



Photo: James Donaldson



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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#GULFFUTURE

Our Vision

Northern Gulf Resource Management Group is dedicated to cultivating living landscapes that support local livelihoods for current and future generations.

Company Ethos

The Northern Gulf Resource Management Group is a “bottom up” organisation, in that our ideas and projects emanate from ordinary residents and community members of our region and are carried out by the organisation.

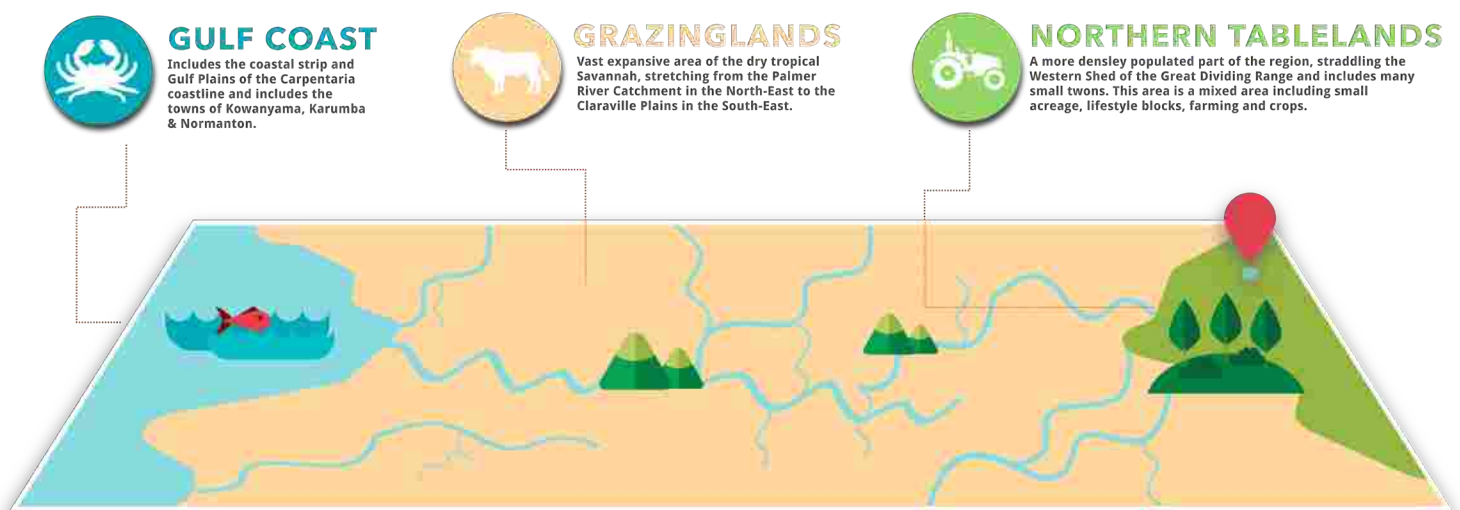
We are a leader, in that we strive forward and blaze trails, we make decisions and get runs on the board in a manner that champions the organisation’s integrity, respect and trust.



Welcome

The Northern Gulf Resource Management Group facilitates community owned outcomes, which balance economic activity, social and cultural interest, and environmental values, within the context of maintaining and managing healthy ecosystem functions.

OUR REGION



GULF COAST
Includes the coastal strip and Gulf Plains of the Carpentaria coastline and includes the towns of Kowanyama, Karumba & Normanton.

GRAZINGLANDS
Vast expansive area of the dry tropical Savannah, stretching from the Palmer River Catchment in the North-East to the Claraville Plains in the South-East.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS
A more densely populated part of the region, straddling the Western Shed of the Great Dividing Range and includes many small towns. This area is a mixed area including small acreage, lifestyle blocks, farming and crops.

Gulf Coast

Land area (km ²)	13,041
Population	2,877
Density (people/100 km ²)	21
% Indigenous	59
Top industry	Fishing

Grazing Lands

Land area (km ²)	179,687
Population	1,990
Density (people/100 km ²)	1
% Indigenous	11
Top industry	Grazing

Northern Tablelands

Land area (km ²)	1,330
Population	3,716
Density (people/km ²)	279
% Indigenous	5
Top industry	Farming

Acknowledgment of Country

The First Peoples of Australia have called the Northern Gulf region home for millennia.

We would like to to acknowledge in particular:

Bar Barrum, Mbabaram, Wokamin, Olkola, Djungan, Muluridji, Mareeba Tribe, Ewamian, Tagalaka, Western Yalanji people, Gkuuthaarn, Kukatj, Kurtijar, Koko Berrin, Yir Yoront and Kunjen peoples.

