

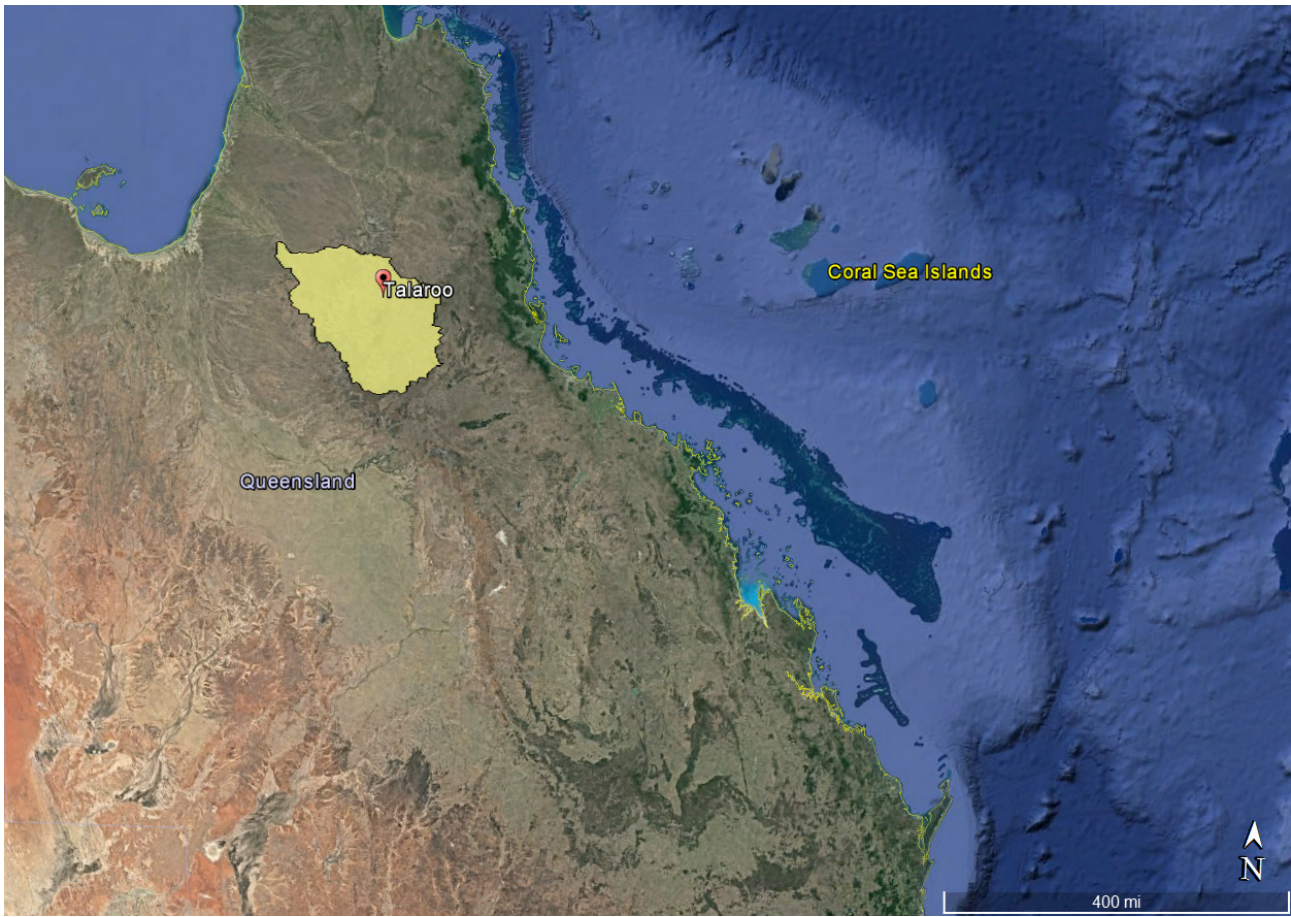


Talaroo Hot Springs Tourism Development and Talaroo Pastoral Lease Conversion to Freehold Land, owned by Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation (EAC)

Information for Ewamian people

Talaroo Indigenous Protected Area and Nature Refuge





Above ! Ewamian Native Title Determination Area

Ewamian People's Country

In the 1990's, Ewamian Elders sought to acquire a landholding on Country as a base for our people to reconnect to Country following our earlier dispossession. Talaroo was selected and in 2009 EAC lodged a successful funding application to purchase Talaroo based on the significance of its cultural and natural values, and its potential to help us realise our people's aspirations for self-determination and financial sustainability in the future.

