has resigned his position to join the new Council and Mayor, Robert Holness. Mainstream local government rules are that as a Councillor he cannot be a full time employee of the Council and its Land Office.

Teddy has completed his Business Studies Certificate III and is a graduate of Cape York Institute's program that encouraged the development of young leaders. He is also an alumni of the *Diplomacy Training Program* out of the University of New South Wales in Sydney which led to his attending a United Nations gathering in New York and later an opportunity to have dinner with Jose Ramos Horte the program's patron, during a *DTP* workshop in Timor.

"The Land Office congratulates the new Council and wishes Teddy well. We hope he finds his studies, and time with the Land Office useful in his new role as a Councillor," said Land Office Manager, Viv Sinnamon.

Teddy has taken over the Council portfolio of Aboriginal Lands and Culture from Councillor Michael Yam since his recent swearing in at the Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council chambers.

Councillor Yam has been an active advocate of Aboriginal land management during his time as a Councillor.

"I will continue to promote my mob's right to managing Kowanyama Aboriginal Lands and waters for the benefit of our future generations along with helping develop a strong Aboriginal Council.

I will actively support our Land Office where ever I can," Councillor Yam said recently

KOWANYAMA ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

Robert Holness

(Mayor)

Michael Yam

(Deputy Mayor)

Teddy Bernard

Billy Thomas

Walter Parry

Councillors Walter Parry and Billy Thomas both held positions as Rangers during the early establishment of Kowanyama's Land Office.

New Ranger Service staff

Two new rangers, Fitzroy Lawrence and Nigel Coleman have joined Land Office staff with Darren, Phillip, Louie and Senior Ranger Garth making up the Ranger Service.

They have been busy getting camp sites ready for the opening of the recreational camping and fishing season on the first of June. More on their activities with photos in this issue.

Phillip Yam, Daniel and Louie Native have travelled to Oriners via the eastern road at Artemis on the Peninsula Road to prepare for an early season's start with the usual clean up and the Fire Program. Daniel has offered to help with GPS, data gathering and mapping work.



RECREATIONAL FISHING

2012 SEASON OPEN

It is June again and the recreational fishing season has opened for visiting fishing parties. In excess of sixty thousand dollars was taken last season. Half of the revenue went to traditional owner clans of the fishing areas. Some of the funds went to prizes for the Tilapia competition at the Lake Tinaroo Barra Bash, and \$2500 went towards costs to bring together members of the Indigenous, recreational and commercial fishing sectors in Mareeba for expert discussions in a review of the Mitchell River Watershed Management Plan (2000).

Fishing camp fees provide a valuable contribution to Land Office operations.

The poor road conditions took the shine off parties using the Wonya Creek and Bull Crossing.

Some may remember that in the regulations established back in the late eighties the season was opened in June to give frontage country on the Mitchell time to dry out. There was one season in that time when the Mitchell delta flooded in May and the Wonya sites were not opened until July because of the late wet condition of the road. This does not happen often.

Hopefully a machine will be available soon to light grade the worst of the road to the river. Having a good road into that country will always be difficult.



Wonya and the Mitchell in the wet

It will be interesting to see how the season goes this year with the very short and late run in the river this wet along with last season's higher levels through the 2011 dry.

Those coming to fish under permit are asked to please prepare to vacate camp sites by 10.00am to allow any incoming parties to set up in good time after they have registered with the Land Office.

LOCAL CROSSING REPORTS

Rangers have been preparing the recreational fishing camp sites and ask that everyone takes care with their vehicles and equipment when accessing the sites and other bush areas.



Lower Sandy: With care



Top Sandy OK but care nth side



Ranger staff putting out Bull Crossing signs



Shelfo: Not for a while yet !



Dunbar Koolatah Crossing: Not yet!!

Beach clean up

Rangers did an early season clean up last month using the Culture and Research Centre's Honda four wheeler.

Some salvageable floats were recovered along with the usual small pieces of net.

The Mitchell River coast is lucky having a south north current that keeps a lot of the marine rubbish away from our coast. This may be one of the reasons that there are not the large populations of sea turtles found further north where there is also a big problem with international ghost nets and other marine rubbish.



Taron David on the Topsy to South Mitchell beach

The tides and currents in our corner of the Gulf also seem to have stopped the Macassans in the early days from exploring any further east than Sweers Island.

