



Australian Government



Reporting back...

2014-15

How Indigenous Ranger and Indigenous Protected Area programmes are working on country

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ISBN 978-1-925238-49-5 (PDF)

ISBN 978-1-925238-50-1 (HTML)

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Front cover: Fauna survey on Nyangumarta Warrarn IPA.

Photo © Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (WA)

Back cover: Paruku IPA (Lake Gregory). Photo © Kimberley Land Council

Please note that this report may contain images and names of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.

Reporting back...

Foreword

I am pleased to present this report which summarises the work of over 170 Indigenous land and sea management teams — the driving force behind Australia's Indigenous Ranger - Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) programmes.

Indigenous rangers play a vital role in managing Australia's land and sea country. Their work is instrumental in protecting and conserving Australia's natural and cultural assets, and brings with it strong social benefits through employment and economic opportunity for Indigenous people in remote communities.

Both programmes deliver important environmental outcomes and are highly valued by Indigenous communities as a way of providing meaningful work. They also contribute to improved education and community health outcomes.

In 2014-15, the Working on Country programme delivered 759 full-time equivalent ranger jobs in over 100 ranger groups, supporting the Australian Government's objective to improve employment outcomes for Indigenous people.

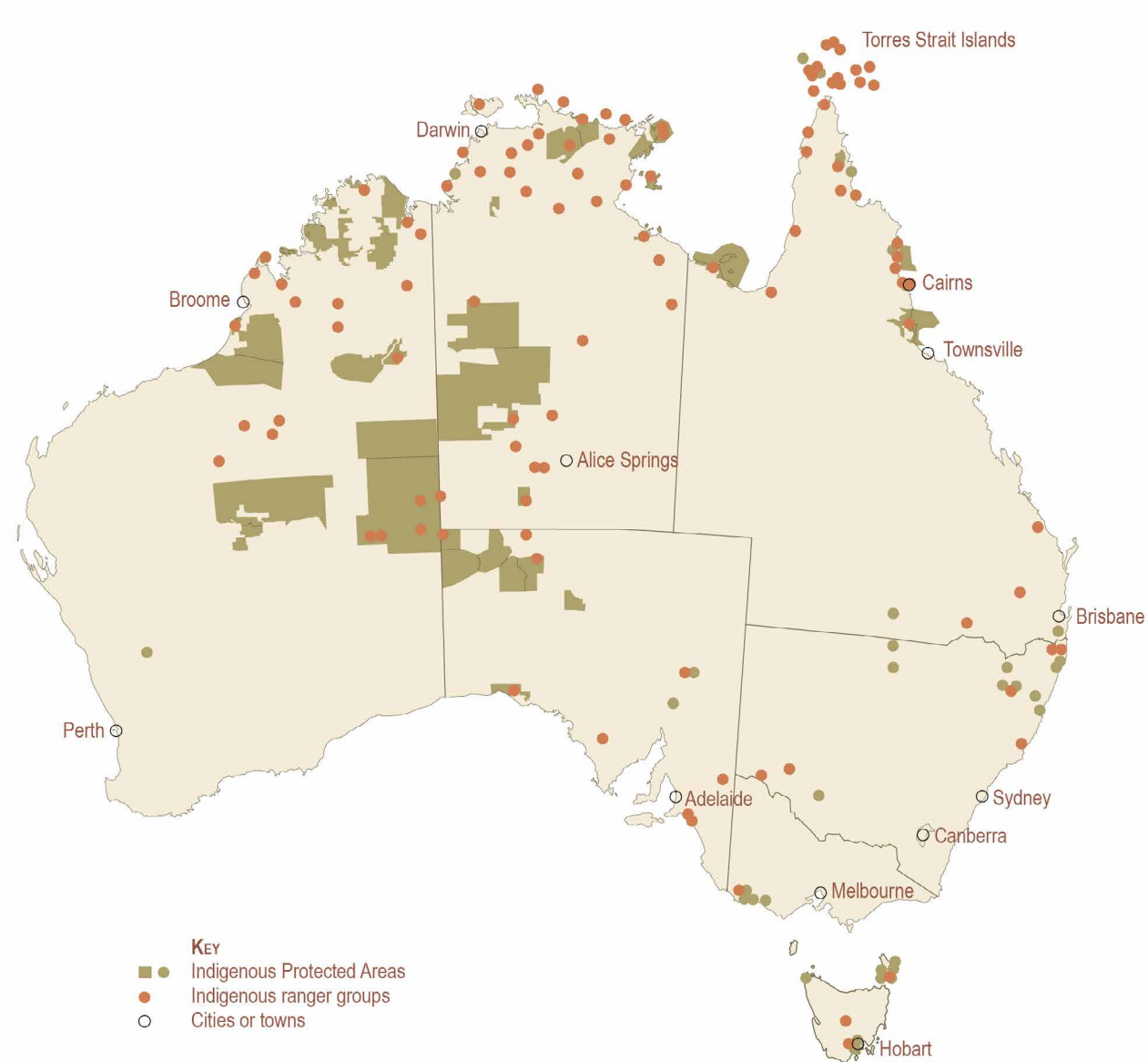
The Indigenous Protected Areas programme also provided employment by supporting Indigenous Australians to conserve their country as part of the National Reserve System for the benefit of all Australians.

I am a strong supporter of both programmes which strike the right balance between providing jobs for Indigenous people, environmental management and opportunities for commercial development.

I trust this report will be a useful resource and will continue to follow the progress of Indigenous land and sea management projects with great interest.

Minister for Indigenous Affairs,
Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion

IPA and WOC ranger groups, June 2015



Managing Indigenous land and seas



The Yappala IPA Rangers started in 2014-15 with three part-time rangers employed through the IPA programme. Photo © Yappala IPA Rangers

Across Australia, over 170 Indigenous land and sea management projects are supported by the Australian Government.

In 2014-15, over 100 Indigenous ranger groups and nearly 70 Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) were funded through the Working on Country (WOC) and IPA programmes.