Talaroo IPA is a 31,000ha property on the Einasleigh River and our central base on Country from which we run a successful Ranger's program funded by the Qld Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program whose focus is to help manage and protect the natural and cultural values of Talaroo. Talaroo was purchased under the National Reserve System and managed in accordance with a Plan of Management under international conservation guideline standards (IUCN categories II and IV).

Talaroo is home to a unique, mounded hot springs complex which, through the assistance of Queensland Government's Growing Tourism Infrastructure Program funding, corporate and other government sponsors, and our own resources, EAC plan to re-open to tourists in 2021.



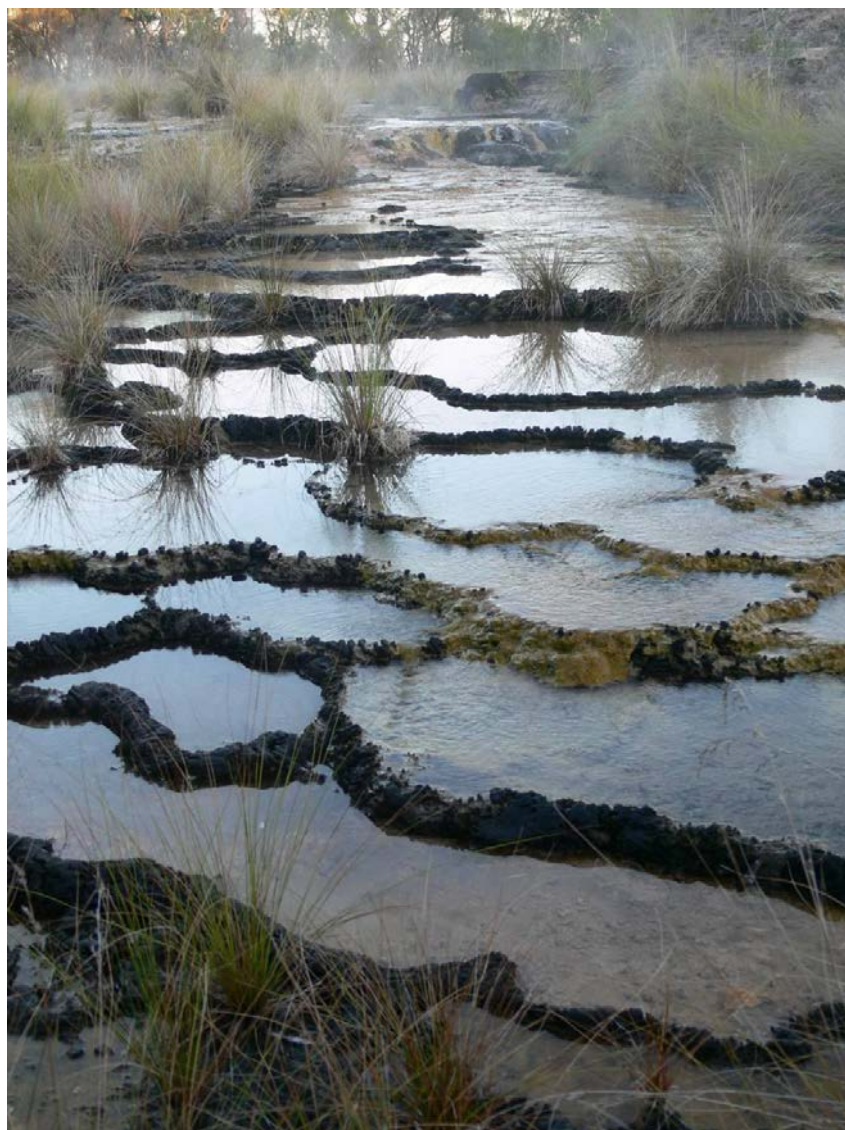
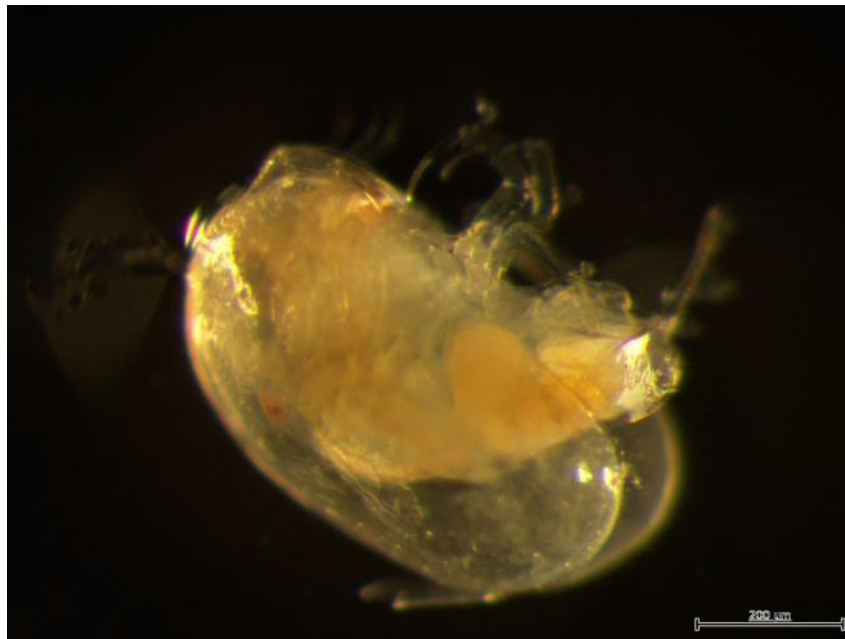
Above | Talaroo Hot Springs aerial view

