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QUD356/2025 & QUD357/2025

IN THE FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DISTRICT REGISTRY
GENERAL DIVISION

**CHARLES WOOSUP & ORS ON BEHALF OF THE ANKAMUTHI PEOPLE SEA CLAIM AND
STATE MINISTER FOR THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND**

&

**BERNARD CHARLIE & ORS ON BEHALF OF THE GUDANG YADHAYKENU PEOPLE SEA
CLAIM AND STATE MINISTER FOR THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND & ANOR**

Applicant

STATE MINISTER FOR THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND & ANOR

Respondents

**Document: Record of Conference of Experts held on 25 & 26 August in the Brisbane
Registry**

Date: 25 and 26 August 2026

INTRODUCTION

1. Orders were made in these proceedings on 3 June 2026 requiring the expert witnesses retained by the Active Parties to attend a conference at the Brisbane Registry before a Judicial Registrar for the purpose of narrowing or removing any differences in their preliminary opinions. The orders provide for the expert witnesses to produce this record for the use of the Active Parties and the Court.
2. Expert anthropologists Dr Anthony Redmond and Mr Ray Wood attended the conference of experts, which was conducted by Senior Judicial Registrar Laurelea McGregor and Judicial Registrar Georgia Morrison on 25 and 26 August 2026 at the Federal Court of Australia at Brisbane.
3. Each anthropological expert had access to the materials which were provided as basis material. They were not provided with the same list of materials. However, the Experts each attended the conference of experts having considered the material that they were provided.
4. At the conference of experts, each expert was reminded of their role as an expert witness, including their duty to the Court.
5. At the conference of experts, the experts considered the questions (as annexed to the orders made 3 June 2026) and provided answers as set out at **Annexure A**.
6. At the conference of experts, the anthropological experts formed their joint opinion as set out in this report and indicated by signing the declaration at the end of this report that they reached those opinions taking into account and applying their training, knowledge and experience as an expert and having a regard to:
 - a. the basis material they were each provided;
 - b. any other material available to or within the knowledge of the expert; and
 - c. the questions considered during the conference and the views of each other expert.
7. In this report, “Overlap Area” means those parts of the land and waters covered by the applications in Endeavour Strait Proceedings, being QUD356/2025 Charles Woosup & Ors on behalf of the Ankamuthi People Sea Claim and State Minister for the State of Queensland & Ors and QUD357/2025 Bernard Charlie & Ors on behalf of the Gudang Yadhaykenu People Sea Claim and State Minister for the State of Queensland & Ors (Overlap Area).
8. The Experts made the following observations:
 - The Experts consider they should reconvene after the lay evidence, and after sufficient time to consider the transcript of the lay evidence, to re-assess their opinions and if they can be further clarified or explained;

- At this time it is also hoped there will be access to the Waters report which will potentially change or inform their opinions; and
- The Experts consider that, following the two elements described above, they should participate in drafting further questions to be answered.

ANNEXURE A

1. How, if at all, do the traditional laws and customs that govern land and marine tenure in the Overlap Area, extend into the sea from the adjacent local estates in the land?	
Dr Redmond	Ray Wood
The primary tenure principle is that marine estates extend outwards from the adjoining landed estate coastline and become frayed or less distinct at their outer extremities. This has been described in the earlier ethnography as a “spatial projection of proprietorship” (Wilkin in Haddon 1904 vol 5:37)	Agree that that is the principle, but needs to be further developed as follows: In all those parts of seaboard Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait where the classical patrician system survived long enough to be studied by anthropologists, estates have been found to extend well into the sea. The classical studies are those of east coast Sandbeach groups by Chase, A. & B. Rigsby (1998 ‘The Sandbeach People and Dugong Hunters of Eastern Cape York Peninsula: Property in Land and Sea Country’), and Wilkin’s account of the Torres Strait case (see Redmond’s opposite column). The same applies to the higher level language-named groupings that these estates were intramural divisions of. In fact even before sovereignty, there was a difference from the situation on land is that with distance into the sea from the beach, the sea tended to verge toward a home or mainland settlement’s internally undivided communal title in actual practice, and this consolidated throughout each Torres Strait and NCYP community’s sea country as the clan estate system was eroded under colonial impact.