Indigenous land and sea management (ILSM) teams provide essential environmental management across vast areas of Australia, often within Indigenous Protected Areas. They care for cultural heritage, control feral animals and weeds, reduce wildfires and work with researchers to help save threatened species. These activities deliver benefits for all Australians.

“IPAs and Ranger programmes offer the best opportunity to combine meaningful Indigenous employment with the fulfilment of cultural obligations by Traditional Owners.”

Margaret Rose, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation and Nyangumarta Traditional Owner

Each year we collect information from Indigenous ranger and IPA projects about the number of people employed, the types of activities they are doing, and the flow on benefits to the environment and local communities.

This report details just some of the many achievements of ILSM teams for the year 2014-15.

Note: Indigenous ranger and IPA projects are generally referred to as ILSM teams in this report.

Protecting country and culture

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) are an important part of the National Reserve System — conserving examples of our unique landscapes, plants and animals for future generations.

Four IPAs were dedicated in 2014-15 adding over seven million hectares to Australia's National Reserve System.

By the end of June 2015, there were a total of 69 dedicated IPAs covering over 57.9 million hectares making up more than 41 per cent of the National Reserve System.

Around 20 IPA projects remain in the consultation phase. This involves consulting with the community and stakeholders to produce an IPA management plan, a process that often takes several years.

Once all consultation projects are dedicated, IPAs will potentially make up more than 50 per cent of the National Reserve System.

Indigenous Protected Areas	State	Hectares
Warraberalgahl and Porumalgal	Qld	59
Kiwirrkurra	WA	4,268,254
Nyangumarta Warrarn	WA	2,827,240
Matuwa Kurrara Kurrara	WA	596,642
Total area		7,692,195

Table 1. Indigenous Protected Areas dedicated in 2014-15

“As a Nyangumarta elder, I am very proud of this (IPA) achievement for the Nyangumarta people. Having our IPA will allow us to maintain our significant sites, and look after our country – from the desert to the sea.”

Nyaparu Rose, CEO, Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation

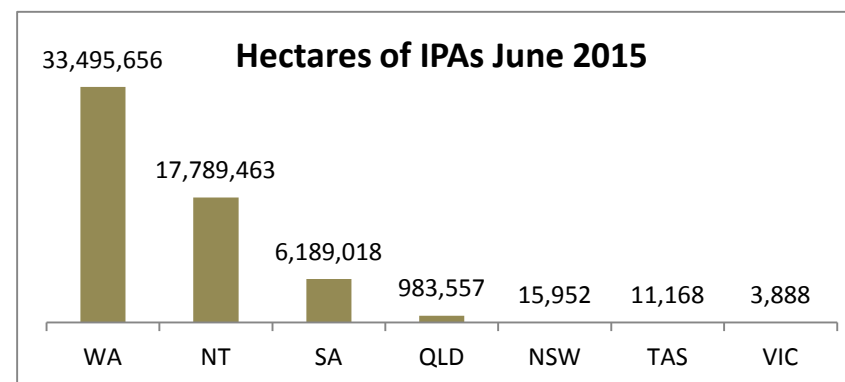


Figure 1. Area of IPAs per state/territory June 2015



Celebrating the declaration of the Nyangumarta Warrarn Indigenous Protected Area (WA). Photo © Tyson Mowarin and Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

CASE STUDY 1 - Indigenous rangers at the forefront of cyclone recovery (NT, QLD)

Local Indigenous ranger teams were at the forefront of the recovery effort after Cyclone Lam smashed its way through Arnhem Land communities in February 2015.

Many people see the tasks of Indigenous rangers as environmentally related; organising controlled burns, surveying wildlife and controlling weeds. But the local knowledge and skills of rangers becomes invaluable in emergency situations.

When Indigenous rangers first heard that Cyclone Lam was heading towards them, they ensured remote residents were evacuated to towns with cyclone shelters and collected fuel and over 1,000 litres of water in preparation for the post-cyclone clean-up.

After the cyclone passed, the rangers were back in action, working closely with service providers and the police to assess the damage and prioritise their work. They cleared tracks, took water and fuel to remote homelands, ensured generators were working and removed trees from power lines so electricity could be restored as soon as possible.

Dhimurru Ranger Milika Marika recalls the damage after Cyclone Lam.

“The first thing we noticed was how many trees had fallen down on houses... It was good to be able to do something about it.”

The Dhimurru and Crocodile Islands rangers worked together to clear the road from Mooroongga Island airport to the community.

Meanwhile, the Crocodile Islands Rangers of Milingimbi and neighbouring homelands were also busy patching roofs and clearing communities of fallen trees.

“Our rangers are trusted by the community. After the recent cyclone, the rangers were among the first on the ground helping with the clean-up before the emergency people arrived.”

George Milaypuma, Crocodile Islands Ranger

Help also arrived from further afield. The Tjuwanpa Women Rangers team travelled from Alice Springs to Milingimbi to assist.

In a similar spirit of cooperation in Queensland, Mandingalbay Yidinji, Giringun and Gidarjil rangers travelled to Yeppoon to assist Tangaroa Blue and Darumbal Traditional Owners with a beach clean-up after Cyclone Marcia hit in February 2015.



A Crocodile Islands Ranger helps repair cyclone damage at Mooroongga.
Photo © Crocodile Islands Rangers

Working on country

Many Indigenous Australians have a special relationship to country — land or sea — and a cultural responsibility to care for it based on laws and traditions passed down by their ancestors.

