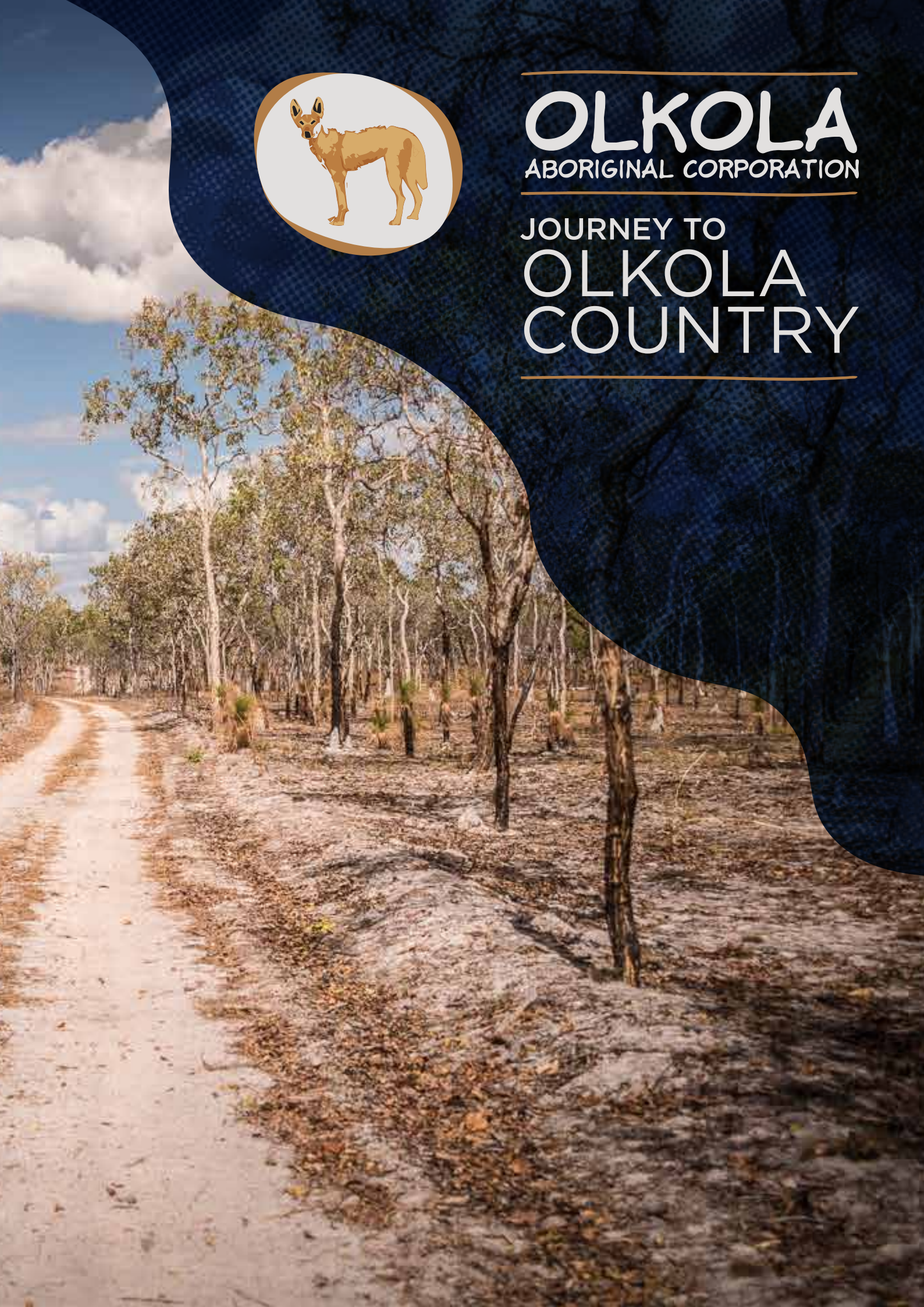




OLKOLA
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

JOURNEY TO
OLKOLA
COUNTRY



Killarney Station
Photo Monash University



Killarney Station
Photo John Pender



Olkola Country
Photo Olkola

WELCOME TO OLKOLA COUNTRY

Nukakurra Lagoon
Photo John Pender

The Olkola people welcome you on tour through Olkola Country. During your tour you will visit our special places and see the country with the guidance of the Olkola Traditional owners, you will hear their stories and see the bush through their eyes.

