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**Community Profile**

**Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation**

At Booroongen Djugun College near Kempsey indigenous students and their teachers are not afraid of asking the big questions. "What's in a Swamp?" was the title of their previous Environmental Trust project. And now they want to know "What is our carbon footprint?"

The College was set up by Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation in 1994. It provides indigenous people with access to industry skills, and allows them to be competitive in the job market. In 2007 the college had 101 students enrolled in Conservation and Land Management studies. Other subjects on offer include business, hospitality, health and community services.

The philosophy of the college is to teach in harmony with Indigenous peoples' cultural and social needs. College Director Val March says that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want courses that are culturally appropriate that meet their needs and the needs of their community.

"There are many courses on offer [at other training facilities] but few have Aboriginal content and even fewer have any relevance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders world of knowledge and community," said Val.

"Booroongen Djugun College is Aboriginal-owned and Aboriginal-controlled, and is able and willing to meet the cultural, traditional and custom needs of our people in quality delivered courses."

In 2002 the Corporation received funding from the Trust to convert a small wetland on the college grounds into an outdoor education centre. Jidaanga Swamp is continuing to provide important educational and recreational functions for the college and wider community. Elders meet regularly at the swamp for various activities, and it has been used to train students in Waterwatch sampling. The college also hosted "Breakfast with the Frogs" where pupils and staff of the local primary school gathered with Dunghutti and Birpai Elders and wildlife experts to learn about local plants and animals, and share knowledge within the community.

With their current project "Tracking Forward – Leave No Footprints", the college will try to calculate the carbon footprint of the facility and find out if it is possible to reduce its greenhouse emissions (or become carbon-neutral) by planting trees onsite. At least 2ha of land has been set aside on the college grounds. In addition to the tree planting, walking tracks and interpretive signs will be installed to complement the existing facilities at the wetland.

"Tracking Forward" is also an apt description of the college's philosophy, which is already looking ahead to future environmental goals.

"Sustainable land management and existing commercial management is part of our ongoing management methodologies and will enable Booroongen Djugun College to obtain ISO14000 accreditation [in environmental management] in the longer term."

Val hopes that the current project will encourage other indigenous landholders to become involved with the economic and environmental use of their land for carbon trading.

For more information on the college visit their [website](http://www.booroongencollege.nsw.edu.au/).

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