

2018 - 2019

# ANNUAL REPORT

Bigambul Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC)

2018



**BIGAMBUL**

Native Title Aboriginal Corporation  
BNTAC

## ACRONYMS

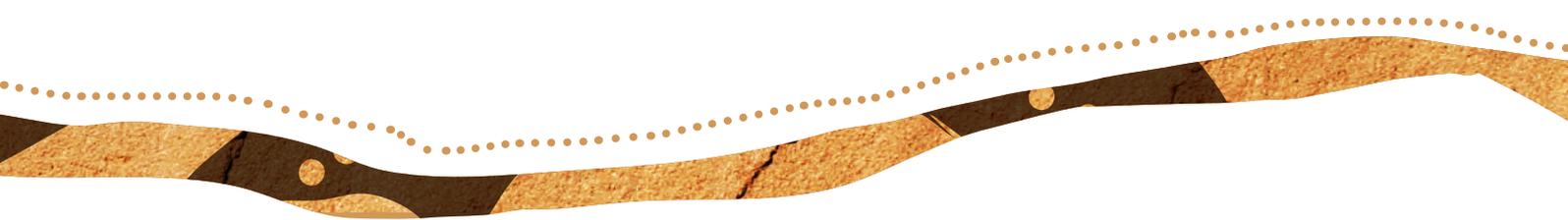
ARTC	Australian Rail Track Corporation – Inland Rail
AWA	Aboriginal Waterways Assessment
BCTE	Bigambul Centre for Training Excellence
BNTAC	Bigambul Native Title Aboriginal Corporation
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plans
GST	Goods and Services Tax
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreements
KRA	Key Result Areas
NBAN	Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
PBI	Public Benevolent Institute
QSNTS	Queensland South Native Title Services
RNTBC	Recognised Native Title Body Corporate
RTN	Rights to Negotiate
ToR	Terms of Reference



**BIGAMBUL**

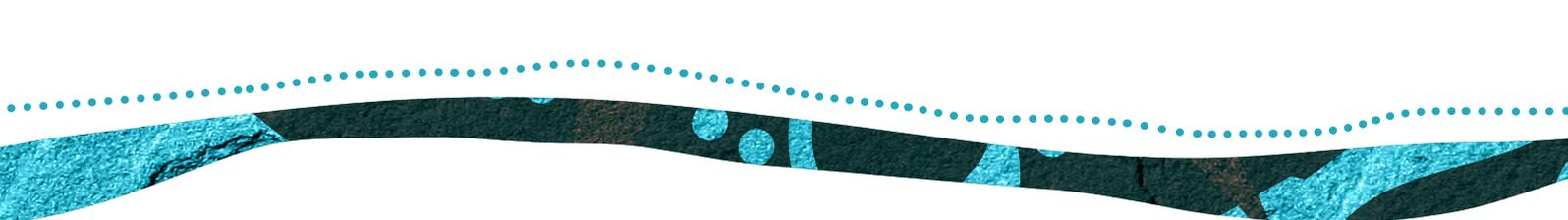
Native Title Aboriginal Corporation

• BNTAC •



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## ● Acknowledgements

Bigambul Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC) would like to recognise and acknowledge the support and contribution of our Members and Directors, and pay our respects to Bigambul Elders – past present and emerging.

We would also like to acknowledge our proponents and key funders, including:

- Shell Group – Queensland Gas Company (QGC)
- Australian Rail Track Corporation – Inland Rail
- Origin Energy
- Hutchinson Builders
- Australian Government
- Queensland State Government
- Queensland South Native Title Services

BNTAC would like to advise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers that this report may contain images of deceased Aboriginal persons.

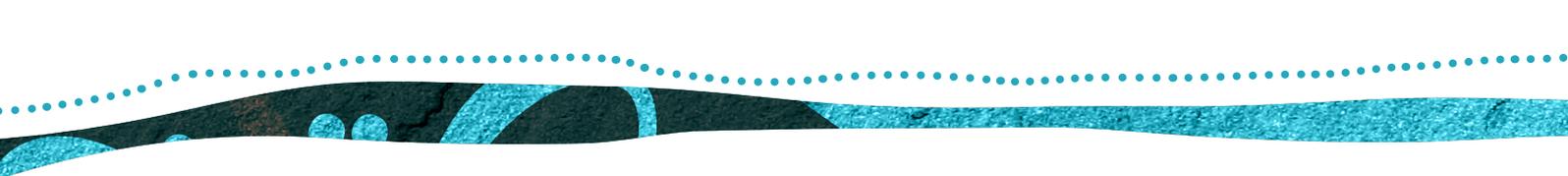
Please note the term 'Aboriginal' has been used with ultimate respect throughout this document; to refer to Bigambul people specifically.

The terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and 'Indigenous' have also been used in the report with ultimate respect, in reference to the broader Queensland and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

## ● Contact Details

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## ● Overview

### WHO WE ARE

Bigambul Native Title Aboriginal Corporation represents our People in native title and cultural heritage matters, managing our rights and interests for the benefit of the whole community.

Our purpose is to honour, identify and occupy our continuous connection to country through our ancestors and with our Elders so we can teach and grow our young people – to lay the groundwork for a sustainable and thriving Bigambul nation. This supports our Vision of: cultural identity; leadership; self-determination; economic independence.

Although a young organisation, BNTAC has directed significant efforts toward developing internal capacity

and capability; and setting in place rigorous policies, procedures and processes; to lead by an example as a well governed, high quality and legislatively compliant Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC).

Since our recent establishment and achieving Consent Determination in 2016, BNTAC has already achieved a demonstrated track record in project and funding management and acquittals and is in a position of strength to ensure the effective oversight, monitoring and governance of the organisation moving forward.

## ● Our Vision | Our Purpose

### OUR VISION

To preserve pride through cultural identity and see Bigambul people become resilient, strong and empowered through leadership, knowledge and education that encapsulates self-determination, economic prosperity and independence.

### OUR PURPOSE

We honour, identify and occupy Our continuous connection to country through our Ancestors and with Our Elders so we can teach and grow Our future generations and lay the foundations for a sustainable and thriving Bigambul nation.



## ● Our Philosophies and Values

### OUR PHILOSOPHIES

Our corporate focus is guided by the following philosophies.

#### **Cultural identity**

The rich cultural practices, knowledge systems and cultural expressions of Bigambul peoples are sources of great strengths and keeping Bigambul culture thriving is a necessary part of the solution to broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage in Australia.

#### **Leadership**

Through leadership, knowledge transfer and establishment of effective corporate governance, solid values and principles to create empowerment and resilience, will continually enhance sustainability of the Bigambul Nation.

#### **Self Determination**

Self-determination as an ongoing process which ensures the continuance of Our people's participation in decision-making and control over Our own destiny as a Bigambul Nation.

#### **Economic Independence**

We believe knowledge is power and through innovative partnerships and economic participation Our collective primary aim is improving opportunities for the social and emotional wellbeing of Bigambul people.

