

tayaritja

HEALTHY COUNTRY PLAN

This is our healthy
country plan.

It is what our community
wants to see happen on
our Islands to make sure
the land is healthy.



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WARNING:

Community members are warned that this document contains images of our people who have passed away.

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WORD LIST:

Throughout this plan, we have used palawa kani. Here is a list of the words we have used and their English meanings.

When we use palawa kani we do not use capitalised letters. There are also some English words that have been defined too.

palawa kani words:

limuna	Sheoak (<i>Allocasuarina</i>)
luna	woman
lungtalanana	Clarke Island
lutruwita	The Tasmanian mainland
Manalakina	palawa kani spelling of the name Manalargenna
rruni	Island
tayaritja	The Furneaux Islands
tunapri	Knowledge
yamina	Grass tree. Also known as yakka gum and black boy (<i>Xanthorrhoea</i> sp.)
yula	Mutton bird/Short tail shearwater (<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>)

English words:

Pest plants	A pest plant is a native plant that is having a negative impact in the environment. This is opposed to a weed which is an introduced plant that has a negative impact on the environment
Inappropriate fire	Fire which occurs too often and is too hot

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Managed Land:



Context Map



Lungtalanana

LUNGTALANANA:

Our community has a long connection to lungtalanana. Like the rest of tayaritja, Aboriginal people have used the land known as lungtalanana since lutruwita was connected to the mainland.

lungtalanana is the third largest runi in tayaritja. It sits south of truwana and is 20km offshore from lutruwita.

lungtalanana is 8,230 hectares in size.

In the early 1800s lungtalanana was recorded as being heavily timbered with gums and limuna. The limuna forest was said to grow in a belt around the outskirts of the island, close to the shore. These days the island is predominately regenerating pasture and coastal heath, with patches of native woodland.

lungtalanana has a prominent central plateau. The central plateau acts as a fresh water catchment, with the water flowing from the plateau into the sea.

There was a large fire on lungtalanana in 2014 which burned about 98% of the island. Slowly, the island is recovering and the vegetation is now sprouting green shoots.



Beach on lungtalanana

After the fire, lungtalanana was burned and bare. Despite the devastation, the fire had created perfect conditions for conducting a comprehensive heritage survey. Prior to the fire, only four ancient heritage sites had been identified on lungtalanana. The survey carried out after the fire identified at least 6 more ancient heritage sites.



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It is estimated that lungtalanana was consistently occupied by Aborigines up until 6500 years ago. Aboriginal occupation was then interrupted by the end of an ice age which resulted in sea levels rising and lungtalanana becoming a rruni.

Aborigines did not occupy the rruni again until they were taken there by raytji sealers in 1810. During the 1800s our people mainly lived in small huts around the area now known as Spike Bay.

Many Aboriginal luna were taken to lungtalanana to live with raytji sealers and many families were raised there. In the early days lungtalanana had a small community of residents.

The name lungtalanana came from a luna named Tanalipunya. Tanalipunya had been taken to tayaritja by white sealers. Like all Aboriginal luna who were taken to tayaritja, Tanalipunya's skills were utilised to help the less capable sealers survive the harsh conditions. Before being taken to tayaritja, Tanalipunya had been married to Manalakina.

More recently, lungtalanana has been used as an alternative to incarceration for young Aboriginal offenders. Since the community gained control of the rruni in 1997 a small number of Aboriginal families have made the rruni their home while administering the youth justice program.

While the community gained control of lungtalanana in 1997 by signing a lease, it was not until May 2005 that the Tasmanian Government returned ownership to our community. Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) now hold the title for lungtalanana on behalf of all Tasmanian Aborigines.



From top: Water flowing to the muka, and Billy Maher's drawing of the Dorothy Star

Devastation on lungtalanana
after the 2014 fires.



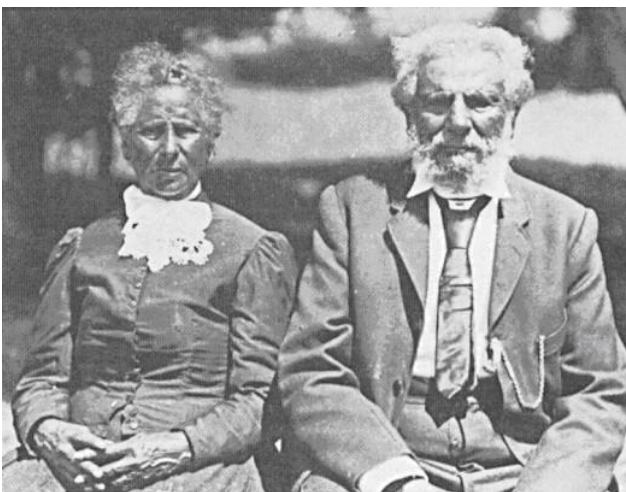


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Top Left:
Heritage sites uncovered after the
2014 fires

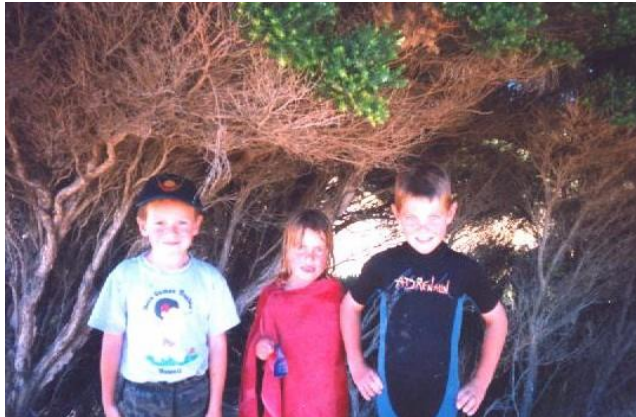
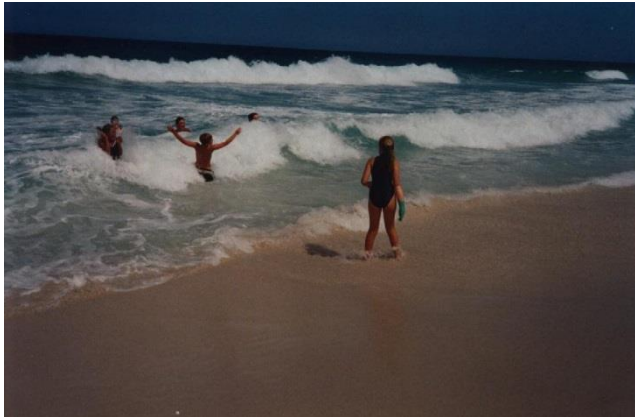
Below:
The Thomas family on lungtalanana





Top and below:
Families and luwutina enjoying country and muka
on lungtalanana

Underneath: The old homestead – lungtalanana





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BABEL ISLAND

Babel Island is an important rruni for our community. As Aboriginal people we have had a connection to this place since time began. Way back when lutruwita was joined to the mainland, our people were using the land now known as Babel Island. In modern times, our people have birded Babel Island for over 130 years.



Historical photos of community travelling to and from Babel Island for the birding season.



Babel Island

Babel Island is located half way up the east coast of Flinders Island. A sand spit reaches from Sellars Point on Flinders Island out across the muka, towards Babel Island. Babel Island is 441 hectares in size.



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Babel Island has the biggest mutton bird rookery in the world. Babel Island has historically offered a place for community to make a living for themselves and their families through birding.



Left to right:
Sand spit off Babel and South East Beach.



Left to right: Rookery on Babel Island and Yola
off the coast of Babel Island

Back in the old days, all the birds taken from Babel would need to be salted because there was no refrigeration available to keep the birds fresh. The salted birds would then be shipped to lutruwita, and other parts of Australia, to be sold for eating. Oil from the birds would also be sold, as would the feathers and the down.



