VALUES AND THREATS

Jawoyn Healthy Country Plan

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2018-2028
The Jawoyn Association wanted a practical and community owned plan to guide all major land management and cultural activities on Jawoyn Country.

The plan had to come from the dreams, concerns and knowledge of the Jawoyn people.

The plan will be used to guide the Jawoyn Association’s work, direct the Jawoyn Ranger Program and engage with government agencies and other stakeholders in natural resource management. It will also help guide land use negotiations and decision makers when considering the future of economic development across Jawoyn Country.

The planning process occurred during September 2016 with 3 large community meetings organised by the Healthy Country Plan Working Group. One at Pine Creek, along with Werebun community members. One at Nitmiluk Gorge for all Katherine based people. The other at Baranga with people from Manyallaluk and Wugalarr bused in. A steering committee of 8 people were selected from these meetings to help guide this healthy country plan and ensure its integrity.

The plan is separated into two parts:

**Values**—This is everything that people cared about and wanted to protect and look after into the future.

**Threats**—These are the things that are impacting our Values.

Our work is to be focused on protecting these values and reducing these threats.

We would like to acknowledge all who contributed to this plan. In particular, leading elders who were part of the steering committee who have since passed away. Their legacy lives on in our work.
Value 1

Living Culture

This is everything; our languages, knowledge, history, people’s identity and law. This is how we work together with strong leadership for our land and our people.

What we want

We want our kids to sit down with our elders, the kids can sit down and listen to them, learn from them.

We want our kids to know their skin and clan group ... where they belong. We don’t want our kids to be frightened of country and we don’t want them to get sick from doing things wrong way. We want all our people to know these things.

We want our kids to learn language might be, Jawoyn, Dalabon, Myali or Rembarrnga.
Value 2

Cultural Sites and Rock Art

Across Jawoyn country we have many special places of great cultural importance. We have thousands of rock art galleries, burial places, sacred sites, and ceremony grounds. We have archeological sites from the first people right through to more recent mining history and shows our ongoing connection to our land for over 40,000 years.

What we want

Our elders will help us identify the most important sites to be cared for.

We want the right people and families and elders to be involved with these sites.

We will have the technical skills to care for and document our own sites and rangers and young people will be given the culture knowledge to confidently visit and manage these important places.

We want to be caring for all the priority cultural sites on Jawoyn land.
Value 3

Important Plants

Our plants play a part of everyday life for our people. We value many different plants on our country, for food, medicine, fibre and tools. Our knowledge of our plants is strong and we want to keep it that way. Having healthy plants shows that country is looked after.

What we want

We need to be able to find and harvest plants where they have always been found.

We need to know what to do to protect and encourage these important plants to grow and fruit.

People need to know the protocol to harvest, prepare and use plants.

In the future, plant resources will be able to support businesses and livelihoods.

We want to make some important plants more accessible by planting crops in gardens, these gardens can be used to teach others this plant knowledge.
Value 4

Important Animals

There are many important animals on Jawoyn land that are part of healthy country.

Our animals are culturally important and we are spiritually connected to them all through our stories and beliefs. We love eating bush meat and know it is healthy for us and we go to a lot of effort to hunt and fish.

What we want

We need to be able to find and harvest animals where they have always been found.

We want our animals populations to be rich on our land, and people to enjoy healthy bush tucker in their everyday diet.

We will call out to our old people and the country will give us good fishing and hunting.
Value 5

“Wark” Water Places

Our rivers, billabongs and springs are full of life, it is at these places we go fishing and hunting with our family. Many important plants and animals are only good when our water is healthy.

What we want

We want our water to be clean and safe to drink.
We want to enjoy healthy and rich resources from these water places into the future.
We want to fix up these areas and make all Jawoyn springs and waterways healthy again.
We want to be involved in the planning and understand any development project that could damage our water in Jawoyn country.
Value 6

Fire Management Tools

Fire is our most powerful land management tool. We have used fire to protect and restore Jawoyn land for thousands of years. We do fire work on all our country and it lets us get around to many different areas.

What we want

Fire continues to be used as a powerful land management tool to look after country by rangers and Traditional Owners.

Our extensive fire knowledge using both science and traditional knowledge is being applied across Jawoyn land. We want everyone to work together with this to look after country.

We want to form new partnerships to extend our fire management across all Jawoyn Land.

Special places and animals are getting the right fire management they need to thrive.
Value 7

Getting on Country

Maintaining a strong connection to country is very important for Jawoyn people. The land makes us strong and we are proud of our knowledge, culture and identity. Out bush is where our stories are passed on and where our kids can learn off the land as our ancestors did in the old days.