2. Under the traditional land tenure model for the landed estates adjacent to the Overlap Area, were the primary owners of local estates constituted via recruitment through patrifilial descent?

Dr Redmond	Ray Wood
Patrification was the focal principle for land ownership at the local estate level. This structure of serial patrifiative links in which more distal ancestors' names are forgotten and are folded back into the Dreaming gives rise to corporate land holding groups. Matrifiliation provided an important but less highly ranked basis for country group membership. In this sense there was a system of complimentary filiation for land ownership	Agree in general terms, but I do not accept that the principle is merely patrification, but that it is patrilineal descent. There is in fact no such thing as 'patrifiative descent.' Filiation is not descent, rather recruitment by patrification is a one-step acquisition of rights from one's father. In recruitment by descent, on the other hand, the primary owners constitute a corporate descent group, being the descendants of a line of ancestors at multiple generational levels above the father. Classical Australian corporate descent groups, inclusive of North Cape York Peninsula (NCYP) People, are invariably patrilineal, meaning that the ancestors from whom rights descend are those in the father's male line. The individual acquires rights automatically at birth by being born into such a descent group. If recruitment is simply by patrification, then it is not by descent. One immediate indicator that a descent doctrine is at work is how widespread it is in Aboriginal communities for senior individuals to state that "I get my country from my father and father's father". Patrilineal antecedents above that of the paternal grandfather join the stock of ancestor spirits resident on an estate. It is rare for their names to be remembered, although often a few individuals become memorialized because of some biographical achievements, the most common being their war record, or their imputed supernatural powers. The descent doctrine, however, is codified in other ways, in particular patrilineally descending site totems, which in the present case were documented by Sharp (Sharp 1933-4, 1939) throughout NCYP, including in his Cowal Creek genealogical data, such as that obtained from Tommy Dodd and others as set out in my report (Wood 2026 [179-186]). Agree with what Redmond has said about matrifiliation being lower in rank. That is, rights in mother's country in classical systems are merely matrifiative: they do not descend, i.e. they are not genealogically transmissible to further generations.

3. Since effective sovereignty has local group organisation become attenuated in and around the land adjacent to the Overlap Area, such that language and dialect labelled groupings, that are larger than the original local estate areas, are now the relevant land holding groups?

Dr Redmond	Ray Wood
Yes, local estate group organisation has become attenuated, though some localised totemic affiliations persist. The system of law and custom under which people belong to country always allowed for processes of fusion and fission of localized estates. This allowed for the possibility of coalescence into larger entities possessing shared jurisdiction over broader tracts of country. Language group identity in the NCYP, based upon ownership of a particular language and the country that language was embedded in, has achieved a greater level of community attention and boundedness in respect of land ownership than was the case in the precolonial past. At different points in NCYP history, toponymic identifiers such as “Red Island”, “Northern Sandbeach”, “Seven Rivers” have been the most commonly used terms to refer to local groupings rather than languages and dialects. While language identities do anchor people to place and to each other they seldom mark off well bounded social entities because there are persistent patterns of intermarriage between neighbouring language groups. See section 3 of my report for a discussion of this dynamic. In terms of the relationship between a unitary Injinoo/Cowal Creek identity and more localised group identities in the contemporary community, Fuary and Greer reflected on the intense interest generated in the Injinoo community by the 1987 workshop which allowed NCYP people to elaborate on	Agree with Redmond’s first paragraph, and with the first sentence of his paragraph two. I agree with his second sentence at paragraph two with certain reservations, namely that the history is much more layered than a one-step evolution from clan estate level to language group level. Mergers of entire language groups occurred, and the great majority of the language groups recorded in 1848-9 and the 1860s simply disappeared, and this is part of the history and motivations that led to the formation of the Injinoo community. Certainly attenuation of the intramural estate system was severe between the 1860s and on into the 1870s and continuing variably and unevenly into the early 1880s. In adaptation to this, patrilineal estate groups folded into the next level up, i.e. language-named groups or ‘tribes,’ these being the multiple such names preserved in the ethnohistorical written records. However, conjoint succession did not stop at that level, and language group identities did not remain unchanged from circa 1880 to the present as just noted. Rather, in intervening periods the prevailing new self-constructions were, at a first stage, Red Island and Jardine River, thence a further merger into the Cowal Creek ‘kachinu’ (united) community, then yet a further one in 1930 with the reception of the McDonnell/Atambaya group. I’m not convinced that this tension was always there, but was rather developed during the 1990s. I note that Kwok’s work was during that period as it was developing. The result was that it was not language group identities that defined landed interests for a lengthy period from 1914 to after the Mabo 2 judgment. The efforts to disaggregate the <i>Injinoo kachinu</i> (‘united community’) postdate the native title

