Magnetic Island Nature Care Association Inc.

September Newsletter

2026

The development plans for the private property at Radical Bay and proposed 'access track'.

Latest on the Radical Bay Road by Charlie McColl

The newly renovated 3 kms Radical Bay track goes through the open gate of the private property, across the creek, up the dune and quite a distance inside.

Technically, there is no legal public access to the beachfront via this route. Similarly, the national park walking track from Horseshoe Bay arrives hard up against the private property and the various sandy tracks to the beachfront from there all trespass on private land.

The "public access" lines drawn on the map are not built and are actually located in thick bush and the tidal estuary at the beach end. So public access to the Radical Bay beach remains an unresolved but vital question.

MINCA has been following the proposed development of the property at Radical Bay for many years. A detailed account can be found on our website. https://www.minca.org/radical-bay-270623.html

Entrance to Radical Bay private land

Port of Townsville

The Port of Townsville has been asking for submissions relating to their request for a 10 year permit to continue dumping dredge spoils at the head of Cleveland Bay. Leading up to this, two public consultations were well attended by locals at Peppers. Gethin also gave a radio interview on the Port's proposal which has been made into a podcast.

MINCA has met frequently with PoTL to express our concerns about the continuing impact of dumped dredge spoil on the ecology of Cleveland Bay. MINCA's submission included concerns that much of the spoil is re-suspended by waves and currents, redistributed around the bay and back into the port access channel.

Not only does this result in excessive maintenance dredging, it settles on reef flats and seagrass beds and reduces the resilience of our marine ecosystems.

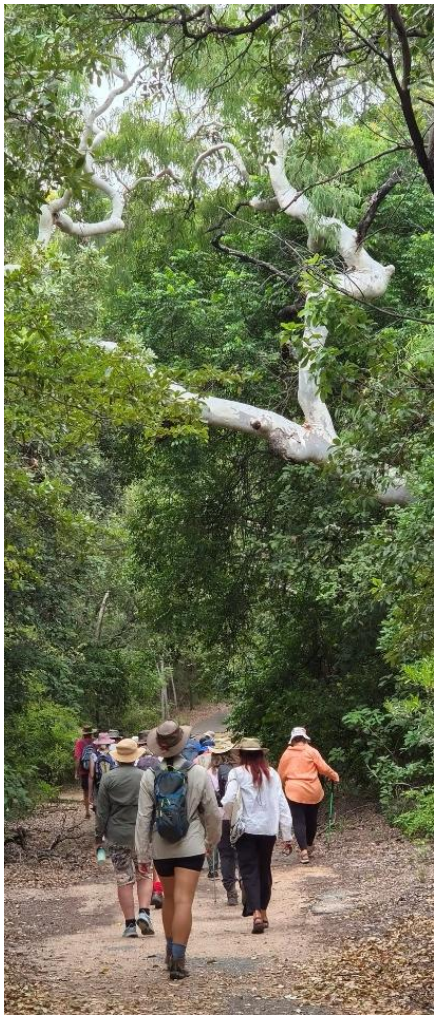
MINCA is asking for an independent and comprehensive analysis of the options, including moving the dump zone into deeper water, to be completed prior to granting a new 10 year permit.

For more information visit our website
https://www.minca.org/port-dredging-and-dumping-417302.html

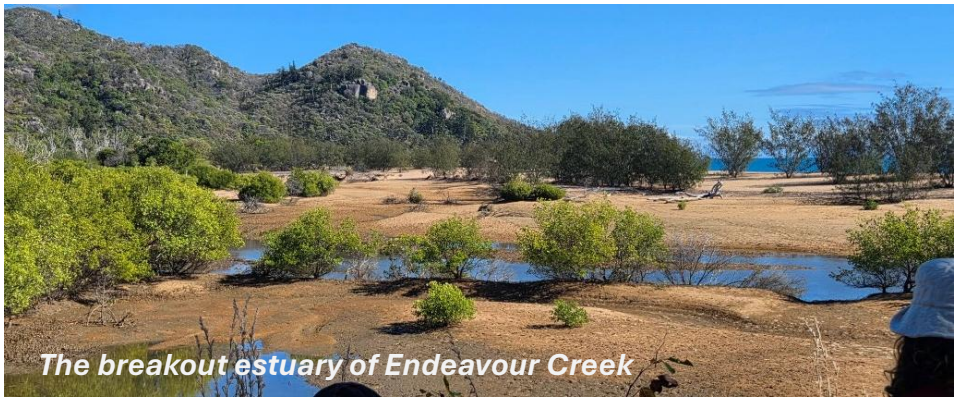
MINCA AGM

The MINCA AGM was held at Claude's Block on 20 September 2026.

A new executive was elected with **President** - Gethin Morgan, **Vice President** - Hugh (Charlie) McColl, **Treasurer** - Annie Niven, **Secretary** - Jennifer Mulcahy, **Ordinary members** – Andy Frost and Annie Taylor. **Membership Officer** - Christine Smith.