Camp will be set up at Killarney, with each tour limited to 10 people creating a unique and intimate experience. On camp you will be staying in tents with your daily on country meals supplied by Olkola.

The tour will depart the camp daily to visit various locations on Olkola Country, during the excursions you will visit the ancient rock-art, homes of the Alwal (endangered Golden Shouldered Parrot) and story places accompanied the whole time by the Olkola People.

We enjoy bringing people to Olkola country on our tours so we can share our stories and our country on an educational experience that is rewarding for all.

THE OLKOLA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

The tours are run by the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation. We are the largest non-government landholders in the Cape York Peninsula with approximately 1,412,000 hectares under our care.

The Corporation ensures that everything on country including tours follows our healthy country plan which is a compilation of targets the corporation is working towards - the biggest points of the plan are to improve, protect, restore and keep healthy the Olkola Country.

Tourism as a sustainable way to provide employment and to reinvest into the organization for running costs, infrastructure development and various programs run on country but also to share our stories and provide an authentic on country experience.



WHERE IS OLKOLA COUNTRY?

Olkola Country is located 5 Hours from Cairns in the middle of Cape York with Laura and Cooktown to the West and Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw to the East.



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We want to bring our People home to Olkola Country and respect the ways of our Old People.

Together we have one Language, one Home and are one Tribe.

Our Past Elders are a part of our Country. We see you everywhere - through our stories, in our animals, in the land and in the water. By keeping our Country and Culture alive and healthy we keep our connection to our Old People.

Many Olkola Families have fought hard to get our land back in the last 30 years. Without their fight we would not be here.

Olkola Healthy Country Plan

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HISTORY OF THE OLKOLA PEOPLE

European invasion of Olkola Country occurred during the early 1800's which saw almost all of Olkola Country converted to Cattle stations.

Whilst some Olkola People were able to stay on country, others were forcibly removed by the Government and placed in communities, far and wide throughout Queensland; a shared fate of many Aboriginal groups in Australia.

Thus began one hundred years of displacement through which Olkola people have fought to sustain our community, culture and connections to country. It is a Struggle we are winning.

In 1995 Olkola people successfully petitioned for the purchase and subsequent grant of Glen Garland Station, a key portion of our traditional lands. In 2014 we negotiated the handback of the Olkola Five (Dixie, Wulupan, Killarney, Strathmay and Crosbie Stations).

Today Many Olkola People live far and wide - with many Olkola people living on country in Cape York communities, other Queensland communities and on Olkola Properties such as Strathmay Station, Glen Garland Station, Killarney Station, even at New Dixie Station.

As Olkola people we are united in our quest to move forward; to return to country, care for country and culture, and pursue sustainable land-based enterprises.

THE PROCESS OF RETURNING TO LAND



Killarney Station
Photo Anette Ruzicka

The Cape York land tenure resolution process is facilitating the return of millions of hectares of land back to the Traditional Owners. It is unique within Australia, and the world.

In 1996, after years of Indigenous-led campaigning, the Queensland Government committed to acquire significant pastoral leases and return the land to rightful Traditional Owners.