Talaroo Hot Springs - Scientific and Cultural Values

“It’s no surprise scientists across a range of disciplines regularly visit the Talaroo Hot Springs – they are truly unique!!”

Natural Values

- the mounded structure of the springs, composed of travertine, has taken approximately 65 million years to form
- the water currently being discharged is not connected to the Great Artesian Basin, but testing revealed it most likely to have fallen as rain over 20,000 years ago when megafauna roamed, to seep through the substrate, making contact with super-heated granite up to five kilometres underground on its long journey to be pushed back to the surface
- water ranges in temperature up to 72 degrees celsius, discharged from six vents which flow from the springs into three drainage streams to the Einasleigh River
- over millennia the flow has provided a constant supply of water that supported unique flora, fauna and invertebrates to subside during times of climate change



Top | A close up of ostracods found in 45 deg. waters
Bottom | Shallow pools formed by barrages of travertine associated with emergent cyanobacteria.

Source: Peter Negus, Jonathan Marshall, Alisha Steward, Glenn McGregor & Ruth O'Connor 2013

Ewamian Cultural Values

Ewamian people have their own values for the springs. Previous interviews with Elders have suggested the following values:

- Ewamian women birthed their children in the cooler pools in the outflow streams
- A woman, whose shape appears in steam arising from the pools, is the Spirit of the Springs
- At night-time, Quinkan spirits are said to be at the springs

Recent history

Prior to EAC acquiring Talaroo, the station was used for pastoral purposes and the springs were impacted by cattle and feral animals. Sometime in the 1970s an inground pool was installed below the spring's mound, and pipework connected to the vents to heat the pool which provided a level of damage.

Since EAC has assumed management, our Rangers we have taken the upmost care of the springs and regularly consult with scientists to ensure they are managed to protect and enhance their natural values and function, and will continue to provide the highest duty of care custodianship into the future, ensuring impacts to them continue to be minimised.

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Top | A photo of the springs from earlier in the 1900s
Bottom | A sketch of the Springs from the Scrapbook of Arthur James Vogan

Source: National Library of Australia



THE CAULDRONS, EINASLEIGH HOT SPRINGS.





Above | Sunrise at the springs

EAC Aspirations for the Springs and Talaroo as Places of Cultural Wellness

Sharing our culture and promoting cultural wellness

Reopening the Springs to Tourists

The springs are currently closed to the general public and are managed and monitored by the Ewamian Rangers, based on the best scientific advice.

EAC, over the past three years have been planning to reopen the springs to tourists and have undertaken significant planning, design, business development and experience planning in preparation of opening a 'culturally and environmentally sensitive' tourism offering that allows people to visit the springs, spend time with Ewamian people, and participate in a range of activities on beautiful Talaroo and Ewamian Country.

Planned Visitor Experiences

We are targeting visitors who respect our Country, our people and our culture.