### OUR VALUES

#### **Cultural authority**

We are strong in our cultural identity and knowledge

#### **Respect**

We are committed to working together and building effective and sustainable partnerships;

#### **Honesty**

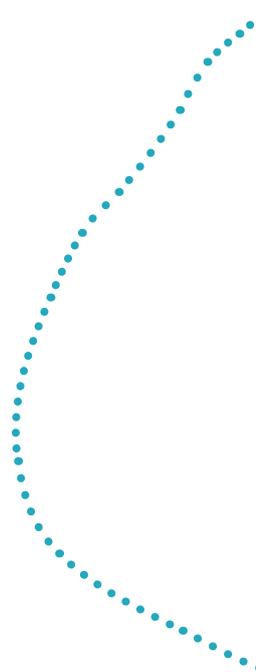
We demonstrate integrity and transparency in our actions;

#### **Trust**

We have faith in our elders, our communities and each other;

#### **Vision**

We display understanding to achieve independence for our people.



## ● Our Lands

Bigambul country is located in South West Queensland, spanning the Queensland and New South Wales borders and centred on the riverine area between Macintyre and Weir rivers.

The current boundary is defined in part by the Macintyre River in the south (which becomes the Barwon River at its junction with the Weir River), the Macintyre Brook, and with the Moonie River in the west. In the north, it extends to encompass Western Creek (a tributary of the Weir River) and in the east, the boundary falls short of Cecil Plains, Millmerran, Inglewood, Beebo and Texas. Goondiwindi is the largest town in the claim area.

Our country is neighbored in the north by the Barunggam, and by the land associated with the Mandandanji to the north-west. In the south-east at Beebo and Texas lies a transitional boundary zone in which Bigambul and Gambuwal/Kammbuwal people likely share interests, and to the north-east lies Gabel country. The southern extent of Bigambul country abuts Kamilaroi country / Gommeroi and the south-western corner meets Yuwaalaraay country.

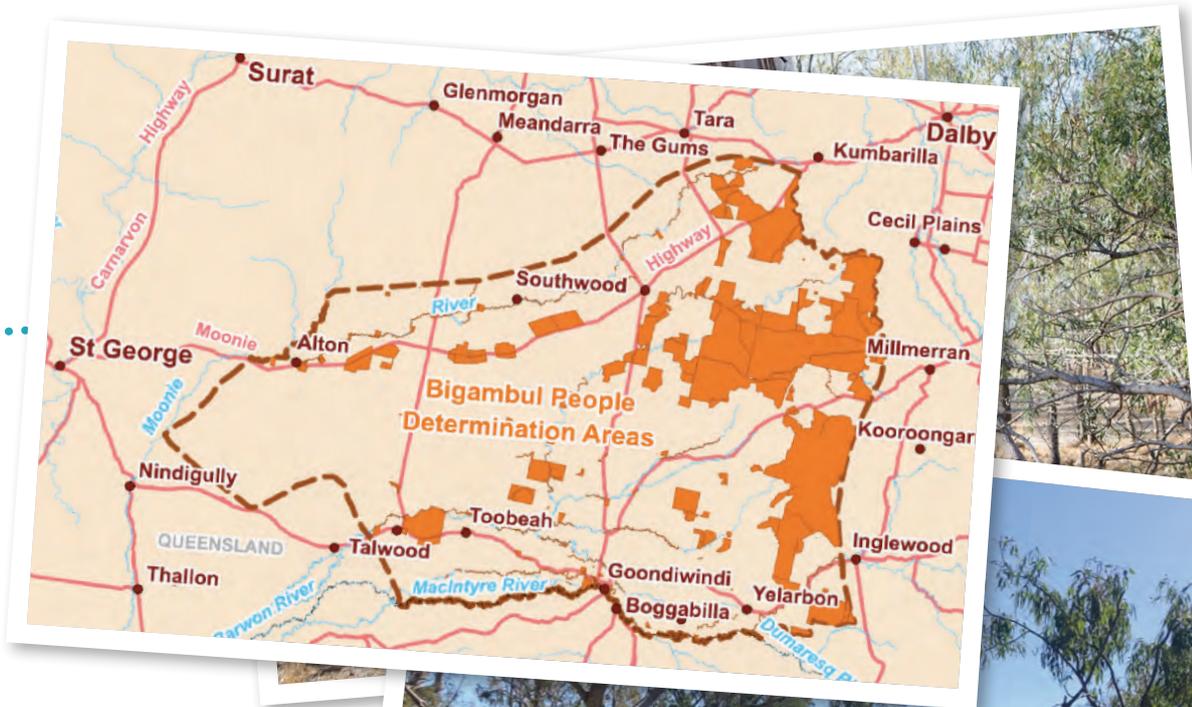


Figure 1. Bigambul Determination Area



## ● Key Result Areas

BNTAC's current Key Result Areas (KRA's) include:

- i. Maintain rigorous corporate governance practices that are culturally inclusive, accountable and transparent.
- ii. Invest in the preservation and advancement of historical and traditional lands, cultural knowledge and practices and promote Bigambul connection to country;
- iii. Leverage commercial opportunities to build the economic strength of the Bigambul people;
- iv. Build the skills and capacity of Bigambul people through expanded training opportunities;
- v. Bolster and maintain BNTAC capabilities in moving toward self-sufficiency.

The following table summarises key strategic priorities and performance measures that fall under these broad KRA's for the PBC.

**MAINTAIN rigorous corporate governance practices that are culturally inclusive, accountable and transparent**

**PRIORITY**

**Maintain effective governance, operational performance standards and financial stability.**

### **Performance Measures**

- Finances, assets, investments, debts, properties and facilities are ethically managed in compliance with the Regulatory and Statutory obligations
- Code of Conduct, corporate policies and procedures ensure: responsible corporate behaviour; accountable and transparent decision making; effective budgeting, accounting, auditing, financial reporting; effective management of risk and opportunity; effective performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and development and implementation of Board Charter and Members Charter

**PRIORITY**

**Maintain proficient planning investment and delivery strategies and procedures**

### **Performance Measures**

- Planning, investment and delivery framework includes: Corporate Plan; Three-Year Business Plan (aligned to Board Member terms of appointment); Annual Operational Plans; Risk Mitigation Strategy; Communication Strategy; Investment Strategy.
- Social, cultural, education, commercial business and economic development and land acquisition strategies
- Establish and maintain a constant and strong advocacy and representation

**INVEST in the preservation and advancement of historical and traditional lands, cultural knowledge and practices and promote Bigambul connection to country**

**PRIORITY** : **Develop and maintain a Bigambul Cultural Immersion Program**

**Performance Measures**

- Board to establish protocols and rules that demonstrate respect for Bigambul lore and cultural practice, to inform a Bigambul Cultural Immersion Program
- All government and industry employees participate in compulsory cultural immersion programs prior to commencement of any major project work conducted

**PRIORITY** : **Strengthen Apical Ancestor family group connections to traditional land, kinship system, lore, culture, customs and values.**

**Performance Measures**

- Ancient cultural footprints, stories and customs applicable to sacred sites and places of significance are restored and preserved.
- All Apical Ancestor families have their family tree formally developed and recorded
- Design a Bigambul language program that promote Bigambul language in schools, all levels of Government through Elders sharing stories and experiences

**PRIORITY** : **Maintain a Cultural Heritage, Land and Environment Rehabilitation and Preservation Policy and Management Plan**

**Performance Measure**

- All major projects conducted within the Bigambul Nation comply with our Cultural Heritage, Land and Environment Policy and Management Plan standards and conditions and include strategies and resources to ensure the effective rehabilitation and preservation of all areas adversely affected.

