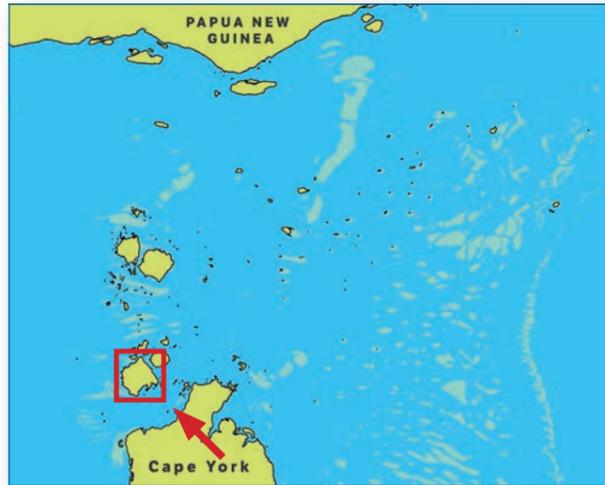


# Muralag Land and Sea Profile



OVERVIEW	
Traditional island name	<b>Muralag</b>
Western name	<b>Prince of Wales</b>
Inner Islands Cluster	<b>Kaurareg Nation</b>
Local government	<b>TSC</b>
Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC)	<b>Kaurareg Native Title (Aboriginal) Corporation RNTBC</b>
Land type	<b>Continental Island</b>
Air distance from Thursday Island (km)	<b>1</b>
Area (ha)	<b>20069</b>
Indicative max length (km)	<b>17</b>
Indicative max breadth (km)	<b>19</b>
Max elevation (m)	<b>247</b>
Coastline length (km)	<b>78</b>
Population (2011 ABS Census)	<b>87</b>
Area of island zoned development (ha)	<b>NA</b>
Area of disturbed / undisturbed vegetation (ha/%)	<b>401 (2%) / 19668 (98%)</b>

### KEY VALUES

Healthy sea ecosystems	Marine water quality	Coral reefs	Seagrass meadows	Dugong	Marine turtles
Subsistence fishing	Healthy land ecosystems	Sustainable human settlements	Coasts and beaches	Mangroves and wetlands	Coastal birds

**RANGER GROUP**

### MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

**LAND**

**SEA**

**PEOPLE**

### CLIMATE CHANGE RISK

Vulnerability to sea level rise (+1.0m) **Very Low**

Sea level rise response options **Very High**

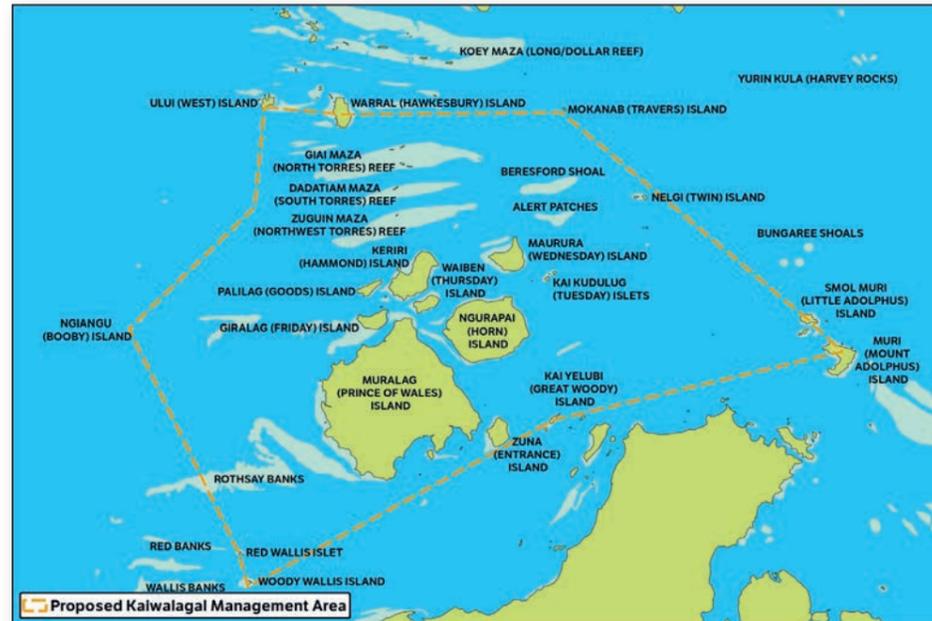


## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Muralag Island is a very large (20,069ha) continental island in the Kaiwalagal Archipelago (Inner Islands Cluster) of the Torres Strait about 1km southwest of Thursday Island. Muralag (population 87) is part of the Thursday Island group of islands that lies close to Cape York Peninsula and shares similar topography and geological history with the mainland. The community is located in 3 small settlements on the northern side of the island. It is one of the few islands that has parcels of freehold land. Some beachfront and riparian areas on Muralag have been designated as recreational areas.

