

Lignum

(Wirnta; *Duma florulenta*)



Image credit - [Riverspace](#)

Bold and underlined words are in Kurnu-Baakandji language, local to the junction of the Warrego and Darling Rivers (from Paakyanti Dictionary).

Fig 1. Young lignum shoots.
Credit - Kevin Knight



Lignum is a water-dependent shrub that grows on floodplains and in wetlands. It has a very deep root system that penetrates the soil to at least 3 m in depth, allowing it to survive from 3-10 years between inundation events (although a drink every 3-years is much preferred than one every 10-years).

Lignum is known to be one of the most ecologically important floodplain shrubs of Australia. It provides protected breeding habitat for native wildlife including many species of colonial breeding waterbirds (such as ibis), and contributes large amounts of carbon to floodplains - a critical nutrient that helps to drive the food chain. Traditionally, the fibrous branches of lignum are used as a material for weaving and the young shoots (fig 1) a diet staple and source of moisture for the local Kurnu-Baakandji people.

Our study area at the junction of the Warrego and Darling (**Baaka**) rivers (background image) hosts over 500 ha of lignum-dominant vegetation community. These communities benefit greatly from Commonwealth water for the environment. In fact, recent management of water for the environment and naturally wetter conditions have seen lignum in its best condition in our 8-years of monitoring this system. During our latest survey, we even observed a big lignum recruiting event which we're looking forward to monitoring over the coming year.

Managing water for the environment is a collective and collaborative effort, working in partnership with communities, private landholders, scientists and government agencies - these contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, work and play. We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



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