

NARI NARI  
TRIBAL COUNCIL

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that  
this report may contain images of deceased people.

[www.narinari.org](http://www.narinari.org)  
412 Belmore Street Hay NSW 2711  
P 02 6993 2243 E [narinari@bigpond.net.au](mailto:narinari@bigpond.net.au)

# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

This year I am proud to report that Nari Nari Tribal Council continues to grow and rise as a leader in Aboriginal land and water management.

I am also honoured to be able to follow in my father's footsteps and take on the role of Chair of the organisation, a position I hold with pride.

Water is the lifeblood of the land we care for, and it has been one of the main focusses at both Gayini and Toogimbie, with an incredible response from the increased rainfall this year, environmental flows and flood waters. We are noticing new shoots on trees and vegetation popping up across once bare ground. The groundwater is being recharged and we are seeing the numbers of Australian reptiles, amphibians and mammals increase.

Importantly, the waterbirds are taking advantage of the influx of water, and breeding at an incredible rate.

We have been notified of the success of our application for an Indigenous River Rangers team of five staff, and hope to be recruiting for these vital roles later in 2021. Nari Nari was one of five successful projects across the Basin.

We are continuing to work towards self-sustainability and are partnering with experts in regenerative agriculture, science and renewables; as we learn from our supporters, we also share our knowledge with others.

I predict that Nari Nari will continue to have a positive impact on how Country is managed in the Murray Darling Basin, and will continue to influence policy and lead the way for future generations.



NNTC Chair Jamie Woods conducting a smoking ceremony at the Hay Hospital re-development - November 2020.

# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

## JULY

Gayini Land Manager Mark Brettschneider appointed Yanga Rural Fire Brigade Captain; first Aboriginal person in that role.

## AUGUST

eFund budget approved.  
Annual report distributed.

## SEPTEMBER

Agistment agreement signed with Docs Spinefex Pastoral.  
Elders newsletter distributed.  
Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley visits.

## OCTOBER

Waterbird breeding begins, following eWater events at Gayini and Toogimbie.

## NOVEMBER

Strategic planning day held with Executive & Staff.  
NAIDOC celebrated with a tour of Gayini by the Women's group.  
First Triple C Youth on Country camp held.

## DECEMBER

Visits by Cox Architects, Kalara Capital and Biodiversity Conservation Trust hosted On Country.  
Women's Yarn Up held.  
End of year community event held at Gayini.

## JANUARY

Elders and members visit Gayini and Toogimbie over the festival break.

## FEBRUARY

NSWALC State Councillor Leeanne Hampton tours Gayini.  
NSW Office of Sport and Transgrid defibrillator applications successful.

## MARCH

Core Group meeting held.  
Seed Strategy workshop held On Country.  
Elders Camp hosted at Gayini.

## APRIL

Cultural Burn Guide workshopped, draft Guide released for comment accepted by NNTC Board.  
Second Triple C Youth on Country camp held at Kia-Ora.

## MAY

Website updated and launched.  
Cultural Burn Guide launched and distributed.  
Triple C video released.  
Governance Group meeting.  
NNTC features in a positive story on ABC's 7:30 Report.

## JUNE

eFund Budget and Implementation Plan approved.  
Core Group and Consortium meetings held.



# IMPACT - HEALTHY COUNTRY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## Stronger Culture

292	On Country visitors
7	Events held
7	Sites recorded
48	Sites protected
10	Locations renamed using Nari Nari language
8	Training courses
7	Number of people trained

“ It's made my spirit come back to my soul ”

**Triple C Youth Camp participant - age 15**

## Water Management

3	eWater events - Gayini and Toogimbie
190	giga litres (190,000 megalitres) delivered across Gayini, equivalent to 76,000 Olympic swimming pools
700	megalitres delivered across Toogimbie

“ The 2020 breeding at Gayini is believed to be the largest known Ibis nesting event to be initiated and maintained solely with water for the environment ”

