

Welcome to our Latest Update

Dear Waanyi Common Law Holders and Members,

It has been a significant period for the Waanyi PBC, with important progress being made across governance, caring for Country, cultural heritage and creating opportunities for our people. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed their time, knowledge and commitment to this work.

One of the most important milestones this year is the official reopening and formal return of Boodjamulla National Park (Aboriginal Land). This is far more than the reopening of a national park. It is the recognition of the Waanyi people's enduring connection to Country and an important step forward for future generations. I look forward to celebrating this historic achievement with our Elders, families and community at the On Country celebration on 4 September.

As we continue to grow as a Corporation, our commitment remains unchanged. We will continue working to protect Country, strengthen our culture, create opportunities for Waanyi people and ensure our voices remain at the centre of decisions that affect our future. Thank you for your continued support. I encourage everyone to stay connected with the Corporation and, where you can, get involved as we continue building a strong future for the Waanyi people together.

Hayley Iles
Chairperson
Waanyi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation

Busy Week Builds Momentum for Waanyi

The first week of July was a busy and important week for the Waanyi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation. Community meetings, governance training and strategic planning all took place as the Corporation continues working towards a strong future for Waanyi people.

Welcoming the New Board

Following the recent Annual General Meeting, the newly elected Directors joined the continuing Directors in Mount Isa for several days of governance training and planning.

The workshop helped the Board get to know each

other, build strong working relationships and prepare for the important work ahead.

Directors completed training on their legal duties under the **Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI Act)**, good governance, making informed decisions and working in the best interests of all Waanyi Common Law Holders.

The Board also completed financial management training. Directors learned how to read financial reports, understand budgets and make good financial decisions for the Corporation. The 2026-27 Budget was not reviewed during the workshop due to **Annual General Meeting** scheduling changes, the training will help Directors thoroughly evaluate the proposed budget at the Board meeting on **August 3**.



Returning to Boodjamulla Together

For generations, Boodjamulla has been the heart of Waanyi Country. It is a place that holds our stories, our culture, our ancestors and our ongoing responsibility to care for Country.

This year marks an important milestone in our shared journey.

Following many years of work, Boodjamulla National Park (Aboriginal Land) has now been returned to the Waanyi People, resolving our long-standing Aboriginal Land Act claim. It is a significant achievement that recognises our enduring connection to Country and strengthens the future of Waanyi custodianship through cooperative management of this special place.

It also comes at a meaningful time. After the devastating floods that forced the park to close and caused widespread damage throughout the Gorge section, Boodjamulla is once again welcoming people back to Country through a staged reopening. Seeing families, Elders and future generations return to this place makes this occasion even more special.

To celebrate this historic moment, the Waanyi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (Waanyi PBC), together with the Department of Environment, Tourism,

Science and Innovation (DETSI), warmly invites all Waanyi families and community members to join us for an On Country celebration.

Save the Date

On Country Celebration – Boodjamulla National Park (Aboriginal Land)

Friday, 4 September 2026

Gorge Section, Boodjamulla National Park

The day will bring our community together to celebrate Country, culture and the journey that has led us here. There will be cultural performances, formal speeches, music, activities for families and children, and a community BBQ lunch as we acknowledge this important chapter in Waanyi history.

More information about transport, accommodation, catering and the day's activities will be shared in the coming weeks.

We encourage all Waanyi families to come together, reconnect with Country and celebrate this historic occasion. It is an opportunity to honour those who worked tirelessly over many years to see this outcome achieved, and to look ahead to the future generations who will continue to care for Boodjamulla.

We look forward to welcoming you home to Country.

Registration is essential

Experience the magic of Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park once again.

Scan the QR code to lock in your spot.



Tyrone Hookey

My name is Tyrone Hookey, I am a Waanyi man born and raised in Mount Isa. I was raised in a close family upbringing. I am a father of five with one grandchild.

I was given the opportunity by my parents (the late Reginald Hookey and Mandy Hookey nee' Chong) at the young age of 15 to leave school and choose to pursue a working career in the family business. This is where my working career in transport, bulk earthworks & mining began. I have a passion for both the transport industry in bulk haulage & heavy haulage applications as well as heavy machinery in the applied fields.

