Tour plans ramp up for pristine Dalumba

DREAMS are progressing to create a tourism business at Dalumba Bay.

Dalumba Bay is located in Groote Eylandt’s south east in a remote and pristine area that has been mostly closed to the public.

ALC anthropologist Hugh Bland said there were no plans to open it as a recreational area but to host tour groups.

Ida Mamarika said it would be a way for people to spend more time on country and pass on knowledge.

The ALC transported families to the area for three days in October, following a groundswell of support within Umbakumba for younger people to get back on country rather than staying in the community. Continued pg. 3.
Better protection for eastern beaches

AT LEAST 15 marine patrols will leave from Umbakumba in the next year to protect beaches and marine life at the south east of Groote Eylandt.

The first two patrols from the eastern community were done in October and the ALC’s Umbakumba rangers will continue to patrol at least every fortnight.

ALC Rangers commit to at least 30 patrols in local sea country each year.

For most of 2016 this was done with just one qualified coxswain leaving from Angurugu, until ALC Umbakumba Ranger Coordinator, Luke Radcliffe, completed his ticket recently.

Luke said doing patrols from Umbakumba would take pressure off Angurugu-based rangers.

"Previously most marine patrols were done on the north-western part of the Groote Eylandt coastline because it was more accessible from Angurugu," Luke said.

"From Umbakumba it is a lot less hours and distance to get to some of the far south east parts of the island, especially around Dalumba Bay, which is prime location for nets to wash up."

Ranger Alex Ngalmi said so far the patrols by the ALC’s Umbakumba rangers had been to find and remove so called “ghost nets”, which are abandoned fishing nets that have washed up on shores.

Thousands have washed up on shores across northern Australia in the past few years, mainly from Indonesia, trapping marine life and have a devastating impact. Many enter the Gulf, move in a clockwise position and wash up on the shores in different areas.

"We keep the shores safe for animals such as dugong that might get caught and die on ghost nets," Alex said.

"It is easy to remove the smaller ghost nets but the bigger ones, we need to take to the sand and cut them up by grinder because we can’t get them onto the boat otherwise."

He said they also collected rubbish along the beach to stop turtles and other animals from choking on items such as plastic.

"While we have been out on patrol, we have seen a lot of saltwater animals in the water," Alex said.

"We all like the beach and it’s important that we look after it."

He hoped to do his coxswain ticket soon so he could skipper the boat himself.
Protection for new rock art sites

A WELL-KNOWN Australian rock art researcher has been impressed by the number of art sites and variety of the art on Groote Eylandt.

Dr David Welch spent 11 days on traditional lands of Jaragba, Wurragwagwa, Barabara and Yantarrnga in two areas along Umbakumba Road together with two ALC staff.

Dr Welch said the sites contained some of the oldest art he had seen, much of it thousands of years old and with many similarities to Kimberley and Kakadu art.

He said rock art was a central part of Anindilyakwa culture and was intimately connected to land, law and religious belief; and he was surprised at how much art was found in a relatively small area.

It is the fifth rock are survey commissioned by the ALC in the past three years.

The first areas were in the southern areas of the island that required protection from future mining projects.

ALC environment manager Ross McDonald said they were trying to work their way right across the islands to identify what areas required extra protection.

"The idea is that we locate art that can be used in future to do more intensive surveys if required," Ross said.

As they worked their way across more than 5000 hectares, they took photos of the art, recorded GPS sites and noted any risks to the art such as fire, tree roots, mud wasp nests and termite trails.

Dr Welch has made recommendations within the juras produced to protect some of the newly discovered art, saying some was in danger of being destroyed by termites and tree roots.

The information is kept by the ALC and rangers will use it to protect the art work, record culture and act as a record of past ancestors of daily life at that time. Ross said if Traditional Owners were interested, some of the recently recorded art sites could be important future tourism locations.

Aboriginal art is based on story-telling, using symbols as an alternative method of writing down stories of cultural importance, as sharing knowledge about survival and land management.

SURVEYS: Much of the newly discovered sites had been forgotten about.

70 transported to proposed Dalumba campsite

Continued from front cover

It was a logistical challenge to transport 70 people via helicopter and 4WD to camp near Turtle Beach with anthropologist Dr Jackie Gould and lead author of the Groote Seas Native Title Claim, Dr Scott Cane.

Another meeting with all families represented was held in Umbakumba later in October. Hugh said there was a general consensus to consider culturally approved tourism plans in a process being led by the ALC Royalty Development Unit.

"We are obviously a long way off development but the next steps will be to do with scoping the cost of potential infrastructure, to locate funds, and put in place an Indigenous corporation to run the tours," Hugh said.

The site being considered for tourism development in Dalumba Bay is where the current access road comes onto the beach in an area of woodland adjacent to Miller’s Camp.

The last outstations at Dalumba Bay stopped being used over 10 years ago.
Still, sleeping at night by fires meant they sometimes got burnt. Strong sunshine and some foods caused headaches, and eye infections were common. Eating sour fruits or rancid meat caused digestive issues, and coarse food wore teeth down to the nerves. Jellyfish and snakes stung, and occasional fights ended in bruising and gashing.