Fish health

Anyone who sees a dead groper or other fish including grunter, big scale mullet and ocean catfish should contact the Land Office straight away.

- Over the last four years around 85 groper have died in Queensland
- A streptococcus infection has been found in some dead and sick fish.
- Fish with sores should be bagged and put on ice
- Record the location of the fish

NOTE TO RECREATIONAL FISHERS

Visiting fishing groups are asked to bring in specimens to the Land Office if they are able either frozen or at least on ice. Any assistance you can give would be appreciated as a way of keeping an eye on our Gulf fishery



STRATEGIC INDIGENOUS RESERVE



Joe Ross Chairman of the Indigenous Water Policy Group

Mitchell River consultations

The idea is fair allocation of future water reserves for the different mobs of the Mitchell catchment

Whitefulla's boundaries once again have managed to complicate things for everyone on the Mitchell including the Government.

The bottom end of the Mitchell River west of the junction of the Palmer and the Mitchell River is in the "Cape York Region". This means that the rest of the river is not, and that there are different arrangements for water allocations for Aboriginal groups for the two regions in the one catchment..



Djungan Elder Ron Archer has been working with consultant Jan Crase and Aboriginal groups of the river to talk about the management of the future

reserve. The study is part of a North Australian proposal to the Governments for a 25% allocation of river water from the total water put aside for all users on the river as a strategic reserve for Aboriginal users.

Representatives from Kowanyama have attended meetings in North Queensland, Darwin and the

Kimberley in Western Australia over the last two years.

This month Michael Yam and Michelle Major attended a meeting in Mareeba to hear the findings of the study by Jan and Ron that was written up in a paper by William Nikolakis.

The meetings have been organised by North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Alliance.

A Water Facilitator's Network was established to bring issues to an Indigenous Water Policy Group who discussed water policy issues with the Federal Government.

The group developed a proposal to set up an *Indigenous Strategic Reserve (SIR)* in all water plans across states. The Network has now been wound up after providing valuable information from communities to the Water Policy Group.

NAISMA held a meeting of Water Facilitator Network members hosted by Kowanyama at *Worrtha* in July 2010.

MARY RIVER STATEMENT

The principles

In August 2009, about 80 Indigenous experts from North Australia met at Mary River Park in the Northern Territory to talk and present their water interests and issues to the Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce.



Alice River North Queensland

"As traditional owners we have an inherent right to make decisions about cultural and natural resource management in Northern Australia".

1 Land, water and people are very closely connected, which means unity of land, water and indigenous people

2 Water management and use includes all of cultural uses, environmental flows, consumptive and commercial uses, and that all freshwater systems are included whether on the mainland or on sea country.

3 Keeping to a balanced revised "triple bottom line" (Social, cultural, ecological and economic) that includes a fourth element of political sustainability.

4 Water dealings are based on free, prior and informed decisions and engagement with indigenous communities at all levels.

5 Principles of international law be the guiding principles for the development of indigenous engagement on water

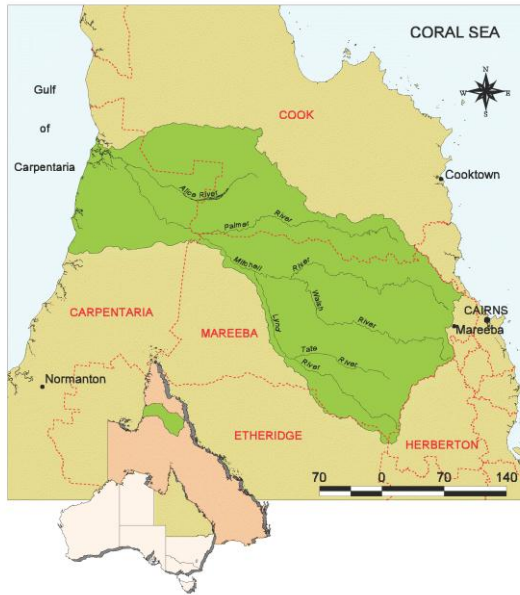
6 Water allocation needs to be linked with best practice, sustainable, efficient use and accurate up to date information about environmental flows

7 Indigenous people across North Australia are united in dealing with water issues and accordingly recognise a set of common interests that are set out in the Mary River Statement

Mitchell River Watershed Management Group

Reviewing its Year 2000 plan

For some time now the Mitchell River Group has been struggling to keep its doors open.



