

2019-2029

# MAYALA COUNTRY PLAN

*Arrinyjijarda loo amboon amboon angarriya*

Coming together as one



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**Warning: This plan contains names and images of deceased Aboriginal people.**

Artwork credits:

Siswoyo Frank, Cecelia Tigan, Herbert Marshall

Photo credits:

Wil Bennett, Tanya Vernes, DBCA, DBCA-Holly Raudino, Environs Kimberley - Lou Beams, Environs Kimberley - Jess Miller, Environs Kimberley - Ayesha Moss, Rowena Mouda, Janella Isaac, Sarah Yu, Kimberley Land Council

Graphic design and layout:

Erin Ritchens, Design Plus Digital

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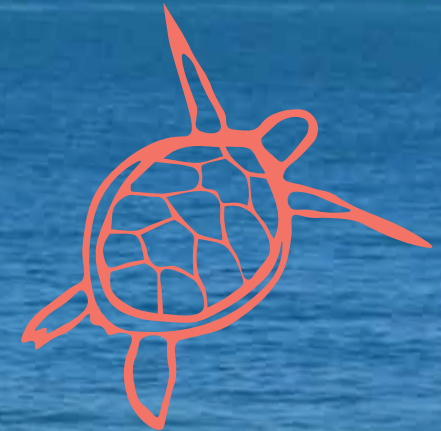
Copies of the Plan are available from:  
Mayala Inninalang Aboriginal Corporation  
c/o Kimberley Land Council  
PO Box 2145  
Broome WA 6725

## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge our apical ancestors who fought hard for recognition of Mayala Country, and those families who took over from them and supported them, and our Elders who were passionate about passing on knowledge for caring for Country. We honour all their memories through this plan.

From a history of missions and colonisation many Mayala people grew up speaking Bardi, which Mayala people have adopted. We acknowledge the Bardi language and pay our respects to the Bardi people.

The Mayala Country Plan was developed by the Mayala Country Planning Working Group with the support of the Western Australia Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Parks Australia, Country Needs People, Kimberley Land Council and facilitated by planning consultant Tanya Vernes. We thank Sarah Yu, Wil Bennett and Anna Mardling for their support and DBCA for the use of *Worndoom* survey vessel and crew for planning on Country. Sincere thanks to all Mayala People who participated in the planning process, contributed their knowledge, experience and ideas to create this plan.



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# Dedication

We dedicate this plan to our  
ancestors from milonjoon.









# PART 1

## *Introduction*

“To look after Mayala Country as  
our old people have asked us to.”



## A message from Mayala representatives

The Mayala Country Plan encompasses all of *Mayala Baaliboor* - Mayala Country, which comprises all the islands, the sea, submerged lands, seabeds and saltwater. Mayala Baaliboor is our continuous cultural land- and sea-scape, where our cultural, social, political and ecological relationships on Country interconnect. This undivided nature of Country is reflected in our intent for our Country Plan.

Mayala People carry the responsibilities of our ancestors to manage our Country as they did, so that it always remains alive, healthy and rich. This is based in our unique cultural knowledge of Country, especially the complex tides and currents - the *loo* and *noomoorr*.

Our Country Plan sets our strategic approach and priorities for Country: to look after, enjoy and use our Country sustainably for future generations. Through this Country Plan we are exercising our rights as Traditional Owners and custodians to determine our future and that of our Country. This Country Plan leads all other planning processes on our Country, and we invite potential partners - whether they be state government, scientists or businesses - to recognise and support our plan, not create their own.

Achieving the goals of this Country Plan has benefits beyond Mayala people, as custodians of highly biodiverse and rich Country.

We will invite partners to work with us and invest in our priorities and actions to achieve Mayala's vision for Country.

“That’s what this plan is about,  
everyone getting together and  
working together as Mayala people.”





# Mayala Country



## Culture - what does it mean?

“ Culture is belonging to this place. It's doing things like our ancestors did and remembering the way our ancestors lived. ”

Culture is a big word and can mean different things to different people.

For Mayala it means carrying on what our old people taught us and sharing this with our generations to come so that Mayala people remain strong with *gorna liyan* and the Country remains healthy.

Culture means belonging to and caring for our Country and continuing to live by our cultural protocols handed down from *milonjoon* (from long, long ago) still just as relevant in today's world.

Culture comes in packages. Some of the packages that make up this big word 'culture' are *wiini* - respect, *nimalji* - caring and sharing, *Barrgiban* - cultural respect that guides behaviour (e.g. between brother/sister) and *rinyriny* - common sense, knowledge and wisdom all in one. Culture is like a toolbox with all these little bits and pieces available to help govern people, keep people in a straight line.

Culture is with you from the start, when you're a small child. It grows with you: it's a lived practice. Listening respectfully to your old people and learning from them, especially on Country, is the way to keep growing culture.

Culture is changing a lot now. As future keepers of Country, Elders wish to teach our young people about culture alongside modern ways of learning and caring for Country.

“ Like a *ajibankoor* (willy-willy), it [culture] picks everything up and brings it together and leaves the path clear. ”



## Milonjoon agal joodinygor (from long ago and always forever)

We have included these protocols so that Mayala people understand their responsibilities and all people understand how to behave on Mayala Country.

**Mayala people make decisions for Mayala Country.** Mayala, as Traditional Owners with responsibilities for Country, are the decision makers for Country. Our Lore has kept our Country and our people alive since milonjoon (from long ago) and we are here because of our ancestors and their care for Mayala Country. We follow our own cultural governance structures and kinship systems.

**Certain family groups have cultural authority to speak for different areas.** This is documented through the Native Title process and will form part of the Cultural Policy of the Mayala Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC). The PBC is the first point of contact, and the PBC will follow cultural governance structures to obtain any permissions.

**Ask first to come onto Country** is a basic principle of respect. It's about *wiini* (respect) for others' rights, for your own Lore and culture, and also for safety. Permission includes access by tourists, locals, fishing clubs, researchers, government and businesses. Activities on some islands can harm individuals even if they are a long way away - ask first so there is no harm to Country or people. This includes charter boats and planes visiting our Country or landing on our islands, other Aboriginal people, for example wishing to hunt or fish in Mayala Country, and activities such as burning.

**All Mayala custodians have a responsibility to keep an eye on Country, on behalf of everyone else.** Although there are family groups connected to some islands, everyone is responsible for keeping watch over all Mayala Country.

“Every island is important to us.” Aubrey Tigan

**Aarnja** (*giving*) - Supporting others, caring and sharing, teaching our young people, sharing cultural knowledge and exchanging stories.

**Promoting Mayala language** - The older generations alive today were the last ones to hear Oowini spoken, the language of Mayala island Country. We also acknowledge the Oomiida language through one of our apical ancestors. Honouring traditional language through naming places or facilities.

**Hunting** - Right way, not too much, “just enough” and share it through cultural protocols. For example, the *jawaloo* (tribal son) hunts and is obliged to give their catch to their *jawaloo-njarr* (godparent), who decides how to share the catch. We hunt for family, not filling up freezers, so that the Country remains healthy for the future. Hunting by season: know the indicators. Don't waste food, feed animals any leftovers.

### **Cultural connections with coastal areas**

- There are some mainland coastal areas where Mayala families have always accessed for resources and continue to have a connection, for example, *Yaloon*, *Gooban*, *Gamoogoorr*, *Jojogarr* and *Graveyard*. We want to work with our neighbours to maintain our cultural connections and responsibilities for these areas.



Barrbal at Diiji

“ Once when I was little, I became very sick because the wrong person was burning my Country. I was really sick, burning up myself, even though I was a long way from Country. We need to burn the right way, and take care of special places the correct way so people aren't hurt and for banmaninboor (beings in sacred places). ”  
Sandy Isaac



**Introduction to Country** - For Mayala people, introduce yourself and any visitor to Country when visiting Country.

**Sandy Isaac:**

*Nye-yoo mayalaboor jiba ambooriny nganungaliid anyjiilulumorr gala.*  
Me, Mayala man I bring these people/strangers here look after them.

**Alma Ejai:**

*Jiiba darr-arangarr baanagarr Mayalayoon ambooriny goorr-joogarra baaliboоро arralalamood.*

We come today, people of this place (Mayala), look after us.

**Lorna Hudson:**

*Barr-na-garr darr-arrang-iig nyaal-aab Mayala Baaliboор-ngan arralu-lon-jaambal-moord aarood agal arraang ambooriny boоро gorn-ar-raam-jaard.*

Today, I come here to Mayala Country, look after us and these other people who are with us. Make this place good for us.





## Mayala Language

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Sitting at the intersection of Nyulnyulan and Worrorran family groups of languages, it was crucial for Mayala survival to be able to communicate and maintain good relations with people from these groups. *Oowini*, *Jawi*, *Bardi*, *Oomiida* and *Oongarong* were spoken in the region within and around Mayala. *Oowini* is the traditional language of Mayala island Country, and through Native Title we have connections through one of our apical ancestors to *Oomiida* language which we also acknowledge. *Oowiini* originated from the islands where as *Oongarong* and *Oomiida* were identified as coastal languages. From a history of missions and displacement from Country, the old people today were the last to hear *Oowini* spoken. Most Mayala people today have grown up speaking *Bardi*, and Mayala have adopted *Bardi* language and therefore *Bardi* is used in this plan. Mayala are committed to waking up and reviving the languages of Mayala Country.









“Garnduwarr garnduwarr... As we approach Country its like the islands are coming out to greet us, because they're happy. Country is happy to receive us.”

## Purpose of our Country Plan

The Mayala Country Plan provides a framework for our people to plan for and manage Country. This Plan lays out steps to achieve Mayala People's priorities, governance and management for all of Mayala Country.

The Plan communicates how we want to continue to enjoy, use and manage our Country and cultural heritage, and to provide sustainable livelihoods with economic opportunities for our future generations. The Plan builds on the Saltwater Country Project 2004-2006 and 2008 to promote the diverse cultural and biological values of Country and continuing Mayala connection to Country.

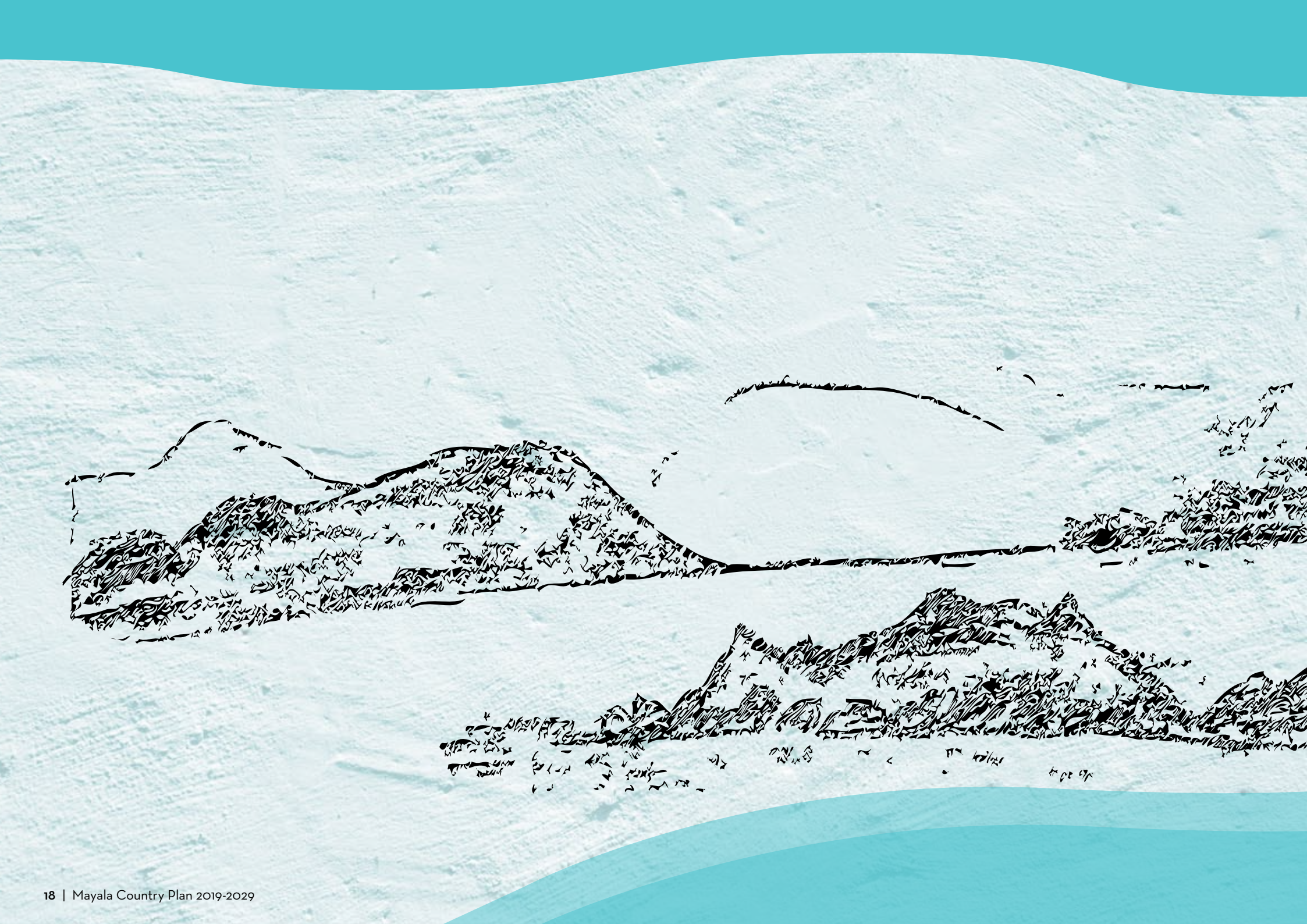
Mayala people make decisions for Mayala Country. We have developed this Country Plan as a strategic, big picture guide on how Mayala will manage Country, our priorities and our aspirations.