Over the course of my working career of 20 plus years, my experiences have consisted of maintenance works starting with general labour/maintenance from mowing & snipping lawns/grass, mine shutdowns etc to driving road trains & operating heavy machinery, TA-ing' repairs and maintenance on heavy equipment to achieving leading hand/supervisory roles, as well at one point, establish my own transport & logistics business in 2011 which I operated for approx. five years. Continuing to pursue this passion with other companies gave me the opportunity to learn many other skill sets and standards, relevant to everyday life.



I would like to thank CEO Trent McKenzie and Acting Business Manager Boyd Simpson for the opportunity and confidence they have shown in appointing me to this role. I would also like to thank Jonathan Hall and Conor Harrington for making me feel so welcome and for their support as I begin this new chapter with the Waanyi PBC.

Key Skills

Being indigenous with the background experiences I have, I believe I can communicate and convey issues with understanding. Additionally, I can bring the following skill sets:

- Stakeholder engagement / networking
- Contractual requirements / management
- Compliance & governance
- Employment & economic development
- Advocacy for indigenous - Waanyi enthusiasts

Interest in the Role

Throughout my career I have held various roles in the transport and bulk earthworks industries. Throughout this time, I have met many Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals that are skilled and ambitious in these fields that share the same interest I have, which has shaped my character and experiences.

Over the past five years, I have actively pursued self-development, and through this, I want to invest my experience and time into becoming more and leading a community. So, when the advertisement was released as an expression of interest to apply for the Engagement Project Officer role at the Waanyi PBC, I pursued it with great interest.

Ambitions for my Waanyi People

To earn their respect (and vice versa) for the time I lost whilst working away, by rebuilding and working alongside my Waanyi people to achieve the organisation's current business vision and mission in this new chapter, in line with what they envision. I want to see our cultural knowledge advance further with more diversification in cultural heritage and monitoring; to pursue, where possible, more economic opportunities so this can support new business ventures and current local businesses with employment and training; and where applicable, to job-place Waanyi people who are job-ready in roles to continue on with their own prospects and careers.



Community Information Meetings

Between **1 and 3 July**, the Corporation held community information meetings in **Doomadgee, Gregory and Mount Isa** with representatives from **Santos** and **Geoscience Australia**.

The meetings gave Common Law Holders the chance to hear about proposed activities in Waanyi Country, ask questions and share their views. Topics included cultural heritage, protecting Country, environmental management, future consultation and opportunities for the Waanyi community.

During the week, the Corporation was careful to respect **Sorry Business** taking place within the community. No meetings were held on days that would conflict with cultural obligations. The meeting schedule was changed where needed to ensure families had the time and space to meet their cultural responsibilities. The meetings also took place during the school holidays, with the largest community meeting held in Mount Isa.

These meetings were an important step in making sure Common Law Holders stay informed and have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect their Country.

The next step will be a site visit to **Santos' operations in Roma**. A group of Waanyi Elders and representatives will visit the site to learn more about how Santos manages its operations, protects the environment and keeps people safe.

After the visit, those who attend will report back to Elders and Common Law Holders so that everyone has the opportunity to understand what they have seen and continue the discussion.

GREAT Training Opportunities

The **Gulf Regional Economic Aboriginal Trust (GREAT)** is currently calling for Expressions of Interest for its fully funded industry training and licensing programs. This is an incredible, cost-free opportunity to build practical skills, secure essential certifications, and open doors to new employment pathways.

- Civil Machinery Training
- Truck License
- The White Card Course
- GCA Leadership
- Set to Success

We warmly encourage all Waanyi people to apply and take advantage of these valuable programs. To make

the application process as smooth as possible, the Waanyi PBC is standing by to assist eligible Waanyi members. If you need help preparing your application or navigating the requirements, please reach out directly to **Jonathan Hall** at admin@waanyiabc.org.