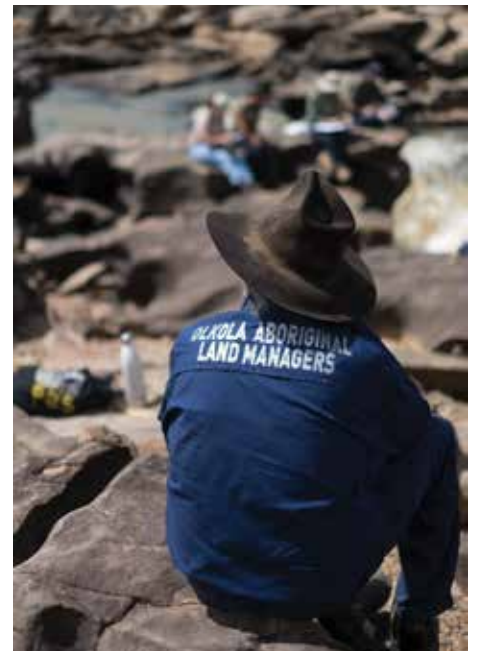
The process has led to the creation of a new kind of national park – just like Olkola – and freehold country, where Traditional Owners and state government work together to manage the land.

Today, more than 3 million hectares of land has been returned to Aboriginal clans across Cape York.

The return of land to Olkola has resulted in a continuous belt of Aboriginal owned and managed land, from the Coral Sea to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Our connection to our Country and our Language may have been damaged, but it was never forgotten.

Olkola Elder
Photo Georgia Nowak



OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE

“The Olkola people are united in their quest to return to and care for country, and to pursue sustainable opportunities to provide for our people”

– Deb Ross-Symonds, CEO of the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation

We are descendants of the Uw Okola speaking peoples, connected in kinship despite the forced removal of many of our Old people from our ancestral arrgi (land), which our clans and families have lived off and cared for over countless generations.

Science dates Aboriginal occupation in central Cape York back as far as 34,000 years before present.

We are ‘Freshwater People’ with traditional lands in Central Cape York.

Olkola people form five main clan groups originating from our dreamings within the Uw Olkola lands; being - Ootalkarra -the Dingo and boss of Olkola Country, Kurrumbila - the Grasshopper, Kan Kan - the Fish Hawke, Ilanyarra - the Worm, and the Hot Water People. Each

Dreaming has its main story place on Olkola Country, with many other important story places and sacred sites within those Dreaming Areas.

There are also many Laws about Country and places that have been left by our Old People that we must follow in order to care for the health of our Country and our People. As a Corporation, we have formally adopted ‘the Olkola Way, Protocol to Accessing Country’ into our Rulebook as the first step to bringing Olkola Law and Custom to the forefront of everything we do.

HOW WE CARE FOR COUNTRY



Olkola Ranger
Photo Anette Ruzicka

"It feels really good to be back out on Country working to protect one of our totems, an endangered species"

Ashaley Ross, Alwal Ranger

The Olkola Aboriginal Corporation currently employs Indigenous Rangers to care for the Olkola lands. When you meet the rangers and hear them talk about their story you can see how much the land means to them and how important it is for them to be out there.

While on tour you will have the opportunity to meet some of our amazing rangers, and hear their stories.

"It's good to get our people back on the land. Get the young ones doing the cultural side, pass on the river names, look for artefacts and know their stories."

Jack Lowdown, Olkola Ranger and Cultural Adviser

Aboriginal land is best handled by the Aboriginal people whose story and history starts there. Rangers are there to take care of the land through carbon farming, weed management and wildlife protection.



Olkola Ranger
Photo Olkola

THE TARGETS OF THE CORPORATION



Olkola Elders
Photo Anette Ruzicka

Our targets are the things we value and care about improving, protecting, restoring and keeping healthy. This is what we are working for.

Our Targets:

- Olkola People and wellbeing,
- Cultural Sites and Story Places,
- Traditional Knowledge and Customs,
- Economic Development and Self Governance,
- Infrastructure and Equipment,
- Totems and Wildlife,
- Freshwater Environments,
- Forests and Woodlands,
- High Country - the Great Diving Range,
- Escarpments and Fossils.

You can learn more about our Targets in the Olkola Healthy Country Plan found on the Olkola Website.



Olkola Rangers
Photo Georgia Nowak



THE ALWAL Golden-shouldered Parrot

The gorgeous Alwal is one of Olkola's most significant totems. These totems are important part of the Olkola culture and a central part of our identity. They link ingan (story) connections across our arrgi (land).

