

Get to know us better...



Jamay Deshong

Reef Catchments Project Officer

"I feel a profound duty as a proud Koinjmal youth to aid in the restoration of our planet's health."

Jamay's family has long been intertwined with Reef Catchments, dating back to our days as the Mackay Whitsunday NRM Group. From attending the Reef Catchments Emersion Training Camp at Action Challenge Bloomsbury at the tender age of 8, Jamay has been actively engaged in sharing Traditional Knowledge with fellow Reef Catchments staff.

"I remember on more than one occasion that Mum had to bring me into the Reef Catchments office because I would pretend to be sick, so I would not have to go to school. I remember thinking that the RCL staff at the time were the coolest people in the world. They would chat, play games and even gave me the odd job to do. From then I always knew I wanted to work at Reef Catchments."

Now, more than 10 years later she holds the role of Project Officer for the NRM organisation. Working with Reef Catchments Jamay has a pathway to improve connections and shared knowledge between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians in the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac (MWI) region.

Environment & Community

For Jamay and her community, the environment holds profound significance.

"I believe that Mother Earth was created for us to live on and look after, and due to urbanisation of vital areas like wetlands, I feel a profound duty as a proud Koinjmal youth to aid in the restoration of our planet's health."

Reef Catchments are very good at what they do, and that is to sustain, protect and improve the Natural Resources of our area. The organisation shares the same vision and values as me, and it is so awesome to work with like-minded people."

Currently, Jamay is collaborating with Yuwibara Traditional Owners to develop a seasonal calendar—a valuable educational resource for schools, NRM organisations, and rangers alike. She eagerly anticipates its unveiling, confident in its ability to both inspire and educate.

"I'm really excited to share the calendars with the community because it gives a bit of an insight on what indicators the Yuwi Traditional Owners look for when managing land & sea Country." - Jamay.

Moreover, she recently conducted a drone training session with the Yuwi rangers, aiming to equip them with the skills necessary for surveillance, monitoring, public awareness, and education initiatives.

"The drone training with the Yuwi Rangers went really well. Even though we taught them the very basics on how to operate a drone, it was very fulfilling to help them upskill so they can be the best they can be."

Healthy Country Plan

In addition to her work with Yuwibara Traditional Owners, Jamay is actively engaged in crafting a Healthy Country Plan alongside her family, the Koinjmal people of Koinmerburra Country.

"The Healthy Country Plan is important because it is not only a plan where our goals and visions are laid out but it is also an opportunity to get all the family in one room to discuss how we can make these visions come to life."

This plan serves as a blueprint for the future, facilitating discussions on the aspirations for our Traditional Lands and the strategies needed to achieve them.

Through collaborative efforts with Reef Catchments, Ellie Bock, Kevin Blackman from Regional Advisory & Innovation Network, and the Traditional Owners, significant strides have been made, with the completion of the Plan slated for the end of 2024.



Pictured: Jamay (8 y.o) with Reef Catchments Staff member at an RC Emersion Training Camp, Bloomsbury.



Pictured: Jamay delivering an acknowledgement of country at the Healthy Rivers to Reef Stewardship Event, 2023.



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