



# Saibai Mura Buway (PBC)

Reviving Traditional Gardening on Saibai



Australian Government



**TSRA**  
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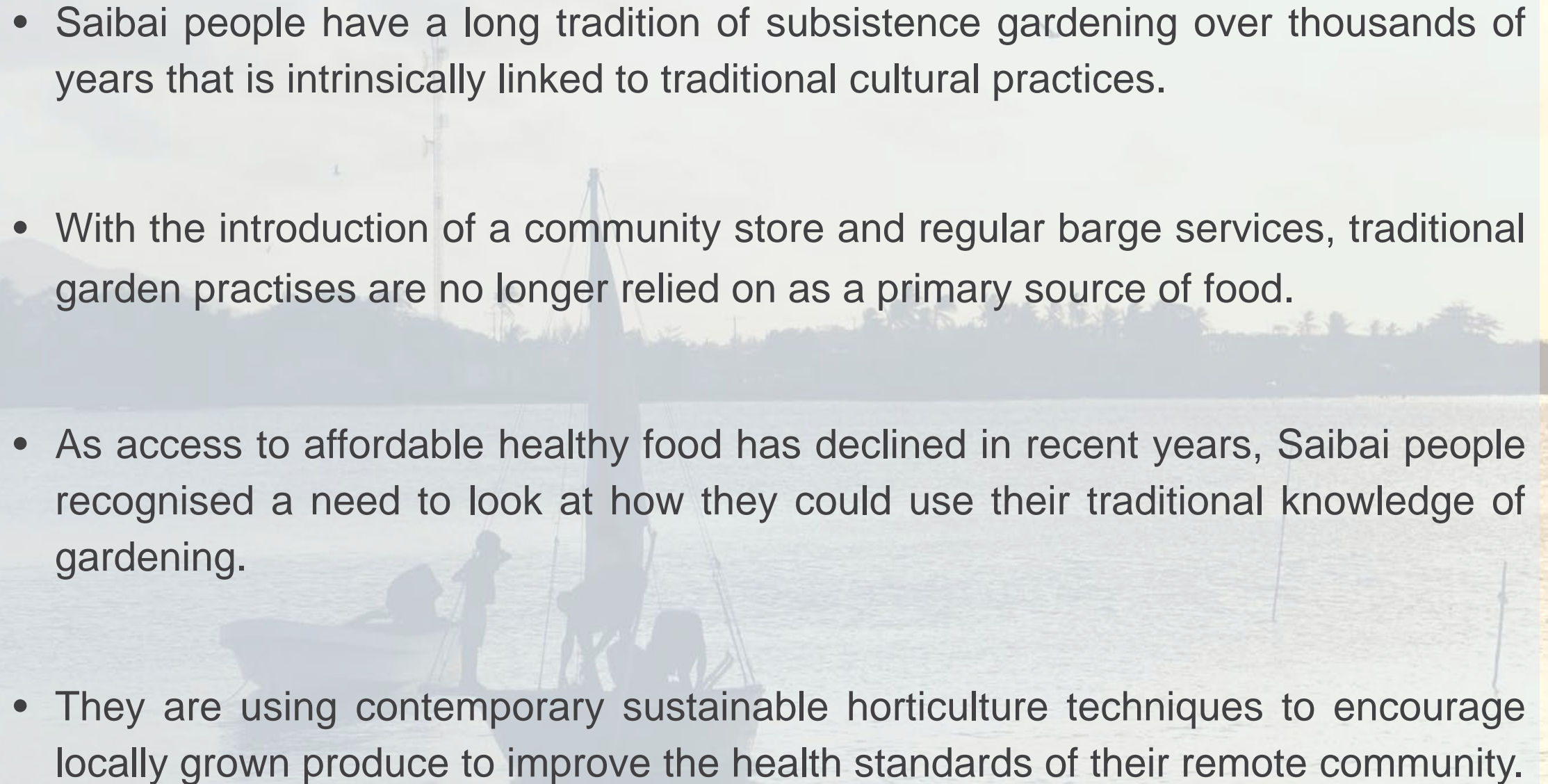
# Introduction

- Saibai Mura Buway PBC gained Native Title Determination in 1999.
- Has a transient population of about 450 people.
- Saibai is a mud Island formed from the sediments of the Fly River.
- The Island has extensive mangroves and freshwater swamps.