**James McGuire**

NSW DPIE Environment Energy and Science

## Locations renamed using Nari Nari language

**Watu Lake** (Kieeta Lake); Woot-too meaning "Ears"

**Wanab Hill** (Humbug Hill); Waa-naab meaning "Fire"

**Banim Swamp** (Avalon) Ba-nimm; meaning "Bread" (Nardoo grows freely here)

**Jjemba** (proposed Donga Complex; Yeam-ba meaning "To sit")

**Bayil Bank** (Telephone Bank); Bay-yill meaning "Trees"

**Bala Rookery** (Eulimbah) Ba-laa meaning "Head"

**Fairfax Floodway** (Suicide Bank) named in honor of John Fairfax

**Emu Lake** (Lorica Lake / Nolan's Chance) named after the mobs of emus that gather there

**Mim Hill** (Tit Hill) Mimm meaning "Cousin"

**Dinan Lake** (Kia Lake) Din-aan meaning "Foot"

Source: Pathangal Languages Education Aboriginal Corporation

# IMPACT - HEALTHY COUNTRY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## Grazing Management

- 1 Annual vegetation surveys conducted
- 2543 Stock agisted
- 1127 NNTC owned stock
- 2 Stock & irrigation planning meetings held

The agistment agreement between NNTC and Doc Spinifex Pty Ltd continues to be an important partnership. The relationship has assisted NNTC in an economic sense, but has also increased knowledge and capacity in staff, in relation to stock and vegetation management.

## Fire Management

- 1 Plan developed
- 13 Cultural burns conducted
- 30 Hectares burned
- 270 Kilometres of fire breaks

The Cultural Burning Guide was developed collaboratively by NNTC staff and Elders and released in April 2021.



# IMPACT - HEALTHY COUNTRY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## Vegetation Restoration

- 4 Seed collection events

Seed collected included Nitre Goosefoot, Old Man Saltbush, Miljee, Black Box, and River Cooba.

Seed collected and redistributed to scalded or eroded areas, and for NAIDOC celebrations.

The Gayini Seed Strategy was workshopped in March and the draft strategy completed in May 2021. It is expected the Gayini Seed Strategy will be formally adopted by the NNTC Board in August.

## Governance and Establishment

- 4 Governance group meetings
- 2 Consortium meetings
- 5 NNTC Board meetings
- 3 Discussions held around economic potential

Discussions have been held throughout this year with stakeholders such as Paul Ramsay Foundation, Kilara Capital and AAMIG, regarding potential ecologically responsible economic opportunities.

## Pest Plant & Animal Management

3957	Pigs
117	Cats
255	Foxes
1135	Deer
25	Rabbit
45	Rabbit warrens destroyed
1021	Weeds sprayed (kilometres)
5509	Boxthorns removed

In November 2020 NNTC staff and Riverina Local Land Services signed off on the Gayini Pest Management Plan, which outlines indicators of successful pest management across the conservation area. The planning was undertaken collaboratively, between Project staff and Land Managers, and LLS Biosecurity Officers.



# COMMENTS ON THE EFUND BUDGET - FY21

The Gayini project is supported by a private fund, managed by the Gayini Consortium of Nari Nari Tribal Council, The Nature Conservancy, University of NSW and Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group. The day-to-day operations are managed by Nari Nari Tribal Council, with administrative support of Hay Local Aboriginal Land Council.

In the 2020-2021 financial year, there was an underspend of 39% against the approved budget.

The savings occurred in the following strategy areas:

11% Strategy 1: Site Based Management Activities - Savings in this Strategy came from NNTC writing and releasing it's own Cultural Burning Plan, and members and volunteers becoming involved in on ground management tasks, such as weed and pest control.

5% Strategy 2: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Activities - Community events, including Elders Yarn Ups, were postponed during Covid travel restrictions, and some cultural protection works - namely site inspections - were conducted by Hay Local Aboriginal Land Council.

3% Strategy 3: Infrastructure Management - The small underspend in this Strategy resulted from staff and members undertaking repairs and management of eWater infrastructure and tracks and fire trails.

15% Strategy 4: Enabling and Foundation Expenses - Savings in this area came from streamlined administration, which reduced costs across the financial year. There was a high underspend in wages, as casual employment was not possible during Covid travel restrictions.



## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH



AUDIENCE

581

319

POST REACH

9974 +1.9%

500 +8%

AUDIENCE AGE

35-44

35-44

AUDIENCE GENDER

49.7% women,  
50.3% men

46.4% women,  
53.6% men

TOP 3 AUDIENCE  
LOCATIONS

Hay 25.5%  
Sydney 9.5%  
Melbourne 6.9%

Sydney 11.39%  
Melbourne 10%  
Hay 8.8%

# 18,493

18,493 - the official 2020 ibis nest count at Gayini!

The Centre for Ecosystem Science, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of New South Wales reported 3,329 of those nests are of the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) and the remaining belong to Straw Necked Ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*).

The Glossy Ibis is the smallest of the three species of ibis in Australia, and is considered vulnerable in NSW and Victoria due to the loss of wetland ecosystems, so this breeding event is especially exciting.

"The breeding at Gayini is believed to be the largest known Ibis nesting event to be initiated and maintained solely with water for the environment," said James McGuire from NSW DPIE Environment Energy and Science.



Images: CSIRO





# GAYINI LAND MANAGER APPOINTED YANGA FIRE CAPTAIN

Mark Brettschneider, was appointed Captain of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) Yanga Brigade in July 2020.

Mr Brettschneider is the first Aboriginal person to be appointed to the role, according to Zone Manager Tony Whitehorn.

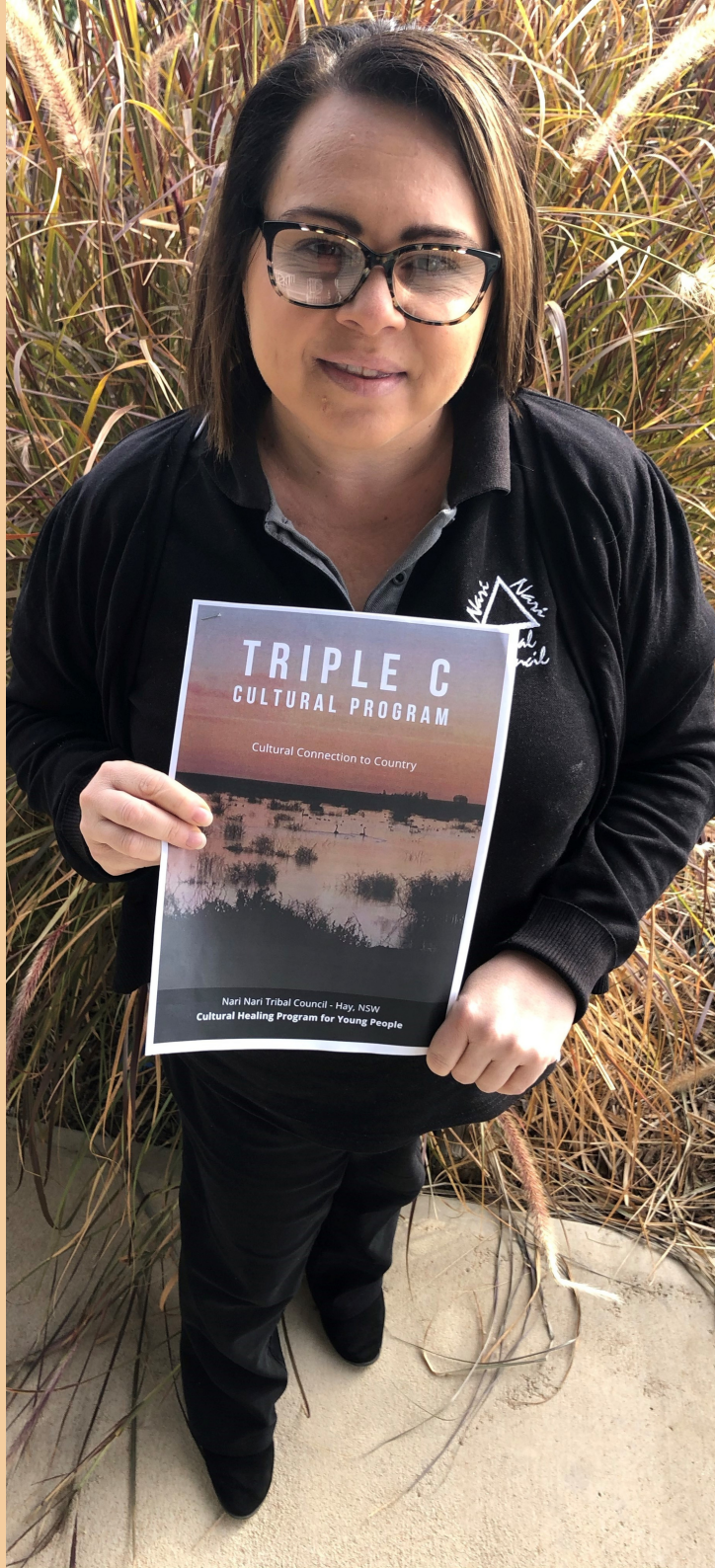
As Captain Mr Brettschneider is responsible for brigade safety, permit issue, inspections, co-ordination of team training and equipment needs, as well as fire line management during bushfire events.

