

ABSTRACT FOR QUEENSLAND COASTAL CONFERENCE 2009

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Author: Phil Rist

Organisation: Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

Presenters Name: Phil Rist

Postal Address: PO Box 303, Cardwell Qld 4849

E-mail Address: admin@girringun.com.au

Phone: 07 4066 8300

Fax: 07 4066 8353

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Girringun Aboriginal Corporation – An Overview

Established in 1996, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation represents the cultural interests of nine Traditional Owner groups in the southern Wet Tropics, in the Natural Resource Management process. Girringun's primary focus is to ensure involvement and engagement of Traditional Owners to fulfil their responsibility of caring for our country.

Girringun facilitates Traditional Owner engagement in the NRM process through representation on land management committees, planning, on ground initiatives and recognition of agreed protocols for liaison with Traditional Owner Elders. Looking after our country from a culturally and environmentally responsible viewpoint is fundamental to securing the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of our people.

Some of Girringun's major achievements include: the Cardwell Indigenous Rangers Unit (CIRU) now called Girringun Aboriginal Rangers Unit (GARU) which commenced approximately five years ago when Girringun approached QPWS and GBRMPA to develop a vehicle for Traditional Owners to deliver traditional owner management aspirations including: cultural heritage monitoring and mapping; traditional knowledge recording; sea grass bed monitoring; legislative enforcement (white man law); and TUMRA and cultural enforcement (black man law).

Girringun's TUMRA, representing six Traditional Owner groups with saltwater estates in the adjacent Great Barrier Reef Marine Park has involved a two year planning process between Girringun and various government organisations (GBRMPA, QPWS, EPA, CQLC) and was accredited in December 2005.

The Agreement has implemented a voluntary Traditional Owner management regime regarding turtle and dugong hunting and acknowledges traditional and contemporary law and custom of the six saltwater groups.

The Hinchinbrook Seafood Industry have acknowledged Giringun's authority as the traditional custodians of this area and have begun to negotiate with the Traditional Owners regarding the sustainable harvest of wild barramundi. This is an ongoing process.