Maintaining cultural connections to country

Cultural activities allow Indigenous people to maintain or renew their cultural connections to country. In 2014-15 over 90 per cent of projects reported carrying out cultural management activities. Examples include:

- **Cultural burning** - The Warburton Men Rangers reported that traditional ecological knowledge plays an essential role in their burning programme. Burns are conducted during *yurangka* (hibernating season) which begins when sand goannas go into their burrows for the winter and ends when they reappear in the warmer months. (WA)
- **Cultural hunting** - Ngarrindjeri Rangers collected swan eggs, an important traditional activity that helps maintain their connection to country. To ensure sustainability, some eggs are left in the nest for the parents to hatch. (SA)
- **Fish trap maintenance** - Nyul Nyul Rangers completed mapping a traditional fish trap system at Weedong and did some restoration work. (WA)
- **Re-establishing cultural burns** - Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Rangers attended a traditional burning workshop at Cape York. A cultural fire practitioner from Queensland travelled to Tasmania to help establish cultural burns on Aboriginal lands. (Tas, Qld)
- **Aboriginal art garden** - TIDE Rangers helped create an Aboriginal art garden at the Manning Regional Art Gallery in Taree. The aims were to create an attractive feature in the town and build relationships in the community. Feedback has been positive. (NSW)
- **Bush plants guide** - The Blackstone Women Rangers from the Ngaanyatjarra IPA produced a traditional plant guide. (WA)

“We made a plants book so our children can recognise plants and gather food from them. Showing them traditional way of gathering and cooking is important so they do it the proper way for our future generations.”

Maimie Butler, Blackstone Women Ranger



Ngarrindjeri Rangers collect swan eggs, a traditional food.
Photo © Ngarrindjeri Rangers



Blackstone Women Rangers show *yiniti* seeds used to make jewellery. Photo © Blackstone Women Rangers



Marcus Ferguson from Ngunya Jargoon IPA with a threatened long-nosed potoroo. Photo © Firesticks



Kija Rangers Imran Paddy and Andrew Mung surveying for Gouldian finches. Photo © Kimberley Land Council

Monitoring and managing wildlife

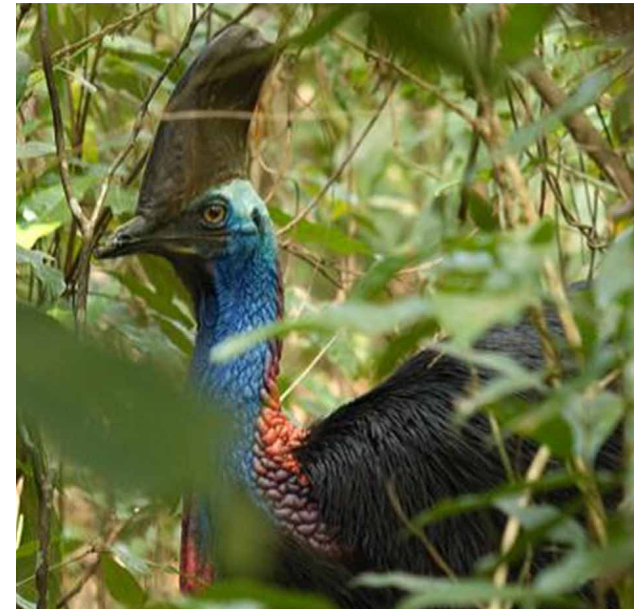
Threatened species are plants and animals at risk of extinction in the wild. Over 75 per cent of ILSM teams reported monitoring or managing threatened species, often in partnership with research or conservation agencies. Other non-threatened wildlife was also monitored and managed.

- **Biodiversity monitoring** - Rangers from four Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) — Minyumai and Ngunya Jargoon on the coast, and Wattleridge and Boorabee and The Willows on the tablelands — are working in partnership with Firesticks Project staff to monitor the effects of contemporary Indigenous burning on biodiversity. Two years of baseline monitoring on fire responsive birds and mammals has now been completed and the monitored plots are being burnt. The monitoring also found 47 threatened species, such as the squirrel glider and turquoise parrot, on the four IPAs. (NSW)
- **Turtle research camp** - Data collected by the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers for 10 years has shown an average of nine turtles nesting per night and high hatchling success rates. (NT)
- **Mutton bird survey** - Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Ranger crews surveyed mutton birds on three island IPAs. The crews checked how many burrows were occupied per transect and weighed some birds to gauge how healthy they were compared to previous years. (TAS)
- **Threatened bird habitat management** - The Kija Rangers have been engaged by Rangelands Natural Resource Management to conduct prescribed burning on around 720,000 hectares of pastoral station land in the east Kimberley. This fire management aims to protect Gouldian finch and purple-crowned fairy-wren habitat. (WA)

- **Southern Cassowary Project** - The endangered cassowary is one of Australia's most remarkable birds. The Kalan Rangers teamed up with CSIRO scientists to carry out four field surveys studying the abundance and distribution of cassowaries on Cape York. The rangers paid special attention to the impact of feral pigs, cattle and forest fires, and helped develop plans to manage these threats and improve the bird's habitat. (Qld)
- **Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre** - Yuku-Baja-Muliku were in the process of building a centre and training Indigenous rangers to take care of sick and injured sea turtles around the Cooktown area. (Qld)
- **Northern quoll surveys** - Cane toad colonisation of Northern Australia has been associated with crashes in quoll populations. After several unsuccessful quoll surveys, the Chuulangun Rangers from Cape York found the footprints of a northern quoll during a rock art survey. The rangers have installed a motion camera to try and capture images of quolls using the rock shelter. (Qld)
- **Crocodile management** - Nyikina Mangala Rangers worked with staff from the Department of Parks and Wildlife to remove an aggressive crocodile from a popular fishing and camping spot following reports from the public. The crocodile named Pay Day, was taken to a crocodile park where he will be introduced to a female. (WA)



Nyikina Mangala Rangers remove a 3.6 metre problem crocodile. Photo © Kimberley Land Council



Southern cassowary. Photo © Kalan Enterprises



Kalan Ranger records data. Photo © Kalan Enterprises

Using fire to manage country

For thousands of years, Indigenous Australians lit small fires across the landscape to clear paths, hunt animals and create new plant growth. More recently, fire has been used as a tool in contemporary land management.

Around 88 per cent of Indigenous Land and Sea Management (ILSM) teams reported carrying out fire management activities such as patch burning and asset protection. Some also reported helping local fire services control wildfires.