**PRIORITY** : **Maintain a Bigambul Cultural Heritage Register**

**Performance Measure**

- Maintain an up-to-date Register and record of physical locations and significant sacred and other important sites, song lines and stories within the Bigambul Nation.

## ● Key Result Areas (continued)

**LEVERAGE commercial opportunities to build the economic strength of the Bigambul people.**

### PRIORITY

**Develop and maintain sustainable, profitable and viable commercial businesses**

#### Performance Measures

- Design a long-term (10year) economic development strategy that leverages benefits from ILUAs, CHMPs and other agreements, seeks joint ventures with commercial enterprises and enter into partnerships with governments to boost Bigambul businesses and employment
- Investigate and access opportunities for economic development and employment through government programs (land and water management, monitoring and regeneration of country, Rangers program, Murray Darling Basin Commission)

**BUILD the skills and capacity of Bigambul people through expanded training opportunities**

### PRIORITY

**Maximise economic participate for our people by ensuring access to quality vocational training and pursuit of real jobs and business opportunities from all project developments.**

#### Performance Measures

- Design and development of the business model of the proposed Bigambul Centre for Training Excellence.
- Establishment of partnerships and joint ventures to support and build capabilities of the Bigambul Centre for Training Excellence
- Building the skills and capacities of Bigambul people through training programs on country connected with schools, vocational training and Tertiary institutions, linked to employment outcomes

**BOLSTER and maintain BNTAC capabilities in moving toward self-sufficiency through social enterprise and grant funding**

**PRIORITY**

**Working in productive partnerships with government agencies and industry proponents who are equally committed to delivering opportunities for Our people from all project developments within the Bigambul Nation's boundaries.**

**Performance Measures**

- Secure Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C) Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) funding for capacity building, training, management systems and economic development over 2018-2020
- Secure funding from Proponents, State and Federal Governments
- Secure joint ventures with Philanthropic Organisations
- New and innovative business opportunities can be developed in response to Trust and individual, family or group business interest and aspirations
- Develop and maintain a Bigambul Small Business Certification Program



# REPORTS

## ● Chairperson's Report

As Chairperson of Bigambul Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC), I am very pleased to present the 2018/2019 Annual Report. The past year has seen significant developments for the PBC; and I would like to take the opportunity to thank and acknowledge my fellow Directors for their commitment and efforts; as well as recognise the ongoing work and dedication of our Executive Director in driving the organisation's corporate and operational activities.

The outcomes of this report demonstrate sustained efforts on behalf of BNTAC since achieving Native Title Determination in 2016, to focus energies toward developing our internal capabilities, to then grow and develop our work program – whilst also ensuring we are working in line with the needs, priorities and aspirations of Our people.

Particular focus has been attributed toward undertaking governance reform and improvement measures; to ensure both best practice as well as effective and united leadership for our nation. The journey to Determination for our Nation was not without its challenges and divisions; and a key objective for BNTAC is now actively working to ensure good, quality and effective leadership that is inclusive and representative of Our peoples' voice, wants, needs and aspirations. This is fundamental to achieving our united Vision for our nation.

In addition to targeting efforts and energies toward strengthening governance and leadership, other key operational highlights for the period have included:

- Development of a Bigambul Cultural Immersion Program
- Development a Cultural Heritage Register for ongoing maintenance
- Program to develop a Cultural Heritage, Land & Environment Rehabilitation and Preservation Policy and Management Plan

In terms of new projects commenced and/or confirmed during 2018/2019, it gives me great pleasure to report significant developments in this space. During the financial year, BNTAC received confirmation of our successful application for funding to QGC through the Supporting Stronger First Nations Program, for the following projects:

- The BNTAC 2019 Youth Summit – to be held September 27-October 1, 2019 in Goondiwindi
- The Bigambul 3year Determination Celebration – to be held following the Youth Summit between end of 2019 and March 2020
- Part one of the Bigambul Language Preservation Program

Further to the latter, it also gives me great pleasure to report that BNTAC has also been advised of our successful application to the Commonwealth's Indigenous Languages and Arts Program, which will support the second component to our language preservation program – and in particular the production and publication of both written and audio-visual language and cultural resources.

It is also noteworthy that proponents and partners, ARTC Inland Rail, have also pledged support toward our 2019 Youth Summit, in addition to providing financial contributions toward our cultural heritage work program. I would also like to acknowledge Origin Energy for their donation of a decommissioned camp which has now been placed on our Millmerran property.

These are all significant developments over the last 12 months, which are testament to the amount of work and growth that BNTAC has achieved for the period. Moving into the 2019/2020 period, these confirmed new projects will be major focus points – in addition to progressing with other current mapped priorities for the period. For example, BNTAC are already in the process of trying to secure funding and resources to develop both a comprehensive Caring for Country Plan, as well as a 10year Economic Development and Prosperity Strategy for our nation. Both projects will offer reciprocal benefits, as well as supporting our broader targets and KRAs – particularly in relation to caring for land and environment, and supporting the social and economic development and outcomes of Our people and nation.

As we enter the 2019/2020 period, I looked forward to continuing to work in close consort with other Directors, BNTAC Members and broader community – as we continue to grow and develop our PBC capacities and capabilities; and expand and grow our work program for the interests and benefits of Our nation and people.

**Elvie Sandow**, BNTAC Chairperson

## ● Executive Directors Report

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2018/2019 BNTAC Annual Report. I would like to start by taking the opportunity to acknowledge and recognise the committed efforts of all BNTAC Directors and Members for the period. 2018/2019 has been a year of significant progress and developments for BNTAC – with continual work being undertaken in the post-determination space to develop internal capacity and capability; and to also begin to expand and diversify our work program in line with our PBC functions, and based on the united Vision and priorities of the Bigambul nation and community.

The last twelve months' strategic and operational work programs have been guided and directed by BNTAC's five Key Result Areas (KRAs):

1. Maintain rigorous corporate governance practices that are culturally inclusive, accountable and transparent.
2. Invest in the preservation and advancement of historical and traditional lands, cultural knowledge and practices and promote Bigambul connection to country;
3. Leverage commercial opportunities to build the economic strength of the Bigambul people;
4. Build the skills and capacity of Bigambul people through expanded training opportunities;
5. Bolster and maintain BNTAC capabilities in moving toward self-sufficiency.