We acknowledge these groups, the traditional custodians of the land within the Northern Gulf NRM Region, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

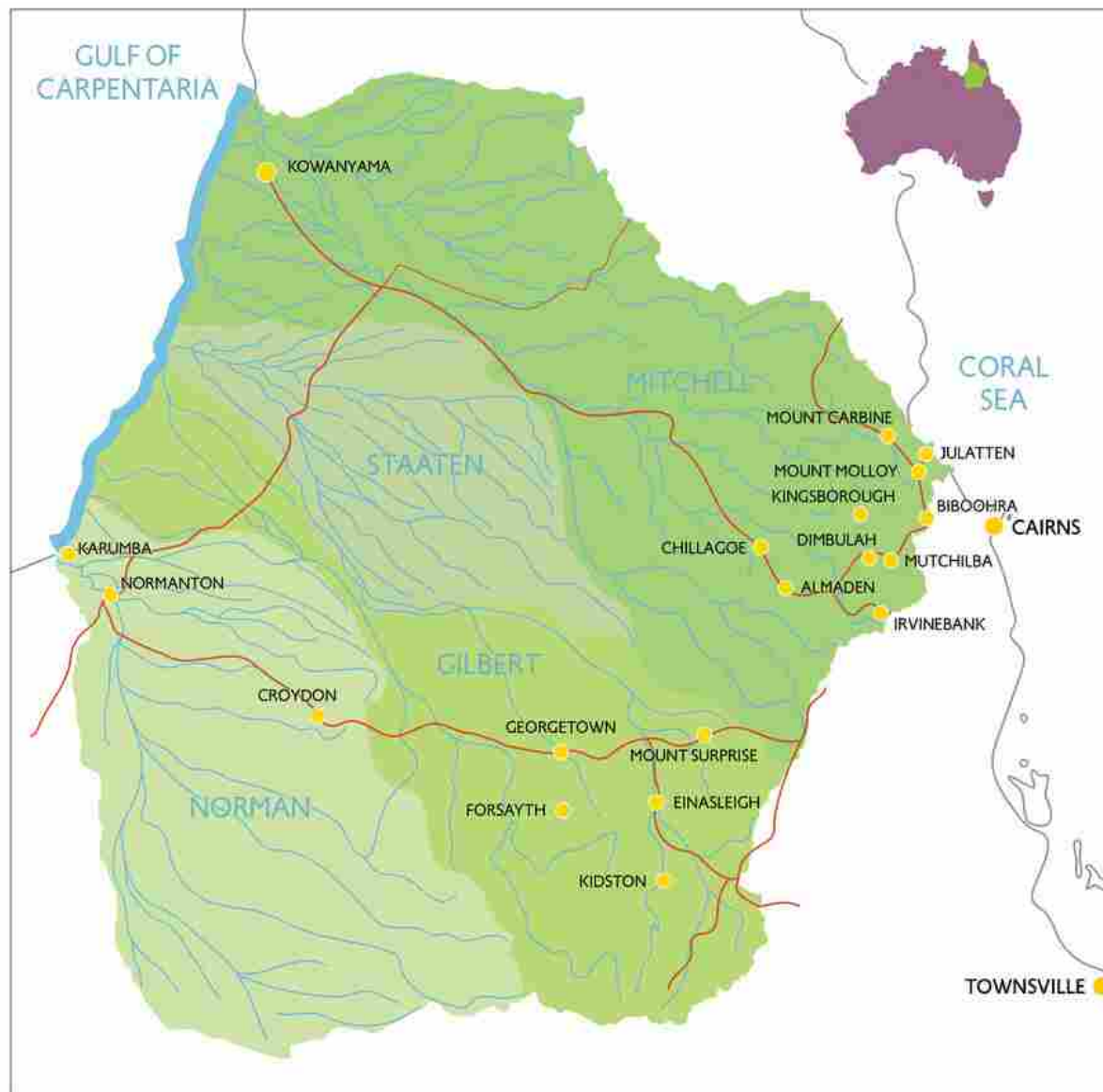


FIGURE 1: The Northern Gulf Region is dominated by dry tropical savanna rangelands, with four river catchments as shown. The region is very sparsely populated, with most small townships clustered to the east.

Chair's Message

Ellen Weber & Riki Gunn



We are pleased to be able to present the 2019–20 Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd (NGRMG) Annual Report highlighting our positive achievements during a very challenging year.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the business of NGRMG and caused us drastically to modify service delivery for the communities across the region. A few activities were put on hold and it is pleasing that most of these are now able to recommence. In spite of the pandemic, the NGRMG team continued to collaborate with partners across the pastoral, First Nations and industry sectors. This highlights the resilience of our team and our ability to innovate rapidly and effectively, with many notable achievements presented in this report.

Following John Brisbin standing down at the 2019 AGM, members welcomed Riki Gunn to the role of Chair. Well-known and respected for her strong connections to the seascapes and communities in the Gulf region, directors were both pleased to have her lead the organisation to August 2020, and also respected her decision to step aside for personal reasons. Riki's huge commitment, great knowledge, professionalism and skills will be sorely missed.

We welcomed a new company Secretary, Bob Frazer to NGRMG. It is impossible to understate the depth of wisdom Bob brings. Formally CEO of Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM and inaugural CEO of Cape York NRM, we are blessed to benefit from the skills and experience he brings.

Our partnership with NQ NRM Alliance remains strong. Thanks to the leadership teams at Cape York NRM, Terrain NRM and Corporate Nature for their commitment to strong partnerships and delivering efficient HRM, financial, IT and WHS systems across the three NRM bodies.

We would like to thank Zoe Williams, CEO of NGRMG and fellow Directors Jess Fealy, Anne Clarke and Brian Muirhead and the remarkable staff for their significant contributions this year. Through Zoe's leadership the organisation has grown in staff and budget. No mean feat, especially during such a challenging year.

The NGRMG Board has worked very hard together, in order to ensure the organisation continues to operate effectively, and considers the risks, challenges and opportunities that will impact or enhance the future of our region.

