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Media Release

Bundjalung Nation Traditional Owners submit Section 10 for the Commonwealth protection of Wallum site

Following positive meetings with the NSW State Government in Sydney earlier this month, an application under Section 10 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (ATSIHP Act) was submitted to Tanya Plibersek's office last night by lawyers on behalf of a group of Bundjalung Traditional Owners.

The group are requesting permanent protection of the Wallum site in Brunswick Heads NSW due to its cultural significance.

Representatives from 7 clans of the Bundjalung Nation including Minyungbal, Widjabal Wiabul, Bandjalang, Githabul, Arakwal, Yaegl, and West Bundjalung and regional clans with associations into the site including Yugambah and Mulanjali are included in the detailed application.

The Section 10 application details the significance of the Wallum site including Aboriginal cultural pathways, significant pre-colonial trees, significant ceremonial and cultural associations and specifically to protect totemic associations with threatened species that rely on the site including the grey-headed flying fox, koala, black cockatoo, and wallum frog, which hold significant spiritual meaning for many clans and nations.

Traditional Owner Letitia Kelly shares, *"the Wullum site is important because it is part of the three brother's story. Many mobs have pathways across the lands. It is important we stand for comprehensive cultural heritage information to be undertaken by all mobs affected by areas which are under threat. This site is particularly important because of pathways and cultural totemic associations within the site. It is crucial for the region and for many Aboriginal communities and societies, who are entitled to protect their totemic habitats for the practice of their culture"*

The cultural heritage report submitted in 2009 for the Wallum site by the controversial Everick Heritage Consultants lacked detail due to inadequate consultation. The report stated, *'The Subject Lands are within the territory of the Minjungbal people, with the Kalibal/Widjabal to the west and the Arakwal to the south'*, however no Minyungbal or Widjabal people were consulted; and the only Arakwal representative consulted indicated the presence of a *'significant pathway'* that *'required further investigation'*.

**For further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact: Holly Galbraith
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About Save Wallum

A place of deep cultural and ecological significance, 'Wallum' also constitutes a significant part of the mere 1% remaining Wallum Healthland in Byron Shire. The 30HA Wallum site located in Brunswick Heads NSW is currently at risk of development from a zombie DA. The planning and assessments of the site date back more than 10 years and would not be approved by today's standards. A community grassroots campaign formed in 2023 to protect this unique and biodiverse area, #SaveWallum.

About Section 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984

Under a Section 10 application the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment can use the ATSIHP Act to make a declaration to protect an area. A declaration is a legislative instrument, and it is an offence to breach it. The proponent, in this case Clarence Property, will be notified by the Minister's office that an application for protection has been received. The proponent may be asked to pause their activities to allow time for the application to be evaluated and for the Minister to consider making a declaration.



Glossy Black Cockatoos feeding at Wallum Brunswick Heads. Image credit Mac Maderski