their distinctive, underlying cultural identities, something which had previously been occluded by administrative concerns with building a unified NPA identity. They noted that:

“Indeed, the catchcry in the community at the time of the research was that Cowal Creek community members were ‘all one nation’. This is not surprising given the history of the establishment of the village and subsequent movements of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to the NPA. However, at the workshop, there emerged a sense that one could also legitimately identify in terms of more primary cultural affiliations. This is not to suggest that the one supplanted the other, but rather, additional categories of identification were now being expressed. Up to this point very little interest had been shown by outsiders in this essential part of their identity. **We were not imposing these categories of identification on people**, but were facilitating the process by which these primary senses of self (already being used interpersonally and beyond the formal public domain) were legitimated and put on the public agenda”. (Greer and Fuary 2008:12)

Kwok’s research from the mid-to-late 1990s confirmed a picture of reemerging fusions and fissions between groups which had coalesced over the post-sovereignty period but had steadfastly maintained their sense of distinctive cultural identities, noting that,

“New political and administrative institutions developed to represent the interests of the settlement and a new community identity was forged, so that at a certain level people today do identify as a single group: says Goody Massey, ‘We like one group now’ and Gordon Pablo - ‘Our

era, and are not unanimous, as the actual views of at least Angkamuthi identifiers expressed to me reflect a spectrum of positions from individuals claiming that the subject area is solely or primarily Angkamuthi country, to those that emphasize that it is shared by Angkamuthi and GY. This spectrum of views is the current situation rather than that the division into separate language group countries is unanimous or consolidated, and it is just not the case that it prevailed unchanged throughout the last ca. 140 years.

On my first acquaintance with Injinoo in 1986, I was introduced to many individuals by the late Gordon Pablo, who later identified a few of them as ‘Seven River,’ Cairncross,’ ‘Whitesand’ (i.e. Wuthathi), but the Aputhama ‘one people’ doctrine was the major theme, and they did not just state it, but were proud of it.

For this I take the term ‘conjoint succession,’ introduced in the seminal native title ethnographic work of Sutton (2003:5-8), as the best understanding of what occurred. Sutton explains how conjoint succession has occurred at variable levels in Aboriginal tenure and territorial systems, nor just at the clan to language group level. Rather there were many cases along advancing frontiers in which several entire language groups merged into conjoint succession communities, as explained in [112-116] of my report.

generation been born here and we think we belong Injinoo'.
Despite these developments the persistence of separate affiliations to country and identities should not be underestimated. They are deeply rooted and strongly felt and entail a range of rights, responsibilities and knowledge¹ which are exclusive to the particular group".
(Kwok 1998:17 - my emphasis)

¹ Although note that knowledge of many sites and stories seems to be fairly generalised.

4. What do the early ethnographic sources indicate in respect of which groupings held rights in the land adjacent to the Overlap Area?

Dr Redmond	Ray Wood
At sovereignty a set of local estates labelled under the terms Gumakudin/Yumukunji and Oiyumkwi (which were amongst the various groups later subsumed into the “Red Island tribe”) held the primary estate interests in the land adjacent to the overlap area.	Gumakudin held the primary rights on the mainland coast, and the Kaurareg on the opposite shore, i.e. Prince of Wales Island and associated islets. The available records are not sufficient to establish which mainland group held rights on west Punsand Bay east of Peak Point – i.e. whether Gumakudin or a group allied to the Gudang, the latter being located further east on Albany Passage and Mt Adolphus Islands. To the west of the Jardine River was either Angkamuthi or a group allied to them and to Gumakudin, at least this is evident by the 1880s, before which there are no clear records, but a number of no longer extant group names are candidates especially in Brierty (1849, in Moore 1978).