We are owned and directed by the people of the Northern Gulf. We work for living landscapes that support livelihoods. We would not be here without you.

Our community's support is an essential element in ensuring the success we have working as an NRM group in the Northern Gulf region. To those of you that have contributed by hosting field days on your property, attending workshops and meetings or helping with project planning and delivery, we express our sincere gratitude.

Kind regards,

Handwritten signature of Ellen Weber in black ink.

Ellen Weber

Handwritten signature of Riki Gunn in black ink.

Riki Gunn



CEO's Message

Zoe Williams

Perhaps you have seen the meme where the movie reviewer gives "2020" one star out of five and comments, "I hope the sequel is better!" While it would be easy to dwell on the challenges we faced during the past year I am incredibly proud of the way our staff, board and communities handled the unprecedented year that was.

Together with our NQNR Alliance partners we were able to quickly put together a Pandemic Response Plan to ensure Northern Gulf was able to continue its work in the community, to the greatest extent possible, while protecting our staff and stakeholders from the risks associated with Covid-19. This plan provided confidence to our staff, partners, funders and communities, and enabled us to manage a year of global uncertainty.

Our staff embraced the challenge, continually looking for ways to deliver to our communities despite office closures and restrictions on face-to-face gatherings and travel. During the year we saw new initiatives rolled out, including our "Croaker Conversations" series on Facebook, an increase in web-based delivery and some innovative workshop delivery that enabled us to meet health department guidelines, while still providing our communities with the information and social connection they look to Northern Gulf to provide.

This year we welcomed five new members to the team and commenced a range of exciting new projects, including disaster recovery works for the 2019 monsoon flooding, a further round of the very popular Bush Business program, a study of habitat connectivity in the Upper Mitchell Catchment, improving digital connectivity for disaster readiness, and the Climate Mates service, as well as continuing our biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and community resilience programs. While you might think the events of this year would have caused us to take a step back, I am pleased to say that our staff and board continued to seek out new opportunities to grow the business and enable us provide even greater services to our communities.

We approach 2021 with a dedicated team, a new office, a range of exciting projects and a much welcomed La Nina forecast, and I have every reason to believe that the "sequel" to 2020 will see Northern Gulf and our communities continue to rise to the challenges and deliver on the opportunities the year ahead brings.

Kind regards,

Zoe Williams

Board of Directors Reports

Brian Muirhead

“To say the last 12 months has been challenging would be an understatement. In spite of this we as a Board remain cohesive and committed to a process of continuous reflection, review and improvement, and to lead an efficient and effective organisation that is well placed to deliver the needs of the community that we serve.



Like the landscape and the people within it we remain focused on long term resilience and sustainability. I’m excited to be a part of it”.

Jess Fealy

“This year has been a challenging year and I must say a big congratulations to Zoe and the staff for ensuring the Northern Gulf organisation continues to grow and build respect and value in our community, through the professional programs, events, education and people we bring to the region.



I am so excited about the plans for the future we have in the pipeline and believe our recent office move to the DAF precinct will be an excellent step towards productive, ongoing natural resource management collaboration and partnerships.”

Ann Clarke

“The Northern Gulf region is full of potential and has given me some of my best working career experiences so I was thrilled and deeply honoured to be supported by the members to sit on the Board one year ago. While its been a challenging year for all of us in the North it has also been immensely gratifying to be part of meeting those challenges through Board decisions.



I’ve also enjoyed becoming familiar with the great work of the NGNRM team and the community in climate event preparedness, soil protection and rehabilitation, country school and rural women’s programs as well as providing our farmers with targeted support to meet the challenges of the digital world. I look forward very much to us building on these successes and strongly promoting the unique qualities of our region and our people.”



Building Connectivity & Disaster Management Readiness

The twelve month Building Connectivity and Disaster Management Readiness in the Northern Gulf project focused on improving community capacity and capability to respond to future disasters by working with isolated landholders, local governments and community groups to build greater communications capacity and install private weather and stream flow gauges for integration into a system capable of providing timely flood and fire disaster management information.

Through this project Northern Gulf was able to support landholders to trial technologies that improve safety and productivity on isolated properties. Technologies being tested include a variety of stream gauges and weather stations, mobile boosters and various tools and technologies for internet access.

Many of the landholders partnering in the project were surprised by just how much improvement in digital connectivity they were able to achieve using the technologies that already exist. A key message of the project is that better connectivity may be possible if people explore all the available options.

As the world becomes increasingly reliant on digital communications for everyday interactions it is vital that our rural and regional communities are not left behind. To further explore these issues, Northern Gulf have partnered with James Cook University, Queensland University of Technology, Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and Gulf Cattleman's Association to undertake further investigations into digital connectivity and inclusion in the Northern Gulf region in the 2020-2021 year.





James Donaldson
Biodiversity Officer

Biodiversity

I'm not sure too many people expected this year to turn out how it has but there have obviously been a few spanners been thrown in the works! The onset of COVID prevented or delayed delivery of many field-based and face-to-face deliverables. However, there were a still few highlights along the way.

The Biodiversity Bright Spots project achieved an exciting milestone early this year with the completion of the expression of interest round. As a result of the process, seven projects were assessed and endorsed by the Golden-shouldered Parrot Recovery Team and an independent expert panel. These projects span the Gulf and the Cape and will address key threats to the endangered golden-shouldered parrot across their range. These projects should start rolling out in the next few months.