The Alwal is also a rare and endangered bird only found in certain types of savanna woodland in the southern central area of Cape York - making this little bird extra special and unique.

These parrots make their nest homes in tall cone-shaped termite mounds, and often return to the same nest site every year. They live on grass seeds and herbaceous plants, and visit waterholes early in the morning.

LIFE IN A TERMITE MOUND



Nest entrance
Photo Olkola

The Alwal's nest inside a chamber they build in termite mounds. These chambers are made up of a 10-15cm long tunnel, leading into a 20cm egg chamber. From February to June, the adult parrots dig out the nest chamber. The female then lays 4-7 eggs, which hatch in about 20 days. Both parents feed their young, who stay in the nest for 4-5 weeks.

Inside these strange nests, a caterpillar also co-exists with the Alwal in a symbiotic relationship. The moth caterpillar (*Trisyntopa scatophaga*) helps keep the nest clean by eating the Alwal's droppings, and the nest provides the perfect food source and shelter for them to spin their tubular silk cocoon.



Sacred Kingfisher (*Todiramphus sanctus*)
Photo Olkola

BIRDS OF OLKOLA COUNTRY

Alwal - golden shouldered parrot
Psephotus chrysopterygius

Red-tailed black cockatoo
Calyptorhynchus banksii

Palm cockatoo
Proboscigar aterrimus

Brown falcon
Falco berigora

Whistling kite
Haliastur sphenurus

Australian bustard
Ardeotis australis

Brolga
Grus rubicundus

Jabiru, Black-necked stork
Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus

Cattle egret
Ardea ibis

Bush stone curlew
Burhinus grallarius

Red Tailed Cockatoo
(*Calyptorhynchus banksii*)
Photo Olkola

Pied butcherbird
Cracticus niglogularis

Galah
Eolophus roseicapilla

Double-barred finch
Taeniopygia bichenovii

Red-backed fairy wren
Malurus melanocephalus

Red-winged parrot
Aprosmictus erythroptus

Rainbow lorikeet
Trichoglossus haematodus

Rainbow bee-eater
Merops ornatus

Yellow honeyeater
Lichenostomas flavus

Little friarbird
Philemon citriogularis

Sacred kingfisher
Todiramphus sanctus







Ajin Burning
Photo Olkola

CARBON FARMING Olkola Ajin(Fire) Savanna Burning Project

Reducing greenhouse gases and earning carbon credits through early season tropical savanna burning in Australia.

A well-managed early dry season burning of tropical savanna, which Indigenous people have long practiced through “fire stick farming”, can significantly reduce

the overall emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly methane and nitrous oxide.

Tropical savannas contain about 30 percent of Australia’s land-based carbon stocks. They are also our most fire-prone biome and wildfires on this country make a significant

contribution to Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions.

On Olkola country – and across Cape York – our rangers are conducting early season tropical savanna burning. These burns help create fire breaks, and minimise wildfires later in the season.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF TERMITES

Termite mounds are a big part of Olkola country. They can be found across most of the landscape and have lots of fascinating uses – including a special home to the Alwal – and are important to the ecosystems of Cape York Peninsula.

7 things you may not know about termites...

- Termites help soil store more water to keep plants alive during the dry season.
- Termites provide fire-resistant nesting sites and shelter for other animals, like birds, lizards and quolls.
- They unlock and recycle energy and nutrients by harvesting grass, wood, soil and debris.
- A year-round food source, termites are loved by ants, lizards, small mammals and birds.
- Termites are not ants!
- They have an intricate caste system made up of a king and queen, workers, soldiers and nymphs.
- Termites are clever architects – some of their cathedral-like mounds are between 50 and 100 years old.



Termite Mounds
on Olkola Country
Photo Olkola



Olkola country
Photo John Pender

ECOLOGY OF COUNTRY

Cape York Peninsula and Olkola country is dominated by climatic, geological and historical influences, which combine to create an amazing range of habitat type.