They would use a range of bush medicines to deal with these ailments.

Angurugu woman Charlene Lalara, who works in the newly opened Bush Medijina on Groote Eylandt, said for small health problems, she still preferred the treatments to going to the clinic.

“It’s better than the western medicine and you can cure things quickly,” Charlene said. “We use bush medicine for so many things, including to treat sores, scabies, colds and flus.”

Bush Medijina is a business that officially opened in October to employ and empower local women.

Employee Cherylisa Mamarika said the opening was a big event for both employees and visitors.

“It was really good, everyone enjoyed the day and what we are doing, we had a good turnout,” Cherylisa said.

Cherylisa, Charlene and their co-workers Sasha Amaqula, Lorisanne Mamarika, Renita Lalara and Bridget Mamarika welcomed guests with four varieties of bush medicine ice tea and a slice of cake before being pampered.

Treatments included hot rock and paperbark massage, crushed coral foot spa and hair braiding and nails. Charlene said the hot rock and paperbark massage was a hit.

The women boiled the paperbark and hot rocks over the fire in bush medicine, then wrapped the rocks in paperbark and applied to affected areas. This was followed by massage with products such as Mawilyaburna and Mamarra, good for muscles soreness, stress relief and general aches and pains.

The women are now busy in the lead up to Christmas preparing and packaging gift packs, which are available from the Anindilyakwa Art Gallery and at occasional market stalls.

Cherylisa said she had learned bush medicine from her grandmother and aunty. She said the plants could be found all over Groote Eylandt.

“It usually takes a day or two to make the medicines because they have to be left overnight and prepared the next day,” Charlene said.

The women will also be doing training over the next couple of months and will be offering bush spa workshops in the New Year.

Hampers to bring Christmas cheer

HAMPERS will be delivered by GEBIE in Angurugu on Wednesday, December 7, in Umbakumba on December 8, and on Bickerton Island on December 9. After the popularity of last year’s hampers, the GEBIE Social Program hopes to deliver the hampers each year instead of the December monthly medical purchase order. Each hamper is made up of three boxes of festive foods such as a leg of pork, leg of ham, Christmas pudding, Christmas cake, ice-cream, custard and more.
Community spirit for school attendance

POSITIVE: Teachers, assistants, students and family and community members woke up early to make Umbakumba’s Back to School Walk a bright and fun way to bring in the last school term of the year. Groote Eylandt’s Remote School Attendance Strategy team has big plans to further improve school attendance in 2017. More details in the next issue of Ayakwa.

Ocean mapping project begins

THE ALC has teamed up with the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) to protect local sea country from future mining and other threats.

The two-year project that started in November aims to collect information to better understand, protect and manage the Groote Archipelago seas.

The NT Government has a moratorium on seabed exploration and mining in the NT’s coastal waters until March 2018 pending the outcome of a comprehensive assessment by the Environment Protection Authority. The moratorium follows lobbying by the ALC and other stakeholders.

ALC mining manager Ross McDonald said the seas around Groote are also now protected by a reserve from mining law however a change in government means this protection could disappear in the future so we need as much information as possible to help us protect the seas.

"Any mining of the Archipelago’s seabed would devastate the feeding grounds of fish, turtles, dolphins and dugongs," Ross said.

"The aim of the ALC is to gain as many protective layers over the sea as possible."

He said the project, which started in November, would map habitats including reefs, sea grasses, fish and coral in a bid to understand "what’s actually out there."

The project would also map ocean currents to determine any future threats from oil spills, pollution and do sediment sampling.

"We will look at mud and sands in some places on the sea floor for signs of pollution from heavy metals as a result of mining, not just from mining from Groote but from other mining areas in the Gulf."

"Basically we are looking at the health of the sea country, ensuring that if people catch fish or turtles they are still healthy to eat."

"It will allow the ALC and the Land & Sea Rangers to do a better job of protecting areas that are sensitive, whether they are culturally or environmentally important."

Charles Darwin University researcher Dr Jackie Gould would also be involved in the project and would be on island to follow up on information traditional owners already have on areas and uses of the sea.

Information collected would be used to create a map for future use and by Rangers to better manage the Groote Eylandt Indigenous Protected Area (IPA).

Ross said the surveying would require a few small samples of mud or sand in some places otherwise it would not impact on the sea floor, reefs or any other sensitive areas.
FREE CHILD CAR SEATS

ANYONE that missed out on a child car seat can still have one installed for free by calling GEBIE.

Car seat installation days were held in Milyakburra, Angurugu and Umbakumba in October with the newly certified fitters, trained by Kidsafe NT in a two-day course.

GEBIE Social Program manager Jenny Parmenter said children up to the age of seven years are required by NT Traffic Laws to use car seats.

“Using a car seat is important to keep babies and children safe in the case of an accident,” Jenny said. “Our supply and installation program is supported by GEBIE, Kidsafe NT, NT Police, South 32, MACC, Seaswift, Drivesafe NT and Infasecure.