How to Apply

Spaces are strictly limited, so we encourage you to register your interest early. For general eligibility inquiries and direct registrations, contact GREAT at:

- **Phone:** 0455 257 760
- **Email:** coordinator@greatust.com.au
- **Website:** greatust.com.au

Beyond the Programs: Why Saving Outback Youth Starts at Home

A youth worker in Mount Isa highlighted that programs alone cannot fix the complex challenges facing young people in outback Queensland.

Speaking on ABC North West Breakfast, Hayley Iles, the youth services manager at the community-led not-for-profit Injilinj, stated that many youths are trapped in "survival mode" due to poverty, trauma, and unstable living environments. She emphasised that real change requires a holistic approach that provides stronger support for families and repairs the home life before children can truly benefit from external intervention programs. Iles advocates for shifting focus from temporary youth programs to comprehensive, wrap-around support for families to address the root causes of youth challenges in Mount Isa.

This approach seeks long-term stability by targeting underlying issues like generational poverty and trauma, aiming to reduce crime and improve community safety through holistic family restoration. For more details, visit ABC North West Queensland website.



2026 Waanyi Cultural Project Updates

The PBC has continued delivering grant funded projects to get our Waanyi people out on Country to document and look after significant areas. We have also secured new funding to rehabilitate flood affected areas and deliver a language workshop.

Boodjamulla Cultural Mapping

In May the PBC engaged anthropologist Caro Macdonald to coordinate a women's trip to Boodjamulla National Park. The women spent five days visiting and updating records of the important women's sites and traditions at the Park. We loved seeing the younger and older generations coming together to revisit and help look after these significant areas. We thank all the women who participated and acknowledge the support of the Queensland Government for funding this work under the Boodjamulla Cooperative Management Agreement.



Riversleigh Cultural Values Investigations

After hosting workshops in Doomadgee and Mount Isa in April, the PBC completed the first stage of on-Country research in the Riversleigh World Heritage area with our project partner 4 Corners Heritage in June. We spent three days with the men visiting important cultural sites and walking areas that had never been surveyed before. We recorded several new sites and identified hundreds of stone artefacts. The impacts of past flooding have made for some tough, scrubby country along the Gregory/Bidunggu River that is not easy to walk in. We thank the men for their efforts and the First Nations Heritage Grants program which allowed this work to happen. At least one more trip is planned for later in the dry season.



Flood Recovery Project

After investigating the impacts of the 2022-23 floods on cultural sites along the Gregory/Bidunggu River last year, the PBC has secured additional funding through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to rehabilitate affected areas. We thank the Queensland Government for supporting this work and look forward to working with our Waanyi people to start on-Country works later this year.

Waanyi Language Workshop

The PBC has been awarded grant funding under the Priority Languages Support Program to host an on-Country language workshop which will be planned for May 2027. In the meantime, the PBC hopes to recruit a Community Language Worker to help deliver the workshop. We thank First Languages Australia for funding this work and hope it will be an opportunity for our Waanyi people to develop language resources and make plans for future language activities.



Heritage Protection

It has been a busy start to the dry season with several cultural inductions and cultural heritage surveys being completed, and a combined number of over 200 days of Cultural Monitoring across 7 different projects. Our busiest project has been Rio Tinto Exploration's Lawn Hill Riverleigh Project, followed by Boodjamulla National Park re-build. The PBC has maintained positive relationships with proponents and has been working with Cultural Monitors to improve our procedures and professional standards.



Boodjamulla NP

Rebuilding and refurbishing works commenced at Boodjamulla National Park in May, continuing the flood recovery efforts. Waanyi Cultural Monitors have been on the ground working alongside the contractors to re-build walking tracks and visitor infrastructure. The current works are expected to be completed by 30 July 2026.

Mining Exploration

Rio Tinto Exploration (RTX) re-commenced works on Thornton and Riversleigh Stations in late-April. Waanyi Cultural Monitors have been supervising mapping and sampling, earthworks and drilling. Two cultural heritage surveys have been completed. RTX's new camp is now located on Thornton Station just east of the Gregory Downs-Camooweal Road.