Target markets and activities may include:

- **Caravans and Campers**, with numbers limited to minimize impacts and ensure visitors can enjoy a more immersive cultural experience
- **Self-Drive** market to the 'accessible outback' from Cairns and other regions, offering permanent and on-demand 'glamping', food and beverages for packaged stays
- **Tours** – breakfast, lunch and sunset tours of the springs, with Ewamian tour guides, who take visitors through the natural and cultural values of the springs, including 'welcome to country smoking circle' and other cultural activities, food and beverages. Tours will be pre-booked and available to guests of other tourism operations including Undara Outback Experience, Bedrock Village Caravan Park, Cobbold Gorge, the Savannahlander Train, and other local operators.
- **Workshops and conferences** - we will host local workshops and programs, and small conference groups at our campground 'Hub' amenities, subject to availability, during and outside of the peak tourism season between March and September

- **Wellness activities** – bathing in spring waters, spa and traditional treatments will be available to reinvigorate our visitors and connect them to Country
- **Cultural sites, 'truth-telling' and spending time with us** – Talaroo is home to grinding grooves along the Einasleigh river, scar trees and many artefacts. It is also the location of a massacre site when many of our forebears perished. While this site is today exclusively for Ewamian people's reflection and connecting with ancestors, we wish to share our history and encourage visitors to learn through truth-telling, as we believe when the truth of history is told, we can all walk together. When available, visitors can spend time with our rangers on other parts of Talaroo, participate in artefact making including didgeridoos and boomerangs, or explore scenic areas and witness abundant bird and animal life, on our walking trails complete with interpretive information and signage
- **Talaroo mid-season festival** – we are also in the early planning stages for a cultural festival ground featuring music and dance which if supported by the board, would be held annually or bi-annually after our tourism enterprise is operational

Infrastructure

Funding for infrastructure is in place, and will include:

- Springs boardwalks and amenities will be updated to enable visitors to experience the springs so impacts can be minimised and managed
- A new access road, camp and caravan/RV sites developed
- New iconic 'Hub' building developed, including kitchen and café, amenities block including self-cater camp kitchen, laundry and showers
- Permanent and on-demand glamping tents, some with ensuites
- Spa facilities including spring water swimming pool, hot spas, showers and change rooms and amenities
- Walking tracks

Project Timeline

2019

Funding secured

Detailed design

Experience and operational
planning

Tenders to construct

Convert Pastoral Lease to
Freehold Land

2020

Tenderer appointed

Construction period

Soft opening – September /
October

2021

Official opening planned for March
2021



Top | Artist's impression of the outdoor dining area and Hub Building

Bottom | Artist's impression Hub entry and Yarning Circle

Concept images supplied by Toussaint and Volz Architects

Converting the Talaroo Pastoral Lease to Freehold Land

Talaroo Station was not included as part of the original Ewamian Native Title Claims as at the time EAC were applying to the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation to purchase the lease of Talaroo Station with an intention to convert the Lease to Native Title 'Exclusive Possession' or 'Aboriginal Freehold' in the future.

Currently Talaroo Station Pastoral Lease is only available for land uses related to Conservation and Pastoral activities.

The Queensland government, on receipt of the Talaroo Hot Springs Tourism Development Application, offered to convert the lease of Talaroo to Freehold land, owned by EAC, in exchange for certain conditions including the ILUA, a discounted purchase price and providing a survey of the land which the Board of EAC accepted.

This was because the Hot Springs Tourism Development is not permissible under a pastoral lease, whereas larger scale tourism developments are permissible on freehold land.

EAC are committed to conservation as the primary land use of Talaroo Station, with the focus of ranger activities under guidelines from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (II & IV) and the Plan of Management (Indigenous Protected Areas) and Nature Refuge Agreement.

Benefits of Talaroo being Freehold Land, Owned by EAC

It was always EAC's intention to lodge another claim for Exclusive Possession over Talaroo at a later stage. However, as EAC now holds the deed to Talaroo Station as pastoral lease holder, Freeholding Talaroo Station is a far more beneficial option for Ewamian People.

The lease conversion to freehold will assist EAC, Ewamian Tatampi Puranga Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (your PBC) and the Ewamian community to be able to undertake a lot more activities than is currently prescribed under a lease from the Queensland Government for the purposes of Pastoral or Conservation activities, and no longer require approval from the state to undertake lawful land development activities.

Freehold land owned by EAC ultimately benefits Ewamian people's longer term aspirations for self-determination and provides increased economic development opportunities for Ewamian people.