In addition to undertaking a Constitutional Review and implementing a number of new provisions and monitoring and management procedures, BNTAC has undertaken targeted efforts to maintain rigorous corporate governance practices. In addition to securing BNTAC's Charitable Status and PBI status and becoming GST registered; we have also developed a dedicated BNTAC Communication Strategy, including targeted measures to achieve a locally inclusive and united approach / vision for our nation; established BNTAC Implementation Committees and respective Terms of Reference (ToRs) across these groups to drive BNTAC's current work priorities and projects; and developed a BNTAC Cultural Capability and Cultural Authority Framework.

Progress has also been made for the period toward building efforts and investment toward the

preservation and advancement of historical and traditional lands, as well as cultural knowledge and practices and promoting Bigambul connection to country. BNTAC have now developed a Cultural Immersion Program for implementation, which will be a requirement for all government and industry employees to complete, prior to commencement of any major project work conducted on our lands. We have also progressed with developing a united Plan for our nation; and development of a current Cultural Heritage Register, comprising records of physical locations and significant sacred and other important sites, song lines and stories within the Bigambul Nation.

A priority has also been progressing with development of a Cultural Heritage, Land and Environment Rehabilitation and Preservation Policy and Management Plan. This will be fundamental toward informing in-built provisions to ensure the preservation and rehabilitation of country, environment and culture as part of any major works undertaken on our lands. Further to this, a critical planned initiative that will continue to be a priority in 2019/2020, is the development of a comprehensive Caring for Country & Cultural Heritage Plan and Scorecard framework. The aim is to provide a comprehensive roadmap for cultural heritage and land and water preservation and rehabilitation. This will be a guiding framework for BNTAC's own caring for country and cultural heritage work program; as well as informing standards and requirements of proponents working on our lands and waterways.

This will also connect to another planned project for 2019/2020 that BNTAC have been working toward, which pertains to the development of a 10year Economic Development and Prosperity Strategy for the Bigambul nation. The Strategy will actively support our target of leveraging commercial opportunities to build the economic strength of the Bigambul people, as well providing a community-led and locally collaborative road-map; to ensure a healthy; thriving; and sustainable Bigambul nation and community – now and into the future.

These activity measures necessarily cross-over into and also actively support our KRA pertaining to building the skills and capacity of Bigambul people through expanded training opportunities; with mapped economic development priorities and targets to necessarily encompass expanded training and skill development opportunities for Bigambul people. To these ends as well, during 2018/2019, BNTAC

has continued ongoing discussions with proponents regarding local economic development and skill and training opportunities for Bigambul people; as well as developing our own revised Workforce Development Plan.

Focused efforts have also been attributed to new program/project innovation and development, to support bolstering and maintenance of BNTAC capabilities, and aid us in moving toward self-sufficiency. 2018/2019 saw an expansion for BNTAC in terms of our existing proponent and funder relationships; and the projects that we have in place through these current formal arrangements.

Key proponents within our Determination Area and with which BNTAC have formal affiliation, include:

- Shell Group QGC
- ARTC Inland Rail
- Origin Energy

QGC Shell have an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with BNTAC and through negotiated arrangements, also financially contributed during 2018/2019 to the Implementation Manager role position within the organisation – assisting to drive key reform and strengthening measures pertaining to corporate and operational functions. Furthermore, during 2018/2019, BNTAC received advice from QGC of our successful applications for funding through the supporting Stronger First Nations Program for the following upcoming projects:

- The BNTAC 2019 Youth Summit to be held September 27 to October 1 in Goondiwindi
- The BNTAC 3year Determination Celebration, to be held following the Youth Summit as a whole-of-community and family event
- Part one of the Bigambul Language Preservation Project, which also represents an ongoing work program for BNTAC

Australian Rail Track Corporation – Inland Rail have a formal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) in place with BNTAC. Through the CHMP in place, ARTC-Inland Rail currently have a proposed workforce in our Determination Area comprising: one Senior Cultural Heritage Field Officer and two Cultural Heritage Field Officers. Funding was also committed to BNTAC toward development of the Bigambul Cultural Induction

Program and purchase of Geo-spatial equipment; and ARTC-Inland Rail are also making a one-off financial contribution to the upcoming BNTAC 2019 Youth Summit.

Origin Energy is also a proponent operating in our Determination Area. At the End of September 2018, BNTAC was gifted a decommissioned Camp by Origin. The gifted, 50man camp from Origin Energy was received and placed on the Millmerran property during 2018/2019. The Camp includes:

- Industrial kitchen
- Self-contained dongers / demountables
- Dining / Mess hall
- Equipment and furniture
- Electric Boards
- Outdoor Dining

It is noteworthy too that as part of current discussions and working arrangements with all proponents, there is an emphasis on identifying and cultivating increased training, graduate and employment opportunities. Both ARTC-Inland Rail and QGC Shell have also committed to present on local work opportunities and training and employment pathways at the upcoming 2019 Youth Summit and into 2020.

Other successful applications / proposals for the 2018/2019 period also included BNTAC's submission to the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts Program. BNTAC have now secured financial support to build on stage one of our Language Preservation program, to develop audio visual and written resources, complemented by local artists' works, that can be disseminated broadly and used as key teaching and educational tools for current and future generations. This project will be a major focus moving into 2019/2020.

These outcomes highlight the amount of work and efforts undertaken for 2018/2019; as well as the growth and expansion that has occurred to BNTAC's current and forecast work program. This places BNTAC in a strong and capable position moving into the next 12month activity period; and I look forward to working with my fellow Directors and Bigambul community members to continue to drive and support our Vision and priorities for Our nation and people.

**Justin Saunders** - BNTAC Executive Director

# ● Corporate Services Report

The following Corporate services and Operational reports summarise key outcomes, developments and highlights for the 2018/2019 period.

## GOVERNANCE

The Bigambul PBC is committed to furthering the aspirations of our people. To do this, we have invested in and demonstrated the highest standard of good Indigenous governance and effective and transparent decision-making; to ensure we are acting in the best interest of our native title holders. We are committed to ensuring the recognition, protection and enjoyment of native title and the right of our Bigambul communities to economic, social and environmental development that reflects our values and aspirations. The Bigambul Board currently comprises of seven (7) Director appointments, which include two (2) Bigambul Youth Director positions.

We are aware that in facilitating access by proponents

perspective of legislative standards and requirements; and whilst ensuring we remain true to our Vision and Purpose and the needs, interests and priorities of Bigambul people. We are in turn committed to evidence-based decision-making, as demonstrated in the due diligence undertaken in designing our latest Strategic Plan.

Each of our Directors are leaders in their own fields and bring important information, skills and experience to the organisation. In addition, Directors readily keep abreast of developments nationally and maintain networks through regular participation in regional PBC forums and conferences at the state and national levels.