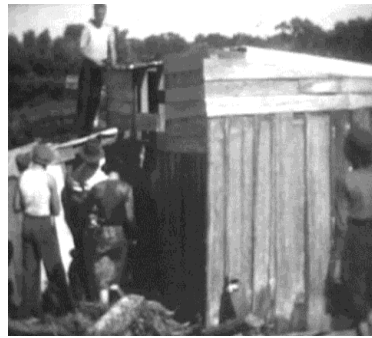
Left to right: Rough conditions heading to Babel Island, Historical image of community setting sail to Babel Island.

Babel Island has the biggest mutton bird rookery in the world. Babel Island has historically offered a place for community to make a living for themselves and their families through birding.

In the 1920s birding started to become profitable for Aborigines. During this time, there were more sheds on Babel than on any other rruni in tayaritja. The majority of these sheds were owned and operated by Aborigines. This is quite a notable achievement for our people. At the time, throughout the rest of Australia, there were very few Aborigines who could say that they owned and operated their own businesses and were able to provide employment for their community.



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Historical images of life on Babel Island during the birding season.



In its heyday, Babel Island was a busy and vibrant little rruni during birding season. It had 26 sheds operating, as well as a nurse, a police officer, a food store and a health inspector.

In more recent times, the number of operational sheds on Babel Island has dwindled to just one.

After a long struggle for land rights, the Tasmanian Government finally returned Babel Island to the community in 1995. The title for the land is held on behalf of the Aboriginal community by ALCT.

Top: Birders on Babel island – more recently and in the 1970s

Bottom: The title for Babel Island is finally returned - 1995.



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BIG DOG ISLAND

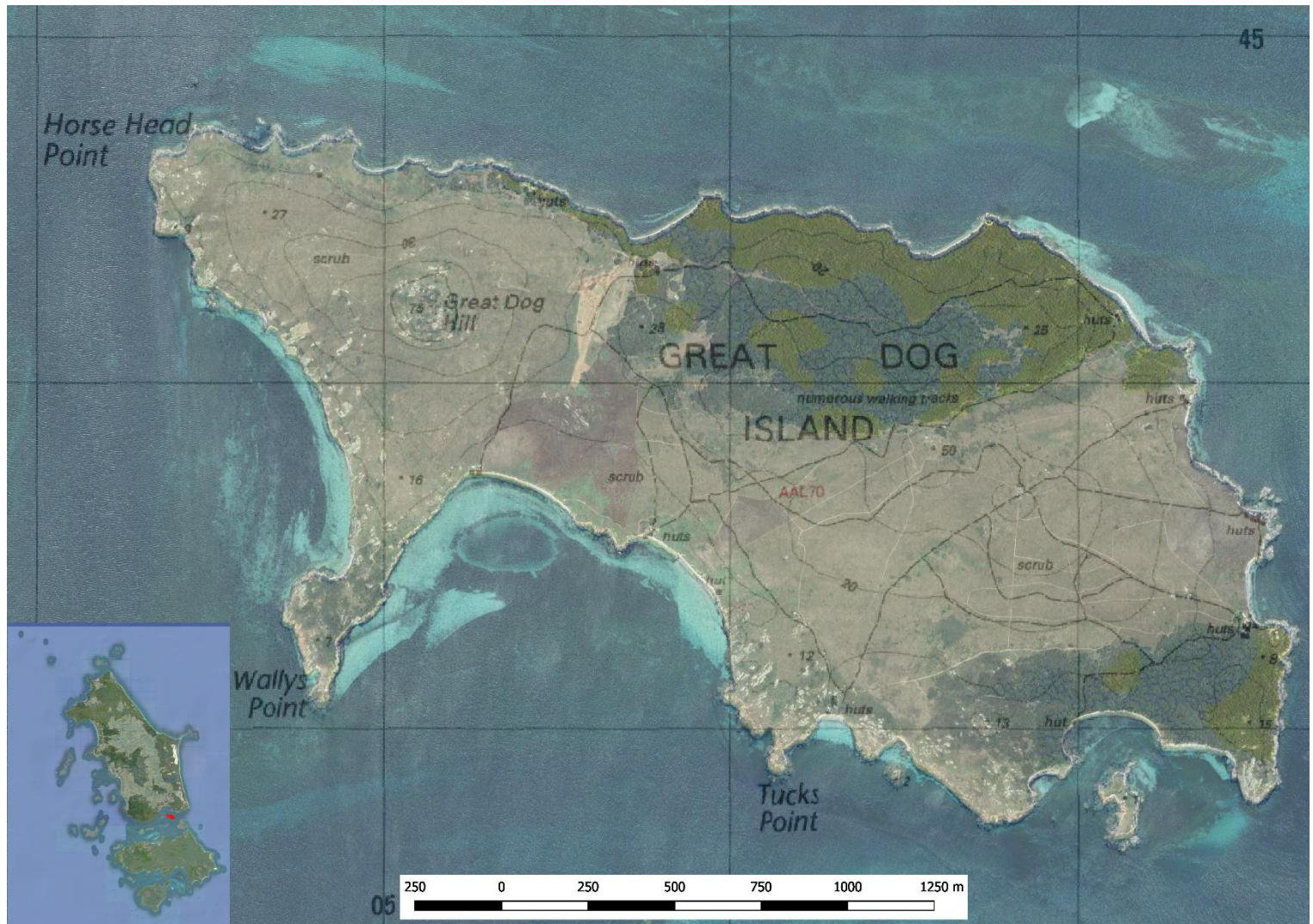
Big Dog Island is an important rruni for our community. As Aboriginal people we have had a connection to this place for thousands and thousands of years. Way back when lutruwita was joined to the mainland, our people were using the land now known as Big Dog Island. Over the last 200 years, our community has used the rruni for birding.

In fact, it is estimated that Big Dog Island has one of the longest continuous birding operations anywhere in the world.



Big Dog Island is off the south coast of Flinders Island in Adelaide Bay. As the crow flies, Big Dog is only 3kms away from the township of Lady Barron.

Coast of Big Dog Island



Big Dog

There are ancient heritage sites on the runi that consist of both isolated artefacts and artefact scatters. These areas are interwoven with our community's more contemporary heritage connected to birding, particularly the birding sheds.



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In 1828, Big Dog Island was described as being 'well wooded with good grass being found in many places interspersed with thickets (of scrub)'. These days, the island only has remnant scrub. For the most part, the scrub was reduced through inappropriate fire and over clearing, for both grazing and to make use of the timber for firewood and boat building. The small patches of scrub that remain on the island are of a high conservation significance. This is because there are few examples of this kind of scrub remaining throughout outer tayaritja.



Historical images of community birding
on Big Dog Island.



Over fifty per cent of Big Dog is tussock grassland, and all of this grassland is mutton bird rookery. The rookery, for the most part, is in fair condition, despite currently being covered with fireweed.

The fireweed colonised the rookery after inappropriate fire ravaged the runi in 2013 and much of it is expected to die out in the next few years. This is not the first time this has occurred. In 1984, the then managers of Big Dog Island, set about a campaign to stop people undertaking rookery burns because of the impact of fireweed. Despite this, a major rookery burn was undertaken in 1986 (with the exception of lease 5). This resulted in the island being in much the same state as it is now.



Patches of remnant scrub



Healthy rookery on Big Dog Island

Big Dog Island was originally used for grazing sheep and cattle, as well as mutton birding. Having livestock on the island had a negative impact on the rookery. The hooved feet of these animals destroyed burrows and made a mess of the rookery. Despite this, cattle remained on the island until the late 1950s and sheep were not completely removed from the island until it was handed back to the community. Since livestock have been removed the rookery is much healthier.

In the past, there were also problems with feral cats on the island. However an eradication program carried out in the early 1990s seems to have been fairly successful and feral cats are no longer being reported as a major issue.