Some months ago its Executive made a decision to employ Linda Souteriou to help reinvigorate the Group that was formed from the Mitchell River Conference at Kowanyama in 1990.

Linda spent a previous life time working with natural resource management regional bodies in Western Australia. She has come to live in the north with her husband who is now working in Cairns. Two of Linda's main jobs are to review the Mitchell River Watershed Plan and to identify financial support for the Group's administrative operations and future projects. The first outcome of Linda's hard work is a draft prospectus to use for fund raising.

Boundaries again

Once again boundaries drawn by other people have created issues for management of Mitchell River country. Fortunately the people on the ground know where they are in the sea of bureaucratic boundaries.

In the past the lower end of the Mitchell has been called "No man's land". Kowanyama is in the Cape York region as well as the Northern Gulf NRM Region. Those who do not live here have now called the lower Mitchell a "shared responsibility area". Kowanyama has refused to be part of the debate continuing to assert their right to responsibility for the management of Kowanyama Aboriginal Lands with the help of chosen partners.

Mareeba planning workshop

Linda Souteriou facilitated an initial catchment planning workshop in Mareeba attended by a roomful of people representing farmers, miners, recreational fishers, indigenous groups and community. Kowanyama was represented by Viv Sinnamon, Teddy Bernard and Aaron Crosbie as he was moving to Cape York sustainable Futures.

Fisheries sector workshop

Kowanyama Land Office later contributed \$2500 to the organisation of a Fisheries workshop by the Mitchell River Group and held in Mareeba during April. The money came from the Land Office's income from recreational fishing and camping permit fees. Thomas Hudson and Michael Yam attended. Thomas gave the opening welcome and introduction at both the 1988 Kowanyama Northern Fisheries Conference and the 1990 Mitchell River Conference. He was a member of the 1989 Kowanyama team with James Bernard and Viv Sinnamon that successfully negotiated the fisheries closure of the South Mitchell with Commercial fishers and Government.

"In 1989 Kowanyama showed its commitment to Gulf fisheries management by buying out two commercial fishing licences to get a river closed and protected for the benefit of Kowanyama as well as the region and fishery. \$64000 of Kowanyama's own money was used to buy and close two barra licences", Mr Hudson said.

Chairman of Karumba Commercial Fishermen's Organisation, Gary Ward and his wife Claudine travelled from Karumba for the meeting with recreational and indigenous fisheries sector members. Gary had been a part of the 1989 negotiations, had attended the 1988 Kowanyama fisheries meeting and also joined fisheries representatives at the 1990 river conference.

The meeting gave Gary and Claudine the opportunity to catch up with Kowanyama. In more recent years commercial fishers have attended cultural awareness workshops organised by Carpentaria Land Council in Burketown with QCFO.

NAILSMA SPONSORS NATIONAL GATHERING

Indigenous Sea Country



In May over one hundred people from every state and territory of Australia gathered at Mary River to share stories of their indigenous experiences in the management of their traditional sea estates.

Darren Burns of Quandamooka Land Council of Stradbroke Island extended his best wishes to everyone at Kowanyama. Stephen Schnierer, *Banjalung* representative from Northern NSW

attended as a facilitator and advised on international indigenous interests. Stephen attended the Cape York Land Council Forum at *Shelfo* with other interstate guests in 1995. He has kept a keen interest in Kowanyama ever since.

Early pioneers of Aboriginal land management agencies including Kowanyama Land Office, *Dhimurru* (Yirrkala), *Bawinanga/Djelk* (Maningrida), *Anindilyakwa* (Groote Eylandte) attended the three day workshop. Phil Rist represented high profile Aboriginal management agency, *Girringun* at Cardwell. Queensland representation included *Quandamooka* Land Council, Stradbroke Island near Brisbane (Darren Burns) to *Apudthama* Rangers, *Injinoo*, Cape York (Christo Lifu). Torres Strait Islander representatives included Walter Mackie and Frank Loban.



The boundary between land and sea is best shown during the wet season floods of our delta. There isn't a boundary! Salt one day, fresh the next. In some places salt on top, fresh underneath.

Early in the meeting delegates pointed out that sea was not seen as separate from land. That it had to all be managed as "*country*", the indigenous way of seeing the world.

