

Mowingee 2026

Dambimangari Newsletter

Welcome to our latest newsletter from the DAC offices

Chairperson's Report

There's a lot happening for DAC this period and I'm proud of the work we are doing together. We've had some big achievements already, and we are building strong

foundations for our future. One of the biggest milestones is the new chapter for Koolan Island, where DAC has supported Crestlink's acquisition. These types of partnerships are about making sure Country is looked after properly, our cultural responsibilities are respected, and that there are real opportunities for our people to return to Country, live there, work there and build our own businesses in a healthy and sustainable way.

At the same time, we are continuing to make strong progress across other important areas, including our developing partnership around Garaan-ngaddim, Horizontal Falls with Journey Beyond and our compensation claim at Yampi Sound. All of



this is part of the bigger picture — making sure our people can be

sustainable on Country and that we are meeting the targets in our Healthy Country Plan and Strategic Plan. I want to acknowledge the strong guidance from my Board, who continue to provide leadership and support, and the hard work of our staff, especially Leanne Ferguson who

recently stepped up as Acting CEO and Paul Morgan, our CEO for the support they are providing as we move toward these exciting milestones. I have real faith in our Board and staff, and I appreciate the work everyone is doing to help build a strong future for Dambeemangaddee people. – Gary Umbagai, Chair DAC.

Message from the CEO

It has been another very busy and productive period for Dambimangari



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Aboriginal Corporation, with strong progress being made across many areas of our work. Over recent weeks, we have delivered successful community roadshow presentations, held important meetings with community members and partners, and continued progressing the DAC Strategic Plan implementation.

These discussions are helping guide the future direction of the Corporation and ensure we continue delivering outcomes that support

Dambeemangaddee people and Country. We are also continuing to strengthen our organisation through recruitment and workforce development. New positions have been advertised, with additional staffing and placement opportunities being developed to support our growing

programs and operations. Safety remains a key priority across all areas of our work. This includes continuing conversations around alcohol and other drugs (AOD) policies and support processes for staff and prospective team members. DAC is exploring ways to ensure workplace safety

while also taking a supportive and culturally appropriate approach that recognises wellbeing, monitoring and ongoing support pathways for employees.

I would like to thank our staff, Directors, Rangers, Traditional Owners, partners and community members for your ongoing hard work, support and commitment. Together we continue building a strong future for Dambeemangaddee people and Country.

- Paul Morgan, Chief Executive Officer, DAC

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A New Chapter for Koolan Island

Koolan Island has long been a place of industry, but as one chapter closes, it is our people — as Traditional Owners of this Country — who are at the centre of shaping what the next one looks like. In June, Crestlink took over Koolan Island operations from MGX Resources, and we are proud to support this transition.



This is a moment we have been working toward together, built on a relationship with Crestlink that has grown properly — through respect, listening, and time spent on Country. We also want to acknowledge MGX and thank them for the working relationship we have shared over many years, and for the opportunities they provided to our community during their time on Country.

What excites us most is what this means for Dambeemangaddee families. This is a real opportunity for our people to return to Country — to live there, to work there, and to run our own businesses on Country. As our Chair Gary Umbagai has said, our long-term goal has always been to see our people return to Country in a healthy and

sustainable way. This partnership gives us real hope that Koolan Island's future will honour that vision — protecting Country, upholding our cultural responsibilities, and creating something meaningful for the next generation. There is still work ahead, with the full transition expected to complete in late 2026 or early 2027. But we are at the table, we are part of the conversation — and that is something we have all fought hard for over many years. Our ancestors walked this Country, looked after it, and we carry that responsibility now. Seeing our families return to Country — to live, to work, to raise children and build businesses on our own Country — is what this has always been about.

KOOLAN ISLAND SITE VISIT

On 1 April 2026, DAC coordinated a site visit to Koolan Island, bringing together Traditional Owners, key staff and partners to explore how the Koolan Island Cultural Centre (KICC) and lease area can work for Dambeemangaddee people in bigger and better ways.



The group that came together on the day included: Jess Forrest, Jordie Rieniets, Steve Poole, Robyn Mungulu, Graham



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Woolagoodja, Tom Gill, Lenny O'Brien, Pam Jennings, Scott Watson and Jono Marshall — a strong mix of traditional owners, staff, rangers, tour guides and designers.