After a long struggle for our land rights to be recognised, the Tasmanian Government finally returned Big Dog Island to the community in 1995. The title for the rruni is held by ALCT on behalf of the Aboriginal community.



The title for Big Dog Island is finally returned - 1995

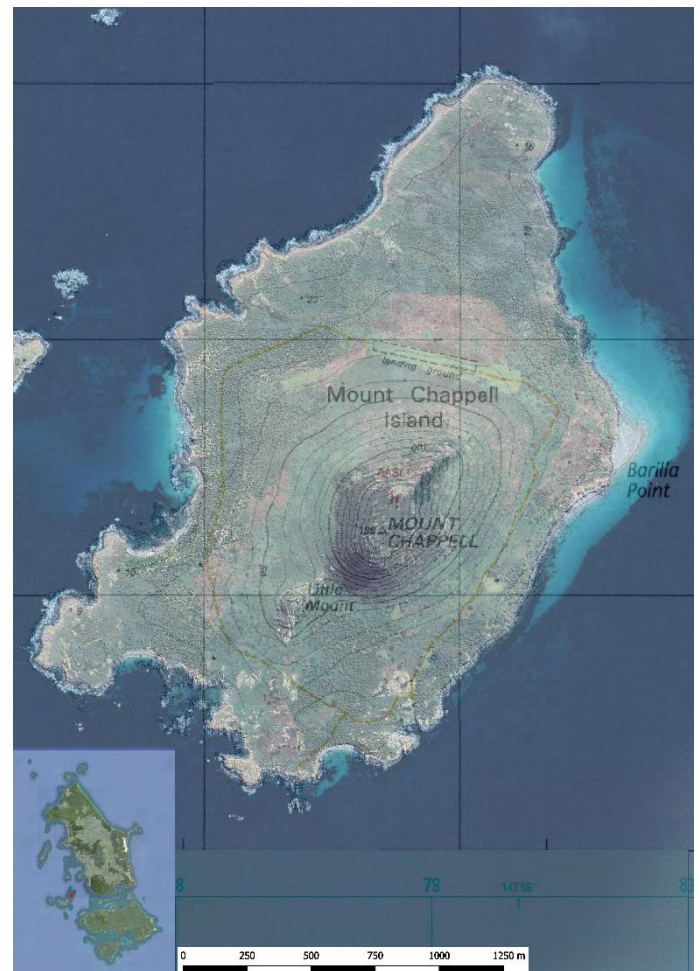
BADGER and HUMMOCKY ISLANDS

The Aboriginal history of, and connection to, Badger Island and Hummocky is rich and has stood for a very long time. From significant and ancient occupation evidence such as hearths and midden deposits dating back 20 000 years, to the development of Badger as a hub of an Aboriginal community and culture encompassing many islands in the Furneaux group in the mid 1800's, the Aboriginal community's connection to Badger and Hummocky continues.

Badger and Hummocky were returned to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community under the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995. Following this, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Land Management Program began work on the islands. Badger and Hummocky were listed as Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) in 2000 and are managed according to the IUCN protected area management category V: Protected Landscape/Seascape.

Work undertaken through the Land Management Program has been based on the Environmental Rehabilitation Plans for Badger and Chappell Islands developed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in 1999, and the Badger Island Land Management Strategy Paper, developed by the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania in 1998.

There are also other plans that provide direction for works on Badger and Hummocky.

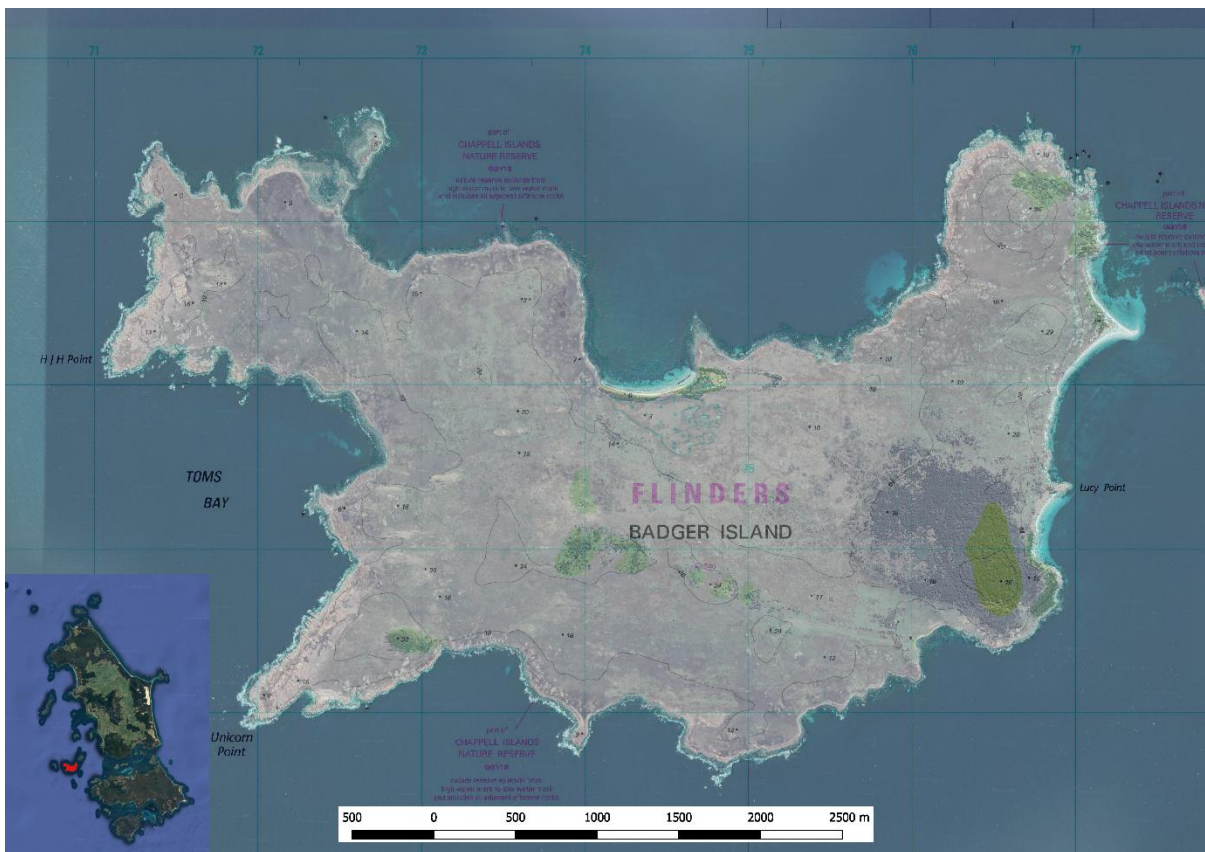


Hummocky Island



These include the Badger Island Aboriginal cultural and heritage conservation management plan 2005; the Chappell Island historical site assessment report 2006, and the Chappell Island boxthorn management plan 2009.

The last review of the Land Management Program's efforts on Badger and Hummocky involved a workshop on the islands camp in April 2011, and evaluations of works and achievements of the land management crew over the last 13 years.



Badger Island

Badger and hummocky cover an area of 1244 Hectares and 325 Hectares respectively. They are located approximately 20 km south west from Whitemark on Flinders Island, and 47 km North of Cape Portland in the north east of the Tasmanian mainland.

Badger Island is flat, with the highest point being 38 m above sea level and the remainder between 10 and 20 m above sea level. Hummocky however is iconic for its peak, Mt Chappell, reaching from the sea to 198m.

Granite outcrops dominate the majority of the coastlines on Badger. The raised areas on Badger consist of limestone. The soils on Badger are generally shallow, light brown sandy loams that are well drained.

Hummocky is made up of granite, which outcrop at the coasts and the summits of the two peaks. The soils are mainly eroded granite sands with some wind-blown additions. The soils are well-drained and are high in nutrients from the large population of birds, particularly Cape Barren Geese.