THE UPLANDS - KIMBA PLATEAU

On Olkola country, in the south central part of the Peninsula Ridge, the Kimba Plateau is part of an upland area known as the 'desert' because it lacks surface water. However the deep-red soils and sands of the plateau 'desert' store a lot of wet season rainfall that sustains taller denser forests and woodlands, and provides life-sustaining groundwater into the catchments of five river systems flowing to the east and west coasts.

A TROPICAL CLIMATE

Cape York sits in the wet-dry tropics. The wet season is short, from November to April when 90% of rain falling during this time. The dry season is longer and dominated by a south-easterly wind sweeping across the peninsula. Olkola country, and the Cape, is often battling droughts or floods, which can make survival more challenging for wildlife, vegetation and people.

AN ANCIENT LAND BRIDGE

The Cape York Peninsula was part of a land bridge between Papua New Guinea and Australia, many thousands of years ago, connecting people and the rainforests of PNG with Cape York Peninsula. As a result, many plants and animals on Olkola country share ancestors with similar species found in PNG. The fossil remains of megafauna, such as the bones of the giant wombat-like animal, Diprotodon, have also been found on Glen Garland near Musgrave.



Olkola country
Photo Olkola

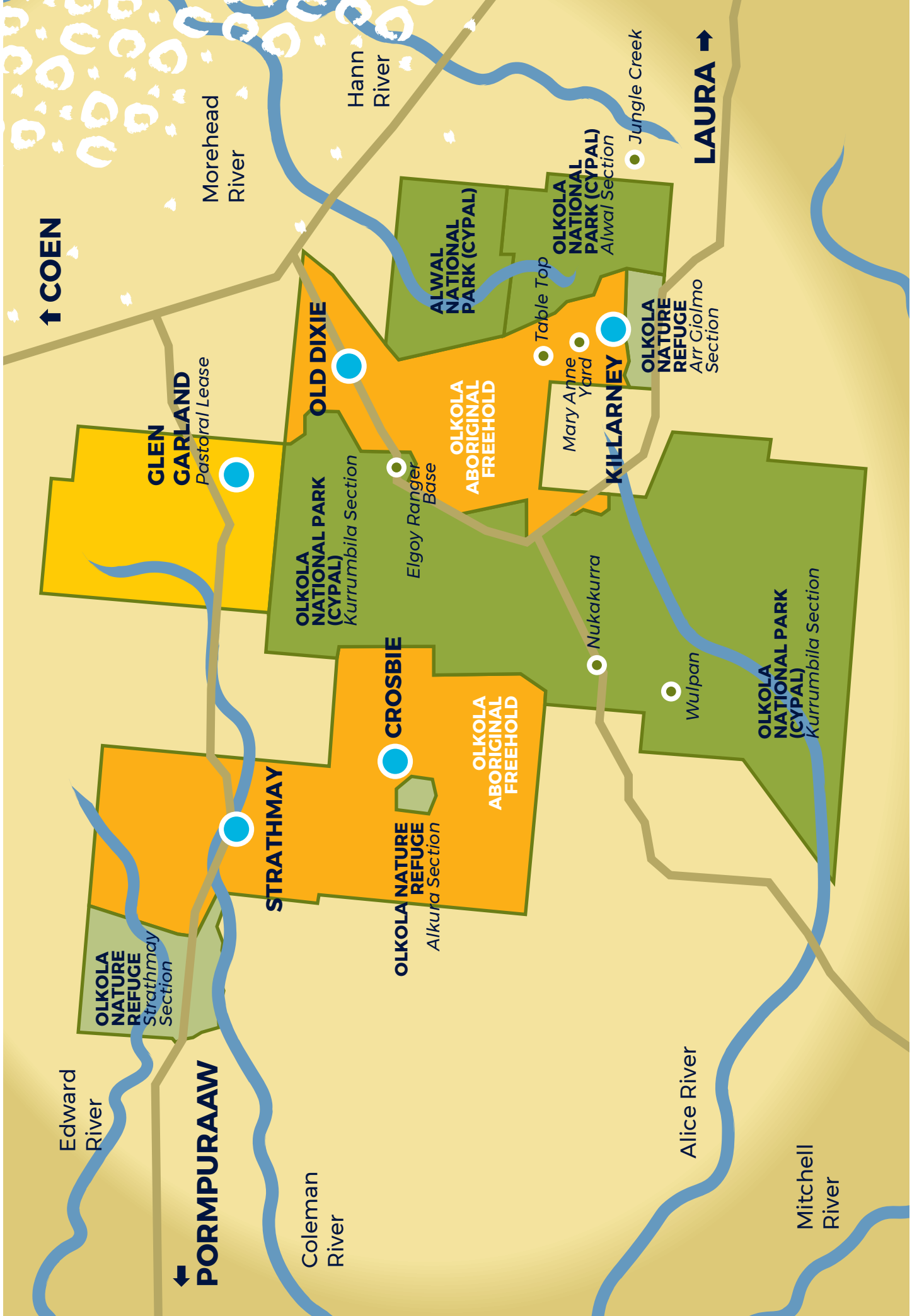
VEGETATION

Tropical savanna woodlands and expansive grasslands make up the Cape York Peninsula and Olkola country.

Three types of plants dominate the dry tropical savanna **woodlands**: eucalypts, melaleucas and acacias. Eucalypts and melaleucas are common in areas where there is a reliable annual wet season, with eucalypts favouring the drier land and melaleucas preferring areas that are seasonally flooded. Acacias can be found further south in arid and drought-prone areas.

