



ICIN Indigenous
Carbon
Industry
Network



Annual report

2022-2023

Participants at the 2023 North Australia Savanna Fire Forum



Our Mission

To promote and facilitate an active, innovative and Indigenous-led carbon industry supporting healthy country and better livelihoods for Indigenous people.



A statement from our Co-Chairs,
Cissy Gore-Birch & Dean Yibarbuk

The Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN) is a 100% Aboriginal-owned not-for-profit registered charitable company limited by guarantee. Since its initiation in 2018, ICIN has grown to 25 Full Members - Indigenous land and sea management groups with their own carbon projects on their Country - and four Associate Members. ICIN member organisations are now actively managing over 50% of Australia's landmass.

Terrah Guymala of Warddeken Land Management, photo credit: David Hancock

ICIN is committed to supporting the growth of the Indigenous carbon industry, one that is recognised around the world for the benefits it brings to Country, culture, climate and communities. We achieve this through delivering landmark national events, informing Federal and State governments on policy developments and producing best practice guides for land managers.

Thanks to funding from the ILSC and the support of our members we designed our Strategic Business Plan, which highlights the unique and critical role the network plays as an independent source of information about the industry for Indigenous groups and as the peak body representing the Indigenous carbon industry.

The Strategic Business Plan identified five key pillars for ICIN's work over the next three years.

An important learning this year was the need to seek core operational funding beyond short-term funding contracts to support the network as we grow. The services and role of ICIN are in high demand, and we are in a fast moving and complex space. Matching this with attracting the resources needed to do our collective work continues to be a challenge for the network.

For many of us it has been a long journey. We continue on, picking up the pieces, continuing to fight for self-determination and respectful partnerships. We are proud of the work of ICIN in supporting the success of the Indigenous carbon industry and we look forward to continuing this important work.





Our Purpose

To enable and empower Indigenous people to benefit from carbon markets through their land and sea management practices by supporting an active network of Indigenous organisations working towards an Indigenous-led carbon industry supporting the advancements and aspirations of Indigenous people across Australia.



A statement from our CEO, Anna Boustead

Things have been busy at the ICIN this year as it continues to grow from strength to strength thanks to the support and dedication of its members and supporters. This includes fantastic partnerships and collaborations contributing to Indigenous-led research and policy development in the carbon industry, creating real empowerment and positive change for Indigenous groups managing their Country.

For me, it is a real privilege to be working for many inspiring Indigenous leaders and allies across the country over the past

five years to bring about positive change and transformative outcomes for Indigenous communities.

2022-23 was significant, being the first year ICIN Ltd took on independent operations, as we grew from the seed planted by the original Steering Committee following four years of hosting by Warddeken Land Management. We honour the memory, positive energy and legacy of Mr Rioli, who was on the original Steering Committee and Initial Board until he was suddenly lost to us last year.

We hosted two national forums, the North Australia Savanna Fire Forum and the National Indigenous Carbon Forum - both fantastic celebrations of the achievements of Indigenous land managers through carbon projects. Discussions at these events highlighted inequities and market failures unfolding as the corporate carbon market grows. Opportunities were also raised to better support Indigenous led projects that recognise Indigenous rights and interests; through resourcing, good government policy, values-based decision making by investors and genuine partnerships with research institutions, funders and land managers.

We published the first [Indigenous Carbon Project Guide](#). This key resource, several years in the making, is fast becoming a go-to guide for Indigenous organisations interested in the industry. This year we intend to develop further support materials from the basis of the Guide, while continuing to produce key industry updates and showcase our member's incredible projects.

I wish to thank the Board of Directors for guiding ICIN through this new and exciting stage of development, the incredible people contributing time and expertise through our member organisations, as well as staff and advisors who contributed throughout the year: Kaye Hall, Amy Ramires, Brian Hylands, Jarrad Holmes, Toni Hay, Craig North, Polly Grace and Sherie Bruce.



