

YARNTIME NEWS

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TURTLE CAMP A SUCCESS!

Mapoon's Turtle Beach Camp has started full commercial operation with the first group of tourists giving the venture a big tick — all the details in this special edition

FEATURES

- TURTLE BEACH CAMP GETS UNDERWAY
- ERNIE DINGO & TROY CASSAR- DALEY AT T.O,'S LUNCH
- AUNT THELLY

MINISTER VISITS CAMP

Queensland's Tourism Minister, Margaret Keech, visited Mapoon in July, taking time to travel to Janie Creek to have a look at the Turtle Beach Camp tourism venture.



Queensland Minister for Tourism, Margaret Keech, at Mapoon Council Chambers with Mayor, Peter Guivarra.

Minister Keech made it to Mapoon fairly late in the day and spent an hour or so talking with Councillors, members of the Community Justice Group and residents before heading up to Janie with Mayor Peter Guivarra.

the Camp's manager and workers.

attempt at tourism has been.

Most of the tourists attending the Camp were dead to the world asleep after spending the morning hauling those ghost nets off our beaches. It's a shame because the tourists have been very happy with the Camp experience and could have told the Minister how successful Mapoon's first

Still, she was able to talk to DPI Officer Peter McCulkin, who talked the Minister through the daily activities at the Camp.

The Minister said she was very impressed with the project and she was obviously taken by the stunning beauty of Janie Creek.



Famous turtle scientist, Dr. Col Limpus, at the Chivaree Camp.

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THE MAYOR'S MOMENT

Hello Countrymen. I guess the big news of the month is the Turtle Camp project.. I'd like to thank everyone for the big effort they've put in and because I know I'll miss people out if I try and mention everyone by name, I'll just say thanks and congratulations to all involved. The Camp looks great, it works well and all the tourists say they've had a great time. We've learnt a lot and it'll only get better from now on!



Mapoon Mayor Peter Guivarra

One thing we should all know from the experience is that Mapoon people can do anything we put our minds to and our hearts into.

Be proud Countrymen—Mapoon is now on the national tourism map.

I'd think we should all thank Danny Cooktown and the other traditional owners of the Janie Creek area. Not only have they allowed us to use their Country for the project but they have also let us give the Camp the name of the warrior Chivaree. That's a big thing and an honour.

The success of the Turtle Beach Camp means a lot more than just having one good enterprise that will one day earn money for Mapoon. It also opens the door for lots of other projects and enterprises, run by the Council or run by Mapoon families or individuals.

Your Council is already considering the idea of a fishing

lodge and of course we have plenty of good spots for another eco-camp.

Now is the time for you to be thinking about what you could do to set up your own business. The tourists are coming in for the Turtle Camp and every year more and more people come to camp at Janie Creek and Cullen Point. There just has to be heaps of spin-off enterprises for local people.

If you've got an idea that you think might work and that you'd like to have a go at, get some advice, talk to Council and have a go. Let's make the most of this chance and build Mapoon up

so our Town can stand on its own two feet.

The most important thing though is that we work together and support each other. That's what will make us strong. We're only a little place and like any small place there will always be lots of gossip and stories about people. You can't change that but what we can do is make sure that gossip and stories don't hurt us as a Community.

Let's stick together in the big things and as the Turtle Camp shows, we can build a real future for ourselves.

P.G.

AUNTIE ZOE SAYS THANKS

Every morning Auntie Zoe De Jersey goes for a walk and every morning trucks and cars roll past her, speeding by and covering her in Mapoon's red dust — most

but not all. Auntie Zoe wants to say thanks to the courteous and considerate driver of the long white water truck who always slows down and goes wide.

FROM LITTLE THINGS BIG THINGS GROW

Just six months ago there was nothing there. Then came the fence, then the platforms, the water tank, showers and toilets and finally a kitchen and an open air dining area. In just six months Mapoon's workers have changed Janie Creek

from a flat bit of land into a popular tourist camp. Its been an amazing effort. Our CDEP workers helped Roger, Aide, Pungi and the rest to build the platforms, toilets, showers and dining area, while Porky found and delivered a supply of fresh

water and Lawrie, the rangers and Council Administration worked out how to make the Camp operate smoothly. From nothing to a tourism venture that even has the Minister for Tourism excited in just six months. So what's next?



Aide and Pungi building the platforms for tourists tents.



The very early days—just a fence and some frames.



With a good bore found, the tanks are set in place.



The first dining area. This one for workers.



The kitchen and dining area enjoyed by first week tourists.



Tourists head off for a long night in search of turtles.

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

One of the things we have been working on here at Council is the development of a Shared Responsibility Agreement with the State Government.