5. Can ancestors listed in the APSC Form 1 and/or the GYPSC Form 1 be identified as having held ancestral rights and interests, or as having been descended from persons who held ancestral rights and interests, in the land adjacent to the Overlap Area?

Dr Redmond	Ray Wood
The data indicating persons with the clearest traditional connections to the Overlap Area is Tommy Dodds mother's father, Iyeri, whom Tommy Dodd told Sharp was "Oiyumkwi: from Cape York to Jardine River" (Sharp field notes Cowal Creek 1933:18/5). The living descendants of Iyeri generally identify as Gudang Yadhaykenu people today – see section 5. The various ancestors discussed in section 5. of my report are people who have been identified as belonging to what emerged in the immediate post- sovereignty era as the "Red Island" grouping. This was a coalescence and amalgamation of some remanent local groupings (Oiyumkwi, Yumakuntji /Yumakunti/ Yumakudi/Gumakudin with some Gudang , Unduyamu and Yantigan) which had come to be identified under the broader Yadhaykenu language label by the mid-1890s. The contemporary descendants of these people generally identify themselves as Gudang Yadhaykenu people.	My apologies for the length of my response to this question, but I consider the Aboriginal facts of the late 19th century to be more complex than that arrived at in the Redmond report from the focus on the Tommy Dodd genealogy. I can also only partly answer this question so far, pending reception of a report from Kate Waters which will help identify the ancestor set of the 1912-14 era which I consider the most relevant, rather than an attempt to go back beyond the reach of traditional oral genealogies, where nothing of which would today be known were it not for European archival sources. Even were that not the case, the Redmond report's reliance on archival sources to ground the current GY identifiers' claim to exclusive native title has produced only Sharp's 1934 Tommy Dodd genealogy. This is not in my assessment the "clearest" data, but the <u>only</u> clear data, and is confined to a single Oiyumkwi individual, Iyeri, Dodd's maternal grandfather, likely DOB 1850s. This tenuous ancestral thread is in my view an insufficient basis upon which to attribute sole primary ownership of the subject area to the 'Red Island tribe,' which is the successor group to the historical Gumakudin group, and now re-badged as 'Gudang-Yadhaykenu,' but whose ancestry was overwhelmingly from the Cairncross coast. Tommy Dodd was a rememberer of the Oiyumkwi group of the past, not a practitioner of it, as: • he did not give his personal group identity as Oiyumkwi; • nor treat 'Red Island' as synonymous with Gumakudin; • nor appeal to Oiyumkwi as the basis of his rights; but • identified himself with the successionist Red Island identity and with the successionist language Yadhaykenu, and not withstanding that he had no measure of Yadhaykenu ancestry. He has thus not identified, by either filiation or descent, with any of his parental or grand parental language-named groups, but with the then new successionist identity of Yadhaykenu Red Island.

