

LALANG-GADDAM MARINE PARK

Annual Summary 2025

2025 SNAPSHOT

What we achieved in 2025

- **9 vessel expeditions** on PV Worndoom and PV Woonbalu
- **Collaboration with Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation (DAC) rangers, staff and partners out on Country**
- **18 Traditional Owners on Country**
- **1 aerial survey of Lalang-gaddam Marine Park (LgMP) focussing on coral health**
- **73 vessel days in the park** - the most since 2017
- **3695 nautical miles** covered by vessel
- **386kg of marine debris removed** - the most recorded and removed in any year
- Resumption of **joint patrols with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)**
- **First joint patrol with Australian Border Force (ABF)**
- **101 vessel observations**
- **Successful disentanglement of a humpback whale at Kuri Bay**
- **Joined CSIRO Eye on Water program** - monitoring water quality in LgMP



Above: JMB members meet on Country at Yaloon
Left: JMB members visit Yowjab



Worndoom anchored in Ganbadba, Talbot Bay

HIGHLIGHTS

On Country expeditions

JMB on Country at Yaloon

An on Country Joint Management Body (JMB) meeting was held at Yaloon on Saturday 21st June. A large contingent of the JMB were able to attend as well as Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) LgMP rangers, DAC rangers and DAC staff. The successful meeting enabled productive discussions around key issues such as the revised version of the LgMP Visitor Plan, DAC staff structure and the approval of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) project expenditure.

During the expedition, the ranger team and JMB members were able to undertake a site visit to Yowjab (Montgomery Reef). This was a great opportunity for JMB members to witness how the site is being used by commercial and recreational vessels. This site visit will aid in JMB discussions around how the site will be managed in the future.



Story time and a camp fire during the on Country expedition

On Country expeditions

In August, DBCA and DAC successfully facilitated an on Country trip for members of the Mungulu family to access and experience their country. For several family members this was an opportunity to visit Country for the very first time. Family members were able to go fishing, visit cultural sites and have discussions around the family's connection to Country.



Pinjirri with family members aboard at Maamboolbadda (Kings Cascade)

Turtle monitoring

In September, DAC and DBCA staff successfully conducted the annual turtle monitoring program within the LgMP. The primary focus of the patrol was the development of a DAC led project, continuing the long-term monitoring of turtle nesting activity within Lalang-gaddam Marine Park. The patrol was timed for the estimated peak of the flatback turtle breeding season, with all turtle species tracks recorded. Other key objectives of the trip were to identify predator tracks at the monitoring beaches, any turtle nest disturbance by those predators and a marine debris clean-up on nesting beaches.

The patrol was led by DAC with support from DBCA, with refresher training to upskill both new and existing members of the ranger team.



DAC Ranger Phil Ngerdu with a lost flatback turtle hatchling



Turtle monitoring team

Foreign fishing vessels (FFV's)

In mid-September, a team of DBCA and DAC rangers, DAC staff, and Australian Border Force officers joined together aboard PV Worndoom to survey the vast coastline of Lalang-gaddam Marine Park. Using vessel tenders to navigate the shoreline and drones to monitor mangrove systems, the teams worked together to identify and document potential hides used by illegal foreign fishers in the area.

The officers also assessed mangrove and coral reef damage, marine debris, and any potential impacts to cultural heritage sites.

This was the first collaboration of its kind for the groups involved, and it proved highly successful, with strong knowledge-sharing and three-way learning taking place throughout the trip



PV Worndoom and an ABF helicopter, collaborating in efforts to detect FFVs



A drone was used to survey large areas of mangrove



Searching for FFV hides near Augustus Island

Whale disentanglement

On 15 August 2025, a specially trained Parks and Wildlife Service crew responded to a report of an entangled whale in Kuri Bay. The team flew 370km by helicopter, to find an 11 metre humpback whale heavily entangled in ropes. The team worked with local industry staff for seven hours to carry out a careful and complex operation to successfully disentangle the whale. A great outcome and good example of collaboration with support from local industry.



A specially trained team work hard to disentangle the whale



After 7 hrs of careful work, the whale swam free



Marine debris

DAC and DBCA teams worked hard throughout 2025 to remove any marine debris found in Lalang-gaddam Marine Park. A total of 386kg was collected, which was the largest amount collected on record for the park.

All debris was recorded, bagged and returned to an appropriate waste facility. In the case of any pearling floats, these were returned for use to Kuri Bay Pearl Farm.

DAC and DBCA Rangers with bagged marine debris



Water quality at various locations in LgMP will be periodically monitored as part of CSIRO's Eye on Water Program

Joined CSIRO's Eye on Water program

In 2025, DBCA's LgMP team signed up to CSIRO's Eye on Water program to monitor water quality in the park.

Water colour is a very informative indicator of the ecological state of marine and fresh waters. Until recently, it was only measurable with specialist scientific instruments. The Eye on Water program aims to use measurements of water colour and physical attributes to understand changes in water quality. This can help identify algal blooms and changes to sediment levels.

The Eye on Water program combines a smartphone application, additional physical measurements and a supporting website.

It will help to obtain data towards a better understanding of how areas in LgMP change over time and in response to short duration events like bushfires, floods and cyclones.

Ranger spotlight

A big congratulations to DAC trainee Levi Neville, who successfully completed his Coxswain Grade 2 and Certificate 2 in Conservation and Ecosystem Management. The DBCA LgMP team looks forward to welcoming and supporting Levi and another trainee marine ranger in 2026.

Farewell and hello

After five years working with the Lalang-gaddam team, Ellen D'Cruz left us to pursue other opportunities down in the South West. It was great to have one last on Country trip with Ellen at Yaloon as part of our JMB meeting. Ellen was also given a painting from the JMB to say thank you for her time working in LgMP.

Although it was sad to say goodbye to Ellen, we were fortunate enough to have Suzie Glac now join the team as the new Assistant Marine Park Coordinator.

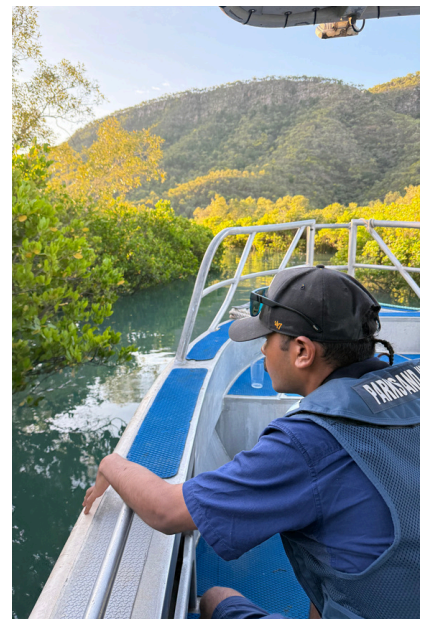
Suzie has worked in various Australian marine parks for more than 20 years, and is looking forward to getting out into the Lalang-gaddam Marine Park and working alongside our awesome joint management partners at DAC.



Ellen D'Cruz receiving her beautiful farewell gift from JMB member Kirsty Burgu



Suzie Glac, excited to join the LgMP team



Levi surveying mangroves on patrol in LgMP



Aidy mentoring Levi