The Gulf Fire Forum was finally held in September 2020, with presenters and graziers descending on Mount Surprise to learn and share knowledge about indigenous fire management, controlling weeds with fire, arson, legislation and carbon credits. There was plenty of good feedback on the event and we hope it is something we can build on in future.

This year James has been working with an IT guru to build a Property Information Management System (PIMS), supported with funding from the Queensland Community Fund. The PIMS is currently going through a testing phase but will allow us to keep our list of contacts in one place and up to date and track our engagements by area or project so we can better deliver for the landholders in our region.

There have also been some exciting collaborations with conservation groups working on threatened species in the region including Sharks and Rays Australia and the North Queensland Natural History Group.





Remote Food Gardens

Gulf Kids Day celebrated its 10th birthday this year at Croydon, and the occasion called for a special cake. Gulf Kids Day was the brainchild of Erica Hughes, who ten years ago was a Northern Gulf project officer based in Croydon. Who would have thought it would still be going today!

The financial year 19/20 saw Northern Gulf continue to deliver the Remote Food Gardens Network project, with an increase in funding, which meant we were able to engage with and deliver the program to seven schools and one community garden in the Northern Gulf region. This also means we are able to support more students in our region to live healthy lifestyles through the delivery of three Gulf Kids Days in 2020. It is estimated that over two hundred students from our region will attend Gulf Kids Days and we will also increase the number of school food gardens to eight over this period.



Two Gulf Kids Environment Days were held during August 2020 with the theme "Healthy Kids, Happy Kids". They were hosted by Croydon State School on Thursday 13th and Mt Surprise school on the Friday 14th with students from Gulf Christian College, Normanton State school, Croydon, Georgetown, Mt Surprise, and several schools of the air families attending. In total over 110 students enjoyed activities from five different instructors covering healthy lifestyle activities. The Remote Food Gardens continues to support students across our area with a quarterly newsletter supplied to all schools in our region. The Gulf Kids News offers garden support, updates on the schools' gardens, fun activities and competitions for the children.



This year the Georgetown community garden has hosted two "Yoga in the Garden" sessions and a "Mini Health Retreat". Community interest is growing in these healthy lifestyle options, with over a dozen people attending the last yoga workshop.

This project now has three project officers in part-time capacities delivering services to the community. The program will continue to be funded by the North Queensland Primary Health Network in 2020-2021.



Vickie Mylrea,
Indigenous Partnerships Officer

Indigenous Partnerships

The Tagalaka, Reading the Country for Future Generations project, is being delivered through a partnership between Northern Gulf, Tagalaka Aboriginal Corporation and Qld Parks and Wildlife service. This project, funded by the Department of Environment and Science through the Looking after Country program, has supported:

- The employment of a three-person ranger team for a period of three months
- Monitoring of cultural sites
- A draft on-country plan that will support Tagalaka Aboriginal Corporation in their on-country development of projects for the next five years
- The delivery of a Community e-survey that discussed threats to country and future partnerships on country
- Introduction of a Tagalaka newsletter



Northern Gulf, in partnership with Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation, was successful in receiving funding for Reconciliation week. This project is supported by the Etheridge Shire Council and Savannah Guides and was planned for May 2020, but due to Covid-19 the funders have advised that it can be delivered next year, and planning for this is underway. This year's planned NAIDOC morning tea has also been delayed until November due to Covid-19.

Another part of the Indigenous partnerships program is supporting groups in their endeavours to access funding for their environmental and cultural projects, and we continue to offer support, as needed, to develop and manage projects and seek funding.

Covid-19 has created a few speed bumps in Indigenous partnerships with most participants being in the most vulnerable group, which has slowed the areas of communication, but 2021 will hopefully see things pick up.





Community Engagement

Engagement has proved a challenge this year due to COVID-19 restrictions and many community events that we regularly attended were cancelled.

Bush Business started up with zoom sessions comprising of two groups with members from the Dimbulah/Mutchilba area and Etheridge Shire. Our workshops were eventful and sometimes entertaining while battling technology, poor internet, and a four-year old deciding to make scones while her grandmother was on zoom. We've discussed generating an idea, setting goals, steps for setting up a business, and vision boards. We have a diverse group of people ranging from gift shop and hotel owners to creative people and an apiarist. Everyone is looking forward to attending local markets and Christmas events during November and December. Thanks to ANZ Seeds of Renewal Program and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) for giving the Bush Business participants the opportunity to build confidence to grow their hobby or business and to follow their dreams.

Bloom & Prosper Women's event was a welcome event funded and supported by the Commonwealth and State Government, Cape York NRM, Rural Financial Counselling Service, National Drought, and North Queensland Flood Response & Recovery Agency. The event was held at five locations, Mt Molloy, Mt Carbine, Cape Gateway Motel, Mt Uncle, and Mt Surprise over five days to comply with restriction guidelines. Workshop and information sessions covered preparing for a disaster, disaster recovery, awakening your "Inner Boss", stepping up during disaster, personal styling and confidence building, using climate and weather tools, business/produce marketing tools and preparing a disaster management plan.

We also made time for networking and strengthening bonds and friendships. For those who couldn't make the events in person under the changed format we put together and mailed out resources and support packages.

Croaker Conversations proved to be a success and gave Northern Gulf project officers the opportunity to connect and engage with interesting presenters and attract an audience when we could not hold face-to-face events and workshops.