	The extreme limitations to his and his Cowal Creek contemporaries' oral memory is revealed in how none of them recognized the group name Gudang, and few recognized the name Gumakudin, and those who did told Sharp it was "all finished." In my wide experience of normal Aboriginal usage, such a phrase means that that group identity as a carrier of landed rights and interests is longer an extant one. Rather Red Island and it's Cairncross language Yadhaykenu had replaced it. This was in turn melded into the later Cowal Creek community identity, which further submerged Endeavour Strait group identities of the pre-effective sovereignty era, which on my reading of the data is a case of the Gumakudin group identity being quite washed away. There is other early data to precisely the same effect, namely concerning Iyeri's son Kaio. (Contra my report's suspicion that there might have been two Kaios, I later formed the view that there was only one, but the filing of the report was rushed by the date being brought forward, and this was not corrected.) Kaio identified himself with the then contemporary 'Red Island' Yadhaykenu group identity when speaking with Haddon in 1898, not as Oiyumkwi or Gumakudin, despite every opportunity to do so in his discussion with Haddon in which Oiyumkwi was explicitly discussed. It is evident from Haddon's records of that discussion that Kaio and his four companions used 'Red Island' as a name with a layered history: the historical Oiyumkwi layer, succeeded by the 1880s by the Yadhaykenu-dominated succession community (Discussed in Wood 2026 [91-94]). Kwok also notes the history embedded in group labels over the 170 years since records commenced, and poor recognition of this in the Redmond report (2022 now 2026) and other reports, which "flatten out" historical layering: <i>"My greater concern, however, is that these models flatten out the history of the various identity groupings, particularly those with English name labels, tethering them to discrete locales and depicting them as more or less directly commensurable with the traditional groups known to have occupied those areas at settlement. To my mind, identity labels, such as Red Island, Somerset or Cairncross, while having some significance in marking localised connections, also</i>
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	<i>each contain within them complex histories of disruption, migration, resettlement and coalescence.” (Kwok 2021: 10-11).</i> What happened to the other seven Gumakudin men – and presumably some Gumakudin women and children – who survived the 1867 attack them by a Yadhaykenu raiding party? Why are they not in Sharp’s data, but Iyeri and his son Kaio only? Where were Iyeri’s brothers’ descendants? A clue is that Kaio was not in the Red Island camp in the 1880s, but in the Jardine River camp, which a Police report (Wood 2026 [71]-[73]) indicates was already drawing much of its population from southwards, e.g. Vrilya/Red Point on the upper Seven Rivers coast. Kaio was one of seven men kidnapped in 1885 from the Jardine camp and from the beach at Cowal Creek. When their return was ordered by Thursday Island officials, Kaio did not opt to disembark at Red Island, nor at Cowal Creek where he had been seized by his kidnappers and which was closest to Red Island, but at the Jardine camp. He was there again in 1887 when arrested for his part in the murder of a trepanger. I do not consider it is possible for him to have been there unless he had close kin there, and that this points to persons of Gumakudin ancestry in that Jardine camp, not just at Red Island. In particular, what or who was the Apokwi group of the Jardine to Crab Island area? A camp of partly Gumakudin refugee composition? It is just an accident of arbitrarily patchy records that it and the Jardine camp’s composition was not documented beyond Kaio’s presence in that camp. I was still searching archival records for further light on this when my report was filed.
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6. Have members or ancestors of the Ankamuthi, and members or ancestors of the Gudang Yadhaykenu peoples, intermarried or shared residential communities? If they have, is this relevant to how families from both groups have accessed resources in the Overlap Area?

Dr Redmond

Intermarriage between neighbouring NCYP groups has fostered and sustained standing mutual permissions for shared use rights in the Overlap Area. These sharing practices are built upon a common understanding that each of these groups retains differentiated rights and interests in their respective core countries.

My understanding is that there has been a more consistent pattern of intermarriage between Gudang Yadhaykenu families and their Atampaya, Kaurareg and TS Islander neighbours, than between Gudang Yadhaykenu and Ankamuthi families. Similarly there appears to have been a great deal of intermarriage between Ankamuthi and Atampaya families.

Ray Wood

I agree with these propositions in that they appear to have intermarried to a great degree, but the full extent of intermarriage and the dates on which it commences is not easily ascertained from the genealogies available to me in previous reports, which e.g. do not specify the group identities assigned to each participant. I will wait for Waters' report before commenting further on this.

7. Under traditional law and custom, does the nature of marine estates in the Overlap Area give rise to permissive shared resource use and harvesting?

Dr Redmond

Yes. The highly valued sharing dynamic amongst neighbouring NPA groups hinges upon paying proper “respect” to the owners of the estate where permissive use rights are being extended.

Ray Wood

While this principle is common in the NCYP-Torres Strait supra region between two parties in cases in which one is the native title holder and the other a party with permissive use rights only, I can find no evidence that this scenario has ever been in force between the parties now in dispute over the Endeavor Strait waters and islands.

This is because they have, as a matter of functionally lived-out facts, and in accordance with their ancestors’ participation in the joint succession process from ca 1912-14, been a single primary owner group for 100+ years. In my view, neither party has any basis in customary law for making such a claim upon the other. Almost all of the ancestry is from well to the southeast and southwest of Endeavour Strait. Equally importantly, neither have any history of making such a claim upon each other until very recently. My interviewees have emphasized how free the Injinoo community was of any trace of exclusivity in these waters and islands throughout their lives, and that there was free and undifferentiated resource use throughout them for the entire village, resources were very often shared with households without discrimination between those of Seven Rivers vers Red Island ancestry ever being involved. The Injinoo community was cross stitched by intermarriage and kin-relatedness to a significant degree, and it was the lines of kinship along which sharing of turtle or dugong flowed, not language group ancestry forming lineal slices through that.

