



Assessment of the social outcomes of the **Working on Country Program**

REPORT – May 2012



urbis

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Urbis's Social Policy team has received ISO 20252 Certification for the provision of social policy research and evaluation, social planning, community consultation, market research and communications research.

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Acronyms

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
BAC	Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects Program
CEPANCRM	Contract Employment Program for Aboriginals in Natural Land and Cultural Resource Management
CLC	Central Land Council
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DERM	Department of Environment and Resource Management
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
CTG	Closing the Gap
IPA	Indigenous Protected Areas
KLC	Kimberley Land Council
MERI	Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NLC	Northern Land Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
QLD	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SEWPaC	(Department of) Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
TIDE	Taree Indigenous Development and Employment Ltd
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
WoC	Working on Country
WA	Western Australia

Executive Summary

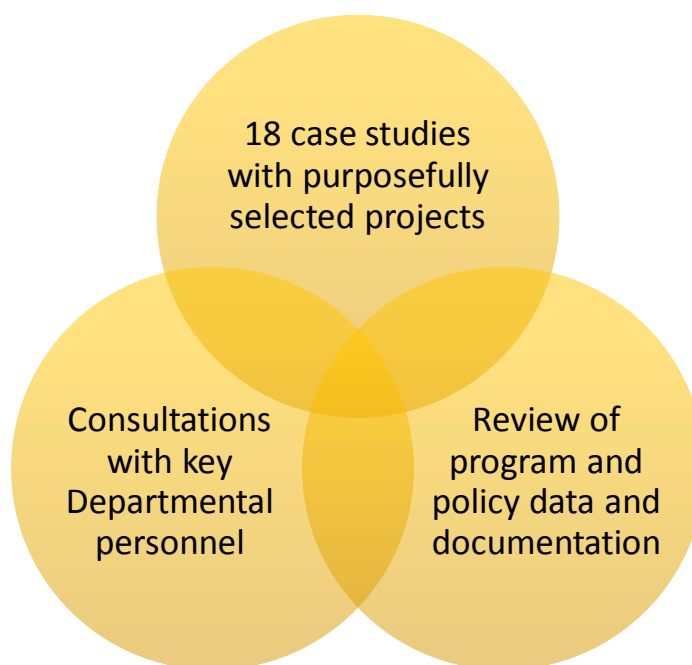
This report documents findings from research undertaken by Urbis to assess the social outcomes of *Working on Country (WoC)*.

WoC is an Australian Government program that provides employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in regional and remote Australia to undertake natural resource management (NRM) work that aligns with Australian Government and local community environmental and cultural priorities. The program aims to employ and train over 690 rangers by June 2013, with this target growing to 730 rangers by June 2016.

This research was prepared for the Australian Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC or the Department) to provide an independent demonstration of the social value and achievements of WoC and complementary Indigenous NRM programs, and to establish an assessment framework for future studies.

The research methodology involved three key components, outlined in the diagram below.

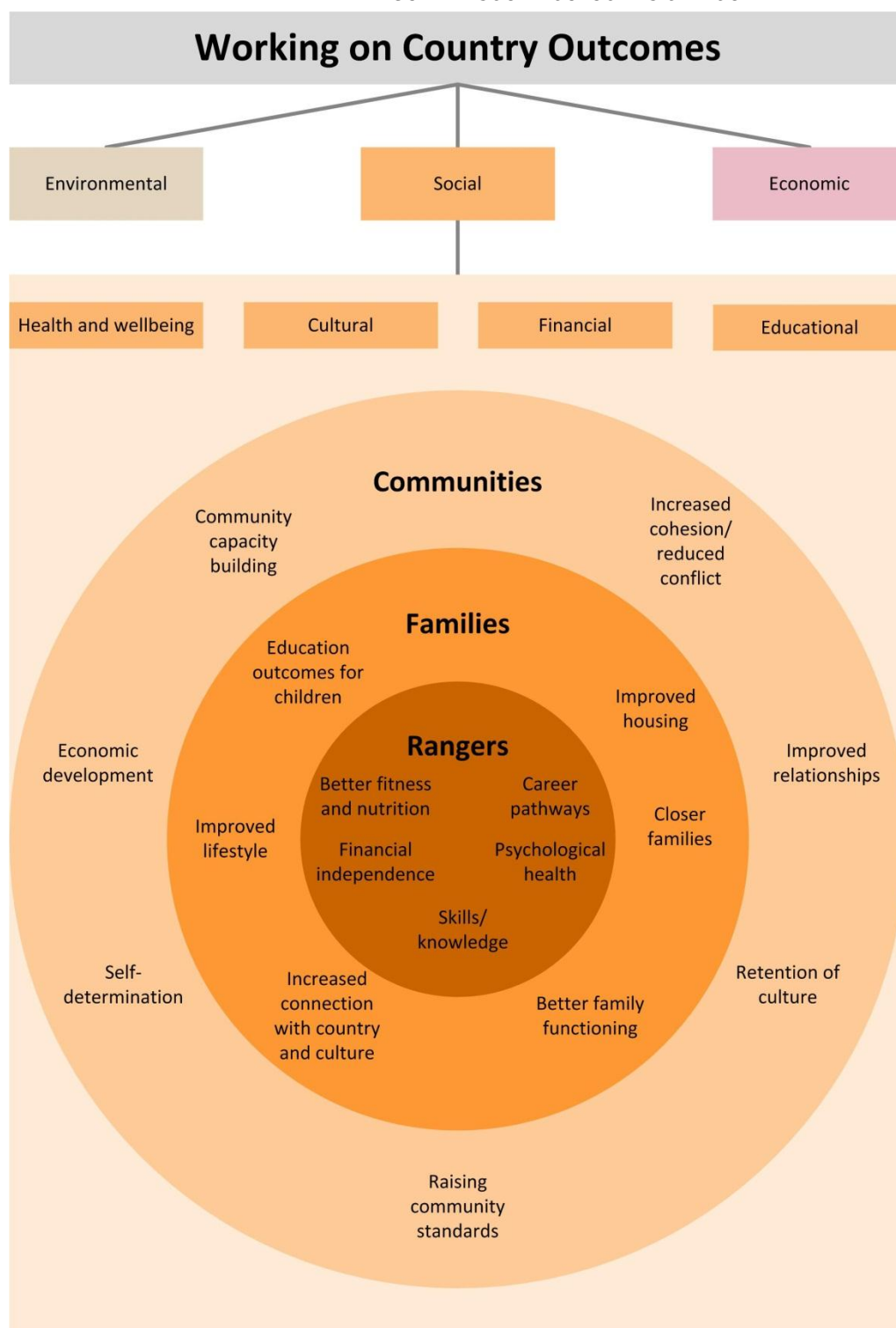
FIGURE 1 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



KEY FINDINGS

The social outcomes of WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives are diverse, wide-ranging and interconnected. As demonstrated by the diagram below, the social outcomes of WoC and related initiatives can be categorised according to health and wellbeing, economic, cultural and educational outcomes for the individual rangers, their families and communities.

FIGURE 2 –SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF WOC



WoC is a highly valued program. Research participants feel the program has significant demonstrable benefits and indicate it is important the program continues in the future.

WoC is designed as a program which recognises Indigenous people have a great deal to offer the broader community. WoC invests in the application of Indigenous skills and knowledge in natural resource and cultural management, valuing these contributions as legitimate and important. It is this valuing and acknowledgement which is central to the demonstrated social benefits of the program.

WoC occupies a unique space in which the aspirations of Indigenous communities intersect with the aspirations of the Australian Government. It is this shared interest which is central to the program's success.

Developed from a strong cultural and economic foundation, WoC empowers communities in managing the natural and cultural values of their traditional estates. WoC is a critical resource and focal point for communities providing economic development, building community capacity and social capital. WoC supports the emergence of positive role models and community leaders who inspire and bring hope to the younger generations, while respecting traditional authority and cultural knowledge.

The program's partnership model fosters new and improved relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations. Interest from and partnerships with external organisations provides communities with access to new knowledge and information, raises the profile of communities, and affirms Indigenous culture and knowledge. Increased exposure to traditional skills and practices in caring for country generates respect for and positive perceptions of Indigenous people amongst the non-Indigenous community.

WoC engages people in meaningful and fulfilling employment. Being a ranger provides opportunities for self-improvement and career development. It provides a platform for people to undertake work they view as making important and positive contributions to country and community. The program achieves a range of financial, educational, cultural, and health and wellbeing outcomes for participants. Rangers feel an improved sense of self including increased pride, self-esteem, confidence, hope, and happiness.

The benefits of the program extend to the ranger's families. Rangers act as role models for family members providing them with a positive sense of the future and something to aspire to, broadening horizons and raising expectations of what is possible to achieve. The program improves standards of living and the financial status of entire families and also strengthens relationships and family functioning.

A number of key program success factors have been identified by program and project stakeholders throughout the length of this research project. These are described below.

RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

WoC recognises and values the skills and knowledge of Indigenous Australians and the economic, environmental and cultural contributions they have to make.

The program is mutually beneficial in that it supports the interests of Indigenous people in caring for country, which in turn helps the Australian Government to meet its responsibility to protect and conserve the environment.

A TWO-WAY LEARNING MODEL

WoC values and uses both western and traditional knowledge, providing unique cross-cultural sharing and learning opportunities.

LOCAL DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

WoC projects are led by the local community and underpinned by community ownership and action. Traditional owners and local communities are involved in the design, development, implementation and leadership of projects to ensure they align with the needs and interests of the community, and benefit the environment.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

The program provides auspice organisations and local communities with opportunities for economic development and self-management.

WoC is highly visible within communities and involves engagement at a whole-of-community level. The program facilitates relationship building between individuals, clan groups, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and local and external organisations.

The spiritual and cultural offerings of the program are critical and contribute to cultural continuity in supporting the intergenerational transfer of knowledge.

HOLISTIC AND MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

The program is holistic and multi-dimensional in offering employment, career and professional development and training opportunities that address the economic, social and cultural needs of employees and communities.

WoC provides long-term, real employment opportunities that align with needs and opportunities in local contexts. This involves Indigenous people doing real work and being paid real wages, and high expectations of what can be achieved by Indigenous people.

WoC provides meaningful and culturally appropriate employment that recognises traditional activities as legitimate forms of employment and matches work opportunities to the goals and aspirations of individuals and the community.

The program has targeted and integrated training designed to address skills gaps in local and regional industry. WoC effectively links training to employment.

PROGRAM BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

This project addressed the social outcomes of WoC and did not explore program challenges and barriers. Notwithstanding this, stakeholders identified a number of key challenges that may be useful to consider.

While the program is viewed by some stakeholders as providing pathways to employment opportunities external to WoC, this is not always viable due to limited employment available locally and the reluctance of rangers to move away from their traditional country to seek out work. Many employees say they want to continue working as rangers in the future. Some suggest that career development opportunities *within* the program could be strengthened.

The WoC ranger positions are attractive and often sought-after by community members. The high demand for positions on the program can be difficult to balance with the limited number available. As a result, the allocation of ranger positions by funded organisations can be a source of tension and conflict within some communities.

The successful implementation of the program can be a challenge for economically underdeveloped and remote communities due to their isolation from retail and social services and poor physical infrastructure such as housing. Additional program investment in supporting resources and infrastructure (e.g. housing and transport) would support program implementation and improve outcomes.

Many raised concerns that ongoing government investment in the program is not secured beyond 2013. Rangers particularly voice uncertainty and concern about their job permanency and future prospects.

PROPOSED ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework (i.e. program logic) for understanding the social outcomes of WoC has been developed (see Chapter 4). This was informed by the WoC program logic as part of the *Caring for our Country* Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework, focusing on the social outcomes only (not the intended environmental outcomes).

A proposed assessment framework has been developed in line with the program logic and broader Government policy objectives. The framework outlines a range of indicators and data sources that can be used to further identify and measure the social outcomes of WoC in the future.

The assessment framework proposes the collection of qualitative and quantitative data to identify social outcomes at the individual, project and community levels and capture input from a diversity of project stakeholders.

1 Introduction

It is a big privilege to be working here. I was born and bred here; it means a lot to put back into the community. That's what makes us who we are.... I love working, I was working in Western society since I was eighteen years old and I forgot about my country. Being able to work here has made my life. Coming back to my grass roots, I am proud of what I have done.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger and elder)

Working on Country (WoC) is an Australian Government program that provides employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in regional and remote Australia to undertake natural resource management (NRM) work that aligns with Australian Government and local community environmental and cultural priorities.

In April 2011, Urbis commenced research for the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC or the Department) to assess the social outcomes of the *Working on Country (WoC)* program.

This research report provides the Department with an independent demonstration of the social value and achievements of *WoC* and complementary Indigenous NRM programs.

More specifically, this research:

- defines, identifies and analyses the *range* and *extent* of social outcomes achieved by *WoC* and complementary Indigenous NRM projects, in particular, the *Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA)* program
- examines the social outcomes across purposefully selected projects to make an assessment at a whole of program level, while capturing the distinctive features of specific projects
- assesses the strategic link between *WoC* and the broader policy agenda, including its contribution to the *Closing the Gap (CTG)* agenda and other relevant government policy such as *Caring for our Country*, and SEWPaC portfolio commitments
- reflects on the value and worth of *WoC*
- establishes an assessment framework and benchmark for future studies.

In line with the project terms of reference described above, the assessment of social outcomes focuses on addressing key questions such as:

- How are social outcomes defined in relation to *WoC* and complementary Indigenous NRM initiatives? What are the categories or range of social outcomes associated with this program?
- How can the identified social outcomes be attributed to the program? What is the evidence that indicates a direct link between *WoC* and complementary NRM programs and the social changes that have occurred?
- What individual social changes have occurred and what are the cumulative effects of these?
- What social outcomes are achieved distinctly for each project and cumulatively across all projects?
- What social changes have occurred at the individual, familial and community levels?
- What is the worth of *WoC*? What is the public value created by the program?
- What is unique or different about this program?

- How do the social outcomes link, relate or contribute to the *CTG* agenda and other relevant government policy?
- How can the social changes associated with the program be identified and measured? What are the key indicators that demonstrate the outcomes and value of the program?

1.1 THIS REPORT

This report provides the Department with findings from the conduct of 18 case studies with purposefully selected *WoC* and related Indigenous NRM projects, a review of program and policy documentation and data, and consultations with key SEWPaC personnel.

The report briefly discusses the historical and policy context of *WoC* and related policies and programs, provides a conceptual framework for categorising and understanding the range and type of social outcomes associated with *WoC* and related Indigenous NRM initiatives, identifies and describes the social outcomes achieved across the eighteen case study projects, discusses key findings and implications at a whole of program level, and outlines a proposed assessment framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter One: Introduction
- Chapter Two: Methodology
- Chapter Three: Policy Context
- Chapter Four: Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Social Outcomes
- Chapter Five: Case Study Projects
- Chapter Six: The Social Outcomes
- Chapter Seven: Key Findings and Implications
- Chapter Eight: Measuring the Social Outcomes.

2 Methodology

As shown in the diagram below, the research methodology involved three key components: the conduct of 18 case studies with purposefully selected *WoC* and related Indigenous NRM projects, review of program and policy data and documentation, and consultations with key SEWPaC personnel.

FIGURE 3 – METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

Case Study Research	Data and Documentation Review	Consultation with Departmental staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection criteria developed • 18 <i>WoC</i> projects selected in accordance with the agreed criteria • Research instruments and communications materials developed • Face-to-face consultations with 8 <i>WoC</i> projects • Telephone interviews with 10 <i>WoC</i> projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program documentation, data and policy documents were reviewed to: • understand the relationships between <i>WoC</i> and related policies and initiatives • inform the development of a conceptual framework model for the representation of outcomes • inform the case study approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone and face-to-face interviews with Departmental staff to establish a sense of the strategic and organisational drivers for the research project • A workshop with SEWPaC staff and community representatives to discuss and confirm the research approach and activities • A second workshop with SEWPaC staff and community representatives to discuss and confirm the proposed assessment framework

2.1 THE CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Eighteen case studies were conducted with purposefully selected *WoC* and related Indigenous NRM projects. Eight projects, across five locations, were consulted during site visits (the primary case studies) and the remaining 10 as telephone consultations (supplementary case studies).

Case study research involves an in-depth investigation of a 'case'. Case study research examines and describes contemporary, real-life situations. It considers the voices and perspectives of all key players, and the political, social, historical and cultural context.

2.2 THE SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Eighteen projects for case studies were purposefully selected to ensure they provide evidence that satisfies the specific research questions posed. Case studies focus on projects demonstrating positive outcomes to maximise learnings in relation to the range and extent of social outcomes being achieved by *WoC* and related Indigenous NRM initiatives.

A criteria for the selection of case study projects was developed in consultation with the Department and other key stakeholders. The selection criteria included:

- a representation of projects that have co-funding arrangements with *IPA*
- a spread across large-scale and small-scale projects (based on number of employees)
- a spread across organisations that support several *WoC* projects and those that support only one *WoC* project
- representation across the Australian states and territories
- representation across regional and remote locations
- projects that have been established for at least two years
- projects that employ women and involve elders
- the inclusion of a few projects with cross-tenure arrangements.

2.3 PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THIS RESEARCH

The following 18 *WoC* projects were consulted with as part of this research:

TABLE 1 – CASE STUDY PROJECTS

FACE-TO-FACE CONSULTATIONS
Kalan and Lama Lama Ranger Projects, Coen, QLD
Dhimurru Working on Country, Nhulunbuy, NT
Working on Country to manage the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area, Maningrida, NT
Thamarrurr Rangers Land and Sea Management Project, Wadeye, NT
Riverland Rangers Project, Renmark, SA
Ngarrindjerri Working on Ruwe (Country), Meningie, SA
Raukkan Natural Resource Management Project, Raukkan, SA
Managing Identified Natural and Cultural Resources across the Central Land Council Region, Anmatjerr Rangers (Ti Tree), NT
TELEPHONE CONSULTATIONS
Kimberley Rangers: Working on Country - Bardi Jawi Rangers, WA
Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, Taree, NSW
Kimberley Rangers: Working on Country Wunggurr Rangers, WA
Mapoon Land and Sea Centre, QLD
Improving Landscape Scale Conservation of Threatened Grassy Woodland Ecosystems in the Greater Murray Goulburn Catchment project, VIC

WoC/IPA projects in the Torres Strait, QLD
Implementation of immediate and high priority actions from the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan, NT
Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area, VIC
Northern Territory Top End Aboriginal Land and Sea Management - Gumurr Marthakal, NT
Protecting country, supporting land management workers for the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area, NT

The map on the following page provides a geographical representation of the 18 projects.

2.4 THE CONSULTATIONS

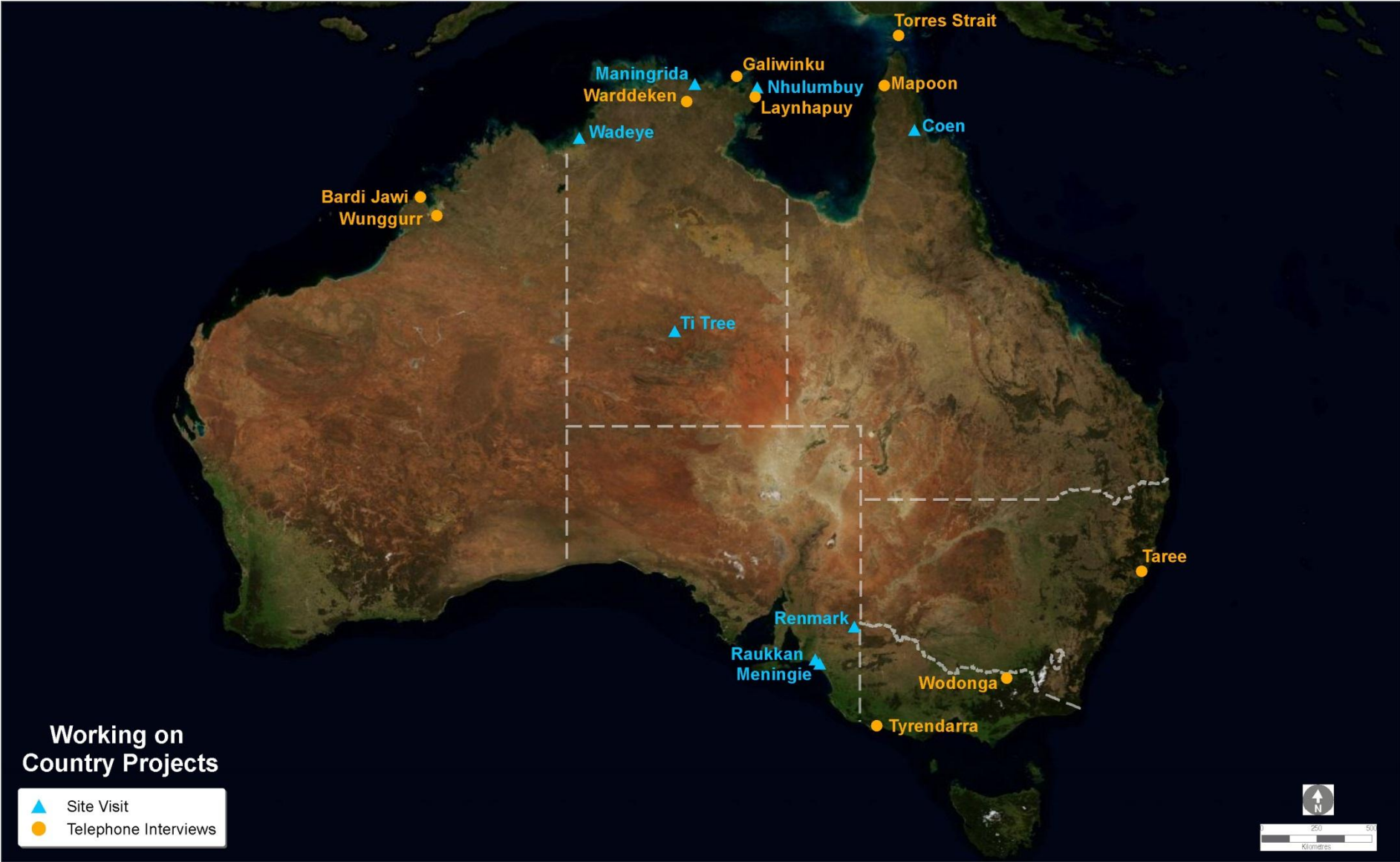
Eight site visits were conducted across five locations. A range of stakeholders were consulted during the site visits including: staff from the auspice organisation, the rangers, elders and traditional owners, board members, partner organisations, registered trainers, researchers and anthropologists, school teaching staff, government personnel, employment service providers, farmers and private land holders.

Site visits involved both formal and informal consultations, and often included a tour of the local community and significant cultural/NRM sites, and the rangers' work locations.

In addition to the site visits, in-depth telephone consultations were conducted in relation to 10 projects. The telephone interviews were targeted primarily at organisational stakeholders but in some cases also involved speaking with the rangers.