These new ideas from the Government are generally called SRA's and Mapoon has nominated the issue of Early Childhood.

We have told the Government we want a priority for the idea that Mapoon children will have a good start in life and be ready for formal schooling by age five and a half.

We know from research conducted around the world that the first five years are the most important time for the development of a child's brain.

The more they are talked to and read to during this time means the better they will be able to talk themselves.

We also know that the more young children talk the better they can read.

We are asking both the State and Federal Governments to make a commitment to build a new early childcare centre in Mapoon.

The centre is to include child care for babies, a room for playgroup and space for a kindergarten and pre-school.

If we can get the building, then Education Queensland



Mapoon C.E.O. Julie Ling

have said that they will add a preparatory year to our school program. The preparatory year is important because it will set our kids up better for starting school.

We are tell the Governments that Mapoon parents will actively support and take part in an early childhood program and that our respected Elders will assist by promoting the importance of a good start in life.

The development of a Shared Responsibility Agreement is one conditions that the Commonwealth Government has laid down

for recovering CDEP funding for the Community.

Councillor Tani Ling recently attended a Montessori conference and is able to talk to interested parents about what International Montessori might be able to do with Mapoon parents and children as part of the early childhood program.

We are also hoping that health screening and immunisation programs for children will also

be able to be delivered at the early childhood centre so that these services come to children and their parents as part of the early childhood program.

As everyone says, children are our future. We can only hope that both the Commonwealth and State Governments will come to the party and play their part in helping to guarantee that future for the children of Mapoon.

Julie.

WORKERS PLOT FARMS FUTURE

Mapoon's farm has changed a fair bit over the past month, with a hard working and dedicated bunch of blokes having a real go at turning it into something we can all be proud of.

With a little help from Penny McIntosh, from the Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility, they've been putting their efforts into carving out personal vegetable and fruit gardens and you can really see the difference.

CDEP Manager, Dennis Fields says he has to go out there each day just to make sure the workers are taking a lunch break and he reckons

it's normal now for people to still be at the farm and working hard, even after knock-off time.

"Everyone likes the work and the help from Penny and so they're giving the farm a real go."



Workers at the Mapoon Farm are making a real difference to the place.



BRING ON THE BLACKTOP

It's almost tar time for the Gillies! Mapoon's road crew have finished the long job of making around six kilometres of road, from the Shire boundary toward Mapoon, ready for bitumen. In case you haven't noticed, they've spent the last few months

grading, watering and rolling the surface to give us a nice flat stretch of dirt that's raised up well above the surrounding country. It's been a tough job with the crew, led by Deputy-Mayor Cr.

Busch, plus a pile of contractors, working ten days on and four days off to get the job done properly and on time.

While they've been finishing up the hard labour side of the job, others have

been organising for the blacktop to be made.

Soon we'll see the tar going down and this part of the roadwork finished.

Well done Bushy and all the crew!



MEDIA MOB INVADE CHIVAREE CAMP

The start of the Turtle Beach Camp has put Mapoon in the media spotlight again.

Midway through July the Senior Political Reporter for The Australian Newspaper, Tony Koch, came to have a look at the Turtle Project. He brought a photographer and some of the shots they took are included with this story.

Tony Koch's story and a great photo, were in the national edition of the Australian on Saturday, 15 July.

The second week of the Camp brought reporter, host and crew of the Channel Ten program Totally Australia.

They're making a one hour documentary on the Camp that will be played in about two month's time. The Ten mob say they'll send us a copy of the documentary.

Finally, in the last week of July, Channel 7 star, Ernie Dingo, and country music legend, Troy Cassar-Daley, joined Camp Three.

Ernie and Troy arrived in time for lunch with Janie Creek's Traditional Owners. Both played guitar and sung a few songs. The highlight had to be Troy Cassar-Daley singing Slim Dusty's 'Leave Him In The Long Yard' with Danny Cooktown, Mum Thelly and Patrick Burke doing the harmony.



Photos thanks to Eddie Safarik and The Australian Newspaper.

Ernie Dingo and Troy Cassar-Daley fitted right in, spending time with everyone, especially the kids.

They went out looking for turtles that night and found eighteen, a record for the Camp.

Ernie and Troy's story about our Turtle Camp will be on the Great Outdoors, as part of a special feature on Indigenous Tourism.

(right) Totally Australia's Wesley Denning, Kate Fitzgerald and Stephen Harrison.



P.G. & Reporter, Tony Koch, sharing coffee at Chivaree Camp.