Here's to 2021 being a huge year to attend events, run workshops, and reconnect with our partners and community members.





Marcus Mulholland
NRM Project Officer



DRFA Riparian Recovery Program



Marcus Mulholland joined Northern Gulf in March 2020 bringing with him an array of civil and environmental engineering experience. Since joining the team Marcus has been coordinating works at six gully remediation sites within the Etheridge district, as well as an aquaponics community garden project in partnership with the Tagalaka rangers at Croydon.

Gully Erosion Remediation

In response to the environmental damage caused across Queensland by the monsoon trough in January/February 2019, the Commonwealth and Queensland State governments agreed to jointly fund an Environmental Recovery package valued at \$36 million. Northern Gulf secured some of this funding to help landholders within the region repair their eroded gullies following the intense rainfall event experienced during the trough. These eroded gullies were identified during a large-scale aerial and land-based reconnaissance survey of the region (Stage 1), which was undertaken in October 2019.



By March 2020, works had begun to remediate the damaged gullies (Stage 2). The first task for the engineers was to develop a three-dimensional topographical model of each gully using drone mapping technologies. Specialist engineers then used hydrological computer software to simulate intense rainfall events over each of the gully's topographical model. These hydrological simulations helped the engineers understand the water velocities across the sub-catchments which informed the engineer's gully remediation design.

The engineer's gully remedial designs include a mixture of regrading, reshaping, rock chutes, rock basins, rock check dams and surface treatments. Surface treatments, will include the application of gypsum, mill mud, seed and mulch. The aim of this surface treatment is to encourage the growth of new ground cover grasses that will help protect the gullies against future topsoil losses. To help aid the establishment of the ground cover grasses, cattle will be kept off the remediation areas over the wet season.



Earthworks and construction of the rock structures has now commenced, with completion of works schedule to finish before the onset of the heavy rains approaching in the later months of 2020.

Croydon Community Aquaponics Garden

Aquaponics Community Garden

Northern Gulf, in partnership with Tagalaka Aboriginal Corporation are undertaking a community-based aquaponics garden project in Croydon. The objective of this project is to help the Croydon community build disaster recovery and resilience by addressing food security issues. When the highways to Croydon are cut off by floodwaters, so too are the food supply chains into Croydon. By producing fruit, vegetables, herbs and fish, an aquaponics garden offers a fantastic alternative food supply to that which is normally transported into town from wholesale food suppliers.



A food security consultant has also been engaged to help the community develop a food security strategy. This will further reinforce the Croydon community's disaster preparedness and recovery.



Before work could begin building the aquaponics system Northern Gulf staff and the Tagalaka Rangers had to construct a 15m long shade house. Although the ground was rock hard, the rangers employed the use of a motorised picket driver to penetrate the ground and install the pickets ready for the poly pipe arches of the shade house. Soon the shade house took shape and was ready to house the aquaponics system.

Once the shade house was complete, it was time for the 2 day 'build and learn' aquaponics workshops. These training workshops were hosted by Rod Ingersoll, an aquaponics specialist from Cairns with three decades of aquaponics project experience. Training included both practical & theoretical elements, with building undertaken in the mornings before moving into the air conditioning for the theory components.

Participants were required to learn everything necessary to build and maintain an aquaponics system including system setup, care & maintenance, fish & vegetable selection and general food security awareness. James Beasley from Croydon has now been employed by the NGRMG to oversee the day to day monitoring and maintenance of the system, which will produce fresh fruit, vegetable and throughout the year and into the future.





Scott Middleton,
Land Protection Officer

DRFA Weed and Pest Animals Program

Following the major flood event across the North West Queensland region during February 2019, the Federal and Queensland Governments established a joint funding response (Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements) to direct funding assistance toward the management of the increased biosecurity threat associated with weed and pest animal populations across flood affected areas.

The Northern Gulf Resource Management Group (NGRMG) was successful in sourcing funding under the Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements program to deliver strategic weed and pest animal projects across flood effected areas of the Carpentaria Shire Council Local Government Area over a two-year period (2019 – 2021).

Recently, additional funding has been released under Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements to extend existing programs in the Carpentaria Shire and expand projects into other flood affected areas including the Croydon and Etheridge Shire council Local Government Areas.

To date, the DRFA program has resulted in the extensive engagement of flood effected landholders within the Carpentaria Shire which has enabled the development of twelve projects targeting new or emerging invasive pest plants posing “significant” risk of spread and adverse impacts across sixteen landholdings across the Shire. Funding has also enabled support for the delivery of invasive pest animal control programs with funding allocated to aerial pig shooting and 1080 wild dog baiting across the Shire.



Existing projects under the DRFA invasive pest projects across the Carpentaria Shire include:

- Bellyache bush control in the Norman, Morning and Smithburn River Catchments
- Rubber vine control across the Flinders and Norman River catchment overflow area of the Mitchell grass plains
- Mesquite control in the Leichhardt River Catchment
- Chinese apple control in the upper Flinders (Saxby) River Catchment
- Rubber vine control at the historical Burke and Wills Camp 119 site
- Control of invasive weed communities across flood out areas surrounding the townships of Normanton and Karumba
- Aerial Pig Shooting
- Wild Dog 1080 baiting programs
- Surveillance, education, and awareness during the project duration to define new invasive weed incursions and promote best practice management of existing and emerging weeds of local significance



With the recent announcement of additional DRFA program funding for NGRMG, flood affected landholders across the Croydon and Etheridge Shires will be engaged over coming months for the development of additional invasive weed projects targeting new or emerging Water hyacinth, Rubber vine and Chinese apple incursions.

