

BUNYA  
PEOPLES'  
ABORIGINAL  
CORPORATION



## BOOBURGAN NGMMUNGE NEWS

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**November 2012**



# Booburrgan Ngmmunge News



## **Introducing the Bunya Peoples Aboriginal Coroporation**

The Bunya Mountains Elders Council (BMEC) has a new name to coincide with its recent incorporation. The BMEC are now known as the **The Bunya Peoples' Aboriginal Corporation (BPAC)**.

The BPAC will carry on legacy provided by the BMEC and all the people who have helped shape it.

The BPAC will continue to provide Aboriginal leadership that promotes and protects the cultural and environmental values of the Booburrgan Ngmmunge (Bunya Mountains) landscape.

## **Next Steps**

With BPAC having been incorporated for only a short time (incorporation was granted on 16/10/10) there are a number of activities that the group must do. These include:

- Holding a General Meeting (Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November).
- Establishing administration (i.e. bank account).
- Developing the BPAC strategic plan and an annual business plan.
- Organising events and activities on and around the mountain for people to be involved in caring for the Booburrgan Ngmmunge landscape.

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*Stakeholder gathering for the launch of the Bunya Mountains Program in 2011 at the Bunya Mountains.*

## **Thank-you to all our partners**

The BPAC value the partnerships that have been developed through its programs and its activities, the success of the organisation depends on them. The BPAC are also committed to effective engagement with the broader community to achieve the cultural, social and environmental enhancement of the Bunya Mountains landscape.

The BPAC acknowledge that its achievements to date have been possible due to the partnership approach and collaborative efforts with its partners. These partnerships are also critical to realising future aspirations.

## Special acknowledgement goes to:

- Traditional Owners and groups connected to the Bunya Mountains
- The Burnett Mary Regional Group
- The Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC).
- The Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines.
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.
- The Western Downs Regional Council

The BPAC looks forward to strengthening these relationships and building new ones for a bright future for the Bunya Mountains and its' people.

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# Booburrigan Ngmmunge News



## 2012 Landcare award winners and Banksia Award finalists

Aboriginal people with connections to the Bunya Mountains are celebrating the announcement that the BMEC won the Leighton Holdings Indigenous award at the National Landcare Awards ceremony held in Sydney on September 4.

The award gives national recognition to the BMEC for projects such as the Murri Ranger program, Kids on Country and Indigenous Heritage programs.

Through these programs the BMEC has achieved positive impacts in creating Indigenous employment, education and engagement opportunities as well as increasing the awareness of the cultural significance of the Bunya Mountains.



*Uncle Mal Collinge and Aunty Lurl Henderson receiving the award with Catriona Rountree*

BMEC Elder Mal Collinge was pleased about the award.

"This award recognises the hard work of a lot of people who have recognised a common goal of

reuniting the Indigenous community to Country on the mountain and who have come together in partnership to achieve this goal," Mr Collinge said.

Key partners that have contributed to the success of BMEC and the Murri Rangers include the Burnett Mary Regional Group, SEWPaC (Australian Government), Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, and the Western Downs Regional Council.

The BMEC also submitted an application for the Banksia Awards in the Indigenous category. The application was successful in reaching the finals, but fell at the last gasp to a great group in the Northern Territory. The group, NAILSMA won the award for their excellent i-tracker program that is being implemented across Northern Australia. Whilst the BMEC weren't winners this time, excellent networking occurred and they got to dress up!



*David Calland (DNRM), Emily Maher (BMRG), Aunty Lurl Henderson (BPAC) and Uncle Mal Collinge (BPAC) at the Banksia Awards.*

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## Caring for the Bunya landscape

Restoring the Grassland Balds on the Bunya Mountain is a key activity for the Bunya Rangers. In collaboration with QPWS, the Murri Rangers have been clearing woody vegetation, weeds and burning the balds in the attempt to protect them. Balds that the Murri Rangers have been working on include those pictured on this page.

Over the last few months the Murri Rangers have been focusing their protection efforts on the Little Mowbullan Bald. Historically this peak was a significant grassland (pictured below) however weeds and vegetation has reduced the size of the bald significantly. The Murri Rangers have spent numerous days clearing the bald, preparing it burning (in the next year).