ICIN Board

Co-Chairs



Cissy Gore-Birch
(Jija/Balangarra Aboriginal Corporation)



Dean Yibarbuk
(Gurrgoni/Warddeken Land Management Ltd)

Directors



Cathy Goonack
(Uunguu/Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corp)



Neville GulayGulay
(Yolgnu/Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corp)



Tyronne Garstone
(Bardi/Kimberley Land Council)



Teddy Bernard
(Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council)



Suzanne Thompson,
Yambangku Aboriginal Culture Heritage & Tourism Development Aboriginal Corporation (YACHATDAC)



Anna (Gazzard) Boustead,
ICIN CEO and Company Secretary

Our Values

- Strategic and Focused:** Our purpose is clear and connected to our actions.
- Genuine, Indigenous-led, Accessible and Member-driven:** We work together to support each other from the ground up, by ensuring decision-making is driven by our members.
- Empowering and Inclusive:** We support more Indigenous voices to be heard and seek to maximise benefits to Indigenous communities by enabling greater Indigenous engagement in the carbon industry.
- Respectful:** We acknowledge that we all come from different places, yet we seek common ground where we find it. We respect local cultural protocols and are mindful that our industry is grounded in thousands of years of traditional knowledge and practices.
- Transparent and Accountable:** We are a trusted voice for the industry through our reputation for practicing good governance and by supporting two-way communication throughout the network.
- Innovative and Adaptive:** We are an emerging network, so we will adapt to members needs as they change. We are innovative in our work and want to learn as we grow.
- Independent and Not-for-Profit:** We do not have any commercial interest in the carbon market other than seeking to enhance benefits for all Indigenous carbon businesses across Australia.



Our strategic pillars

2023-2024

With Key Objectives

- 1. Indigenous groups across Australia are enabled to make informed decisions about carbon projects**
Objective: Continue to provide free independent information about the carbon industry targeted to Indigenous groups.
- 2. A growing Indigenous-led carbon industry, enabling more jobs and opportunities for Indigenous people**
Objective: Grow career opportunities for Indigenous people and support research and development of new Indigenous-led carbon methods.
- 3. Indigenous rights to carbon are fully recognised in policy and practice of carbon and other environmental markets**
Objective: Support member-led design and advocacy of informed collaborative policy positions and best-practice guidelines through the network.
- 4. Promote Indigenous-owned carbon projects**
Objective: Support an understanding of the unique benefits to country, people and culture that are delivered by Indigenous carbon projects.
- 5. The Indigenous Carbon Industry Network is meeting the long-term needs of its member organisations**
Objective: Build the capability of the network to ensure it can meet the needs of Indigenous groups across Australia in the long-term.



Smoking ceremony at the 2023 North Australia Savanna Fire Forum

Our network



OUR MEMBERS

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Our Members



Associate Members



Key achievements

1. Guide: Indigenous Carbon Projects Guide

Australia’s first [Indigenous Carbon Projects Guide](#) produced by an Aboriginal organisation. This guide has been developed to ensure Indigenous groups are well-informed to position themselves to maximise the benefits from carbon projects, and to have their voices heard by government and policy-makers.

2. Report: Mapping the Opportunity for Indigenous Carbon in Australia

This [report identifies the opportunities and barriers](#) to Indigenous participation in the carbon scheme in Australia. This research is important, as despite the positive outcomes of carbon projects for community and culture, uptake so far is mainly limited to the savanna fire method and projects in North Australia. A more detailed version is available to members only.

3. Industry Showcase: 2022 AER Summit

In October 2022, 15 ICIN delegates joined 1000 industry members on Gadigal Country (Sydney) for the Australasian Emissions Reduction (AER) Summit. The network had a significant presence for the first time, which opened the door for many important conversations about issues and opportunities impacting Indigenous communities. Our booth featured a video showing all member projects and primary contact details. Thank you to the CMI for the complimentary booth. ICIN is pleased to be an Associate Member of CMI.

4. Award: Best Collaboration in NRM 2022, Territory NRM Awards

ICIN was honoured to be awarded the Best Collaboration in Natural Resource Management Award at the Territory NRM Conference. Terrah Guymala of Warddeken Land Management and ICIN CEO Anna Boustead accepted the award on behalf of the network’s then 23 Indigenous organisations (pictured, right). We thank the Territory NRM for this recognition.