Prickly Acacia Project

Following the major flood event of February 2019 the Federal Government (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment) has provided funding for Prickly Acacia control to the Northern Queensland Flood Recovery program to be delivered over five years 2019-2024 across three NRM regions – Desert Channels Queensland, Southern Gulf NRM and Northern Gulf Resource Management Group.

The aim of the NGRMG funding component is to reduce the risk of prickly Acacia to the Northern cattle industry through supporting landholder identification, mapping and control of new or isolated Prickly Acacia incursions throughout the Northern Gulf region.

Landholders are encouraged to contact NGRMG to confirm the identification of Prickly Acacia and access funding for Prickly Acacia control and support services.





Sally Fileds
Intensive Agricultural Officer



Healthy Farming Futures Program

The Healthy Farming Futures project has just entered its third year and aims to work with farmers to improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation.

The major achievements of this project include:

- Increasing awareness and adoption of land management practices through workshops and one on one agronomic technical interactions
- Soil and leaf tests to guide farmers on how to read their soil tests and to better inform on farm nutrition decisions
- Tracking soil carbon levels as a tool to evaluate increases in soil carbon and water holding capacity over time
- Field days, workshops and seminars attended by farmers to raise awareness and support the adoption of recommended soil management practices, including hosting Integrity Soils last December, and Brian Wehlburg from Inside Outside Management for a Savory Institute Holistic Land Management Introduction course in June
- Building numbers in the Healthy Soil, Healthy Plants, Healthy People farmer peer group network to keep local farmers informed on upcoming events, programs and all things soil
- Supporting local growers to participate in the Wet Tropics Soil group that is run by farmers for farmers. This is important as this group will continue past the life of the current NRM soil health programs as the regional farmer hub for soil regeneration
- Building a regenerative agriculture library with tools that can be borrowed by land holders to aid in the transition of practice change on farm



We have been collaborating with Terrain NRMs RALF and Digging Deeping co-ordinator to ensure continuity of events, sharing of resources and information and cross promotion of NQ Alliance soil events to our soil health networks, so that farmers have the opportunity to attend a broad range of events and have access to multiple visiting experts, building their soil health knowledge and own network to learn from each other.



In 2020 we were also successful in securing two Smart Farms Small Grants to support our regions farmers work in building soil health and on farm diversity. This will see a number of new programs around soil health, worm farming, multispecies plantings and pollinator insects delivered over the coming year.

The Healthy Farming Futures program is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment through the Regional Land Partnerships.

Dan Wingett

Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator



Regional Land Partnership

Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator

The Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) position is funded through the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The RALF supports landholders, industry and community groups to adopt new and innovative sustainable agriculture practices.

Northern Gulf's RALF Dan Wingett has been busy assisting fellow project officers to deliver and disseminate information about our projects and is currently engaged with a number of project partners, community groups and stakeholders in the region.

Dan has been actively involved in the final roll out of ag-tech equipment for Northern Gulf's Building Connectivity network participants and you will find him travelling around the Gulf country equipping graziers with new technologies and advice on improving remote communications.

The Upper Mitchell River Catchment Rehabilitation project has been another project where Dan has helped coordinate and plan for strategic development of future priority impact areas with fellow colleagues.

Northern Gulf was successful in receiving a grant from the Heywire program and RALF



Dan Wingett spent a week with a group of students from Mareeba State High School and Dimbulah High School. The week consisted of the children spending a few days being trained in media studies and videography and then excursions to a local farm and café for filming the Paddock to Plate story.

Dan has been an active contact for our landholders when needing assistance with funding applications and property management planning. Whilst attending events this year such as workshops for the Land Restoration Fund, Northern Gulf's Holistic Management workshop, Compost Tea field day and Gulf Fire Forum, Dan has been an integral part of conversations leading to the development of new projects in the region.



Natural Resources Investment Program (NRIP)

As part of the Natural Resources Investment Program (NRIP) Gulf Rivers Riparian Improvement Project, Dan Wingett our NRM Project Officer engaged with five local stations to develop and implement projects that improve riparian condition along the Einasleigh River and its tributaries.

The Gulf Rivers Riparian Improvement Project has primary outcomes to improve native vegetation in riparian zones and reduce sediment running into the Gulf River Catchments. Project works have entailed fencing off riparian zones and managing livestock grazing and weed distributions, installing alternate watering points away from riparian zones to reduce grazing pressure on sensitive riverine areas and the control of feral animals.

These projects work together to improve native vegetation, improve water quality, stabilise riverbanks to control erosion and promote better ground cover for soil stability resulting in less sediment run off.

Round two of the NRIP funding started in July 2020 and Dan has been working with four more properties to develop projects that adhere to the primary outcomes.

We are on our way to have two projects finished by December 31 and they both include fencing of riparian zones, installation of off-stream watering points for livestock and strategic weed control for containment and eradication.