“Properly installed car seats reduce the risk of injury and death to children in car accidents by as much as 80 per cent.”

Online MJD learning for health workers

A NEW online learning unit has been released for health professionals to learn about Machado Joseph Disease (MJD) before seeing an affected patient for the first time.

MJD Foundation chief executive Nadia Lindop said it was a more efficient way to educate clinics and hospitals, given the growing numbers of Indigenous Australians affected and the number of those ‘at risk’ increasing.

She said five times as many people now had the disease compared to when the Foundation started in 2008.

The Federal Health department funded the Foundation to develop the module to complement the Remote Area Health Corps’ existing health modules aimed at health professionals new to remote communities.

The eLearning module, which takes two to three hours to complete, covers aspects of the disease such as: genetic features and prevalence, and management of symptoms such as incontinence, mobility issues, speech and swallowing difficulty, sleep disturbances, muscle cramping and pain, and social and emotional wellbeing.

The new module was launched on November 15 at NT Parliament House, sponsored by Health Minister Natasha Fyles.

EDUCATION: Joyce Lalara and speech therapist Michaela Jackson hope the new learning module will improve awareness.

SAFETY FIRST: Newly certified trainers, Varren Amagula and Neville Wurramara use their new skills to install a car seat.
Bush textiles in time for Christmas

BUSH-DYED textiles made on Groote Eylandt are selling in Darwin – and as far away as Tasmania.

Bush dying is similar to tie-dying but uses natural bush materials to make the dye.

Artist Aly de Groote finished another week of successful workshops teaching the craft in October.

Coordinator Bernadette Watt said they wanted to up skill big groups of women who could teach other women.

“We often have women come and go in the communities so there are always new women wanting to learn,” Bernadette said.

“Training lots of women means younger artists can learn from older artists rather than always having new workshops.

“Aly is helping to make sure we continue to produce high quality work to sell.”

Women participated in the fabric dying workshops in Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra with beautiful results.

They worked with textiles such as woollen scarves, t-shirts and singlets, some of which will be exported to the NT Museum and Art Gallery Shop, Nomad Art in Parap and Art Mob gallery in Tasmania.

The Anindilyakwa Art Gallery in Alyangula also has a range of new works for sale in time for Christmas.

Money for outstation maintenance

TRADITIONAL owners on outstations can now access more money for repairs and maintenance works to provide health and safety, shelter, sustainable power and water systems and disability modifications.

The Homelands Extra Allowance has been increased from $5200 to $10,000 per person for expenses such as ramps for wheelchair access, green technology which is energy and cost efficient, termite treatment, electricity supply and maintenance, and extended living spaces.

Community Services Minister Bess Price said up to 10,000 Aboriginal people were estimated to be living on more than 400 homelands throughout the NT.

“Homelands residents often live in some of the most remote areas of Australia where reliability of potable water and essential services is critical to maintain healthy living and enable active participation in society,” she said.
‘Keep speaking in language’: linguist

ASAC’S new linguist has come from the bustling streets of London to the dusty streets of Angurugu because he is passionate about supporting Indigenous languages.

David Nathan says he is excited to be working in the Groote Eylandt communities, where the language is spoken across all generations.

In the late 18th century, there were more than 300 Aboriginal languages spoken in Australia. Now, less than 100 remain in daily use, but David says most of these are “spoken by a very small number of old people, and not with the detail, beauty and range of the entire language”.

“There are only a handful of languages where children speak it fully as a mother tongue and Anindilyakwa is one of them,” he said.

Even though Anindilyakwa is among the strongest Indigenous languages in Australia, it is still at risk of dying out within a couple of generations.

“The language will stay alive if people decide day by day to keep using it,” he said. “As a linguist I hope my contributions can help maintain the language’s status so that there continue to be positive reasons for its owners to use it.”

David previously worked with Aboriginal people in the Western Desert; at Batchelor Institute’s Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics; and for 10 years as director of the Endangered Languages Archive in London.

“Working on Groote Eylandt is special for me because it’s a chance to use what I learned overseas, here in a community setting,” David said.

Part of his work will involve looking over work by linguists and others in the 50 years since missionary days and working out how to preserve and catalogue it for use in the future.

He also plans to work with the Language Centre team to make multimedia apps and other online language resources.

He said he is passionate about making more audio resources available, and advocating for more Anindilyakwa-only material, because if the environment is dominated by English and bilingual material “it doesn’t fully respect the language or encourage the language to be learnt in detail.”

DENTIST VISIT

A DENTIST and dental assistant will be at Angurugu and Alyangula health clinics from November 29 until December 15. The Anindilyakwa Oral Health program provides free dental care for children and adults of Anindilyakwa descent.

INTERPRETER SERVICE

AN interpreter service has become one of the biggest employers of Aboriginal people in Australia. The NT Government’s Aboriginal Interpreter Service – which has an office on Groote Eylandt – provides a 24-hour booking service.

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