5. Development of the Strategic Business Plan 2023-2026

ICIN has launched its [Strategic Business Plan \(2023-2026\)](#). We thank Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) for funding this important project.



6. Policy Development

A) Contributed to the Independent ACCU Review 2022 (Submission). Engaged by DCCEEW to support the First Nations consultation. Successfully advocated for the removal of Conditional Registration, a clause which enabled a carbon project to be registered on Native Title lands without the knowledge and consent of native title holder for 5-7 years.

7. Method Development

- A) **Savanna Fire Management Method:** Supported several workshops to develop a report to inform CER/DCCEEW.
- B) **Integrated Farm and Land Management Method:** (Neville GulayGulay, pictured top right) Supported several workshops to develop a report to inform CER/DCCEEW.
- C) **Feral Ungulate Blue Carbon Method:** Supporting workshops led by the Feral Herbivore Working Group and research led by the University of Queensland.



8. Growth of communications

- LinkedIn followers: 1745
- Facebook followers: 1.1K
- Newsletter mailing list: 1353

Key Events

North Australia Savanna Fire Forum 2023

The successful North Australia Savanna Fire Forum, run in partnership with Charles Darwin University (CDU), was held in February 2023 on Larrakia Country (Darwin). In 2023, the Forum was sold out, with 350 fire managers, Indigenous land managers, carbon industry practitioners, scientists, policy makers and other interested parties in attendance.

The rich Indigenous-led program included the latest in savanna fire management practice and fire science technology as well as First Nations leadership in caring for Country and the preservation of ancient fire management practices. ICIN thanks all who contributed to making this annual event such an outstanding success, in particular the Senior Elders who generously shared their extraordinary insights and wisdom with attendees, ensuring the passing on of ancient fire management practices to younger generations.

Attendees appreciated the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and connect with other ranger groups, receive latest sector and policy information and to meet and hear from people who are leaders in the field. Nearly all participants rated their experience at the forum as either 'very good' or 'excellent' and would recommend attending the Forum.

The Forum welcomed international delegates from ten countries (pictured below middle), including Zambia and Botswana, to learn about traditional fire management practices from expert fire rangers. These delegates were impressed with how Indigenous groups have leveraged ancient wisdom to create a carbon industry for their people.

We thank our 2023 sponsors: Northern Territory Government, Clean Energy Regulator, The Nature Conservancy Australia, Raindance Systems, ISFMI, Charles Darwin University and TNQ Drought Hub. ICIN is looking forward to hosting the 2024 Savanna Fire Forum on Larrakia Country in February 2024.



Mandy Muir with Kakadu National Park rangers at the 2023 Savanna Fire Forum



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2023 highlights

- 350 attendees
- 50% of participants from Indigenous groups
- 30 different language groups represented
- 30 international delegates welcomed
- 60 presentations over three days

Minister Lauren Moss at the 2023 Savanna Fire Forum

"I understand fire from when I was a very young kid living in the Cape, how to respect fire, how to light fire, when to light fire, when to burn our country. As I grew older, I learnt even more about fire from the old people, and it was all about early burning. You burn early in the year, and then the fire doesn't go too far."

– Mike Ross (pictured, right),
Forum presenter, Olkola Aboriginal Corporation



"Fire, family and Country is important to us. It actually makes our dream come true, it's what we want to do on Country, to keep the Country by fire burning, have our family on Country. It's my Dad's legacy and my legacy that we are back on Country. Savanna burning has opened up a lot of opportunities for myself and for my family."

– Joanne Nelson,
Forum presenter, Batavia Aboriginal Corporation





Key Events

National Indigenous Carbon Forum 2023

The National Indigenous Carbon Forum provides a vital opportunity to share knowledge and improve understanding of Indigenous rights and interests in carbon across Australia. Held annually in May, the forum has a strong emphasis on Indigenous-led discussions, and is attended by Indigenous rangers and land managers to scientists, policymakers and market specialists.

In 2023, the Forum was held on the 16th and 17th of May, the event was exclusively for Indigenous only participants and non-Indigenous people representing Indigenous organisations. We were pleased to host 150 Indigenous people over the two-day on-line program.