- **Patch burns** - During winter, the six ranger teams of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands lit hundreds of patch fires to create fire breaks, control weeds and encourage the growth of certain plants like the rare Everard Garland Lily. (SA)
- **Controlling wildfires** - Nyul Nyul and Karajarri rangers worked with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to successfully control the spread of wildfires. By back-burning along roads, the rangers helped increase the width of fire breaks to prevent wildfires jumping roads. (WA)



Ranger Sammy Dodd from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands conducts patch burning. Photo © APY Land Management

- **On-ground and aerial burning** - The Garawa and Waanyi Garawa Rangers carried out fire planning with stakeholders. In the dry season, the rangers completed their burning programme. (NT)
- **Using fire to control weeds** - The Minyurnai IPA Rangers are working with the Firesticks Project to trial fire as a method of controlling the highly invasive grass, setaria. (NSW)



Minyurnai IPA Rangers, working with the Firesticks Project, trial using fire to control setaria, a highly invasive wetland grass. Photo © Firesticks



Karajarri Rangers helping the Department of Fire and Emergency Services with roadside burns. Photo © Kimberley Land Council



A Ngurrara Ranger tests a water sample. Photo © Kimberley Land Council

Managing freshwater

Water is vital to life and traditional water sources are an important part of Indigenous Australian's culture. Nearly 50 per cent of ILSM teams reported freshwater management activities, some in conjunction with resource management partners.

- **Water management** - Under the direction of Traditional Owners, Ngurrara Rangers cleaned out two water holes. Ten rangers participated in a week of water monitoring training, and five rangers helped to install and monitor bores. (WA)
- **Waterhole maintenance** - The Anmatyerre Rangers, guided by Traditional Owner priorities, have maintained four rockholes and fixed fences around rockholes in the Mulga Bore area. (NT)
- **Wetland fencing** - The Kowanyama Rangers fenced Red Lilly and Crayfish Hole to keep out stock with excellent results. (Qld)

Controlling weeds and revegetating land

Nearly 90 per cent of ILSM teams reported managing vegetation, many in consultation with natural resource management agencies.

- **Boxthorn control** - The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Chappell Island crew have planted hundreds of native seedlings where boxthorns once stood. (Tas)
- **Revegetation work** - The Budj Bim Rangers, with assistance of International Volunteers, planted several thousand native trees and grasses along the west bank of Lake Condah within the IPA. (Vic)
- **Mimosa control** - The li-Anthawirriyarr Rangers conducted on-ground chemical treatments and two aerial sprays of mimosa in 2014-15. Surveys show good progress towards controlling the nationally listed weed in the Arafura wetland. (NT)
- **Mathiesons Road project** - Over the past three years, the Githabul Rangers have successfully treated 450 hectares of lantana infested land in Toonumbar State Forest — a culturally significant area as it was a pathway for original custodians. The rangers have also planted around 10,000 trees at the site to reduce the spread of exotic weeds. (NSW)



A Githabul Ranger treats invasive weeds. Photo © Githabul Rangers



Yukultji Napangarti Ward holding a feral cat she hunted on the Kiwirrkurra Indigenous Protected Area. Photo © Kate Crossing

Controlling feral animals

Over 75 per cent of ILSM teams reported surveying or managing feral animals. Nearly 50 per cent targeted feral herbivores and over 30 per cent feral cats or pigs. A number of teams also worked with their communities to explain the damage feral animals do to country.

- **Cat hunting strategy** - Research suggests that regular cat hunting around the Kiwirrkurra community is assisting the survival of two iconic species, the bilby and the great desert skink. To help expand the traditional hunting of cats in threatened species habitats, hunters on the Kiwirrkurra IPA can now have their travel costs reimbursed. A dozen cats and one fox have been removed in this reporting period, with new hunters becoming involved more recently. (WA)
- **Feral pig control** - Bulgul Rangers working with partners surveyed an estimated 1,500 feral pigs in their wetland areas. Two aerial feral pig culls removed around 60 per cent of the population, around 450 in December 2014 and 460 in mid 2015. (NT)

Managing and educating visitors

Many tourists are interested in learning more about Australia's Indigenous people. Over 60 per cent of ILSM teams reported managing visitor sites and carrying out visitor communication and education.

- **Promoting a walking trail** - Mandingalbay Yidinji Rangers hosted representatives from Tourism Tropical North Queensland to showcase the Mayi Bagan Trail and cultural tourism opportunities, including the East Trinity boat cruise and wetland tour. (Qld)
- **Mungo Visitor Centre** - Two Willandra Lakes Region Rangers helped maintain Mungo Visitor Centre facilities. The Programme Manager developed a new visitor centre display to educate visitors about Aboriginal culture and ask them to show their respect by not collecting stone artefacts. (NSW)
- **Maintaining visitor sites** - The Queensland Murray-Darling Rangers reported maintaining several cultural heritage sites that are open to visitors. Activities included fencing sensitive sites, weed removal and erosion control. (Qld)



The Karajarri Rangers installed an interpretative sign at Purnturrrpurnturr on the Karajarri Indigenous Protected Area. Photo © Kimberley Land Council

Looking after sea country

For coastal Indigenous communities, the sea is part of 'country'. Around 35 per cent of ILSM teams reported managing sea country.

- **Ghost nets** - The Yirralka Rangers conducted six ghost net patrols along over 42 kilometres of the Laynhapuy IPA coastline. They collected 105 nets or around 2.5 nets per kilometre. This is almost double the number of nets collected in 2013-14. Their report suggests this increase is partly due to Cyclones Nathan and Lam which hit Arnhem Land in early 2015. (NT)
- **Climate change research** - Climate change is a very real issue for Torres Strait communities who already see climate related changes happening around them. Torres Strait Indigenous Ranger teams were actively involved in supporting climate change research — monitoring issues such as coastal erosion, coral health and turtle nesting — as well as assisting with the delivery of local climate change education and planning workshops. (Qld)
- **Traditional use and marine resource agreements** - A number of Queensland Indigenous ranger groups (e.g. Yirrganydji, Lama Lama, Yuku-Baja-Muliku and Girringun) and their communities have developed an agreement with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to manage their sea country resources for the future. Agreements differ, but describe how Traditional Owner groups wish to manage traditional hunting of turtle and dugong and the role of rangers in compliance and environmental monitoring. (Qld)
- **Fish research** - The Anindilyakwa Rangers worked with NT Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPIF) staff to gather data on why some coastal reef species of fish are declining across the tropics. They recorded fish length and sex, assessed parasites, and took DNA and age samples. (NT)
- **Search and rescue** - The Bardi Jawi Rangers were part of a search and rescue team that found four men who went missing after their boat ran out of fuel. At the end of a day's search, the men were spotted by a police helicopter and picked up by the rangers. (WA)