The Yanga Brigade responds to a range of emergencies including structure fires, motor vehicle accidents and storms.



Mr Brettschneider will call on his 17 years of experience with NSW National Parks and Wildlife, where he acted as Divisional Commander of the Remote Area Fire Fighting team. During this time, he flew into fire zones, winching in and out of inaccessible areas via helicopter, most recently during the NSW fire storms last summer. Mr Brettschneider spent a total of 20 days battling bushfires in the Grafton. Nowra and Tumbarumba regions. In his role as Yanga Brigade Captain, Mr Brettschneider encompasses the RFS programs into the land management practises on Gayini.





# CONNECTION PROGRAM RECEIVES NSW FUNDING

Nari Nari Tribal Council successfully applied for \$94,300 funding to host a series of cultural camps at Toogimbie Indigenous Protected Area and Gayini, west of Hay. The funding was announced in 2020 as part of the Stronger Country Communities program.

NNTC staff developed the program, titled “Triple C – Cultural Connection to Country”, with Damien Kennedy of Kennedy’s Aboriginal Cultural Healing, in Wagga Wagga.

The ongoing program evolved from several On Country camps that were held in 2019, which resulted in very positive outcomes for attendees.

“The principal of Mt Austin school in Wagga told us that school attendance rates for participants from the camps increased up to 90% as soon as the boys returned, as did student involvement in school activities,” said Toogimbie IPA Project Co-ordinator Tara Dixon.

“This funding is a massive step into a much larger scale of cultural camps On Country,” Ms Dixon said. “Being able to reconnect to Country is a benefit in each individual’s healing process and it plays a huge role in steering young men in the right path.

“The program consists of a number of themes, including reconnection, self-improvement and healthy living. I look forward to what can be achieved from this pilot program, and one day also providing women’s camps,” Ms Dixon said.

“This is wonderful news,” said Helen Dalton Member for Murray. “It’s so great to see Nari Nari Tribal Council getting much needed funding to continue its excellent work.”

“These programs are vital for Indigenous youth, and I will continue to advocate for funding in the area.”

The Triple C Program is a Cultural healing initiative for Aboriginal males aged 14 - 24. The program objective is to connect disassociated youth to Country by hosting small groups of 8-10 participants on country owned and managed by the Nari Nari Tribal Council.

# INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED AWARD-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER VISITS GAYINI

Internationally acclaimed and multi-award-winning photographer and filmmaker Murray Fredericks visited Gayini conservation area in November, scouting locations for future landscape photography.

“Most of my images are planned out in a very considered and controlled way, then shot in repeated attempts over many years,” Fredericks commented.

A guest of Nari Nari Tribal Council, Fredericks visited wetland areas, recently inundated thanks to a partnership between NNTC and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.

“We are managing flows through Gayini, into Yanga Lake,” explained Jamie Woods, NNTC Chair.

“The flows have prompted massive bird and frog breeding events, so Murray has visited at the right time.”

The 88,000 hectares of Gayini is owned and managed by NNTC, and is in the initial rebuilding stages, with plans to further welcome visitors over coming years.

In 2015, Fredericks received the People’s Choice Award for the Bowness Photography Prize, was runner up in the Head-On Festival Landscape Prize and a finalist in the JWS Photo Award.

He has achieved a new level of recognition recently, featuring in a television campaign for Colourbond Steel.

His first documentary film, Salt, for which he was cinematographer and co-director, won twelve major international awards, played over 50 festivals and was screened on the ABC and PBS in the USA.