BNTAC Board meetings are regularly convened and

***BNTAC has prioritised good, transparent and effective governance since its inception; and over the last year there have been maintained efforts to ensure we are building the necessary foundations of good governance and management – as we seek to expand and grow our work program, in line with our strategic plan and the vision of BNTAC and our native title holders.***

to our lands and waters under the Native Title Act and other legislative regimes, we are asking our people to make difficult, long-lasting decisions that impact on their inherited rights and interests – often on tight timeframes and/or under duress. Such circumstances can give rise to or unearth disputes that need to be successfully managed to reach an outcome that is in the best interest of the native title group and can still facilitate development on our lands. This makes good governance, leadership and consultation and engagement to our native title holders crucial and imperative to the current and future sustainability and viability of BNTAC. To these ends, the Board has prioritised ensuring an inclusive and united approach to governance, leadership and how we plan and make decisions pertaining to our land and waterways. In line with the best practice approaches to Indigenous governance; this means maintaining a constant balance of good and effective governance from the

typically held on country in Goondiwindi. Directors and the Board also come together readily as required to progress current and planned projects and work programs – with momentum in this respect building over the last 12 months.

In terms of specific/targeted strategies and measures undertaken for the period 2018/2019 toward actively ensuring effective and good governance, it is important to note that BNTAC have also undertaken/completed the following key measures and actions and reforms:

- A thorough review of the BNTAC Constitution, resulting in the following changes:
  - Addition of two (2) Skills-based Directorship Positions as part of the BNTAC Board's composition

- Implementation of Rotational Directorships
- Development and implementation of comprehensive Corporate and Operational Policies and Procedures, in line with regulatory and legislative standards.
- Development and implementation of operational performance standards and significant targeted efforts to achieve financial stability
- Development and implementation of a Finance, Risk and Audit Charter
- Comprehensive, best practice financial management, planning and forecasting – including end of month routine financial analysis; appointment of a BNTAC Auditor; annual Audit preparation; and Annual Draft Budget and Expenditure mapping / forecasting.
- Development and implementation of the BNTAC Governance Charter
- Development of a Corporate Capability Statement for BNTAC

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING & RISK MANAGEMENT

In addition to meeting routinely for board meetings the BNTAC board have held dedicated strategy and planning sessions to progress key work programs; as well as to map and identify higher level priorities, considerations and needs; to ensure that we are taking into account the full position of the organisation; as well as current and future potential and actual risks, threats, opportunities and positions of strength.

In particular, a comprehensive risk mapping process was undertaken to parallel development of the BNTAC Strategic Plan, as part of ensuring thorough due diligence; and holistic consideration of the organisation's current and future positioning; and factors at play that may influence this. Current risk factors identified by BNTAC include:

- i. A lack of funding and other resources to pursue our KRAs and all of their underpinning targets and objectives;
- ii. Key person risk and loss of corporate knowledge and transfer;
- iii. A lack of access to expertise whether on the Board or externally;

- iv. Impediments to project timeframes due to other parties' timeline hold-ups;
- v. Challenges pertaining to internal lines of communication, as well as with our membership and broader communities.

While our strategies and targets aim to respond to these challenge areas; they are noted factors that require continual management and containment. This is supported through effective leadership and oversight from our Executive Director; in conjunction with good governance from the Board.

The work that BNTAC has undertaken at the operational level during 2018/2019, to progress and further our priorities/KRA's has also reinforced the strength of the organisation's position; and aided in managing and countering the aforementioned risk areas.

The following Operations Report summarises key activities and developments for the financial period in respect to each priority area of focus.

## ● Operations Report

A key focus for the 2018/2019 period has been continuing with momentum to progress our five strategic priorities/key result areas (KRA's). In addition to guiding our strategic work program; these priorities/targets are dually reflected across our operational work program – driving on the ground work for BNTAC and the focus of the last 12month period.

As listed above, BNTAC priorities/key result areas for the period 2017-2022 are as follows:

1. Maintain rigorous corporate governance practices that are culturally inclusive, accountable and transparent.
2. Invest in the preservation and advancement of historical and traditional lands, cultural knowledge and practices and promote Bigambul connection to country;
3. Leverage commercial opportunities to build the economic strength of the Bigambul people;
4. Build the skills and capacity of Bigambul people through expanded training opportunities;
5. Bolster and maintain BNTAC capabilities in moving toward self-sufficiency.

In addition to undertaking a Constitutional Review and implementing a number of new provisions and monitoring and management procedures, BNTAC has also undertaken other work and targeted efforts through our operational program to **maintain rigorous corporate governance practices that are culturally inclusive, accountable and transparent**. Noted developments/activity outcomes to these ends for the 2018/2019 period namely include:

- Securing BNTAC's Charitable Status and Public Benevolent Institute (PBI) status, becoming GST registered and registration as a charitable institute under the Taxation Administration Act 2001 (Qld)
- Draft development of a dedicated BNTAC Communication Strategy, including targeted measures to achieve a locally inclusive and united approach/vision for our nation
- Establishment of BNTAC Implementation Committees and respective Terms of Reference (ToRs) across these groups to drive BNTAC's current work priorities and projects.

- Executive Director and Board member attendance to other meetings/round tables – extending from the local to state and national levels.
- Development of BNTAC Cultural Capability and Cultural Authority Framework.

It is also important to note that conscious efforts have been made during the last 12months to build the profile and visibility of BNTAC; as well as ensure accessible sources of information so both Our community and stakeholders know who we are and what we do, and also, how to engage. Key measures have included development of organisation branding and communications, as well as construction and the soft launch of the Bigambul website ([www.bigambul.com.au](http://www.bigambul.com.au)).

Significant progress has also been made for the period in building efforts and **investment toward the preservation and advancement of historical and traditional lands, cultural knowledge and practices and promoting Bigambul connection to country**. As per our KRA targets, BNTAC have now developed a Cultural Immersion Program for implementation. It will be a requirement that all government and industry employees participate in the compulsory cultural immersion program prior to commencement of any major project work conducted on our lands. Key components of our agreement is clear employment opportunities adherence to and compliance of the Cultural Heritage and Native Title Acts.

Further to this, BNTAC have progressed with developing our Bigambul Nation Plan, as well as development of a current Cultural Heritage Register; comprising records of physical locations and significant sacred and other important sites, song lines and stories within the Bigambul Nation – that will necessarily require continual maintenance and updating.

Regarding the Bigambul Nation Plan, the document is primarily intended to inform and educate Bigambul People, and to inspire and empower them, to actively engage and participate in addressing the issues and impact of our waterways and river systems. We want to empower our people to be ingrained in our cultural rights and be knowledgeable to assert those rights. These waterways are significant in supporting our ability to live, learn, share and survive, and in keeping our culture alive.