## How was the Country Plan developed?

This Country Plan covers all of Mayala Country - that recognised through the Native Title consent determinations on 4th October 2018 for the islands and sea Country of the Buccaneer Archipelago, the eastern side of the King Sound and to the coast of the Yampi Peninsula, West Kimberley.

Following Native Title consent determination, the Mayala Working Group was established to develop a strategic approach to Country management and developed this Country Plan. Mayala people have supported this process through the Working Group, meetings and field trips on-Country (see Appendix 1). Our Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) was established on 24th May 2019 and will oversee implementation.

July 2018	Direction set from, Mayala Traditional Owners at Native Title Claim Group Meeting
August 2018	First meeting, Mayala Working Group
24-25th October 2018	Country Planning Workshop, Broome
19th March 2019	Country Planning Workshop, Broome
23-26th April 2019	Mayala Country field trip, south
20-24th May 2019	Mayala Country field trip, north
October 2018 - March 2019	Research and information collection
12-13th June 2019	Country Planning Workshop, Broome
April - June 2019	Preparation of the Draft Country Plan
30th June 2019	Checking language and <i>milonjoon</i> stories with Elders
1st July 2019	Presentation and review of Draft Plan, One Arm Point
30th July 2019	Review of the Draft Plan by Mayala Working Group
7th-8th October 2019	Review of the Final Plan by Mayala Working Group
15th October 2019	Endorsement by Mayala Inninalung Aboriginal Corporation
24th October 2019	Launch of the Plan at the Implementation Workshop



# PART 2

## *Mayala: Our Country and our People*



“We are island people:  
we live from the sea.”

Aubrey Tigan



## Mayala Baaliboor: Mayala Country

Our Country is rich, alive and healthy.

The power and creative energy of ancestral beings shaped our Country and they continue to reside within special places, along with the stories and evidence of their deeds and the spirits of their unborn children. Country is alive and Mayala maintain reciprocal and respectful relationships with Country.

Our Country is an extensive network of hundreds of islands, interconnecting sea, reefs, submerged lands, sandbars, seabeds and saltwater in the Buccaneer Archipelago and King Sound off the West Kimberley coast: an area recognised as being biologically diverse and culturally significant.

All parts of Country - whether it be reef, seabed, water, tides, plants, freshwater or animals, along with *Mayalayoon* (Mayala Peoples), are undivided. We have sacred sites and stories on land and in the sea that is evidence of our long association with Country through the rise and fall of sea levels over tens of thousands of years.

All of Mayala Country holds meaning. There are special places for ceremony, traditional burial sites, graveyards, places of historic remembrances or sites for stone tools, middens, ochres and clays used for ceremonial purposes, engravings, stone arrangements, fish traps, Lore sites with restricted access, story lines connecting clan estates, events, seasonal camping areas and trading routes. Traditional language names reflect these associations, *loodin* (songs) and *ilma* (ceremonial performances), strengthen them and make our *liyan gorna* (feel good).

Saltwater is a powerful living force. The huge tides and complex currents created between the islands and in Sunday Strait are exceptional and the region is regarded as one of the most difficult marine areas to navigate. The large semi-diurnal tides range up to 11 metres and as the water moves between the narrow passages of the islands it can create powerful tidal streams of up to 10 knots, back water currents, dangerous whirlpools and tidal overfalls. The whirlpools in Sunday Strait are renowned as treacherous, only to be traversed with the right knowledge and, when using small boats or dinghies, during the right tidal conditions. Our people know the complex tides and travel on the *noomoorr* which is like a road, a saltwater highway.

Loo (tidal currents) connects Country and links together Mayala people and Country. Tidal streams that flow between the islands are named, and some people have personal connection to some loo, as part of their sea Country and there are corresponding rights of use. These tidal streams between the islands vary in power depending on diurnal, monthly and seasonal cycles.

The two tides in Sunday Strait divides the *inalaboor* being the traditional *Jawi* and *Mayalaboor*. One tide from Sunday Island side and one from Mayala Country run into the other, with the Mayala tide coming in first.

## Anggi gaarra What tide is it?

### Nalan - Spring Tide

After new moon there is a small *Ayala* before building up into *Boor-nga* tide, before further building up to *Nalan* (*Boordiig Gooiid* - Full moon).

### Ganyginy - Neap Tide

Tides don't go all the way out, just half way. It just sits still (dead neap).

### Outgoing tides

*Bola* - Morning - 10am start to come in.

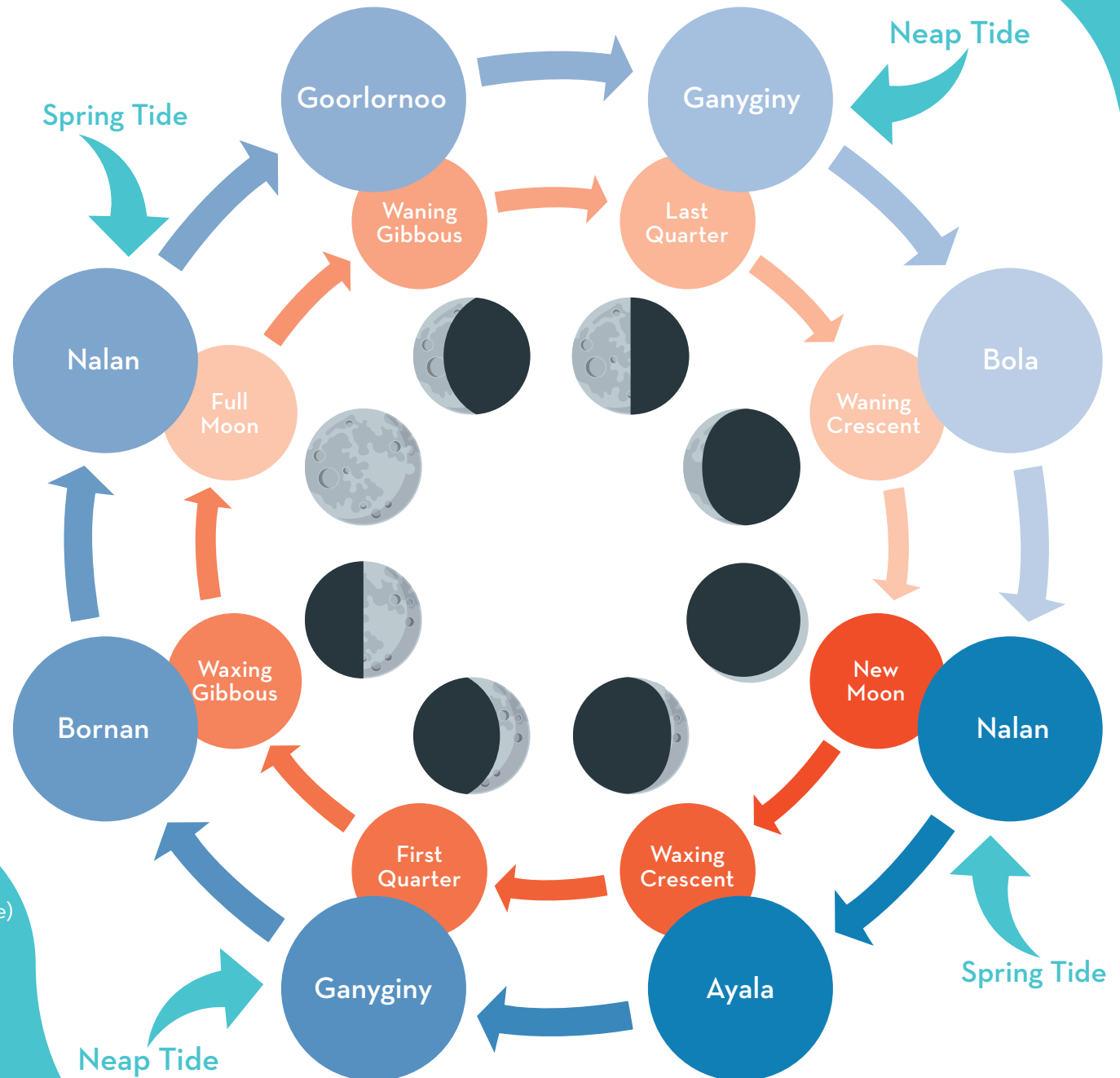
*Goorlornoo* - lazy outgoing tide descending towards *Ganyginy*.

### Incoming tides

*Ayala* - very small tide in morning, big tide at night building up towards *Nalan*.

*Bornan* - small building up morning tide between *Ganyginy* and *Nalan*.

- Iwooloongan* — Tide coming in
- Imbooloong* — Tide is in
- Boornginyjin* — Tide is settled (high tide)
- Iyoordin* — Tide is going out
- Inyjoordij* — Tide is already out
- Boorngoong* — Equinox/open ocean
- Joombalngoorr* — Tide way out-whole reef showing



## Aalinggoon

This is a pearl shell creation story told by Aubrey Tigan to Sarah Yu at Daymango or Graveyard (Strickland Bay). Aalinggoon is a serpent-like being responsible for water and rain, who created the pearl shell in Strickland Bay, King Sound.



Pearl shell riji by Mr Tigan

*Aalinggoon, he came down here into Strickland Bay from the mainland, down.*

*He came into the bay and lives beneath the sea.*

*He comes out every full moon, when it's a big tide.*

*As he floats on his back, as he drifts, the scales fall off his back, and turned into goowarn as they drifted down to the seabed below.*

*The tides came and chucked them everywhere, on the reefs, all around the islands.*

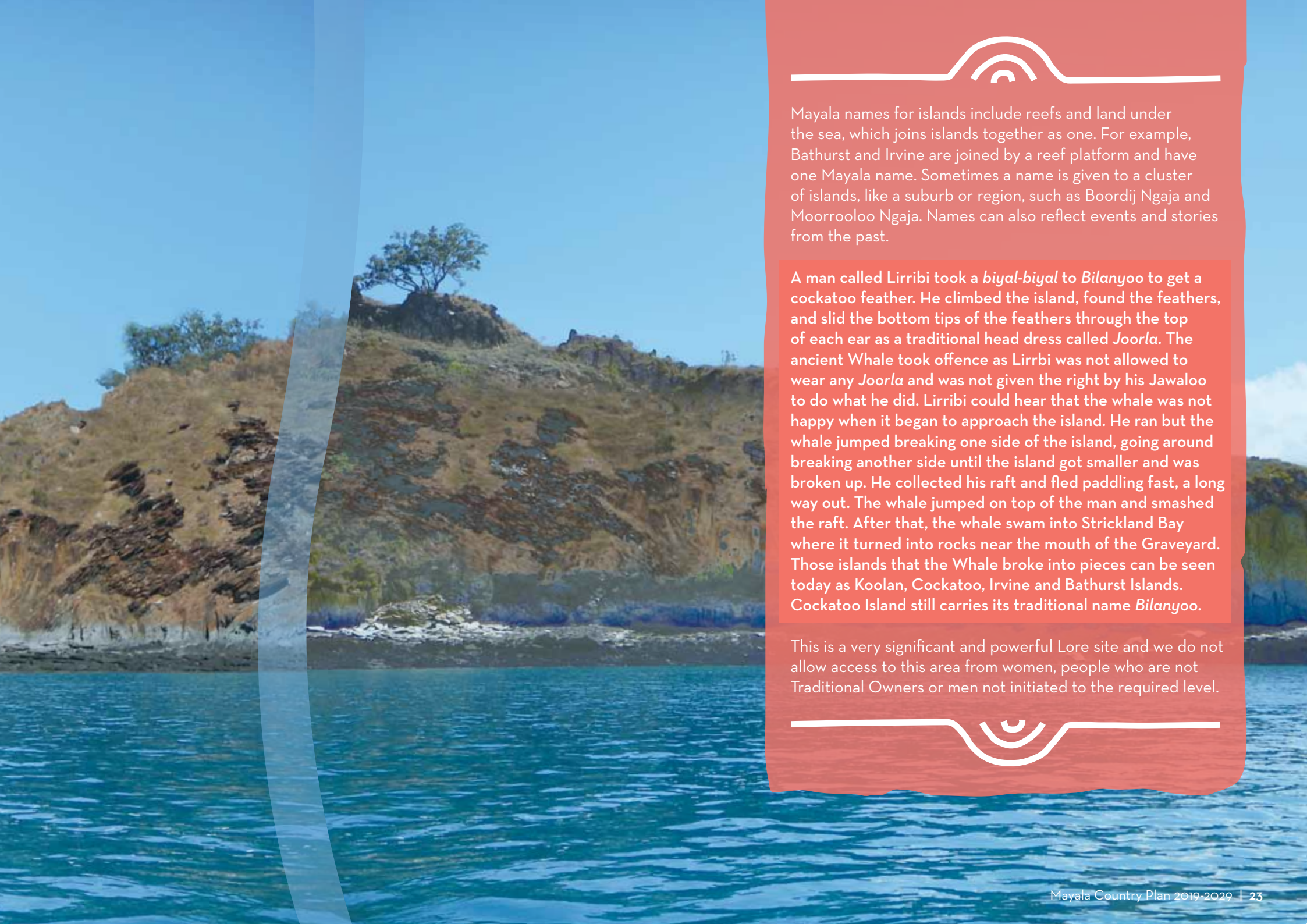
*This way he always gives us more shells.*

*This is a power.*

*This is part of our ceremony.*

*- Aubrey Tigan Galawa*





Mayala names for islands include reefs and land under the sea, which joins islands together as one. For example, Bathurst and Irvine are joined by a reef platform and have one Mayala name. Sometimes a name is given to a cluster of islands, like a suburb or region, such as Boordij Ngaja and Moorrooloo Ngaja. Names can also reflect events and stories from the past.