The non-indigenous way of “NRM” (Natural Resources Management) separates land from sea with many government agencies that do not work together effectively. *Integrated NRM* and *Integrated Catchment Management* have been around in Queensland since the days of the 1990 Mitchell River Conference and in the *Integrated Catchment Management* legislation enacted in Queensland a year later.

A discussion paper about *Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA)* in Australia was written by Dermott Smyth and presented for comment at the Mary River workshop. Dermott has become widely known since the *Resource Assessment Commission* Coastal Zone Inquiry of the 1980’s and has worked with many groups around Australia to develop land and sea management plans. *Dhimurru* and *Yiralka (Yirrkala, NT)* *Anindilyakwa* (Groote Eylandte NT), *Girringun* (Cardwell, QLD), *Mandingalbay IPA* (Yarrabah, QLD) and *Bardi Jawi* (Kimberley coast, WA) presented their experiences with Indigenous Protected Area management as voluntary arrangements with Government to protect their sea country interests. New South Wales and Victorian groups also spoke on the outcomes of their IPA work.

Groote Eylandte and Yarrabah IPA communities developed their community based plans as large and easy to read coloured posters shown to everyone at the meeting.

Discussions helped to formulate a *Vision 2035* for Indigenous sea country and to develop ideas on *Indigenous Protected Areas* and other ways to manage and protect sea country and ensure indigenous management.

Groote Eylandte and *Yirrkala* representatives talked strongly on traditional values and responsibilities for country in a way that kept everyone grounded. A draft statement was prepared and debated on the last day. It is a good follow up to the 2009 Mary River Water Statement. A draft of the statement will be available soon.

CELEBRATING MABO DECISION

The Mabo Decision was a momentous one in which indigenous occupation of Australia before Captain Cook in 1770, and traditional landownership was acknowledged without the loss of a single non-indigenous home or backyard. It is no magic bullet to solve indigenous world problems just the start of a long road.

Kowanyama representatives will attend a Townsville conference this week to celebrate the Mabo decision of Native Title. Charlotte Yam, Teddy Bernard, Robert Holness, Ravin Greenwool and Rodney Whitfield will give a presentation at the conference on Kowanyama’s long and continuing journey in search of self- governance of its Aboriginal Lands.

Kowanyama’s journey began long before its successful Native Title determination at Kowanyama in 2009. The belief here has always been that the right to customary responsibility to management of country was something that had

to be asserted. The establishment here of Australia’s first Indigenous land management agency in Australia was seen as “Post Mabo” believing that Australia’s interpretation of “*Native Title*” would not cover all land governance issues.

Many worked hard nationally to negotiate the nature of Native Title legislation with hard-nosed Governments that had the Australian public believing they would lose homes and backyards. The *great Australian takeover* never happened and urban backyards are safe.

The *Mabo Decision* was a momentous one in which the idea of “*Terra nullius*” was disproved and *traditional landownership* acknowledged. There are successful claims now across Australia but this is only the first major step in a long process for Aboriginal People to gain real justice.

Charlotte Yam with other claimants and their legal counsel in Cairns during Kowanyama Native Title Tribunal discussions



EARLY BURN AT ORINERS

Forest Country Fire Management Program

“People feel a sense of ownership in the Fire Program. Fire is an effective land management tool that has a lot of other side benefits for the people who live in forest country. Importantly too it will help get Olkola people back on country”, said Viv Sinnamon.



Oriners Mob has lit the first grass for the season to begin the first year of Kowanyama's *Forest Country Fire Management Program*. This month they got in to Oriners via the Cape York Peninsula road and Artemis, and been part of a helicopter survey of country with *Olkola* members including Crosbie.

The early season trip was made possible through the hard work of Land Office and Cape York Sustainable Future staff members

The plan will put an end to the big hot late season burns of the past when many stations were burnt. The plan is to reintroduce early patch burning which will break up the country leaving some country unburnt. This is good for stock, wildlife and the protection of property like yards and fences. The fires early in the year are not as hot.

The program started by the Land Office and Oriners Mob now involves all of its neighbours at Balurga, Harkness, Crosbie, Dixie, National Parks (DERM), Rural Fire Service, Cape York Sustainable Futures and *Ulkulu* Land Trust.

