



**GUGU BADHUN ABORIGINAL CORPORATION  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025**

Summary



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# 1 Overview

## 1.1 Strategic Plan Context

Since the Gugu Badhun People's Community Plan was prepared in 2014, the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation (GBAC) Board has identified the need for a new Strategic Plan due to a range of factors including, among others: negotiations with an Australian federal agency, involving a large area of country; increased GBAC governance capacity; and, emerging tourism and research opportunities.

This new Strategic Plan (*plan*), updated from the 2014 Community Plan provides the Board direction on how best to mitigate against social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts these factors may impose while maximising potential benefits and opportunities they present.

The development of this *plan* was informed by three rounds of input from engagement with directors and members of GBAC at a number of workshops in far north Queensland and has been supported by background research.

## 1.2 Summary

This summary has been prepared to communicate the major aspirations, strategies and initiatives identified and supported by GBAC directors to the broader Gugu Badhun community, key stakeholders and partners.

## 1.3 Gugu Badhun Country

Gugu Badhun Country is located in the upper reaches of the Burdekin River, surrounding the Township of Greenvale, approximately 220km north-west of Townsville, North Queensland (see **figure 1 and 2**). The Gugu Badhun People #2 (QUD85/2005) Native Title Determination Application (native title claim) was made to the Federal Court of Australia on March 22, 2005 and was successfully determined on August 1, 2012. The determination area includes 6,540km<sup>2</sup> of country and appears in **figure 1**.

The Gugu Badhun People's Estate is outlined in Figure 2. The term 'estate' refers to traditional definitions of Gugu Badhun 'country' by Gugu Badhun people, all of which has not been formally 'determined' to date in accordance with Australian federal law (refer **figure 2**).