Radical Bay Ramble



The breakout estuary of Endeavour Creek

MINCA Winter Walks

Following the May Radical Bay Ramble, the annual winter walks began in June with a walk from Curlew Flats to Nelly Bay, via the QPWS walking track. Gethin talked about soils, mosaic burning, vegetation types and tracks. Andy talked about the dolerite quarry and its formation.

In July there was a beautiful wander through the enchanted Cockle Bay corner with Gethin and Chris Corbett sharing their knowledge of the woodlands, wetlands, mangroves, and their birds.

A lovely final MINCA Winter Walk was in August, from Horseshoe Bay lagoon to the breakout estuary of Endeavour Creek and back to HSB through the swales. Birdlife was abundant at the lagoon with large numbers of magpie geese. Great information was shared by Gethin, Charlie and Andy about the lagoon, hydrology and history of the area.

PUNQ 2026

A PLACE- BASED CONTEMPORARY ARTS PESTIVAL

The Mark, an installation by Dr Jenny Mulcahy, is located at Claude's Block, 570 West Point Road, Bolger Bay. It is the first driveway on the right after Sunglow Avenue.

The Mark is an ephemeral memorial to those who died whilst in quarantine on Magnetic Island between 1875 and 1915. The markers within the installation each represent a person who died whilst in quarantine on the island. Each strand of rope around the individual markers represents the age of the person who died. The symbols on the markers represent the cause of death.

The installation will be open to the public between 10.00am- 2pm.on the following dates:

Sat 26th September

Sat 3rd October

Sat 10th October

Sun 11th October.

Arcadia booklet #3

(Funded by the Wettenhall Trust and MINCA)

Arcadia Coast Care's most recent booklet ***Foreshores, mangroves and shallows of Arcadia*** is nearing completion.

It's more varied than the previous two booklets that mainly covered plants. This one is about mangroves and the life that lives there, turtle nesting, birds and marine stingers.

There are sections on exploring the beaches and what you'll find washed up on the sand; what you'll find in the shallows – rays, crabs and fish; as well as foreshore plants and why they're important.

With a lot of volunteer hours, expert input and Sue Swaddling's drawings, it will make a great Christmas gift. The launch is planned for late November.

Pavers go down at Claude's Block

Thanks to a private member donation, many volunteer hours by Mick Gorst, Charlie and Gethin, Claude's Block has had a spruce up.

The old carpet has been ripped up and pavers are going down at Claude's Block.

All the pavers have been laid and there's only the finishing touches to go.

Claude's Block Restoration project:

DETSI Lantana eradication

The $48,000 DETSI funded lantana project is going amazingly well. Led by Charlie McColl and a local contracting team, the first pass of the 13 acre block is almost complete and they're doing the important follow up to ensure lantana's demise. The final stage in the new year will be another complete follow up targeting missed and emerging plants.

It will be many more years of vigilant monitoring by MINCA members to ensure Claude's block remains lantana free.

Beach Scrub Project

MINCA is working on a project run by NQ Dry Tropics to improve the condition of the fragile beach scrub in Horseshoe Bay and Nelly Bay Habitat Reserve. Beach scrub is a threatened ecological community identified under the EPBC Act which is very sensitive to fire and can be invaded by weeds and grasses This continues a long-term project by MINCA and MI National Park Volunteers

Cate Paton is managing the project and any help will be very welcome - please contact Gethin or Cate if you'd like to be involved.

The map below shows one of the two areas being managed in Horseshoe Bay, being roughly between the Endeavour lagoon and Horseshoe Bay lagoon.

Horseshoe Bay Lagoon report

By Andy Frost

Unrestricted inflows to the lagoon of saltwater and a short wet season have delivered a trying year for the lagoon. Just 1.5m of rain fell between December and April. The lagoon filled in early January and by May magpie geese had arrived and nesting got underway. Seventeen goslings were the result. Black ducks bred successfully too.

By late May freshwater inflows had declined and water levels in the lagoon fell. During the highest night tides in May and June most of the fish - small barramundi and other species - left the lagoon. After the June tidal inflow water lilies, and then bulkuru rushes, died.

Each month between May and September saw between three and five inflows of saltwater during the highest tides. Salinity in the lagoon rose steadily and iron flocculation increased significantly causing a spike in acidity, especially in the western part of the lagoon, turning the water red/brown.

Despite deteriorating water quality, more than one hundred and fifty magpie geese remain at the lagoon.

Goose feeding on lily flowers in April.

Iron flocculation in June by the boardwalk.

Digging in the bottom for lily and spike rush roots and resting on the banks during the heat of the day. Twenty or thirty pacific black ducks are hanging on as well. Mainland wetlands are drying fast too. Options are limited for waterfowl this year. Extreme salinity is setting in at our lagoon as continued tidal inflows and evaporation do their work.

Happily for our Horseshoe Bay wetlands, the long term study organised and managed by our President, Gethin Morgan is well underway and meetings of the resulting stakeholders' group are being held.

One of the urgent moves under discussion by the group is the installation of a barrier in the excavated channel which currently connects the lagoon to the estuary. This would keep the lagoon fuller of freshwater for longer and reduce tidal inflows. It would be great if it could be in place before the next wet season.

Professional consultants are providing research and recommendations. This study will extend into 2028, with further discussions and planning as research continues and initial moves are assessed.