A man called Lirribi took a *biyal-biyal* to *Bilanyoo* to get a cockatoo feather. He climbed the island, found the feathers, and slid the bottom tips of the feathers through the top of each ear as a traditional head dress called *Joorla*. The ancient Whale took offence as Lirribi was not allowed to wear any *Joorla* and was not given the right by his Jawaloo to do what he did. Lirribi could hear that the whale was not happy when it began to approach the island. He ran but the whale jumped breaking one side of the island, going around breaking another side until the island got smaller and was broken up. He collected his raft and fled paddling fast, a long way out. The whale jumped on top of the man and smashed the raft. After that, the whale swam into Strickland Bay where it turned into rocks near the mouth of the Graveyard. Those islands that the Whale broke into pieces can be seen today as Koolan, Cockatoo, Irvine and Bathurst Islands. Cockatoo Island still carries its traditional name *Bilanyoo*.

This is a very significant and powerful Lore site and we do not allow access to this area from women, people who are not Traditional Owners or men not initiated to the required level.

## Mayalayoon ambooriny: Mayala people

Mayala are true saltwater people.

We have a unique island culture and deep knowledge of the complex currents and tides to navigate between our islands and across our sea Country.

This knowledge comes from our long association and living relationship with Country as it has changed over thousands of years, including adapting to the rising sea that began about 19,000 years ago and flooded extensive areas of Mayala Country (and vast areas elsewhere around the Australian coast). This significant global event is recorded through our stories, the way some of our islands are named, and in our historical, cultural and sacred sites of submerged lands and in the sea.

Our name comes from the spinifex grass that grows on the islands - we used this on top of our *ngirray* (shelters) to protect us from the rain and keep us warm. We burn *mayala gooljoo* with driftwood to make smoke that keeps mosquitoes away. This technique is also used for smoke signalling and used to strengthen babies' feet and knees for walking.

Historically we have close family and kinship ties to the Bardi and Jawi people to the west, the Oongarong and Oomiida peoples of the Yampi Peninsula to the East, and Arrawayin and Yawi-jabayi peoples between Koolan and Montgomery Islands to the north.



Spinifex grass

Saltwater in the sea is connected to the saltwater of a mother's womb - they are considered as one. Saltwater people literally come from the saltwater. **"For sea people, that's the saltwater inside."** - Lucy Coomerang (deceased).

Living on small islands with little game and few large mammals or freshwater sources, our people lived primarily off the sea, adapting tools and technology to harvesting sea resources for survival, using the currents, tides and stars to navigate through Country. Knowing the Country and observing the changes through the seasonal and daily cycles is critical knowledge and skill for survival.

Seasonal indicators tell us when to hunt for different species and visit different areas. Indicators cross over between land and sea Country and are embedded in our cultural stories, practices and Lore. Understanding the landmarks are vital for navigation. For example, when *miinimbi* (humpback whales) are crashing, this drives dugong away.

### Noomoorr

*Noomoorr* are the traffic lights of the ocean - the signs of tidal movements and changes that indicate where to go and when to go.

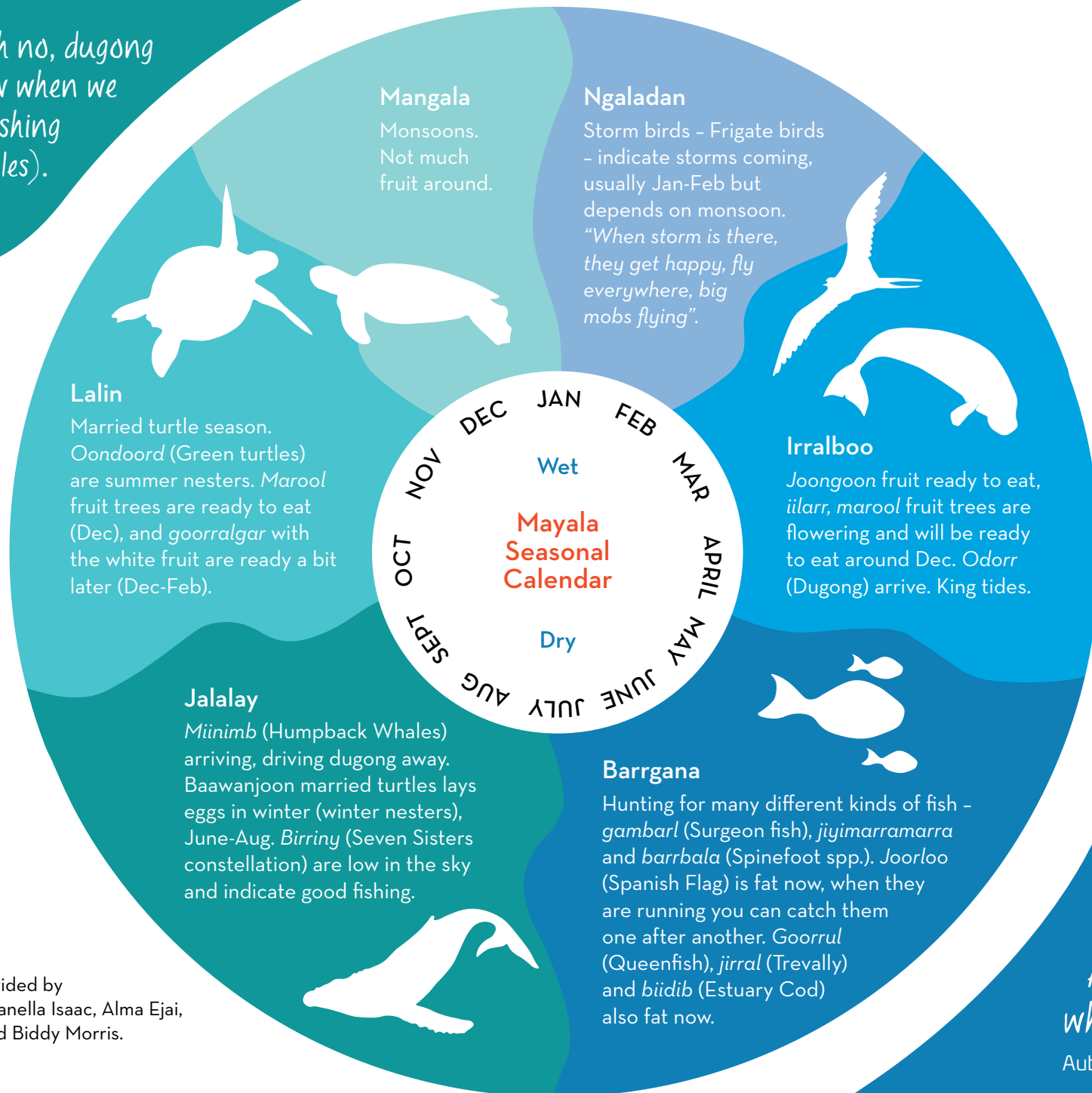
Mayala continue to use their intimate knowledge of the environment, seasons, currents and tidal movements and *noomoorr* to navigate safely through Country, hunt and harvest marine resources and gather tools, bait, materials and medicine.

Timing is crucial. People must know how to hunt and when to go. Getting it wrong could cost your life.

The different phases during each tidal cycle are useful for different activities, including when and where to hunt or harvest shellfish, fish, dugong, turtle, bush fruits, yams, medicine and tools. There are many words associated with the tides that reflect the detailed and complex knowledge of water movement and living sustainably within our marine environment. A strong spring tide (*goorlorloo*) can be dangerous for boating activity because the whirlpools (*jiidid*) in the open ocean, strong currents (*jarrany and loo*) and waves (*alalgoord*) can carry boats into the ocean, making boats difficult to move, tipping them over or pushing them against rocks.



“ We say, ah no, dugong all gone now when we hear that crashing (breaching whales).  
Alma Ejai ”



“ We live from the sea. Everyone must know the sea by heart. How to travel, where to go to get dugong or turtle, shellfish, oysters and fish. And we must know when to go. ”  
Aubrey Tigan

Information provided by Lorna Hudson, Janella Isaac, Alma Ejai, Violet Carter and Biddy Morris.

*Biyal-biyal* (mangrove double log raft, also called *gaalwa*) are a unique and highly efficient way to cover large distances with minimum effort developed by *Mayalayoon*. *Biyal-biyal* are very stable, made from a particular species of mangrove wood and suited to the particular conditions of *Mayala Baaliboor* and the needs of *Mayalayoon*. There are not many boat craft in Australia, and the *biyal-biyal* are unique only to Mayala. The simplicity of the technology and design along with the detailed knowledge of the environment gives it international significance: the maritime knowledge associated with the *biyal-biyal/gaalwa* raft and *noomorr* of Mayala and Bardi is recognised as intangible cultural heritage of the National Heritage listing of the Kimberley.

Navigation by *biyal-biyal* allowed Mayala to ride the incoming or outgoing tides and currents day or night to travel between the islands and to hunt or harvest marine resources, and could also be used for longer expeditions deep within Talbot Bay and as far as *Moonjaniid jina baaliboor* (Brue Reef), a 13km wide reef that rises from the sea only at low tide approximately 20 nautical miles off the coast. *Biyal-biyal* generally carried one to two people with belongings, including one or two dogs on smaller rafts, and up to four people and belongings on larger rafts. *Gaalwa* are used by Bardi/Jawi and Worrora people in this part of the Kimberley.

### Goobala (stars)

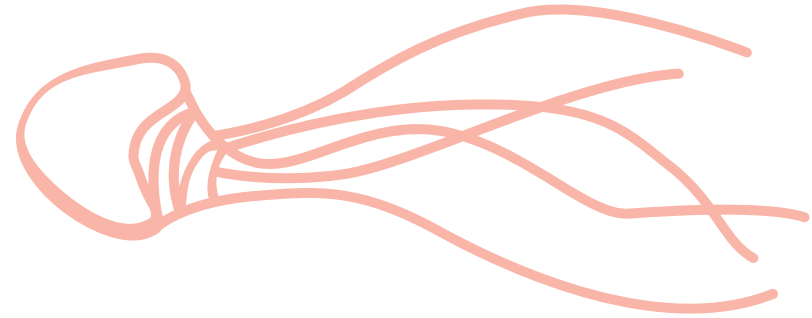
There are lots of names for stars, *Jorla* are the two big stars that are used for navigation.

Following these two stars allows people to navigate through Country at night, even with no moon to guide the way. "We follow one star for a certain distance then at the right point we change and follow another one. It's like catching a bus." Sandy Isaac.

"Every young man should be taught this." Alma Ejai.

*Goobala* can indicate weather patterns - if *goobal* are moving about it will be windy the next day.

*Birring* (Seven sisters constellation) are a significant indicator for the seasons and for fishing, important for navigation and has an important Lore story.



Digan, Mayala Traditional Owner on biyal-biyal

Reading the Country, reading the sea, includes paying attention to the sights, smells and touch - being on Country reinforces our knowledge. The movement of birds, the smells of exposed rocks on the low tide, seabed and reefs are indicators, as are the sounds of the currents and tides, the nature of the winds and storms. We know the speed, the sets, associated backwater currents, the timing and other important details of tidal streams between the islands to navigate safely.

“ People know what time to catch the tide. ”

Sandy Isaac

Mayala is at the junction of an extensive coastal trading network that reinforces cultural ties and exchange. Trading would take place anytime, travel by *biyal-biyal* to trade with coastal neighbours - Bardi, Jawi, Oomiida and Yawjiibia - for items unavailable on the islands; or within Mayala islands *iinalang* to *iinalang*, and sometimes trading with Macassans who ventured into north Australia for trepang and other marine resources.

Goowarn (pearl shell) is plentiful in Mayala Country and is a significant cultural species which connects through Country in a Mayala creation story, a dreaming story from *raya*, and through Lore. Goowarn has been traded for more than 20,000 years through Indigenous tradeways, and more recently carved and decorated pearl shell with *riiji*, sacred designs. This trade originated from the north-west Kimberley and spread across the Australian continent as far as Yalata in South Australia. Pearl shell trade has been happening long before European pearling masters arrived.

“ We feel the sound of the waves and the tide.  
We don't have fear of the sea. It is part of our life.”  
Aubrey Tigan



### With a billycan and tomahawk

My *nyami* worked on the luggers. One time the Belfour was anchored up in the mangroves and because it was neap tide it would be there longer than usual. He didn't like staying in Derby, he wanted to get back home. So he walked with just a billycan and tomahawk all the way past Yeeda and Oobagooma stations to Gooban where he cut down *joorlboo* (mangroves trees) to make *gaalwa* and a *gamban* (paddle).

He pushed off on the raft from Helpman Island and took the *noormoorr* towards Sunday Island. There was a boat coming back from Cockatoo Island and the crew gave him a tow out to Sunday Straight and he paddled from there. He pulled the raft up onto the beach and walked back to the homestead. Everyone was surprised to see him.