Rangelands Projects

E-Beef Smart Farming Project

The E-Beef Smart Farming Project is enabling graziers in the Northern Gulf to investigate, implement and adopt new and emerging technologies on their properties. The aim of the project is to utilise these new tools to assist producers to implement grazing best management practice by demonstrating how timely management decisions can enhance pastures, groundcover, soils, land conditions, business profitability and adaptability. This project brings together three regional NRM organisations from across the Queensland rangelands (Desert Channels Queensland, Southern Gulf NRM and NGRMG) along with the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries (DAF).

Now in its second year, the E-Beef Project is focused on actuating real change on the Smart Farm Demonstration Properties that are at the centre of the project. In the Northern Gulf region, Mt Surprise Station (Mt Surprise) and Scardons Hill Station (Almaden) represent the project's Smart Farms, which utilise Walk-over-Weighing units and Satellite Data Imagery to make more informed decisions about their cattle and land. The project has also focused on strengthening the connections between graziers that make up the Innovation Hubs in the program; these act as producer groups where locally likeminded graziers can interact, share ideas, and pool their resources and skills to overcome challenges in their region.

While COVID-19 presented many challenges to the E-Beef Project, its staff and its producer participants, it was exciting to see the progress that was achieved throughout 2020.

The highlights include:

- Smart Farms becoming more comfortable and capable with their Walk-over-Weigh units
- The Producer Groups are building on their relationships with each other and the project staff. These producers have immediate access to project information and outcomes, along with new opportunities to network with one another and the broader grazing community
- Graziers taking part in the project's producer groups have had opportunities to trial new and emerging technologies in 2020, including remote water sensors, GPS ear tags, virtual fencing collars, and more
- Workshops and upskilling opportunities for producer groups are an important part of the project, and producers were given the opportunity to attend a Reproscan Pregnancy Testing course this year as part of the project's activities
- Under COVID-19 restrictions the E-Beef Project shifted the communications component of the project in 2020 to digital events, with the E-Beef Online Series acting as the centrepiece. This four-part series saw hundreds of people from all Australia join the project team online to hear all about new and emerging tools in the grazing industry



The project team is looking forward to 2021 and is eager to assist graziers in becoming more productive and profitable, whilst caring for their land and contributing to a healthy regional community.

De-risking Broadacre Cropping Options for Northern Queensland

This project aims to investigate the opportunities and challenges involved in broadacre cropping for graziers in the Northern Gulf region. It is an exciting opportunity to investigate the potential for graziers to diversify their revenue streams or to improve animal production outcomes by integrating cropping into their enterprise. The project team brings together an array of skills and backgrounds coordinated by the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA). In a partnership between the University of Queensland (UQ-QAAFI), graziers in the Northern Gulf, Seeds Australia, Elders and AgForce, we are attempting to:

- Identify best adapted maize, grain, and forage sorghum cultivars, cropping systems and agronomic practices for the Northern Gulf region;
- Identify optimum combinations of hybrid characteristics likely to confer adaptation to Northern Queensland environments and markets; and
- Communicate project outputs with producers and agribusinesses

In January-February 2020 the project team planted it's first trial under the project, consisting of mostly sorghum but with other crops also. The two trial sites for the project were Prestwood Station and Strathmore Station, both of which are west of Georgetown in the Etheridge Shire. At each site the project conducts a series of experiments that evaluate key factors such as crop traits, nutrition, cropping systems, and so on. Of key importance to the project is how best to combine these factors to improve water use efficiency in mixed cropping and grazing systems, especially in low rainfall seasons.

Following a disappointing 2019-2020 wet season in the region, the production at each site was low. The project team rigorously monitored and documented crop performance throughout the growing season. The findings from these assessments has been used to plan and prepare for the upcoming wet season where we hope to have more success in total crop output. The promising climate forecasts for the 2020-2021 wet season offers the perfect opportunity to learn from this years planting, and to generate insights on the cropping potential of land in the Gilbert River catchment. The highly weathered soils in

the Gilbert catchment are susceptible to surface crusting, compaction, sub-soil saline sodality, erosion, acidification and have unknown water holding capacity.

As we approach the end of 2020, the project team will begin preparations for planting in early 2021. The team is optimistic that we can build on the learnings of this year and continue to develop a better understanding of what is needed to successfully integrate cropping options in Northern Queensland grazing enterprises.





GrazingFutures

The GrazingFutures program is an ongoing effort to support the resilience of grazing businesses by assisting graziers to recover from extreme climate events and to educate and better equip them so that they are more prepared to manage similar events in the future. The project is funded through the Drought & Climate Adaptation Program (DCAP) and focuses on developing strong partnerships between regional NRM organisations and the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries (DAF). Across the Northern Gulf in 2020 the GrazingFutures project has helped NGRMG to undertake activities and deliver opportunities that would not otherwise be available. Together with Beef Extension staff from DAF, Northern Gulf Resource Management Group organised the following:

- **Wet season spelling plots in the gulf:** Wet season spelling is the practice of removing cattle from a paddock during the growing season and is one of the most effective management tools that graziers have for looking after their land. As part of the GrazingFutures project, NGRMG and DAF installed two sites in the Mt Surprise region. These sites will be monitored at least twice a year moving forward, providing an objective demonstration of the benefits of wet season spelling in terms of land condition and overall pasture productivity.