The team spent most of their time at the KICC and at the operational areas of the Koolan Island mine site as well.



One Place, Many Purposes

During the visit, we discussed how the lease area with existing infrastructure and KICC could support Cultural Tour Guide operations, Ranger Land and Sea programs, marine activities, cultural projects, visitor experiences, and the ongoing KICC exhibition and retail development — a real economic opportunity for DAC and its members. What became clear on the day is that Koolan Island has the potential to be a central operational base — one that supports cultural, environmental, tourism and economic outcomes all at once. People could see the possibilities right in front of them.

Getting Our People Back to Country

At the heart of this work is something

that matters deeply to our people, accessing and getting back on Country. Our vision is for Traditional Owners to have real and regular access to country, whether that's for work, for culture, or simply to be on country. Since the visit, teams have been working together on practical improvements — better shore access and infrastructure that allows staff, Traditional Owners and project teams to spend more time on Koolan Island comfortably. This is how DAC is building a stronger, long-term case for investment in Koolan Island — so the site delivers lasting benefits to Dambeemangaddee people.

Junior Ranger Program

Exciting news — we are proud to kick start a pilot **Junior Ranger Program** for Dambeemangaddee members. This pilot program has been developed to support young Dambeemangaddee people to build practical ranger skills, confidence, cultural knowledge and real pathways to future employment on Country.

Students will take part in hands-on activities including drone operations, digital media and conservation work — all grounded in a strong cultural foundation that explores language, story, responsibility and what it means to care for Dambeemangaddee Country.

The program has been developed with the endorsement of the **Dambimangari Healthy Country Committee**, the **DAC Board of Directors** and **Cultural**



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Advisors, in partnership with Derby District High School.

Dambeemangaddee culture and caring for Country.

Right Way Fire - Fire Walk

In May, **Dambimangari Rangers** and **Traditional Owners** along with



Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) did our **annual fire walk** into the Wotjalum Mission Site. We helicoptered in, barged out, and covered around 8km on foot through country. Fire has always been central to

Weeyanu Gadjarnma is one of our most important tools for managing Country. A huge thank you to everyone who made this walk happen;
Dambimangari Rangers: Amelia Hurrell, Peter Cooper, Tristan Ridley;
AWC: Rory Pogson, Cam Gobel, Derek Oobagooma, Dylan Oobagooma;
Traditional Owners: Letisha Woolagoodja and Boat Crew: Lenny O'Brien, Adrian Lane.

FIRE TRAINING



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Recently at Mornington, Dambimangari Rangers Corby Bedford-Dolby, Josie Malay and Joyce Malay took part in fire training, continuing the practice of caring for Country through Right Way Fire (Weeyanu Gadjarnma).

Right Way Fire means we read the Country and burn at the right time of year—when there is still moisture in the plants and in the air. This keeps fires cool, controlled, and able to go out overnight.

season burns create a mosaic of fire scars, protecting refuges for wildlife and supporting species that depend on fire to regenerate.

This work is supported by partners KLC and AWC, and through collaboration with the North Kimberley Fire Abatement Project. It also contributes to generating carbon credits, helping fund future work on Country.

Lalai Holdings is Moving Forward

DAC's commercial arm — building business for Dambeemangaddee people.

Lalai Holdings Pty Ltd is now registered and taking its next steps. A Business Plan is being developed, and a Lalai Manager will be appointed soon to lead the way. Lalai exists to help Dambeemangaddee people get involved in business — whether that's starting your own, working in partnerships, or building skills and confidence.

Dambimangari Rangers use both **ground burning** and **aerial burning** (helicopter) to create fire breaks and reduce long-unburnt fuel. This helps prevent large, destructive late dry season wildfires, while protecting important cultural sites and infrastructure.

Since reintroducing Right Way Fire in 2010, we are seeing healthier Country—with fewer intense late-season fires, better habitats for plants and animals, and stronger cultural practice. Early dry

Got a business idea?

Talk to Jess Forrest. She can sit down with you, hear your idea, and help you map out the steps to get started.

E: edm@dambi.org.au

Ph: 0457 456 899

“Every strong business begins with a clear vision, strong foundations and the courage to take the first step.”