Badger's landscape has changed dramatically in a short period, with accounts from the early 19th Century describing Badger as well wooded with lagoons and fresh water streams. The landscape has been altered so that it is dominated by poa grasslands to accommodate sheep grazing on the island. Current sheep grazing on the island is managed and kept at a sustainable level and does not threaten the goals set out in this plan.

Hummocky's landscape has also been altered by overgrazing with sheep and fire practices that were too frequent and too hot. Boxthorn has replaced many of the native low shrub-land plant communities such as barilla, coastal saltbush, boobialla and coastal wattles.

Following invasion and dispossession of country, the Aboriginal community's connection to these islands was reinvigorated when the Beeton family leased Badger Island and moved to live on the island in 1857. James and Lucy Beeton went on to each purchase 50 acre blocks on Badger in 1868. A thriving community on Badger Island and Hummocky continued, with the Beeton family controlling the island until 1947 before the Moreton family took control. The Moreton family then sold the lease to the Stackhouse family who farm sheep and still lease the island today



Granite Outcrop – Mt Chappell Peak



Badger Coastline



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“The islands are really important, I think it’s really important that people are able to come and see them, to stay on them and to live on them. It’s an important part of our culture. For the young ones it can be a good place to get away from all the stresses of the city and have a break”

—RM

COMMUNITY VISION:

Aboriginal people are self-determining in the management of their islands.

The community’s connection to the islands is strengthened.

Cultural resources are understood and used sustainably.

The land and its ecosystems are healthy.

Rookeries are healthy and mutton birding continues for generations to come.

WHAT IS HEALTHY COUNTRY PLANNING?

Healthy country planning is a method used by Aboriginal communities around Australia to identify how they want to manage their land. It is part of a planning process used around the world called open standards. Open standards is a method of planning used in land management for the practice of conservation.

Healthy country planning aims to balance environmental values with community values and cultural *tunapri*.

Unlike a traditional land management plan, a healthy country plan looks at what is important to the Aboriginal community and places a higher value on those things, rather than only valuing things considered important by scientists and conservationists.

Our healthy country plan started with a community effort. We had a meeting on Flinders Island in June 2014 and a lot of people shared their *tunapri*, thoughts and feelings on how they thought each of the islands should be managed.

In 2019, the Lungtalanana, Babel Island and Big Dog Island – Healthy Country Plan 2015 and the Badger and Chappell Islands Management Plan 2011- 2016 were combined into the *tayaritja* Healthy Country Plan to encompass *tayaritja*.

Healthy country planning works by identifying targets and threats, and setting goals to either protect our targets or to eliminate our threats.

This plan is only part of the healthy country planning process. It is important that we have continued community input throughout the healthy country planning cycle.



The Healthy Country Cycle



HOW ARE HEALTHY COUNTRY PLANS USED?

A healthy country plan aims to identify the community's objectives for the management of our lands and resources.

Our healthy country plan will sit above our current land management plans in order to give them direction. It will also inform us what our priorities should be when undertaking land management work on Aboriginal lands.

Our healthy country plan gives our community a say in how our lands should be looked after now and into the future.

TARGETS

WHAT IS A TARGET?

A target is a feature of the landscape that the community wish to focus their energy and resources in protecting. A target can be either tangible or intangible. Tangible targets are things in the landscape that you can see and touch. Examples of tangible targets on the islands are rookeries and historical buildings. An intangible target is something in the landscape that cannot be seen or touched. An example of an intangible target is the community's tunapri about certain places.

HOW WE IDENTIFIED OUR TARGETS?

We spoke to people at community camps, community meetings and individually to help us identify the features in the landscape that the community consider the most important. We also held a community meeting on Flinders Island in August 2014.

In this meeting, we made lists of things that the community said are important to the islands.

We then grouped those things together under headings like 'community use' and 'tunapri'. From our list we were able to set priorities on what we should focus our efforts on.

This is how we identified our targets.

TARGET 1

ECOSYSTEMS OF SIGNIFICANCE

FAIR HEALTH



Top: Tussock grass rookery
Below: yamina forest

Why are ecosystems of significance a target?

Ecosystems of significance are environments that were identified by the community as being important.

While some of the ecosystems are identified because they are rare or threatened, others are identified simply because they were considered important features in the landscape.

Although there are only a few threatened species on the islands, there are ecosystems that are rare, such as the remnant scrub on Babel Island and Big Dog.

The yamina (*Xanthorrhoea*) forest on lungtalanana was identified, not because it is endangered or rare, but because it is viewed as an integral part of the lungtalanana landscape.

The tussock grass (*Poa Poiformis*) rookeries on Hummocky, Babel Island and Big Dog were identified as important because they are essential in sustaining a healthy yula population.

Black Boy Forests:

The yamina forest on lungtalanana is important to the community. yamina are also commonly known as black boys. They are called this because the plant has a thick black trunk.

The plant is very slow growing and trunks only start appearing after many, many years of growth – because of this, we know that the yamina forest on lungtalanana is very old.

yamina have long, narrow leaves which are crowded at the tops of the trunks. These leaves can be used for weaving.

The main yamina forest is located on the northern part of lungtalanana, just behind Kangaroo Bay.

There is considerable concern in the community about the health of the yamina since the 2014 fires which burnt 98% of the rruni. However, it should be noted that yamina respond well to fire and they are currently in very good health.

The real threat to the yamina forest, is the spread of a plant disease called *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is a fungal disease that rots the roots of plants. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is spread through contaminated dirt from machinery and vehicles, as well as on clothing and boots.

Tussock grass rookeries:

There are tussock grass rookeries both on Hummocky Island, Big Dog Island and Babel Island. These are extremely important ecosystems, as without healthy rookeries, yula cannot thrive.

Tussock grass rookeries are also significant because they are representative of the original landscape of the islands prior to colonisation and the introduction of European farming practices.

Importantly, tussock grass rookeries are easy to bird and are sturdy enough to withstand annual birding. This is because the tussocks hold the sandy rookeries together and provide natural protection against erosion and sand blows.

Weeds, pest plants, and inappropriate fire are particular threats to tussock grass rookery. After fire has gone through a tussock grass rookery, it is likely to become overgrown with fireweed (as happened recently on Big Dog).

After a fire, fireweed will grow and quickly take over the landscape. However,



yamina forest on lungtalanana



the natural life cycle of fireweed means that it will die off within a few years.

Fireweed is one of the major concerns of the community in relation to the rookery on Big Dog Island. There is widespread concern about the impact fireweed may have on the health of the birds. Currently, the fireweed is dense across the rookery and it is unclear if this is affecting the ability of the birds to scratch out burrows. Some birders claim that the abundance of fireweed is making the birds 'soft'.

Other weeds such as boxthorn, mirror bush and exotic grasses can also cover rookery. This can be seen on many other runi throughout tayaritja.



Community birding on Big Dog Island



Fireweed across the rookery on Big Dog Island.



Weed removal and revegetation work.



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Plant Communities

Cape Barren Pine and tea tree remnant scrub:

Until recently, it was thought there were no Cape Barren pines (*Callitris rhomboidea*) left on Babel Island. However, a small patch of Cape Barren pine was found in 2013.

The Cape Barren pine is particularly sensitive to burning and over-harvesting, as was the case on Babel Island. In the 1800s, Babel Island was described as being 'heavily wooded'. This is in stark contrast to the island today.



Above left: Cape Barren Pine
Above right: Remnant Blue Gum



There are two endangered plants found on Babel Island. These plants are the shade pellitory and coastal twin-leaf shrub.