The range of program stakeholders consulted with enabled a comprehensive and multi-perspective analysis of the social outcomes of *WoC*, closely related programs such as *IPA* and related initiatives supported under *Caring for our Country*.

PICTURE 1 – CASE STUDY PROJECT LOCATIONS



3 Policy context

This section of the report briefly discusses the historical and policy context of *WoC* to provide a framework for conceptualising the strategic link between *WoC* and related programs and policies. This includes a discussion of both the environmental and the social/economic policy contexts with particular reference to:

- *Caring for our Country* and related Indigenous-specific environmental management initiatives
- *Closing the Gap (CTG)* in Indigenous disadvantage.

3.1 THE FUNDING CONTEXT

In May 2007, the Australian Government announced *Working on Country (WoC)*; a \$47.6 million program to support 100 Indigenous rangers over four years under it's *A better future for Indigenous Australians: Building an Indigenous Workforce in Service Delivery* initiative. Further Government commitments have seen significant growth in the program which is now committed to supporting over 730 Indigenous rangers by June 2016. The program is considered ongoing.

WoC employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in regional and remote Australia to undertake environmental work that aligns with Australian Government and local community environmental and cultural priorities. The program aims to train and employ approximately 680 rangers by June 2013, with this target growing to 730 rangers by June 2016.

The stated aims of *WoC* are to:

- support Indigenous aspirations in caring for country
- provide opportunities for Indigenous people to deliver environmental services that protect and manage Australia's environmental and heritage values
- provide training and career pathways for Indigenous people in land and sea management, in partnership with others
- facilitate a partnership approach between Indigenous people and others to deliver environmental outcomes.

The environmental work funded under *WoC* includes:

- the sharing of traditional ecological knowledge and land management practices in relation to country
- controlling weeds and feral animals
- protecting and monitoring threatened plant and animal species
- fire management
- caring for significant wetland areas and marine environments
- a range of cultural heritage management activities.

3.2 THE POLICY CONTEXT

3.2.1 THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY CONTEXT

Caring for our Country is the overarching environmental initiative of which *WoC* and related programs (e.g. the *IPA* program under the National Reserve System, the National Landcare Program, and the Environmental Stewardship Program) form an integral part.

Caring for our Country, a key environmental management initiative of the Australian Government, aims to:

- achieve an environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, resilient, and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate
- connect all Australians with the natural environment
- develop a greater awareness and association between Australians and Australia's landscape and natural resources.

Two Indigenous-specific environmental management initiatives developed as predecessors to *WoC* should be noted here: the *IPA* program and the *Contract Employment Program for Aboriginals in Natural Land and Cultural Resource Management (CEPANCRM)*.

In 1995 the Minister for the Environment approved funding for *IPA*, a program that recognises the benefit of applying traditional Indigenous environmental management practices to contemporary issues such as feral animals, weeds, soil conservations and sea management. There are currently 50 declared IPAs established across Australia covering more than 20 million hectares, which continue to support Indigenous communities to manage their land for conservation.

The *IPA* program has three core objectives:

- to support Indigenous land owners to establish, develop and manage *IPAs* on their land as part of wider Australian Government environmental policy
- to support the interests of Indigenous people and develop cooperative management arrangements with state, territory and federal government agencies to effectively manage protected areas
- to integrate Indigenous cultural knowledge of ecology and conservation with contemporary protected area management practices.

The *IPA* program has been well received by Indigenous communities and is successfully fulfilling program objectives and meeting program targets. The *IPA* and *WoC* programs integrate closely, particularly where there are shared funding arrangements at the community level, and deliver complimentary outcomes.

In 1988 the *CEPANCRM* was established to provide Indigenous Australians with increased opportunity to access employment in remote areas. This program aimed to increase the participation of Indigenous Australians in natural land management on Indigenous owned land and on state and territory managed protected areas. While the program did not make significant headway in the recruitment of Indigenous Australians, it did represent a first step in recognising the efficacy of programs of this nature and legitimised the principle that Indigenous Australians have much to offer the wider community in managing and understanding the Australian landscape and environment. The *CEPANCRM* was terminated in 1997.

3.2.2 THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY CONTEXT

In 2007-08, Australian governments agreed on a national strategy to 'Close the Gap' (CTG) in Indigenous disadvantage through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

COAG agreed on six *CTG* targets:

- closing the life expectancy gap within a generation
- halving the gap in mortality rate for Indigenous children under five within a decade
- ensuring all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years
- halving the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade
- halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020

- halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

To achieve these targets, COAG has developed a number of strategic platforms or building frameworks in seven broad areas:

- early childhood development
- education and training
- healthy lives
- economic participation
- home environment
- safe and supportive communities
- governance and leadership.

WoC makes a direct contribution to the CTG employment target, currently providing employment for approximately 690 Indigenous people across Australia, almost 80% of whom live in remote areas.

WoC also contributes to three of the seven strategic areas for action:

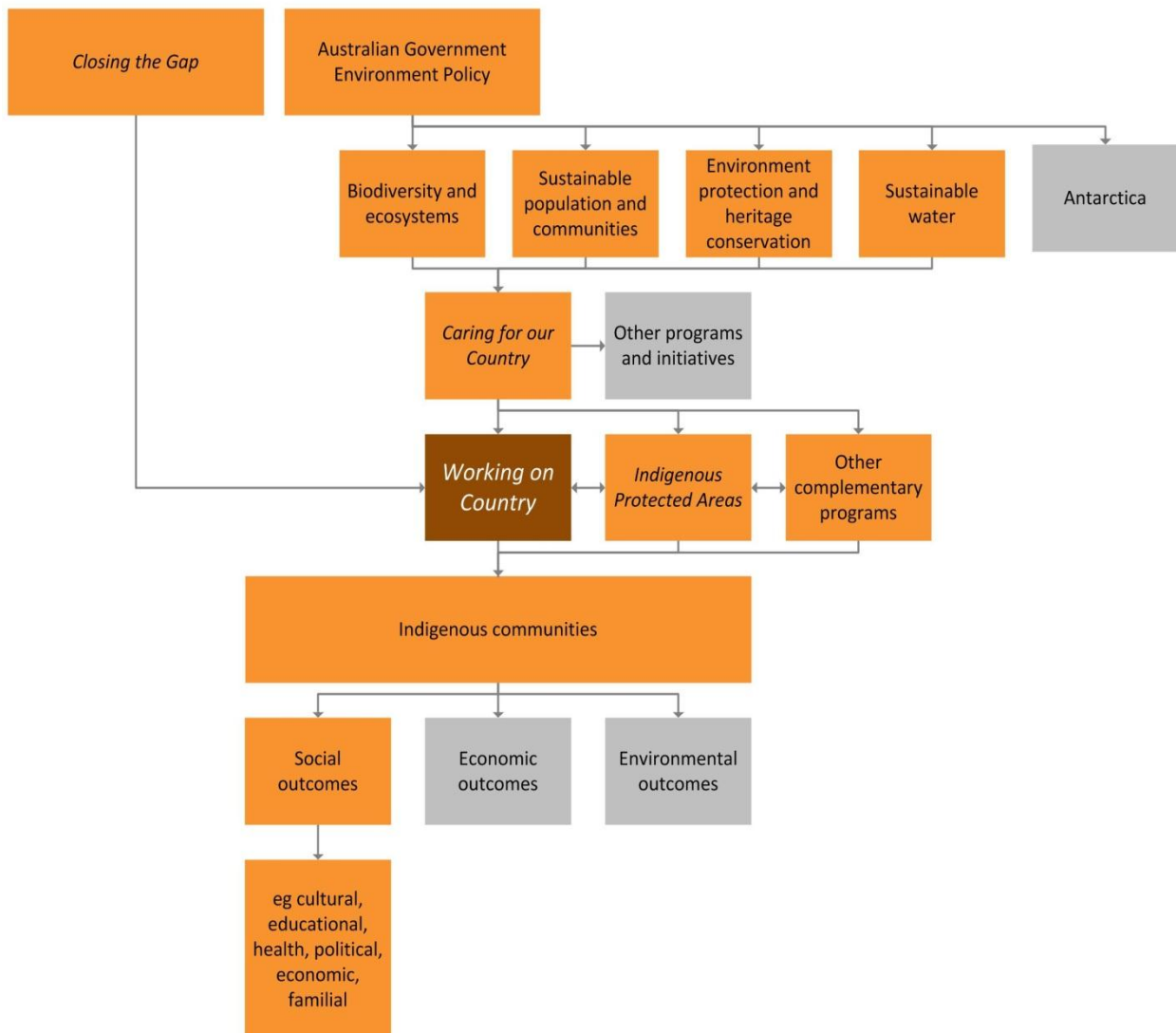
- *Economic participation:* the training and paid employment opportunities provided through WoC increase the current and future employment options for Indigenous people in regional and remote Australia. Due to their paid salaries, rangers and their families have increased purchasing power and economic participation. Wages are often spent within communities, helping to support local businesses and initiatives. Many WoC teams support the local economy by purchasing project supplies such as equipment and petrol and leasing vehicles from local businesses.
- *Safe and supportive communities:* many WoC projects are undertaken on Indigenous-held lands, and the program enables rangers and community members to access country and supports communities to actively manage their traditional country. The program also enables Indigenous people to access and work on traditional lands not currently under Indigenous control through partnership projects. The program supports Indigenous rangers and community members to carry out cultural responsibilities on traditional country, participate in cultural activities such as 'back to country' trips, transfer traditional ecological knowledge, and share cultural practices and knowledge across generations.
- *Governance and leadership:* many of the Indigenous ranger groups report an improvement in leadership skills amongst employees, and an increased capacity for self-management by the auspice organisation. Some projects have demonstrated improved financial independence and self-management capacity, having attracted funding from external sources and entered into private funding arrangements.

3.3 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

WoC forms one component of the large and complex web of interrelated Indigenous and non-Indigenous land and sea management initiatives. The assessment of the social outcomes of WoC is grounded in the understanding that while WoC is one part of a suite of programs operating within the same space, it plays a contributing role to the Australian Governments broader policy objectives. Furthermore, the program evaluation conducted by Walter Turnbull in 2010 identified the potentially good CTG value in WoC as an employment focused environment program delivered at a community level.

Figure 4 demonstrates the relationship of *WoC* to related NRM projects and the broader environmental and Indigenous policy agenda.

Figure 4 – The policy context of *WoC*



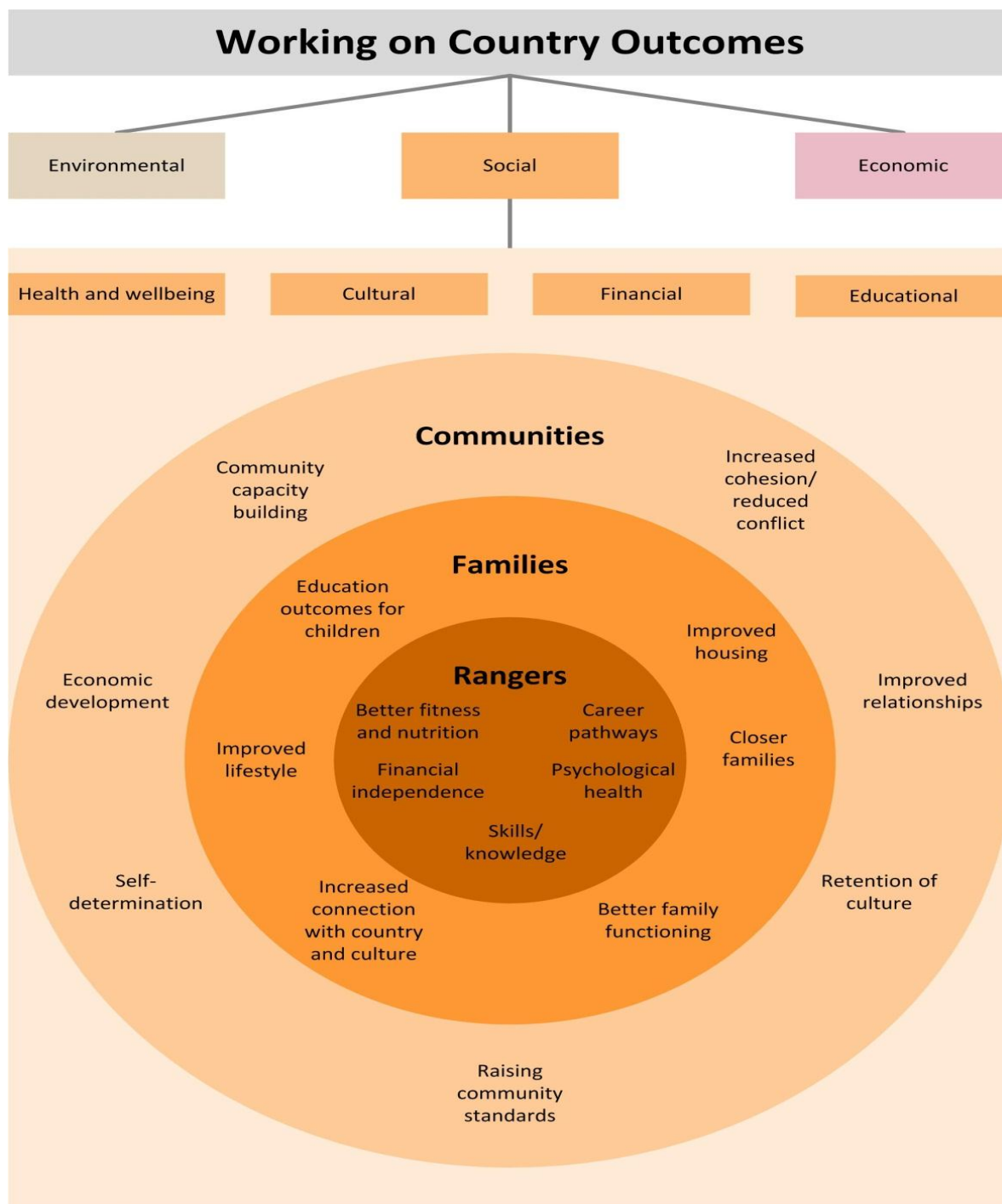
Source: Urbis, 2011

4 Conceptual framework for understanding the social outcomes

This section of the report provides a conceptual framework and outlines a program logic model for understanding the social outcomes of *WoC*.

The social outcomes of *WoC* and related Indigenous NRM initiatives are diverse, wide-ranging and interconnected. As demonstrated by the diagram below, the social outcomes of *WoC* and related initiatives can be categorised according to health and wellbeing, economic, cultural and educational outcomes for the individual rangers, their families and social changes at a whole of community level.

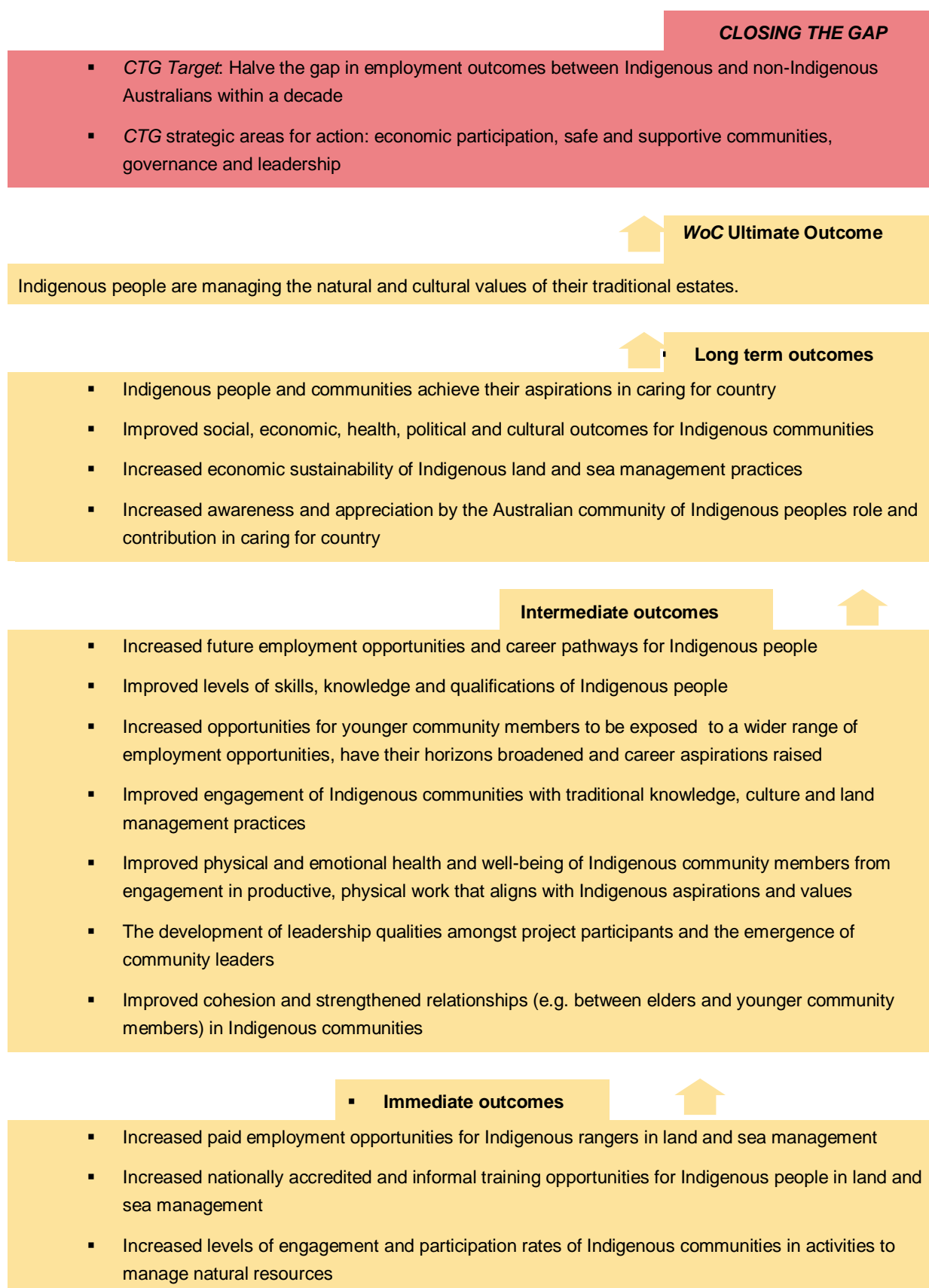
FIGURE 5 – SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF WOC



Source: Urbis 2011

A program logic for understanding the social outcomes of WoC has been developed using an outcomes hierarchy model. The development of the program logic was informed by the WoC logic model as part of the *Caring for our Country* Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework, focusing on the social outcomes only (not the intended environmental outcomes).

FIGURE 6 – PROGRAM LOGIC FOR THE SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF WOC



- Increased opportunities for elders and others within the communities with experience in caring for country to actively transfer cultural and traditional knowledge
- Increased opportunities for community involvement by elders, traditional owners, women and young people in land and sea management activities facilitated by ranger groups

▪ **Inputs/activities**



- Indigenous rangers are employed in full-time, part-time or casual positions and paid salaries to undertake conservation work in places that have demonstrated important natural and cultural values
- Formal nationally accredited and informal training is delivered
- Funding is provided for operational costs such as materials, equipment and vehicles
- Community environment management plans that articulate the community vision, values and goals for country ensure the management of land and sea under *WoC* addresses these
- Project design and delivery involves traditional owners and respects Indigenous decision-making, governance regimes and land management accountabilities
- Planning and delivery involves partnership building and stakeholder consultation
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are developed to document progress made against key social and economic outcomes

▪ **Needs**



- Meaningful stakeholder engagement, relationship building and the establishment of partnerships to support and enhance program outcomes
- An understanding of Indigenous aspirations, values and issues in caring for country to ensure that the employment opportunities offered resonate and align with these
- A whole of Government approach to Indigenous issues and understanding the link between *WoC* and the *CTG* agenda and other key government policy and programs
- Access to land and sea country
- Alignment of Indigenous aspirations in caring for country and the Australian Government's responsibilities in meeting its environmental outcomes
- Recognition of ranger positions as 'real jobs' that deliver key services and are appropriately remunerated, and distinct from simply an alternative mechanism for delivering welfare to communities through wage subsidisation

5 Case study projects

This section of the report provides a brief description of each of the 18 case study projects.

The descriptions detail project aims and objectives, employment and training information, the nature of the work and the activities undertaken, project governance, leadership and funding, and information relating to the social context. A number of the case study projects have co-funding arrangements with *IPA* and *Caring for our Country*.

The project descriptions provide a useful context for understanding the social outcomes of case study projects, detailed in Section 6 below.

KALAN RANGER AND LAMA LAMA RANGER PROJECTS, COEN, QLD – SITE VISIT

KALAN AND LAMA LAMA RANGER CONSULTATIONS
PHOTO: ANIA WILCZYNSKI 2011.



KALAN AND LAMA LAMA RANGER CONSULTATIONS
PHOTO: ANIA WILCZYNSKI 2011.



Both the Kalan Rangers, based in Coen in Queensland, and the Lama Lama Rangers, based in Port Stewart, are managed by Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation in Cairns, acting on behalf of the traditional owners (the Kalan Aboriginal Corporation and Toolka Land Trust, and the Lama Lama Land Trust respectively).

The Lama Lama project employs six rangers - four female and two male rangers. The Kalan Rangers project employs six rangers and a trainee - two female and five male rangers. Both projects have only been in operation since early 2010. Prior to receiving *WoC* funding, there was a long history of variable and piecemeal investment in ranger-type activities, including utilising some Community Development Employment Projects Program (CDEP) positions.

Both projects are based in the Cape York Peninsula. The Lama Lama National Park covers 35,560 hectares and is located east of the Great Dividing Range. It contains highly significant wetlands, coastal and river bank vegetation, and extensive woodlands. The Kalan Ranger project operates in the Mt Croll Nature Reserve and surrounding Aboriginal freehold land. It covers around 17,990 hectares of pristine ecosystems of which 5,132 hectares are designated as a Nature Refuge under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act* (1992).

The Lama Lama Rangers focus on assessing, documenting and managing the natural and cultural values of their country. The Lama Lama are the only traditional owner group in Cape York to have all of their traditional country handed back (under various tenure arrangements).

In the case of the Kalan Rangers, the Conservation Agreement between the Toolka Land Trust and the Queensland Government to establish the Mt Croll Nature Refuge provides the framework for the rangers' land management plan.

Although the two projects cover distinct geographical areas, similar activities are conducted. These include: weed control, feral animal management, soil erosion, visitor management, cultural heritage work, fire management, biodiversity and carbon assessment (including the Lama Lama Ranger project jointly managing the national park with the Department of Environment and Resource Management - DERM).

The two projects are funded through *WoC*, and each also has \$150,000 annually in funding for an Indigenous Management Agreement with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for joint management of the areas (which involves sharing work plans etc). Currently there is little fee for service work conducted, but the projects are investigating some such work for DERM and local station owners (e.g. in relation to fencing, fire management).