Yirralka Rangers on a sea patrol. Photo Dept. of the Prime Minister and Cabinet



Torres Strait Land and Sea Rangers monitor coastal erosion as part of climate change research. Photo © Torres Strait Regional Authority

CASE STUDY 2 – IPAs, the ‘backbone’ of a flexible employment model (WA)

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) are providing the ‘backbone’ of flexible employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people in remote western desert country.

In 2014-15, Indigenous workers participated in 1,000 days of land management employment. Around half the employment was funded through the IPA programme with the remainder provided by other partners.

The Birriliburu and Matuwa Kurrara Kurrara IPA projects have been vital in getting people to reconnect with country through employment in land management activities.

Traditional Owners realised they could use their part-time and casual IPA land management workers to develop a reliable workforce to engage with partners in the region.

A culturally appropriate, flexible employment model was developed, allowing workers to learn work skills at their own pace while balancing their obligations to family and culture.

Through a staged approach, work is first undertaken as a ranger on Birriliburu IPA. This allows land management skills to be developed in a culturally supportive environment. Then a more structured work environment is experienced on the Matuwa Kurrara Kurrara IPA, which is co-managed with Parks and Wildlife Western Australia.

“With ranger work, more and more people are going back on country. They feel more confident about it, know it better”

Lena Long, Traditional Owner

The final step is delivering professional environmental services such as mine site rehabilitation to companies like Northern Star Resources.

A key outcome for the community and their land management partners has been a steady increase in employment across all projects and an 80 per cent employee retention rate. This has positive flow-on social, cultural and environmental outcomes in this remote desert region.



Structured workplace training and employment. Photo © Central Desert Native Title Services

Supporting employment and training

Providing jobs in Indigenous communities

Indigenous land and sea management (ILSM) projects create meaningful jobs for Indigenous men and women — looking after country.

In 2014-15, approximately 2,582 Indigenous Australians were employed full-time, part-time or casually through Indigenous Ranger - Working on Country (WOC) and Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) projects:

- 1,937 Indigenous Ranger (WOC) jobs (759 full-time equivalent contract positions)
- 645 IPA Indigenous jobs.

The majority, 1,647, worked casually; a further 484 worked part-time and 451 worked full-time, mostly as rangers.

The retention rate of full and part-time employees was high at 84 per cent, with only 148 rangers reported to have left the programmes. Of those, at least 23 have found other jobs.

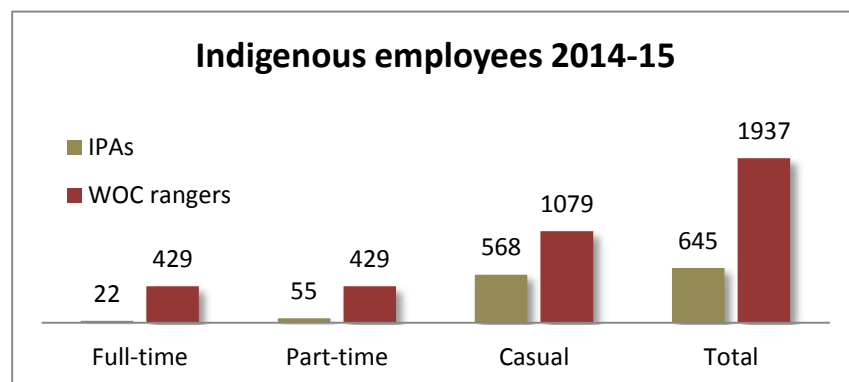


Figure 2. Number of Indigenous Australians employed by Indigenous Ranger (WOC) and IPA programmes in 2014-15

Land and sea management projects are an important source of jobs for Indigenous people, particularly in remote and regional areas where other sources of employment are limited.

Around 70 per cent of Indigenous land and sea management employment occurred in the Northern Territory and Western Australia which correlates with a greater area of IPAs in these regions.

Indigenous Ranger (WOC) groups manage 65 per cent of IPAs, they also work on; Indigenous and other privately owned lands, public lands managed by councils, and state and territory parks and reserves.



Figure 3. Distribution of Indigenous Ranger (WOC) and IPA employees in 2014-15

Increasing job opportunities for women

Part-time and flexible employment arrangements are encouraged to increase the employment of women in Indigenous land and sea management (ILSM).

Indigenous women made up 36 percent of ILSM employees when casual work was included. The number of full-time and part-time women rangers in the Working on Country (WOC) programme was lower at just over 20 per cent.



Three members from the recently formed Gooniyandi Women Rangers' team.
Photo © Kimberley Land Council

- **A new women's ranger group** - March 2014 was a momentous occasion for Gooniyandi Rangers when cultural advisors appointed four permanent casual women to form the Gooniyandi Women Rangers. The four positions are funded through fee-for-service contracts. In May the rangers completed their first fee-for-service work with the Department of Parks and Wildlife. (WA)

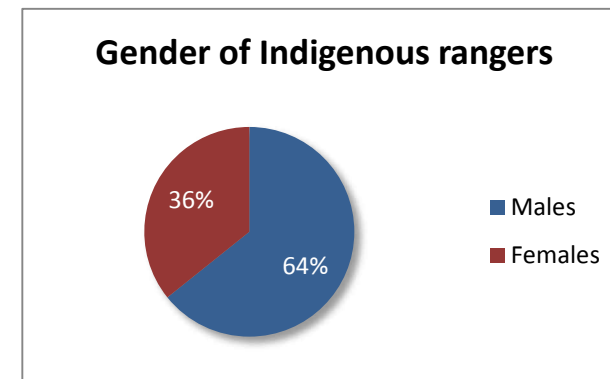


Figure 4. Gender of WOC and IPA Indigenous rangers (includes casuals) in 2014-15

Developing career pathways

Advancement opportunities within Indigenous ranger groups include the roles of senior ranger, supervisor, cultural advisor and programme coordinator.