Recent rains stopped aerial burns with about 100 millimetres of rain reported at Oriners. Burning is expected to begin again in a few weeks before the grass gets too dry. Before the rains patch burning lit on the ground was successful along the Eight Mile Creek frontage. Aerial burns are planned by DERM for *Errk Oygangand* National Park and Crosbie Station. Flights will be coordinated to burn Oriners, Sefton and neighbouring properties while the aircraft is in the area. Scientists headed up by Jeremy Russell Smith from Darwin will visit Oriners and Sefton in July to survey ten unburnt grassland sites.

The Project brings together neighbours with a bunch of agencies. Michael Ross Mob has been able to do some work on Crosbie and geomorphologist, Jeff Shellberg from Cooktown has had a look at erosion issues to help us look after Oriners lagoon.

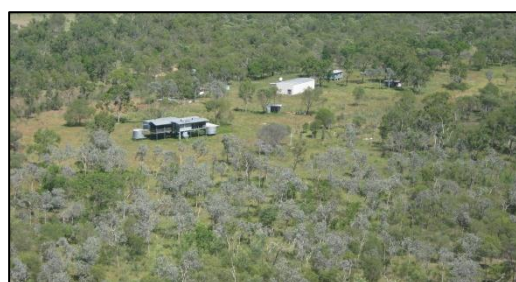
The survey project is funded through the Northern Aboriginal and Islander Land and Sea Management Alliance, NAILSMA, and Kowanyama's Land Office. Scientists will work out how much carbon is in grass as part of a bigger study. It will look at how Oriners can make an income from fire management. This is called "*Carbon Farming*".

Big companies from around the world pay other people to look after country by managing fire and stopping the big late season hot fires that put a lot of smoke and carbon into the air.

A lot of work still needs to be done before people get their hopes up about the economic benefits of *Carbon Farming*. Right now we are having a careful look.

The Kowanyama will commission a feasibility study once the scientists have a better idea of the value of the country and just how much country could be used for Carbon Farming. The Land Office is also aware that a change in legislation over pastoral leases in Queensland will be needed for the economic benefits to flow to landholders. Unlike Kowanyama Aboriginal Trust Lands Oriners and Sefton are pastoral leases bought by Kowanyama in the 1990's.

Kowanyama's *Forest Fire Management Program* will have a lot of other benefits even if the Carbon Farming idea does not work. It is bringing people together in a remote area of the southern Cape to manage country in a way that suits them. It will protect valuable property, be better for cattle management and for the environment. It is also bringing together *Olkola* families from both sides of the Cape on country



RANGER SERVICE ACTIVITIES



Protection of water supply and Dog Pound infrastructure with an early burn



Early check of road conditions to recreational fishing camp sites in readiness for the opening of the fishing season



Helicopter survey of coastal wetlands and waterbird nesting sites



Refurbishment of Service workshops and fabrication of workshop benches and steel storage racks



Fabrication of campsite and road signage





OLD PHOTOS BRING KOWANYAMA'S WARTIME HISTORY TO LIFE

Weather during attack. Overcast at 6500 feet, and a slight ground haze. Weather on return route back- high overcast and haze obscured the stars so that navigator was unable to take shots with octant. At 05.30 July 5 1942 broke into clear and began descending so that we could see coastline of Australia when we flew over it. At 3500 feet still couldn't see below us so climbed to 4000 feet and kept on course of 225 magnetic intending to come into Horn Island on homing frequency, which by an agreement was to be turned on at 05.00 am.

During the Native Title determination in late 2009 at Kowanyama a chance meeting between Land Office staff and Mike Hintz of Oz Tour Safaris Cairns led to an introduction to Roger Marks of Mansfield in Brisbane. Roger was interested in wartime history and quickly sent a series of scanned photographs and historical information about the crash of the American bomber on the floodplain near Shelfo in 1942.

An American Air force veteran and the pilot, Walter Maiersperger who had flown the B17 aircraft back to Charters Towers gave Roger Marks a collection of photos that are now in the Kowanyama Culture and Research Centre museum archive. We now have a better idea of what happened when the bomber returned from attacks on Lae in New Guinea. The pilot lost his bearings on the way back to Cloncurry and ran out of fuel. Unlike the crash landing

on the beach at Edward River the plane was repaired and flown off

28th Bomb Squadron 19 BG

Aircraft 41-2417 B17E

Crew List

1 st Lt Thompson	S/Sgt Sexton
2 nd Lt Schmid	Sgt Norton
1 st Lt Dawson	T/Sgt Prince
2 nd Lt Norton	Cpl Copley
	Cpl Secor

Bomb Loading

10 six hour delay 250lb Australian bombs
4 Inst. 250 lb Australian bombs

Special thanks go to Roger Marks of Brisbane and to Walter Maiersperger of the US for his photos



McKenzie the Superintendent of Aurukun spoke with the Brisbane Sunday Mail in 1943. He described what he knew about the plane crash. The Sunday Mail published a censored article in their paper soon after.