All the Kalan Rangers have recently completed their Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management, and there are plans for some of the Lama Lama rangers to do the same. A range of other skills-based training has been conducted including chainsaw, CyberTracker (a monitoring tool), use of computers, and financial management training (with Westpac).

DHIMURRU WORKING ON COUNTRY, NHULUNBUY, NT – SITE VISIT

*DHIMURRU RANGERS TRAINING IN GPS AND GIS AT YIRRKALA
PHOTO: JANE DERMER 2010.*



*CROCODILE MANAGEMENT
PHOTO: JANE DERMER 2010.*



Dhimurru Working on Country, managed by Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, is based in Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory (NT). Dhimurru is an incorporated Aboriginal organisation established by Yolngu landowners in Northeast Arnhem Land to look after the land on their behalf. Dhimurru is governed by a Board of 10 Directors elected by the members, and drawn from the 17 clans which have an interest in the region.

The Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area declared in 2000 covers approximately 101,000 hectares, of which the Yolngu are the traditional owners. Dhimurru aims to assist its traditional Aboriginal owners to protect and utilise their land and waters for their collective benefit and for the benefit of their descendants, and to assist them to develop and implement sustainable land and sea use and management schemes that promote and achieve the training and employment of traditional owners in NRM work.

A key social and natural resource management issue identified in Nhulunbuy is management of the impact of the (predominantly non-Aboriginal) workers associated with the bauxite mine in Nhulunbuy (NT's largest industrial project).

The Ranger Project has been in operation since 1992 (on a much smaller scale, with some CDEP placements), and received *WoC* funding since 2007. The project also receives funding from *IPA* and *Caring for our Country* programs. A total of 17 rangers, 13 male and four female, are currently employed.

The rangers undertake a variety of activities including weed control, feral animal management, cultural activities, reviewing and contributing to development proposals (e.g. relating to the salmon fishery and the Cane Toad Abatement Plan generated under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (C'th)), and visitor impact management in relation to the bauxite mine and the associated service industry.

Formal partnerships (not attached to funding) are established with the CSIRO (a service agreement for yellow crazy ant management), and the Batchelor Institute (to conduct ranger training). There are fee for service partnerships with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) to monitor foreign debris and plants and animals and Ghost Nets Australia to manage the impact of ghost nets. Dhimurru also works with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Alliance on the use of CyberTracker for data collection.

Training undertaken by the rangers includes Conservation and Land Management Certificate III and Communication in Written and Spoken English – Introductory and Certificate I and II (both delivered locally through the Batchelor Institute). They have also participated in a Business Studies course (delivered remotely through the Batchelor Institute), and chainsaw use, 4WD operation, small engine maintenance, fire suppression and coxswain's (boat operation) training. This has been delivered through a combination of distance and on-site training. The rangers also regularly attend conferences and networking events as part of the ranger training program.

**KIMBERLEY RANGERS: WORKING ON COUNTRY - BARDI JAWI RANGERS, WA –
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

*BARDI JAWI RANGERS MONITORING DUGONG
PHOTOS: RICHARD MEISTER 2008.*



*BARDI JAWI RANGERS MONITORING DUGONG
PHOTOS: RICHARD MEISTER 2008.*



The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) is the peak Indigenous regional community organisation and native title representative body for traditional owners in the Kimberley region of WA. The KLC established their Land and Sea Management Unit (LSMU) in 1998 to assist traditional owners in looking after and managing their traditional land and sea country. The most prominent program managed by the LSMU is the Kimberley Ranger Program which provides employment and training for Indigenous people to manage and protect their country. The rangers undertake a variety of land and sea management projects including cultural heritage site management, recording of traditional knowledge, fire management, removal of ghost nets and marine debris, control of weeds and feral animals, visitor management, protection of threatened species and their habitats and planning for country. A key social and natural resource management issue identified in the Kimberley is managing the impacts of increasing tourism in the region.

Through *WoC*, eight ranger projects support traditional owners to manage 243,800 square kilometres of land and more than 1,800 kilometres of coastline. Groups include the Bardi Jawi, Wunggurr, Uunguu, Paruku, Nyikina Mangala, Karajarri, Ngurrara and Nyul Nyul Rangers. Ranger work plans are developed under the direction of traditional owners and incorporate traditional knowledge and western technologies to care for country. More than 60 Aboriginal male and female rangers are currently employed, and an additional 180 elders and casual rangers were engaged in part time work during 2010/11. This indicates that the ranger program was potentially one of the largest employers of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley.

In addition, the KLC supports six developing ranger groups from across the Kimberley region including the Bardi Jawi Oorany, Kija, Balangarra, Dambimangari, Gooniyandi and Jilajin Rangers.

The Bardi Jawi Rangers are representatives of the Bardi (land) and Jawi (island) saltwater people. Their ranger program was established in 2006 and has been supported by *WoC* since 2008. Six Bardi Jawi rangers are employed to undertake a range of resource management activities including: weed management, land rehabilitation, fire management, monitoring and managing turtle and dugong numbers and habitats, monitoring sea grass meadows, monitoring river water quality; controlling feral animals; monitoring threatened species; managing remnant vine thickets; recording visitor data; protecting important cultural sites and recording traditional knowledge.

The rangers have undertaken Conservation and Land Management certificates as well as various other accredited and non-accredited training programs including coxswains certification, chainsaw use, chemical use, numeracy, literacy and computer skills.

WORKING ON COUNTRY TO MANAGE THE DJELK INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA, MANINGRIDA, NT – SITE VISIT

The Djelk Ranger Program is based in Maningrida in the NT. Maningrida is a community comprising 12 traditional language groups. The project is managed by Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC), an Aboriginal community organisation whose objectives include: the promotion of sustainable use of traditional lands in Maningrida and the 32 outstations it serves, to provide or assist in the provision of employment, and to foster business opportunities and promote economic independence. BAC is managed by a Board made up of Aboriginal elders from the area.

The Djelk rangers manage and monitor the Djelk IPA (declared in 2009) in central northern Arnhem Land. The Djelk IPA covers 6,732 square kilometres of land managed by a team of 28 male and six female rangers. The rangers are also responsible for surveillance of sea country and islands up to three nautical miles off the coast. The ranger program has operated since the early 1990s with CDEP placements, and since 2007 with *WoC* funding.

The Djelk rangers work with partner organisations on a number of projects including controlling invasive species, maintaining historical fire regimes, monitoring marine resources and preventing pests entering Australia. Partner organisations include a neighbouring *WoC* ranger group, Warddeken Rangers, to jointly manage areas with the NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport which funds a scientist to support the work of the Djelk and Warddeken rangers by providing training and direction on biodiversity issues. The rangers also conduct a variety of fee-for-service work with partners such as: the Department of Resources – Fisheries to carry out fishery patrols related to fishery compliance; DAFF Biosecurity to undertake quarantine activities; and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service to carry out coastal patrols, including surveillance of foreign fishing vessels. This fee-for-service work has enabled the program to expand and attract funding for capital items such as boats which support the work of the rangers.

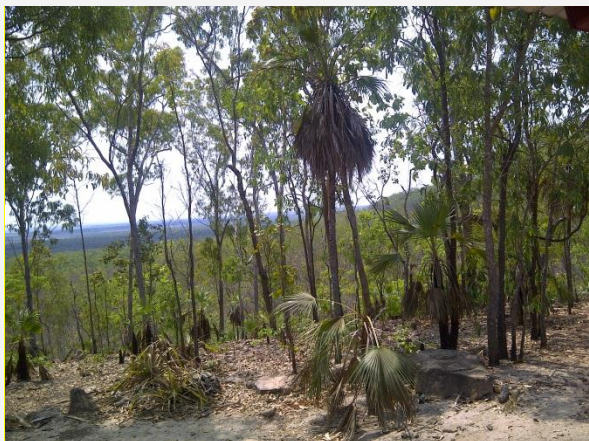
Land and sea management activities undertaken by the Djelk rangers include weed management, feral animal management, seed collection, sacred site and cultural heritage management, sustainable wildlife-based enterprise development, fisheries compliance and monitoring, customs surveillance, monitoring and removal of marine debris, and sea rescues. The women rangers work on significant environmental and cultural conservation projects including seed collection and propagation of native plants for the BAC nursery, harvest of bush food for old people which is distributed through the BAC Aged Care Program, and leading participation in junior ranger camps and training.

The majority of rangers are undertaking their Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management through Charles Darwin University. Other training completed has included firearms licence, aerial platform shooting, Certificate II in Fisheries Compliance, sacred site compliance (conducted by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority) and coxswain's licence (boat operation) training.

THAMARRURR RANGERS LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT PROJECT, WADEYE, NT – SITE VISIT

THAMARRURR RANGERS SITE VISIT

PHOTO: ANIA WILCZYNSKI 2011.



THAMARRURR RANGERS SITE VISIT

PHOTO: ANIA WILCZYNSKI 2011.



The Thamarrurr Rangers program, hosted by Thamarrurr Development Corporation, is based in Wadeye (the largest Indigenous community in the NT). The Thamarrurr region incorporates 18,000 square kilometres of relatively intact landscapes, including 240 kilometres of coastline.

Thamarrurr Development Corporation is a community-based organisation owned by the 20 clan groups of the Thamarrurr region. The governing board of the Corporation is made up of 12 Board Directors representing the three ceremony groups and the 20 clan groups.

There are a range of socio-economic issues in Wadeye which are shared by many remote Indigenous communities: overcrowded and limited housing, poor health, low education levels, social dysfunction, limited employment opportunities, high cost of food and limited essential services. There has also historically been conflict between different clan groups in the region. These issues create a challenging environment for the operation of the ranger group.

The ranger program has been in operation since 2001, initially as a CDEP project before securing WoC funding in 2008. It currently employs 20 rangers full-time – 10 male and 10 female.

The *Thamarrurr Rangers Strategic and Operational Business Plan* (March 2011) states that the expected benefits of the ranger program include: greater ownership and control of economic development opportunities by local people in the region; employment opportunities for Indigenous people on country; income generation; the sustainable use of natural resources; the opportunity to use Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge in a contemporary, practical application, resulting in maintenance and transference to the younger generation; a stronger relationship with traditional owners in the region; a range of skills and products that the community can be proud of; and fostering greater entrepreneurship in the region.

The rangers undertake a variety of land and sea management activities, including fire management, feral animal management, weed management, cultural site protection and documentation, coastal patrols, removal of ghost nets, flora and fauna surveys, water testing, revegetation and a school ranger program.

The Ranger project is funded through the WoC program, NT Fisheries, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (through the Indigenous Employment Program) and undertakes fee-for-service work for the ENI gas plant and Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy (under AQIS).

The rangers have undertaken a range of training courses including handling of firearms, 4WD, operation and maintenance of small machinery, handling of trailers, and remote area first aid.

MID NORTH COAST ABORIGINAL RANGERS, TAREE, NSW – TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

The Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, managed by Taree Indigenous Development and Employment Ltd (TIDE), is a WoC supported project based in New South Wales (NSW). The Mid North Coast accounts for over 10 per cent of the Aboriginal population of NSW.

High unemployment and low levels of education and skills development were reported as key issues for Aboriginal people in the Mid North Coast.

TIDE currently supports the employment of eight Aboriginal people (including one female) across three ranger teams. This comprises: four full-time rangers in Taree, two full-time rangers at Karuah, and two part-time rangers at Gloucester. TIDE is in the process of recruiting another ranger for the Karuah team. Seven of TIDE's ranger positions are funded through WoC while the other positions are non-WoC funded.

TIDE, a community based non-profit organisation, provides employment and training services. The members of TIDE, the majority of who are required to be Aboriginal, elect the company's directors. TIDE also has an Aboriginal Employment Strategy that requires at least 40 per cent of staff to be Aboriginal.

The rangers undertake a range of natural and cultural resource management activities including: weed control, bush regeneration, parks and gardens maintenance, endangered species management, feral animal control, Aboriginal cultural heritage monitoring and assessments, and aquatic ecosystems improvement. The rangers undertake work on public and privately owned land, including work for: National Parks and Wildlife Service, Land and Property Management Authority, Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, local councils, Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee, Landcare, Coastcare, private landholders, conservation organisations, Aboriginal land councils, schools, and golf courses.

The four Taree rangers have completed their Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management, while the others have commenced their Certificate III. The ranger supervisor has commenced a Diploma in Conservation and Land Management. Other training undertaken by the rangers includes: chemical applications, chainsaw use, first aid, all-terrain vehicles, weed identification, supervisor training and occupational health and safety.

The Taree and Karuah ranger teams were established in 2005 under the CDEP. With the closure of the CDEP in June 2009 TIDE secured WoC funding to support the ranger teams. The Gloucester team has been operating since February 2010.

The operations of the ranger teams are overseen by a steering committee that meets quarterly. The steering committee comprises representatives from: TIDE, Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council, Foster Local Aboriginal Land Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Great Lakes Council, Taree Council, Gloucester Shire Council and the Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TIDE, Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council, and Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council addresses cross-boundary issues of importance to the local Aboriginal communities by governing the way work is allocated to the teams. The MOU ensure the rangers only work on each other's country with the consent of the relevant Aboriginal land council.

MAPOON LAND AND SEA CENTRE, QLD – TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

MAPOON COUNTRY (GHOSTNETS)

PHOTO: CRAIG WHEELER 2010.



Mapoon Land and Sea Centre, managed by Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council, is based in Mapoon on North Queensland's Cape York Peninsula. The Mapoon community is situated on the traditional lands of the Tjungundji people. Mapoon was originally established as a church mission community. In 1989, a Deed of Grant of Land in Trust (DOGIT) covering 1,839 square kilometres was handed back to the Mapoon people by the Queensland Government.

Mapoon Land and Sea Centre employs a total of eight rangers. Six of these rangers and a coordinator are employed through *WoC* and two rangers are employed through the *Wild Rivers Ranger Program* (Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management).

The Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers manage the Mapoon DOGIT lands. The area contains the catchments of the Skardon River, Ducie River, Wenlock River, Dulhunty River and Janie Creek as well as numerous smaller tributaries.

Limited local employment and career opportunities and limited access to training and education opportunities due to geographic remoteness were identified as key issues for Aboriginal people in Mapoon.

The rangers undertake a range of land and sea environmental works including turtle research and tracking, revegetation, cultural site management, weed and feral animal control, the protection and conservation of wetlands, controlling visitor access, re-introduction of traditional fire management, crocodile surveys and water quality monitoring.

Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council acts in partnership with the traditional owners. The Land and Sea Committee comprising two elders from each of the council representatives and trustees meet monthly, to oversee the operations of the ranger program.

The Mapoon Land and Sea Centre works in partnership with a range of organisations, including the Queensland and Australian governments, Australia Zoo, AQIS, Birds Australia, Australian Customs, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Ghost Nets Australia and the University of Queensland.

IMPROVING LANDSCAPE SCALE CONSERVATION OF THREATENED GRASSY WOODLAND ECOSYSTEMS IN THE GREATER MURRAY GOULBURN CATCHMENT PROJECT, VIC –TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

WEAVING

PHOTO: THE BORDER MAIL.



TREE PLANTING

PHOTO: THE BORDER MAIL.



The Threatened Grassy Woodland Ecosystems in the Greater Murray Goulburn Catchment Project was delivered by the North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Victoria, in partnership with Goulburn Broken CMA, Murray CMA, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victorian Department of Prime Industries, Trust for Nature, Australian National University, and Nature Conservation Trust.

Funding for the Threatened Grassy Woodlands Project was provided by *Caring for our Country* for a two year period. The funding completion date was June 2011.

The Project, which spanned the three catchment areas of North East (Victoria), Goulburn Broken (Victoria) and Murray (NSW), aimed to improve the conservation management of three nationally threatened grassy woodland ecological communities: the White Box-Yellow Box- Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodland and Derived Native Grassland, Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression bioregions, and Weeping Myall Woodlands.

The Project addressed six *Caring for our Country* targets: 1) increasing native habitat, 2) reducing the impact of weeds, 3) increasing landscape scale conservation, 4) improving knowledge and skills of land managers, 5) engaging Indigenous communities, and 6) increasing community knowledge and skills.

To achieve these targets, the Threatened Grassy Woodlands Project focused on two Indigenous engagement targets: develop an Indigenous partnership by establishing and supporting an Indigenous Landcare group, and deliver six Indigenous community engagement activities within priority woodland areas.

The project led to the formation of an Aboriginal men's Landcare group named 'Bidja Bila' (Men of the River) and an Aboriginal women's Landcare group. Community engagement activities included: tree planting, traditional fire workshop, stone tool making workshop, three weaving workshops, NAIDOC films and artefacts exhibition, the making of a Women on Country film, field days, a strategic workshop for the Landcare groups, and cultural knowledge exchange. Indigenous elders and community members were engaged to deliver the activities and facilitate the workshops. In some cases they were financially compensated for their time and travel/accommodation costs.

An Indigenous Landcare Involvement Officer and an Indigenous Liaison Officer, employed full-time through the North East CMA, facilitated Aboriginal engagement in the Project. An existing local Aboriginal advisory group of elders and traditional owners was involved in the initial planning of the Project, the design of activities and provided advice on how to engage the local Indigenous community. A Steering Committee, which met on a monthly basis, was established to oversee the strategic and operational aspects of the project.

WOC/IPA PROJECTS IN THE TORRES STRAIT, QLD –TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

IAMALGAL RANGERS MONITORING WALKING TRACKS

PHOTO: REBECCA CLEAR 2010.



MALU KIAI RANGERS MONITORING SWAMPS

PHOTO: ALEX WELLS 2010.



The *WoC* and *IPA* projects in the Torres Strait aim to support community-based management of land and sea environments in a culturally appropriate way.

The Torres Strait, the waterway separating Australia's Cape York Peninsula and the island of New Guinea, comprises 19 culturally distinct communities spread over 15 inhabited islands. The Torres Strait is characterised by its predominantly marine environment and geographic remoteness. Travel to the Torres Strait Islands is generally by light air craft and boat.

Torres Strait Islanders have their Native Title land rights recognised and there are Registered Native Title Body Corporates in place for all inhabited and most uninhabited Torres Strait Island communities. A Native Title sea rights claim for the region is currently pending.

There are limited economic development opportunities in the Torres Strait. Fishing is the primary industry, and with the exception of government agency positions based on Thursday Island and emerging tourism and art industries there is a lack of land-based economic opportunities.

Welfare dependency was identified as a key social issue for the Torres Strait. Some Torres Strait Island communities have reportedly experienced social and cultural decline, and disempowerment as a result of welfare dependency. The economic and social conditions in the Torres Strait have also reportedly been affected by the recent CDEP reforms.

The *WoC* and *IPA* projects in the Torres Strait are managed by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), an Australian Government Statutory Authority that operates under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Act 2005*. TSRA's role includes local governance, policy coordination, and program delivery.

TSRA established a Land and Sea Management Unit in 2006 to support regional and community-based environmental initiatives. The Unit comprises approximately 20 regional staff and employs 22 full-time outer island-based rangers through *WoC*. In addition to the *WoC* rangers, the Torres Strait has dugong and turtle officers employed by the Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) funded by *Caring for our Country*. Currently no women are employed as rangers through the program, although TSRA are looking to address this.

Seven Torres Strait Island communities have established ranger groups, these include: Mabuiag, Badu, Boigu, Erub, Mer, Moa, and Iama. TSRA has secured *WoC* funding for the expansion of the program to all remaining inhabited island communities, pending community support for participation in the program. There are two declared *IPAs* and an *IPA* consultation project in the Torres Strait.

The work undertaken by the rangers includes: pest and weed management and feral animal control; marine debris management, removal of coast nets and coastal clean-up activities; monitoring of sea grasses and inter tidal habitats; monitoring and sustainable management of dugongs and turtles; education and awareness raising activities regarding environmental issues and protection of cultural heritage sites; and recording and management of traditional ecological knowledge.

WOC/IPA PROJECTS IN THE TORRES STRAIT, QLD –TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

TSRA works closely with the Torres Strait Islander Regional Council and Registered Native Title Body Corporates in delivering *WoC*, formalised through a MOU. Council provides support to the program, for example, it leases office and storage space (for vehicles) to TSRA. Registered Native Title Body Corporates participate in the recruitment and selection of rangers, determine cultural and environmental priorities for ranger activities, provide approvals to access Native Title land and culturally sensitive sites, and input into the development of the *WoC* work plans.

RIVERLAND RANGERS PROJECT, SA – SITE VISIT

RIVERLAND RANGERS BEING INTERVIEWED AT CALPERUM STATION

PHOTO: STU JORDAN 2011.



THE RIVERLAND RANGER NURSERY

PHOTO: STU JORDAN 2011.



The Riverland Rangers Program, managed by the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board, involves protecting significant cultural and environmental sites on the Murray River in South Australia (SA). The Mallee scrubland of Australia is one of the most endangered vegetation types in the world.

The program grew out of earlier CDEP and Aboriginal Learning on Country (ALOC) programs and was proposed by staff of Regional Development South Australia. It currently supports the employment of six Aboriginal people, including two females. It works closely with a range of local organisations including Mission Australia, the South Australian Department of Natural Resource Management and the local Catchment Management Board via a memorandum of understanding.

A key aim of the program is to work with the strengths of Aboriginal people, drawing upon their strong connection to the land to create a knowledgeable, skilful, qualified and employed Aboriginal community able to confidently manage their local environment. Building capacity and leadership within the Aboriginal community, protecting biodiversity and natural icons, landscape restoration and establishing a small-scale nursery are some of the key objectives of the ranger program.

The rangers undertake accredited training in conservation and land management, equipment operation and occupational health and safety. The rangers are trained in database management for their wetland management monitoring activities and learn to use data loggers and GPS technology. Most rangers have completed accredited training at Certificate II - IV level.

The Riverland Rangers work closely with natural resource management organisations on local priority projects. These include weed control, fauna surveys (often in conjunction with university-based researchers), and restoring and protecting nesting and foraging sites for the nationally vulnerable Regent Parrot. They implement fire management plans and undertake monitoring of groundwater and surface water quality of the wetlands. They also collect seed from local native remnant vegetation and maintain a seed bank in their extensive nursery.

The Riverland Ranger team works on properties along the Murray Darling Basin in SA, such as Calperum Station and Kurlana and on significant Mallee and Murray River wetlands in the local region. These properties contain significant environmental and heritage sites. Calperum Station is home to a Ramsar listed wetland and along with nearby Taylorville Station, is part the National Reserve System, Australia's network of protected areas. Both properties are managed by the Australian Landscape Trust which hosts the Riverland Ranger's headquarters on Calperum Station.