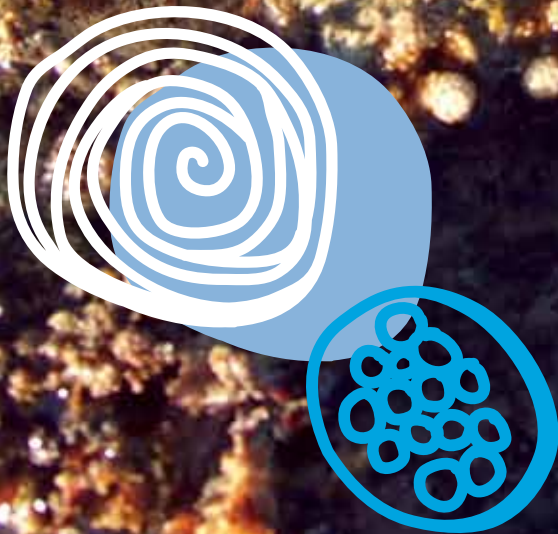
Lorna Hudson

### Colonisation and settlement

Saltwater people in Australia were the first to experience early exploration and often conflict, given that explorers came by sea. When colonisers first came mapping the Western Seaboard Mayala people were lighting fires all the way, tracking their journey so people ahead knew there were strangers in their Country.

From the 1860s pearlers, who bypassed Broome, began arriving on luggers in search of new areas for pearl shell in the King Sound region. The pearl shell beds in Mayala Country are renowned as some of the best in the world. Although early on there was sometimes conflict, later the pearlers encouraged many Aboriginal people to work on luggers. Aboriginal men worked alongside Malay, Chinese and Japanese crew, and developed close relationships. Initially, shell was collected for buttons then trade moved to pearls. Around the 1900s there were pearling camps all along the coast.

*Pictured left: Trochus*



Contact with Europeans brought new disease epidemics, such as leprosy and influenza, which was a heavy toll on Aboriginal people across the Kimberley.

Since the 1920s Mayala people were moved off Country to Sunday Island mission where they mixed with Bardi and other Aboriginal groups from around the west Kimberley. The mission was relocated to Wotjulum between 1934-1939 before returning to Sunday Island. One Elder describes this era as being “*Mustered like bulliman*”. Children and adults were put to work - rearing goats, tending gardens and general maintenance and upkeep of the mission. In this era, people worked for rations such as flour, tea, sugar, blankets and mission garments. Trepan was a delicacy that people harvested and sold to Asian markets to make ends meet during the early Australian pearling era.

In later years people began shelling - collecting trochus shell to sell to make buttons as a way for people to earn an income when living at the mission. People would get four pounds for two heavy bags of tightly packed raw trochus shell weighing around 70kg. Shelling was hard work but people enjoyed camping and being on Country. Some of the main camping areas for shelling are on *Jidalany* (Gibbings Island) and *Boordiji Ngaja* (Fraser Island). People would go around this area to *Noomoonjoo* (Caffarelli Island) and back to *Malgi* (Gagg Island Group) and *Garranard* (Bedford Island) which is a good camping place with lots of bush fruits.

*Jidalany* - People used to camp here a lot when they were shelling or working on Cockatoo mine. People would collect *aalngir* (trochus), *ngoorkma* (trumpet) and *aamboorl* (baler shells) and sell them to people living at the mine: “*We would paint aamboorl all different colours or put holes in them and globes to make lamps out of them. The kids would buy sweets at the shop. People would stay here or gooloo - straight across from Bilanyoo (Cockatoo Island).*”



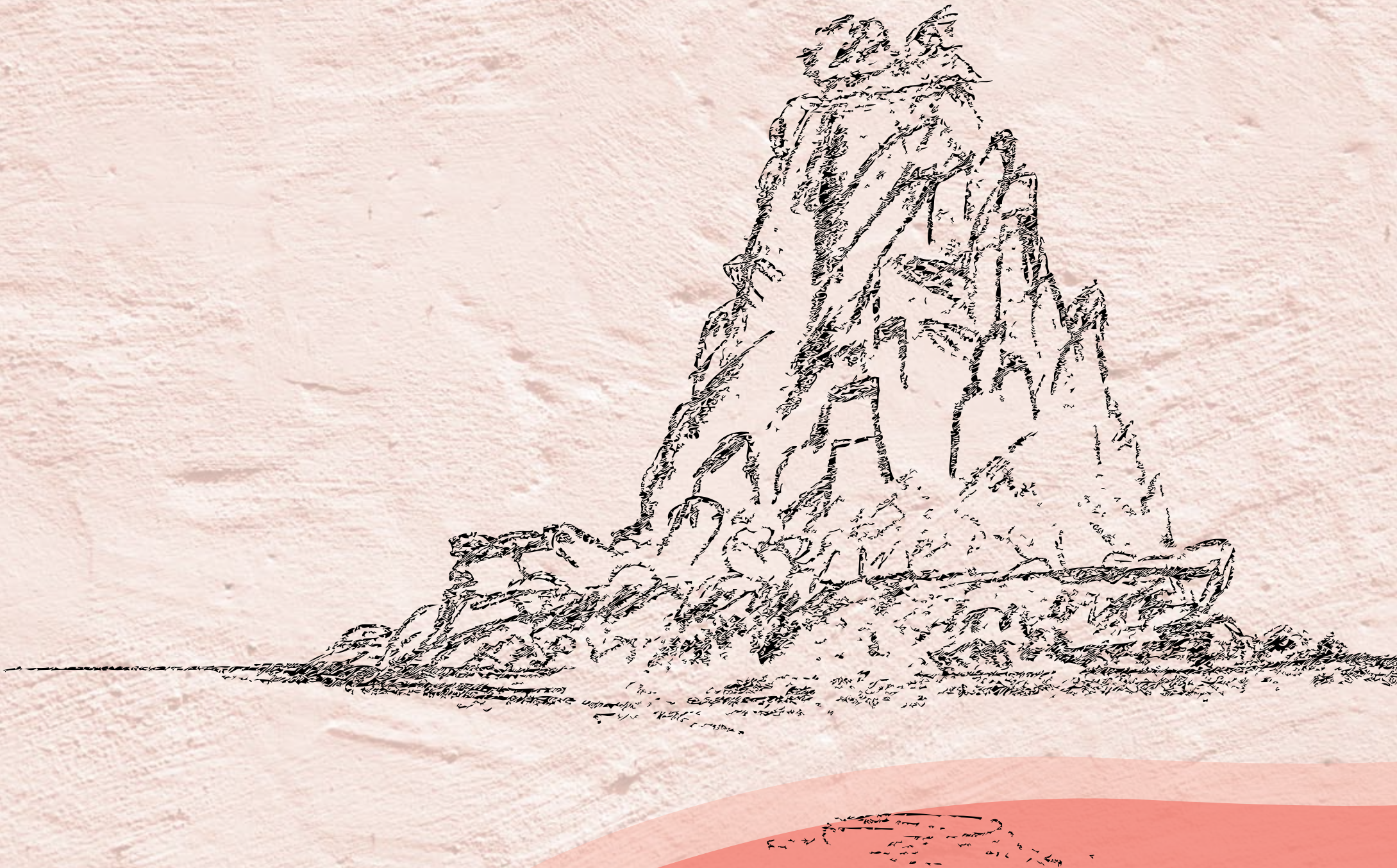
Recording Loodin of Japanese bombers coming in 1942 sung by Bessie Ejai

During World War II, Japanese bombers came close to Sunday Island, which was a frightening time. We would hide in the rocks if we saw them. Around this time people were relocated from Sunday Island to Kooljaman until the war was over.

After the missions closed in the 1950s, most people continued to live in or near Ardyaloon (One Arm Point), Djarindjin-Lombadina or lived among other tribes on the outskirts of Derby, Broome and Port Hedland. Government at the time did not acknowledge Mayala and classed us all as either Bardi or Worrorra. The first thing that Bardi, Jawi and Mayala people did when they got their first welfare payment after the 1966 referendum was to pool their money and buy boats to get back to Country.

Maintaining this close connection to Country throughout difficult times of disruption and change, Mayala carry a depth of knowledge from their own experiences and that of generations before, that is carried through culture, Lore and by living the cycle of the seasons.

Some Mayala People remained in Derby, others moved to townships near and far or relocated as close as possible to Mayala Country. With the help of people like Dave Drysdale and Brian Carter, along with other senior leaders and local Bardi, Jawi and Mayala People, One Arm Point Community was established. We wanted our kids to live near school and not have to risk travelling by sea to get there. Dave Drysdale, Brian Carter and his wife local Bardi and Mayala woman Violet Carter helped establish the initial schoolhouse at Middle Beach. Their support enabled Mayala, Bardi and Jawi to strive as culturally strong people today.



# PART 3

## *Looking after Mayala Baaliboor*

“You can get food anywhere if you know what you are looking for.”

# Our vision

Our vision captures the strength of culture and the aspirations of unity, collaboration and continuing care and protection of Mayala Country by Mayala people:

*Mayala people working together with gorna liyan, in harmony with neighbouring groups and together sharing responsibilities for our future generations. To have the same experience as our Elders before us in being able to enjoy the peace and serenity of our Country that is always alive, healthy and rich. Carrying our culture forward to ensure the safety of our traditional Country, language, Lore and people.*





## Relationships to Country

Along with our cultural protocols, the foundational values of relationships and interconnectivity guide this plan and any future activities or management on Country.

### Relationship between people and Country

The interconnectivity of Mayala people and Country, and of all things on Mayala Country – plants, animals, Lore, ceremony, places, people, time, are undivided. It includes everything and ‘across time’. One part of Country cannot be separated out from another, or one species from another, or people from Country or species. For example, the internationally recognised value of *biyal-biyal* and *noomoorr* depends on the knowledge and the activity of reading the Country. Most significantly, it connects up the activities of people on Country: *noomoorr* is not only the currents and tides, but the relationship of what to do, how to do it, when to do it, including the equipment needed. Our relationship with Country is how we make sense of our world, how we understand it, and that it is interconnected.

Similarly, when we talk of management it is not just managing a particular value but also its relationship with Mayala. For example, monitoring of turtles cannot be undertaken without *aamba* (men), without consideration of the health of the reef and seagrass and the customary practices to maintain the health of these species. Collecting mangrove wood for rafts must be done in the right way – the wood will be hard for the wrong person but soft for the right person.



We want everyone who reads this plan to understand this: it is about the relationship, not the value by itself.

This relationship is supported by the following principles:

#### — Country is alive

The living force of Country has existed forever and we are part of the living cultural landscape. Respectful behaviour on Country and Mayala responsibilities to Country maintain these values. It is important for Mayala people to visit Country regularly and perform the right practices and speak to Country.

#### — Traditional knowledge and practice

Our traditional knowledge and management practices are empirical, reliable and valuable, but endangered. Continuing Mayala traditional knowledge and management of Country alongside contemporary tools, knowledge and science, should not be an afterthought or a token gesture: traditional knowledge and management is a valid form of knowing the world. Any future working partnership must genuinely respect this.

#### — Mayala have rights to practice and maintain culture

Being on Country to reinforce and continue the relationship to Country, for culture, family, hunting, livelihoods, passing on traditional knowledge and caring for Country, including the cultural significance of biological resources (reefs, turtles, dugong, plants, animals, water, loo etc).

#### — Looking after Mayala Country is the responsibility of Mayala people

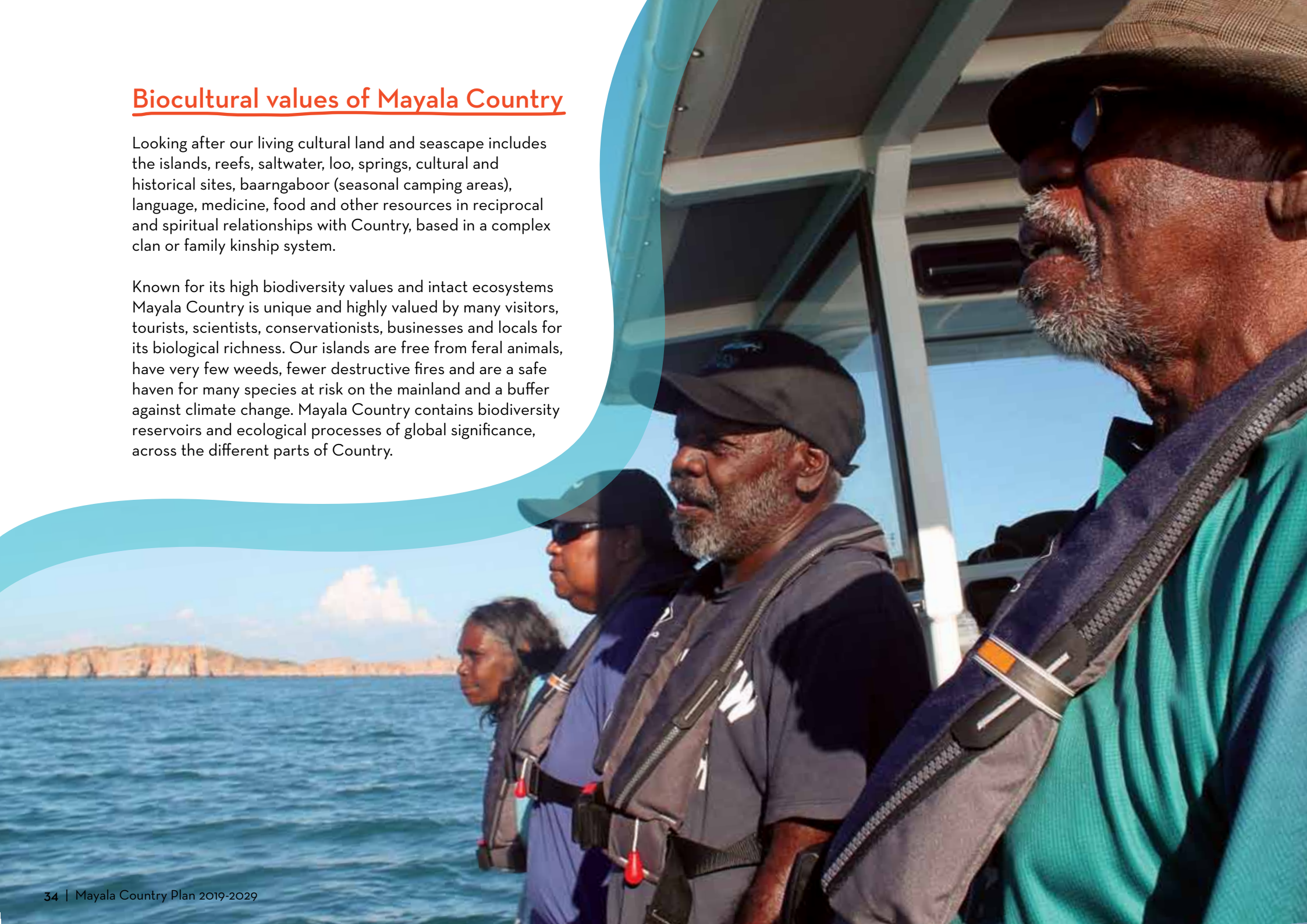
Maintaining Country, restoring Mayala cultural governance and decision making and building understanding and respect for Mayala's cultural responsibilities for Country.