What we want

We want to help all our people get back onto country and create new opportunities to visit country.
We want our people to be able to travel easily on their country.
We want to look after and make more roads and remote work stations on country.
We want our people to know country, so we are confident and then land and our old people will be happy.
We want Jawoyn communities to know their legal rights and responsibility for accessing country.
Value 8

Employment on Country

On country employment leads to an increase in pride, confidence, cultural knowledge and overall wellbeing. This provides opportunities to maintain our country and look after culture while also making a living that supports us in the modern world and this shows our kids bright hope for the future.

What we want

We want our people to have meaningful on country employment into the future. Young people will want to work on country.

We want an easy path from education and training into employment. We want our junior rangers to move to professional rangers and custodians for our land.

We want them to grow within these employment organisations too so they can take on stronger leadership roles.
Threat 1
Feral Animals

There are many different feral animals that are living on our country and causing damage. They are digging up and trampling our wetlands. This washes mud and silt into our waterways making them muddy and shallow and we cannot drink that water. They are killing our animals, eating our important plants, destroying our rock art and frightening people off country.

The main feral animals we have on Jawoyn country is:

• Buffalo
• Donkeys and horses
• Cats
• Cane toads
• Pigs

ACTIONS

The Feral Animal Management Program will help reduce the impact of feral animals on our country and provide benefits to our communities. This will include:

• Fencing off springs
• Carefully planned commercial activities
• Animal control.
Threat 2

Lonely Country

Jawoyn country is a big area, but most of our people are living in communities. We walk around and hunt close to these places and visit country when we can, but a lot of areas are not visited and we don’t walk the land as our old people did. Old people feel sad when country is not visited or looked after. They say that when this happens the country is lonely.

ACTIONS

Our Getting on Country program will help families visit country. This will include:

- Good roads
- Remote work stations
- Culture camps.
Threat 3

Bad Fire Practices

Fire is a powerful and traditional land management tool but country can also be damaged by wrong fire practices. Too much country can be burnt by large hot fires that burn later in the dry season, this makes it hard for our animals to find food and they can go hungry.

Jawoyn association make money off selling the carbon credits from stopping these late season fires. This money funds all our other Land Management Projects and contributes to the employment of many Jawoyn people.

ACTIONS

Our rangers will continue to work together with our elders and community to do our Fire Management Program. This includes:

• Continuing to make good money from our fire program through Carbon Credits
• Monitoring to make sure our fire management is making country healthy
• Reducing unplanned fires on Jawoyn country, especially late season wildfire.
Threat 4

Unauthorised Land Use

People are using Jawoyn lands without proper permission, sometimes it is pig/buffalo hunting or fishing or metal detecting. This causes many problems for us and makes us feel unsafe.

If sacred sites are trespassed it can have severe consequences for us.

When people use our land without our permission it undermines authority of Jawoyn land owners and custodians.

We like to share our country with others, with visitors and commercial activities, but it needs to be on our terms.

ACTIONS

We want to know who is on our country and where they are. We will make a Visitor Permit System that lets visitors respectfully share our country.

We need to be trained to check if visitors have the right approvals to be on our country.
Threat 5
Weeds

Many new plants have arrived on Jawoyn land, some of these weeds can threaten the overall health of our country. Weeds can change country quickly, they push out our native plants which are the food or shelter for many of our animals. They can grow quickly and produce a lot of seed. They can encourage hot intense wild fires, and threaten our wetlands.

The worst weeds are Gamba Grass, Grader Grass, Mission Grass, Hyptis, Chinee Apple, Bellyache Bush and Parkinsonia.

ACTIONS

The Weed Management Program will help reduce the impact of these weeds on our country.

This will help us to:

• Keep on top of new weed threats
• Stop Gamba Grass spreading on our land and keep it out of Arnhem Land.
Threat 6

Distractions/Unhealthy Lifestyle

Our communities are struggling with disadvantage. Unemployment, overcrowding and poor education. This all contributes to bad health for many of our people and social problems including drug and alcohol abuse, depression and violence. We struggle to keep our culture strong with our kids when they are overwhelmed by media and other culture. This is making our country, culture and people sad. Maintaining a strong connection to country makes us healthy, proud and happy.

ACTIONS

Our Getting on Country program helps us to reconnect with country and culture. This includes:

• Back to Country camps and Culture camps
• School programs such as Junior Rangers
• Creating more on country employment will reduce unemployment and poverty.
Threat 7
Development Pressure

Agriculture and pastoral development will see more land clearing and demands on our water. Too much ground water can be used and springs might dry up. There will be pressure to dam our rivers. Mining will continue on Jawoyn land and add to the legacy pollution we already have.

As climate changes we can expect severe weather and other unknown issues.

ACTIONS

Our Land Management Committee will be set up to help influence development projects to make sure:

- It is beneficial to us all and won’t damage our country
- That development will be careful and beneficial to our people
- We are involved in decision making for any development on our country.