The project plays an important role in conserving and raising awareness about Aboriginal cultural heritage by protecting heritage sites including middens, burial sites and scar-trees, along with culturally significant species such as bush tucker and medicinal plants. Local elders and community members participate by sharing knowledge and taking part in tag-along tours while a women's group undertake traditional foods and craft activities.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF IMMEDIATE AND HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS FROM THE LAYNHAPUY
INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN, NT –
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

The *WoC* and *IPA* projects in Yirrkala, Arnhem Land, are delivered by the Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation, established by the Yolngu in 1985. The Laynhapuy Homeland forms a major part of the eastern peninsula. It is home to the Yolngu people, one of the largest Indigenous groups in Australia, who are recognised as maintaining strong Indigenous traditions and culture. The Laynhapuy homelands are on Aboriginal-held land established under the Commonwealth's *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) 1976*.

Declared in 2006, the Laynhapuy IPA protects internationally significant wetlands and coastal landforms, and its sea country is home to endangered turtles and dugong. The work on Laynhapuy IPA is guided by senior traditional owners and aims to support them in the achievement of self-sufficiency in the management and determination of their future.

The infrastructure and economic development activities of the Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation pre-dates the *WoC* initiative and, in 2003, as part of the *IPA* program, the Yirrkala Ranger Program was established in response to traditional owners' desire to manage their country and deal with threats to cultural and environmental values. *WoC* support for the program commenced in 2008. Another rangers' station office was established at Gangan in 2008 and a third Ranger Station was established at Dhalinbuy in 2009. The Yirrkala Ranger Program currently employs 50 rangers on staff at various locations in the homeland network. Of these, 32 rangers (29 men and three women) are employed under *WoC*.

Some of the key social issues identified in the local area include limited employment opportunities and general health issues such as overcrowded living conditions, poor hygiene and nutrition, and poor emotional wellbeing from lack of direction and loss of cultural connectedness.

The work undertaken by the rangers includes: managing visitor activities; controlling weeds, pigs and buffalo; managing fire through traditional burning techniques; addressing the delicate needs of the coastline and the sea country, including removing marine debris such as ghost nets and monitoring turtle habitats and protection of cultural heritage sites; and recording and management of traditional ecological knowledge.

The Australian Government supports the work of Laynhapuy IPA through the *IPA* and *WoC* elements of the *Caring for our Country* initiative. The established programs and initiatives of the Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation are further supported by the *WoC* initiative through the development of an IPA manager role with responsibility for program oversight; establishing relationships with funders; promoting program; managing works program; consulting with the ranger groups; and leadership promotion.

These functions support the goal of achieving self-sufficiency articulated by the traditional owners. Crucially the traditional owners retain the authority to authorise, amend or review initiatives that are intended to improve community life in north east Arnhem land and have significant input into the development of the *WoC* work plans.

RAUKKAN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT, SA – SITE VISIT

RAUKKAN RANGERS BEING INTERVIEWED

PHOTO: STU JORDAN 2011.



INTERVIEW WITH RAUKKAN RANGER AND ELDER

PHOTO: STU JORDAN 2011.



The Raukkan Natural Resource Management project, an initiative of the Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation, is situated at Raukkan on Lake Alexandrina near the Coorong and Murray Mouth. The settlement (formerly Point McLeay), a small Aboriginal community of approximately 150 people, is notable as the home of David Uniapon a famous early Aboriginal Australian inventor, writer and lecturer whose image is on the \$50 note.

There have been record low river flows to the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region due to drought and over-allocation across the Murray-Darling Basin. This has resulted in a range of environmental and community issues affecting the region, in addition to ongoing long-term issues. River flows have recently increased, resulting in higher water levels and flow reaching the Coorong for the first time in over three years. However the issues affecting the region remain.

The Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation was established in 2004 to increase the capacity of Aboriginal people to participate in the management of natural resources throughout SA. A priority of the Corporation is to rehabilitate at least 4.5 square kilometres of land in the area, whilst protecting culturally sensitive sites. The land lies within a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance. The Raukkan Community Council manages the operation of the project.

This WoC funding commenced in 2008 and the project employs around eight rangers (six male; two female) and involves partnerships with: local tourism; NRM contract work; cultural and heritage survey work; local/state/commonwealth government; NRM regional bodies; nursery operations and plant and animal conservation. This work is part of a larger effort aimed at bioremediation of the lower lakes region.

Some of the key social issues identified in Raukkan include limited local employment opportunities, and issues with accessing further education and skills development. The sustainability of the community has reportedly been affected by the removal of CDEP and other key government services, and community members moving away to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. The local school closed temporarily because of inadequate enrolment numbers but has now reopened due to families returning to Raukkan.

The rangers all receive accredited natural resource management training and most have now completed a Certificate IV qualification. The ranger's work is providing long-term control of environmental weeds such as boxthorn and artichoke thistle; re-establishing off-shore reed beds to prevent erosion; re-snagging the wetlands and lake edge with trees for fish habitat; and reinstating historical water flow connections. They have also undertaken significant weed control work around the Teringie Wetland. To date about 10,000 seedlings have been planted out with a further 7,000 to come over the next two to three years. A longer term goal is to plant out 35,000 - 40,000 seedlings.

The project has many links including being part of a nurseries network that is contracted to provide plants for local action planning groups. The project has worked with the local school to establish a native plant garden. Currently the project is working with scientists from Flinders University to monitor migratory birds as part of a National Parks and Wildlife survey and local community members and students often assist the rangers with plantings. The community owns a dairy farm five kilometres from the town where rangers work to stabilise sand drift areas through revegetation and gain valuable work experience in fencing and land management.

NGARRINDJERI WORKING ON RUWE (COUNTRY), SA – SITE VISIT

LAKE ALBERT, WARRANGIE FARM
PHOTO: STU JORDAN 2011.



RANGERS AT WARRANGIE FARM
PHOTO: STU JORDAN 2011.



The Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe (Country) is situated on the Coorong and Lower Lakes which lie on the south east coast of SA and is home to 18 Ngarrindjeri tribes who have been living along the Coorong since it was created. The Ngarrindjeri culture and traditions and the Coorong are inextricably linked. Across the landscape are middens and sacred sites including burial grounds.

The Coorong is a beautiful yet fragile ecosystem which encompasses almost 47,000 hectares of great diversity and stunning scenery including a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance. The shallow lagoons and waterways are a sanctuary for a diversity of animals and fish and more than 200 bird species including the largest breeding colony of the Australian pelican.

The Ngarrindjeri Land and Progress Association manages 20 square kilometres of land, including 30 kilometres of coastline along the Coorong and the Lower Lakes. The Ngarrindjeri have developed a sea country and culture plan, Yarlurwar-Ruwe Plan, to guide work on some of the environmental challenges of the region. Work undertaken by the WoC Aboriginal rangers includes revegetation of land and feral animal management; and protection of endangered species and culturally significant plants and animals including burial grounds.

The Ngarrindjeri rangers have identified and surveyed burial sites in association with the Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation and Flinders University and have been trained in cultural survey work to help in the repatriation of more than 300 old people to burial sites around the Coorong. This is an undertaking of great significance for both the rangers and their community.

The program employs around eight staff who undertake formal training in conservation and land management; financial services; leadership skills; fencing; chemicals management; and heavy equipment operation. Staff have provided input into the local community through dedicated skills transfer sessions and seminars; and tree planting sessions with local schools. Increased employment has increased knowledge and confidence of project participants improving community wellbeing generally.

The project involves a wide range of community awareness raising activities. For example, the media team conducted four one-day workshops with Ngarrindjeri *Caring For Country* and Heritage Rangers.. During the production in Murray Bridge, Raukkan and Meningie members of the Ngarrindjeri Ruwe and the Raukkan *Caring for Country* organisations learned skills in film narrative, interview and editing techniques. The team made a 10 minute documentary about their caring for country practices, including re-vegetation of their traditional country and caring for burial and other cultural sites.

MANAGING IDENTIFIED NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ACROSS THE CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL REGION - ANMATJERR RANGERS (TI TREE), NT – SITE VISIT

ANMATYERR RANGERS' WOMEN'S TRIP

PHOTO: NIKKI COWCHER.



The Central Land Council (CLC) in the NT has been operating a Community Ranger Program since 2001. The CLC is a statutory body under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*, and also has functions under the *Native Title Act 1993* and the *Pastoral Act 1992*. The organisation works to represent and promote Aboriginal rights and supports traditional owners to build on-ground capacity to manage their country.

The main aim of the ranger program is to identify and coordinate education, training and employment opportunities in cultural and natural resource management to support the employment of Indigenous community ranger groups across the region. The rangers' work is mainly in the remote areas where few other employment opportunities exist.

Aboriginal people make up 28% of the Northern Territory population with 24,000 Aboriginal people living in Central Australia. Aboriginal people own 49% of the land in the NT. The CLC Region covers 771,747 square kilometres of remote, rugged and often inaccessible areas in the southern half of the NT. There are 15 different language groups in Central Australia. The CLC is divided into nine regions based around these language groups.

The initial programs were funded using a variety of funding arrangements and predominantly hosted within CDEP programs operated by regionally-based resource centres and community councils. With the demise of the CDEP in 2009, the CLC secured funding through *WoC* to expand the ranger network. The CLC now operates a network of ten ranger programs (three in pilot phase). The ranger program is primarily funded (over 50%) under *WoC* with additional funding coming from *IPA*, the Indigenous Land Corporation's Real Jobs Program, and NT Parks and Wildlife Service contracts. *WoC* funds over 54 rangers in the CLC region.

According to the latest available *WoC Annual Report (2009/10)* there were over 70 rangers employed across the established ranger programs on a permanent or casual basis. Of the 76 permanent rangers employed over this period, all but 11 were still employed at the end of the financial year, indicating a retention rate of 85%. An additional 45 rangers were engaged on a casual basis in the three pilot ranger programs. Around one in eight of the rangers employed in that year (13%) were women.

The Anmatjerr Rangers are based at Ti Tree, a small town approximately half way between Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. There are six Ti Tree rangers funded under *WoC* to undertake a range of activities including recording of flora and fauna for future generations, recording and care of sacred sites, pest and weed control, feral animal monitoring and management, surveys of threatened species, construction of infrastructure at tourist camp grounds, fire management, rubbish/litter control and community education.

TYRENDARRA INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA, VIC – TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Tyrendarra, which was declared an Indigenous Protected Area in 2003, is owned and managed by the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of the Gunditjmara nation. Tyrendarra means 'where rivers meet' and the property is bounded by the Fitzroy River and the Darlot's Creek, and is part of the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape.

The management of Tyrendarra IPA centres on reinstating the pre-1840s wetlands system, supporting the consequent regrowth of the manna gum woodland, managing introduced flora and fauna, and establishing an eel aquaculture industry as a sustainable business venture. The Tyrendarra IPA comprises many registered cultural sites such as fish traps, tool making sites and stone houses.

Through *WoC* the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation employs a team of Aboriginal rangers to protect the natural and cultural values and provide a range of environmental services across the Tyrendarra estate. Six rangers are currently employed (some on a full-time and some on a casual basis) through *WoC*. Aboriginal elders and mentors are also included in the ranger team. Community members are casually employed to carry out natural resource management tasks (e.g. tree and shrub planting) on the estate.

Through a mix of *WoC* and *IPA* funding the rangers are supported in undertaking vegetation, threatened species monitoring, weed and feral animal mapping and control, protection of heritage and cultural sites, repairing and upgrading infrastructure on the property (e.g. bridge, visitors centre and carpark), and building visitor boardwalks, walking tracks and interpretative signage. The Tyrendarra IPA is easily accessible to the broader community, with wheelchair accessible facilities. Rangers are also involved in natural resource management work external to the work conducted on the Tyrendarra IPA.

Rangers have undertaken first aid, chainsaw use, tractor, fencing, weed and pest control, legal compliance, GIS, and GPS training.

The Tyrendarra IPA hosts a range of visitor groups on-site including school excursions, overseas visitors, traditional owners, local organisations and Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members. Cultural education tours are conducted by rangers, elders and traditional owners. An average of two to three schools visit the IPA each year including local schools from Portland, Hamilton and Hayward as well as schools from Melbourne and Adelaide. The police force, hospital staff, Council members and other local organisations have visited the IPA as part of their cultural awareness training. The local Catchment Management Authority is looking to hold an upcoming conference on the estate.

The *IPA* and *WoC* activities are governed by a land management plan, which is supported by the Gunditjmara Elders and community. A management committee meets yearly and a sub-committee meets quarterly to discuss the management of the land. Committee representatives include Winda-Mara Board Members, the Traditional Owners Corporation, elders, rangers and the ranger coordinator.

**KIMBERLEY RANGERS: WORKING ON COUNTRY WUNGGURR RANGERS, WA–
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

The Wungurr Rangers are based along the world-renowned Gibb River Road looking after the land of the Wanjin Wungurr Wilinggin native title claim, which covers 60,150 square kilometres of land in the central northern Kimberley. The area comprises mixed tenure arrangements of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pastoral leases, vacant crown land and Aboriginal and public purpose reserves. The land is home to culturally significant sites including Wanjin and Gwion Gwion rock art sites, sandstone plateaus, waterfalls, rich biodiversity and pristine country.

Established in 2007, the Wungurr Rangers program is managed as part of the Kimberley Ranger Program. Currently five rangers and a ranger coordinator are employed, and numerous traditional owners are engaged as casual staff. The Wungurr Ranger program is managed under the direction of the Wilinggin Traditional Owners and a Cultural Advisory Committee.

We are the Wanjin Wungurr Wilinggin clan and our law and culture is strong. We are keeping it alive by working with both old and young people to look after our country for future generations.

(Wungurr Ranger Storybook Report 2010)

The rangers' work involves: cultural resource and knowledge management, cultural sites protection; biodiversity surveys and monitoring; fire planning and operations; weed and feral animal management; protection of threatened species and their habitats; and managing the impacts of tourists. The rangers also deliver a range of school-based and youth mentoring activities and are involved in supporting the Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation and the Wilinggin IPA Consultation Project.

The Wungurr Rangers program provides learning and skills development opportunities for the rangers including training in conservation and land management, aerial burning, literacy and numeracy, introduction to computers, recreational skippers ticket, turtle monitoring and driver training.

The Wungurr rangers have also attended conferences such as the Oxfam Indigenous Youth leadership Conference and the Cape York Ranger Conference.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY TOP END ABORIGINAL LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT -
GUMURR MARTHAKAL, NT- TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

*GUMURR MATHAKAL RANGER LIRRWA IS HOLDING A
NORTHERN QUOLL, CAUGHT ON MARCHINBAR ISLAND
DURING SURVEYS LOOKING FOR THE GOLDEN
BANDICOOT*

PHOTO: PHIL WISE 2010.



*LIRRWA AND MATHEW, GUMURR MARTHAKAL RANGERS
ARE LOADING COLLAPSIBLE MAMMAL TRAPS IN
PREPARATION FOR RESEARCH INTO THE GOLDEN
BANDICOOT*

PHOTO: PHIL WISE 2010.



The Gumurr Marthakal rangers, managed by the Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre, are based at Galiwinku on Elcho Island. The Gumurr Marthakal rangers manage a large area of land and sea country at the north-east tip of Arnhem Land. Gumurr Marthakal's coastline is a mixture of sandy beaches, mangroves and rocky outcrops/cliffs.

The Gumurr Marthakal rangers were established in 2004 with WoC funding commencing in 2007. Other funding sources for the ranger program includes: NT Fisheries, AQIS, Ghost Nets Australia, the IPA program, fee-for-service work, and NT government NRM grants.

The project currently employs 11 rangers who conduct various land and sea management activities including: feral animal control; weed eradication; fishery surveillance; and coastal patrols and marine debris management. The rangers do extensive work monitoring and removing ghost nets from their patrol area. The rangers' weed management work includes managing coffee bush and monitoring billabongs for the potential arrival of Mimosa. The rangers are involved in an annual monitoring program of the threatened Northern Quoll, after a successful relocation program to two islands to protect the quolls from the poisonous cane toad.

In consultation with the broader community, the Gumurr Marthakal rangers are completing an IPA consultation process and are currently developing an Indigenous Protected Area plan of management.

Traditional owners are closely involved in the Gumurr Marthakal project. Once a year the Traditional Owner's Board meets to provide direction for the ranger work. Traditional owners are consulted with on a regular basis concerning the delivery of ranger activities and are also involved in the conduct of NRM work alongside the ranger team.

Rangers have undertaken Certificates I and II 2 in Conservation and Land Management and training in fisheries compliance, occupational health and safety, quad bike tickets, poison application, firearm usage, animal trapping, plant identification, numeracy and literacy classes, firearms, forklift licence, and operation of large vessel and vehicle maintenance.

**PROTECTING COUNTRY, SUPPORTING LAND MANAGEMENT WORKERS FOR THE
WARDDEKEN INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA, NT– TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

ROMEO LANE AT MANAMNAM ROCK ART SITE

PHOTO: DANIEL HANISCH



CLEARING A FIRE BREAK ON THE WEST ARNHEM PLATEAU

PHOTO: PETER EVE



Indigenous landholders declared the Warddeken IPA as a protected area in September 2009. Warddeken IPA covers 1,394,951 hectares of stone and gorge country on the western Arnhem Land plateau. Adjoining Kakadu National Park, Warddeken is globally significant for its natural and cultural values. The area is home to many endemic plants, numerous threatened species and unique threatened ecological community – sandstone heathlands. A number of clans of the Bininj Kunwok language group are the area's traditional owners.

The establishment of Warddeken Land Management was driven by traditional owners from western Arnhem Land, who led the movement to reinstate Indigenous fire management in these depopulated lands. They established an outstation in remote western Arnhem land as a base for the ranger operations. Warddeken Land Management Limited comprises a mix of full-time, part-time and casual employment.

Our vision is to have our healthy people living and working on our healthy country in the Arnhem Land Plateau. We want to work with partners to achieve mutually agreed objectives using Indigenous and western science-based knowledge systems. We want the management of our land to be in our hand now and into the future. (Warddeken Land Management Limited Annual Report 2010-11)

The rangers undertake various cultural and natural resource management activities in accordance with the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management. Activities include fire management, feral animal (e.g. buffalo, black rats, cats and introduced bees) management and weed control, cultural management and maintenance of rock art sites. The rangers have undertaken training, both through accredited courses and on the job. Accredited training undertaken to date includes use of firearms, use of quad bikes, operation and maintenance of small machinery, weed identification, chemical safety, wildfire awareness and first aid. While on the job the rangers have gained skills in bookkeeping, administration, mechanics, and ecological survey techniques.

Warddeken Land Management has a range of partnerships and collaborative projects. Their most notable partnership is the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project, in which five Indigenous ranger groups undertake fire management in western Arnhem Land, to offset greenhouse gas emissions from a gas plant in Darwin. The Warddeken rangers also work in collaboration with Kakadu National Park rangers in fire management, weed control and dealing with the problem of feral buffalo. The Warddeken rangers are also working with a mining exploration company in Mikginj Valley in relation to land management issues.

Weather is a significant challenge for the Warddeken rangers. During the wet season road access to Warddeken IPA can be cut-off for months at a time, and monsoon rains can severely damage the roads. Isolation is another key challenge for people living and working on the Warddeken IPA. Access to essential services such as food shops, postal services, banking facilities and medical services is difficult, and due to weather and public transport constraints, access is often only possible by expensive charter flights. There is also limited infrastructure to support and accommodate the ranger teams with rangers living in safari tents and older outstations and limited access to power and many modern conveniences that people take for granted.

6 The social outcomes

This section of the report describes the social outcomes of *WoC* and related Indigenous NRM initiatives as identified by stakeholders of the 18 case study projects.

Stakeholders unanimously agree *WoC* has achieved significant and far reaching social outcomes for individuals and communities. The social outcomes are wide and varied, and interconnected in interesting and nuanced ways. *WoC* appears to have a ripple effect in communities, like a pebble in a pool.

This section of the report thematically documents the economic, cultural, health and wellbeing, and educational outcomes identified in relation to individual rangers, their families and the broader community.

While this chapter focuses on reporting the social outcomes of *WoC*, it is important to note that several of the case study projects receive considerable investment from *IPA*, *Caring for our Country* and other related federal and state government funded NRM programs. The assessment of social outcomes achieved by these projects should be understood as a result of funding in this space as a *whole*, rather than attributed only to *WoC*.

6.1 SOCIAL OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUAL RANGERS

6.1.1 REAL JOBS

WoC is viewed by stakeholders as a 'real job' that offers a decent salary and good working conditions and benefits (e.g. annual leave).

They can choose to go on a holiday. They have four to five weeks off in summer and still get paid. That would not have happened before.

(Ti-Tree Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Rangers themselves see *WoC* as a proper job and career development opportunity. Many compared their experience of *WoC* with CDEP suggesting *WoC* provides considerably better remuneration, better conditions, more interesting work (on CDEP rangers were often doing basic tasks such as picking up rubbish) and training that is linked to employment.

[WoC] provides opportunities for people to work and better themselves. CDEP is glorified work for the dole; [WoC] is a destination rather than a stepping stone.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

It replaces a part-time CDEP project, it becomes more ongoing, it's career development, not stopping and going. You get up and go to work every day, whereas on CDEP it's only two days a week, and it's boring.

(Lama Lama and Kalan Ranger Projects, organisational stakeholder)

CDEP is alright I suppose but it can't touch the ranger program.

(Bardi Jawi Rangers, ranger)

Project managers suggest a key success factor of *WoC* is achieving the right balance between a holistic, flexible program that addresses the social and cultural needs of workers while demanding appropriate levels of worker responsibility and accountability. Importantly, project managers and coordinators say *WoC* allows them to balance enforcing worker accountability with flexible working conditions to facilitate the sustainable employment of rangers, many of whom have limited work histories and experience.

Riverland Rangers

'We learned from CDEP that social problems needed to be tackled as part of the program. Participants had to be frank about whether it was right for them. We had about 60 CVs to choose from. So we had to have a water-tight structure where workplace culture, community culture and Aboriginal culture came together. We said, "you don't get too many chances" - and generated positive mental attitude.'

(Organisational stakeholder)

Wunggurr Rangers

'Many rangers haven't had work before... It's hard for coordinators, you have to push a certain level of work ethic but it has to be balanced. Flexibility is really great. Some rangers are happy to work 12 hours straight but not five days a week 9am-5pm. Most rangers were on CDEP program previously, which is fairly slack'.

(Organisational stakeholder)

Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA

'WoC is a means of transitioning out of CDEP. We deliberately have a small number of rangers because work in a formal sense is very unfamiliar to rangers... The smaller team enables us to manage the quality of engagement with the process of work... The rangers are living in safari tents or older outstations, until 2010 there was no power supply and no fridge. People are doing it tough, which causes churning in the workforce. The young ones are thrilled to be out working on country to start with but the gloss comes off pretty quickly. You can't just plop people into full-time jobs, give them four to six weeks in holidays and time-off over the weekend, it doesn't work'.

(Organisational stakeholder)

Many rangers indicate the salary earned through WoC is one of the key benefits of the program. Earning an income allows rangers to purchase material goods, improve their standard of living and increase their personal freedom and choices. The ability to maintain a decent standard of living also frees people up to engage more with their culture.

