



Media release

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Hi-tech help to retain local Indigenous cultural knowledge

Efforts by local Traditional Owner Groups to prevent their cultural and environmental knowledge from being lost have been given a boost through new grants to buy equipment for the recording and storing of information.

About \$30,000 has been allocated to six groups under the NQ Dry Tropics' Traditional Ecological Knowledge Project.

It's the first time grants have been allocated to Traditional Owner Groups under the initiative, with funds being used to purchase resources such as computers, GPS equipment, smart whiteboards, and interpretative signage.

The Traditional Owner Groups involved in the project include Nywaigi (Ingham to north of Townsville), Manbarra (Palm Island), Bindal (Townsville), Gudjal (Charters Towers), Jangga (Mount Coolon), Juru (Ayr).

NQ Dry Tropics Engagement Officer, Natalie Friday, said the groups want to ensure future generations have a full understanding of the cultural and historical connections Indigenous people have with the environment.

"When our elders die, some of the information passed on to them by their elders is being lost, and that's something this project is looking to reverse," said Natalie.

"For example, GPS equipment will allow groups to pinpoint burial sites, rock art, traditional wells, and artefacts.

"As a nation, we will have lost something precious if we don't do more to record and protect this local cultural knowledge. Projects such as these will provide a map for this Indigenous generation, and those that follow it.

"It's a positive way of using new technology for insights into an ancient culture."

The information will be stored by Traditional Owner Groups in an easily accessible cultural database specifically commissioned by NQ Dry Tropics for the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Project. The database also has the capacity to store recordings of aboriginal languages.

Since being established in 2009, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Project has been responsible for a series of projects that allow groups to access information and funding for land and sea activities important to them.

These included the introduction of a cultural education program to school children in Ayr, and the development of a successful landholders' guide to cultural heritage in the region, called 'Healthy Land Yarn'.

Funding support for the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Project has been received through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative.

NQ Dry Tropics' region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays. **Media contact:** Sara Lando 4722 5729 or 0466 014 728.
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