A statement was developed in concert with attendees and ICIN members during the Forum, this statement was later delivered by ICIN Director Suzanne Thompson (pictured below) at the Carbon Market Institute's 2023 Carbon Farming Forum.

We thank MC Carol Vale for her contribution as well as our 2023 valued sponsors: Clean Energy Regulator, The Nature Conservancy Australia, NSW Government, Queensland Government, Queensland South Native Title Services and TNQ Drought Hub.

2023 highlights

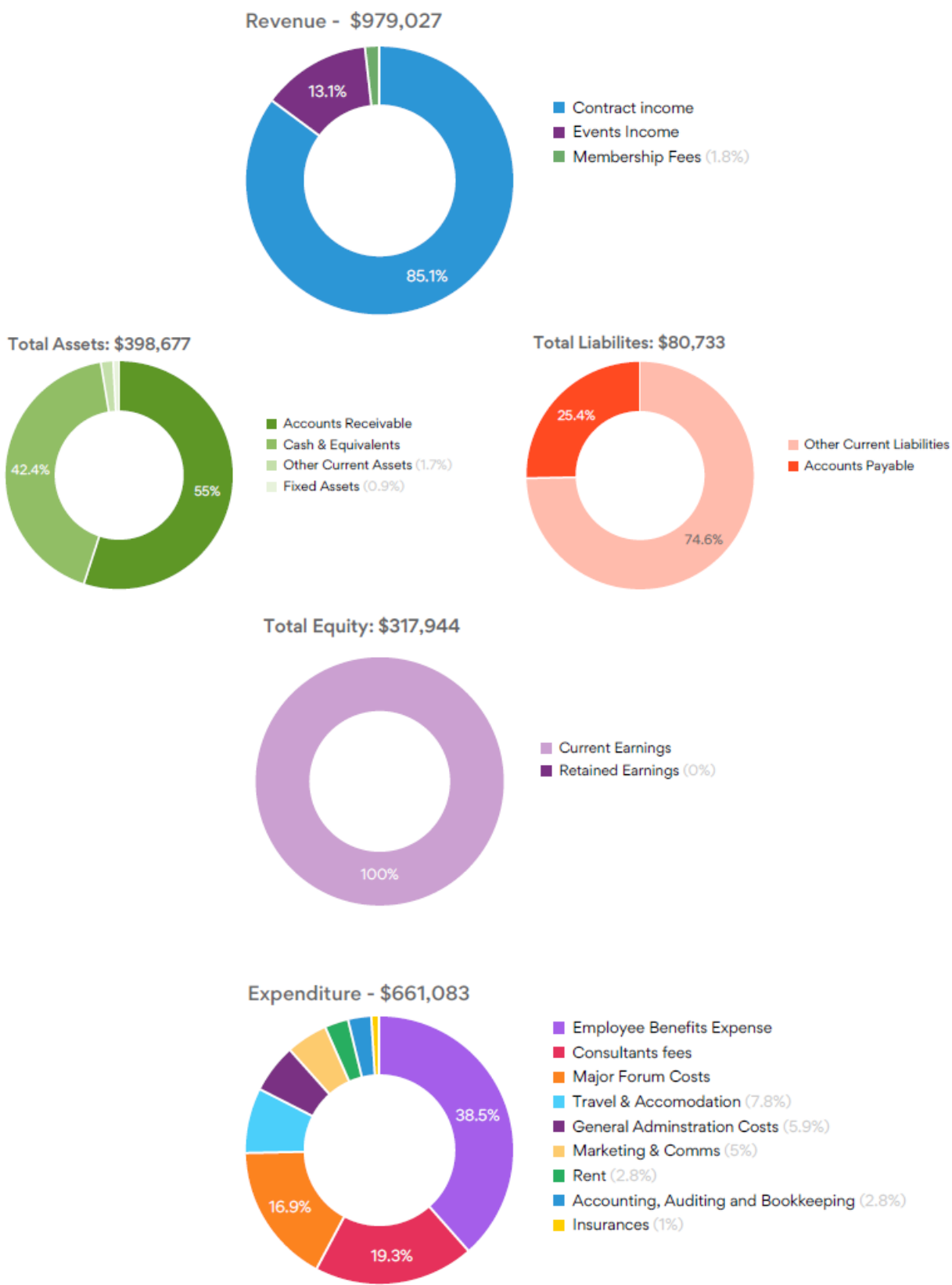
- 150 rangers attended
- Two-day program
- 2023 theme: Exploring Opportunities, Defining Our Rights
- Presenters included Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy

The Statement

1. We are driven by a strong commitment to care for our country, respect for country and culture and support self-determination of our communities
2. This is our space, an Indigenous-led space. It is vital to ensure that the integrity of projects held by First Nations people is maintained. Indigenous-owned carbon projects are unique, and special.
3. The Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Native Title holders for a carbon project is required by law. Gaining consent from Traditional Owners for a corporate carbon project is not a valid reason to promote Indigenous values of a project - and therefore gain a premium on the market. Protecting our Indigenous-owned brand is really important. We are concerned by our experience that carbon projects that are not Indigenous-owned are able to attract the 'Indigenous' premium price in the market, but yet the benefits are not awarded to us as Traditional Owners.
4. We want to be properly informed about developments that impact on our country.
5. We seek respectful partnerships and have a lot of expertise built upon thousands of years of traditional knowledge and practice. We are making a space for government to sit at our table, not the other way around.
6. Carbon method design must value Indigenous IP and be Indigenous-led. Indigenous land managers are already working hard to manage their country and are experts in land and sea management informed by many thousands of generations of practice.
7. As Traditional Custodians of our lands, we assert our rights, recognised in the UNDRIP, to the carbon that is stored through healing our country from the damage done by colonisation.
8. Traditional rights in and obligations to country have been passed down and followed for thousands of years. These rights and obligations are based in fundamental principles centred on connection to country, respect, and consent from the right people for country. Unfortunately non-Indigenous land tenure systems can be complex and time consuming to navigate. It is the responsibility of carbon project developers to make sure they take the time to understand who speaks for Country and who has a right to consent to carbon projects.
9. Although the carbon economy is still in its formative years, for too long, third parties have exploited the rights of Indigenous people to carbon. It is time to flip this narrative and reframe who benefits from this industry. Traditional Owners must be respected as equal partners, and not simply a gateway or 'tick and flick' to access and exploit our lands for the commercial gain of others.
10. Outside of the 35 Indigenous-owned carbon projects, the carbon industry has become a fast paced, highly commercialised space that is increasingly dominated by large corporates with little to no connection to us or our lands.
11. Engagement with us about emerging biodiversity markets has to be meaningful if it is to create good outcomes for country.
12. There is a strong need to support the ongoing role of ICIN as it is providing an important and vital service facilitating Indigenous leadership in this space and informing Indigenous groups about the carbon industry.

Financial report

2022-2023



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank organisations, partners and agencies that have provided funding to the network during the 2022-23 year. This includes the Australian Government (DISER), The Nature Conservancy, the Northern Territory Government, the Queensland Government’s Land Restoration Fund, the Clean Energy Regulator and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation.

Many thanks to our partners who have supported us throughout the year with in-kind support, this includes Charles Darwin University, the Carbon Market Institute, the Queensland South Native Title Service and Warddeken Land Management.

Lastly, thanks to our members who have provided an estimated \$2.5 million in in-kind support during the 2022-2023 year.



Photos from the 2023 Savanna Fire Forum

Support Us

The Indigenous Carbon Industry Network is an Indigenous owned registered charity with full Deductible Gift Recipient Status. All donations fully tax deductible. [Donate today.](#)

The ICIN now invites expressions of interest from potential funders with aligned values. To find out more, contact ceo@icin.org.au.

To find out more about ICIN and to sign up for our monthly bulletins please visit our website [icin.org.au](https://www.icin.org.au).

ICIN warmly welcomes expressions of interest from Indigenous organisations who wish to join our growing membership, please contact ceo@icin.org.au with membership enquiries.



Women In Fire Yarning Circle, 2023 Savanna Fire Forum

Tiwi Resources