The freedom to put fuel in my car and go wherever I want to. Not being restricted anymore.

(Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, ranger)

Previously people are just surviving – worrying about rent and housing. Employment gives people the opportunity to improve their lives. When dominant culture came in, it swallowed up culture really quickly. It suppressed cultural activity because people were worried about how to survive in a changing world. Employment can re-invigorate culture from a different perspective, because it gives people the freedom to do those things.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, organisational stakeholder)

6.1.2 SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

WoC offers stable, full-time employment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples under multi-year contracts. This stability of tenure was identified by stakeholders as a key success factor of the program.

Stable employment provides the rangers with financial security and enough time to effectively build skills, knowledge and capacity.

Secure employment [is a good outcome]. The three year contracts are very important. It allows you to maintain and train staff. Both the people and program benefit from that ownership.

(Tyrendarra IPA, organisational stakeholder)

Job stability

Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe

One Ngarrindjeri ranger recounted his sporadic working history. Having grown up in Raukkan he left school at 16 years of age and worked for a local council for three months. He then travelled to Hong Kong to undertake maintenance work on a synagogue. Two years later he returned to community because his grandfather was sick. He was on CDEP from 2000 until it was removed from community, at which point he spent some time working on the Murray Mouth as part of the drought response. This ranger said a key attraction of WoC was the offering of a three year contract - *'If it was a one year program I was not going to get involved, it has to be sustainable employment'*.

A young Ngarrindjeri Land and Progress Association (NLPA) board member and previous ranger coordinator (who wrote the original WoC funding application) said WoC was his first job out of school *'I was working at NLPA picking up whatever work I could, WoC gave me meaningful employment and job security for three years, full-time. I was 18, I got a mortgage for my first house, for me it was life changing'*.

The projects consulted with as part of this research have maintained a high retention rate of employees. Some project managers suggest they have been surprised by the stability of tenure. While some rangers have left the program, reasons cited include: to work elsewhere or because of family reasons. Project managers indicate that rangers do not generally leave the program due to job dissatisfaction.

The retention rate for Aboriginal job seekers is not high but WoC examples show that it's possible to hold down a job. This infiltrates the community. Employers are seeing that Aboriginal people can have work skills and commitment.

(Riverland Rangers, external stakeholder)

6.1.3 MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

WoC offers meaningful employment that aligns with the rangers' interests and abilities. The rangers indicated that instead of work simply being a means of surviving, work is now a vehicle through which they can pursue their interests, develop their skills and competencies, and contribute to the broader community.

WoC offers paid positions for the rangers who are providing a great public service caring for country and contributing to the good of the nation.

(Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA, organisational stakeholder)

Importantly, the employment opportunities offered by WoC are aligned with cultural and community needs, and provide an opportunity for the rangers to realise their aspirations in caring for country. Many rangers suggest they were primarily attracted to the job because of the cultural and spiritual offerings, and

that the financial rewards were a secondary consideration. A number of rangers assert that WoC is the best job they have ever had, and project managers note that rangers wear their uniforms with pride.

Can't get a better job than this, it's the best. Two or three of us applied for job interviews, got jobs, and then said 'what is the pay like?' It was an afterthought.

(Bardi Jawi Rangers, ranger)

I am here for the land and my people; it's not about the money.

(Dhimurru Working on Country, ranger)

We are Ngarrindjeri people. The importance of protecting and working on country is incredibly important, I can't state that enough.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

The biggest difference from when I was a park ranger is - I was mainly dealing with people but now I am working on country and seeing the benefits. It is a big privilege to be working here. I was born and bred here; it means a lot to put back into the community. That's what makes us who we are.... I love working, I was working in Western society since I was eighteen years old and I forgot about my country. Being able to work here has made my life. Coming back to my grass roots, I am proud of what I have done.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger and elder)

6.1.4 INCREASED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Rangers have completed varying Certificates in Conservation and Land Management (Certs I, II, III, and IV) and have also undertaken various NRM related training courses including: chemical applications, terrain vehicles, weed identification, chainsaw, first aid, occupational health and safety, supervisor training, GPS, data collection and recording, coxswain tickets, shooters licence, car, truck, trailer, boat and motorbike licenses.

Stakeholders indicate the training opportunities improve the ranger's technical skills and knowledge, increase their capacity to conduct their work, broaden their minds, and build their general management skills.

Rangers have undertaken Certificates I and II in Conservation and Land Management, fisheries compliance, OH&S, coxswain, quad bikes, poisons, firearms, animal trapping, and plant identification training. They learn to do their job and they look at the world differently.

(Gumurr Marthakal, organisational stakeholder)

Stakeholders report rangers 'have skilled themselves'. Rangers are enthusiastic about their studies and proactive in seeking out training opportunities. As an example, the majority of the Raukkan rangers have completed their Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management. The Raukkan rangers have excelled at their studies, with most completing the twelve month course in four to six months. The rangers themselves indicate they value the training opportunities provided through WoC.

Before I used to look at trees and think of nothing, and now I know their scientific names.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

All the training is a benefit to us. It broadens our knowledge and technical skills. It teaches us how to go about our jobs in a safe and orderly manner.

(Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, ranger)

The training model of WoC is seen as exemplary and a key to the program's success. It is a holistic training model that caters for a wide-range of learning needs and levels. Training is delivered in a culturally appropriate way that offers practical, hands-on learning experiences.

The training model used by the WoC program is excellent. It's practical, on the job, with learning in groups. Connection with cultural interests is a huge success factor. There is good transfer both ways between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The mentoring aspect is a huge part of its success.

(Riverland Rangers, external stakeholder)

The rangers are often trained on their own land or work sites. Training for the Lama Lama and Kalan Rangers, for example, is now being delivered locally in Coen rather than the rangers travelling to Cairns, with project management indicating this arrangement is more appropriate and effective. The Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe project has partnered with a local registered training organisation to provide input into how the training is developed and delivered to ensure it responds to the specific needs of the ranger group.

The training provided is linked with and matched to the ranger work; it is training in context rather than in isolation. The training is relevant and applicable, with the rangers able to apply the learnings immediately to the work they are undertaking.

The training opportunities have allowed some rangers to engage with tertiary education for the first time or to re-engage after a long absence. Rangers have re-developed skills relating to how to behave in a formal education setting such as concentration, time management, following instructions and so on. The program has also raised expectations about what level of training can be achieved.

[Because of the training success of the rangers] we are now pushing Certificate III and IV rather than Certificate II. We are encouraging another level of training.

(Riverland Rangers, external stakeholder)

WoC projects also offer non-NRM related training and learning opportunities including: numeracy and literacy courses, computer skills and financial literacy. These training opportunities address education and learning gaps (some rangers have limited formal education) and assist rangers not only to carry out their work duties but to better manage their lives.

Financial literacy training

Ti- Tree Rangers

The Central Land Council provides workers with financial literacy training. This involves assisting rangers manage their tax , superannuation, timesheets and bank accounts. As a result, rangers have increased capacity to manage loans and debt. *'50% of them didn't have bank accounts before. We take for granted what they have been able to achieve.'*

Some rangers are on salary sacrifice packages. However, there is no direct debit and the rangers have to take responsibility for managing this. *'Most rangers would have some other complicating factors such as court fines, now they can make separate payments right away. It's a benefit that can't be undersold - they can get on top of their fines. That's the barrier point. If you've got a fine, you can't get a license, or buy a phone, so you can't get a job.'*

Rangers also have informal learning opportunities, for example attending NRM conferences and visiting other ranger projects. These professional development and informal learning opportunities expose rangers to professional networks, and new and other ways of doing business. They also assist with building relationships and fostering knowledge sharing.

6.1.5 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

WoC is considered to be an effective career development opportunity. Within WoC ranger teams there is generally the opportunity to progress from trainee, to ranger, through to senior ranger and coordinator. Some stakeholders view the program as a useful stepping stone for future career opportunities. Through their involvement in WoC, rangers further develop their skills, knowledge and their marketability in the workforce. There are various transferrable skills learned through WoC including: communication, planning, filling out paperwork, teamwork, decision-making, public speaking, understanding governance structures and NRM skills.

It gives everyone the opportunity to grow, it is beautiful stepping stone.

(Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe, ranger)

The training provided develops skills and knowledge the rangers can use as a basis for transitioning into other employment.

Professionalism and opportunities that flow from that – a career path, experience and training. If they choose to leave the region they have a basis for moving forward.

(WoC/IPA projects in the Torres Strait, organisational stakeholder)

Rangers reportedly have increased confidence in seeking out other employment options and greater awareness of the employment process. A few examples were provided of rangers successfully transitioning into other jobs.

It's made a difference to how they think about employment. We've been able to transition several rangers into other employment. They have resumes; they know what an interview is about. They turn up dressed neatly. One guy turned up in a tee shirt with "I love beer" on it, our guy followed him into the interview wearing a suit.

(Riverland Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

WoC has given several rangers ideas about future employment options. Some rangers indicate they have aspirations to start up their own businesses (e.g. gardening and landscaping businesses or tourism businesses), venture into private industry (e.g. work in the mines doing landscape restoration and rehabilitation and tree surveys), or progress in the WoC program (e.g. be a trainer or ranger supervisor).

[Working in the program] makes you feel confident in yourself in what you do. I'm planning to start up my own enterprise with my family... maybe looking at tourism, set up a car hire business – I might get involved in that.

(Kalan Ranger Project, female ranger)

Notwithstanding this, other rangers indicate they want to continue working as a ranger, and suggest there are limited employment options available locally. Some project stakeholders also indicate that the notion of WoC as a program to facilitate career pathways for rangers is not always viable, particularly if this involves rangers moving away from their traditional country to seek out work. This appears to be especially relevant for remote WoC projects on traditionally owned lands where the Indigenous people maintain a strong, continuing connection with culture and country.

6.1.6 INCREASED CONFIDENCE

Improved confidence was a commonly reported outcome of WoC. As part of their involvement in the program, rangers may be required to speak in public at conferences or give presentations to local community groups and organisations, to other ranger projects, or to funding or partner bodies. Rangers also have opportunities to interact with people they would not usually such as registered trainers, government personnel, private land holders, universities and research centres, and tourists.

The main thing I notice is confidence when dealing with bureaucrats, get up and do PowerPoint presentations, a whole new level of confidence in dealing with things they otherwise wouldn't engage in.

(Lama Lama and Kalan Rangers, SEWPAC representative)

I wouldn't say boo but now you can't shut me up, I now got that confidence in myself.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

Interacting with people - with the training organisation, with government departments, you have to communicate in a proper manner. Rangers are generally shy to talk to white fellas, but now we have certificates and rangers feel very confident, very proud of where it can take us.

(Bardi Jawi Rangers, ranger)

A number of project stakeholders mentioned the increased confidence amongst women rangers in particular, see text box below for an example.

Increased
confidence in
women rangers

Thamarrurr Rangers

'Seeing the women getting stronger and stronger in this program. This is a very patriarchal society – seeing the women get more confident in their ability to do the tasks and get out on country ... This program is really helping to push women looking after country side by side with men doing this. Women are starting to feel they have a right and a role that is equal to the men's role. Then that confidence bleeds out into the rest of their lives. I've seen the women go from being so fearful of some situations, driving a vehicle, camping out, it's really crucial to get some balance back, not just see it as men's business.'

(Organisational stakeholder)

Increased confidence was also attributed to rangers having new experiences and broadened horizons, through educational, networking and travel opportunities. See example in text box below.

Broadening
horizons

Mapoon Land and Sea Centre

The Mapoon Land and Sea rangers visited Australia Zoo. As part of this trip they were required to travel by plane, catch taxis, and stay in a hotel. Some of the rangers had never been on a plane before. According to project management, the ranger's success in negotiating a metropolitan city contributed to increased confidence in their abilities.

The rangers' pride and sense of achievement from the work and training they have undertaken and their increased skills and knowledge, has also improved confidence in their abilities and their future options. Some rangers spoke of doing work or training they never thought they would be able to do.

Most Aboriginal people are shy, can't get up in a classroom and talk... The first time I did I had tears coming out of my eyes, the emotion and feeling was there.

(Mapoon Land and Sea Centre, ranger)

It taught me that I could still learn at the age I am at and further that more if I want, I know that if I want to there is opportunities out there for me.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

6.1.7 LEADERSHIP SKILLS

WoC reportedly assists rangers develop their leadership skills. Some rangers are elected members of Council and others act as representatives for the local community at conferences and other events.

Development of leadership skills

Raukkan Natural Resource Management

Two of the young male rangers are elected members of the local council. The farm manager who used to drive the school bus said WoC has enabled one of these rangers, in particular, to channel his leadership potential in a positive and constructive way.

'As a kid you could see his leadership potential, he was always a leader but he used those skills in a bullying and disruptive way. On the school bus - sitting up the back, whacking people on the back of the head. Now he is using these skills in the right way.' (External stakeholder).

Rangers appear to be aware of their status as community role models, a responsibility they are proud of and take seriously.

[The program has] made a good man of me, I respect people, the people I approach around Djelk, strengthening relationships, talking with visitors, public presentations with other rangers about our work here and how we do it, I have more confidence and am being bold, like a role model to the other [younger] rangers.

(Djelk Land Management Extension Project, ranger)

Women rangers were often mentioned by stakeholders as being particularly important role models. Some women rangers are undertaking tasks not conventionally done by women. WoC is helping break down gender barriers regarding work roles by showing younger women what is possible.

Women rangers as positive role models

Riverland Rangers

While there was only one female Riverland ranger, she was a highly visible example to younger girls.

'She is showing what girls can do. She was very shy but now she's the best backhoe operator. She also has her car licence and chainsaw ticket. Since being on the job she's a lot more confident. She can talk to people and is seen as a leader and an organiser. She teaches mum and the aunts. She's taking her skills home - putting in native plants at home and mulching. Her mum is really pleased with her.' (Organisational stakeholder).

6.1.8 WORK AND ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

WoC has improved work orientation and readiness skills amongst the rangers including: planning, goal setting, self-discipline and work ethic. Rangers demonstrate commitment to their job and responsibility to

their team mates. Rangers reportedly have improved team work, communication, negotiation and problem solving skills.

They are committed to their job and interested in working, admirably so. They have had fewer days off than I have; a demonstration of their level of commitment.

(Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

The program has been very successful in addressing issues of work attendance and attitudes to work. It's helped to break down barriers of stereotypes and employers say that young people are more switched on.

(Riverland Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

The work stabilises people. They see that if you don't come to work you are letting the team down. The rangers are learning that they owe the project their time – they're working on company time. It's a big step; we are trying to transition them into responsible employment behaviour. We want them not to have a taste of mainstream; we want them to be mainstream. They see that they owe their paid time to the employers. For example, when the manager isn't there, they continue to work.

(Riverland Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

6.1.9 INCREASED EXERCISE AND IMPROVED NUTRITION

A commonly reported health outcome was the improved fitness of the rangers due to the physical nature of the work undertaken. In some cases, broader community members also experience improved fitness from their involvement in the ranger work, for example, from participating in 'on country' camps, tours and tree planting.

It leads to better outcomes as people are on the ground doing stuff, being active, planting trees. Getting people out and getting active, walking.

(Threatened Grassy Woodlands, organisational stakeholder)

Physical fitness and exercise

Wunngur Rangers

A stakeholder of the Wunngur Rangers reports the program has led to improved fitness of the rangers. *'The rangers get exercise; they are walking around and getting fresh air'*. It is reported that exercise and healthy eating initiatives have been incorporated into the Wunngur Rangers program, with the rangers participating in regular boxing and aerobics classes.

Stakeholders frequently identify improved nutrition as a positive health outcome of WoC. Rangers and their families have improved nutrition as a result of increased knowledge of food sources and traditional medicine, increased food production, improved access to fresh food, and healthy food provided by the auspice organisations. Some rangers indicate they have lost weight due to increased exercise and improved nutrition. See text box overleaf for some examples.

Thamarrurr Rangers Land and Sea Management Project

On field trips the Thamarrurr Development Corporation provides the rangers with healthy food, and all rangers make a small financial contribution towards the purchasing of healthy lunches each week. Their work on the land and waterways has provided the Thamarrurr rangers with increased access to fresh fish and bush tucker. The Coordinator also notes that since their employment through WoC, the rangers have improved knowledge of healthy eating habits.

Djelk Land Management Extension

The Djelk rangers hunt fresh food including fish, yams, buffalo, and kangaroo, which they often provide to the local aged care facility to give older Aboriginal people the opportunity to eat traditional bush foods.

Mapoon Land and Sea Centre

From their WoC wages the Mapoon Land and Sea rangers report being able to afford better quality food. Some rangers have also purchased cars which enables them to drive into town to do their grocery shopping and access a greater variety of food, including cheaper food options.

Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe

One Ngarrindjeri ranger said his WoC wage enabled him to undertake the weight loss program, Tony Fergeson, he comments: *'I lost 14 kilos in 8.5 weeks, got my sugar levels down to the 4/8 range... I went to my doctor and he wanted to hug me'*.

Gumurr Marthakal

The Gumurr Marthakal rangers live and work on the land for periods of three to four weeks at a time. During this period the rangers will gather and eat fresh food from the land including: stingray, fish, crayfish, mud crab, mud mussels, yams, oysters and wild honey. A stakeholder of the program suggests the Yolngu people generally have a low life expectancy. The positive health outcomes of the program are seen to be particularly important given this context.

Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA

The high cost of food and the difficulties of supply are a key issue for rangers and their families living on the Warddeken IPA. The shipping of food from the shop in town is expensive and takes a long time. The food delivered is often not what people ordered and receipts are not always provided. Warddeken Land Management are assisting rangers and their families with ordering food for delivery. People nominate to put money aside out of each for groceries, Warddeken Land Management manage the orders, communicate with shop staff to ensure receipts are provided and cover the freight costs for rangers and their families.

6.1.10 HEALTHY COUNTRY, HEALTHY PEOPLE

The rangers suggest WoC enables them to live a healthy lifestyle working outdoors and in touch with the natural environment.

It's a healthier lifestyle down here – you don't see all those tourists that come all the way from Cairns and drop off their bugs. You've got the fresh air.

(Lama Lama Ranger Project, ranger)

The spiritual and psychological health benefits of maintaining a strong connection to country and culture and of the opportunity to contribute positively to the community were frequently mentioned. The intrinsic link between the health of the natural environment and of Aboriginal people emerged as a strong theme throughout the consultations.

People are able to sustain on country. If people look after country, country looks after people – it's a circular thing.

(Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA)

It feels good to be out on your country, taking care of it. I find it very exciting because I never spent time down here before when working in Coen. I now get to see all the places [of] the Lama Lama people. It's a wonderful experience; it's so good to be there.

(Lama Lama Ranger Project, ranger)

Being on country locates people within themselves; there is a sense of being real, of being whole.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, Indigenous Health Project worker)

The benefit of being out on some of the most pristine country. There isn't too many benefits of working in this community.... but mentally there is a lot of benefits with the day-time work and access to country.

(Thamarrurr Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

The opportunity for Aboriginal people to connect with their lands and waters (with some connecting for the first time) and the revival of traditional NRM and cultural practices also contribute to the psychological well-being of community members.

Taking away country and language created the gap. WoC increases people's sense of who they are, regaining what was once taken away, that is a really critical Closing the Gap strategy.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, Indigenous Health Project worker)

Not just physical outcomes but mental health outcomes as well. The denial of Aboriginal culture for so long, previously there was no opportunity to re-access that culture, people are starting to feel good about it again.

(Threatened Grassy Woodlands, organisational stakeholder)

Some rangers said they have noticed tangible improvements to the environment due to the investment in NRM activities made by WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives. This has improved the psychological health of community members who have witnessed the neglect and decline of the natural environment over the years.

Raukkan Natural Resource Management

For many years, an older ranger from Raukkan would not go down to the river because seeing the degradation of the environment depressed him. Since *WoC* he has noticed significant ecological change with frogs, some birds and fish species returning to the lands and waters. Now he takes joy in visiting the river, *'I can see the regeneration of the land; I know that is a good thing'*.

6.1.11 IMPROVED HEALTH CARE

Some *WoC* projects indicate the rangers have increased access to health services. Stakeholders suggest the rangers have increased motivation and sense of purpose as a result of being gainfully employed, which encourages them to look after themselves and seek out health care when needed. Being employed encourages some rangers to take more care and pride in their personal appearance and the cleanliness of their house. *WoC* has contributed to building confidence levels, with rangers being more confident in accessing services and are better able to self-advocate. Some rangers have purchased cars with their *WoC* wage facilitating greater access to the health clinic and enabling them to transport other community members (e.g. older people) to the clinic.

Some projects actively provide their workers access to health care (see text box below).

Lama Lama and Kalan Ranger Projects

The Lama Lama and Kalan ranger groups have regular visits from a local health care professional who performs a general check-up. The Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation will sometimes refer rangers to other services such as the Wellbeing Centre for treatment if a particular health issue is identified, for example drug and alcohol abuse.

Occupational health and safety outcomes were also identified by stakeholders. Training opportunities provided through *WoC* encourage safe work practices and teach the rangers how to undertake their work in a safe and orderly manner.

6.1.12 DECREASED DRUG AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Stakeholders report that some rangers have decreased their drug and alcohol consumption. Rangers often work in remote locations or dry communities where drug and alcohol access is limited. Gainful employment has also motivated some rangers to cut back on their drug and/or alcohol use, self-regulating their drug and alcohol consumption because of their work responsibilities. Some rangers, for example, report restricting their drinking to the weekends.

Less drinking and drug taking amongst the rangers, they drink a lot less because they know they have to turn up to work every day and I know if they are pissed and stoned, but they take their work responsibilities seriously.

(Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Some projects have implemented strategies specifically aimed at addressing drug and alcohol consumption. An example is provided in the text box below.

Decreased drug and alcohol use

Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe

The Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Association (NLPA) has implemented a Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy and workers are subject to regular drug testing. According to one stakeholder, all thirty workers are currently clean with a number of workers supported by the NLPA to address their drug and alcohol issues. The benefits of breaking the cycle of dependency for these families is reportedly appreciated by the broader Aboriginal community and thought to be a positive influence on the younger generation. The Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy is described by an organisational stakeholder below:

'It's about working with people, supporting them through the process. It is not about zero tolerance or excluding people but about being safe and healthy... for their families trying to break the cycle of dependency, show the future generations what's possible. Big positives are recognised by the broader Aboriginal community – we had Aunties and Uncles coming up to us and saying thank you'.

6.1.13 IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH

The rangers consistently say they enjoy their jobs and their involvement in WoC makes them feel happy. As one ranger coordinator comments *'the rangers are coming to work with smiles on their faces'*. The mental health of rangers has reportedly improved. Rangers report increased motivation, positivity and hope and reduced depression and stress.