Reconnection to country, as a nation, will facilitate

healing, regeneration and rejuvenation of our culture and traditional practices, and will forge and strengthen our aspirations regarding cultural and spiritual responsibilities to our traditional lands and waters. The nation plan will highlight the needs and possibilities for future projects and programs in achieving identified outcomes and steer us in developing cohesive partnerships and relationships. Through the plan, we will be exploring opportunities for water and resources planning, cultural and environmental flows, nation building, and government co-design.

A further priority has been progressing with development of a Cultural Heritage, Land and Environment Rehabilitation and Preservation Policy and Management Plan. This will be fundamental toward informing and helping to negotiate in-built provisions to ensure the preservation and rehabilitation of country, environment and culture as part of any major works undertaken on our lands. Complementing the former is the ongoing work that BNTAC are currently undertaking to progress toward developing a Caring for Country Plan.

As further described in the Proponents and Projects section below, a critical planned initiative is the development of a comprehensive Caring for Country & Cultural Heritage Plan and Scorecard framework. The aim is to provide a comprehensive roadmap for cultural heritage and land and water preservation and rehabilitation. This will be a guiding framework for BNTAC's own caring for country and cultural heritage work program; as well as informing standards and requirements of proponents working on our lands and rejuvenation and preservation of our waterways.

Part of the scoping of the planned Caring for Country Plan will also identify opportunities for economic development through caring for country and cultural heritage preservation and management activities/strategies. This will also connect to another planned project for the upcoming period that BNTAC have been working toward, which pertains to the development of a 10year Economic Development and Prosperity Strategy for the Bigambul nation. The plan will actively support our target of **leveraging commercial opportunities to build the economic strength of the Bigambul people**, as well providing a community-led and locally collaborative road-map; to ensure a healthy; thriving; and sustainable Bigambul nation and community – now and into the future. Planned

strategies to parallel and help inform development of the Plan also include conducting a whole-of-community skills-audit; and scoping and development of a credentialing framework for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses – to culminate in a register of locally endorsed suppliers.

These activity measures necessarily cross-over into and also actively support our KRA pertaining to **building the skills and capacity of Bigambul people through expanded training opportunities**; with mapped economic development priorities and targets to necessarily encompass expanded training and skill development opportunities for Bigambul people.

Other activities and strategies in progress to bolster access to training and employment for Bigambul people include through:

- Ongoing discussions with proponents, and negotiation of social responsibility provisions as part of any formal agreements; and
- Development of a revised internal Workforce Development Plan.

Ensuring the financial security and sustainability of BNTAC as an organisation has also been a major priority for the period, and dedicated efforts have been undertaken to **bolster and maintain BNTAC capabilities in moving toward self-sufficiency**. In particular, this has seen focused efforts attributed to new program/project innovation and development (in line with our strategic focus areas); and seeking funding and procurement against these priority initiatives to establish the foundations for long-term impact and outcomes.

Throughout November 2017, BNTAC undertook a Roadshow series throughout the South West and Burnett Regions. The purpose of the Roadshows was to provide a comprehensive update on key activities undertaken over the past twelve months and to showcase the successes and the alignment against the KRAs of the BNTAC Strategic Plan and the future development of the PBC. The Roadshows also provided an opportunity for Our People to ask any questions, provide constructive feedback and strategies for moving forward. The Roadshow series commenced on Country in Goondiwindi then to Toowoomba, Cherbourg and finally Brisbane.

## ● Proponents, Relationships and Current Planned Projects

This section summarises our current key stakeholder and proponent relationships, including current projects being progressed by BNTAC through formalised agreements; as well as planned and upcoming projects that are either yet to commence, or which are still awaiting confirmation of funding.

As a PBC, BNTAC's prescribed functions under the Native Title Act are to:

- Hold, protect and manage determined native title in accordance with the objectives of the native title holding group;
- Ensure certainty for governments and other parties interested in accessing or regulating native title land and waters by providing a legal entity to manage and conduct the affairs of the native title holders;
- In addition to caring for country, engage in a diverse range of activities on country.

This means the scope of BNTAC's functions necessarily encompass broad stakeholder and proponent relationship management/engagement, particularly in relation to negotiating and managing access to our lands and waters.

In terms of our current relationships, the following table summarises key proponents in our determination area that we currently work with.

In addition to summarising the scope/nature of the current relationships, the information below includes details about funding and contribution committed by proponents in support of BNTAC and our current projects/programs.

### Proponent:

#### **SHELL GROUP** - QUEENSLAND GAS COMPANY



QGC Shell have an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with BNTAC. Through negotiated arrangements, and also through successful applications for funding by BNTAC, QGC Shell have also committed financial contribution to the adjacent listed projects / activities.

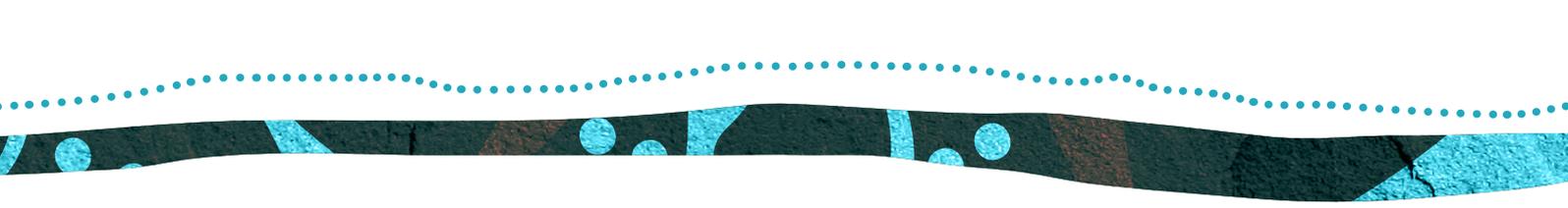
QGC Shell has committed financial contribution to BNTAC for the following projects/activities through the supporting Stronger First Nations Program

#### **One-off funding for BNTAC Implementation Manager**

QGC have provided one-off funding to support engagement of an Implementation Manager resource to support the PBC in achieving its economic objectives, by designing and implementing governance procedures, workforce plans and economic development strategies and continued PBS development.