Figure 1– Gugu Badhun #2 Determination Area

**Gugu Badhun People #2  
 DETERMINATION AREA**

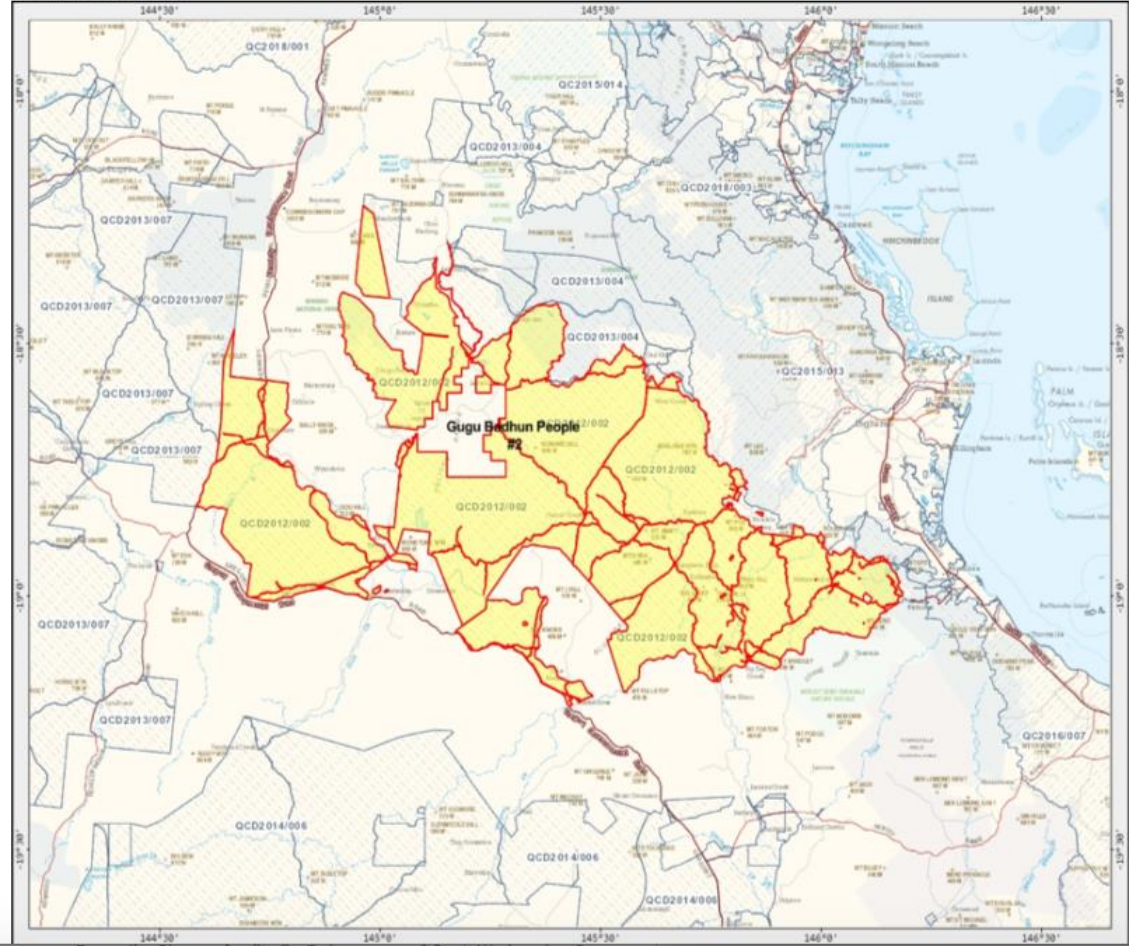
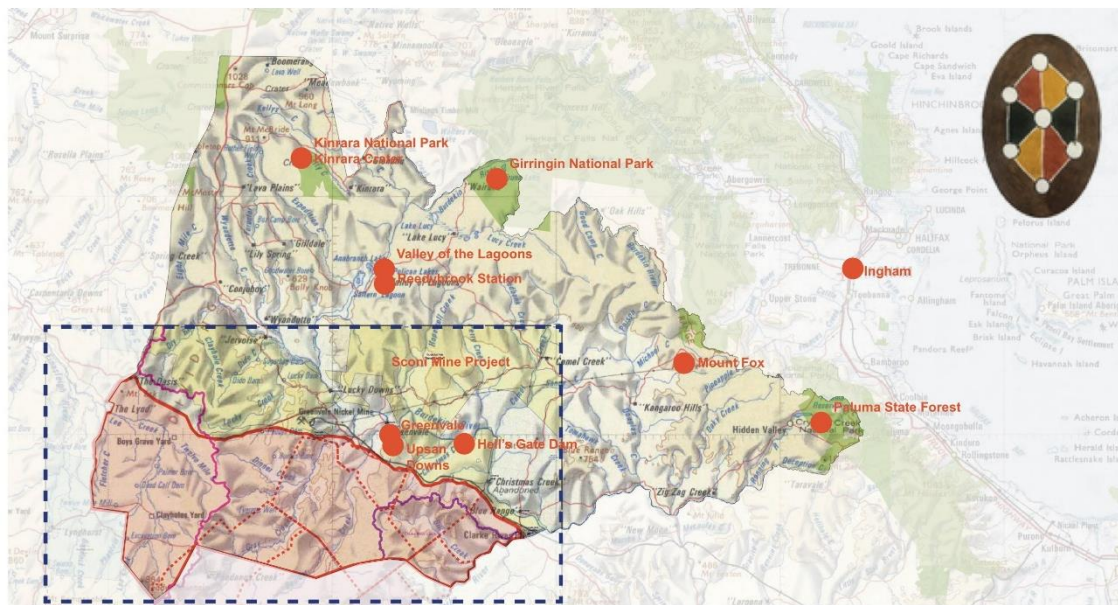


Figure 2– Gugu Badhun People Traditional Estate (including negotiation area)

