



Bajigal Habitat Restoration Update

Restoration of Reef Islands Project | January – July 2026

We acknowledge and pay our abiding respects to our Ancestors – our Old Peoples; to our Mandubarra Elders past and present; and to all Mandubarra families and Traditional Owners, wherever you may be living across the world.

Artwork by Mandubarra artist Naomi Epong

Storage solutions

In April, the team coordinated the transport and installation of a shipping container on Bajigal. This container will be instrumental to ensuring smooth and efficient work and is now a fully operational team member of the RORI Bush Crew!

The container provides secure, on-island storage for the equipment needed for day-to-day restoration work, keeping heavy tools close at hand. Project equipment now has safe, weather-proof storage keeping them clean, dry, maintained and ready for use. Camping gear has been added to storage, with plenty of room left in the container for extra items.



Container installation on Bajigal.

The container will continue to be used for storage throughout the remainder of the project. As the project progresses, additional items may be added to ensure smoother operations for the RORI Bush Crew. Its close proximity to the Bajigal work sites also reduces the time and effort required to pack, transport and unload equipment, leaving the crew with more time to do what they do best – restoration works!

Highlights



Winter weather wins! July ensured the most consistent restoration effort so far with 11 days on island.



Drones are being used for aerial footage of restoration works and have helped capture before and after photos of conditions.



30 bags of pest weed were removed in one visit – the largest single weed removal so far!



Guinea grass trials (GGT) are underway! Target pest species are being removed as the crew works through the project sites. More information on GGT is on page 2.



Winter at Bajigal and Bimi.

Camping on Country

The island is now becoming a working base for the Bush Crew, with camping commencing in July. The crew have completed multiple overnight stays at campsite 1 located near the container. Being so close to the container means the area can be used as the main base for operation. The RORI Bush Crew can get a good night's rest and have an easy commute in the morning!

A Traditional camp area has also been re-established at the beach front, near the fish trap. Camping on Bajigal allows the RORI Bush Crew to be immersed in Land and Sea Country by living and working on Country.



Entrance to Campsite 1 and container area.

Goodbye Guinea grass!

With the planning stage complete, the Guinea grass trials launched in to action in April, with Aestra and the RORI Bush Crew surveying the two relevant management units to identify suitable trial areas. Working tracks were cut into the vegetation at sites 1 and 2 near MUs 7-9, allowing easier access. Botanists also ran plant ID workshops with the MALSI Rangers and RORI Bush Crew. The trials kicked off in July.



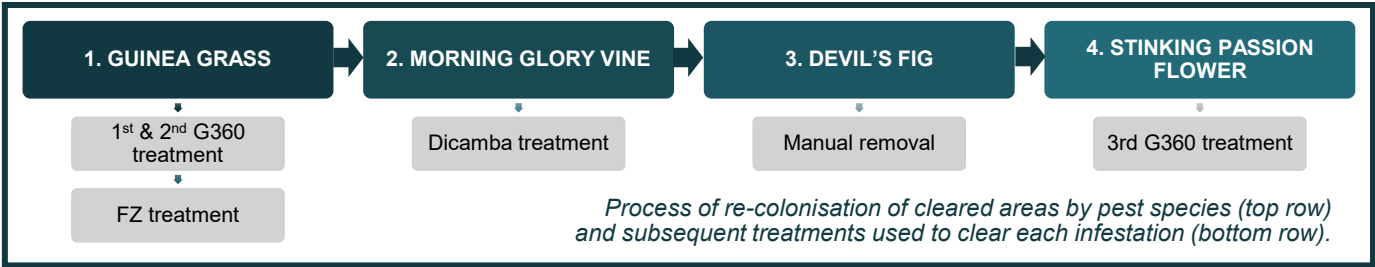
Guinea grass experts and botanists conduct risk assessments with RORI Bush Crew (left). Guinea grass tussock pulling and removal method being used (right).

Glyphosate 360 (G360), a weed control herbicide, has shown the most promising results against Guinea grass and other target pest species. Some areas have high densities of target weeds and require high efforts to clear them. Both manual and chemical controls are being used in many of the areas.



MU2: Plot 7 – Day 1 of treatment with Glyphosate 360 (top) and day 14 after herbicide application (bottom).

Some cleared areas proved painful for the RORI crew, with some treated areas being re-colonised by other weeds – not just once, but two or three times. This has resulted in extra work and the use of multiple rounds of herbicides to treat subsequent infestations. This re-colonisation and treatment process can be seen below.



Bajjal weed removal areas (circles) and morning glory weed density (2025 survey) (squares). [Source: Aestra]

What's next...

The RORI Bush Crew worked hard to deliver many project wins over the last six months. With equipment now at hand, camping reducing travel effort, and GGT underway, the Bush Crew are committed to restoring the native scape of Bajjal.

Restoration works are now underway in MU3, with work in MU2 completed in August and re-treatments in persistent areas already underway.

Let's see what the next six months brings!

Part of the Reef Joint Field Management Program's **Restoration of Reef Islands** project, with funding from the Reef Trust.