

# Ngurupai Land and Sea Profile



## OVERVIEW

Traditional island name	<b>Ngurupai</b>
Western name	<b>Horn</b>
Inner Islands Cluster	<b>Kaurareg Nation</b>
Local government	<b>TSC</b>
Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC)	<b>Kaurareg Native Title (Aboriginal) Corporation RNTBC</b>
Land type	<b>Continental Island</b>
Air distance from Thursday Island (km)	<b>9</b>
Area (ha)	<b>5345</b>
Indicative max length (km)	<b>9</b>
Indicative max breadth (km)	<b>7</b>
Max elevation (m)	<b>112</b>
Coastline length (km)	<b>30</b>
Population (2011 ABS Census)	<b>539</b>
Area of island zoned development (ha)	<b>NA</b>
Area of disturbed / undisturbed vegetation (ha/%)	<b>About 534 (10%) / About 4811 (90%)</b>

## RANGER GROUP

## MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

### LAND



### SEA



### PEOPLE



## KEY VALUES



Healthy sea ecosystems



Marine water quality



Coral reefs



Seagrass meadows



Dugong



Marine turtles



Subsistence fishing



Healthy land ecosystems



Sustainable human settlements



Coasts and beaches



Mangroves and wetlands



Coastal birds

## CLIMATE CHANGE RISK

Vulnerability to sea level rise (+1.0m) **Very Low**

Sea level rise response options **Very High**



## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Ngurupai is a large (5,345ha) continental island in the Kaiwalagal Archipelago (Inner Islands Cluster) of the Torres Strait about 9km southeast of Thursday Island. Ngurupai (population 539) is part of the Thursday Island group of islands that lies close to Cape York Peninsula and shares similar topography and geological history with the mainland. The community is located on the northwestern side of the island.

The topography of Ngurupai includes hills and mounds of basaltic rock (highest point 112m). Over 90% of the island is covered in undisturbed vegetation, with closed and open forest, grasslands and intertidal wetlands and mangroves on the coastal margins. Extensive burning of grass and woodlands in the summer months is prevalent across the Inner Islands cluster.

Native title is recognised over Horn Island and is held in trust by the Kaurareg Aboriginal Native Title Corporation RNTBC. Kaurareg Aboriginal Land Trust holds tenure over 75% of Ngurupai as Aboriginal freehold land. Ngurupai and other uninhabited islands in the vicinity of Ngurupai are within Torres Shire Council's jurisdiction.



This map is based on the proposed dugong and turtle management area. Dugong and turtle management areas show the general area of operation of community-based land and sea Rangers. The best available information (including traditional place names) has been used at the time of publication. This map is indicative only and not intended for native title purposes.

## RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Recent land and sea management achievements include:

- Native title secured over Ngurupai and six other islands
- Community participation in inter-tidal and sub-tidal seagrass monitoring and training activities
- Marine debris monitoring and management activities, including removal of ghost nets
- Community participation in the Sustainable Horticulture Project, including the Horn Island harmony garden fruit tree planting
- Horn Island cane toad population surveys undertaken
- Kaurareg Elders were instrumental in the design of the early phase of the Dugong and Turtle Management Project across the region

## LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT AREA

The Kaiwalagal land and sea management area includes a number of uninhabited islands, reefs and marine areas (see map) covering about 239,123ha.

## MAIN THREATENING PROCESSES

The main threatening processes affecting the Kaiwalagal land and sea management area relate to climate change (inundation from sea level rise, coastal erosion, and impact of changed climate on vegetation), the spread of pest plants and animals, and declining water quality (including marine debris and increasing sedimentation).

## LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Management priorities under the themes of Land, Sea, and People have not yet been identified in a Working on Country Ranger Plan for Kaiwalagal land and sea country and there are currently no Ranger positions (as at 2015). The LSMU supports the aspirations of the Kaurareg People to develop their own land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal region, and to identify and progress priority projects such as dugong and turtle management, protecting significant cultural sites, preserving Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and managing pests.

## DUGONG AND TURTLE MANAGEMENT

There is currently no endorsed Dugong and Turtle Management Plan in place for the Kaiwalagal Region (as at 2015), but Kaurareg organisations will be actively involved in the development of a broader land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal region, including a framework for the sustainable management of dugongs and turtles.

## CLIMATE CHANGE PROFILE

Climate change in the Torres Strait will involve a warming of air and sea temperatures, rising sea levels, more severe weather events, ocean acidification and some changes to rainfall patterns, evaporation, wind and ocean currents. These changes are predicted to have long-term impacts on all of the region's key values across the Land, Sea and People themes. Ngurupai has a 'medium' vulnerability rating to sea level rise and a 'high' response options rating (there are reasonable options to move to a safer site on the island). A rise of 50 cm will start to cause significant tidal inundation of the community. For more information on climate change, please see the Torres Strait Climate Change Strategy 2014-2018.

## TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Ngurupai is part of a cultural landscape of great significance to the Kaurareg people, the Traditional Owners of the Kaiwalagal region. In the development of a land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal region, the Kaurareg people will have the opportunity to identify their priorities for the protection of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) for future generations.

## COMMUNITY HORTICULTURE

The Ngurupai community has previously had an active food producing community garden in place to preserve traditional gardening skills and support greater community self-sufficiency in food production.

## FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The Ngurupai community is highly reliant on air transport, diesel powered electricity generation and barge transport of supplies and materials to and from the community. Renewable energy options will be explored to reduce carbon emissions and work towards energy independence.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As there are currently no Rangers on Ngurupai, community engagement with the Ranger Program is currently limited to region-wide initiatives. As part of negotiations over the development of a land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal Region, Kaurareg Ranger positions may be established on Ngurupai in the future. Kaurareg Rangers would play a key role in on-ground environmental management initiatives as well as community engagement to ensure management activities remain relevant to community priorities.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, visit the TSRA website at <http://www.tsra.gov.au> and the Torres Strait eAtlas <http://ts.eatlas.org.au/ts>