On Big Dog, the remnant scrub occurs mostly on the north-eastern side of the run. Although many of the plants that make up the remnant scrub are not endangered, there are endangered plants found there. These plants include:



Northern leek-orchids
(*Piasophyllum secitum*)



Broad-lip bird orchid
(*Chiloglottis trapeziformis*)



Grassland greenhood
(*Pterostylis ziegeleri*)



Banded greenhood
(*Pterostylis sanguinea*)

The large patch of scrub on Big Dog is thought to be the most ecologically diverse in outer tayaritja.

The remnant scrub and Cape Barren pines are important because as ecosystems, they are reflective of the landscape before the introduction of European farming practices.

Badger Island

There are five main plant communities on Badger:

1. Poa grassland: Covers the largest area of the island, and consists of native stypa species as well as introduced weeds and grasses.
2. She-oak woodland: A healthy stand of this woodland is situated at the eastern end of the island, covering over 20 hectares. Boobialla, coastal tea tree and coastal beard heath are other species commonly found with the dominant She-oaks. There are other small stands of this woodland found in more central areas of the island that have been degraded by sheep grazing.
3. Swamp paperbark: Stands are scattered over the central lower parts of the



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4. Coastal heath: Scattered patches occur around the coast, consisting of Boobyalla, coastal tea tree, with an understorey of cushion bush, sea box and white correa.
5. Horehound herbfield: Isolated areas around and on the airstrip.



Coastal heath example on Badger



Badger Grassland

Hummocky Island

Harris in 1996 described eight main plant communities:

1. White correa shrubland: Occur on the upper slopes of Mount Chappell with dusty daisy bush, coastal beard heath, boobialla and coastal wattle.
2. Barilla heath: Forms the most extensive pure stands of any Tasmanian off-shore islands and is commonly found along the west and north-west coast of Hummocky.
3. Coastal saltbush/tetragonia shrubland: Found in parts of the north coast.
4. Poa tussock grassland: Occurs in large patches in the north-east, south and high on the north-western slopes of Mt. Chappell.
5. Coastal spear grass grassland: Found in small fringing areas around the coast.
6. Marram grassland: Dominates a grassland mid-way down the east coast.
7. Horehound herbfield: Numerous infestations on flatter areas.
8. Boxthorn shrubland: The tallest shrub on the island, varying from impenetrable thickets, to open shrubland. Boxthorn infestation poses a significant risk on a number of levels, particularly degradation of native vegetation and animals.



Barilla heath

Badger's animals

Mammals: The red-necked wallaby is the most abundant mammal on Badger and its high numbers mean it is potentially a sustainable food resource on the island.

The Tasmanian Devil was released on Badger in 1996 by unknown persons. An attempt to remove the population following the release was thought to be successful, although dens, tracks and other signs have been observed. A survey is to take place in July 2011 to investigate any Devil presence on the island.

Archaeological digs provided evidence of wombats on the island historically, although there are no recorded accounts of wombats on Badger.

Reptiles: Reptiles on the island include tiger snakes and skinks, which are both common on the Island.

Birds: Cape Barren Geese are common on the island. Currawongs, Owls, Plovers, Swallows, Pardalotes, Grey Shrike-thrush and Grey fantails have all been observed on the island.

Coastal birds common to Badger Island include Oyster-catchers, Pelicans, Seagulls, Molly Hawks and Cormorants.



Cape Barren Goose in flight over Badger



Hummocky's animals

Muttonbirds and Tiger snakes are the iconic animals on Hummocky. In the early 1870's, Hummocky was recognised as the main muttonbirding island in the tayaritja. The decline in the muttonbird population has been dramatic. From a catch of 400 000 birds in 1876, to around 46 000 in 1974 and 1975, the muttonbird population has never recovered to its former status. Sheep grazing on the island is suspected to be one of the main contributors to the decline due to collapsing burrows and altered vegetation and habitat, however the impacts of fire and the large population of tiger snakes could also contribute to the decline.

Although the tiger snakes on Hummocky have become a distinctive feature of the landscape, their huge population has been an issue in the past with the risk they posed for muttonbirders.

There have been many snake culls between the late 1800's through to the 1950's. This has not seemed to have a long term impact on today's tiger snake population, which are observed regularly. This unique species is now seen by many as a valuable part of Hummocky's biodiversity.

The introduction of pasture grasses for grazing sheep has created ideal habitat for Cape Barren Geese. These birds are numerous on the island and have many nests on Hummocky. Peregrine falcons, pardalotes, Pacific gulls, Oyster-catchers and Sea eagles can also be observed on Hummocky. The introduced starlings are a pest on Hummocky, spreading the fruit from Boxthorn.



Hummocky's famous tiger snake



Cape Barren Geese Grazing on Hummocky Airstrip

Why are ecosystems of significance rated as being in fair health?

Ecosystems of significance are rated as being in fair health because of the impact of invasive weeds and pest plants (such as fireweed). If action is not taken to rid the runi of weeds and pest plants, they have the potential to take over and cause a lot of damage. The main weeds that pose a threat on the islands is African boxthorn and mirror bush, with the main pest plant being fireweed.



These places are important places, and they're important places just the way they are. We need to look after them. When are we going to stop thinking we have to develop things all the time? That's not our way.

—RS



Babel Island



The main threat to the yamina forests on lungtalanana is phytophthora cinnamomi which is a plant disease. Phytophthora cinnamomi has been identified as being on lungtalanana, but at present, it has not had any extensive impact on the yamina forest.

Since invasion, clearing, grazing and too much fire have impacted upon our ecosystems of significance. Now, only a few small healthy patches remain, which is why it is so important we work to keep them healthy.



African boxthorn on Babel Island



yamina forests impacted by phytophthora cinnamomi

GOAL

- The impact of weeds is reduced through active management

TARGET 2

YULA (MUTTON BIRDS)

POOR HEALTH

Why is yula a target?

yula are important to the community because birding is an integral part of our culture. The skeletal remains of yula have been found scattered throughout middens around all of lutruwita. Yula have been an integral part of our people's

diet for thousands of years – some people in the community say that our people have relied on yula for sustenance since time began.

yula arrive from the northern hemisphere in late September. They clean out their burrows in October and lay their eggs between late November and early December. Once the chicks hatch they are fattened up by their parents. The parents take turns feeding the chicks, at first nightly but as the chicks grow bigger and stronger, their parents will only feed them once every 2 weeks.

Once the chicks are big and fat, the parents leave them alone in the burrow and embark on the long journey back to the northern hemisphere.

Birding season usually starts in March and runs through to the end of April. By the time the birding season comes round, the chicks are covered in soft grey down and, in a good season, they are big and fat. Perfect for eating.

In the late 1870's it was recorded that birding was the only industry in Tasmania to provide a living for Aborigines. Back in those days, yula were a highly valued commodity, with feathers and oil being sold for a good profit. However, by the early 1900s the exporting of feathers and oil had all but stopped, and the main focus for birding was getting yula to eat.



Community birding on Big Dog Island.

In the old days, salted yula was often the only meat available to Aborigines living on tayaritja, with other meat from European animals being too expensive for most Aboriginal people to afford. Big Dog Island is home to the longest continuous mutton-birding operation in the world. It is the island where most of our birding is still done today. The majority of the sheds on Big Dog Island are operated by Aborigines.

Babel Island has the biggest rookery on the planet. However, in recent times, it has not been as readily birded as Big Dog. This is largely because of the remoteness of the island and the difficulty faced in travelling there.

Although Aborigines started petitioning the Tasmanian government to have Big Dog Island set aside exclusively for Aborigines to bird as far back as 1877, it was not until 1995 that the rruni was officially returned to our community. Babel Island was returned at the same time.



Community birding on Big Dog Island.



Birds prepared for eating.





Community birding on Big Dog Island.

