

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2018



**Email:** [admin@mandandanji.com.au](mailto:admin@mandandanji.com.au)

**Website:** [mandeandandanji.com.au](http://mandeandandanji.com.au)

**Facebook :** [facebook.com/Mandandanji-News](https://facebook.com/Mandandanji-News)

It has been my privilege to serve as the chairperson of the Board of Directors (The Board) of Mandandanji Limited (ML) and Mandandanji Cultural Heritage Services (MCHS) in 2018. I can only hope that our ancestors are proud of what the Board has achieved this year and that our people and future generations can be assured that both organisations will be there for many years to come.

2018 has in many ways been a difficult year. The Board has had to reorganise both ML and MCHS to address changing circumstances and previous poor business management. The Board has weathered opposition and derision once again this year, but as someone wise once said, “we may not be able to change the direction of the wind....but we can adjust our sails”. And this is exactly what we have done, having succeeded in achieving our goals to secure a future for both organisations. A future that can see every member of every family benefit from what ML and MCHS can offer.

The total loss for Mandandanji this year (2017-2018) was over \$400 000 less than it was for 2016 – 2017. That is an achievement this Board is certainly proud of.

### **Mandandanji Limited**

With Mandandanji Limited we have sought to reduce some costs from the past.

- We are no longer contracted to consultancy firm RREDD or its employees saving hundreds of thousands per year.
- No Board member was issued with a phone, a computer or credit card – which in previous years proved to be overly costly for the organisation.
- Board meeting costs have been reduced by increasing the number of teleconferences, face to face meetings no longer being catered for and the Executive Board meeting only twice.
- **Tim Klaas** was appointed as our Project Manager this year and has brought his years of experience, knowledge and qualifications working in Policy, Planning and Engagement for both the Federal and State government as well as the Oil and Gas and Community sectors. Tim has been able to meet our HR, Cultural Heritage, Compliance and maintenance contract negotiation responsibilities with the utmost professionalism.

To help the Mandandanji people we have

- Funded around \$30 000 through the Mandandanji Assistance Fund to help with school, sports, medical and social needs.
- Further expanded the mandandanji.com.au website, emails and our social media presence to keep members better informed.

### **Mandandanji Cultural Heritage Services**

It has been an especially hard year for MCHS

- In January 2018 the Cultural Heritage service provision was wrongfully transferred to an alternate Service Provider.
- This move placed an unnecessary financial strain on the organisation and wiped any decision making powers from our own group, as well as causing a major rift to our pool of Cultural Heritage Officers who were wanting to remain loyal to the Mandandanji.
- The MCHS Board, the Applicant's group and our solicitors fought to reassert MCHS as the rightful and legally appointed Cultural Heritage provider through an almost endless stream of phone calls, emails and meetings
- At the time of this report all but one of our proponents has switched back to MCHS as the Cultural Heritage provider.
- MCHS will be looking for more CHOs to take on the challenge of an increasing workload and a recruitment drive will begin shortly.

### **Muddy Waters**

Unfortunately, MCHS had to close the Muddy Waters business down earlier this year. Despite the efforts of senior staff, poor management over an extended period and the inability to meet our contractual compliance obligations had resulted in a company that was hugely in debt to Mandandanji Limited just to keep the front door open. Although the company had recently begun to improve financially it was still years away from being able to repay its debt to ML and function as a company on its own without support.

We would like to thank the staff of Muddy Waters and hope that many of them will be able to join the MCHS team in proposed maintenance contracts with a number of proponents

## Native Title

On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Mandandanji was handed a negative determination on Native Title in the Federal court. In a Watershed decision for the Mandandanji, the Federal Court made a consent determination of native title recording that native title does not exist in relation to the claim area comprising approximately 20,000 square kilometers in southern Queensland. The parties had agreed that native title had been extinguished in all but 5% or 6% of the claim area and their experts disagreed about whether the claim group were in fact descendants of the persons who held native title at sovereignty.

Key points to note as having a major impact moving forward are that;

For **New Grants** – the procedures in the Native Title Act will not apply  
For **Existing Agreements**: - proponents may have termination rights if the agreement contains “contrary determination” clauses contemplating a negative determination;

Following a Special General Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 Mandandanji engaged solicitor Trevor Hauff to launch an appeal.

Unfortunately, the Applicant group failed to provide Mr Hauff with all the details he required to successfully launch an appeal and the time for that appeal has now passed.

Mr Hauff will now help us to approach state and federal ministers about native title but we will need the help of the whole of the Mandandanji people.

Petitions are available at the back of the hall today, from our Roma office or to download at [mandandanji.com.au](http://mandandanji.com.au).

## In Conclusion

I would like to thank the Board for their support this year. It has been difficult to learn to not only lead the Board but to work with them as well and I may not have always got it right but I have sought to learn from each experience. I am immensely proud to have been part of a Board that has achieved so much through so many battles. I feel confident that whoever is chosen for the Board over the next year will find Mandandanji Limited and Mandandanji Cultural Heritage Services in a much healthier state than when they were handed to us.

I would also like to thank **Johan and Rachel from Condon Treasure** for all their hard work this year and of course our Auditors, **McConachie Stedman**.

Thank you to our solicitors **Michael Owens** and **Trevor Hauff** for answering so many phone calls and emails.

Thank you to our **Cultural Heritage Officers** who have also faced a difficult year.

Thank you to **Ronny Manns** and **Lyndon Landers** who have parks and monuments clean and tidy.

And finally thank you to **Rebecca Landers** for working in our Roma office for the greater part of this year and welcome to **Angela Klein** who has taken over that job and is here taking minutes today.



**Raylene Manns**

Chairperson

Mandandanji Limited & Mandandandaji Cultural Heritage Services Pty Ltd