In 2014-15, around a third of WOC and IPA supervisors and programme coordinators were Indigenous.

To support Indigenous career progression, several Indigenous organisations offer development and leadership programmes.

- **Ranger development programme** - The Kimberley Land Council employed a mentor through complimentary funding, to support rangers to reach their work and personal goals. Five of the Kimberley ranger coordinator positions are now filled by Indigenous people. The mentor also works with new senior rangers to ensure they receive a formal induction to the role and are supported in their new positions. (WA)
- **Martu leadership programme** - Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ) runs a leadership programme for Martu Rangers in partnership with World Vision Australia. The programme supports participants to take a more active leadership role within their ranger teams. It also offers a range of experiences and training, giving participants the skills and confidence to interact more successfully in Western society. (WA)

Support staff roles, such as administration and information technology, were funded through operational expenses by a number of ILSM projects. Some of these positions were filled by Indigenous people.

Supporting higher education

Indigenous employees undertake training to equip them for work as rangers and further their career opportunities.

In 2014-15 around 70 per cent of ILSM teams reported facilitating accredited training in conservation and land management for their employees. This is quite an achievement given over 50 per cent of teams found it difficult to access training for various reasons.

In total, 490 employees were studying for certificates and 111 employees had completed them.

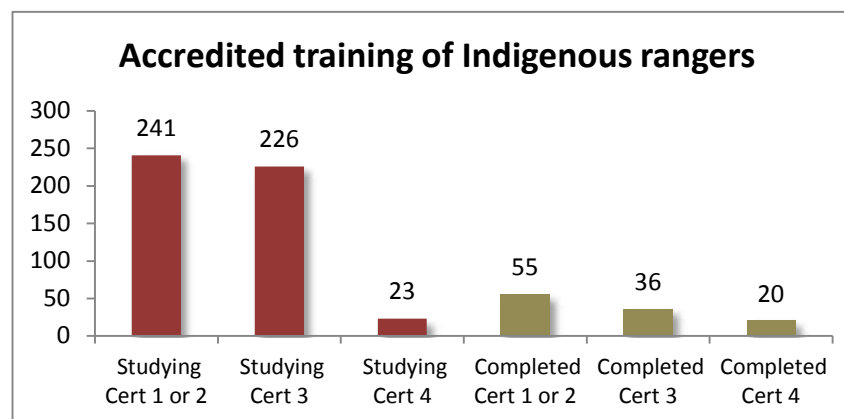


Figure 5. Number of WOC and IPA rangers doing accredited training in 2014-15

CASE STUDY 3 - Rangers undertake fisheries compliance training (NT)

In June 2015, 19 Indigenous rangers undertook training to expand monitoring and surveillance capacity in Northern Territory fisheries.

Rangers from Daly River, Crocodile Islands and Finniss River travelled to Maningrida in West Arnhem Land to join the Djelk Rangers in training for a Certificate II in Fisheries Compliance.

As part of their role managing the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area, the Djelk Rangers undertake surveillance and monitoring for the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, Customs and Quarantine and the Department of Agriculture. Acting Djelk Ranger Manager Dominic Nicholls said.

“This cert II training is an important step in rangers contributing to protecting our natural assets. It expands our capacity to support Fisheries and Water Police in managing NT fisheries.”

This qualification is for people in a support role at local level, working with an agency or organisation that has legislated responsibility for the management of fisheries, both wild-catch and aquaculture.

“It is important to invest in the on-ground capacity of Indigenous ranger groups as they have the capacity to exponentially widen the reach of partner agencies,” Dominic said.

“This is a win for everyone; it supports people, the jobs they do and the NT community.”

Djelk Rangers have been monitoring the coastline of their 670,000 hectare Indigenous Protected Area for more than 20 years. Dominic said they are looking to the long-term capability of the ranger programme. Beyond Certificate II, Djelk has its sights set on Certificate III where qualified rangers will have formal enforcement powers, on par with national park rangers.



Djelk Rangers work with Australian customs staff. Photo © Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation

Meeting rangers' training needs

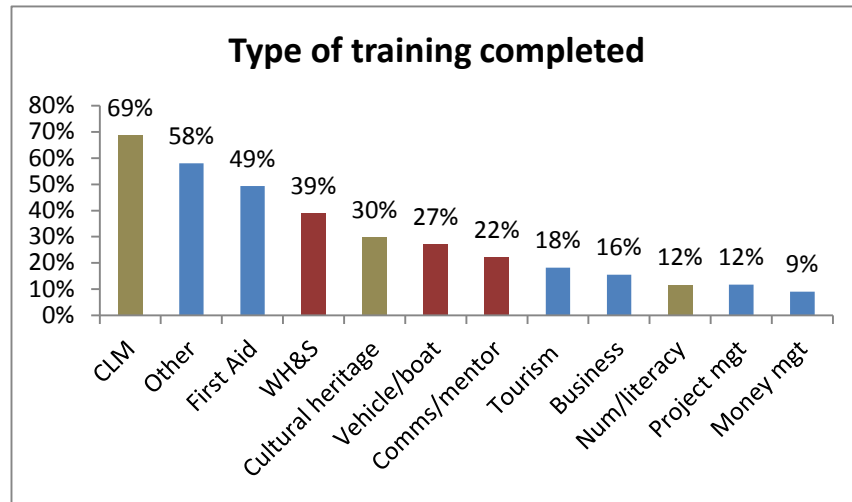


Figure 6. Type of training undertaken by WOC and IPA rangers in 2014-15

In addition to conservation and land management (CLM), 254 employees undertook non-accredited training. Courses included first aid, work health and safety (WH&S), cultural heritage, coxswain's licences, firearms handling, leadership and digital media.