ERNIE AND TROY JOIN T.O.'S LUNCH



REMEMBERING THE REMOVAL

Sometimes you can look so hard at the place you want to be that you don't think about what you might have to do to get there.

The Queensland Government found that out when they decided to remove Mapoon people from their homes.

All they saw was the solution to a problem and the problem may well have been the money it cost to keep the Mapoon Mission going.

No-one really knows why it happened. The history, the papers aren't clear. There's no doubt, though, that the cost of the Mapoon Mission was a worry for the Government and the Missionaries.

There's also a story that the then head of Native Affairs, Pat Calloran, wanted to set up some sort of ideal farming community at Hidden Valley, (now New Mapoon), and needed workers.

And there's a lot of people who blame Comalco.

The truth of why it was done may never be known for sure but something that is clear is that the removal of Mapoon people from their homes was a morally wrong act that has scarred the hearts of a whole mob for generations.

The truly remarkable thing is that so many Mapoon people have it in their hearts to forgive this thing that they can't forget.

Aunty Mabel is one of those people. She was a young married woman when the police came to her door asking after her brother Robert Reid. She didn't know it then but that act was for her the start of a hard, hard period in her life and in the story of Mapoon.

The arrival of the Police on 15 November, 1963, was itself the final part of a story that had started years before.

Auntie Mabel remembers being a girl in 1953-54 when the first meetings were held to try and encourage Mapoon people to leave the area.

The Government brought a long line of doctors and scientists and public servants to the Mission to try and frighten people away.

Dr Thompson came and said the water was no good and would make people sick. Others said the land was full of hookworm and it was too unhealthy for people to stay.

Everone knew these stories were silly. People had lived here for tens of thousands of

years, the water was good and there had never been a problem with hookworm.

Some people, though, could see around the corner and figured that sooner or later the silly stories would become more serious attempts to push people out. Some left and bit by bit the Community grew smaller.

In 1963, the Government finally decided that Mapoon was small enough and the time was right to act.

And so the Queensland Government found itself in a place it probably never expected to be; using armed force to deny people their basic rights to freedom and property. A democratic State kidnapping it's own citizens and destroying personal property to reach a financial or political goal.

The Mission shop had been closed for a while by then and Willie Cooktown was the Town's lifeline, taking his boat around to Weipa to get food.

Willie Cooktown, Allan Parry, Andrew Archie, Gilbert Jimmy, Mabel's brother Robert and Frank Don stood up to the Government pressure and all paid the price.

The Police came to Mabel's house that sad night and

MAPOON'S DARKEST DAYS

asked to see her brother. Robert had gone out shooting for duck earlier in the day and hadn't come home. The Police went to the well and met up with him there, telling him that his wife, already ill in Thursday Island Hospital, had been moved to Bamaga and that he needed to come with them immediately.

Mabel heard arguing and then Robert came home and packed a few clothes saying he had to go and asking Mabel to send the rest of his clothes on to Bamaga. Robert told her the Police were taking him there, along with Gilbert Jimmy, Andrew Archie, Frank Don and others.

Robert was taken to the old cottage at the edge of the Mission area. There, he and many other Mapoon people were kept under police guard for three days. During daylight hours they were allowed to sit outside under the old Beach Almond trees but they weren't allowed to leave the area and had to go back to the cottage at night.

It turned out that during that time police had gone to Janie Creek to capture Willy Cooktown and his family.

Meanwhile, Mission Boss, Mr Turner, asked to see everyone else, asking them individually if they wanted to go to Hidden Valley or Weipa.

Aunty Mabel was angry. Wives were being asked to make decisions without talking to their husbands and when it was her turn to choose, Aunty Mabel refused. She said she would wait for Jim to return from work that had taken him across the other side of the Bay.

The boat didn't wait for Jim to come home and the first stage of the Removal was over when it sailed for Bamaga. Auntie Mabel wasn't on board but her brother, Robert, was.

Robert told Auntie Mabel later that Police had used a flat bottomed boat so they could sneak into Mapoon, hugging the coast so they couldn't be seen.

Mapoon was a lonely place after that. Only 15 families were left and the pressure for everyone to leave was getting harder to resist.

The last truly happy time was Boxing Day, 1963. All Mapoon families came together to share a meal and to dance.

After that most of the remaining families headed for Weipa, leaving just Jim and Mabel and their five children, Mabel's mum, Stephen Mark and his family, Roy and Bettie Fletcher, Henry Brown and Willie Gow and his family.

They stayed until May 1964, the time of the second removal. Mabel went to Bamaga, where her brother, sister and Jimmy's family were living.

