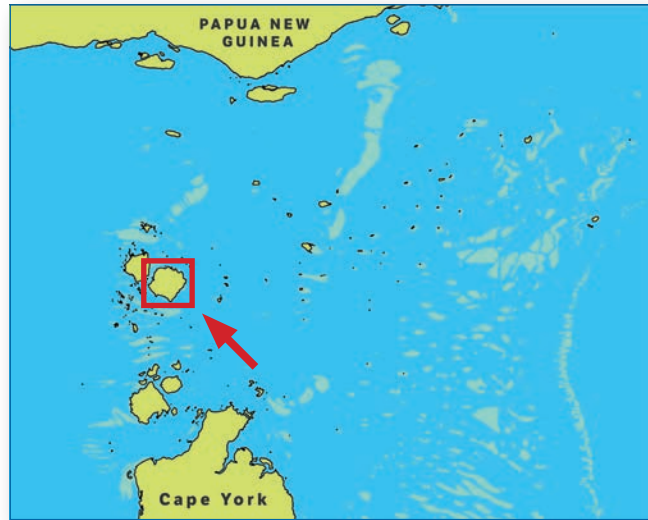


Mua Land and Sea Profile



OVERVIEW

Traditional island name	Mua
Western name	Banks
Western Islands Cluster	Maluilgal Nation
Local government	TSIRC & TSC
Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC)	Mualgal (TSI) Corporation RNTBC
Land type	Continental Island
Air distance from Thursday Island (km)	40
Area (ha)	17164
Indicative max length (km)	17
Indicative max breadth (km)	16
Max elevation (m)	370
Coastline length (km)	59
Population (2011 ABS Census)	420
Area of island zoned development (ha)	NA
Area of disturbed / undisturbed vegetation (ha/%)	424 (2.5%) / 16740 (97.5%)

RANGER GROUP



Rangers
2015



MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

LAND



- Ecological survey
- Feral animals
- Weeds • Burning
- Community garden
- Native nursery

SEA



- Turtle and dugong
- Crocodiles
- Marine debris

PEOPLE



- Research support
- Community involvement
- Traditional ecological knowledge
- Traditional and cultural sites

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) **Medium**

Sea level rise response options **High**



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Mua is a very large (17,164ha) continental island in the Western Islands Cluster of the Torres Strait about 40km north of Thursday Island. Mua (population 420) is a granitic island and a remnant of the chain of islands forming part of the Australian Great Dividing Range. There are two communities on Mua - Kubin and St Pauls - located about 15km apart on the southwestern and eastern sides of the island respectively.

The topography of Mua consists of steep rugged hills including Mt Augustus (370m), the highest point in the Torres Strait. The hills comprise gravelly clay and rocky outcrops and are covered with open and closed forest, with melaleuca (tea trees) on lower slopes near the coast. More than 97% of the island is covered in undisturbed vegetation.

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

LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT AREA

The Mua land and sea management area includes a number of uninhabited islands, reefs and marine areas (see map). The Mualgal (Kubin/St Pauls) Dugong and Turtle Management Area covers about 194,357ha.



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
- Feral animal management, including pig trapping
- Weed mapping and management activities
- Ranger and RNTBC participation in the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) project, including training in the use of the TEK database system

MAIN THREATENING PROCESSES

The main threatening processes affecting the Mua 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

Thirteen management priorities under the themes of Land, Sea, and People are identified in the (draft) Mua Working on Country Ranger Plan. There are 6 Ranger positions (as at 2015). The Mua Lagalgau Rangers will continue to work closely with both communities 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 Mua communities are actively implementing the Mua Dugong and Turtle Management Plan (2011-2016), that is built on the Mualgal Traditional Owners' vision:

"To maintain proactive use of dhangal ar waru resources and fauna within the sea boundaries of the Mualgal nation (Near Western Islands) to protect, preserve and educate the traditional ways of hunting and livelihood of our traditional ancestors and to ensure dhangal ar waru is here for the next generation."

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. Kubin has a 'very low' vulnerability rating to sea level. St Pauls has a 'low' vulnerability rating to sea level and both communities have a 'high' response options rating (there are good options to move to a safer site on the island). For Kubin sea level would need to rise more than 300 cm, and for St Pauls a rise of 90 cm before sea level rise causes regular inundation. For more information on climate change, please see the Torres Strait Climate Change Strategy 2014-2018.

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

The Mua communities are 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 Rangers' planning and on-ground cultural and natural resource management activities to be informed by Ailan Kastom (Island Custom).

COMMUNITY HORTICULTURE

The St Pauls community has an active food producing community garden in place to preserve traditional gardening skills and support greater community self-sufficiency in food production. The Regional Landcare Facilitator has played a leading role in the establishment and maintenance of the community garden, with support from the Mua Lagalgau Rangers

FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The Mua communities are 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

Mua Lagalgau 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 MUA'S IMPORTANT ANIMALS & PLANTS



Emerald Monitor
Photo: Tim Vickers, Wikimedia Commons



Fawn Leafnosed-bat
Photo: Ian Gynter



Cooktown Orchid
Photo: John Hill, Wikimedia Commons



Manilkara kanosienensis
Photo: David Stanton

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>