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Cultural Programs Update

DAMBEEMANGADDEE LIVING CULTURE WORKING GROUP — JOIN US!

DAC's Cultural Programs work is guided by self-determination and co-design — meaning Dambeemangaddee families lead the way on decisions about people, culture and country.

To keep all families included in cultural decision-making, we are establishing a **Living Culture Working Group** — a safe and nurturing space for all Dambeemangaddee people, no matter where you're at on your cultural journey. Whether you know our culture deeply or are just finding your way back, you are welcome here. Let's learn together, reconnect, and keep our Wandjina Woongudd living culture strong for the next generation.

To keep all families included in cultural decision-making, we are now establishing a **Living Culture Working Group**. **We are asking for two representatives from each family to come together and have a say on cultural matters that affect us all. This is about making sure every family has a voice — grounded in our cultural governance and values.**

📢 **We want to hear from you! If your family would like to put forward representatives, please reach out to Mariana Sampaio at culturalprograms@dambi.org.au or contact the DAC office.**



Lalai Ngala Ngala Dreamtime Talking

Pilot Project of Wandjina School Knowledge Transmission

Pilot Project – LALAI NGALA NGALA, Dreamtime Talking, an Intergenerational Knowledge Transmission

We are working on something special — the **Lalai Ngala Ngala or the Wandjina School**, a program built around passing on Woddordda knowledge and culture to future generations. The goal is to make sure our culture, identity, and knowledge systems stay strong and are carried forward by Dambeemangaddee people, the right way.



Session 3 learning Bush Names with Leah Umbagai, supporting, Mariana Sampaio, Cultural Programs Co-ordinator -



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It needs to be engaging for all involved. As Pete O'Connor put it, **"Kids have to learn with the heart."**

Earlier this year, we ran a pilot program called Lalai Ngala Ngala with around 20 children aged 6 to 12.



Treyvann showing his Wandjina drawings in one of the sessions.

Over five sessions, cultural advisors, Kallum Mungulu, Pete O'Connor, Gary Umbagai, Shontae Charles, and Leah Umbagai shared teachings on Lalai (Creation History), Identity, Kinship, Skin Systems, Bush Names, and Places on Country. Gary also shared his own memories of learning from elders as a child. From those sessions, we have learned that the best way to learn and share culture is by – On Country Learning - immersing ourselves on country to bring the knowledge to life through all the senses.

We are excited to share that in May 2026 we secured a grant to take children out on Country from 8–15 August, with a focus on Lalai and Kinship. This kids' trip on Country is exactly the kind of learning we know works — being on Country, together, with our Traditional Owners.

DAMBEEM MAMA

Cultural Site Monitoring Project

Looking after our Cultural Sites — **Dambeem Mama** — is one of the most important goals in our Healthy Country Plan. Earlier this year, DAC's Cultural Programs team, with Stafford Smith, Cultural Advisors, Healthy Country Committee and our Rangers came together in a workshop to talk about what healthy cultural sites look like, what threatens them, and what we need to do to protect them.



Cultural Site Monitoring Workshop

Warren Barunga led the discussion, and the message was clear: being on Country is the number one sign that Country is healthy. The biggest threat our people identified was unauthorised access — people coming onto our Country without permission.

"We have cultural obligations to visit these sites." — Pete O'Connor

Our Healthy Country Plan recognises 14 categories of Cultural Sites, including burial sites, painting sites, law and



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ceremony sites, fish traps, powerful water places, storylines, and trading routes. To help us look after all of these, we are building a **Cultural Sites Monitoring System** that our Rangers can use when they are out on Country — recording what they see and keeping track of the condition of each site. This means we will finally be assessing Country on our own terms, using Dambimangari knowledge and priorities — not just ticking someone else's boxes.

"We have to check our own boxes."

— Pete O'Connor

Dambi-Led Tourism at Garaan-Ngaddim

The future of tourism at Garaan-ngaddim is taking shape, with Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation welcoming new State Government funding to support Traditional Owner-led tourism and the next stage of transition on Country.