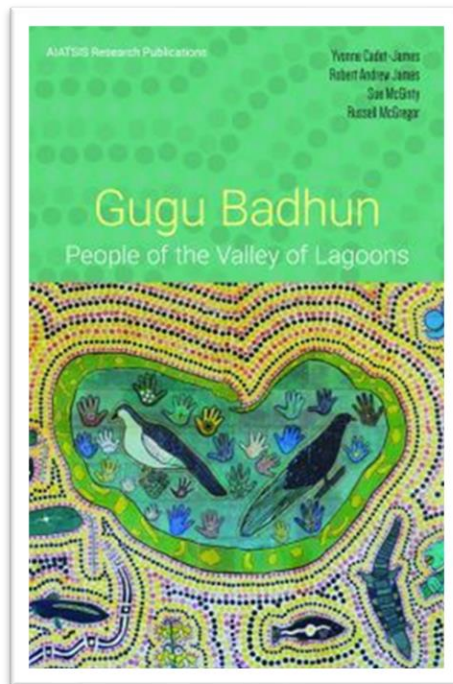


## 1.4 Gugu Badhun Community

Gugu Badhun people are spread throughout Australia, with a significant proportion of the community still living in the North Queensland region not far from their country, in the regional urban centres of Greenvale Charters Towers, Townsville, Atherton, Innisfail and Tully. The Gugu Badhun people number in the hundreds, and a large proportion maintain connection with country and the passing down of traditions. In recent years memories and stories of ancestors have been facilitated by an annual cultural camp, held on Country each year.

The Gugu Badhun People have been proactive in the preservation of their culture, through the documentation and recording of the language and oral histories which has been supplemented in more recent years by establishment of the Djima Research Centre. In 2017, *Gugu Badhun: People of the Valley of the Lagoons*, authored by Yvonne Cadet James, Robert Andrew James, Sue McGinty and Russell McGregor was published.

Figure 3– *Gugu Badhun: People of the Valley of Lagoons* (2017) by Yvonne Cadet-James, Robert Andrew James, Sue McGinty and Russell McGregor, published by AIATSIS Research Publications, Canberra



## 1.5 Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation

The Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (GBAC) is the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act* (Cth) (2006) (CATSI), and holds the Native Title rights, interests and assets as agent of the Gugu Badhun people. GBAC was incorporated with the Office of Registrar of Indigenous Corporation (ORIC) on May 3, 2012 and was Registered as a Registered Native Title Body Corporate on August 23, 2012. The GBAC Board represents the six constituent family groups:

- Burdekin Family
- Gertz Family
- Hoolihan Family
- Illin Family
- Kennedy Family

### **Gugu Badhun Directors**

(as at November 2019)

GBAC Board has increased to 10 possible Director position – 2 Directors per 5 family groups. Current Directors are:

- Leah Hoolihan
- Richard Hoolihan
- Troy Johnson
- Dallas Thompson
- Hazel Illin (Director)
- Nada Kennedy (Director)
- Yvonne Cadet-James (Director)
- Janine Gertz (Coordinator)

There are 70 members of the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation as at June 2019

In the 1990's, the Gugu Badhun People negotiated with Chevron, a company proposing development of a gas pipeline between Papua New Guinea and Gladstone, traversing Gugu Badhun country. During the course of the negotiations the Gugu Badhun People established Gugu Badhun Ltd, which has subsequently been the 'Nominated Body' for assets arising from negotiations and other sources.

Figure 4– Photograph of Yarggardji, the largest of the Pelican Lakes, Valley of Lagoons