#### **BNTAC 2019 Youth Summit**

During 2018/2019, BNTAC was advised of its successful application to QGC to convene a dedicated Bigambul Youth Summit. The 5-day Summit is to be held in September 2019 in Goondiwindi. The fundamental aim of the Bigambul 2019 Youth Summit is to engage



Bigambul young people as part of 5-days of dynamic and interactive Nation Building. Key underpinning objectives include:

- Facilitating opportunity for a representative group of Bigambul young people to come together to engage in cultural learnings knowledge transfer and skill and capability development
- Actively supporting the cultural and social connection and identity of Bigambul young people, and engagement of the next generation as part of native title and nation building
- Promote and facilitate the cultural, social and economic aspirations and participation of Bigambul young people
- Provide tangible opportunity to receive the views and input of young people on their needs, aspirations and priorities, so that the voice of our youth is heard and represented as part of current and future strategies and actions
- Develop the foundation for the establishment of an ongoing Bigambul Youth Advisory Council that will continue to operate beyond cessation of funding

### **Bigambul 3 year Determination Celebration**

During 2018/2019, BNTAC also received advice that we were successful in submitting to convene a dedicated Bigambul Determination Celebration – to be held as a whole-of-community event on Country, to follow the 2019 Youth Summit. The event will most likely be held between December 2019 and first quarter of 2020 and will:

- Provide an opportunity for Bigambul families to engage and participate in cultural celebration and nation building that will positively contribute to connection to culture and country
- Provide information and raise awareness about Bigambul culture and identity, BNTAC governance, BNTAC strategic priorities and activities, and opportunities for local support and participation
- Provide an opportunity for participants to learn about QGC's project and the emerging long-term partnership between QGC and the Bigambul Nation
- Include a report back from the Bigambul Youth Summit

### **Language preservation project - part one**

Further to above, BNTAC was also successful in developing a submission to QGC Shell for the commencement of a Bigambul Language and presentation Program. QGC Shell have committed a one-off financial contribution toward part one of the project, which involves a thorough scoping and collation of existing archives and records to develop a comprehensive baseline report and record of Bigambul language. This will be the necessary foundation needed for part two of our language preservation program, involving compilation of audio-visual and written language resources (see below).

Proponent:

**AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION**  
- INLAND RAIL



Australian Rail Track Corporation – Inland Rail have a formal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) in place with BNTAC that acknowledges and asserts that the Bigambul People are the Owners and Custodians of Cultural Heritage in the Plan area. Through the CHMP and existing partner arrangements, financial contributions have been committed to BNTAC pertaining to cultural heritage and management, as well as through a pledged contribution to the 2019 Youth Summit. A Statement of Committed is also set to be signed and executed between both parties in 2019.

Through the CHMP executed between BNTAC and ARTC-Inland Rail a workforce in our Determination Area allows for Cultural Heritage Field Officers to identify, monitor and record Cultural Heritage.

Funding was also committed to BNTAC toward development of the Bigambul Cultural Induction Program and purchase of Geo-spatial equipment; and ARTC-Inland Rail are also making a one-off financial contribution to the BNTAC 2019 Youth Summit.

It is noteworthy too that as part of current discussions and working arrangements, there is an emphasis on identifying and cultivating increased training, graduate and employment opportunities. Both ARTC-Inland Rail and QGC Shell have also committed to present on local work opportunities and training and employment pathways at the upcoming 2019 Youth Summit.

Proponent:

**ORIGIN ENERGY**



Origin Energy is a proponent operating in our Determination Area. At the End of September 2018, BNTAC was gifted a decommissioned Camp by Origin. The 50-man camp has been placed on BNTAC's Millmerran property.

The gifted, 50man camp from Origin Energy was received and placed on the Millmerran property during 2018/2019. The Camp includes:

- Industrial kitchen
- Self-contained dongers / demountables
- Dining / Mess hall
- Equipment and furniture
- Electric Boards
- Outdoor Dining

The establishment of the camp will allow BNTAC to establish the Bigambul Centre for Training and Excellence.

Proponent:

**HUTCHINSON  
BUILDERS**



Hutchinson's are a reputable construction company who are working on a pro-bono basis with BNTAC in the design and development of the Bigambul Centre for Training Excellence (BCTE)

As part of the process of moving toward self-determination and economic prosperity, the Bigambul Nation propose to expand present facilities on our Millmerran property to establish a Bigambul Centre for Training and Excellence (BCTE) to make it a preferred destination for accommodation, training and cultural learning and cultural tourism.

Construction, establishment and commencement of the BCTE will provide many opportunities and benefits for the Bigambul People, in particular economic development and prosperity.

In working toward achieving our goals, the Bigambul people propose to implement projects and programs aimed at developing the skills of the Bigambul people, enhancing corporate partnerships and protecting our culture and language.

Our range of current partnerships and relationships will actively support achievement development and implementation of training, skills and capacity building programs and packages.

All Bigambul opportunities will bring a unique way of teaching as participants are developing a strong emphasis on interactive learning and cultural immersion.

As well as training opportunities for Bigambul people, the BCTE will also be available for training for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and non-Indigenous people, non – Government Organisations (NGOs), Tertiary Institutions and other Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Organisations (AICCOs). Several training programs are already in development.

*(Please see design concepts in Appendix 1)*

Other successful applications/proposals for the 2018/2019 period also included BNTAC's submission to the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts Program. BNTAC are very pleased to report that we have now secured financial support to build on stage one of our Language Preservation program, which as noted is being supported by QGC. This second confirmation of funding from the Australian Government will however enable BNTAC to take the next step in our language preservation and revitalisation program – allowing us to extend on the initial baseline project to develop audio visual and written resources, complemented by local artists' works, that can be disseminated broadly and used as key teaching and educational tools for current and future generations.

As noted, earlier in the report, other planned projects and proposals that BNTAC have also been progressing and are currently still waiting to secure confirmed funding for, include the following:

## ● Proponents, Relationships and Current Planned Projects (continued)

### A planned Caring for Country Plan

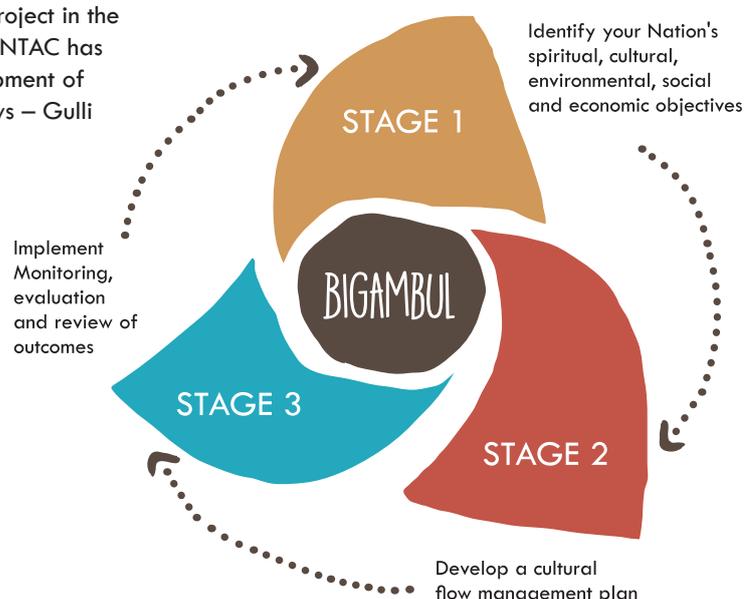
The primary output of this project would be development of a 10year Bigambul Caring for Country Plan. In addition to setting out our caring for country and cultural heritage priority areas; their underpinning objectives; and strategies to be undertaken in support of these targets; the plan would also culminate in development of a Bigambul Caring for Country 'scorecard', which will be the framework for the initial country and cultural heritage 'health check' to be undertaken, against each of the identified priority areas that will make up the Caring for Country Plan. In this manner, the scorecard will enable a mechanism through which to not only conduct a baseline 'health check' against the priority areas (the outcomes of which will inform strategies for development as part of the 10year plan), but it will also enable a framework for annual/bi-annual similar assessments; so, we can track progress and outcomes and in turn the effectiveness of strategies implemented.