The WA Government has committed \$5 million to help DAC build new cultural tourism experiences at Garaan-ngaddim, while licensed operators will continue travelling through the wide gap until the end of the 2028 season. The decision gives certainty for local tourism businesses while creating space for us to lead what comes next. For us, Dambeemangaddee people, this is about making sure tourism on Country is guided by culture and respect - our stories. DAC Chair Gary Umbagai said the funding is an important step toward building a stronger future for Dambeemangaddee families and young people.

"This support means we can keep building something our people can be proud of — tourism that shares our

stories the right way and keeps our old people's knowledge strong for the next generation."



The funding will support planning and infrastructure, helping DAC grow tourism experiences that centre Dambeemangaddee culture and connection to Country. It builds on the work already happening through the DAC tour guide program and the partnership with Journey Beyond, where

local guides have been sharing culture and learning on Country.



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Mr Umbagi said supporting the transition period was about working together and making sure local jobs and opportunities remain strong.

“Tourism has always been important here, but now we have the chance to shape it ourselves. This gives us time to do it properly — on our terms, with our people leading the way.”

As Garaan-ngaddim moves into this new chapter, Dambeemangaddee leadership remains focused on protecting Country while creating real opportunities for community, culture and future generations.

Tour Guides

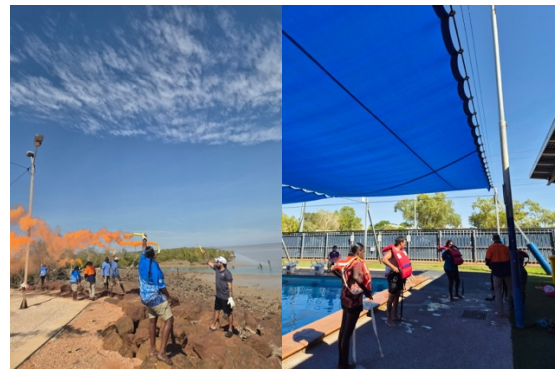
The Dambi Tour Guide team has been busy — out on Country, in the classroom, learning and sharing Dambeemangaddee culture with visitors to our coastline.



DAC's partnership with Journey Beyond is now in full swing at Garran-Ngaddim, with our newer guides proudly representing Dambeemangaddee people and culture aboard tourist vessels. Feedback from guests and

Journey Beyond staff has been deadly, recognising the professionalism and cultural knowledge our guides bring to every tour.

Off Country, the team has been building their skills through a Certificate I in Tourism (TAFE), Coxswain training, media training with WWF, and ongoing in-house professional development.



The guides have also been delivering cultural awareness presentations to operators along the Kimberley coast — True North, Coral Expeditions, and Odyssey Expeditions — helping ensure our culture is shared the right way.



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Visitor Management Field Trip

A recent on-Country field trip travelled through the southern part of Dambeemangaddee Country, departing from Cygnet Bay and visiting a range of key visitor areas.



The trip focused on recording and reviewing visitor activity across approved visitor sites, Traditional Owner-guided locations, and closed or restricted access areas. This work supports the ongoing implementation of the Dambimangari Country Visitor and Tourism Plan 2025–2029, which guides how visitors are managed safely and respectfully on Country. The Plan helps identify where visitors can go, where access needs to be managed, and where protection of cultural and environmental values is a priority. It also supports Dambimangari-led visitor management and future tourism opportunities.

Field assessments strengthened understanding of Visitor Pass locations

across the southern region and supported improvements to how the Visitor Pass system is used to manage increasing visitor activity on Country. Practical training was also delivered in the use of the Fulcrum surveying application for Dambimangari staff and Traditional Owners, including Geoff Nevill and Shirley Thomas. This training supports stronger on-Country monitoring and data collection skills. Kim Cream, the new Visitor and Tourism Manager, joined the trip to build on-Country knowledge of visitor management locations, Visitor Pass sites and day-to-day operational processes.

The trip also provided important



opportunities for knowledge sharing and skills development in visitor monitoring, helping build local capacity to care for Country.

This work contributes to the Dambimangari Healthy Country Plan 2023–2032, which guides how



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Dambeemangaddee People continue to care for Country, protect cultural values, and strengthen partnerships for future generations.

The field trip was undertaken in partnership with DBCA Parks and Wildlife through Joint Management Expeditions for Lalang-gaddam Marine Park.