Mayala wish to enhance and protect their relationship to Country through any future planning or management processes and ensure governance and management of Mayala Country is consistent with these principles. One way to do this is to ensure these principles form Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in any future planning or management processes.

## Biocultural values of Mayala Country

Looking after our living cultural land and seascape includes the islands, reefs, saltwater, loo, springs, cultural and historical sites, baarngaboor (seasonal camping areas), language, medicine, food and other resources in reciprocal and spiritual relationships with Country, based in a complex clan or family kinship system.

Known for its high biodiversity values and intact ecosystems Mayala Country is unique and highly valued by many visitors, tourists, scientists, conservationists, businesses and locals for its biological richness. Our islands are free from feral animals, have very few weeds, fewer destructive fires and are a safe haven for many species at risk on the mainland and a buffer against climate change. Mayala Country contains biodiversity reservoirs and ecological processes of global significance, across the different parts of Country.





*linalang* (Islands and reefs)  
*Oola* (Wetlands and springs)  
*Mayiboorda* (monsoonal vine thicket)  
*Gaarra* (Saltwater)  
*Gaanyga* (Mainland coast)



“ All blue water, you can't see any islands.  
You're like a mermaid! ”

### *linalang* (Islands and reefs)

Our islands are generally small and rocky and although vegetation is sparse, many of the islands have important fruits, yams and other bush tucker and medicine or plants used for materials or tools. Only some islands have freshwater, which is a scarce and a significant resource for survival.

Islands have a wide variety of edible plants and there are certain areas rich in bush fruits. These resources are managed through fire, replanting or deliberate spreading of seeds. *goolngarriny*, the long yam (*Dioscorea transversa*) is an important starch staple, and some islands like Oolala (High Island) are visited especially to harvest this yam, which is carefully managed. Other important bush foods and medicines include: *irril*m (*Glycine* sp.), *goorrall* (*Buchanania obovata*), *joongoon* (*Mimosops elengi*), *goorrir* (*Ficus virens*), *niyalboon* (*Cyperus bulbosus*), *ranyji* (fruit tree), *moonga* (Sugarbag) and mangrove trees for making *biyal-biyal*. *Madoorr* and *goorrir* figs could be dried and stored in special places for later use when fruits were scarce.

People would travel to certain islands to collect important or rare resources such as *galarrin* (*Acacia* sp.); its strong wood is used to make nails to join rafts and its leaves are burnt to relieve asthma.



lidoorl by Herbert Marshall

Fire is managed through traditional practices which include protecting significant areas and having the right person doing the burning. For example, we don't burn on Hidden or Long islands because of the rock wallabies.

### Taking a *biyal-biyal* to Moonjaning iinalang (Brue Reef)

Mayala people would travel to Moonjaning iinalang to collect trochus and fish. They would stop on Noomoonjoo (Caffarelli Island) on their way and wait for the right tide to take them in their *biyal-biyal*. People would launch on the right tide and go with the seabirds in the direction of the reef. It would take a few hours but eventually you could see the birds flying around the reef and see waves crashing, then you know you are there.

### This story of Moonjaniid jiina baaliboor was told by Sandy Isaac

An old man named Joorloo lived on Brue Reef with his children, back when it was an island. They were not good people, they were cannibals. One day a man was swept out there after losing his raft when hunting for turtle. The children were out and Joorloo hid the man in a *nirayi* and told him not to come out when the children got home. When his children came home he told them to dance for him around the fire. After dancing the children were so tired they fell straight to sleep. The next day Joorloo told his children to go really early to the other side of the island to fish. While they were away Joorloo gave the man one of his *imboogoon* (canoes) and told him to go quickly. He pushed him with all his force off the island. When his children came home and learned about the visitor they were angry. A big flood came and covered up the island but you can still see the huts under the water, turned to stone now.

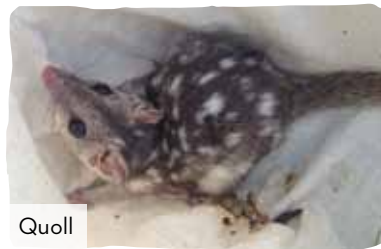
Most islands are surrounded by extensive reef platforms exposed during low tides. We consider islands connected by these reef platforms as one island and they are named in this way. For example, *Dijji* is the name for Pascoe and Hazel Islands and the interconnecting reef platform. Islands are also linked by the currents that flow past them or through cultural stories and sites. Many small islands belong to each other, like a suburb or region and we name them as a group, like *Garranarr* (Bedford Island group).

The islands are connected under the water and our Lore and cultural knowledge identifies sacred sites in the sea: islands that are now reefs, evidence of camps under the water and pathways connected and celebrated. Isolated from the mainland by rising sea levels up to 19,000 years ago, our islands are a microcosm of ecosystems on the adjacent mainland. Ancient reefs of black limestone rise up in places from when the Devonian reef skirted the Kimberley about 350 million years ago.

Although all islands are important to us, there are seasonal camping areas and special places like *Moonjaniid jina baaliboor* (Brue Reef), *Wanganiny* (Irvine/Bathurst Island), *Gararr* (Mermaid Island), *Dijji* (Herbert Islands Group) and *Ngalangalangarr* (Silica Beach) straight across from *Malgi*, which hold sacred meaning. *Ngalangalangarr* is a rare geological feature: it is thought this is one of only two beaches in the world like this.

The few scientific surveys undertaken on our islands confirm that they have high conservation value protecting populations of species threatened on the mainland, such as Nabarlek and Northern Quoll, guarding them against advancing mainland threats such as cane toads. These islands may also offer future translocation sites for species at risk on the adjacent mainland. Scientists suggest there are likely to be more nationally-threatened animals on our islands than have so far been recorded.

There are important animals on some islands, including many species nationally threatened or are listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC)*:



Quoll



Quoll tracks

Name	Location
<b>Nabarlek</b> ( <i>Petrogale concinna</i> )	Rock wallaby on <i>Oongaliyan</i> (Long Island) is rare on other north Kimberley islands, highly threatened and likely in serious decline on the mainland.
<b>Monjon</b> ( <i>P. burbidgei</i> )	Occurs on <i>Banggoon</i> (Hidden Island) and the fact that Nabarlek and Monjon rock wallabies do not co-occur on islands is important to scientists to understand these species and their habitats, and protect them.
<b>Euro</b> ( <i>Macropus robustus</i> )	Known to occur on <i>Banggoon</i> (Hidden Island) which is important as kangaroos are rare on islands.
<b>Golden-backed Tree Rat</b> ( <i>Mesembriomys macrurus</i> )	Occurs on Chambers, Hidden, Lachlan and Conilurus Islands.
<b>Golden bandicoot</b> ( <i>Isoodon auratus auratus</i> )	Was once plentiful across Australia but is now restricted to offshore islands, including in the Buccaneer Archipelago.
<b>Northern Quoll</b> ( <i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i> )	Threatened by the introduced cane toad, has been recorded on Silica Beach and Caffarelli, Sir Frederick, Chambers and Hidden Islands, where it has a better chance of persisting than on the mainland.
<b>Kimberley rock-rat</b> ( <i>Zyzomys woodwardia</i> )	Occurs only in the Kimberley, has been recorded on Bathurst and Irvine Islands.
<b>Masked Owl</b> ( <i>Tyto novaehollandiae kimberli</i> )	Another EPBC listed species known throughout the region.
<b>Water Rat</b> ( <i>Hydromys chrysogaster</i> ) <b>Grassland Melomys</b> ( <i>Melomys burtonii</i> ) <b>Banggoon</b> (Hidden island)	Other important small mammals are present on islands and an important Corella nesting site in the rocks on <i>Julugi</i> .

Banggoon (Hidden), Ooloogija (Lachlan) and Onggaliyan (Long) Islands are at a unique junction between the North Kimberley, Central Kimberley and Dampierland IBRA regions and in addition to many threatened species support ecosystems and species usually found on the mainland hundreds of kilometres apart. This increases their value as a refuge.

Reefs provide rich food sources such as *niwarda*, *jalnggoon* (oysters), *alngir* (trochus), *goowarn* (*Pinctada maxima*) pearl shell, many kinds of fishes and a place to hunt turtle and collect useful materials such as *ambool* (baler shell) and *ngoolnga* (Trumpet Shell) used for carrying water. *Goowarn* is a rich food source, and important culturally with significance in Lore, as part of traditional trade and in cultural ceremonies. Pearl shell was collected, cleaned, shaped and often decorated with *riiji*, special designs, often highlighted with natural ochres, to be worn in ceremonial occasions or traded and exchanged via traditional networks that traversed the Australian continent for over 20,000 years.

Large pearl shell beds are exposed during the low spring tides on reefs surrounding islands. Graveyard, within Strickland Bay, is a traditional place for collecting pearl shell and where many hard hat pearl divers lost their lives. There are many lonely graves in this area. It is a treacherous reef, and the divers' pipes got caught and people drowned. We feel sorry for people who died on our Country.



Diji Reef



Pearl shell beds



Turtle tracks



Trochus

Protecting the pearl shell beds in Graveyard is important for its environmental values, historic and Lore significance (Arligyoon story site). As filter feeders, pearl oysters are an indicator for water quality and reef health, needing the currents and clean water of a healthy marine system. *Goowarn* is threatened by climate change (water temperature, algae, change in currents etc), and by an increase in boating, tourism, fishing, as well as oil and gas extraction.

We have noticed the reefs are not as healthy as in the past. They have fewer octopus, blue crab and trochus, and are threatened by coral bleaching through climate change. When people walked across the reefs, they would walk in a way that would not damage the reef, in single file.

*Alngir* (*Trochus hanleyanus*) extends throughout the northern waters of King Sound. Trochus are collected from inter-tidal reef platforms by hand at low tide. Long journeys were made by *biyal-biyal* to *Noomoonjoo* (Caffarelli Island) and later by motor boat to collect Trochus and other resources as far as Brue Reef.

Reefing activities, to collect *goowarn* or *alngir* are favoured during *lirralboo* and *Jalalayi* when the low tides expose large reef areas and the winds are generally favourable for small boats. *Alngir* plays an important role in keeping the reef in balance. Much *Alngir* has been removed in the past and we are concerned about sustainability.

### Oola (Freshwater wetlands and springs)

Oola (springs), oongoor (rockholes) and oomban (intertidal seepages), are rare and only occur on some islands. Animals like Nabarlek on Oonggaliyan are dependent on freshwater. Knowledge of these water places, and how to look after them is an important responsibility. Some freshwater springs are in the intertidal areas and exposed when tides are low. Rock wallabies, woodland birds and other animals come down and drink on the sand when the tide is out.

Important water places include:

- Jalngararr on Oonggaliyan
- Joordolon on Gararr
- Jirriwilliny on Oolala

Some need to be maintained by removing mangroves, vegetation and digging sand or sediment out to restore their flow. Cleaning them out is an important activity for survival of people and animals that depend on these rare sources of water. If we don't visit the Country, the water will dry up. This needs to be a regular part of future ranger work, but all Mayala people should also do this when visiting Country.

Freshwater places house *raya*. When we approach, we speak to Country and although the *raya* can't be seen they are always there, and move out of the way for us. Visitors need to be welcomed to the Country in the right way or else the water might dry up or other bad things might happen.

Freshwater wetlands have many useful food, tool, materials and medicinal resources, including *barr* (paperbark), *iidoon* (pandanus), *goolngarr* (big yam) and many bush fruits.

Oola in Jalngararr on Oonggaliyan



lilarr



Marool



Albay



Joongoon



Irrilm



lidoorl

### Mayiboorda (monsoon vine thickets)

Monsoon vine thickets provide small areas rich in plant and animal diversity and protected from harsh fires. Important plants are collected from these areas for food, medicine and materials. Some islands are known or visited for these resources, such as those on *Moorrooloongarr Ngaja*. These are often close to seasonal camping areas for easy access to bush fruits which could be eaten straight away or dried and stored for later use.