### Little Mowbullan Bald



Little Mowbullan.



### Fishers Bald



### Wescott Bald



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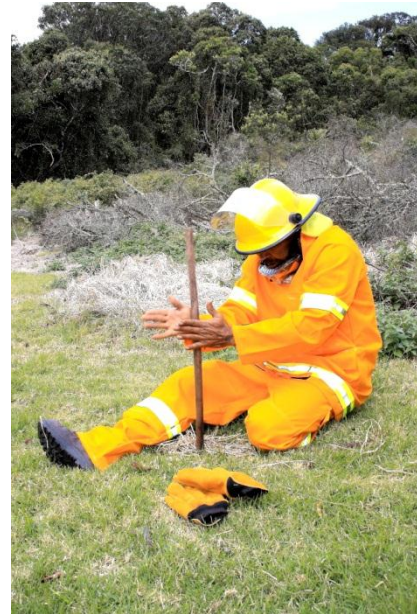
## Fire

The fire season is well and truly upon us, with numerous wildfires burning throughout the region in October. To assist in managing the threat of fire, the Murri Rangers have been attending prescribed burns with QPWS. To prepare for the season, the Murri Rangers attended a fire refresher course with Kelvin Quinn (Head Ranger of the Bunya Mountains QPWS). Kelvin explained the operation of different equipment as well as the operation and maintenance of the Murri Ranger fire unit.

The Rangers have attended burns on and off the mountain gaining important fire fighting experience and knowledge of fire behaviour on different country. Burns the Rangers have been involved in include:

- Fuel reduction burns just outside of Wondai on Forestry land
- Fuel reduction burns at the bottom of the mountain at Saddle Tree Creek
- Prescribed burn around Koondai lookout in the Bunya Mountains
- Second burn on the Westcott bald in the Bunya Mountains. The first burn was undertaken by the Murri Rangers in 2010 after reclaiming the bald from the encroaching rainforest, weeds and trees.

In addition to the prescribed burns, the Murri Rangers are on call to assist QPWS with wildfires.



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## Cultural heritage management

### Ban Ban Springs

Managing cultural heritage sites is an important aspect of the Murri Ranger program. Over the last six months the Murri Rangers have removed threats from two culturally significant sites in the region, one of which was Ban Ban Springs.

Two days of site management work was completed on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of July. The work focussed on the removal of weeds that were threatening to overtake the spring. Overall the project resulted in 65 man hours of on ground works for the Wakka- Wakka custodians on country.

Featured below are some of the key works that have been delivered such as weed pulling on balloon cotton from the iconic spring, hand pulling of thistle from the edge and surrounding parklands to the culturally significant spring, collecting of general rubbish left by passing tourists and identification of Weeds of National Significance (WONS) in the local area.

(before)



(after)



More work is planned for the site, including:

- Weed spraying
- Mechanical removal of smaller weeds
- Mowing and wiper-snipping round main entry point of spring.

This project was completed by the Bunya Mountain Murri Ranger's on behalf of the Wakka-Wakka traditional owners. The Murri Rangers and BMRG are working with the Traditional Owners to continue maintaining and improving the site.



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## Community engagement:

### Inspiring the Youth of today

Working with the youth of the community provides a unique opportunity to encourage and inspire the younger Indigenous generation.

The Murri Rangers continue to deliver aspects of the Kids on Country program to schools and teachers in the region. The Murri Rangers work in collaboration with the Queensland Education Department to implement this program.

In addition to the schooling program the Murri Rangers have completed activities with the Cherbourg Police Ranger group.



The Kids on Country, Teachers on Country and the Cherbourg Police Rangers programs are a great way to show young people, and educators the importance of the Bunya Mountains landscape to Aboriginal people, and that there are opportunities to be involved in Caring for Country activities in their local areas.

The Murri Rangers look forward to working with these groups as we can see a great opportunity to share some knowledge of the Mountain and surrounding areas. These activities also increase Murri Rangers' skills in Cultural Tourism and education with great opportunities for these programs to expand.