Thank you to everyone involved in



sharing knowledge, supporting training, and helping ensure visitors continue to experience Dambeemangaddee Country the right way.

Meet the DAN Navigators

DAN (Dambimangari Aboriginal Navigation) Navigators are a dedicated team to support DAC members navigate life's challenges with confidence. Whether you need help finding safe housing, navigating health services,

finding work, or just someone in your corner — the DAN team is here for you.



Meet the Team:

- **DAN Co-ordinator:** Steve Martin — 0484 606 808
- **DAN Assistant:** Grace Matos — 0417 912 921 / danaa@dambi.org.au
- **Navigators:** Anthony — 0474 377 041 & Sheridan — 0477 967 997
- **Community Support Officers:** Sirita — 0497 388 055 & Kirk — 0448 384 863

How They Can Help

- **Housing Support** — finding safe, stable accommodation
- **Health Support** — education and prevention guidance
- **Job Support** — finding and keeping work
- **Advocacy** — standing with you and supporting you
- **Education & Training** — building skills and exploring opportunities
- **Specialised Support** — connecting you to services that suit your needs



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- **Transport Help** — getting to appointments and important places. If any of this sounds like something you or your family could use, give the team a call — they're ready to help.

Recruitment and Staffing NEW STAFF



Shelbi Mann,
Community Service
Officer, Hedland



Elsa O'Brien
Women's Ranger
Coordinator



Geoffrey Neville
Tour Guide



Aaron Cooper
Tour Guide



Russell Mouda
Ranger



Tristan Ridley
Ranger



We'd also like to congratulate **Kim Cream** who stepped into the role of **Visitor and Tourism Manager**.

Congratulations Kim!

Work with DAC

Receptionist
Healthy Country Manager
Trainee Executive Assistant
P/t Admin Assistant, Yampi Sound
Trainee Marine Park Ranger

<https://dambimangari.com.au/about/work-with-us/>

Dates for the Diary

Date	Event
Wed 1 July 2026	DAC Board Information Session – Rock Art Replica Workshop
2 July 2026	DAC Board Budget Meeting
6–10 July 2026	NAIDOC Week
27 July – 2 Aug	Numemdumah and Jangoot Family Trip
8-15 August	Kids Trip on Country
11 August	FSC Meeting
25–27 August	DAC Board Meetings
2 September	DAC Board Audit
Tue 8 Sept	Information Day
Wed 9 Sept	AGM
Mon 21 September	Regional Project Funds — next release date
28 Sep – 9 Oct	Refreshing Wandjina & Cultural Sites Monitoring Trip
14 Nov	Marine Park JMB Meeting



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SAVE THE DATE

DAC AGM & INFORMATION DAY

Coming together. Sharing information.
Strengthening our Corporation.



INFORMATION DAY
TUESDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2026

More information to come soon.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
WEDNESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2026

More information to come soon.

Stay tuned for more details.
We look forward to seeing you there!

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Aboriginal Corporation

GOT A BUSINESS IDEA?

Do you have a business idea you've been thinking about but aren't sure where to start?

"Every business starts with an idea. Let's take the first step together."

Support is available for members interested in exploring their business ideas. Reach out to Jess and we can schedule a time to yarn about your idea — from there, we'll work together to develop a simple roadmap or basic business plan with practical action steps.

SUPPORT MAY INCLUDE

- Talking through your business idea
- Identifying your first steps
- Developing a basic roadmap or business plan
- Mentoring and accountability in the early stages
- Linking you with a suitable mentor or support person

GET IN TOUCH

Contact Jess Forrest at DAC to arrange
a time to discuss your business idea

Ph: 0457 456 899

edm@dambi.org.au

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Aboriginal Corporation

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The Role

Lead Dambimangari's Land Management Program. Manage Rangers across fire, threatened species, feral animals, biosecurity, carbon, cultural heritage and Sea Country — guided by Traditional Owner law.

What you bring

- 5+ yrs remote land management
- Indigenous community experience
- Fire & biosecurity operations
- Threatened species monitoring
- Budget & grant management
- Leadership & mentoring
- 4WD & light aircraft ready

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Phone: (08) 9383 3293

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Lalang-gaddam
marine parks