Jim and Stephen Mark stayed behind a while, to round up cattle and drive them to Bamaga. Auntie Suzie Madua's old home was saved from the destruction of Mapoon so that Jimmy and Stephen would have a place to live while they worked.

Jim and George Williams spent three to four months driving the cattle to Bamaga. When they got to Hidden Valley they found their families living in terrible conditions, in strange country, going hungry and getting sick. The promises that had been made, of good houses and a better life were lies. The hard years had begun.

The people changed the name of Hidden valley to New Mapoon so that at least the name of their real home would survive and of course they kept alive the dream of returning one day to reclaim their proper place.

Mapoon today is the living proof of their determination and strength and their love for this special place.

(Thanks to Auntie Mabel for sharing—hope I got it right)

DAPHNE'S THE DRIVER

The new Town bus is on the road and its thanks to Daphne Annabar.

For the past few months the bus has been sitting around waiting for someone to get the proper license and authority to drive the thing on a regular, passenger carrying, basis.

Daphne decided she'd have a go and had no trouble!

Now she's Mapoon's most successful local artist

and our bus driver.

Everyone says Daphne is a great driver who provides a safe and comfortable ride.



Daphne Annabar at the wheel of the bus.

STRANGE!

A visitor to Janie Creek from the tiny NQ town of Deeral found a metal cylinder on Main Beach recently. The cylinder had a telephone number on the side and so our visitor, Wilson Pickering, gave it a call. It turned out to be an answering machine in South America. Wilson left a message and didn't think anymore about it until he got a call from a scientist in Noosa, thanking him for finding a computerised fish tag. The tag was put on a fish on the Victorian/New South Wales border a month before.

MORE BRASS THAN A MINER'S BAND

A big mob of very senior police officers turned up in Mapoon at the end of July.

Led by Assistant Police Commissioner, Peter Barron, they were here to talk, not to make any arrests.

The photo shows the Police with Mayor, Peter Guivarra and Deputy William Busch.



DIRECTOR GENERAL IN TOWN



Warren Hoey, Mapoon's Government Champion and the head of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, came to Town at the end of July.

Being our Government Champion means he's

supposed to talk us up and help us out.

So, he came for a couple of days, met a lot of people and had some long yarns, had a good look around at just about everything and spent a night at Janie Creek.

AROUND TOWN — IN PICTURES



AUNT THELTY'S STORY

There's a shed in Aunt Thelty's back yard. She and her husband, Allen, built it in the days when Mapoon people were coming home. In many ways that shed tells the story of Aunt Thelty and her life.

The shed brought Thelty and Allen a lot of joy, it helped them make friends, gave them comfort and shelter, looked out on the beauty of this place and gave them a foundation on which to build their lives.

But the shed, like everything in Aunt Thelty's life, didn't come easy. It was built with determination and hard, hard work, with loyalty and courage and undoubtedly with humour.

Aunt Thelty was born here in 1927 and grew up in a house just the other side of Rev. Ward's grave. Her father, Willie, was a Mapoon man, her mother, Lucy Footscray was born in Cohen. Married in 1917, Willie and Lucy raised 10 children, Thelma Rhyda was number six, coming after Gerry, Mollie, Charles, Alfred and Ted and before Theresa, Louise, David and Gina.

Willie was the Mission's head stockman. He was good at the job and in demand. Not long after Aunt Thelty started school, he took a job in Weipa and played a part in the moving of Weipa from its original location to the Town's current

site. The family went with him, to Weipa and then to Aurukun, then Thursday Island, to Lockhart River, at the request of a Bishop and finally to Kowanyama, where he died, on 10 January, 1940.

The family returned home then to Mapoon. That was at the start of World War 2 and life in Mapoon was difficult with the Mission closed and food in short supply. Aunt Thelty, her mother, two sisters and a brother made the move to Thursday Island.

She finished growing up on the Island, met her husband, Allan Burke, there, had all her children and had moved to Red Island Point, now Bamaga, when the Removal happened.

When the call went out for people to come home, Thelty and Allan were amongst the first. Aunt Thelty had travelled many roads—she's still travelling today—but Mapoon was where she felt she belonged.



Allan and Thelty built their shed. Allan also helped build the old airstrip, worked as a truck driver and was Mapoon's first CDEP Manager.

Most of their children, Roddie, Rex, Veronica, Patrick, Greg (sadly passed on) and Gerry were working for Comalco and Roddie brought the then head of Comalco and his family to visit. They were the first of many friends to stay in the shed.

And people still come to stay with Aunt Thelty. Her warmth, her laughter and her generosity cross the boundaries of race and culture, bringing her the friendship and admiration she deserves and marking her as the living spirit of that welcoming place, Old Mapoon.