His photographs have been shown twice at the Louvre as part of Paris Photo, in Shanghai, and in many locations, including the National Gallery of Victoria and the National Portrait Gallery in Australia. His work also sits in major public and private and corporate collections including the National Gallery of Victoria, National Portrait Gallery, Elton John, Valentino, ABN AMRO, and Macquarie Bank collections.





# LIFE-SAVING EQUIPMENT GRANTS FOR NARI NARI TRIBAL COUNCIL

Nari Nari Tribal Council has received funding from both the NSW Office of Sport and energy sector leader Transgrid to purchase life-saving automated external (portable) defibrillator machines. Transgrid provided support as part of their Community Partnerships Program, funding the purchase of two defibrillators for use On Country at Gayini Conservation Area and Toogimbie Indigenous Protected Area.

The NSW Office of Sport Local Sport Defibrillator Program, sponsored the purchase of an additional unit, for community sporting use, and Nari Nari purchased a fourth unit.

“Our lands are isolated and these machines will potential save the lives of staff and Elders, and we are grateful to both Transgrid and the NSW Government for their support,” said IPA Project Manager Tara Dixon.

A defibrillator is a life saving device which delivers a controlled shock to an individual experiencing cardiac arrest, increasing their chances of survival.

Behind cancers, cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke, is the leading cause of death in Aboriginal Australians. Image: Mark Brettschneider, Tiem Wilson and Tara Dixon from Nari Nari Tribal Council with life-saving defibrillator equipment, provided by Transgrid and NSW office of Sport.



# NARI NARI FEATURES IN POSITIVE 7:30 REPORT STORY

In May, Nari Nari and the success of Toogimbie Indigenous Protected Area west of Hay featured on ABC TVs 7.30 Report.

"Indigenous groups in Murray-Darling Basin fight to have their voices heard over water rights...

...In the rare cases where Aboriginal people do own and manage water in the basin, the results speak for themselves.

The Nari Nari Tribal Council (NNTC) acquired Toogimbie Station, outside Hay in western NSW, in 2000 under a government land restitution scheme.

Crucially, it came with the rights and infrastructure to pump thousands of megalitres of water from the Murrumbidgee River. In 20 years, the land has transformed from a dust bowl to a combination of sustainable farming, protected cultural areas and thriving wetlands alive with native birds and plants.

"You add water and this is what you get," said Mark Brettschneider, NNTC land manager.

"Water is the way out of welfare," says NNTC managing director Ian Woods.

"We're sick of government designing programs for us. We want to design our own programs and fund our own programs, and we can do that with water."

Brad Moggridge says the transformation at Toogimbie shows what is possible when Indigenous people are empowered to own and manage water.

"The potential is the gap will close. We'll have healthier rivers, we'll have healthier country, we'll have healthy culture and we'll have healthy people."





# MAWAMBUL CELEBRATES NAIDOC DAY

Mawambul Co-management Group has again marked NAIDOC Day by donating a seed propagation pack, and colourful drink mugs to students at local schools. The mugs include a sachet of iconic Milo, perfect for the cold weather, and organisers hope the re-usable mug helps reduce landfill.

Mawambul is a partnership between NSW National Parks and Wildlife, Hay Local Aboriginal Land Council and Nari Nari Tribal Council.

The theme of National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance (NAIDOC) is “Heal Country” which calls for stronger measures to recognise, protect and maintain all aspects of Aboriginal culture.



The NAIDOC theme of healing country is why organisers decided to include native seed, small biodegradable pots and soil for students to grow their own Old Man Saltbush. The seed was collected at Toogimbie Indigenous Protected Area and Gayini Conservation Area, formerly known as Nimmie Caira.

# THE STORY BEHIND OUR LOGO

In 2020 the Board, staff and members of Nari Nari Tribal came together to develop a new logo to represent the organisation.

The logo is made up of four interwoven elements; a green outer circle, representing NNTC's commitment to Caring for Country, and blue to symbolise rivers and waterways.

In the centre, the orange circle embodies the earth below us.

At the heart of the design footprints represent the people - our Custodians are central to all aspects of land and water management.

As we care for the land and water of this Country, so too the Country cares for us.