Why are yula considered as being in poor health?

yula is considered to be in poor health because of the decrease in bird numbers. It is unclear why the numbers have dropped over the last couple of seasons, but it is of grave concern to the community. The community are also worried that not as many young people are interested in going birding as they have been in the past. This requires striking a careful balance between decreasing bird numbers and conserving our culture. People are worried our skills could be lost and that too many of our young people are missing out on experiencing and participating in birding, while also being concerned about diminishing yula numbers.

Concerns were also raised about the impact of fireweed on the rookeries, particularly on Big Dog. Despite fireweed being a native, it is felt that because it is growing in such abundance it is degrading the rookery there.

GOAL :

- yula are always abundant and available on the Islands for community use



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HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

TARGET 3

POOR HEALTH

Why are historical buildings a target?

Big Dog and Babel

The historical buildings identified as being of particular importance to the community are the old homestead on Big Dog and the birding sheds on Babel.

These historical buildings are important to our community. The community feels that by letting the old buildings fall into disrepair, we stand to lose an important part of our heritage.

The historical buildings often have the names of the people who worked in them written about the place – especially in the old sheds on Babel.

Our community feels that both the buildings and the writings need to be preserved.

The community considers these writings are an important record of our community's history. Some people thought that the writings in the buildings would help people feel connected to deceased family members who had worked the sheds many years before, and some people thought that seeing family members' names in these places would help those who have not spent much time on the islands, forge a more meaningful connection to these places.

lungtalanana

It was also suggested that minor maintenance works could be undertaken on the historical buildings on lungtalanana to make the island more appealing for community to visit when the island is not in use by programs.



Nissen hut on Babel



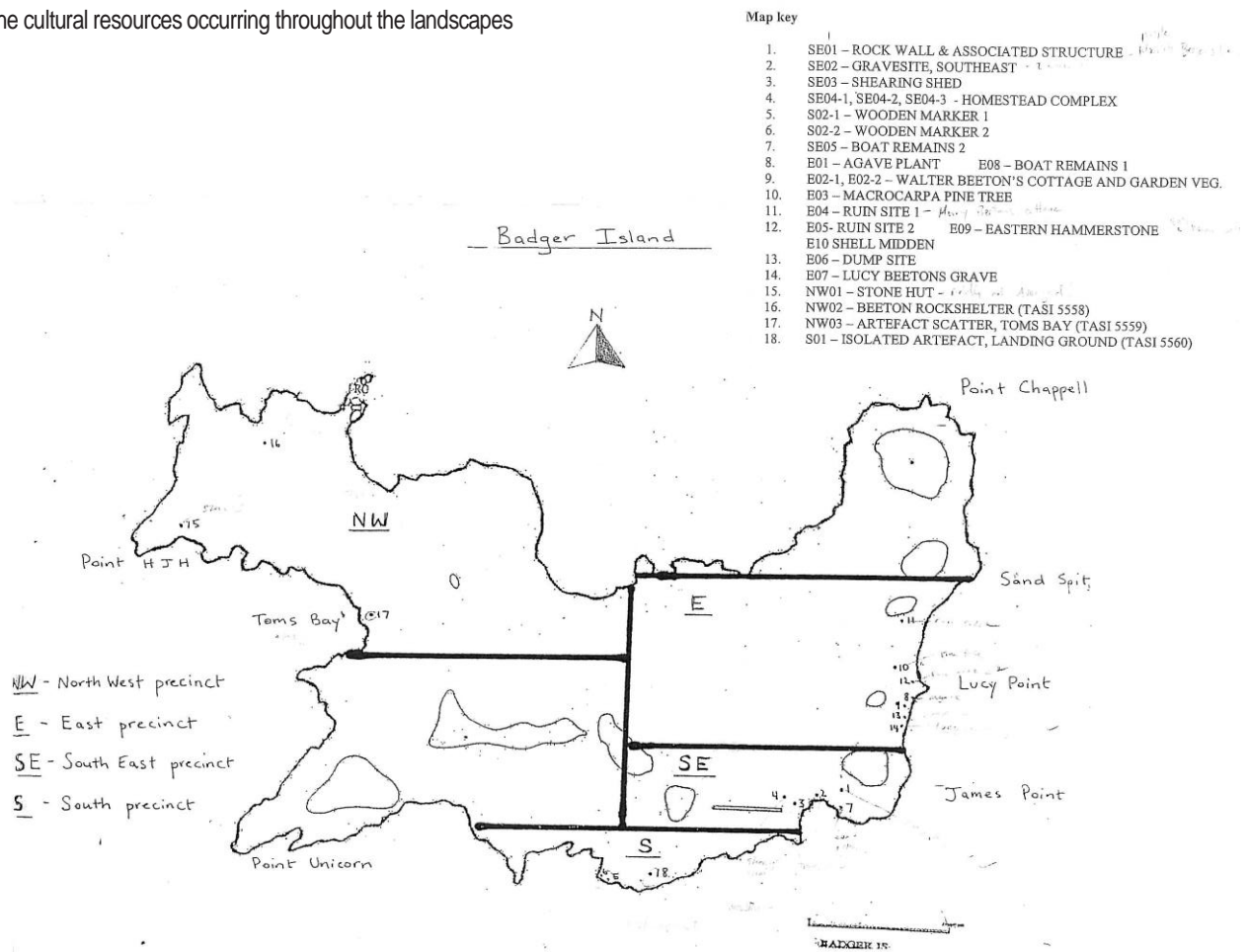
The names of birders - Babel Island.

Badger Island and Hummocky

The whole of Badger Island and Hummocky are cultural sites in themselves. There are places within these landscapes which are important in regard to protecting Aboriginal heritage and the continuation of knowledge and stories about the Aboriginal community's connection to these islands. Both islands have had detailed assessments and plans developed to protect these sites.

The Badger Island Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Conservation Management Plan (2005), the Mount Chappell Island Natural and Cultural Resource Survey (1996), and the Chappell Island historical site assessment report (2006) contain details about these sites on the islands, and strategies to protect and monitor their condition.

Cultural sites range from times when the land was bridged from lower sea levels, to remnants from buildings and gardens from the mid 1800's, as well as the cultural resources occurring throughout the landscapes



Why are the historical building rated as being in poor health?



Historical shed falling down.

On Babel, many of the old birding sheds are falling down and will soon be lost. The old homestead on Big Dog Island needs work to ensure community feel comfortable using it.

The community feel that the buildings on lungtalanana could be freshened up to ensure they remain in good condition.

Given that many of sheds on Babel have fallen down or are in a bad state of disrepair, they were rated as being in poor health. The community thought work should be undertaken as a matter of urgency to ensure these buildings (and their writings) survive long into the future.

GOAL:

- Cultural heritage sites are protected

TUNAPRI

FAIR HEALTH

TARGET 4

Why is tunapri a target?

tunapri is our knowledge and our stories. The community identified this as an important target, as without the passing on of tunapri, the significance of our connection to tayaritja could be lost – especially for younger generations.

The community identified tunapri as being: the knowledge of our cultural resources, how they are used and where they can be found, as well as who worked what sheds and which families were strongly connected to what islands. Many people also thought important tunapri included the story of our struggle to have the islands returned to our people.

The passing on of tunapri involves telling our contemporary stories of the islands, as well as making sure our history of these places is known.

Why is tunapri rated as being in fair health?

The tunapri of the islands is considered to be in fair health. It is felt that teaching the stories of the islands and passing on tunapri about each place could be improved upon. This is considered to be a two-way street – Our community feel that more of an effort should be made by our elders to tell their stories, and more of an effort should be made by our youth to listen.

The community feel that a greater effort should be made with getting people back on country – particularly to the tayaritja. Trips back to country would allow community members to develop their own tunapri about tayaritja. This is how we keep our tunapri strong.

Only by going back on country and sharing tunapri with young people will we ensure our young people understand the significance of tayaritja and what these rruni mean for our peoples' story.





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Birding on Big Dog Island.