Living in dysfunctional towns there is drug and alcohol abuse, idleness, overcrowded housing, violence and sexual abuse. [WoC and IPA assist people with] getting away from bad shit in the towns. Life in the bush there is less violence and more happiness ... [WoC and IPA improves] optimism. You don't come across [optimism] much, the attitude is often life is shit and then you die but on our own country there is connection with ancestors, we feel good about ourselves, about creating a future for our kids.

(Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA, organisational stakeholder)

Meaningful paid employment – people are less prone to depression and other social diseases; off the welfare system, active and fitter and healthier. Out on country the spiritual and physiological social benefits and also the cultural benefits associated with that are very important.

(WoC/IPA projects in the Torres Strait, organisational stakeholder)

You'd often have trouble getting people out of bed, now there is a reason to do that.

(Ti-Tree Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Stops you from feeling depressed because you are not doing nothing, stops stress, everything. Keeping your mind healthy, you are getting out in the fresh air. All the opportunities we get, it makes you feel so much better about yourself.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

Suicide prevention program

Wunggur Rangers

The Wunggur Rangers program has implemented a suicide prevention initiative with some of the rangers undertaking training in suicide intervention. This has involved a one week training course and workshops. One stakeholder suggests suicide and poor mental health are key social issues affecting the local community. The rangers have reportedly learnt how to identify signs of depression and risky behaviour and have gained skills in approaching discussions of this nature with their family, friends and members of the broader community.

6.1.14 SENSE OF SELF

Rangers have increased pride and self-respect, including an improved sense of identity and direction in life, which stems from working in a real job that is important to them and their community.

Improved morale. Everyone wants to be a ranger, they look up to us. Rangers have better self-esteem, a purpose in life. Pride is an important outcome – we love what we do.

(Gumurr Marthakal, organisational stakeholder)

People are walking around with their heads held high.

(Ti-Tree Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Rangers report feeling increased levels of independence and autonomy and also report a greater ability to take control and manage their own lives.

Being able to take control and make decisions.

(Ti-Tree Rangers, ranger)

Implications for measuring the social outcomes in the future

- The range of social outcomes for individual rangers, as identified by stakeholders, suggest there are various dimensions that could potentially be investigated in order to measure the social outcomes of WoC in the future. These include:
 - The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed through WoC
 - The employment status of rangers previous to their involvement with WoC (e.g. were rangers previously unemployed, employed part-time, full-time, on a temporary basis or employed through CDEP)
 - The retention of rangers in the program (e.g. what proportion of rangers sustain the three to four year contract compared to the proportion of rangers that leave the program)
 - The career progression of rangers (e.g. how many rangers transition from the program to other employment opportunities and career progression within the ranger teams)
 - The impact of employment and financial security for rangers (e.g. how many rangers are able to pay-off debts, take out financial loans, set up bank accounts)
 - Self-reported employer job satisfaction (e.g. to what extent do rangers enjoy their work? Does it offer career development opportunities? Does it align with their interests and needs?)
 - Rangers demonstrating job commitment (e.g. getting to work on time, number of days off, accountability to the team)
 - The type and level of formal and informal training undertaken and completed by rangers
 - The number of rangers who have got their drivers license
 - Self-reported learning outcomes for rangers
 - Professional development opportunities (e.g. networking with other rangers, attendance at conferences)
 - Self-reported future career aspirations of rangers
 - Increased confidence (e.g. demonstrated through public speaking and presentation at conferences and to project partners or funding bodies)
 - Rangers taking on leadership roles (e.g. demonstrated through becoming elected members of Council, being a spokesperson for their community at conferences and events, leading tours and community events, working with school children)
 - Improved eating habits and weight loss amongst rangers
 - Rangers have increased and more frequent contact with health services
 - Decreased drug and alcohol consumption amongst rangers
 - Improved mental health amongst rangers (e.g. decreased depression and anxiety).

6.2 SOCIAL OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES

6.2.1 INCREASED CONNECTION WITH COUNTRY AND CULTURE

Stakeholders report that rangers discuss their work with their family, and family members participate in on-country fieldtrips, increasing their connection to country and culture.

Family members reportedly have an enhanced interest in participating in cultural and NRM activities facilitated under *WoC* and the *IPA* programs, demonstrated by some family members getting involved in ranger activities on a voluntary basis.

Rangers are also able to pass on their knowledge to younger family members, which is important for maintaining continuity of culture.

I got four boys. I take them out into the bush and teach them about plants. I can teach them traditional Aboriginal knowledge. I didn't know this before.

(Riverland Rangers, ranger)

It's helping to keep the place alive.

(Ti-Tree Rangers)

6.2.2 IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Stakeholders suggest *WoC* has contributed to improved educational outcomes for children. Rangers act as positive role models for family members, promoting the message that educational attainment increases the likelihood of meaningful and fulfilling employment options. For some families, *WoC* has contributed to breaking the cycle of unemployment exposing children to family members who are engaged with employment and training for the first time. Seeing family members, who were previously unemployed or on CDEP, engaged in full-time work increases children's understanding of the value of education, provides them with a sense of the future and gives them something to aspire to.

They see their parents committed to a job that translates into getting up to and going to school in the morning. It could possibly affect school attendance.

(Ti-Tree Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Through their exposure to the ranger jobs, ranger's children and other family members have raised career aspirations, with some aspiring to be rangers when they grow up.

The rangers act as important role models to other members of the community. It has been demonstrable for the first time, that Aboriginal people can start off with nothing and get full-time work and get qualified. Some of these communities haven't seen that before.

(Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Women rangers participating in a work sphere that is traditionally male dominated, contributes to broadening horizons of work possibilities for young women.

They love it, they look up to us, they will become rangers, even my little sister who is ten now said 'I want to be a ranger', she asks me a lot of questions.

(Mapoon Land and Sea Centre, female ranger)

On a practical level, having a parent or family member getting up and ready for work each day reportedly increases the likelihood of their children getting up in the morning and getting driven to school. Stakeholders also report the rangers have increased capacity to fund their children's education due to their *WoC* wage. Some examples are provided in the text box below.

Rangers have increased
ability to finance their
children's education

Kalan and Lama Lama Ranger Projects

All the Kalan and Lama Lama Rangers with children have established a Student Education Trust (SET) fund. SET, an initiative designed and delivered by Cape York Partnerships, allows families to put aside money for their children's school fees and other education related expenses such as uniforms and textbooks. The Government Coordination Officer in Coen suggests the rangers are contributing more money to their children's SET funds since being employed by WoC, with some rangers contributing in the Gold Category - the program's highest category.

Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe

The Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe Ranger Coordinator said his WoC wage enabled him to provide a quality education for his children. All his children have attended a local private school and two of his children successfully attained their Year 12 qualification. He states:

'If I didn't have this job I couldn't send my kids to a good school. Two boys I didn't think would make it to Year 12 did'.

6.2.3 IMPROVED STANDARDS OF LIVING

The improved financial status and standard of living for families is frequently mentioned as a social outcome of WoC. Having just one family member earning a decent, stable income can make a significant difference to the financial status of an entire family.

Just having an income... having an ATM card around is a benefit to the whole family.

(Wunngurr rangers, organisational stakeholder)

It is a way out of poverty on a smaller scale.

(Bardi Jawi Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Rangers have been able to pay-off fines and address previously standing financial problems, relieving families of financial burden and stress. Having stable employment has enabled rangers to undertake long-term financial planning rather than simply covering immediate expenses. The rangers frequently report being able to purchase cars, furniture and household goods, clothes and food for the family. Rangers said they have been able to afford a family holiday, some for the first time.

For participating rangers there have been unprecedented levels of income. They now have ability to pay bills, to plan for and purchase things over time such as cars due to wage stability.

(Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

It's really important, you can see it has improved some of the families... one person working, you have a vehicle, at Christmas time – in the past you couldn't really buy too much – now you have money saved up, you can take the family to Cairns.

(Kalan Ranger Project, ranger)

It makes me look rich. I bought a leather lounge I never, ever thought I would buy. And an iphone 4 and plasma screen TV I never, ever thought I would have.

(Riverland Rangers, ranger)

Rangers consistently mention the importance of being able to support and provide for their families, particularly their children. Rangers experience pride and peace of mind being able to purchase toys etc for their children.

It is horrible when you have to say no to your kids because you got not money.

(Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe, ranger)

It made us worry; to see things on TV you can't buy for the kids... It means we can now buy nice things for our kids.

(Djelk Land Management Extension Project, ranger)

Some rangers indicate their WoC wage has been important for enabling them to support their extended family. For example, a female ranger from the Mapoon Land and Sea Project said her father has passed away and she is able to assist look after her four brothers and one sister, many of whom experience trouble securing work.

6.2.4 IMPROVED LIVING CONDITIONS

For some families, WoC has led to improved living conditions. A few examples were given of the auspice organisation providing housing for rangers and their families on their properties. This has provided housing stability for some families who were previously moving around a lot. Others report the WoC wage has enabled rangers to transition their families from living in overcrowded housing into the private rental market. Other rangers are entering into home ownership or aspiring to do so.

Improved housing

Lama Lama and Kalan Ranger Projects

The Government Coordination Officer in Coen has identified a number of Aboriginal community members, including a number of the WoC rangers, currently living in Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation houses interested in purchasing the house they are living in. They are currently in the process of assisting these rangers in transitioning to home-ownership through the Indigenous Business Australia home-ownership scheme.

6.2.5 BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER

WoC contributes to strengthening family relationships in a number of ways. The provision of jobs locally enables family members to remain living on community with their families, instead of relocating to find employment.

I am just loving full-time employment. Living away from home, working on the mines, puts huge pressure on family back home.

(Bardi Jawi Rangers, ranger)

The local employment opportunities generated through WoC have enabled some rangers to stay in community rather than re-locating to seek out work. One Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe ranger, a single father of twins, who previously had full-time employment as a park ranger said WoC provides better flexibility for him to care for his children. Rather than travelling out of community for work, his work is located closer to home which enables him to visit his children during breaks if needed.

Rangers who have purchased cars have increased mobility and can more regularly visit family members who live out of town or in different communities. Some rangers have also purchased communications technology (e.g. computers and mobile phones) and have improved computer literacy through training, enabling them to stay better connected with family members.

There were also numerous instances whereby family members of rangers (children, cousins, siblings) have become involved with the ranger activities on a volunteer basis, or of family members working in the program side by side.

6.2.6 BETTER FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Stakeholders report that in some cases WoC has contributed to reduced domestic violence and better family functioning amongst the ranger families. See text box below.

Reduced domestic and other violence

Kalan and Lama Lama Ranger Projects

A number of Kalan and Lama Lama Project stakeholders suggest rangers have reduced levels of domestic and other violence from being actively and meaningfully engaged in employment. Reduced destructive behaviour amongst the rangers reportedly translates positively to their children, with improved family functioning leading to better behaved children.

'There are really only two crimes in Coen which people go to prison for- physically harmful domestic violence and multiple drink driving offences. One of the major causes of domestic violence is people sitting around all day bored out of their mind, getting horribly drunk and then having an argument with their missus and it all goes pear-shaped. We have had a notable reduction in domestic violence since the ranger program. Partly because if you go to work, go home tired, have two drinks and go to bed tired you are less likely to stay up all night pissed out of your brain.' (Coen Justice Group representative)

'There used to be a high level of violence, that happens at a much lower level now. The violence and domestic violence has dropped tremendously. The police say the WoC project is an amazing success. Local coppers say this is the best thing that has happened in Coen for years. I have 15-20 young people actively engaged in work and not out on the streets'. (Ranger management)

Implications for measuring the social outcomes in the future

- The range of social outcomes for families, as identified by stakeholders, suggest there are various dimensions that could potentially be investigated in order to measure the social outcomes of WoC in the future. These include:
 - The extent to which family members participate in on-country fieldtrips and other ranger activities
 - Self-reported future career aspirations of rangers' family members
 - Increased school attendance and achievement amongst the rangers' children
 - The capacity of rangers to financially contribute towards their children's education
 - Improved standards of living for rangers and their families (e.g. demonstrated by the increased ability to purchase homewares)
 - Improved housing conditions (e.g. demonstrated by the number of rangers transitioning into private rental or home ownership)
 - Reduced domestic or other family violence.

6.3 SOCIAL OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES

6.3.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A number of projects consulted with indicate WoC is one of the biggest employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the local community. This includes small, remote communities such as Raukkan, Coen and the Torres Strait Islands, which have very limited economic infrastructure and also larger communities such as Wadeye.

If WoC didn't come along when it did there would be ten people without a job right now. For a community with a population of 140, that is huge. There is no other bigger employer in town.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, organisational stakeholder)

Apart from CDEP with 40 to 50 people, the ranger program is the primary full-time employer in Coen by far. The hotel employs a small number on a fly-in fly-out basis and the health clinic employs three to four Indigenous people. So it makes a big impact having that many people employed.

(Lama Lama and Kalan Ranger Projects, external stakeholder)

There aren't many full time positions on the island. [The WoC position] is a real privilege and security of tenure.

(WoC/IPA projects in the Torres Strait, organisational stakeholder)

Stakeholders suggest many rangers would not have been able to secure the same level of employment without WoC. The majority of rangers consulted with were not employed full-time prior to their involvement with WoC. Rangers were unemployed, employed on a sporadic and temporary basis or employed through the CDEP. WoC provides career development opportunities for unskilled workers with few alternative options due to their limited educational attainment and employment histories.

I am getting older, the opportunities for employment elsewhere are lacking, because of [low levels] of education.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

Notwithstanding this, some of the rangers have extensive employment histories in NRM. For example, a few were previously employed as rangers within national parks. WoC appears to accommodate and appeal to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a range of work experience and skill levels.

Stakeholders are cognisant of the wide-ranging positive outcomes at a whole of community level that stem from the generation of stable and meaningful employment. As one stakeholder suggests:

Employment is a key driver for addressing social issues in the community. When people are gainfully employed there are wide and varied flow-on effects. People are more inclined to look after themselves, to seek out better health care, take their children to school because they have a purpose and a sense of the future. This flows on to the younger generations by providing children with a vision for the future.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, organisational stakeholder)

Stakeholders indicate the visibility of WoC in communities has affected the way both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people see employment:

WoC is important for maintaining the employment base for Aboriginal people. It seems to have a 'halo effect'. I notice that more people are seeking traineeships and attending interviews. We do reverse marketing, finding people to put into jobs - we're finding it easier to put people into jobs because employers see WoC rangers as examples of what people can do.

(Riverland Rangers, external stakeholder).

Stakeholders suggest WoC plays an important role in supporting the local economy and other local Indigenous businesses. WoC invests significant funds into the local community. For example, numerous projects indicate they purchase project supplies such as equipment, petrol, vehicles and so on from local businesses.

The flow on effects to businesses in Coen would have to be positive – cash spent in town, fuel spent for vehicles for the program, it would have a flow-on effect for businesses in town such as cafes also. Indigenous people tend to buy most of their things such as food in town – white people have more capacity to travel elsewhere.

(Lama Lama and Kalan Ranger Projects, external stakeholder)

Supporting the local economy

Tyrendarra IPA

While the Tyrendarra IPA and WoC projects emphasise the importance of traditional owners and the local Aboriginal community carrying-out the NRM work on the property (e.g. fencing, maintenance of walking tracks) in order to promote a sense of community ownership of the land, local businesses provide materials and supplies and are sometimes contracted to provide building services.

6.3.2 MAINTAINING AND PROTECTING SACRED SITES

The work undertaken by the rangers is reportedly helping to improve, protect and restore sites and species of cultural significance. This involves: fencing to keep out animals (e.g. wallabies) that damage cultural sites, putting up interpretation signs to raise awareness of culturally significant sites so visitors are careful not to damage them, rehabilitation of culturally significant species (e.g. rushes for weaving), and the upkeep of walking trails.

The general land management side of things, fire, feral animals, weeds, it's helping to protect sites of cultural significance.

(Djelk Land Management Extension Project, organisational stakeholder)

The Ngarrindjeri rangers, for example, have been trained in cultural survey work to help in the restoration of more than 300 burial sites around the Coorong. They have also partnered with Flinders University to undertake archaeological digs.

The Tyrendarra IPA comprises many registered cultural sites such as fish traps, tool making sites and stone houses. Protecting the cultural values of the estate is a key part of the rangers' work. The rangers maintain the cultural sites, repair and upgrade infrastructure on the property (e.g. bridge, visitors Centre and carpark), and have built visitor boardwalks, walking tracks and interpretative signage.

The supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA involves the maintenance of historically and culturally significant rock art and the conduct and teaching of traditional practices such as spear making and traditional food preparation (e.g. washing yams in baskets).

...once you stop using these cultural practices you lose the knowledge of how to do it. There is a lot of excitement about bringing it back; it's good for people's heads.

(Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA, organisational stakeholder)

6.3.3 SHARING OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

WoC and related Indigenous NRM programs have reportedly facilitated the transfer of traditional knowledge from elders and traditional owners to the broader Indigenous community. There is greater capacity for knowledge concerning the location of sacred sites, water holes, fauna and flora, and traditional ways of caring for the land to be passed down through the generations as a result of involving traditional owners and elders in the planning and conduct of ranger activities. The IPA planning process in particular can be an important process for supporting this engagement.

The older and younger crew working together, that is the whole point of it. Some of the older ones can't go out as much so the younger ones help out, they get the food and in return the older rangers teach the young, transfer their knowledge.

(Gumurr Marthakal, organisational stakeholder)

The involvement of elders and traditional owners reportedly makes them feel their knowledge is important and valued.

They realise the significance of their role – guiding the rangers and teaching them to work the right way on country.

(Ti-Tree Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

Some of that knowledge is being transferred to younger members, the older ones really like the fact that this program is valuing and respecting that knowledge. There's a huge amount of that cultural knowledge that is being noted, we've got traditional owners identifying plants.

(Lama Lama and Kalan Ranger Projects, organisational stakeholder)

Elders lead cultural activities and workshops with the rangers. For example, a community elder spends one day each month teaching the Ngarrindjeri rangers wood carving. WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives have facilitated new ways of capturing and recording traditional knowledge to assist with the inter-generational transfer, such as film recording of elders. Traditional owners and elders sometimes accompany the rangers on camps or country visits. This not only allows the elders to teach the rangers about their country and traditional NRM practices, but also increases the access traditional owners and elders have to country. The IPA program is also credited with increasing access to and ownership of country by traditional owners and the broader Indigenous community.

It's improving older people's access to country...an old lady had never been to her country before. She went back with her family and was able to find a spot her father told her about and now she can tell her kids.

(Wungurr Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

The old Aboriginal people come back happy from trips to country, it reenergizes the old people, they're telling stories for weeks. ... Some of the old people we take out they get tears in their eyes from getting that connection with their country.

(Thamarrurr Rangers, ranger)

Increasing access to country

Tyrendarra IPA

Tyrendarra, one of the first properties in the region to be declared an IPA, is reported as being significant for facilitating Indigenous ownership and control over country. Tyrendarra provides a place where traditional owners and the broader Indigenous community can access their land and has built the confidence of the Indigenous community in managing their country.

'It's pretty important for those reasons, it's a really important part of the community. The sense of ownership, people take their kids and family members out...It's a place where cultural values are available'.
(Organisational stakeholder)

Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA

Due to the history of white settlement in the western Arnhem Land Plateau it is reported that some members of recent generations of local Aboriginal people have had limited access to their country. *WoC* and *IPA* are reported to facilitate increased access to and knowledge of this country. Warddeken Land Management run a Walking on Country Program where elders lead on-country tips and talk about the changes to the natural environment they have observed. One stakeholder describes it as *'a very powerful program'*.

6.3.4 INCREASED CAPACITY TO IDENTIFY RECORD AND DOCUMENT TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND ARTEFACTS

WoC has reportedly facilitated increased community capacity to identify and record traditional knowledge, cultural sites and artefacts, and in some cases rangers have uncovered sites not previously known about by community. Some ranger groups have been involved in archaeological or similar training to increase: their skills and knowledge in identifying artefacts and historical sites, their knowledge about how to report sites, and what to look for. These learnings are often disseminated to the broader community (e.g. children are being shown artefacts and sites). Rangers have developed data collection and recording systems and processes so they can document, organise and disseminate findings in a structured way. Some examples are provided in the quotes below.

[There is] a book to be launched from WoC site visits - took us to a water hole we didn't know about. ... [The benefit of recording those stories] is that we can pass onto the next generation. Helps young people know more about their culture.

(Thamarrurr Rangers, external stakeholder)

We've put together a package of information about native plants and bush tucker. It's been distributed to schools, Indigenous kids and their families. There's also interpretive information and

signage that everyone sees when they arrive here. It gives people a renewed sense of country. More people are interested in bush foods now.

(Riverland Rangers, ranger)

A big part of that language stuff has died. Earlier this year we got flora and fauna got it all on a big database, we have the scientific names and the language name and the pictures of each – we take pictures and can show the elders, they tell us what it is. It's helping to document all that traditional knowledge.

(Kalan Ranger Project, ranger)

6.3.5 INCREASED CULTURAL HERITAGE AWARENESS

Rangers have increased knowledge of cultural practices, for example traditional food sources, traditional plant usage, bush medicine and so on which they share with their families and the broader community. WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives have reportedly increased the capacity of communities to support cultural activities and events as some of this work is carried out by the ranger teams. For example, rangers produce traditional resources such as tools, spears, baskets and boomerangs, are involved in cultural events such as NAIDOC week, and support traditional ceremonies.

Rangers are often called on to assist in major ceremonies. It allows ceremony to happen, and culture to continue.

(Djelk Land Management Extension Project, organisational stakeholder)

Indigenous and non- Indigenous people are reportedly becoming more aware of Indigenous cultural heritage, as a flow-on effect of WoC and its whole-of-community engagement approach.

Increased cultural awareness

Riverland Rangers

One of the female Riverland Rangers is working with the women's group and takes them out on country trips. The group meets once a month to collect rushes and do basket and placemat weaving. They also harvest bush medicine and foods like munthries which they make into jelly and chutneys and jams. Renmark High School now supplies native foods for cooking. The women's group introduces Aboriginal children to bush tucker. They took rushes to the Kuning Centre and planted them.

The visibility of the rangers within the community has reportedly raised the profile of cultural issues - '*Because of stories and word of mouth about the rangers program, local people, whether they are tourists, farmers or townspeople, they are now more aware of the range of sites and see points of interest in the landscape that they didn't before. Aboriginal people see preserving burial sites as important. They value it because it's protecting their culture. There's a long way to go but I'm sure this has changed many people's awareness of cultural heritage issues*'. (Organisational stakeholder).

Some stakeholders report a renewed sense of Aboriginality and strengthened cultural identification amongst rangers and other community members. It is suggested that Indigenous people are enjoying rediscovering their cultural heritage. Young rangers, in particular, are demonstrating increasing interest in their cultural heritage.

Our heritage and culture was being lost. People were just at home or the club. We do need our culture. We've found sites, signs, trees and we're now getting more detailed knowledge. For example, why were canoes made here when the river is far away? People can see subtle signs such as footholds in a red gum. Spirituality is coming back.