*Aarla mayi* generally means fruit or vegetable food source. They can be important seasonal indicators with certain fruits indicating seasonal changes for *aarli barnangg* (shellfish, crabs, oysters and fish) and *arli goolil* (meat from the sea). For example, *Lalin* season has plentiful bush fruits and some indicate the right time to hunt for stingrays and married turtles, or that *moonga* (bush honey) is ready for eating.

## Gaarra (Saltwater)

The sea Country includes all the saltwater and submerged lands (both permanently submerged and tidally): *gaarr-gaarr* (ripples), *loo* (tidal streams or currents), *galoorr* (foam), *jardagarr* (sandbars), *niimir* (drop offs or deep holes in the sea), *jiidid* (whirlpools), *ooloowa* (spouts). Some sandbanks are sacred and significant and there are other sacred places in the sea.

There are diverse and biologically important areas within our sea Country. This includes large coral reef systems with a unique coral province that are important transition zones between Bardi and Kimberley populations. Scientists think this unique zone is crucial for coral reef gene flow that will help sustain populations through climate change. The reefs along with seagrass and nesting beaches support five species of sea turtle. Large estuaries and mangrove communities are important nursery habitat and upwelling provides rich marine life. Continental shelf and sheltered bays support migratory pathways, calving and nursing habitat for humpback whales and migratory pathways for pygmy blue whales.

The large tides and currents, deep water areas and Indonesian flow-through has created unique marine and coastal ecosystems supporting many protected and EPBC species listed as threatened, migratory, marine or cetacean.

Our staple foods include saltwater fish, turtles and turtle eggs, dugong, crabs and oysters which feed our *liyan*. Turtle and dugong are important cultural and economic foods. We hunt Green turtles and harvest Green and Flatback eggs on nesting beaches throughout Mayala Country.

Five species of sea turtle - Green, Leatherback, Olive Ridley, Hawksbill, Loggerhead. Older people used to eat Hawksbill, they would stuff it first before cooking, and it was also traded.



Dugong - Dugong is an important *goorlil* (meat of the sea). When the easterly wind blows dugong are fat and we eat it with *joongoon*.



Snubfin

Big populations of snubfin (Yaloon, Lachlan Island, Cone Bay), bottlenose, Indo-pacific dolphins and false killer whales.



Corals



Bull breach

*Miinimbi* (humpback whales) - come through during *Lalin*, hot weather time. The presence of the *miinimbi* tell us to get ready for Married (mating) turtle time. Mothers and babies stay in sheltered waters, the fathers are out in deeper water keeping tigersharks away. The mothers breach with babies to show them off to the fathers way out in deeper water, introducing them, showing them.



Our sea Country provides us with *aarli barnangg* – food of the sea. Healthy reefs and seagrass provide important food and resources, such as *marrarn* (mangrove jack), *barrbal* (golden lined spinefoot), *jiyimarramarra* (spinefoot), *gambarl* (Surgeonfish), *aalngir* (trochus), clam shell, *ngoolnga* (Trumpet shell), *aamboorl* (Baler shell) and oyster. There are healthy populations of fish of all kinds hunted on the reefs with spears or by using *mayoorr* (fish traps).

Seasonal indicators tell us when to fish: *Jooloo* (Spanish Flag) has orange fat in May/June, the Cod is also fat around this time and that we mix with meat and stingray. When the *miinimbi* come through we know the dugong have gone and it's time to get ready for turtles.

There are healthy populations of top predators such as sailfish, sharks including tigersharks and *garnamarrd* (hammerhead), many kids of seabirds and migratory shorebirds.

*Loolool* (Whale sharks) are the guardians of the sea. Whale sharks rescued anyone who drifted out into the ocean or got lost. We don't see them very often but if you are in trouble you can call out to them in language and ask them to take them home. They would even take someone with their raft and turtle from hunting and take them to safety.

### Loolool

Whale sharks are the protector, guardian of the sea.

It is an important animal. We call it *iwala*, old uncle. When people were chasing turtle, they could dive down and talk in language to *loolool*. There are many stories about *loolool* rescuing or helping people.

One time, some men were hunting turtle and lost their raft, the *loolool* come up and took them with their turtle to beach. When it dropped them on the beach the men put *balalagood* (*Acacia* sp.) and a pearl shell on top of the head of the whale shark, which was a customary thank you for *loolool*. Then it swam away.



Goodigoodi



Goolngarr



Lachlan Island (left) and mainland

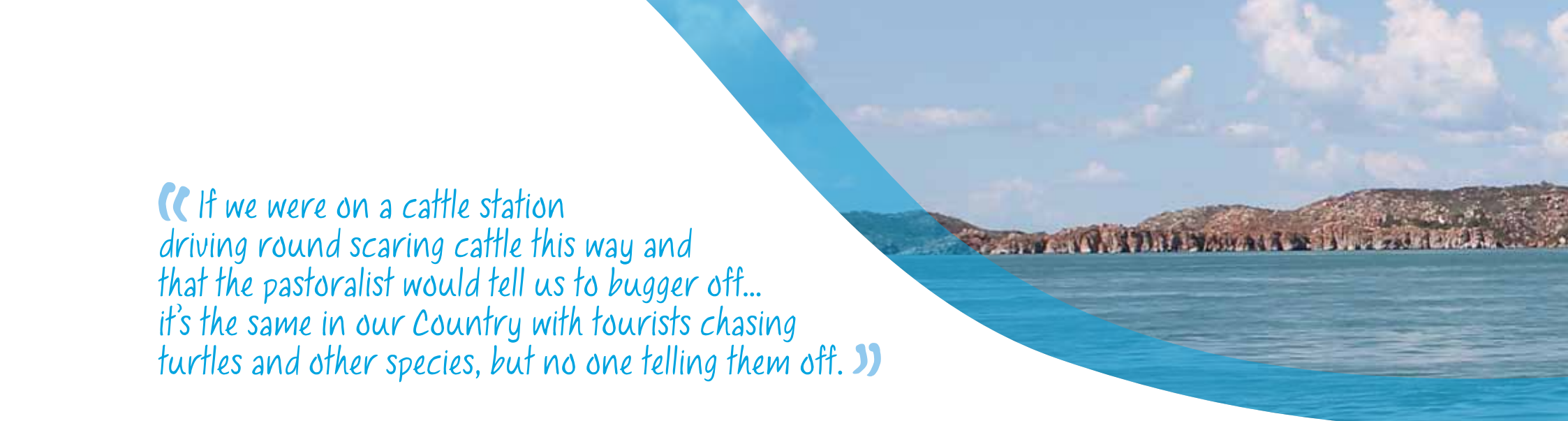
### Garngaa (mainland coast)

Mayala people's survival depended on the use of resources in coastal areas within our Country, such as:

- Yaloon (region) includes Oobiyal (region south of Cone Bay) and Maanangoo – *goolngarriny* (long yam), *aangi* (oysters), *oola* - big water place on top, and seasonal camping area, and two hills that are the place of Goolaman story
- Gooban to get mangroves to make *biyal-biyal/gaalwa*, important, still go there
- Near Dugong Bay to harvest *Maanjilal* for *biyal-biyal/gaalwa*
- Gamarrgoorr – location in graveyard for spears, *jiinaal* for bamboo spears
- Jojogarr is the place to get *goodigoodi* (cypress pine to make paddles)
- Graveyard – pearl shell beds and story

Jojogarr is an important place Mayala men get *goodigoodi* for paddles on the mainland. At the right tide the men can walk across from Jojogarr to the mainland.

“ If you're in trouble you sing out, “Iwala!”  
And he'll come and get you. ”



“ If we were on a cattle station driving round scaring cattle this way and that the pastoralist would tell us to bugger off... it's the same in our Country with tourists chasing turtles and other species, but no one telling them off. ”

## Concerns for our Country

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Although Mayala Country is valued for its high biodiversity and as a refuge for many species, threats are increasing as human activity increases along the Kimberley coastline - tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, mineral exploration/extraction, climate change and the environmental consequences of moving people off Country.

### Connection to Country

Loss of traditional knowledge from Elders passing away and inability to access Country is a great risk to cultural values. Being on Country feeds our spirit, our *liyan*, and enables us to care for Country, teach our children to hunt and be safe in the big tides and dangerous currents between the islands. Knowledge of tides is crucial for safe access and to maintain cultural connections, language, livelihoods and for future socio-economic opportunities. Our knowledge of the complex tides is translated through words, sounds, touch and sight. Without being taught on Country kids won't know the right sounds of the water or other indicators that tell when to depart to reach a certain island: getting it wrong could cost lives. It is important for us to visit Country regularly or else it gets lonely and freshwater places, caves and shelters hide themselves.

Culture is changing a lot now. We used to get our cultural education from our old people by mixing together, but now, with our families spread out, it is more from immediate families. Strengthening culture will help to look after Country.

### Unmanaged tourism

Unmanaged tourism is our biggest concern. The cruise boat industry accessing land and Aboriginal cultural sites without consent is of particular concern to us. Sealing the Dampier Peninsula road in the next two years is expected to greatly increase the number of boats and people accessing our Country. There are five sea turtle species living in the same waters, and with dugong they are threatened by increasing boat traffic (boat strike) and disturbance to nesting beaches. Disposal of bilge water could impact on water quality and reef health. Traditionally, seasonal camping areas were a sustainable practice to let the land rejuvenate. Tourists camping in areas they're not supposed to has flow on impacts such as introducing weeds or feral animals, walking on and damaging reefs, lighting fires, damaging cultural sites and leaving rubbish.

### Illegal fishing

The Buccaneer Archipelago is a hotspot for illegal foreign fishing vessels taking trochus, sharks, fish and reef shelling and a high



quarantine risk of pests/diseases into the area. Indonesian fishers have been caught in Mayala Country collecting trochus.

### Overfishing

Overfishing by recreational and commercial fishers who access areas without permissions or concern for impacts. Commercial fishers using large nets impact on many more species than those they target and we have noticed a decline in fish stocks over the past decades. Lots of boats now are filling up with lots of fish to take back to town, and there are areas that are a sanctuary for whales and dolphins where fishing may be impacting on these and other species.

« We don't know how many people fishing, how many licenses. »

### Introduced species

There are currently no feral animals on Mayala Country. There are some weeds, such as *Passiflora foetida* on *Jidalan* and some other places, but not many. Weeds, cane toads, rats, feral cats and marine species that may be transported by visitors or vessels (e.g. bilge water or from aquaculture) are a significant threat that would change the biodiversity values and reduce the significant role our islands play

as a refuge, also highlighting the importance of quarantine measures to prevent introductions of pest species. People frequently land on our islands without permission or care for quarantine, increasing the chances of threats to our small island ecosystems.

### Climate change

Climate change impacts on freshwater springs, tides, places, plants and animals and how people relate to Country. Many of our springs occur on or near the beaches with some only appearing at low tide, such as the spring on Oongaliyan. Rising sea levels will damage sensitive springs/ areas and the many dependent plants and animals, including EPBC listed threatened species such as Nabarlek that rely on freshwater.

Algal blooms in seagrass threaten turtle and dugong. Climate change is already changing the flowering and fruiting seasons of some of our important bush fruits. We are concerned for reef health, turtle eggs (temperature dictates gender), nesting beaches and water places along the coastal areas which will be greatly impacted. Mayala people have experienced climate change in *milonjoon* times: we lived through significant events of sea level rise and other effects of climate change with our Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), our own Indigenous science: this should be taken seriously by mainstream Australia when addressing climate change concerns.



### Wrong way fire

Fire damages plants and animals if not done the right way. Increasing human activity in the area is likely to lead to more fire, threatening fire-sensitive plants on the islands, such as monsoon vine thickets, and obligate seed species *Callitris columellaris*.

### Pollution

We are very concerned about the threat of pollution and contamination from potential oil spills from increasing ship traffic along the Kimberley coast, and mining impacts. There are also some places where people have set up camps without permission and put signs (e.g. Jidalan memorial and sign Buccaneer Beach) which has lots of old junk like a BBQ, old tent, metal pipes, glass bottles, and cans left on the beach. We are concerned about mining on land outside of Mayala Country that could impact it, for example by pesticides and chemicals washing down the Fitzroy River and into King Sound, and the Jowleanga Mine spillway dam overflows. The potential for pollution and pest species being brought into near shore areas through the Indonesian flow through requires constant monitoring.

### Safety

We are concerned about the safety of all people, especially tourists. Yoorroon (Whirlpool pass) is dangerous and our old people witnessed Indonesian boats being dragged down into the centre, never to be seen again. This and other places can only be crossed on the right tide and with the right knowledge of how to cross them. All *aamba* should know this and listen to their Elders to stay safe on Country. For tourists and visitors, we will develop a visitor management system to keep people safe and as a way to educate visitors about our Country and cultural protocols.