# Saibai Island

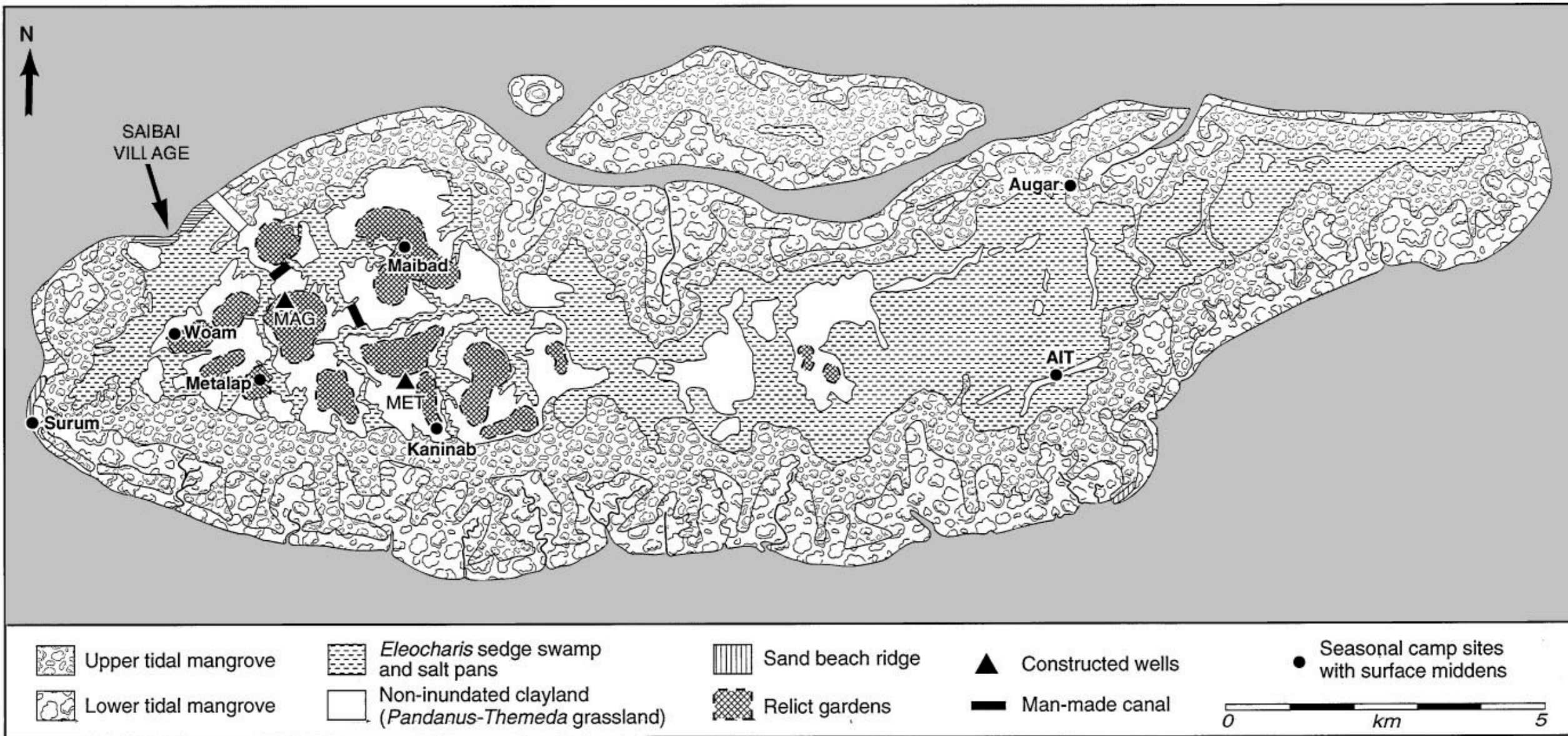


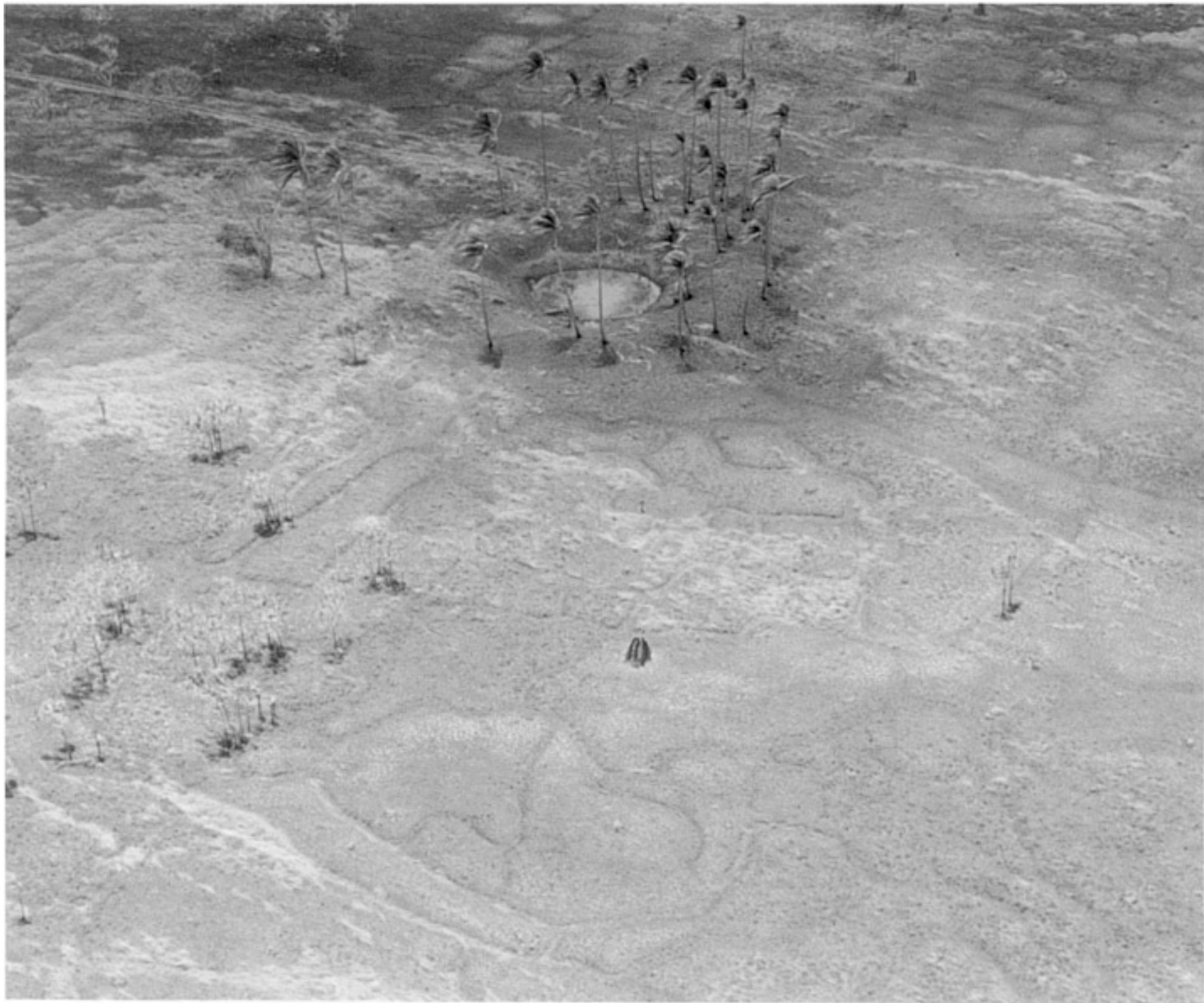
- Saibai Island sits approximately 5km of the PNG coastline.
- Within the Treaty Zone and has close relationship with the customary costal villages of PNG.

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- Saibai people have a long tradition of subsistence gardening over thousands of years that is intrinsically linked to traditional cultural practices.
  - With the introduction of a community store and regular barge services, traditional garden practises are no longer relied on as a primary source of food.
  - As access to affordable healthy food has declined in recent years, Saibai people recognised a need to look at how they could use their traditional knowledge of gardening.
  - They are using contemporary sustainable horticulture techniques to encourage locally grown produce to improve the health standards of their remote community.

# Traditional Gardening

- Saibai people used a ditch and mound style of gardening.
- For centuries they cultivated traditional Yams, Taro, Cassava, Sweet Potato, Banana and Sugar Cain.
- People relied on their traditional knowledge of the seasons and stars to know when to plant different crops.
- The traditional knowledge of how to plant crops and look after garden beds has been passed down through the generations.











- Today only a small number of Saibai people still practice traditional gardening.
- In recent years it has been a priority of the PBC and local community to bring back traditional gardening and pass on this knowledge to younger generations.