(Riverland Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

I lived in Raukkan my whole life but I didn't take notice, now I care for and love my environment.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

6.3.6 RETENTION OF LANGUAGE

A positive outcome attributed to WoC by some stakeholders is the preservation of traditional language. For example, the Melang school site is becoming a learning centre for the teaching of language and culture attributed by Raukkan stakeholders as a spin off from the WoC program. Other projects report WoC has facilitated an increased use and knowledge of traditional word and terms for describing the natural environment.

People stopped using language. Words for describing land forms and ecology of the plateau, these descriptive linguistic terms, we are working with old people to get conservation language back into the process of land management.

(Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA, organisational stakeholder)

The Kalan rangers indicate they have started teaching children language (e.g. nursery rhymes, parts of the body, traditional flora and fauna names).

Bringing language back into the school, our boys are now talking language; they know the names for the birds and animals.

(Kalan Ranger Project, female ranger)

6.3.7 A TWO-WAY LEARNING MODEL

WoC uses a model drawing on both western science as well as Indigenous cultural knowledge in caring for country. While WoC projects enable traditional practices to occur and Indigenous input and decision-making into how country is managed, projects are also supported by scientific organisations, research centres, universities and farming groups who lend their expertise, skills and knowledge to the application of ranger activities (e.g. teaching of fauna surveying, monitoring activities, scientific names of flora). This 'two tool boxes' approach gives the rangers with a different perspective on land and sea management, providing them with the tools needed to successfully manage country.

White fella training gives the rangers a different perspective.

(Gummur Marthakal Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

We manage our IPA using the best of both worlds: following the ancient laws handed down to us from our ancestors and also using western science to help us understand country in a different way. By using these two knowledge systems we manage our IPA to a very high standard in both a cultural and scientific way.

(Supporting land management workers for the Warddeken IPA, organisational stakeholder, Annual Report 2010-11)

We have a two way approach with non-Indigenous and Yolngu working together. We use western knowledge and also our Yolngu knowledge and management. Working with scientists regarding issues and how we manage the country. Flora and fauna surveys, we did one last year where we used our senior rangers to identify different tracks and what they belong to, putting down Yolngu names for plants and animals. Using western scientific knowledge about the plants. Traditional knowledge used also -if we want to find something Yolngu will know where to find it, the season.

(Dhimurru Working on Country, ranger)

An identified spin-off effect from this two tool box approach is a two-way transfer of knowledge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous project participants and partners. A key outcome identified by stakeholders is that non-Indigenous managers, partners and the broader community are gaining a greater exposure to and appreciation of traditional knowledge. It is reported that non-Indigenous project management stakeholders, school staff who accompany children on excursions with the rangers, land holders who contract ranger work and visiting scientists and researchers benefit from their involvement with WoC through developing skills and knowledge in the cultural aspects of natural resource management. Some ranger groups are also taking up opportunities to share cultural knowledge and practices with visitors – *‘people who pass through aren’t just stopping for a coffee, they’re also learning about the culture and customs’*. (Kalan ranger).

Knowledge exchange

Djelk Land Management Extension Project

The Djelk Land Management Extension Project Coordinator indicates there are benefits in non-Aboriginal staff with a background in western land management science developing skills in cultural aspects of NRM. He said that one of the differences the program has made to his life is that: *‘I see things differently. Rather than just looking at it from a land management science point of view’*.

The IPA program also reportedly increases exposure to Indigenous history, knowledge and values amongst the non-Indigenous population.

Cultural awareness for non-Indigenous population

Tyrendarra IPA

The Tyrendarra IPA hosts a range of visitor groups on-site including school excursions, overseas visitors, local organisations and non-Indigenous community members. Cultural education activities are a key component of the Tyrendarra IPA/WoC projects. Guided cultural on-country tours are conducted by rangers, elders and traditional owners. The estate provides a useful talking space where the guides can share their knowledge and histories in an interactive, engaging way. Walking tracks and interpretive signs have been constructed to facilitate the cultural education activities. An average of two to three schools visit the IPA each year including local schools from Portland, Hamilton and Hayward as well as schools from Melbourne and Adelaide. Students can participate in hands-on outdoor activities such as stone, tool and basket making or create artworks in the visitors Centre. The police force, hospital staff, Council members and other local organisations have also visited the IPA as part of their cultural awareness training.

6.3.8 LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

WoC projects often involve school children through: formalised junior ranger programs, rangers undertaking work on local school grounds (e.g. planting, gardening), rangers providing input into the school curriculum or subject development, rangers taking children on country excursions, rangers giving speeches or presentations to school classes, children undertaking ranger activities (e.g. tree planting, bird monitoring, plant identification, beach clean-up), school holiday programs, and mentoring and work experience/traineeship programs.

Children looking to the future

Gumurr Marthakal

'The kids get everything out of it...We do the trouble classes, the ranger delivers [the lesson]. When we walk in everyone sits down, everyone is interested and paying attention. The Principal says to us 'if every teacher was like [the ranger giving the lesson] we would be having a win''(Organisational stakeholder)

'The ranger program gives hope to kids looking to the future. In remote areas it's very difficult to think of the future. We are family orientated, leaving our country [for work] is very difficult. For white fella kids the world is their oyster but there's not much hope here' (Organisational stakeholder)

As a result of these activities, schools are incorporating environmental education and physical environmental infrastructure into school processes to a greater degree. School staff also have a better appreciation of the value of environmental education for students.

I want the kids to love their country.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, local school teacher)

Rangers are reportedly seen as role models for students, with some aspiring to be rangers when they grow up. A number of the rangers from the Maningrida project, for example, have come through from the junior ranger program.

We fill an important niche and we're told there's lots of up and coming kids who are wanting to work with us – seen as being an important and desirable career path.

(Dhimurru Working on Country, organisational stakeholder)

Mentoring and working with youth through schools...there's the capacity to really make a difference. School holiday programs and traineeships are fantastic; it is a big part of [the WoC program].

(Wunggurr Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

School children reportedly have increased environmental knowledge, understanding of what country offers and the importance of caring for country.

They look at the rangers as their role models, but it doesn't mean they have to become a ranger. They are role models in a broader way, not just as a ranger but also as traditional owners, people who look after the land, custodians of the land.

(Dhimurru Working on Country, organisational stakeholder)

Stakeholders of the Wadeye project suggest that the vehicles needed to access remote country are scarce and expensive. As such, the rangers provide school children with unique access to country that would be difficult to achieve otherwise.

The school activities also increase young people's awareness of culture, improving peace of mind for elders and traditional owners knowing that cultural knowledge is being passed on and retained by the younger generations.

Connecting children with culture and keeping the stories alive.

(Thamarrurr Rangers)

Stakeholders suggest WoC encourages school attendance with ranger activities and classes at school being popular and well attended. It also increases the relevance of school learning for students by demonstrating the links between school subjects and future career pathways.

It keeps attendance high as well – they enjoy studying science, staying at school, gives them possible career opportunities, it makes them see their school studies as more relevant - see areas they can move onto.

(Djelk Land Management Extension Project, organisational stakeholder)

Increased
school
attendance

Thamarrurr Rangers

Stakeholders of the Wadeye project suggest WoC has contributed to increased school attendance. Children are not allowed to attend excursions unless they have achieved a 65% attendance rate. The country visits facilitated by the rangers related directly to the story the children were learning at school, tying in the excursion to the school curriculum and reinforcing the relevance of school.

6.3.9 INCREASED COHESION AND REDUCED CONFLICT

Stakeholders report WoC has contributed to improved cohesion and reduced conflict in communities. In some cases, WoC has provided opportunities for different traditional country or language groups to work together in new ways and for cross-cultural learning experiences. In communities with multiple clan groups, WoC has facilitated relationship building and interactions between groups. Other examples were provided of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples not living on their traditional country having the opportunity to work alongside traditional owners, often facilitating an exchange of traditional knowledge and practices.

Ti Tree Rangers

Central Land Council staff report increased communication, relationships and cooperation across traditional country and language groups with rangers from different tribes getting to know each other through camps and joint training. For the first time, with the permission of elders, rangers are working together on other people's country when needed on big jobs. Rangers have opportunities to work on or near the sacred sites of other groups, a process whereby traditional owners feel increasingly comfortable about people from other country coming to work on their land. As one stakeholder suggests:

'There's more willingness to go there and there's more willingness to invite others in.'

Mapoon Land and Sea Centre

One male ranger from Mapoon speaks of his experience of working on a different clan's traditional country:

'Mapoon is not my country. I've been here 21 years. It's been great to have other guys on board sharing the knowledge. Working on other people's country – the cross-cultural stuff...Different tribes all in one area, we are all in Mapoon, all together. It's a big benefit – we all work for the land, together.'

The provision of stable, meaningful employment is also said to contribute to reducing community conflict and destructive behaviour, an outcome that has been especially prevalent amongst young male rangers.

[The] ranger program has settled the young people – have a good, ongoing job – it's become a very sought after job – they all have uniforms, and they love working on country.

(Lama Lama and Kalan Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

6.3.10 BREAKING DOWN SOCIAL BARRIERS

WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives are attributed with not only creating closer day to day links between some Indigenous clan or language groups but also improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Activities such as workshops, exhibitions, resource creation, media participation, tours, camps, school/educational activities, and documenting and recording NRM practices increases the exposure of broader community members to Indigenous knowledge, issues and cultural practices. The Grassy Woodlands project, for example, held a cultural exhibition at the Albury library museum over a 12-14 week period coinciding with NAIDOC week and school holidays. The exhibition, which featured artefacts, baskets, spears, films, and photos, was reportedly well attended and attracted media coverage.

In some projects the rangers undertake private contracting work for private landholders, local Councils, schools and national parks agencies for example. This raises the profile of local Indigenous people, helps combat negative stereotypes, and generates respect for and positive perceptions of Indigenous people amongst the non-Indigenous community.

We were looking at the impact of the program. One ranger said that when he went into a shop the shopkeeper would ask him about the program rather than look at him distrustfully the way they used to.

(Riverland Rangers, organisational stakeholder).

Raukkan Natural Resource Management

The Raukkan rangers undertake contracting work with a neighbouring farm involving revegetation, planting and fencing. The non-Indigenous farm manager acknowledged the contribution made by the rangers and their skills in undertaking such work, he states: – *‘with the fencing – they did it well and quickly. They can do it for sure’* (farm manager). The contracting work has facilitated the development of relationships, with the rangers reportedly socialising with the farm workers.

Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers

Stakeholders identify the gradual acceptance by farmers and graziers to having Aboriginal rangers working on their land as an important outcome of the WoC ranger teams. The ranger teams have been important for helping overcome the prejudices or negative stereotypes non-Indigenous land holders have about Aboriginal people. Project stakeholders report the ranger teams have secured private contracting work through positive word of mouth from satisfied customers, and customers contracting repeat work for the rangers.

‘We had one particular project where the landholder came back and couldn’t believe how hard they worked; originally he thought they would all be sitting under the tree doing nothing. He was very impressed and telling all his mates about it apparently.’ (Organisational stakeholder)

Stakeholders also indicate WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives have strengthened relationships between organisations, with local organisations working collaboratively in the design and delivery of projects. In many cases, these working relationships have been formalised through MOUs. The development of working relationships between local organisations enables holistic, coordinated service delivery and greater commitment and buy-in from organisations in supporting the local Aboriginal community.

The MOU with two land councils, getting any two land councils work together is pretty challenging, has been a real achievement. Partnerships have been established and they are made clear in participants who comprise the steering committee – everybody shows up to the meeting, very strong relationships have been formed.

(Mid North Coast Aboriginal Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

We try to work with outside agencies and groups – build a relationship between Aboriginal people and the broader community, breaking down barriers – caring for country is just one aspect, we run other programs as a community, try to coordinate all different programs and processes to get the best outcomes.

(Ngarridjeri Working on Ruwe, organisational stakeholder)

Partner agencies now have a profile. Regarding NRM we now have a bit of a profile, they know who to contact. Show the local community that we are interested and committed to the Aboriginal community.

(Threatened Grassy Woodlands, organisational stakeholder)

6.3.11 COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Project stakeholders suggest *WoC* contributes to building community capacity through skills and knowledge development, facilitating improved access to information and technology, providing opportunities for knowledge transfer and facilitating links to external organisations.

WoC has increased the capacity of communities to deliver NRM and cultural work by creating dedicated employment positions in the natural and cultural resource management sector rather than relying on communities to volunteer time for such activities. The Tyrendarra *IPA* and *WoC* projects are attributed with building the organisational capacity of the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation to undertake natural resource management, as one stakeholder comments:

It's acted as a springboard for other activities. It started off as me and two others with a broken down old ute and a couple of shovels. We built the land management group from there.

(Tyrendarra *IPA*, organisational stakeholder)

The formal and informal training opportunities provided by *WoC* have raised the skills and capacity levels at a community level by retaining skills locally, creating community leaders and allowing for the transfer of skills and knowledge inter-generationally within and between communities.

It is good for the community to have people trained up. Good in emergency situations for example cyclone time, when police and interpreters are working together to let people know when the cyclone is coming.

(Thamarrurr Rangers)

Community capacity building

Raukkan Natural Resource Management

The Raukkan Natural Resource Management Project Manager described the local community as being in 'dire straits' before the introduction of *WoC* with the removal of CDEP and other key government services (e.g. public housing). Significant numbers of community members moved away to seek work and the local school closed temporarily because of inadequate enrolment numbers. *WoC* has reportedly played a significant role in sustaining and rebuilding the local community by building capacity and retaining skilled workers.

'There is an Aboriginal community up the river with more dogs than people... it is a cultural museum. If we didn't have those opportunities the same thing would have happened here. Things would have fallen apart, we would have been a welfare driven community.'

For many projects, the ranger positions are central for carrying out a wide-range of community building activities. Rangers contribute to community life through engaging with school children, at-risk young people, aged care residents, traditional owners etc. One stakeholder described the ranger teams as a '*resource and focal point*' for the entire community.

Rangers help out with everything from child safety program to aged care, health services, and general community support. So everyone in the community is having contact with the program in one way or the other.

(Djelk Land Management Extension Project, organisational stakeholder)

... The ability to provide support in general [is one of the most important outcomes of the project]. Child Safety asked the rangers to do something positive with kids who'd been removed. It gives a sense of pride to do something.

(Djelk Land Management Extension Project, organisational stakeholder)

Some rangers are reportedly better able to deal with political and policy issues, bureaucracy, government agencies, banks and employers due to improved literacy skills. As a Central Land Council stakeholder states: *'If you can't read, you are in a perpetual state of confusion'*. As a result, communities have increased capacity for active and informed political participation. For example, the Central Land Council reports communities have greater capacity to assist in Native Title Claims with rangers involved in sacred site identification, management and Federal Court determinations.

Stakeholders report increased access to communications technology such as computers and information as a positive outcome of WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives. Grassy Woodlands project stakeholders indicate that Aboriginal community members have increased knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities in accessing the land. For example, community members learnt they were required to apply for a permit to strip bark off trees to make a canoe. People understanding their rights and the appropriate processes have enabled them to gain greater access to their country.

Establishing links with external organisations such as research centres, universities and government agencies has enabled the rangers to access new information and disseminate this information amongst the community. Interest from large external organisations also helps raise the profile of small Indigenous communities.

As Ngarridjeri people it affirms us, there's a lot of interest, a group every week comes in.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, organisational stakeholder)

6.3.12 SELF-DETERMINATION

WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives reportedly support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspirations in caring for country and contributes to increased decision-making and ownership by traditional owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in cultural and natural resource management. WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives have contributed to increased community control over land use practices, with some projects reporting greater input into local tourism practices, advising where tourists can and cannot visit.

The program's governance arrangements, in particular those managed in partnership with the IPA program, ensure that projects align with aspirations of traditional owners to manage their lands sustainably and in accordance with their cultural priorities. Project leadership and management occur at a local level, and communities feel a sense of project ownership. Traditional owners are consulted with, represented on Steering Committees such as those established under the IPA program, have a role in designing and implementing projects, and are involved in guiding and prioritising the ranger activities.

They [the traditional owners] know they are really being listened to.

(Ti Tree Rangers)

I wanted to see and work on my country, being a traditional owner I wanted to be a leader for it, for my tribe. To say if I can do it, you can too.

(Mapoon Land and Sea Centre, ranger)

Aboriginal input and Aboriginal say – we need our voices heard – very important to promote what rangers are doing and what Aboriginal people want.

(Bardi Jawi Rangers, ranger)

WoC/IPA projects in the Torres Strait

An MOU has been established between the Torres Strait Regional Authority, Council and Registered Native Title Body Corporates (RNTBC) in all islands where ranger groups have been established. The RNTBC is invited to participate in the recruitment and selection process for the rangers. They also play a role in determining the cultural priorities for ranger activities, providing input to traditional recording and management of knowledge, hosting and participating in traditional knowledge exchange forums, providing approvals to access relevant Native Title land and culturally sensitive sites and generally assisting in decision making and priorities of the ranger work. The RNTBC have input into the development of each ranger team's WoC work plans.

Wunggurr Rangers

The Wunggurr Rangers have developed a Healthy Country Plan that reportedly provides guidance to private companies (e.g. mining companies) and state government departments in relation to activities conducted on or impacting the land. The Wunggurr Ranger program provides support to the Wilonggin Indigenous Protected Area Consultation Project and also to the Wilonggin Aboriginal Corporation to assist with establishing greater traditional owner governance of the local area.

Some communities are looking outwards, exploring partnership opportunities with non-Indigenous organisations, and seeing the benefits of integration. A few projects report increased trust from and willingness by non-Indigenous private landholders to have Indigenous people work on their land. In particular, some projects say non-Indigenous landholders are more frequently reporting cultural artefacts or bones found on their properties.

Respect for Indigenous people is coming up. Aboriginal people are saying we are here, we want ownership, we want to self-manage and work in partnership with white organisations. Many white people are seeing that Native Title is not a bad thing. For example, the Loxton Tower track – our rangers did the bones recovery. There was a picture in the paper.

(Riverland Rangers, organisational stakeholder)

WoC and related Indigenous NRM initiatives fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to deliver local projects and some communities see the program as a useful stepping stone for making the transition to self-management. A number of the projects consulted with demonstrate improved financial independence and self-management capacity, having attracted funding from external sources and entered into private funding arrangements. A number of projects are investigating opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the program such as partnership/co-management arrangements with private industry or National Parks or private enterprise opportunities such as eco-tourism.

Tyrendarra IPA

The Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation is now fully accredited under ISO220. Winda-Mara have implemented a range of formal procedures and processes including an induction process for new staff, formal recruitment interviews, risk management strategies, and occupational health and safety training.

'The organisation is run much more professionally. It means we can transfer people to other organisations such as National Parks, state government departments, and apprenticeships because they know how to work in a professional organisation, they know the behaviours and systems' (Organisational stakeholder)

6.3.13 RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Stakeholders suggest WoC plays a role in maintaining and raising community standards. Rangers have a strengthened sense of accountability and responsibility both at work and in the community. Some rangers are said to have taken on leadership roles and set higher standards of behaviour. The increased emphasis on caring for country at a whole of community level, inspired by WoC, has reportedly promoted pride and respect for community. For some communities that have limited economic infrastructure, the employment opportunities generated through WoC have changed the social norms of the community.

Anti-social behaviour decreased and standards of behaviour were set. Raukkan is not just a place where you live and die in. They now understand this; there is pride in the community.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, local Indigenous health worker)

Opportunities for new experiences provided through WoC can give rangers new perspectives on their own community, generating respect and pride. One Raukkan ranger speaks of his experience of attending training in a neighbouring community:

For six months one day a week I went across the lake, I had never been across to Melang before. I discovered that side of the lake and those peoples, and the respect they have for Raukkan.

(Raukkan Natural Resource Management, ranger)

Implications for measuring the social outcomes in the future

- The range of social outcomes for communities, as identified by stakeholders, suggest there are various dimensions that could potentially be investigated in order to measure the social outcomes of *WoC* in the future. These include:
- The contribution made by *WoC* to the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed in the local community
- The financial investment or contributions made by *WoC* to other local businesses and organisations
- The extent to which ranger activities protect and restore sites and species of cultural significance
- The development of data collection and recording systems and processes to document, organise and disseminate cultural knowledge
- The extent to which rangers are involved in supporting cultural activities (e.g. production of traditional resources, involvement in cultural events such as NAIDOC week, and supporting traditional ceremonies)
- The extent to which ranger activities involve elders, traditional owners and school children
- Increased use and teaching of language by community members
- Partnerships or MOUs established between *WoC* projects and external organisations, and ability of projects to secure external project funding
- Increased interactions and improved relationships between different clan groups
- Increased willingness by private landholders to contract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work on their properties
- Reduced conflict, violence and anti-social behaviour in communities
- Increased interactions and improved relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members
- Increased political capital (e.g. demonstrated by greater capacity to assist in Native Title Claims)
- Increased control over land use practices (e.g. visitor monitoring and input into local tourism policies and practices).

7 Key findings and implications

This section discusses the key success factors of WoC and the nature of social outcomes achieved distinctively for projects and cumulatively across all projects.

WoC is a highly valued program that delivers capacity building, cultural, economic and health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and entire communities.

WoC is not just a good program – it can be a game changer. WoC builds a foundation for individual social development while pulling up entire communities. The program builds individual pathways, confidence, self-esteem and pride. It empowers communities, reinforces cultural authority and promotes pride in and respect for communities. Constructing a modern identity for young people in traditional communities; that is what makes the program so valuable.

(Program stakeholder)

WoC acts as a catalyst for social, cultural and economic change for the whole community.

The future delivery of the program is important in the context of environmental threats such as ecological degradation and climate change and is also critical in supporting the economic and social development of Indigenous communities.

[WoC is] extremely important! It brings pride, health, jobs, and the kids are looking up to the rangers. I don't know what to do without it, it is our life.

(Gumurr Marthakal, organisational stakeholder)

WoC is designed as a program which recognises Indigenous people have a great deal to offer the broader community. WoC invests in the application of Indigenous skills and knowledge in natural resource and cultural management, valuing these contributions as legitimate and important. It is this valuing and acknowledgement which is central to the demonstrated social benefits of the program.

WoC occupies a unique space in which the aspirations of Indigenous communities intersect with the aspirations of the Australian Government. It is this shared interest which is at the heart of the program's success.

Developed from a strong cultural and economic foundation, WoC empowers communities in managing the natural and cultural values of their traditional estates. WoC is a critical resource and focal point for communities providing economic development, building community capacity and social capital. WoC supports the emergence of positive role models and community leaders who inspire and bring hope to the younger generations, while respecting traditional authority and cultural knowledge.

The program's partnership model fosters new and improved ways of relating between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations. Interest from and partnerships with external organisations provides communities with access to new knowledge and information, raises the profile of communities, and affirms Indigenous culture and knowledge. Increased exposure to traditional skills and practices in caring for country generates respect for and positive perceptions of Indigenous people amongst the non-Indigenous community.