## 1.6 Assets and Opportunities

Table 1 - GBAC Key Achievements since 2014

<p><b>Governance and Administration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hired a part-time Administration Officer/Coordinator (one day per week)</li> <li>• Governance training for the Board of Directors</li> <li>• ILUA's and agreement negotiations</li> <li>• Establishment of Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC Office June 2019 operating 3 days per week - located in Townsville City.</li> <li>• Hired Part-time Administration / Coordination Officer</li> <li>• Hired Part-time Dept of Defence Projects Coordinator</li> <li>• ORIC Governance Training for Board of Directors February 2020</li> <li>• Established Gugu Badhun website for communication with Gugu Badhun people and external stakeholders (website under further development)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economy and Infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of two projects for Gugu Badhun, 'Back on Country' and 'Common Country'</li> <li>• Successful relationships and negotiations with various stakeholders including mining companies, local businesses and government departments</li> <li>• Cultural experiences and educational programs provided at Hidden Valley with a strong base of visitors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environment and Country</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in the Giringun Aboriginal Ranger (GAR) program</li> <li>• Good access to country due to good relations with property owners</li> <li>• Successful completion of two programs: 'Back on Country' and 'On Common Country', which improved relations with pastoralists and local businesses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community and Culture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2017, <i>Gugu Badhun: People of the Valley of the Lagoons</i>, authored by Yvonne Cadet James, Robert Andrew James, Sue McGinty and Russell McGregor was published.</li> <li>• Establishment of the Djiman Research Centre including a framework for research partnership and engagement.</li> <li>• Cultural camps have continued on country, providing opportunities for Gugu Badhun people to connect</li> <li>• Research partnerships with University of Technology Sydney, University of Arizona, University of Queensland and James Cook University</li> <li>• The collection of a substantial amount of cultural material in locations such as the School of Indigenous Studies at JCU</li> <li>• Development of a number of resources and activities to enable members of the community to access information about their</li> </ul>

cultural heritage (e.g. the Gugu Badhun 'women on the move' digital resource and Gugu Badhun language CD)



## 2 Strategic Plan

### 2.1 Vision

The vision of the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation is for:

*An organisation dedicated to the cultural, social, economic and political well-being and development of the Gugu Badhun community.*

### 2.2 Goals

Achieving the Gugu Badhun People’s vision can be measured by the goals defined in **Table 2** below.

Table 2 – Goals

Sustainability Area	Goals
<b>Administration and Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ numerous fully-funded human resource positions filled to support governance and administration of Gugu Badhun entities</li> <li>▪ establishment of an Operational and Administrative Hub on Country</li> <li>▪ establishment of a dedicated commercial premises in an urban centre</li> <li>▪ increased community participation in board and community meetings in diverse locations</li> <li>▪ effective communications materials that improve community connections and facilitate external partnerships, agreements and observation of protocols</li> </ul>
<b>Economy and Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the successful implementation of mutually beneficial partnerships</li> <li>▪ increased employment and training opportunities for community members, supported by an Employment, Education and Training program</li> <li>▪ defined and executed economic development principles and strategies</li> <li>▪ measurable improvements to the prosperity of all members of the community through increased education, training, employment and business development activity</li> <li>▪ leveraging the new resources and staffing at GBAC to create increased, whole of community economic benefits</li> <li>▪ a range of resources in place (human, land, buildings, infrastructure, financial) that improve the function and sustainability of the community and support achievement of other parts of the vision</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ investigating and establishing an appropriate tourism venture(s) on Country</li> <li>▪ developing a register of goods and service suppliers within the Gugu Badhun community for use by the Department of Defence</li> <li>▪ supporting enterprise in the community, through the GBAC and the employment of a Business Development Officer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community and Culture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ documentation and collation of cultural information, ongoing research, and protection of cultural material in digital and physical keeping places</li> <li>▪ develop and conduct Gugu Badhun population census so that demographic data can inform the design of a whole of community well-being program</li> <li>▪ establishment of a whole-of-community wellbeing program to improve the physical and mental health of Gugu Badhun people</li> <li>▪ to catalyse the sustained growth and resilience of the Gugu Badhun people through the establishment of a Gugu Badhun youth program</li> <li>▪ preserve and practice Gugu Badhun language and culture through a culture and language program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environment, Country and Land</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ increased access to, and programs on, country</li> <li>▪ acquisition of country and the development of infrastructure on country, informed by a Whole of Country Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Land Acquisition and Land Management Plan</li> <li>▪ to be role-models in land use and management practices, with respect for Country and long-term environmental sustainability through investment in renewable energy</li> <li>▪ sufficient resources to map cultural, natural, and economic values of Country</li> <li>▪ expand capability and resources for the management and development of land</li> <li>▪ establish a Gugu Badhun Rangers Program for the management of cultural material and sites, as well as the ongoing management of weeds, pests, feral animals, etc</li> </ul>

## **2.3 Priority Aspirations**

Below is a summary of the priority aspirations identified and supported by GBAC directors and members during consultation for this *plan*.