### No-go Zones

A number of areas are restricted access or are no-go areas to tourists and visitors for various reasons including safety, important areas for Mayala people's enjoyment and Lore grounds and other significant cultural areas. These areas include:

- Wanganiny (Bathurst and Irvine Islands) is a no-go zone;

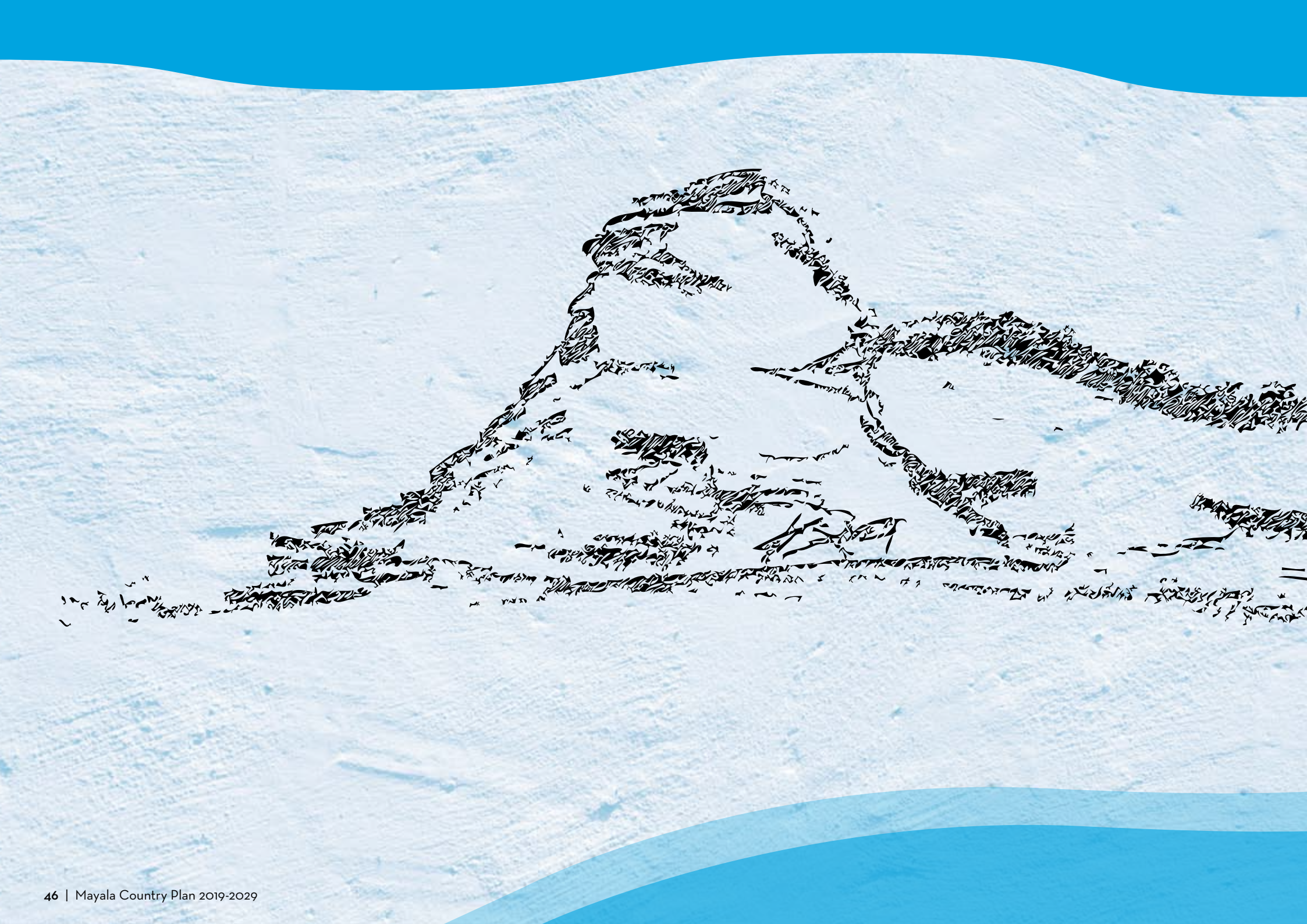
- Some sandbars e.g. back of Oongaliyan (Long Island), is *banmangibooroo* (mustn't go there)
- Place on Oolala (High Island)
- Mangolman - restricted areas
- Jooloogi restricted activities to protect this significant area with large numbers of cockatoo nesting, connected to a significant cultural story and site
- Dugong Bay is important nursery area for whales. Restricting activities and managing as a whale and dolphin sanctuary zone.

« Mother whales go right inside Dugong Bay to Namayi with small ones to keep them safe. »

Before Native Title legislation existed or our Native Title was recognised, government decisions were made to use some parts of our Country for other purposes, without our consultation or consent. These include:

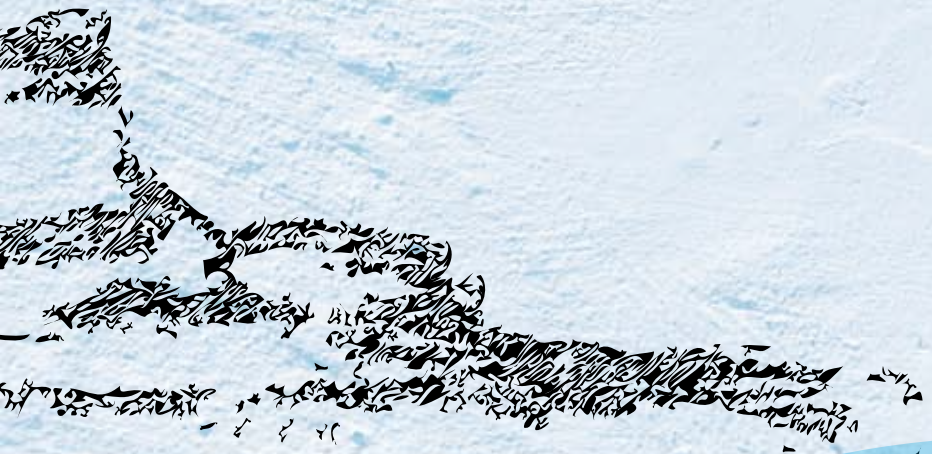
- Tanner Island dedicated as a Nature Reserve vested in Conservation Commission of Western Australia
- Port waters near Irvine Island on the north-eastern boundary, Port Authority
- DBCA tenure on Noomoonjoo (Caffarelli Island) - navigation beacon with tenure vested in Conservation Commission of Western Australia
- Yampi Sound Defence area, Australian Government - coastal section near Lachlan Island
- Kimberley Marine Park, Australian Government - north-west corner of the Mayala native title determination
- Lalang-garram/Camden Sound Marine Park, Western Australia government - a very small section of approximately 2600ha (0.4%) of sea Country in the south-west corner of the marine park

We want to work with governments to redress these issues.



# PART 4

## *Joordingyoor (Implementation)*



“Carrying our culture forward to ensure the safety of our traditional Country, language, Lore and people.”





## Managing our Mayala Baaliboor

Mayala's strong connection to Country, cultural knowledge and practices will guide ongoing management.

Knowledge is only part of the story: it is also the interaction of people with Country. Managing our *Mayala Baaliboor* through the foundational values outlined in Part 3 means that the quality of the relationship between Mayala people and a living Country will form KPIs in any future management, and include the use of traditional ecological knowledge, use and enjoyment of Country, and responsibilities and decision making.

Any future Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) needs to be consistent with these foundational values.

## Our goals and actions

Mayala have identified five goals to continue to look after, use and enjoy Country:

- Care for Country, keep it healthy and look after it the way our old people always have.
- Manage access to Mayala Country and use of Mayala resources by outsiders.
- Genuine research partnerships are benefiting Mayala people and Country into the future.
- Our knowledge remains strong and our cultural rights are protected.
- Achieve economic benefit for Mayala recognising that any business on Mayala Country is Mayala business.

The Action Plan provides a range of priority strategies and actions to achieve the goals.



## Action Plan

<p><b>Goal</b></p>	<p>Care for Country, keep it healthy and look after it the way our old people always have.</p>
<p><b>Strategy</b></p>	<p>Mayala Ranger Group undertaking management on Country.</p> <p>Work towards Protected Areas on Country through an IPA and traditional owner led management.</p> <p>Junior Ranger and diversionary program engage both troubled youth and successful young leaders to build self-esteem and connection to Country.</p> <p>Mayala Rangers in partnership with key stakeholders and programs looking after special places on Country including springs, rock wallaby habitats, reefs and cultural places.</p>
<p><b>Priority Action</b></p>	<p>Secure funding and resources to establish the Mayala Ranger Program - including survey vessel, Ranger base and sub-bases, employment, training and funding for projects on Country.</p> <p>Secure IPA funding to plan for and establish an IPA.</p> <p>Establish Protected Area Management Committee to ensure TO-led PA governance and management.</p>

<p>Manage access to Mayala Country and use of Mayala resources by outsiders.</p>	<p>Genuine research partnerships are benefiting Mayala people and Country into the future.</p>	<p>Our knowledge remains strong and our cultural rights are protected.</p>	<p>Achieve economic benefit for Mayala recognising that any business on Mayala Country is Mayala business.</p>
<p>A visitor access management system in place.</p> <p>Education and awareness raising in the community and with key stakeholders for Mayala management of Country.</p> <p>Regulation of commercial and recreational activities.</p>	<p>Undertake research through partnerships that respect cultural protocols and use two-way learning and research.</p> <p>Genuine partnerships address Mayala research priorities.</p>	<p>Educating our young people through documenting and sharing cultural knowledge.</p> <p>Practicing culture and exercising our cultural rights by visiting and being on Country.</p> <p>Wake up Mayala languages through a dedicated language program.</p>	<p>Creating an economic future for our people through opportunities consistent with our Country Plan.</p>
<p>Develop a visitor permit system to manage visitors, engage and educate them about cultural protocols which may be implemented through interpretive signs, information sheets and media to increase awareness, safety and protection of Mayala Country.</p> <p>Establish relationships and future agreements with regulators to provide information and seek Mayala endorsement on commercial and recreational activities and licenses.</p>	<p>Develop Mayala research priorities for the next five years, inclusive of key stakeholders for success.</p>	<p>Secure funding for a cultural program that includes resourcing of activities and coordination.</p>	<p>Create an Economic Development and Employment Plan for existing and new businesses on Country and to support Mayala businesses on Country.</p>

*“Our children and their children  
need to see what we’re seeing now.”*





## Protected Areas on Mayala Country

Establishing a protected areas governance arrangement will ensure all protected areas on Country, whether Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), state or commonwealth parks, will be complimentary and support Mayala-led governance and management.

To look after our Country so that future generations can experience Country as we and our ancestors have. We are planning for protected areas over our islands and sea Country together, through an Indigenous Protected Area. The existing Kimberley Marine Park (Commonwealth) and the proposed Buccaneer Archipelago Marine Park (WA) have the potential to complement and contribute to the holistic land and sea IPA. We have the support of DBCA and Parks Australia for this approach.

We envisage all protected areas are complimentary and support Mayala-led governance and management.

### Indigenous Protected Areas

An Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) is an area of land and/or sea that has been dedicated by Traditional Owners and recognised by all levels of government and internationally as a protected area. IPAs are similar to other protected areas except that they are established under the cultural authority of Traditional Owners rather than the legislative authority of government. IPAs are established to protect and manage the area's natural and cultural values and to sustainably use resources within the area.

IPAs are managed by “legal and other effective means” allowing for collaboration through a MoU or agreement for areas that Traditional Owners do not hold tenure or native title. IPAs can coexist with government protected areas, such as national parks and marine parks, and there are many examples where co-development of a management plan over land and/or sea has created benefits for both Traditional Owners and government or other partners. The contribution of IPAs is counted as part of the protected area estate of Australia's National Reserve System (NRS).

Mayala's approach is to dedicate both land and sea as an IPA and manage this as one protected area, consistent with our cultural concept of Country. This is a long-held goal by Mayala, identified by Elders in our 2008 strategic plan for Country. With our Native Title Consent Determination, we are now ready to pursue our long-held aspiration of an IPA over all our Country.

## Governance

Our Lore has sustained the Country and People since time began. With our Native Title consent determination and PBC now established from July 2019, the PBC will be the first point of contact. Developing the Protected Areas Management Committee and the Mayala Ranger Program are cornerstones for successful implementation of the Country Plan, governed by the PBC.

Any other protected areas must support Traditional Owner-led governance and management, and bring social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits to Mayala people. The core values for any existing and future protected areas will become KPIs (or similar) in other protected areas planning, monitoring and management processes.

## Partnerships and collaboration

We and our Elders before us have worked hard to gain Native Title recognition for our responsibilities, rights and interests in our Country and our next step is to invite partners to work with us.

Cultural competency is important to develop a non-Indigenous persons understanding about Mayala culture. You cannot become culturally competent by attending a cultural awareness workshop - it can only be gained by living and experiencing the core values of Mayala People's culture.

We welcome partners, including the Western Australian government, who will respect our authority for our Country, be ready to learn about and support Mayala culture and work alongside us to achieve our aspirations.

With our partners we will explore new and existing opportunities to leverage resources and build capacity for shared goals. Below are some of the ways stakeholders can support Mayala. More opportunities will be explored through implementation workshops and ongoing engagement.



**Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)** - strengthen existing relationship through opportunities for visitor management, on ground Ranger and IPA support and Traditional Owner-led governance and management of protected areas on Mayala Country.

**Parks Australia** - can support a consistent Traditional Owner-led approach to protected areas by taking steps towards joint governance and management of the Kimberley Marine Park (Cwth) and supporting the development of Mayala Rangers.

**National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)** - can support Mayala's intentions for an IPA over land and sea by providing consultation funding, and support development of Mayala Rangers.

**Department of Fisheries** can educate the community by engaging with commercial and recreational fishers, signage, permits/licenses and compliance, in collaboration with Mayala.

**Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)** can help Mayala establish checks and balances for vessels, planes and drones in Mayala Country.

**Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI), Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)** can support Mayala research priorities and partnerships that build Mayala capacity.

**Bardi Jawi and Dambimangari Traditional Owners** share many family and cultural linkages with Mayala. Support each other to strengthen Traditional Owner-led governance and management.

**Kimberley Ranger Network** and **Land and Sea Management Unit** - KLC provide critical support of PBC, Mayala protected areas planning, IPA and development of Mayala Ranger group.