WoC engages people in meaningful and fulfilling employment. Being a ranger provides opportunities for self-improvement and career development. It provides a platform for people to undertake work they view as making important and positive contributions to country and community. The program achieves a range of financial, educational, spiritual and cultural, and health and wellbeing outcomes for participants. Rangers feel an improved sense of self including increased pride, self-esteem, confidence, hope, and happiness.

The benefits of the program extend to the rangers' families. Rangers act as positive role models for family members providing them with a positive sense of the future and something to aspire to, broadening

horizons and raising expectations of what is possible to achieve. The program can improve standards of living, the financial status of entire families and also strengthen relationships and family functioning.

7.1 THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF *WORKING ON COUNTRY*

A number of key program success factors have been identified by program and project stakeholders throughout the length of this research project, these are described below.

While the strong focus on economic participation is a key success factor of *WoC*, many of the program success factors relate equally to the *IPA* program and other Indigenous initiatives supported by the *Caring for our Country* initiative.

- *WoC* recognises and values the skills and knowledge of Indigenous Australians and the economic, environmental and cultural contributions they have to make.
- The program is mutually beneficial in that it supports the interests of Indigenous people in caring for country, which in turn helps the Australian Government to meet its responsibility to protect and conserve the environment.
- *WoC* is a community capacity building model that is led at the local community level and underpinned by community ownership and action. Traditional owners and local communities are involved in the design, development and leadership of projects to ensure they align with the needs and interests of the community, and benefit the environment.
- The program provides auspice organisations and local communities with opportunities for economic development and self-management.
- The program is holistic and multi-dimensional in offering employment, career and professional development and training opportunities that aim to address the economic, social and cultural needs of employees and communities.
- *WoC* provides long-term, real employment opportunities that align with local contexts. This involves Indigenous people doing real work and being paid real wages, and having high expectations of what Indigenous people can achieve.
- *WoC* involves the provision of meaningful and culturally appropriate employment that recognises traditional activities as legitimate forms of employment and matches work opportunities to the goals and aspirations of individuals and the community.
- The program offers targeted and integrated training designed to meet skills gaps in local and regional industry, and effectively links training to employment.
- *WoC* is highly visible within communities and involves engagement at a whole of community level. The program facilitates relationship building between individuals, clan groups, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and local and external organisations.
- *WoC* values and uses both western and traditional knowledge, providing unique cross-cultural sharing and learning opportunities.
- The spiritual and cultural offerings of the program are critical and contribute to cultural continuity in supporting the intergenerational transfer of knowledge.

7.2 THE DIVERSITY AND CONSISTENCY OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The case study research undertaken indicates that while there was a high degree of consistency reported across projects regarding the social outcomes achieved, there were also outcomes achieved individually for each project.

The types of outcomes achieved are influenced by the social, geographic and economic context of projects. There appear to be a number of specific factors that contribute to the diversity of program outcomes, including:

- The settlement history of communities and the continuity of culture. The involvement of traditional owners and elders and the facilitation of cultural activities and learnings, for example, are difficult in some communities that experience the significant impact of white settlement, including the disruption of culture and the displacement of Indigenous people from their traditional country. In some communities where the impacts of white settlement are present but less significant, *WoC* and related initiatives have assisted with facilitating continued and improved access to country and culture. In other communities, *WoC* and related initiatives are said to have achieved cultural outcomes to a lesser extent, as a strong continuing culture and connection to country already exists within the community.
- Project leadership. The type and nature of the auspice organisation including whether the auspice organisation is an Indigenous or non-Indigenous organisation, and whether it is a political, community, or environmental organisation influences the priorities, activities and management and governance arrangements of projects with a flow-on effect for the types of outcomes achieved for employees, their families and the broader community.
- The size of the project and the number of employees. Many project managers appear to make deliberate decisions about the number of project participants and rangers employed. The desired number of employees and project participants varies across contexts. Some project managers indicate smaller ranger teams allow management to provide targeted and more intensive support to employees. Smaller ranger teams assist with managing employees' engagement with the process of work and addressing the social, health and cultural needs of workers, to ensure sustained participation in the project. For other projects, larger ranger teams provide benefits in securing a critical mass of workers for undertaking needed cultural and environmental management of communities. The positive economic and community outcomes can have a greater impact in smaller communities with comparatively larger projects. In this context, ranger projects are highly visible within communities and play an important role in supporting local economic development.
- The geographic location of projects, including the state/territory in which the project is situated, the environmental context and the degree of isolation or remoteness. Projects located in remote and isolated regions can experience greater barriers to achieving positive outcomes due to difficult working and living conditions, but in some cases can also provide more controlled environments in which positive social outcomes can be fostered (e.g. less access to alcohol and other drugs).
- The funding and partnership arrangements of projects. Funding and partnership arrangements with external bodies enables Indigenous people to access and work on traditional lands not currently under Indigenous control, facilitates two-way transfer of knowledge (western science and traditional knowledge), supports relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners, and assists some auspice organisations in beginning to make the transition to self-management.
- The social context of projects. For many projects, *WoC* is used as a basis for implementing a range of social, health and economic initiatives designed to respond to specific local issues or needs.
- The labour market conditions of communities. The development of local economies and the availability of jobs significantly influence the efficacy of *WoC* as a program that can provide future employment opportunities and career pathways for project participants.

7.3 PROGRAM BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

This research was required to investigate the social outcomes of *WoC* and did not specifically explore program challenges and barriers. Notwithstanding this, stakeholders identified a number of key challenges that may be useful to consider in future program design and delivery.

While the program is conceptualised by some stakeholders as providing pathways to employment opportunities external to *WoC*, this is not always viable due to limited employment available locally and the reluctance of rangers to move away from their traditional country to seek work. Research participants generally view *WoC* positions as 'real jobs'. Employees say they want to continue working as rangers in

the future. Some stakeholders suggest that career development opportunities *within* the program could be strengthened.

The WoC ranger positions are often attractive to and sought-after by community members. The high demand for the program can be difficult to balance with the limited number of positions available. The allocation of ranger positions can be a source of tension and conflict within communities.

The successful implementation of the program can be a challenge for economically underdeveloped communities and remote communities due to isolation from retail and social services and poor physical infrastructure such as housing. Additional program investment in supporting resources and infrastructure (e.g. housing and transport) could be beneficial.

Many program stakeholders raise concerns that ongoing government investment in the program is not secured beyond 2016. Rangers themselves voice uncertainty and concern about their job stability and future prospects.

Communities are reliant upon WoC, they will fall down if funding disappears....It would be a shame to lose all that has been gained.

(Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan, organisational stakeholder)

[The program needs] ongoing commitment and involvement. Don't make the same old mistake of running a program for a couple of years and then going away... It takes more than a couple of years to maintain the land... You need to be patient, Indigenous people are patient...Indigenous people have been here for thousands of years. It is slowly turning around, the government are asking for our help but they still keep us at arm's length and are not fully committing.

(Threatened Grassy Woodlands, organisational stakeholder)

Rather than a short term project focus, it needs to become something that is embedded in government policy framework as a permanent fixture... Expectations that those ranger groups will be ready for autonomy are unrealistic. It is a long term process. The ranger programs are central to the delivery of environmental management. If the funding is discontinued it will have very significant negative flow on effects.

(WoC/IPA projects in the Torres Strait, organisational stakeholder)

8 Measuring the social outcomes

This section of the report examines the implications of the social outcomes reported by program stakeholders for the development of a framework for future assessments.

8.1 FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

The proposed assessment framework (below) outlines a range of indicators and data sources that could be used to identify and measure the social outcomes of *WoC* in the future.

The assessment framework outlines potential indicators and data sources against the program logic model provided in Section 4, and in line with broader policy objectives.

The assessment framework proposes the collection of qualitative and quantitative data to identify social outcomes at the individual, project and community levels and capture input from a diversity of project stakeholders.

This draft assessment framework was workshopped with key Departmental and community stakeholders to ensure the proposed measures are appropriate and useful, and to promote the likelihood of the ongoing application of the framework. Consideration has been given to developing a framework that provides the Department with the information required while ensuring reporting requirements are not too onerous for funded organisations.

8.2 POTENTIAL INDICATORS

As outlined in Section 6, the social outcomes identified by project stakeholders suggest a range of potential future measures. While not all of these measures will be achieved by every project (for the reasons discussed in Section 7.2 above) they may be useful for providing an indication of the social value and worth of *WoC* in the future. These measures are outlined in the table below.

TABLE 2 –POTENTIAL SOCIAL MEASURES

CATEGORY	POTENTIAL MEASURES
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed through <i>WoC</i>▪ The employment status of rangers previous to their involvement with <i>WoC</i> (e.g. were rangers previously unemployed, employed part-time, full-time, on a temporary basis or employed through CDEP)▪ The retention of rangers in the program (e.g. what proportion of rangers sustain the three to four year contract compared to the proportion of rangers that leave the program)▪ The career progression of rangers within the program▪ Rangers transitioning to other employment opportunities▪ Self-reported employer job satisfaction (e.g. to what extent do rangers enjoy their work? Does it offer career development opportunities? Does it align with their interests and needs?)▪ Rangers demonstrating job commitment (e.g. getting to work on time, number of days off, accountability to the team)▪ Self-reported future career aspirations of rangers▪ Self-reported future career aspirations of rangers' family members▪ The financial investment or contributions made by <i>WoC</i> to other local businesses and organisations
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The impact of employment and financial security for rangers (e.g. how many rangers are able to pay-off debts, take out financial loans, set up bank accounts, contribute financially towards their children's education)▪ Improved standards of living for rangers and their families (e.g. demonstrated by the

CATEGORY	POTENTIAL MEASURES
	<p>increased ability to purchase homewares)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved housing conditions (e.g. demonstrated by the number of rangers transitioning into private rental or home ownership)
Educational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The type and level of training undertaken and completed by rangers The number of rangers who have got their driver's license Self-reported learning outcomes for rangers Professional development opportunities (e.g. networking with other rangers, attendance at conferences) Increased confidence (e.g. demonstrated through public speaking and presentation at conferences and to project partners or funding bodies) Rangers taking on leadership roles (e.g. demonstrated through becoming elected members of Council, being a spokesperson for their community at conferences and events, leading tours and community events, working with school children) Increased school attendance and achievement amongst the rangers' children
Health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved eating habits and weight loss amongst rangers Rangers have increased and more frequent contact with health services Decreased drug and alcohol consumption amongst rangers Improved mental health amongst rangers (e.g. decreased depression and anxiety) Reduced domestic or other family violence
Cultural and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which family members participating in on-country fieldtrips and other ranger activities The extent to which ranger activities protect and restore sites and species of cultural significance The development of data collection and recording systems and processes to document, organise and disseminate cultural knowledge The extent to which rangers are involved in supporting cultural activities (e.g. production of traditional resources, involvement in cultural events such as NAIDOC week, and supporting traditional ceremonies) The extent to which ranger activities involve elders, traditional owners and school children Increased use and teaching of language by community members Increased interactions and improved relationships between different clan groups Increased willingness by private landholders to contract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work on their properties Reduced conflict, violence and anti-social behaviour in communities Increased interactions and improved relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members Increased political capital (e.g. demonstrated by greater capacity to assist in Native Title Claims) Increased control over land use practices (e.g. visitor monitoring and input into local tourism policies and practices) Partnerships or MOUs established between WoC projects and external organisations, and ability of projects to secure external project funding

The proposed indicators are drawn from the full range of potential measures outlined in the table above. While not all these measures have been included in the proposed framework, consideration has been given to measures which are likely to be present across all projects (rather than those specific to particular contexts) and those that will provide the most value in demonstrating the achievements of WoC.

8.3 POTENTIAL DATA SOURCES

Proposed data sources include both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative information is often perceived as being the most 'objective' and reliable basis for measuring program outcomes, however it is generally limited by lack of data specific to target populations or areas, timing of data collection to measure progress, and an inability to understand relationships or causality (City Futures Research Centre, 2006). Qualitative data can provide a more detailed understanding of the underlying social and behavioural dynamics associated with social and economic programs. The most common methods used to obtain relevant qualitative data inputs include in-depth interviews, focus groups, and longitudinal surveys.

The most valid and useful quantitative data across a range of spatial levels is Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data, which provides baseline conditions for a range of populations and spatial areas. However this is only available in 5-year snapshots, and therefore may not provide data at a suitable frequency for program reporting.

The Department currently collects useful quantitative and some qualitative data relating to the social and economic outputs and outcomes of *WoC*. This annual data collection provides a useful source of targeted data which can be used to track the progress of the program in relation to a number of key indicators. The proposed assessment framework below provides a few suggestions for additional data collection through this existing mechanism. This includes: information on the cultural activities conducted by ranger teams, the governance arrangements of projects and further demographic information on project participants.

Information relating to the personal experiences and perceptions of project participants is not currently collected by the Department in an ongoing way. An employee/project participant survey, administered to project coordinators and employees, could be a useful data collection tool to monitor and assess the social outcomes of *WoC*. The framework outlines potential lines of inquiry of the employee/participant survey. Further consideration should be given to the specific wording and targeting of questions during the development of survey instruments.

The collections of additional qualitative and quantitative data from community services including health services, schools, employment services, police and corrective services could also be a useful source of data.

Table 3 – Proposed assessment framework

INTENDED OUTCOME	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
Ultimate outcomes		
Indigenous people are managing the natural and cultural values of their traditional estates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain or increase the number of Indigenous organisations contracted to manage projects Maintain or increase the number of Indigenous people employed Self-management capacity demonstrated by established partnerships with external organisations Input into local land use practices demonstrated by involvement in local tourism policies and practices and fee for service contract work Cultural activities performed by projects Decision-making and involvement of traditional owners and Indigenous communities 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPaC)</p> <p>Existing data collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation name Number of Indigenous Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) Total employed In the past 12 months, has your project had partnerships with any of the following organisations? (state governments, scientific/research organisations, commonwealth government, NRM regional bodies, non-government organisations, local governments, private corporations) In the last 12 months, has your project been involved with any of the following commercial activities? (Tourism, NRM contract work, commercial harvest of wildlife, cultural heritage survey work, other) <p><i>Suggested additional data collection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last 12 months, what cultural activities has your project been involved in? (e.g. restore/protect cultural sites, recoding of cultural knowledge and artefacts, teaching of traditional language, involvement in cultural events e.g. NAIDOC week, supporting traditional ceremonies) What governance arrangements have been established to facilitate involvement and decision-making by traditional owners and Indigenous communities? (e.g. input into land management plans by traditional owners/elders, representation on steering committees, engaged as mentors, activities led or guided by elders/traditional owners)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for rangers to participate in cultural traditions and practices Rangers perceive cultural benefits of the program 	<p>Source: Employee/participant survey</p> <p>Question to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What work or activities do you do? (<i>Prompt: what cultural activities or learnings have you been involved in?</i>) Are you building your cultural knowledge? What do you like about being part of WoC? What have been the cultural benefits? <p>Note: Qualitative discussions with elders and traditional owners could be useful</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous employment in relevant industries by region 	<p>Source: ABS Census 2006 – Indigenous profile</p> <p>Key indicator: Industry of employment by Indigenous Status.</p> <p>Industries including:</p>

INTENDED OUTCOME	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous land and sea ranger (if available) Agriculture, forestry and finishing Cultural and rec relational services
Intermediate outcomes		
Future employment opportunities and career pathways for Indigenous people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of Indigenous people employed by WoC Promotion of Indigenous employees within the WoC program Indigenous employees leaving WoC for employment in another job 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPac)</p> <p>How many people who have been employed in the project in the last 12 months are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still working in the project Have left, employed in another job Have left, not employed Have left, unsure what they are doing <p><i>Suggested additional data collection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many people who have been employed in the project have been promoted to a more senior position within the program?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rangers have improved perception of employment and career opportunities 	<p>Source: Employee/participant survey</p> <p>Question to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you want to keep doing this work in the future? What other plans do you have about working in the future? Do you think your involvement in this project will help you to get other work in the future? <i>(If applicable)</i> Do you think the skills you have gained will be useful in the future?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase proportion of Indigenous school leavers accessing full-time, or part-time employment 	<p>Source: ABS Census 2006</p> <p>Key indicator: Destination of school leavers. Generally measured in four categories: fully engaged in work or study; not fully engaged in work or study; employed full-time (subset of people fully engaged in work or study); people studying full-time at a non-school institution (subset of people fully engaged in work or study).</p> <p>Note: Additional data may be available from local employment services.</p>
Improved levels of skills, knowledge and qualifications of Indigenous people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of training by Indigenous rangers Learning opportunities for students and young people 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPac)</p> <p>Existing data collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last 12 months how many people have completed training? In the last 12 months have any of the following training programs been completed? In the last 12 months, has your project been involved with the local school in any of the following activities? (junior ranger program, talks given by project personnel, traditional skills transfer, visits to country, other)

INTENDED OUTCOME	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reported skills and knowledge development by rangers Perceived knowledge and skills development for students and young people 	<p>Source: Employee/participant survey</p> <p>Question to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think of the training have you done as part of this project? How has it benefited you? Are you building your cultural skills and knowledge? What other learning or professional development opportunities have you had? How does your project work with schools or young people? What benefits does this have for students/young people? <p>Note: Qualitative discussions with local school staff and registered training organisations may be useful.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved training and educational outcomes for Indigenous people 	<p>Source: ABS Census 2006 – Indigenous profile</p> <p>Key indicator: Number of Indigenous people by region by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest year of school completed Level of non-school qualification Type of educational institution attending <p>Note: Additional regional or local information may be available from relevant Education departments, or individual schools.</p>
Physical and emotional health and well-being outcomes for Indigenous community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive impact on health and well-being 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPac)</p> <p>Review: Annual</p> <p>Existing data collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In your opinion, has the overall health and general wellbeing of project participants improved as a result of their project involvement?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal perspective of improved health and wellbeing linked to project activity 	<p>Source: Employee /participant survey</p> <p>Question to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you experienced any positive health and well-being outcomes? Do you think you have improved nutrition and/or fitness from your involvement in <i>WoC</i>? Have you experienced any positive outcomes regarding alcohol and substance abuse? Have you experienced any positive emotional health and well-being outcomes? (e.g. improved confidence and self-esteem, decreased stress and anxiety) <p>Note: Qualitative discussions with local health service staff may be useful.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in health indicators for Indigenous 	<p>Source: Relevant health department (eg NT Government Department of Health)</p>

INTENDED OUTCOME	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	people by region.	<p>Key indicator: Comparative Indigenous health and wellbeing statistics eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mortality rates ▪ Alcohol and substance abuse ▪ Prevalence of disease <p>Note: Other potential sources include the ABS Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples review.</p>
Immediate outcomes		
Paid employment opportunities for Indigenous rangers in land and sea management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paid employment contracts for Indigenous rangers ▪ Local business activity in project related areas 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPaC)</p> <p>Existing data collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indigenous people in contract ▪ Indigenous FTE ▪ To what extent does your project use local businesses for goods and services?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceptions of increased employment opportunities in land and sea management ▪ Self-reported job satisfaction ▪ Personal perceptions of the benefits of paid employment 	<p>Source: Employee/participant survey</p> <p>Question to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you feel WoC and related initiatives have provided more employment options for Indigenous people in sea and land management? ▪ What were your employment circumstances like before your involvement in WoC? ▪ How satisfied are you with your WoC employment? ▪ What difference has paid employment made for you and your family?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of Indigenous people earning an income from land and sea management ▪ Average income for Indigenous people by occupation 	<p>Source: ABS Census 2006 – Indigenous profile</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gross individual income by region ▪ Gross individual income by occupation by region <p>Note: Additional data from local employment services may be available.</p>
Training opportunities for Indigenous people in land and sea management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain or increase in training outcomes and opportunities 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPaC)</p> <p>Existing data collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal accredited training ▪ All other non-accredited training ▪ Total trained

INTENDED OUTCOME	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
		<p>Source: Employee/participant survey</p> <p>Question to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied are you with the training and professional development opportunities? What benefits have you experienced from the training and professional development opportunities? <p>Source: Relevant Educational Department (eg NT Government Department of Education and Training)</p> <p>Key indicators: Comparative indigenous education and training statistics eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student enrolment and attendance by course
Opportunities for elders and others with experience in caring for country to actively transfer cultural and traditional knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of elders and traditional owners in the project 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPaC)</p> <p><i>Suggested additional data collection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last 12 months how many elders or traditional owners have been involved in leading or delivering project activities? <p>Source: Employee/participant survey</p> <p>Question to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are elders and/or traditional owners involved in the project? What are the benefits of this involvement? <p>Note: Qualitative discussions with elders and traditional owners may be useful.</p>
Opportunities for community involvement by elders, traditional owners, women and young people in land and sea management activities facilitated by ranger groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement by target groups 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPaC)</p> <p>Existing data collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of filling in this report, what is the total number of project participants employed? (Male FT, Female FT, Total FT, Male PT, Female PT, Total PT, Total employed) <p><i>Suggested additional data collection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many project employees fit within the following age categories? (under 30 years of age, 30-50 years old, over 50 years)

INTENDED OUTCOME	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
Outputs/activities		
Project design and delivery involves traditional owners and respects Indigenous decision-making, governance regimes and land management accountabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement by traditional land owners in the development and design of projects 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPaC)</p> <p><i>Suggested additional data collection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What governance arrangements have been established to facilitate involvement and decision-making by traditional owners and Indigenous communities? (land management plans, steering committees, mentors, activities managed/undertaken by elders/traditional owners)
Planning and delivery involves partnership building and stakeholder consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholder involvement and project partnerships 	<p>Source: Existing reporting by project managers (SEWPaC)</p> <p>Existing data collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent does your project use local business for goods and services? ▪ Has your project been involved in any commercial activities? ▪ Has your project had partnerships with any of the following organisations? ▪ Has your project been involved with the local school?

8.3.1 SUGGESTED REPORTING TIMEFRAMES AND SAMPLING CRITERIA

It is proposed that reporting against the assessment framework be undertaken every two to three years.

The employee survey could be administered to a number of purposefully selected projects on a two to three year basis. The survey could be administered to one third of total projects selected in line with a criteria to capture a spread of projects. This would ensure a robust representation of projects while minimising reporting requirements for funded projects.

The criteria could include:

- a spread across large-scale and small-scale projects (based on number of employees)
- a spread across organisations that support several *WoC* projects and those that support only one *WoC* project
- representation across the Australian states and territories
- representation across regional and remote locations
- projects that employ women and involve elders
- a representation of projects that have co-funding arrangements with *IPA*
- the inclusion of a few projects with cross-tenure arrangements.

Based on the information collected from the employee/participant survey, the Department may wish to select a small number of projects to undertake follow-up case study research with, to provide a more in-depth demonstration of the social outcomes achieved.

The ABS Census will provide useful benchmarking and tracking data, and will be available for review and collation against the framework every five years.



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