*It should be noted that achievement of the following aspirations is heavily reliant on funding and resource decisions made by government and other bodies. GBAC is committed to exploring each of the aspirations but knows that achievement of some of them is not within their control.*

### **2.3.1 Human Resources to support Governance and Administration of Gugu Badhun Entities**

To establish an effective structure of governance in the GBAC, roles and departments have been identified to assure sustained resourcing and commitment to community goals. Priority positions include an *Executive Officer, Administration Officer, Native Title Officer, Cultural Coordinator* and *Research Coordinator*. Also identified as important to advancing Gugu Badhun aspirations are the establishment of a *Development Manager, a Business Development Officer, a Community Development Worker, a Rangers Program* (with *Ranger Coordinator* role) and governance training for all Board Directors.

### **2.3.2 Formation of an appropriate Operations Facility on Country**

It was identified that establishing sustained governance will require a physical base of operations. GBAC seek to establish two administrative centers to advance Gugu Badhun aspirations; a commercial premises in an urban center (e.g. Townsville or Cairns) and an appropriate *Operations Facility* on Country. The scope of the Operations Facility will depend on feasibility and available funding. Some of the aspirations for this facility include functional uses such as offices, workshops, staff accommodation and a hub for Ranger operations at the same time as fulfilling cultural uses such as material storage, a physical and digital Keeping Place, a Cultural Centre (and community spaces) and a nursery.

### **2.3.3 Resourcing to Support Tourism Aspirations**

The GBAC wish to develop a tourism program to make use of the multiple opportunities on Country. This program would be advanced through the efforts of the Business Development Officer and include further investigations into funding, potential joint ventures, business planning, feasibility studies and destination management.

### **2.3.4 Federal Agency Contracts for Gugu Badhun Business Suppliers**

The Business Development Officer will also help Gugu Badhun Businesses form strategic alliances with Federal Agencies to create more economic opportunities within the community. Responsibilities shall include identifying opportunities, training for pre-qualification and compliance, and ensuring Gugu Badhun business are represented.

### **2.3.5 Gugu Badhun Business Incubation, Development, Seed Funding and Support**

Activities such as grant writing, industry networking, identifying opportunities, establishing seed funding, general skill-building and promotion of Gugu Badhun businesses will help further advance economic development in the community and will be part of the role description of the Business Development Officer.

### **2.3.6 Renewable Energy and Carbon Farming**

The Gugu Badhun people, acting through the GBAC, wish to invest in renewable energy. As the traditional owners of the land, Gugu Badhun people have identified a desire to be role-models in land use and management practices, with respect for Country and long-term environmental sustainability. An all of Country Sustainability Policy, along with investigations into renewable energy generation and carbon farming, shall help advance these goals.

### **2.3.7 Resources to map cultural, natural and economic values of Country**

Gugu Badhun people have identified the need to gather and synthesize data in order to assess a range of values of Gugu Badhun Country. Mapping of cultural and environmental assets, land surveys, economic values

and development opportunities will help GBAC make informed decisions in land development, land contracts and negotiation.

### 2.3.8 Purchase Land on Country

GBAC aim to purchase land on Country for preservation and development. Part of this strategy aims to grow resources and capacity within the GBAC to manage and maintain land assets, for uses as diverse as land preservation, development, agriculture, leasing and housing.

### 2.3.9 Joint Management of Land

Part of the land management strategy is to establish strategic partnerships with other organisations (e.g. QPWS, Ranger Groups and other TOs) to help expand capacity and resources for land management and options for developments.

### 2.3.10 Gugu Badhun Rangers Program

Gugu Badhun People have identified the value of creating a *Gugu Badhun Ranger Program* for the management of cultural material and sites, as well as the ongoing management of weeds, pests, feral animals, etc. A Gugu Badhun Ranger Program will also create employment on Country with potential economic benefit deriving from fee-for-service arrangements with pastoralists, mining companies, government agencies, etc.