Anglo American completed a reconnaissance trip with Waanyi Cultural Monitors in the Gregory Downs and Mellish Park Station areas in June to assist with planning for upcoming seismic and ambient noise tomography surveys. Anglo have proposed additional exploration drilling on Yeldham Station, continuing their program from 2025.

Aeon Metals mobilised to the topside of the Waanyi tenements to recommence early stage works under the guidance of the applicant members for the Waanyi #3 native title claim. Aeon are proposing further exploration drilling and a pre-feasibility study within the Walford Creek project area.



Burke Shire Region

The PBC coordinated inspections of proposed road crossing upgrades on the Gregory-Lawn Hill Road and storm water upgrades in the Gregory Downs township. A cultural heritage survey of the proposed Lawn Hill Creek Crossing upgrade and re-alignment was completed in June. The PBC is continuing to work with the Shire and their representatives to ensure cultural heritage is protected, while acknowledging the importance of road infrastructure upgrades within the gulf region.



Doomadgee Hospital Project

The PBC supported the attendance of Waanyi Cultural Monitors to work alongside monitors from the Gangalidda & Garawa PBC, supervising geotechnical works at the Doomadgee Hospital site which will support future upgrades to hospital infrastructure.

Upcoming Geoscience Australia Work

Doomadgee, Gregory/Bidunggu and Mount Isa to provide information to the Waanyi community on their planned magnetotelluric survey, involving the collection of data that will be used to understand the geology and natural resources of the gulf region. The PBC will be coordinating the attendance of Cultural Monitors across the project this year in the Riversleigh, Bidunggu and Lawn Hill areas.

Deep History, Deeper Roots: Ancient Predator Named After Traditional Waanyi Land

Australia's most iconic marsupial carnivores, from the tiny dunnart to the fierce Tasmanian devil, have finally given up their evolutionary secrets. A massive gap in the fossil record had long left scientists guessing how this diverse family, known as dasyurids, first evolved.

The mystery has now been solved thanks to a microscopic, 23-million-year-old fossil jaw discovered in Queensland's Riversleigh region. Named *Miyumba chrisdickmani*, this newly identified ancient hunter bridges the gap, pushing the origins of Australia's top marsupial predators back by 5 million years and giving researchers their first clear look at the ancestor that started it all.



Artist reconstruction of *Miyumba chrisdickmani*. Image courtesy of Nellie Pease.

PBC Membership

To be eligible to vote at Waanyi General Meetings you must be a member of the Waanyi PBC or become a Director.

We have recently received many new membership applications which are incomplete. Applications must include correct contact details and an approved form of ID. Any Waanyi people who have recently submitted an application, please contact the office to confirm your application is complete. The PBC has been trying to contact many of you regarding supplying

ID to complete your application. Non-members are ineligible to vote at the upcoming AGM or General Meetings.

We also have more than 180 members listed without correct contact details. If you have changed address, phone number or have a new email address please contact the office to ensure your details are recorded and up to date.

Letter of Aboriginality

Do you need a proof of aboriginality for university, college or for other applications? The PBC may be able to assist. Contact the office for more information.

Contact the Waanyi PBC office

- **Phone:** 0418 415 658
- **Email:** admin@waanyipbc.org

Looking Ahead

There is still plenty of work to do. The Corporation will continue working on cultural heritage, caring for Country, governance, employment opportunities and partnerships with government and industry.

Everyone is now looking forward to the Boodjamulla Handback Ceremony on 4 September. This will be an important day for the Waanyi people and a chance for families, Elders and Common Law Holders to come together in the Country to celebrate this historic achievement.

We look forward to seeing everyone there as we continue working together to protect Country, strengthen the Corporation and build a positive future for all Waanyi people.

Stay Connected on Socials

Our community is strong, proud, and always moving forward. To help keep everyone connected and informed, Waanyi PBC has launched an official Facebook page — a new way to share updates, opportunities, and stories that matter to our people.

This page is for our mob — to share news, support each other, and stay strong together. Use your mobile to scan the QR Code to follow the page and stay connected.

Help us spread the word, encourage family members to follow too. The more connected we are, the stronger we grow together.



Waanyi RNTBC
facebook.com/waanyipbc

