

Mabuiag Land and Sea Profile



OVERVIEW

Traditional island name	Mabuiag
Western name	Jervis
Western Islands Cluster	Maluilgal Nation
Local government	TSIRC & TSC
Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC)	Goelmulgaw (TSI) Corporation RNTBC
Land type	Continental Island
Air distance from Thursday Island (km)	71
Area (ha)	648
Indicative max length (km)	4
Indicative max breadth (km)	3
Max elevation (m)	150
Coastline length (km)	13
Population (2011 ABS Census)	261
Area of island zoned development (ha)	63
Area of disturbed / undisturbed vegetation (ha/%)	69 (10.6%) / 579 (89.4%)

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

RANGER GROUP



Rangers
2015



MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

LAND



- Native plants and animals
- Land patrol • Feral animals
- Burning • Weeds
- Coastal management (beach patrol) • Native Nursery

SEA



- Sea patrol
- Seagrass
- Turtle and dugong
- Crocodiles

PEOPLE



- Traditional ecological knowledge
- Traditional and cultural sites (including IPA)
- Community involvement
- Research support

CLIMATE CHANGE RISK

Vulnerability to sea level rise (+1.0m) **Medium**

Sea level rise response options **High**



Supporting the Land and Sea Management Strategy for Torres Strait

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

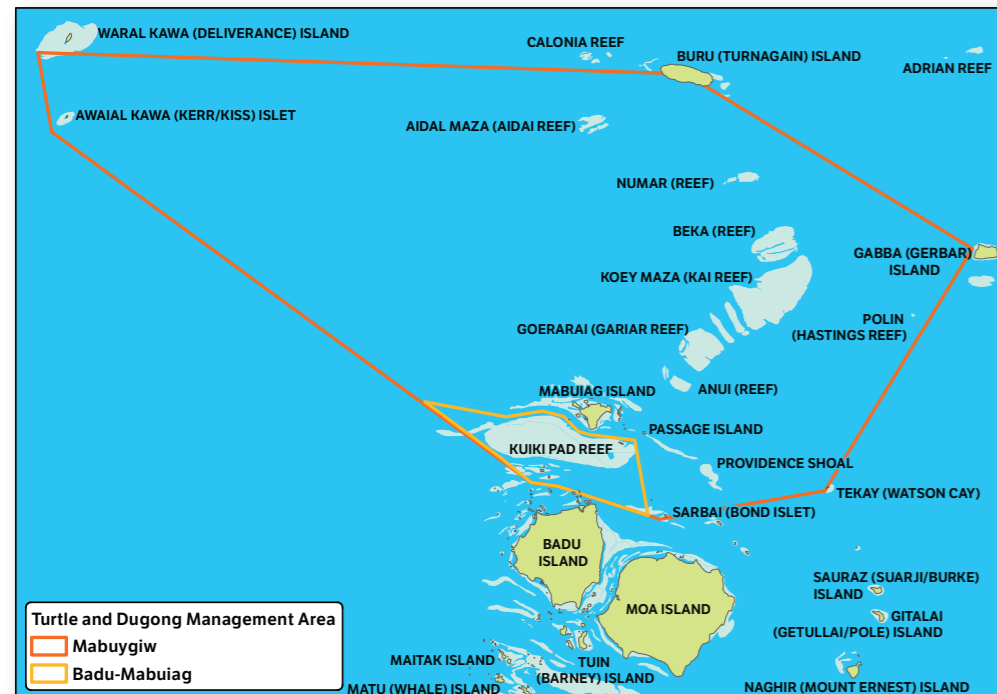
Mabuiag is a small (648ha) continental island in the Western Islands Cluster of the Torres Strait about 71km north of Thursday Island. Mabuiag Island (population 261) is a granitic island and a remnant of the chain of islands forming part of the Australian Great Dividing Range. The community is located on a coastal flat on the southeast side of the island.

The topography consists of steep hills (highest point 150m) covered with scattered forest and light scrub areas, with low-lying regions tending towards swamp and mangroves. More than 89% of the island is covered in undisturbed vegetation.

Native title is recognised over Mabuiag and is held in trust by the Goemulgaw (Torres Strait Islander) Corporation RNTBC.

LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT AREA

The Mabuigiw land and sea management area includes a number of uninhabited islands, reefs and marine areas (see map) covering about 448,011 ha. The area includes the second Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) declared in the Torres Strait (Pulu Islet IPA), adjacent to Mabuiag and declared in 2009.



This map is based on existing dugong and turtle management areas and shows the general areas of operation for community-based land and sea Rangers. 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:

- Community-based dugong and turtle management plan in place
- Ranger group established and Rangers implementing activities under Working on Country plans
- Community participation in inter-tidal and sub-tidal seagrass monitoring and training activities
- Community participation in the Sustainable Horticulture Project, including the establishment of a school garden and community fruit tree planting
- Ranger and RNTBC participation in the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) project, including training in the use of the TEK database system
- Community participation in joint research process with CSIRO and TSRA on community resilience to climate change

MAIN THREATENING PROCESSES

The main threatening processes affecting the Mabuigiw land and sea management area relate to climate change, the spread of pest plants and animals, and declining water quality (including marine debris and increasing sedimentation).

LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Fifteen management priorities under the themes of Land, Sea, and People are identified in the Mabuigiw Working on Country Ranger Plan. There are 3 Ranger positions (2015). The Mabuigiw Rangers will continue to work closely with the community on priority projects including dugong and turtle management, protecting significant cultural sites, preserving Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and managing pests and fire.

DUGONG AND TURTLE MANAGEMENT

The Mabuiag community are actively implementing the Mabuiag Dugong and Turtle Management Plan 2011-2016, that is built on the vision:

“The Goemulgau vision for dugong and turtle management in Goemulgau sea country is the ‘sustainability of sea based resources and the reinforcement of traditional values, cultural protocols and ethics for the traditional people of Mabuiag.’”

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. Mabuiag has a ‘medium’ vulnerability rating to sea level rise and a ‘high’ response options rating (there are good options to move to a safer site on the island). A rise of 100 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

The Mabuiag community is working to protect Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) for future generations. The TEK system enables communities to access information for their own cultural maintenance; support sustainable community based environmental management approaches; and allows Indigenous Rangers’ planning and on-ground cultural and natural resource management activities to be informed by *Ailan Kastom* (Island Custom).

COMMUNITY HORTICULTURE

The Mabuiag community has an active food producing community gardening program in place to preserve traditional gardening skills and support greater community self-sufficiency in food production. The Mabuigiw Rangers have played a role in the community nursery for propagation of native plants for revegetation projects.

FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The Mabuiag 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

Mabuigiw Rangers engage with the community through frequent community notices and ranger talks, community participation in ranger activities, and an annual community celebration and report back. This ensures land and sea management activities remain relevant to community priorities.

SOME OF MABUIAG’S IMPORTANT ANIMALS & PLANTS



Beach Stone-curlew
Photo: Terry Reis



Macleay’s Rainbow Skink
Photo: Ian Gynther



Buzamaar
Photo: Melinda McLean



Noni Plum or Cheesefruit
Photo: Michael Hermann, Wikimedia Commons

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>