### 2.3.11 Whole of Community Wellbeing Program

The GBAC, with the engagement of Community Development Workers, aims to benefit Gugu Badhun people's physical and mental health through a *Whole of Community Wellbeing Program*. Community education programs, access to health plans, pathways to funding avenues and establishing a Wellbeing Futures Fund are initiatives that have been identified as contributing to Gugu Badhun health and wellbeing.

Figure 5– Eight Gugu Badhun children with two friends on the banks of the upper Burdekin River, Reedy Brook Station. Photograph by Lachlan McMahon





### **2.3.12 Gugu Badhun Youth Program**

Investing in Gugu Badhun Youth has been identified as a major priority with youth-focused programs, advanced by the Community Development Worker, seen as central to sustain growth and resilience of Gugu Badhun People.

### **2.3.13 Digital and Physical Keeping Place**

The need to consolidate existing cultural material into a single collection for ongoing preservation has been recognised by Gugu Badhun People, with modern archiving practices such as geographic mapping, tagging and digital database practices central to the process. The Keeping Place shall include environmentally-controlled storage areas for cultural artefacts, with areas set aside for visiting community members to come and participate in cultural programs. In this way the Keeping-Place shall create a Cultural Centre on Country. The Research Coordinator will need to support this project through the brokerage of research funding and expertise.

### **2.3.14 Gugu Badhun Culture and Language Program**

A Cultural Coordinator role dedicated to preserving Gugu Badhun heritage, working within the Cultural Centre and Keeping Place will mean an ongoing commitment to the conservation of Gugu Badhun Culture in the years to come. Wide promotion of community programs in language, knowledge and culture will help foster a continuation of Gugu Badhun traditions.

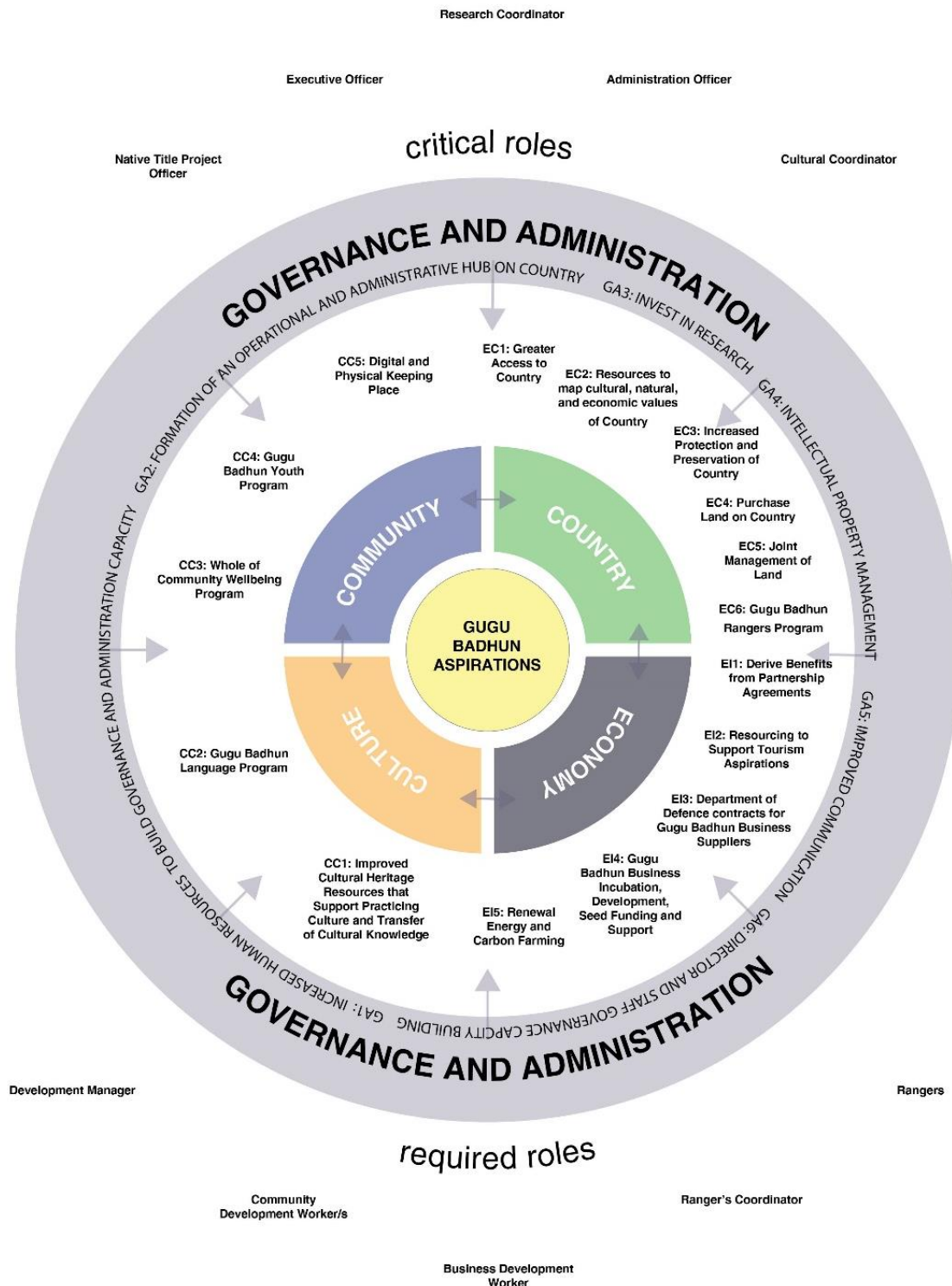
Figure 6– Gugu Badhun Culture Camps at Reedy Brook Camp Reserve