# The development of the Saibai farm

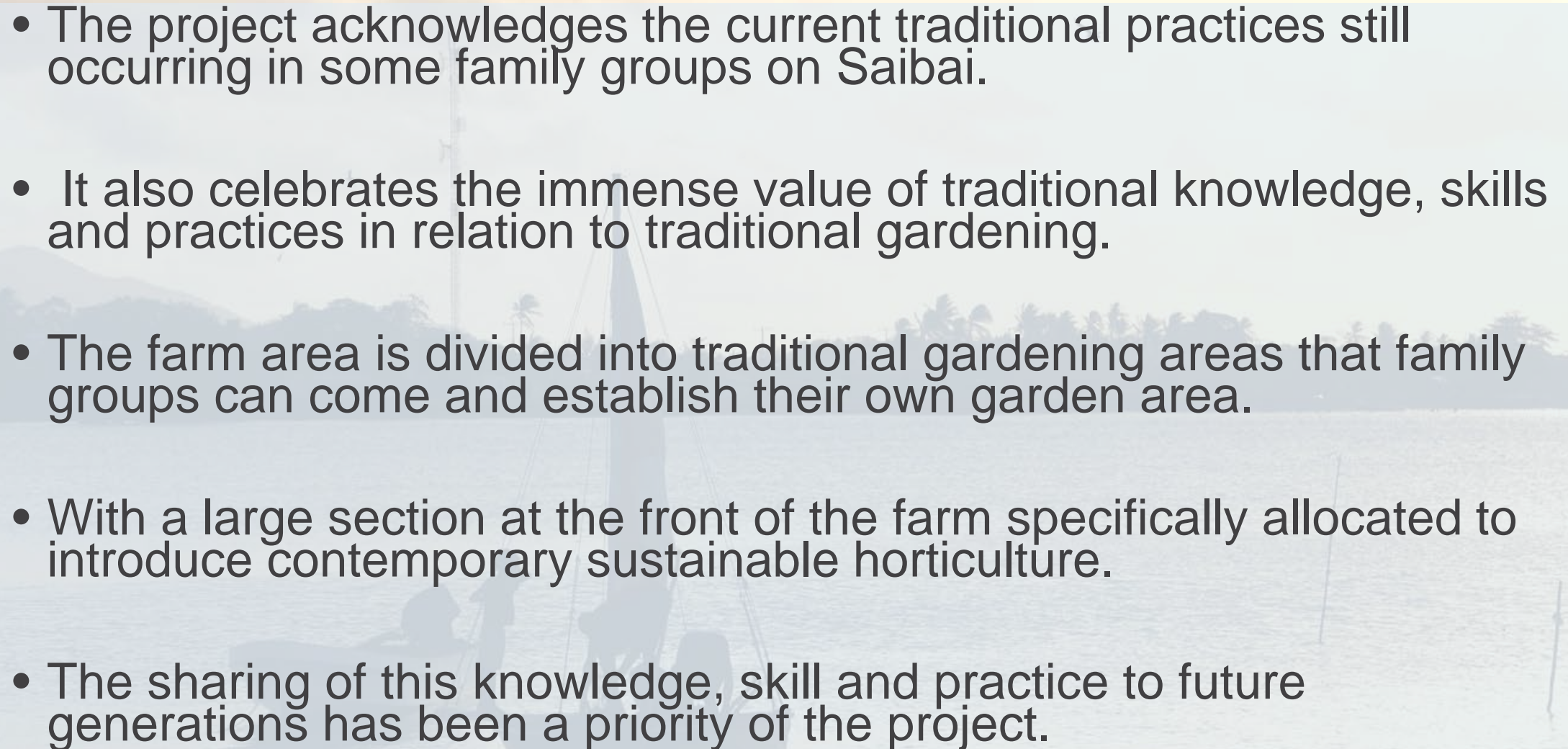
- In 2015 the Saibai Mura Buway RNTBC in partnership with TSRA initiated the development of the Saibai Mekem garden community project.
- The project has developed 1Ha small scale farm site 2km south-east of Saibai Village.
- The project is a whole of community partnership, bringing together community members, TSIRC, My Pathways, Rangers and Tagai College students.
- The aim of the project is to bring together traditional gardening with contemporary sustainable horticulture techniques.

- Stage one of the project was to develop infrastructure at the site.
- A large nursery has been built to propagate fruit trees and vegetable seedlings.
- A undercover meeting area has been built to encourage community members to utilise the farm for family outings.
- The site has been fenced to keep out deer and other feral animals.



# Developing a Garden Plan



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- The project acknowledges the current traditional practices still occurring in some family groups on Saibai.
  - It also celebrates the immense value of traditional knowledge, skills and practices in relation to traditional gardening.
  - The farm area is divided into traditional gardening areas that family groups can come and establish their own garden area.
  - With a large section at the front of the farm specifically allocated to introduce contemporary sustainable horticulture.
  - The sharing of this knowledge, skill and practice to future generations has been a priority of the project.



**Eggplants**



**Corn**



**Mixed cropping**

- Contemporary crops are now being planted
- Rangers are working with the local community to manage the farm.



# Sharing of Knowledge

- The Saibai Tagai school has been working with traditional owners and the Mura Buway Rangers to develop a traditional garden at the school.
- Grade 5/6 students have also participated in traditional knowledge of gardening workshops with elders.





- The Saibai Rangers, Tagai School kids and the PBC have been working to produce a film on the traditional knowledge of gardening.
- A book of how seasons interact with the traditional knowledge of gardening.
- It is hoped that this knowledge can be passed down to future generations.





# Next steps

- Continue to develop the farm site.
- Hold a sustainable horticulture workshop to teach community members contemporary approaches to small scale agriculture.
- Encourage back yard gardens, so more Saibai people grow their own produce.
- Reduce the reliance on community store for fresh food and improve the health benefits of Saibai people.

# Questions