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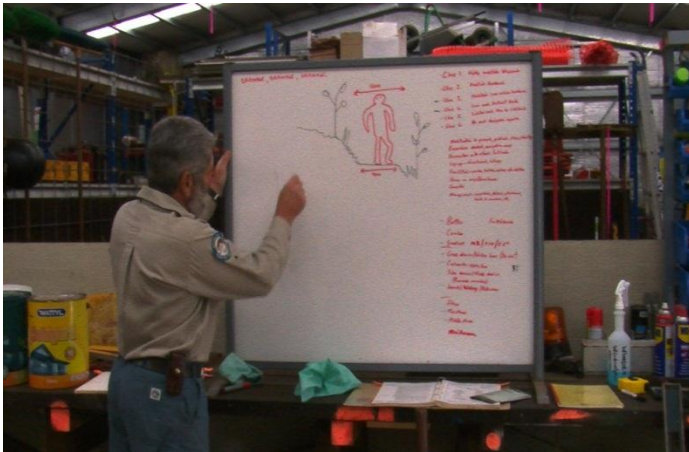
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## Training

### Track training with QPWS

The Rangers had a day with Kelvin Quinn, QPWS, for our track training and maintenance day. Kelvin demonstrated a number of techniques to improve our tracks and also how to make steps and drains. The day was hugely successful with a significant amount of information learnt. A big thank you to Kelvin for his time and sharing his knowledge, there will be some improvements to the Russel Park tracks.



### Cultural Training

The Murri Rangers have been learning cultural lore with a number of Elders throughout the past two years. Recently Uncle Russel Hegarty (Boomi) has been sharing his knowledge with the group. Over a period of three days the Murri Rangers learnt:

- Stories of places on and around the Bunya Mountains.
- Cultural lore and dreamtime stories

The Murri Rangers value cultural knowledge exchange very highly as it helps to look after Country and increases their understanding of traditional practices and values.

## Staff News:

### Ranger Daniel Alberts: The Young One



Hi, my name is Daniel Alberts and I am a new recruit to the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers. I grew up in Wondai and I've been working for 6 months with this mob. I'm the youngest in our clan so I have to step up and try to do the most for these old fulla's. Before this I was working with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) for 4 weeks, I was filling in for someone on leave. I did a good job there so then the Murri Rangers recruited me and now I have a full-time job.

I am doing my certificate 3 in Conservation and Land Management. Since I've been here I have finally gotten my chainsaw ticket and my first aid which didn't take long. Now that I have my ticket, I can help the guys remove trees and logs along the walking trails as well as clearing the grassland balds. Its good stuff and I'm really enjoying the work.

My favorite part of this job is to get out and fight fires. I've only been to 2 this season so far, but it wakes me up and you have to be 100% alert all day, especially when you are on the fire line. It is a new experience for me and I didn't know it could be this fun.

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## Ranger Brian Law: Achieving goals for a bright and better future

During the last 12 months I have been working towards, achieving work and personal goals. I have just completed my Certificate 3 in Conservation and Land Management, and am now undertaking my Certificate 4. My long term goal is to do a Diploma in this sector of work and become a Senior Ranger, leader and mentor for the younger generation.



## Paul Dawson: BPAC Project Officer



Hi. I'd just like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of all the country the BPAC's programs are held, and paying respects to the country of the Bunya Mountains itself. I've been on board for a few months now, employed by the Burnett Mary Regional Group to work with the BPAC.

It's a real privilege to be the Project Officer with the BPAC, and already the huge potential for the organisation to achieve great things is there to see. I look forward to seeing aspirations and goals for the organisation come to fruition, as they are founded on a strong and inclusive philosophy of reinvigorating Aboriginal peoples' connection to the Bunya Mountains landscape, and sharing that connection with the broader community. I would like to thank everyone involved with the BPAC and all of my new work colleagues. I have felt welcomed and working with you is a real pleasure.

We are moving along the process of incorporating, and will be undertaking strategic planning for the organisation to move forward.