### A 10 year Bigambul Economic Development and Prosperity Strategy

The aim of this project will be to develop a 10 year Bigambul Economic Development & Prosperity Strategy; as a community-led and locally collaborative road-map; to ensure a healthy; thriving; and sustainable Bigambul nation and community – now and into the future. Opportunities for one-off funding over 12months are being explored to contribute to the Strategy's direct scoping, research and development costs. This project will sit as an integrated component as part of BNTAC's current, broader work program; with the strategy's development to flow on from projects / initiatives currently in progress; as well as to parallel the development of other relevant projects, including the Caring for Country 10year Plan; with identified opportunities for both documents to offer reciprocal learnings from their scoping and development stages; as well as shared opportunities for local economic development, prosperity and sustainability. In terms of connectivity to other projects, development of this strategy will also flow on from the 2019 Bigambul 5-day Youth Summit, to be held September 27 – October 1, 2019 in Goondiwindi; and the Bigambul 2year Determination Celebration, to be held as a whole-of-community event at the end of 2019 or early in 2020. As noted, BNTAC has received funding from QGC to support the delivery of both projects.

### Bigambul Nation Planning - Cultural Flows

Since commencing this water management project in the last half of the 2018-2019 financial year, BNTAC has undertaken significant activity in the development of the Bigambul Nation Planning - Cultural Flows – Gulli Wongul Nation Plan. The Bigambul Cultural Flows Working Group undertook significant Nation Planning activity which was funded and supported by the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations (NBAN). Through the Bigambul Nation Planning Working Group, Stage One has been completed and Stage Two in its final development.



A key component of the nation planning and cultural flows processes involved the Working Group identifying our Nations spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic objectives for the following Bigambul sites of significance. The following sites of significance identified are

- Inglewood Grinding Grooves
- Boobera Lagoon
- Lees Reserve
- Old Camp and Turtle Bend - Toobeah
- Sandy Beach

### **Aboriginal Waterways Assessments (AWA)**

Recently, Our Nation came together for the purpose of the implementation of the Aboriginal Waterways Assessment program. The AWA Tool allowed Our Nation to consistently measure and prioritise river and wetland health so that we were better placed to negotiate for Our Country's water needs.



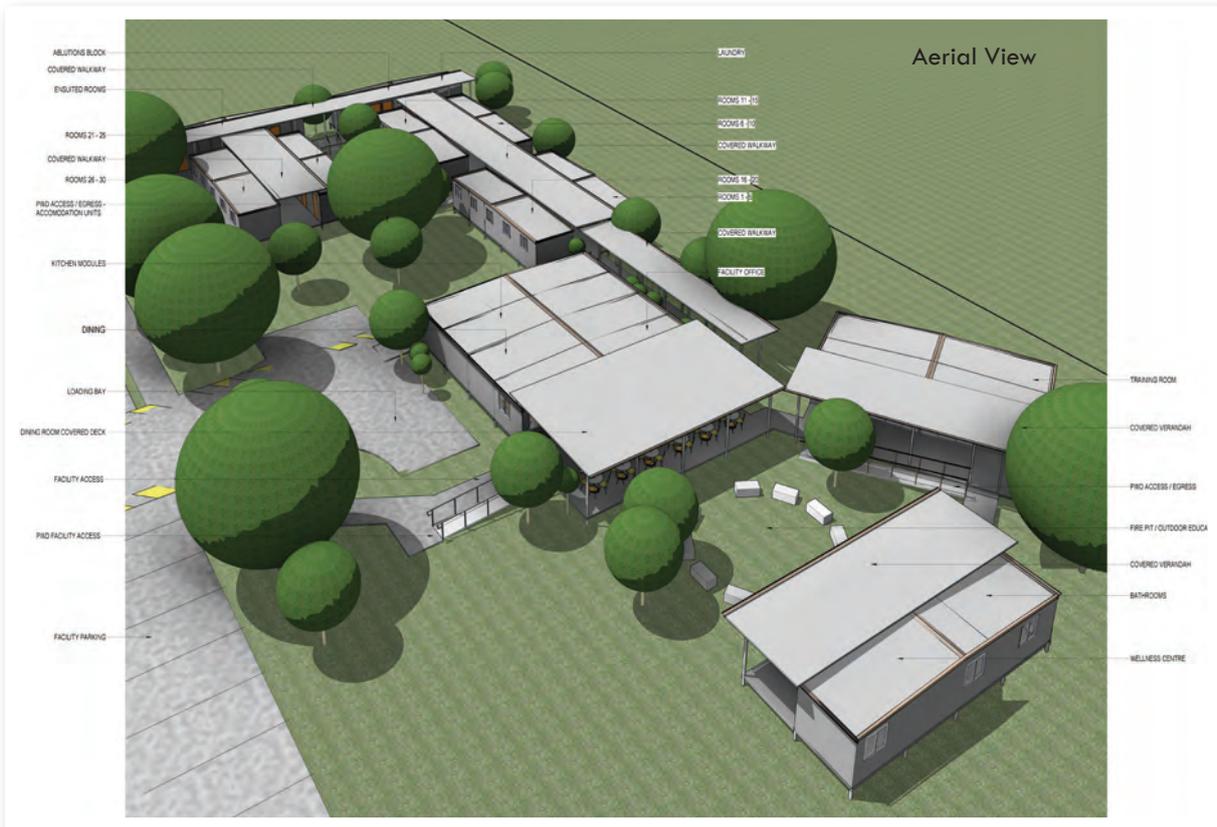
Rigorous mechanisms (beyond the usual economic and environmental indicators) that help explain the importance of water to particular places were critical for effective involvement of Our People in water planning processes. Over the course of the initial undertaking of the AWA, participants visited extra sites of significance, which informed their knowledge of up and downstream impacts, threats and other characteristics of Bigambul Country.

The following sites of significance assessed under the AWA program are:

- The Town Common
- Bondi on the McIntyre River
- Inglewood Grinding Grooves on the McIntyre Brook
- Booba Sands on the McIntyre Brook
- Keetah Bridge on the Dumaresq River
- Welltown on the Yarrillwana Creek
- Old Camp – Toobeah on the Weir River
- Turtle Bend on the Yarrillwana Creek

These planned proposals/strategies will be retained priorities moving into the 2019/2020 period. A further focus for the upcoming financial period and in line with our KRAs, will also be continuing to scope and secure additional capacity and capability development funding for the organisation – with concentrated efforts still being attributed toward developing the foundations of the PBC – to support what is a growing and diverse work program.

# Appendix 1.







# BIGAMBUL

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