- **Ranger Training Officer** - The Central Land Council's Ranger Training Officer ensures that each ranger receives accredited training in a wide range of core skills including; 4WD and quad bike training, first aid, chainsaw operation, and safe chemical handling. Rangers also receive training in other specialised skills, for example; welding, multi-media, fire management and heavy machinery operation. (NT)
- **Fauna survey and training** - Ten Gangalidda-Garawa Rangers took part in an eight day survey at Hells Gate to gain skills in trapping, and identifying and handling animals to allow for future surveys. (Qld)
- **Fisheries training** - Djelk, Dhimurru, li-Anthawirriyarra, Gumurr Marthakal and Anindilyakwa rangers participated in a fisheries Certificate II course in Measuring and Analysis. This will help rangers collect data critical to fisheries management. (NT)



Gangalidda-Garawa Rangers set up a harp trap to survey bats. Photo © Carpentaria Land Council



Northern Territory Arnhem Land rangers undertake fish measuring and analysis training. Photo © NT Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries

Achieving social and economic benefits



Connecting with country on the preminghana camp. Photo © Tasmania Aboriginal Centre



A Yuku-Baja-Muliku Ranger shows Junior Rangers how to tag a turtle
Photo © Yuku Baja Muliku Junior Rangers

Engaging with communities and schools

ILSM projects have broad social benefits. Nearly 80 per cent of ILSM teams reported engaging with their local community by; consulting Traditional Owners, working with schools and junior ranger groups, organising visits to country and sharing cultural knowledge.

- **Culture camp** - The Wagiman Guwardagun Rangers organised a culture camp at Sawmill for over 60 Wagiman people. The community hailed the camp as a great success. (NT)
- **preminghana [sic] camp** - Around 140 Aboriginal community members attended the camp, taking part in cultural activities and visiting cultural sites. (Tas)

“Land is an integral part of Aboriginal people’s social and emotional wellbeing. People don’t always get those opportunities to go on country... the camp helps to make the connection easier.”

Allison Cann, Regional Manager, Tasmania Aboriginal Centre

- **White Ribbon Campaign** - The Tjuwanpa Women Rangers used the Sports Weekend and White Ribbon Day to help address the issue of domestic violence within their community. (NT)
- **Kids on Country** - The Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers have delivered presentations to eight local school groups, transferring traditional knowledge on guided tours of the Bunya Mountains. (Qld)
- **Land management story** - The Arafura Swamp Rangers made a short video for the Ramingining community showing the cultural history of the area and explaining ranger activities such as managing feral pigs and weeds. The video won best story at the Northern Territory Natural Resource Management Awards in 2015. (NT)
- **Junior Rangers** - Yuku-Baja-Muliku Rangers hosted several junior rangers activities including monitoring sea turtles. (Qld)

CASE STUDY 4 – Indigenous ‘Learning on Country’ students graduate (NT)

The first two Indigenous Learning on Country students recently graduated at a Batchelor Institute award ceremony held in Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land.

Five Indigenous ranger groups from Arnhem Land have entered formal partnerships with their community schools to participate in the Learning on Country programme.

The programme has a strong focus on ‘two-way’ learning and students are engaged through activities that use contemporary science and traditional knowledge to care for country; with Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) providing the perfect outdoor classroom.

Gutingarra Yunupingu and Mundatjngu Mununggurr from Yirrkala School became the first Learning on Country students to graduate with a Certificate Level II in Conservation and Land Management. Joining them in the ceremony were two Dhimurru Rangers, Anthony Crafter and Grace Wunungmurra who were also awarded Level II Certificates in Conservation and Land Management.

Learning on Country Coordinator, Dr Jonathan Wearne, was delighted not only with the achievement of the Yirrkala School students, but how Dhimurru and the Yirrkala School worked together to develop the next generation of rangers and future leaders of the community.

“Dhimurru have seized the opportunity to bring Learning on Country into their core business ... Learning on Country events are an opportunity for Dhimurru to reach even further out into the Yolngu community they serve and to give rangers an opportunity to develop and grow into leadership roles.”

Dr Jonathan Wearne, Learning on Country Coordinator

Central to the success of this programme are staff from Yirrkala School and Batchelor Institute and the Dhimurru Rangers. Especially their Senior Cultural Advisor, Djalinda Yunupingu, and Senior Rangers Gathapura Mununggurr and Yupunu Marika, who planned and provided consistent support to students on country and in the classroom.

“The Learning on Country programme draws deeply on several decades of innovation in educational theory and practice by Yirrkala School and the Yambirrp Schools Council. The Principal of Yirrkala School and Principal in Training have been fine custodians of this tradition ...”

Dr Jonathan Wearne, Learning on Country Coordinator

The two Learning on Country graduates have accepted employment, Mundatjngu will work at Dhimurru and Gutingarra at the Yirrkala Arts Centre.

Seven more Learning on Country students at Yirrkala School are on track to finish their Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management and secondary studies in 2016.



(L to R) Katrina Hudson, Mundatjngu Mununggurr, Cheryl O'Dwyer, Gutingarra Yunupingu, Jonathan Wearne, Grace Wunungmurra and Anthony Crafter.

Photo © Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation

Building networks

ILSM teams reported a range of meetings, workshops, conferences and ranger exchanges which provided valuable networking opportunities.

- **World Parks Congress** - This once-a-decade event was attended by more than 6,000 participants from 170 countries. A number of ILSM teams reported attending the congress in Sydney in November 2014 and most also gave presentations. (NSW)
- **Central Land Council (CLC) Ranger Camp** - 130 rangers attended the annual ranger training camp. Rangers came from 11 teams managed by the CLC and four teams managed by other organisations. In addition to land management training, activities included Quit Smoking and exercise sessions, a bush-wok cooking contest, a 'Great Race', and radio and media interviews with the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA). (NT)
- **Smackdown** - About 60 Kimberley rangers participated in the annual Smackdown literacy and numeracy challenge. This event, held on the Karajarri IPA, is designed to develop communication and problem solving skills. (WA)



Ngurrara and Gooniyandi Rangers work together on a Smackdown challenge. Photo © Kimberley Land Council

Working with partners

Partners contribute to many ILSM projects and include; conservation and research groups, industry, governments, and philanthropic groups.