**Shire of Broome** and **Shire of Derby-West Kimberley** can support community education and awareness raising to increase the profile of Mayala and looking after Country with locals, businesses and tourists.

**Kooljaman**, can help educate visitors who enter Mayala Country through Kooljaman.

**Kimberley Marine Tourism Association** can support a visitor management system for charter boats, and respect and support our protocols by educating tour operators and tourists.

**Kimberley Development Commission** - respecting our protocols and collaborating with us for employment and enterprise development.

**Lotteries West** - support the establishment of Mayala Rangers through infrastructure, equipment and cultural projects to enable Rangers to work on Country (e.g. boat, recording projects).

**Environmental NGOs** collaborate to build the capacity of Mayala Rangers to undertake environmental research and management of special places/species.

**Aarli Mayi** provides an important aquaculture business opportunity in collaboration with Mayala, and opportunity to raise awareness of Aboriginal brand, employment and economic development.

**Businesses** such as Maxima, Barramundi Asia, Paspaley and CMC Barging could collaborate with us for employment and enterprise development.

**Cygnets Bay** - continue to maintain our relationship with the Brown family and seek expert advice and assistance to maintain environmental health, sustainability and clean waters.

**Department of Justice (and related youth NGOs)** - can support youth diversionary programs and Junior Rangers.

**Local schools** in Derby, Broome, Ardyaloon, Djarindjin and Beagle Bay can develop education and language programs to support cultural learning and capacity building for future pathways.

**Recreational fishing clubs** can engage with Mayala to develop agreements for fishing competitions and build opportunities for two-way learning.

**Local Indigenous community** develop solutions for key concerns such as access and harvesting of resources e.g. fish, turtle eggs, by engaging with local communities to developing solutions together.

## Communication

Communication has always been an important skill for Mayalayoon to survive, being at the intersection of two families of languages. Launching the Country Plan provides an opportunity to communicate our priorities, develop momentum, partnerships and investment to achieve the strategies and actions outline in this plan.

As Mayala continues to grow our capacity and resources, we will continue to share our plan and build support.

## How do we know we have been successful?

*Oombaloombal*, little by little, upholding our principles and with support and strong partnerships, we will achieve our aspirations. Many things can change in the future and the pathway to our goals may look different. To ensure we are on the right path the Mayala PBC will review the Country Plan in five years.

### **Goolaman**

This is a story about the importance of communication as a key survival tool: the fate of not being able to communicate was serious.

Two men meet by chance across a chasm. One man, Goolinan, was from Oongaliyan and shouted a question in Oowini across the gap. The other man was Ngarinyin and doesn't answer, because he doesn't speak that language. He yells back something in Ngarinyin, which the Oowini man doesn't understand. Then they both turn into two hills, which are still there today.







## Resources

**Mayala Connection Report** - through Native Title, important resource for Mayala People.

**Mayala Looking after Country Plan 2008** - provides strategies for looking after Country and is the guiding document developed with our Elders, many of whom have since passed away. The Plan identifies three broad management zones to focus on-ground work: *Oonggaliyan* (Long Island) and nearby *Dijji* (Herbert Group); *Gararr* (Mermaid Island and reef) and *Oolala* (High Island). Exploring the option of an IPA is listed as an action.

The **Dijji Site Plan** and the **Oonggaliyan Site Plan** - provide priorities and actions for management of these two priority areas closest to Derby and One Arm Point.

The natural and Indigenous cultural values of the islands have been recognised on the **West Kimberley National Heritage List** including:

- The double log raft (*Kalwa*) maritime tradition of Mayala People
- Interactions with Makassan traders over hundreds of years
- Pearl stories and resources used in traditional trade through the *wunan* cultural trade and exchange.

**Kimberley Islands Biodiversity Survey** undertaken in 2012-2014 identified Kimberley islands as having high conservation value, many endemic and threatened species protected from mainland threats.

**Australian Marine Parks Scientific Atlas** - collation of scientific knowledge within the north-west marine reserve.

## Appendix 1

Aamba	man	Loo	tidal currents
Ambool	baler shell	Loolool	whale shark
Alngir	trochus	Mayalayoon ambooriny	Mayala people
Mayiborda	vine thickets	Milonjoon	from long, long ago
Baaliboor	where you camp, where you stay	Miinimbi	humpback whales
Bardi	language	Ngoolnga	trumpet shell
Biyal-biyal	mangrove double log raft, also known as Gaalwa	Noomoorr	saltwater highway, traveling routes on the tides and currents, including timing
Gaarra	saltwater, sea	Oongarong	neighbouring language group to Mayala
Gaalwa	mangrove double log raft	Oola	freshwater
Goobala	stars	Oomiida	neighbouring language group to Mayala
linalang	islands including surrounding reefs	Oowini	language of Mayala island people
Jawi	language	Raya	spiritual beings
Joorla	traditional head dress significant to Mayala and Bardi people for ceremony	Riiji	sacred or special designs carved into pearl shell
Lalin	married turtle season, hot and humid build up time to the wet	Wiini	respect
Liyan gorna/ gorna liyan	spirit, feeling good and strong in yourself		

## Appendix 2

### Care for Country, keep it healthy and look after it the way our old people always have.

Priority Action	Supporting Actions
Secure funding and resources to establish the Mayala Ranger Program - including survey vessel, Ranger base and sub-bases, employment, training and funding for projects on Country.	<p>Establish an MoU with Bardi Jawi to mentor and assist two Mayala <i>aamba</i> train to be Rangers.</p> <p>Establish a Ranger base at Derby and a sub-base at Ardyaloon with two outposts to support on Country work in the north at <i>Jidalany</i> (Gibbing Island) and south at Lachlan or Barnacot Islands.</p> <p>Commence development of marine training competencies for Rangers.</p> <p>Develop 'Circle of Elders' Ranger advisory group.</p>
Secure IPA funding to plan for and establish an IPA.	<p>Regain management of DBCA tenure on <i>Noomoonjoo</i> (Caffarelli Island) and joint management of Tanner Island.</p> <p>Negotiate for marine park/joint management that reinforces Traditional Owner-led governance and management and brings additional benefits to the IPA.</p> <p>Establish zoning that includes no-go areas for any activities in or around these areas.</p>
Establish Protected Area Management Committee to ensure TO-led PA governance and management.	<p>Secure funding and resources to establish a Junior Ranger Program that engages youth showing leadership and those disengaged or at risk.</p> <p>Engage young people in tasks on Country to build confidence and experiential learning e.g. create and put up signs; accompany Rangers on field trip, help build Ranger bases.</p>
	<p><i>Oola</i> - visit and clean out springs and waterholes to keep Country healthy.</p> <p>Monitor and protect rock wallaby populations/habitat on <i>Banggoon</i> (Hidden), <i>Oonggaliyan</i> (Long), <i>Ooloogiigi</i> (Lachlan) Islands.</p> <p>Visit and undertake two-way monitoring of reef health at Brue Reef and other high priority sites.</p> <p>Visit and maintain cultural use in the special places including coastal mainland areas.</p> <p>Establish partner projects to undertake priority Country management activities for rock wallaby monitoring, reef monitoring, maintaining <i>Oola</i>, seasonal camping areas and special places.</p>
	<p>Visit and monitor important gathering places and seasonal camping areas e.g. Bedford Island.</p>

### Manage access to Mayala Country and use of Mayala resources by outsiders.

Priority Action	Supporting Actions
Develop a visitor permit system to manage visitors, engage and educate them about cultural protocols which may be implemented through interpretive signs, information sheets and recordings to increase awareness, safety and protection of Mayala Country.	<p>Develop a visitor permit system to manage visitors and as an opportunity to engage and educate them about cultural protocols and looking after Mayala Country, and safety of visitors.</p> <p>Collect data to know who is on Country.</p> <p>Engagement with the Dampier Peninsula Working Groups to influence opportunities and manage impacts to Mayala Country.</p> <p>Investigate the Unguu Visitor Pass as a potential model for Mayala.</p> <p>Engage with key stakeholders to support Mayala's visitor education and awareness raising.</p> <p>Develop interpretive signs (for example at Derby Jetty, OAP, <i>Kooljaman</i>, <i>Goolan</i> and <i>Bilanyoo</i> and on some islands identified for tourist use) and information sheets to increase awareness of Mayala Country and protocols.</p>
Establish relationships and future agreements with regulators to provide information to Mayala and seek Mayala endorsement on commercial and recreational activities and licenses.	<p>Develop a video recording of Elders to educate tour operators and their guests and reinforce cultural protocols.</p> <p>Engage with local fishing clubs to increase cultural awareness and manage local fishing competitions.</p> <p>Dept Fisheries support to identify Commercial fishing operators and assist Mayala to establish relationships with them - fin-fish, crab license, oyster license aquaculture.</p> <p>Dept. Fisheries supply catch data for planning, monitoring and engage Mayala for monitoring.</p>

**Genuine research partnerships are benefiting Mayala people and Country into the future.**

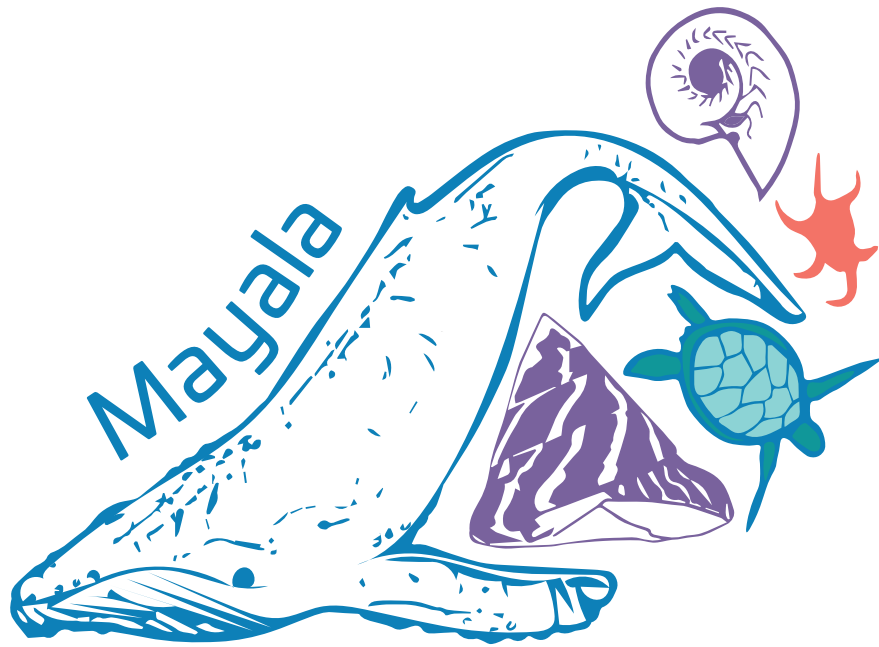
Priority Action	Supporting Actions
Develop Mayala research priorities for the next five years, inclusive of key stakeholders for success.	Mayala representation on ISWAG for regional partnerships, research and discussion.
	Cultural heritage research and support.
	Adopt research partnership protocols and other resources developed by the Kimberley Saltwater Traditional Owners through ISWAG.
	Develop a regional turtle management plan for all five sea turtle species that includes climate change impacts, hunting protocols, monitoring and possible closures (season/places).
	Investigate research opportunities for economic development e.g. blue carbon via ISWAG.

**Achieve economic benefit for Mayala recognising that any business on Mayala Country is Mayala business.**

Priority Action	Supporting Actions
Create an Economic Development and Employment Plan for existing and new businesses on Country and to support Mayala businesses on Country.	Negotiate agreements between PBC and existing businesses on Mayala Country (tourism, charter boats, commercial fishing, etc).
	Scope and develop Mayala tourism products e.g. Ranger tours, tag along tours, aquaculture tours, fishing camps, designated camping sites for fees on islands.
	Develop a commercial entity for Mayala PBC to manage economic activities e.g. permits, camping, Arli Mayi partnership.
	PBC to create an Economic Development and Employment Plan across Mayala businesses - scope opportunities and succession planning.
	Engage a business planning consultant to scope business opportunities and partnerships that align with the Country Plan.
	Develop and promote Mayala cultural awareness training for businesses/ government operating on Mayala Country to reinforce our cultural Protocols.
	Support Mayala people to develop business opportunities on Country.

**Our knowledge remains strong and our cultural rights are protected.**

Priority Action	Supporting Actions
Secure funding for a cultural program that includes resourcing of activities and coordination.	Develop a seasonal and bush foods calendar as an educational resource for Mayala people and for use in schools.
	Develop story books for Mayala children and young adults to help reinforce cultural protocols.
	Engage with schools in Ardyaloon and Derby to increase awareness of Mayala history, presence and connection.
	Ethnoecology project to record traditional knowledge with science.
	Reinforce hunting protocols for all Aboriginal people through educational talks in schools, signage and rangers.
	On Country field trips with elders and young people to teach knowledge and know the special places.
	Establish <i>baali</i> at agreed places, led by families with Ranger assistance.
	<i>Biyal-biyal</i> - <i>noomoorr</i> revival project with young people on Country (build and launch a <i>biyal-biyal</i> ).
	Reinstate <i>Oowiini</i> languages for place names, and for naming Mayala programs, facilities and assets.
	Engage with a language specialist and leading Aboriginal language programs to develop a pathway to <i>Oowiini</i> language revival.
	Elders trip to AIATSIS to collect language resources - review, store and make available to Mayala people.



## Financial and in-kind supporters



Department of **Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions**





# Gala imbanyij