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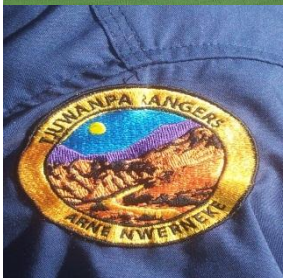


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## 2IC – Maurie Mickelo

In August I got an opportunity to participate in the Australian Indigenous Leadership Course in Cairns. It was very intense learning, but well worth it as I learnt a lot about leadership styles and practice. I met some rangers from around the country and made some good friends, hopefully this will give me a greater understanding of how to be a good leader in the future.



Coastal landscape of Cairns; Badges of some other participating Ranger groups; the leadership workshop and certificate.

**Congratulations to the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers: Successful completion of a Certificate 3 in Conservation and Land Management!**

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## Bunya Country:

### Cultural resources of the month

#### Witchetty grub (larvae of the cossid moth *Endoxyla leucomochla*)

Witchetty grubs, also called Dundur in Wakka Wakka language, are the larvae of large cossid moths, *Endoxyla leucomochla*. Dundur can be eaten raw, or cooked quickly on coals. They taste similar to scrambled eggs.

As well as being good eating, with high amounts of protein, Dundur also have medicinal uses such as relief for babies who are teething, sore gums and broken open to rub on burns.



#### Grass trees/ Black boys (*Xanthorrhoea*)

Grass trees are very much unique to the Australian environment. There are 28 species of grass trees spread all throughout Australia and they are related to the lilies, but are placed in a separate family. They are very slow growing with old species being amongst the oldest living plants on a worldwide scale, surviving many hundreds of years. In fact they are a living fossil developed early in the evolutionary period for flowering plants.



Fires can cause their blackened trunks (1- 2 metres) to branch into two or even more heads. Flowers are long cylindrical spikes (1- 3 metres) often flowering as a direct response to a very recent fire. This ability to be one of the first flowers to appear after a fire ensures a food source for many insects and birds.

#### Aboriginal use

Grass trees were a staple plant for the Aborigines. As a food source, the white tender sections of the leaf bases, the growing points of the stem and succulent roots were all eaten regularly. The removal of the growing point was rare as it destroyed the plant altogether. The seeds were collected and ground into a flour to provide dough for cooking damper.

Small sweet pockets of honey were extracted from the Carpenter Bee's cellular nests, which were bored in the soft pith of the flower stalk. The nectar from the flower could be extracted by soaking it in water filled bark troughs, to produce a thick sweet citric flavoured drink. Aborigines also used pieces of very dry flower stalk for making fire with a drilling stick, and also used the stalk as a fishing spear because of its lightness.

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Witchetty grubs were also dug from the bases of the trunk. Aborigines could tell by observing the dead leaves in the centre of the grass tree crown if they were present.



*Grass tree with multiple heads in the Bunya Mountains*

## **The original super glue**

The leaves produce a hard waterproof resin, which was collected at the base of the trunk. This resin melts when heated, but sets hard when cold. If a fire goes through the area, the resin oozes out and you can find bubbles of it in the sand around the tree or you can dig down near the trunk and get lumps of it that way.

It had a number of uses including:

- Forming glue by mixing it with charcoal, beeswax, or fine sand and dust
- Gluing the cement stone heads to wooden handles and spears to shafts and tips
- Waterproofing bark canoes, water carrying vessels and plugging holes in didgeridoos.

The versatility of this resin made it a valuable trading item and was traded amongst tribes for other important collectables.

## **Bunya Country:**

### **Weed and pest of the month**

#### **Prickly Pear (*Opuntia* spp.)**



*Prickly Pear with clusters of fruit.*

Prickly Pear is a spiky drought resistant cactus that originally hails from the Americas. It had a widespread infestation in early 20th century throughout central and southern Queensland but has reduced through using cactoblastis as a biological control. Prickly Pear is a Class 2 weed of significance in Queensland, and is prominent throughout the region of the Bunya Mountains.

The Murri Rangers have been steadily eradicating Prickly Pear from Russel Park using a technique where the cactus is 'speared' and injected with a herbicide. Larger individuals are pre-drilled and then injected with herbicide. This has so far been successful, with the clearing of Little Mowbulan bald from Prickly Pear progressing well.

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## Strange but beautiful: Fungi of the Bunya Mountains



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