- **Co-management** - Martu Traditional Owners manage the Matuwa and Kurrara Kurrara IPA in partnership with Western Australian Department of Parks and Wildlife. A 1,100 hectare predator-proof compound has been constructed on Matuwa for the reintroduction of threatened species such as bilbies and golden bandicoots. Gorgon Gas is a funding partner. (WA)
- **Warru Kaninytjaku project** - This project has helped bring the warru (black-footed rock wallaby) back from the brink of extinction in SA. The Warru Kaninytjaku Rangers collaborate with Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Land Management, Natural Resources Alinytjara-Wilurara (NRAW), Monarto Zoo and the Warru Recovery Team. (SA)

"I really enjoy working with other organisations and with scientists who come out to the lands. We are all working together for the same thing, to look after the warru."

Ethan Dagg, Warru Field Officer



Jacob Mackenzie holds a baby warru (black-footed rock wallaby). Photo © APY Land Management

Developing commercial activities

In 2014-15, around 65 per cent of ILSM teams reported undertaking commercial activities to generate additional income and jobs. The main activities were fee-for-service contracts (natural and cultural resource management), tourism activities, carbon abatement projects, sustainable grazing and wildlife products.

- **North Kimberley carbon abatement businesses** - Ranger groups working across the Dambimangari, Wilinggin, Unguu and Balangarra IPAs are conducting 'right way' fire to care for their country, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and develop carbon businesses.

The ranger groups use early dry season burns to reduce the intensity of wildfires later in the year, which decreases carbon emissions. They have been credited with over 290,000 Australian Carbon Credit Units for their fire management projects registered under the Carbon Farming Initiative in the last two years (2013-15). Sale of these carbon credits is creating remote area jobs, sustaining traditional practices and benefiting the environment. (WA)



Early dry season burns help to reduce carbon emissions from wildfires.
Photo © Kimberley Land Council

- **Fee-for-service activities** - The Kalan, Lama Lama, Chuulangun, Nanum Wunghim and Marpoon rangers all delivered natural resource management services in Cape York. (Qld)
- **Sea patrols** - A number of coastal ranger groups in the Northern Territory carried out patrols to monitor boating and fishing activity for NT Fisheries. (NT)
- **Sustainable grazing** - Angas Downs Rangers developed a cattle management plan. The rangers branded, de-horned and castrated about 140 cattle. They have also culled or sold around 120 bulls and nearly 300 wild horses. (NT)
- **Campground management** - In the Kaanju Ngaachi IPA, Chuulangun Rangers issued a total of 82 camping permits to campground visitors, totalling 209 camper nights. (Qld)
- **Campground management** - Yalata IPA Rangers installed signs around Yalata Beach and carried out regular camping permit patrols to raise revenue over the visitor season. (SA)



A number of ILSM teams like the Ngurrara Rangers earn income through issuing camping permits. Photo © Kimberley Land Council

CASE STUDY 5 – The Riverland Ranger project has positive social benefits (SA)

The Riverland Indigenous Ranger project is not only looking after country, but providing much needed training, employment and self-esteem for local Aboriginal people.

A team of six Indigenous rangers and a coordinator work primarily on Calperum and Taylorville stations in the Riverland region in the north-east of the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin.

Key parts of the Riverland Indigenous Ranger project include engaging with local schools, maintaining Indigenous cultures, and encouraging the transfer of traditional knowledge from Indigenous elders to younger community members.

The *Most Significant Change Evaluation Report - 2015*, found that the Riverland Indigenous Ranger project delivered positive social change for participants, their families and the Riverland Aboriginal community.

The project is a partnership between the Australian Government, South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board and the Australian Landscapes Trust.

“My confidence has built up slowly but surely. Before you wouldn’t get boo out of me. I’d just stand there and listen, and I’d just laugh, but now I’ll say something. These fellas, they make me talk. That’s all right.”

Amanda Morgan, Riverland Ranger at Calperum

“My youngest, he’s eight years old, wants to be a Calperum Ranger and my kids are proud of me. I can actually stand on my own two feet and do it all. It makes me feel great.”

Karmal Milsom, Riverland Ranger at Calperum



Riverland Rangers Karmal Milsom and Amanda Morgan surveying heritage.
Photo © Karmal Milsom



Riverland Rangers carrying out fire management. Photo © Charles Tambiah

Improving health and wellbeing

In addition to providing meaningful employment, ILSM projects help to connect rangers and communities with their culture and country. Over 50 per cent of ILSM teams reported a noticeable improvement in the health and wellbeing of their employees.

- **Blackstone Walk** - Blackstone Rangers and local elders shared cultural knowledge with 60 community members who walked the 70 kilometre Blackstone Walk over seven nights. Healthy lifestyle staff noted a mean blood sugar reduction of 1.4 points. (WA)
- **Dalabon rock art walk** - The Mimal Rangers helped organise a two week cultural walk for around 25 Traditional Owners and 20 school children as part of the Dalabon Rock Art Project. (NT)
- **Walk on Country** - The Thamarrurr Rangers and Wadeye Health Clinic organised the first Walk on Country. Outcomes included, Traditional Owners visiting and hearing stories about their country and health benefits associated with walking on country. (NT)
- **Culture camp** - The Wattleridge and Tarriwa Kurrukun Rangers organised a five day culture camp. Over 50 Banbai members joined activities such as Aboriginal art classes, learning about local Aboriginal tools and celebrating culture. (NSW)



Blackstone Walk. Photo © Blackstone Rangers

The Indigenous ranger programme is “keeping people out of jail, people are happier, the communities are happier, the elders are happier [and] the country’s healthier.”

Phillip McCarthy, Bardi Jawi Ranger Coordinator

Thanks...

Many thanks for your detailed reports, photos and stories.

They provide a snapshot of the important work ILSM teams carry out in their communities and caring for our great country.

