

Areas of high value to Tiwi people, and areas of shared value

Principle:

The natural and cultural resources of the region provide definition for who people are, and where they fit within society. Areas and elements that have high place values for Tiwi people should be protected and appropriately managed.

Davis (1983) stated *'The continued violation of traditional Tiwi rules of access to ritually restricted areas by non-Aboriginal persons has led to a demeaning of the status of some sites and accompanying psychological stresses for Tiwi custodians. The continued presence of non-Tiwi persons in such areas...has forced Tiwi custodians in some areas to diminish the size of the area in order to maintain its identity and lessen the desecration.'*

A number of sacred and significant sites have been recorded and entered into the Tiwi Geographic Information System. Knowledge about some sites and resources is restricted to suitably qualified and experienced people, and cannot therefore be presented in documents and maps available for general scrutiny. The information, however, must be taken into account when considering access and land disturbance.

In addition to these sites, there are other areas that are highly valued for the resources they contain and their historical usage. These include areas such as Goose Creek where there are significant populations of Magpie Geese, Seagull Island, which is significant for bird eggs, and certain beaches and mangrove communities important for food gathering.

Areas of shared history can be important to both Tiwi and non-Tiwi, as they represent a Tiwi identity in relation to the outside world. One such site of shared value is Fort Dundas, the British settlement established near Punata in 1824 and abandoned in 1829. Other sites are documented in Bathgate and Lewis (1999), and include Mission infrastructure and remains, sawmills and WWII installations. Apart from Fort Dundas, there has been minimal assessment of the value of the remaining sites to Tiwi people. Some, in fact, may be reminders of earlier, unhappier times in Tiwi history, and their preservation may be detrimental to some sectors of the community.

Outcome:

Natural resource management that is appropriate for the majority stakeholders - Tiwi people.

Objective:

3: Preserve and protect areas and resources of high value to Tiwi people.

Recommended Actions:

- 3.1 Through consultation, confirm areas of cultural significance and update the Tiwi GIS where appropriate.
- 3.2 Identify areas of cultural significance that require management/rehabilitation plans; develop and implement where required.
- 3.3 Develop and implement Codes of Practice for consultation with landowners through the appropriate authority prior to land and sea access and disturbance.
- 3.4 Prepare and distribute maps of land ownership and authority.
- 3.5 Provide regular orientation workshops for non-Tiwi staff and residents.