The topography of Muralag includes steep hills and mounds of basaltic rock (highest point 247m). Over 98% of the island is covered in undisturbed vegetation, with closed forest mostly on the sheltered slopes and escarpments, open forest, grasslands and intertidal wetlands and mangroves on the coastal margins. Extensive burning of grass and woodlands in the summer months is prevalent across the Inner Islands cluster.

Native title is recognised over Muralag Island and is held in trust by the Kaurareg Native Title (Aboriginal) Corporation RNTBC.



This map is based on the proposed dugong and turtle management area. Dugong and turtle management areas show the general area of operation of community-based land and sea Rangers. The best available information (including traditional place names) has been used at the time of publication. This map is indicative only and not intended for native title purposes.

## RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Recent land and sea management achievements include:

- Native title secured over Muralag and six other islands
- Hiking trail established in partnership with Tagai College
- Marine debris monitoring and management activities, including removal of ghost nets

## LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT AREA

The Kaiwalagal land and sea management area includes a number of uninhabited islands, reefs and marine areas (see map) covering about 239,123ha.

## MAIN THREATENING PROCESSES

The main threatening processes affecting the Kaiwalagal land and sea management area relate to climate change (coastal erosion and impact of changed climate on vegetation), the spread of pest plants and animals, recreational impacts, and declining water quality (including marine debris and increasing sedimentation).

## LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Management priorities under the themes of Land, Sea, and People have not yet been identified in a Working on Country Ranger Plan for Kaiwalagal land and sea country and there are currently no LSMU-funded Ranger positions (2015). The LSMU supports the aspirations of the Kaurareg People to develop their own land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal region, and to identify and progress priority projects such as dugong and turtle management, protecting significant cultural sites, preserving Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and managing pests. Some Kaurareg people are interested in exploring the opportunity for improved protection of the natural and cultural values of Muralag, including through its possible nomination as a World Heritage Area.

## DUGONG AND TURTLE MANAGEMENT

The Muralag Island community do not have an endorsed Dugong and Turtle Management Plan in place, but will be actively involved in the development of a broader land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal region, including a framework for the sustainable management of dugongs and turtles.

## CLIMATE CHANGE PROFILE

Climate change in the Torres Strait will involve a warming of air and sea temperatures, rising sea levels, more severe weather events, ocean acidification and some changes to rainfall patterns, evaporation, wind and ocean currents. These changes are predicted to have long-term impacts on all of the region's key values across the Land, Sea and People themes. Muralag has a 'very low' vulnerability rating to sea level rise and a 'very high' response options rating (there are good options to move to a safer site on the island). A rise of over 200 cm would need to occur before flooding became a significant issue. For more information on climate change, please see the Torres Strait Climate Change Strategy 2014-2018.

## TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Muralag is part of a cultural landscape of great significance to the Kaurareg people, the Traditional Owners of the Kaiwalagal region. In the development of a land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal region, the Kaurareg people will have the opportunity to identify their priorities for the protection of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) for future generations.

## COMMUNITY HORTICULTURE

The Muralag community does not yet have an active food producing community garden in place to preserve traditional gardening skills and support greater community self-sufficiency in food production.

## FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The Muralag community is less reliant on barge transport of supplies and materials to and from the community, with residents transporting in most of their own supplies. The community does not have an Ergon electricity grid, but households rely on their own solar systems with back-up generators. The community has no airstrip.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As there are currently no Rangers on Muralag, community engagement with the Ranger Program is currently limited to region-wide initiatives. As part of negotiations over the development of a land and sea management plan for the Kaiwalagal Region, Ranger positions may be established on Muralag in the future. Rangers would play a key role in on-ground environmental management initiatives as well as community engagement to ensure management activities remain relevant to community priorities.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, visit the

TSRA website at <http://www.tsra.gov.au> and the

Torres Strait eAtlas <http://ts.eatlas.org.au/ts>