GOAL:

Community gather on the islands. Images from the 1970s through to more recent times

- tunapri is shared and cultural resources are used.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

FAIR HEALTH

Why are cultural resources a target?

Our community are very strong in the belief that cultural resources are everybody's business and everybody's responsibility. We all have an obligation to make sure our cultural resources survive long into the future. Our cultural resources are an important part of our story as Aboriginal people. Without cultural resources we would be unable to practice our culture. Practicing culture connects us to our ancestors and strengthens our identity as Aboriginal people. Cultural resources include many different things, such as yula, stringing shells, kelp, shell fish and other kipli, heritage sites and tunapri.

Why are cultural resources considered to be in fair health?

Cultural resources are considered to be in fair health, because the community are concerned about decreasing yula numbers. There is also concern about individuals being 'gutty' with cultural resources. That means, people taking more than their fair share.

The community feels that the best approach to guaranteeing our cultural resources survive long into the future is to encourage more people to use less resources. This is about striking a delicate balance between the conservation of our resources and the need to practice and pass on our culture.

For the cultural resources to be considered in good health more community members would need to be using them, but they would need to be using them in a more sustainable way.

That means not being gutty with them!!

TARGET 5



Cooking shellfish at lungtalanana



Birding on tayaritja



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As a community, we need to be more proactive in recording when we use our cultural resources, as well putting more effort into monitoring presence and abundance of our resources over time.

The community feels that there needs to be more sharing of tunapri surrounding cultural resources, such as what they are, what they are used for and where they are found. Our community feels it is important that we make a greater effort to pass this invaluable tunapri on to our youth.

GOAL:

- Populations of cultural resources and their habitats are maintained or improved.

TARGET 6

COMMUNITY USE

FAIR HEALTH

Why is community use a target?

Community use of our land is important because it strengthens our connection to these places. We see community use as a target because gathering on land as a community is a way to strengthen our ties to each other, as well as the best possible way to ensure we all have the opportunity to know our country.

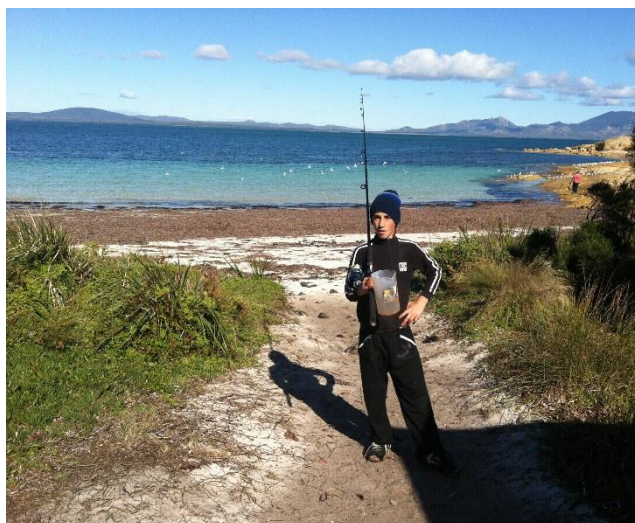
We want to encourage more community to use our lands, but especially our young people, so that they can know the story of the tayaritja and be proud of who they are as Aboriginal people.

The Community Connection Aboriginal connection to the Furneaux Islands extends back around 20 000 years. Shells in the midden material in the Beeton Rock shelter was dated back 9 500 years ago, and hearths beneath the midden show that the shelter was also camped in approximately 20 000 years ago.

The ability for Aborigines in Tasmania to continue their connection with significant cultural places is vital for the health of the land, and of the community. This is the case for tayaritja, and it is therefore a strategy for the TAC's Land Management Program to ensure increased community access to the islands.

There is plenty of information documented about the Aboriginal history of tayaritja. The TAC has many resources on this history for those interested in more detail. There is also an Oral History project being undertaken that will collate stories from people's experiences on the islands. On completion, the information from this project will also be available for the Aboriginal community from the TAC.

There are a range of infrastructure requirements to ensure that access to the islands is safe and enjoyable for the community.





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The Andra Maynard is an 8m catamaran vessel that was built for the TAC's Land Management Program. The intended use is for transport of people and equipment for land management activities and community access activities such as camps and cultural tours.

Access to the islands via the Andra Maynard is dependent on the tide, sea and weather conditions.

There is also an airstrip on Badger, Hummocky and lungtalanana that are maintained for access to the islands by light aircraft.

There are community houses on Big Dog and Badger Island that has 3 bedrooms, toilet, bathroom and kitchen. On lungtalanana there are currently two options for community accommodation with good facilities. There are basic workers quarters on Hummocky and Babel Island, with gas hot water and kitchen facilities.

Community's access to and use of the islands is increased

Why is community use rated as being in fair health?

Community use of tayaritja is considered to be in fair health because many people visit the islands annually to bird. However, it is felt that more people should be encouraged to visit the tayaritja outside of birding, and that this would need to occur before our community use could be considered in good health.

The community feel we need to focus on getting our young people to tayaritja, so they can feel connected to these places from a young age.



Community access trips to tayaritja



“I really want to see more community back out on country with regular trips to the islands occurring. Our island country is beautiful. It’s breathtaking. I wish more people in our community had the opportunity to spend time out on the islands.”

-AM

GOAL:

- Community's access to and use of the islands is increased.

Community gathering on tayaritja both recently and in the 1970s.



FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY

TARGET 7

FAIR HEALTH

Why is financial opportunity a target?

The development of financial opportunities for Aboriginal people and the Aboriginal community is acknowledged as an important area for achieving community aspirations for self sufficiency and self determination.

For long term viability, economic development activities must not harm other important values such as the care and respect for natural and cultural values and the formulation of agreed policies for organisations and individuals aiming to undertake economic activities.

Why is financial opportunity considered to be in fair health?

At present the sustainability of the ongoing care and maintenance of the tayaritja is reliant on Government funding, other financial opportunities to use the skills and knowledge of the Aboriginal People and the natural resources, without exploitation, should be investigated.

- The Aboriginal community financial position is improved through business opportunities

TARGET HEALTH RANKING:

A quick view of how we ranked each target's health. :

Item	Status	Indicator	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
Ecosystems of Significance	Fair	Problem species reduced over time	Increasing	Same	Decreasing	
		Vegetation Condition	Weeds, disease and erosion	Some weeds & erosion	No great weed threat & little erosion	Weed free & no erosion
yula (Mutton Birds)	Poor	Bird Count over 4 consecutive years	Significantly below average	Slightly below average	Average	Above average
Cultural Heritage Sites	Poor	Homestead usable	None	Some	Most	All
		Sheds stabilised	None	Some	Most	All
tunapri	Fair	Oral history recorded from Elders about time on the Islands	None	1 trip organised	1 oral history recorded	More than 1 oral history recorded
		Organised trips (in addition to mutton birding)	None	1 trip organised	2 trips organised but not many young people	2-3 trips organised with lots of young people
Cultural Resources	Fair	Presence and Abundance	None	Present but not abundant		Present and abundant
		Times used	None	Twice	4 times	6 times
Community Use	Fair	Number of organised community visits to islands	None	1 trip attended by community	2 trip attended by community	3 trip attended by community
Financial Opportunity	Fair	Income through business opportunities	None	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
		Number if commercial mutton bird operations	None	Four	Six	Eight
		Number of Aboriginal people employed	None	Six	Eight	Ten

A health ranking table is an easy way to see how the community ranks the health of each target. We have used indicators which show what it takes for targets to be considered in excellent health.



THREATS

WHAT IS A THREAT?

A threat is something that negatively impacts on the health of one of our targets. A threat can be either tangible or intangible. A tangible threat is a thing in the landscape that you can see and touch. Examples of tangible threats are weeds, rubbish, fire and erosion. An intangible threat is something that cannot be seen or touched such as a lack of community interest or loss of tunapri.

