

# Djiru people managing country at Mission Beach

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With help from Terrains' Habitat Incentives Project (HIP), the Djiru people are drafting an integrated natural resource management plan for two big blocks of land, which are home to the endangered cassowary and littoral rainforest, at Mission Beach.

In September 2011, the Djiru people, past and present, were recognised as the Native Title holders of their traditional lands in the Mission Beach area.

Through the Australian Government funded HIP, the Djiru people are developing management plans for two of these Native Title blocks; one at the mouth of Wongaling Creek and another at South Mission Beach.



Djiru Traditional Owner Rona Hart with Terrains' Tony O'Malley on the beach looking in to littoral rainforest on Djiru Country

The Djiru tribe are Rainforest Aboriginal people and have very strong spiritual connections to their traditional country and both of these blocks support the endangered cassowary and littoral rainforest.

The development and implementation of the management plan will be used by Djiru people to guide good planning and decision making about natural resource management on their Lands.

Djiru Traditional Owner Whitney Rassip said,

***"I'd like to plant more cassowary food trees there, I'd like to see them back on the beach".***

Djiru Traditional Owner Rona Hart says the management of this land will also help Djiru people with the transfer of knowledge and the continued practice and maintenance of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge by older and younger generations of Aboriginal people.

Ms Hart said,

*"After having parcels of land returned to our people over the last two years we are anxious to start working on Country by undertaking a range of activities including better engaging our mob, developing further working relationships with key stakeholders, encouraging and empowering our people to continue to connect to country, and relearning traditional language of the things that pertain to the area).*



Leonard Andy, Rona Hart, Tina Hart, Whitney Rassip and neighbouring Girramay/Jirrbal Traditional Owner Jean Thaiday, next to Wongaling Creek on Djiru country. Littoral rainforest on Djiru country at Mission Beach is critically important for Djiru people and Gunday, the endangered cassowary

The HIP is supporting the Djiru people to develop a brochure, targeted at school aged children, about the Djiru people's relationship with the Gunday (the name for cassowaries in Djiru language).

This brochure will be presented to Mission Beach State School students and will also be made available to the local population and tourists alike.

In accordance with the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, in April of this year, three lots of State land were transferred as inalienable freehold land to the Djiru Warrangburra Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

Djiru RNTBC holds the land in trust for the Native Title holders of the land, the Djiru people, and sees these lots rightfully returned to them so that they can manage the land now and into the future.

By Kathryn Dryden.

Source <http://www.rgc.org.au/djiru-people-managing-country-at-mission-beach/>