## 2.4 Plan on a Page

The Plan on a Page identifies the key director aspirations within this plan ‘at a glance’ which are numbered to correspond to the Strategies and Action tables for each area of community sustainability.

Figure 7– Summary Diagram of the Gugu Badhun Strategic Framework



## 2.5 Key Strategies

Table 3 - Strategies

Sustainability Area	Strategies
<b>Governance and Administration</b>	<p>GA1 - Increased Human Resources to Build Governance and Administration Capacity</p> <p>GA2 - Formation of an Operational and Administrative Hub on Country</p> <p>GA3 - Invest in Research</p> <p>GA4 - Intellectual Property Management</p> <p>GA5 - Improved Communication</p> <p>GA6 - Director and Staff Governance Capacity Building</p>
<b>Economy and Infrastructure</b>	<p>EI1 - Derive significant benefits from partnerships and agreements</p> <p>EI2 - Resourcing to support Tourism Aspirations</p> <p>EI3 - Department of Defence contracts for Gugu Badhun Business Suppliers</p> <p>EI4 - Gugu Badhun Business Incubation, Development, Seed Funding and Support</p> <p>EI5 - Renewable Energy and Carbon Farming</p>
<b>Environment and Country</b>	<p>EC1 - Greater access to Country</p> <p>EC2 - Resources to map cultural, natural, and economic values of Country</p> <p>EC3 - Increased protection and preservation of culture and country</p> <p>EC4 - Purchase Land on Country</p> <p>EC5 - Joint Management of Land</p> <p>EC6 Gugu Badhun Rangers Program</p>
<b>Community</b>	<p>CC3 - Community Wellbeing Program</p> <p>CC4 - Gugu Badhun Youth Program</p> <p>CC5 - Digital and Physical Keeping Place</p>
<b>Culture</b>	<p>CC1 - Improved cultural heritage resources that support practicing culture and the promotion and transfer of cultural knowledge</p> <p>CC2 - Gugu Badhun Culture and Language Program</p>

## 3 Contact Us

Please feel free to contact the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation via email [admin@gbac-rntbc.org.au](mailto:admin@gbac-rntbc.org.au) or join our private Facebook group **GuguBadhun**.