I consider that – and have been told by Angkamuthi identifiers – that this situation of permissive use does apply to the Kaurareg on the other shore, i.e. that the Kaurareg have permissive access to these island use of their marine resources, but do not share in native title. It is likely to also apply between Angkamuthi-GY vis-à-vis the Saibai residents in the Bamaga area and their kin from Saibai and other islands, but I have not investigated current practice regarding them.

	To be clear, any proposition that such permissive sharing is, or should be, granted by either the Angkamuthi or GY party toward the other, is one that I can find no customary law basis for, and note that it is not reflected in any opinion expressed in my report.
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8. If the answer to question 7 is yes, under traditional law and custom is the permissive use that primary holders of rights and interests accord to others nevertheless contingent on intergroup relationships prevailing at any particular point in time?

Dr Redmond	Ray Wood
Yes. It is important to note here that reciprocity can only be enacted successfully if there is mutual recognition between the reciprocating parties of the primary ownership of the resource being shared. Given this distinction between holders of estate rights and interests and others who might make legitimate demands upon them, evidence of visitations to sea, reefs and cays within the Overlap Area would not contradict that the area is part of one group or another's exclusive estate.	I don't find the question to be a relevant one to what is in agreement or not. Contingency is a feature of cases in which one side is recognized by all parties as the primary right holder, and the other side can exercise permissive use rights. But as already stated under Q 7, there is no history of that scenario in relation to the overlap area. I have not investigated whether any contingency applies to permissive sharing toward the Kaurareg or other TS islanders such as Saibai people resident in the Bamaga area. While I agree with Dr Redmond's second paragraph, I do think that the same cannot be said for rights in increase sites, which exhibit leveling of site knowledge and right to use those sites across the Injinoo community, inclusive of Gudang Yadhaykenu and Ankamuthi groupings to the best of my knowledge.

9. Based on your answers to the above questions, do the Ankamuthi People hold native title rights and interests in the Overlap Area?	
Dr Redmond	Ray Wood
Ankamuthi people have a connection with the land and waters and possess primary rights and interests in relation to the land and waters south-west of, and adjacent to, but not including the Overlap Area.	My response to this is based partly on the answers to the above questions, but also on other questions not raised above but dealt with in my primary report. This is that, based on ancestral connection with the overlap area, from an ethnographic perspective the Ankamuthi identifiers can demonstrate possession of native title rights and interests in the overlap area.

10. Based on your answers to the above questions, do the Gudang Yadhaykenu People hold native title rights and interests in the Overlap Area?

Dr Redmond

The evidence supports a finding that the Gudang Yadhaykenu people have an ancestral connection with the land and waters from which they derive their native title rights and interests in relation to the marine estates in the Overlap Area.

Ray Wood

For the same reasons and from the same perspective, it appears to me likely that the Gudang Yadhaykenu identifiers can demonstrate possession of native title rights and interests in the overlap area. My sole hesitation is that I haven't had the opportunity to research that as fully as I have with the Ankamuthi grouping.

Declaration of the experts

I, Dr Anthony Redmond, in expressing the opinions attributed to me in this report have had regard to the basis material and the statements made at the conference of experts and have made all the inquiries which I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have, to my knowledge, been withheld.

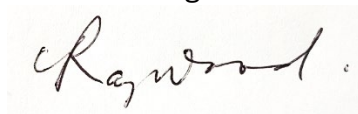
Dated: 26 August 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "anthony redmond" in a cursive, lowercase style.

Dr Anthony Redmond

I, Ray Wood in expressing the opinions attributed to me in this report have had regard to the basis material to the extent that time permitted, and the statements made at the conference of experts and have made all the inquiries which I believe are desirable and appropriate, again within time constraints, and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have been withheld.

Dated: 26 August 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Wood" in a cursive style, with a period at the end.

Ray Wood