- **Soil sampling for graziers:** The GrazingFutures program allows NGRMG staff to conduct activities that can help graziers in their decision-making moving forward. Soil sampling provides critical information to graziers. Soil sampling is important to determine soil texture and properties, detecting the soil nutrients that are present in the soil and therefore showing its capacity to grow and sustain healthy pastures. Soil samples also help graziers to develop accurate supplementation regimes that directly respond to the shortcomings of their soil profile.

- **The Leucaena Network Conference:** In September 2020, The Leucaena Network Conference was held in Townsville. Thanks to the GrazingFutures program, four graziers from the Northern Gulf region were able to attend the event. The conference explored new and dynamic opportunities for the Leucaena industry, from the development of new varieties to diversification and value adding in the use of the legume. It was a fantastic chance for some of our most remote landholders to attend an industry leading event, to network with other graziers from around the state, and to hear from some of the leading researchers in the industry.

The GrazingFutures program was limited in the activities that it could deliver throughout the COVID-19 crises. As we move into 2021, there are plans to facilitate a number of local events for the grazing community of the Northern Gulf.





Climate Mates Program

In 2020 NGRMG joined the Northern Australian Climate Program (NACP) – a program that aims to help the grazing industry better manage drought and climate risks through a range of research, development and extension activities. ‘Climate Mates’ are individuals selected for their knowledge of the industry and their capacity to network and communicate with producers in key red meat regions of Northern Australia.

They aim to improve the use of weather and climate forecasts through training and engaging with graziers, advisors and supporting the broader extension team across northern Australia.

Throughout the year, NGRMG’s Climate Mate, John McLaughlin has provided a variety of services to graziers and industry stakeholders throughout the region. This has involved tailored climate outlooks and updates that provide information specific to the region. Reports that are typically delivered as Northern Australian Updates are refined to provide accurate information that reflects the needs of graziers in the local community.



Activities have also involved one-on-one grazer support to producers across the region. These personal sessions allow graziers to learn climate skills and tools at their own pace and gives them the opportunity to guide the conversation in the direction that is most suitable to their needs. NGRMG hopes that graziers will continue to make use of this personalised service moving into 2021.

Along with information updates and 1-on-1 support, NGRMG has delivered a number of workshop opportunities under the Climate Mates Program. This has involved webinar opportunities for graziers to jump online and listen to presentations from scientists at the University of Southern Queensland’s Centre of Applied Climate Sciences. This project also provided the unique opportunity for Project Officers at NGRMG to undertake a tailored Extension Officer Climate Training session in September 2020, in Mareeba. This half-day event brought together eight staff from NRGMG who are either directly involved in grazing, or whose work regularly brings them into partnership with graziers and the broader industry.

At this event, staff were upskilled on the drivers of climate in the Northern Gulf region and were able to put into practice their learnings to explore what we might experience during the upcoming wet season.

With COVID-19 restrictions severely limited the ability for NGRMG to deliver face-to-face events in 2020, staff are eager to get out and about in 2021 to deliver more climate information and training to the Northern Gulf community.



Board Report

Directors for the period from 1st July 2019 to 30 June 2020:

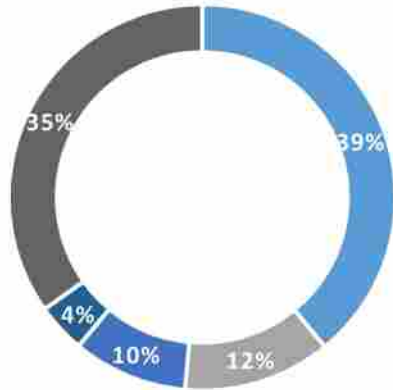
- John Brisbin (Chair) – finished Term on 26 November 2019
- Erica (Riki) Gunn (Chair)
- Ellen Weber
- Jessica Fealy
- Brian Muirhead
- Anne Clarke – started Term on 26 November 2019

Meeting Attendance

Name	No. of eligible meetings	No. attended
John Brisbin	4	4
Erica (Riki) Gunn (Chair)	11	11
Ellen Weber	11	10
Jessica Fealy	11	11
Brian Muirhead	11	10
Anne Clarke	7	7

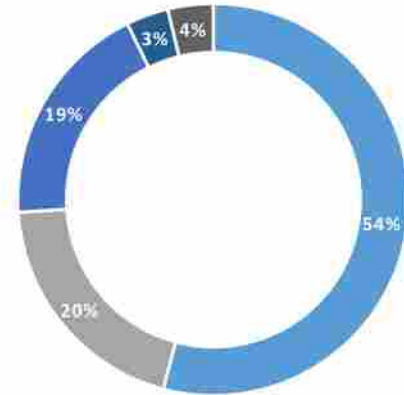
Financial Performance

Expenses by Type - FY2020



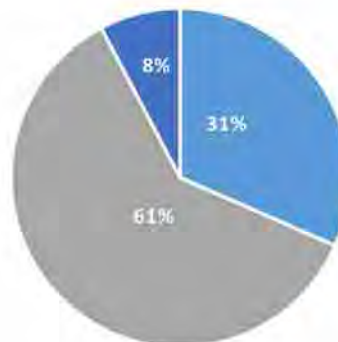
- Employment Expenses
- Non Project Overheads
- Direct Project Costs
- General Admin Expenses
- Board and Governance Expenses

Income by Project Type - FY2020



- Environment
- Agriculture
- Community
- Indigenous Partnerships
- Education

Income by Source - FY2020



- Commonwealth Government
- Queensland Government
- Other

INCOME HISTORY