The slow-growing hardy **grasstree** also thrives on Olkola country. Happy in low-nutrient soil, the grasstree takes up to 10 years to establish before the trunk even emerges. This trunk will only grow about 10-25mm each year, so a 2m plant could be up to 200 years old! The small flowers on the terminal spike are nectar-rich and Olkola people used grasstrees for a variety of products, including spears, resins and fire sticks .

There are more than 300 species of **grass** on Cape York. The seed from these grasses sustain birds, including our beloved Alwal, finches and ground doves. The most common grasses you'll see are kangaroo grasses (*Themeda triandra* and *T. arguens*), fire grass (*Schizachryium*), wire grass (*Aristida*), cockatoo grass (*Alloteropsis semialata*) and spear grass (*Heteropogon contortus*).



↑ COEN

← PORMPURAAW

LAURA →

Edward River

Coleman River

Morehead River

Hann River

Alice River

Mitchell River

GLEN GARLAND
Pastoral Lease

OLD DIXIE

CROSBIE

KILLARNEY

OLKOLA NATURE REFUGE
Strathmay Section

OLKOLA NATIONAL PARK (CYPAL)
Kurrumbila Section

OLKOLA NATURE REFUGE
Alkura Section

OLKOLA ABORIGINAL FREEHOLD

Elgoy Ranger Base

ALWAL NATIONAL PARK (CYPAL)

OLKOLA NATIONAL PARK (CYPAL)
Alwal Section

OLKOLA NATURE REFUGE
Arr Giolimo Section

OLKOLA NATIONAL PARK (CYPAL)
Kurrumbila Section

Table Top

Mary Anne Yard

Nukakurra

Wulpan

Jungle Creek



Bamaga

Weipa

Lockhart River

Coen

Pompuraaw

Kowanyama

**OLKOLA
COUNTRY**

Hann River Roadhouse

Laura

Cooktown

Lakeland

Wujal Wujal

Daintree

Cape Tribulation

Port Douglas

Cairns

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU ONTO COUNTRY



Alwal (The Golden Shouldered Parrot)
Photo Ian Montgomery



Killarney Station
Photo Kerry Trapnell



Monash University Camping trip
Photo Alex Williams, Monash University

Note: Tents in this photo are the students' own and not the tents provided by Olkola for tours



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