BLACKS SAVE BIG PLANE

Sunday Mail January 3rd 1943

"...not long ago a flying fortress with an American crew made a forced landing...

She pancaked on to a natural saltpan clearing, but was in pretty bad shape.....She was located by a Catalina and the message was sent through to the superintendent of a river station where there are about 700 blacks. The head stockman set out with a team of horses and brought in the crew.

The pilot had a rest and something to eat and, then asked could he borrow some men to take him back, because he would have to destroy the plane. And that meant 80000 pounds worth of flying fortress."

Alec McLeod Superintendent here convinced the authorities that the aircraft could be rescued with the help of the Mission. In March 1943 the Australian Board of Missions published a story in its monthly magazine, the ABM Review under the title of Mitchell River Mission.

"Even with war conditions so noticeable in the north the work of the mission goes on but is more varied than usual. Its variation consists in rescuing airmen, building by native voluntary labour a 17 mile road to where these planes came down and constructing a runway to take off again. The airmen were amazed at the capacity of the natives to find their way about in the dark and also their refusal to take payment for the work. The 17 miles of road was put through in a week and the landing strip of 1200 yards in five days. To get to the plane four rivers had to be crossed and many creek crossings had to be made so that they would carry 8 ton trucks. The natives had only a few shovels and picks; the rest worked with their hands. It was case of the natives showing the yanks how to work."



GET TAIPAN WISE

Oxyuranus scutellatus (Big English name)

Ming rrithan (Kokoberra)

Minh koluw (Yir Yoront)

Minh kow merrl (Yir Yoront)

Taipan is a big story minya

Kids should not touch it dead or alive

Clean away its blood just like a person's blood

An increasing number of Taipans have been seen and some killed in the town area in recent years.

One was killed in a bedroom at 9.30 at night.

If you see a snake in the bush let it move away. Do not throw anything at it

Snakes will only attack if they feel threatened

If you see a snake in the town area

- Treat all snakes as poisonous
- Most snakes in town are not
- Do not stir it up
- Keep kids away
- Report it to the Land Office
- Report it straight away
- Land Office staff will deal with it

For those who have not seen a taipan the photo here is an image of the snake killed in the bedroom on Gilbert White Street

- It had fangs one centimetre long
- It is very poisonous
- Is very fast
- Can bite more than once
- Likes eating rats and mice
- Does not like cold weather



Mitchell River Mission in 1942 with the dormitory in the background where the police station now stands on Chapman Road



Dauntless dive bomber that flew Pilot in to fly the repaired plane to Charters Towers

Later during the war *Radar Station number 320* was set up near the airstrip at Mitchell River Mission.

A Defence Service camp was established at Belboro after the crash of the bombers at Mitchell and Edward River Missions



A convoy bringing parts to repair the bomber cross probably the Lynd River before a causeway was built

Lt Schmick and twelve men of 27th Service Squadron and 2 men of 33rd QM Regiment were ordered to travel via Mungana to repair the aircraft on the Mitchell River



While the men repaired the plane's propellers and landing gear Mission workers helped with the airstrip filling in gilgays and cutting small trees. A truck was used to drag a log to grade the surface of the strip. While camped on the river the men hunted crocodiles and enjoyed "crocodile steaks".



Everyone out at the crash site was fed by the visitors.

When the plane flew back to Charters Towers and the flight engineers returned to the east coast it is said that the Mission had enough kerosene and tinned food for a very long time after.

Women watch the activity with kids



The B17 test runs its motors before flying to Charters Towers from the temporary airstrip with all turrets and guns removed and returned to base by truck and train. The bomber that crashed on the beach at Edward River Mission without loss of life remains there now buried beneath the mud and sand. B17E Number 41 2417 and its crew had survived to fly another day



Cultural Heritage Workshop

Sharing our experiences

The Mitchell River Group invited Kowanyama to share experiences in cultural heritage documentation with Mbarbarum, Yelang and Djungan community members at Malanda. The workshop extended over two days and was organised by Brynn Matthews of the Mitchell River Group.