UNDERSTANDING THREAT RANKING:

LOW:

- The problem is only likely to slightly harm some or part of the target.
- The problem is likely to be very local and only affect very few places in the project area, and;
- The problem is easily fixable at a fairly low cost and with little effort from workers.

MEDIUM:

- The problem is likely to moderately harm some part of the target.
- The problem is likely to be somewhat local and affect the target at some places in the project area.
- The problem can be fixed with a reasonable commitment of funds and effort from workers.

HIGH:

- The problem is likely to seriously damage or destroy some part of the target.
- The problem is likely to be widespread and affect the target wherever it is in the project area.
- The problem is either really expensive to fix or it's not fixable at all.

THREAT RANKING TABLE:

A quick view on how our community ranks threats

Threats \ Targets	Ecosystems of Significance	Community Use	tunapri	yula (Mutton Birds)	Cultural Heritage Sites	Cultural Resources	Financial Opportunity	Summary Threat Rating
Lack of Interest		High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium		High
tunapri loss		Low	High	High	Medium	Medium		High
Weeds and Pest Plants	High	Low		High				High
Over Harvesting	High			High		Medium		High
Lack of Funding		Medium			High		High	High
Inappropriate Fire	High			Medium				Medium
Phytophthora	Medium							Low
Feral Animals	Low			Low				Low
Rubbish	Low	Medium						Low
Erosion	Medium			Low				Low



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THREATS

“Our cultural resources are important, and they’re important to all of us. So we need to use them sustainably and encourage other people in the community to use them sustainably too. We need to educate people about not getting all gutty with them.”

-VMG

OVER HARVESTING

HIGH

Over harvesting is considered a threat, particularly to yula. However, over harvesting is also considered a problem for other cultural resources such as shell fish for eating and shells for stringing.

OBJECTIVES:

- By 2024 Educational resources are developed to educate community on collecting and using our resources sustainably.

WEEDS AND PEST PLANTS

HIGH

Weeds are considered a threat to the islands, especially to ecosystems of significance. Weeds and pest plants are a threat because of their invasive nature and their impact on environmental values such as rookeries and coastline. If action is not taken to rid the islands of weeds, they have the potential to take over and cause a lot of damage to the landscape. The main weed that poses a threat to the islands is African box-thorn, with the main pest plant being fireweed.



OBJECTIVES:

- By 2024 no weed is a major threat on lungtalanana

- By 2024 increase the capacity to reduce the boxthorn on Babel Island

- By 2024 all mature mirror bush has been controlled on Big Dog Island

- Continue to implement boxthorn management plan for Hummocky

- By 2024 no weed is a major threat on Badger Island

African boxthorn removal on tayaritja.

THREATS

INAPPROPRIATE FIRE:

HIGH

Inappropriate fire (too often and too hot) is considered a threat not only to our environmental values, but also to the historical buildings on the islands. Inappropriate fire has caused a lot of environmental degradation since colonisation. Inappropriate fire leads to outbreaks of fireweed in the rookeries - as has recently happened on Big Dog.

Inappropriate fire can also degrade the tussocks in the rookeries. This means there is nothing on the ground to hold the rookery together, which increases the risk of erosion, weeds and sand blows developing.

OBJECTIVES:

- Each year adhere to existing fire strategy



Impact of the 2014 fires on lungtalanana.

TUNAPRI LOSS

HIGH

tunapri loss is deemed a threat. If we do not work towards creating opportunities for our tunapri to be passed down we risk losing it in generations to come. By passing tunapri down to our younger generations we keep both our country and our tunapri healthy.

OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage and facilitate opportunities for community members to learn about their cultural tunapri

“More access to the islands is what we need. Without increased access to the islands our younger generations won’t feel as connected to these places as they should.”

-RM



Community on Babel Island both contemporary and in the 1930s

THREATS

LACK OF FUNDING

HIGH

Lack of funding is considered a threat to the islands because without adequate funding our ability to complete works as required is severely impacted. Lack of funding also lessens our ability to organise trips for community in addition to birding.

OBJECTIVES:

- Indigenous Protected Area funding has been secured for the islands beyond 2024.

LACK OF INTEREST

MEDIUM

Lack of community interest was identified as a threat, particularly for our younger generations. It was felt that without a proactive approach to engaging our youth with tayaritja, our connection to these places might be lost. This is particularly the case for birding islands, where the community are concerned visits are only undertaken by people during the birding season.

OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage and facilitate opportunities for Community Members to visit tayaritja.



Visiting Babel Island.

EROSION

LOW

Erosion, particularly sand blows, are considered a threat on the islands, especially those that have been fire affected. Erosion is considered a threat to yula and ecosystems of significance because of the impact it has on a rookery.



Planting tussocks to stop erosion.

RUBBISH

LOW

Rubbish is considered a threat to the islands. It is felt that rubbish is often left behind and that more of an effort needs to be made to rid the islands of rubbish at the end of each birding season.

FERAL ANIMALS

LOW

Feral animals are considered a threat because of the impact they have on native animal populations. A particular concern was the impact cats and rats may have on yula numbers. At present the cat populations are low, and therefore the threat is ranked accordingly.



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THREATS

PHYTOPHTHORA CINNAMOMI

LOW

Phytophthora cinnamomi is a threat, particularly to the yamina forests on lungtalanana. Phytophthora cinnamomi has not been seen on many of the other outer islands, but it is present in tayaritja. Given that our land management practices often involve taking machinery from one island to another, there is a chance that the disease could be spread accidentally.



yamina infected with *Phytophthora cinnamomi*

WORKING ON TARGETS AND WORKING ON THREATS.

There are two main approaches used for ensuring a target is healthy. Those approaches are either threat focused or target focused.

A threat focused approach concentrates on managing threats and minimising the impact a threat has on target health. Whereas a target focused approach means our efforts go toward improving the health of the target, by undertaking works which focus directly on improving the target itself.

This can seem confusing at first, because often the desired outcome of the strategies is the same. However, depending on which approach is taken the strategies used will differ significantly.

EXAMPLE

Ecosystems of significance are a target identified by the community as something that should be focused on.

Weeds were considered a major threat to this target.

A threat focused approach would require land management workers to look at how the threat is impacting on a target, and work towards fixing the threat. In this case, that would mean working towards eradicating weeds (that are having an impact on ecosystems of significance). If we think about this in terms of improving the tussock grass rookeries, strategies might include;

- Employing a specialist work crew,
- Embarking on a prolonged campaign of cutting and pasting boxthorn and other weeds on the islands.



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A target focused approach means that workers focus their efforts on improving and/or maintaining the target itself (rather than removing or fixing any particular threats). If we think about this in terms of the yamina forests on lungtalanana, strategies might include;

- Monitoring vegetation health,
- Ensuring people scrub their boots before entering the area,
- Limiting vehicle access to the area.

Why do we bother breaking down our strategies to threat focused or target focused?

Breaking things down in this way helps ensure any work being undertaken is meaningful, because it addresses community concerns. It also allows for the community to come up with achievable strategies that take into account any limitations, such as the skill base of our land management crews at any given time, as well as budgetary restraints, while still allowing us to work towards meeting our aspirations.

Although the latter strategies would have much less of a measurable impact on ecosystem health, they would also cost a lot less money, a lot less manpower and a lot less skill. Yet both of these strategies work toward achieving the same goal – ensuring our ecosystems of significance are maintained in good health.



Action plans and monitoring.

It is important to check that strategies and an action plan are put in place to make sure we are on track to achieving our vision and our goals.

We need to work out how healthy things are today, and continue to measure their health by collecting the kind of information that will allow us to check whether or not our targets are getting healthier (or at least, not getting worse).

This information can be used to help us keep our healthy country plan on track.

Ongoing input from our community is important. An integral part of healthy country planning is for plans to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

[illegible]

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