Teddy Bernard and Daniel Maddelena talked about Land Office and Traditional Owner involvement in the documentation of country at Kowanyama as well as cultural heritage consultation with Main Roads and Shire Councils doing road work.

Aaron Crosbie from *Cape York Sustainable Futures* and Daniel showed how Cyber Tracker ware was used to record mapped areas and cultural places on the computer. The groups were very interested in how Kowanyama has developed its own information base.

Involvement in the workshop was seen as one way of helping Traditional Owner groups upstream of Kowanyama country who must seek permission to be on their traditional country to record their own country. People were very interested in hearing about recording a living cultural landscape and that cultural heritage was not just about bones, stones and art sites.

The workshop gave Land Office staff an opportunity to talk about Kowanyama, the Land Office and their work as part of their own training and development, and to be part of Mitchell River Watershed Management Group activities

CLOSED MINE POLLUTES JAMIE CK

A tributary of Walsh River

Kagara Limited's Baal Gammon zinc mine shut down its operations after having financial problems and going into voluntary administration on April 29 to look at a \$40m debt with ANZ.

March flooding had spilled material from the mine into the creek.

State MP, Shane Knuth has said that he was worried that the mines financial problems might affect Kagara's ability to clean up the mess or to pay compensation.

Environment Minister, Andrew Powell has said that residents should test water from Jamie Creek and the Walsh River if they are going to use it. He also noted that the flow from the mine area had stopped.

Members of the Jamie Creek community had attended the Mareeba meeting of the Mitchell River Group and had talked with people there including some Kowanyama representatives.

They noted that some of the community had been born at Jamie Creek fishing and swimming there enjoying their remote home.

Kowanyama people hosted the original Mitchell River Conference in 1990 because of their worries about the impacts of upstream mining and

other activities in the catchment.

Studies to establish mercury levels in downstream waters of the Mitchell showed that at the moment there are no significant problems.

"This latest incident shows just how important it is that the impacts of careless mining and other activities must be considered by everyone before mines are given the go ahead by Government. This should not happen," said Cllr Teddy Bernard. who attended the Mitchell River Watershed Plan review in Mareeba last month.

The Land Office will keep an eye on developments and keep readers up to date.





FERAL PIGS ARE DAMAGING OUR COUNTRY

Would you be a turtle
in this swamp

Keeping the pigs out ain't easy

Rangers did repair work on a fence put around Crayfish Hole as soon as it was possible to get into the area after the wet season.

A bull had knocked over a section getting through the fence and pigs had found their way through including where the fence crossed a watercourse. Stock and pigs have only done some minor damage to water plants along the edge of the wetland which is beginning to show signs of recovery since the

fence was erected by Monty Gilbert's fencing team.

Further work will be done this dry season on the problem fence sections. Water quality testing is showing that there is an improvement in water quality as water plants thicken and stock are kept out. *Pormpuraaw* Rangers have had similar success at the Chillagoe Pocket Lagoon near *Puyul* where a very well made galvanised picket exclusion fence keeps pigs and cattle out.





Louie repairing the pig exclusion fence at Crayfish Hole

KEEPING MITCHELL RIVER DELTA WETLAND COUNTRY HEALTHY

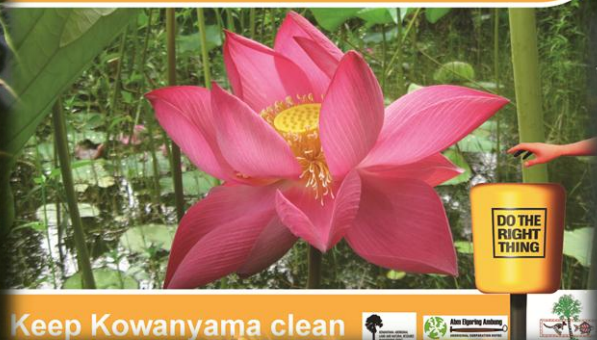
DO THE RIGHT THING

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Management Office
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Post Box 32, Kowanyama QLD 4871

Editorial
Viv Sinnamon
viv@klco.org.au

Telephone 07 40605187
Facsimile 07 40605250

Photos, graphics & stories welcome



Keep Kowanyama clean

