

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas programmes



2013-14 annual report

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Executive summary

The Working on Country (WOC) and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) are long standing and successful Indigenous land and sea management programmes managed by the Environment Branch of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Indigenous Affairs Group.

Collectively they assist over 100 Indigenous land and sea management groups across Australia to deliver meaningful employment and environmental outcomes.

The WOC programme supports the employment and training of Indigenous rangers to develop work skills and manage land and sea country. Strongly aligned, the IPA programme supports Indigenous groups to dedicate and conserve their land and sea country as part of the National Reserve System — for the benefit of all Australians.

Reviews show that both programmes continue to produce significant employment, education, economic and social benefits in Indigenous communities while delivering positive cultural and environmental management outcomes.

This report presents key achievements of the WOC and IPA programmes towards meeting the Australian Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy and its legal responsibilities to protect and conserve the environment.

Key achievements 2013–14:

1. Employment

- Employment – WOC contracted 759 full-time equivalent ranger positions. WOC and IPA together employed 2191 Indigenous Australians in full-time, part-time and casual positions providing an important source of employment, particularly in remote areas.
- Career pathways – of the 136 Indigenous employees who left, around a third were reported to have moved to other employment. The Department's Ranger Careers Strategy aims to support WOC and IPAs acting as a conduit into employment in other sectors.

2. Education and training

- Accredited training – over 60 per cent of projects had one or more ranger who had completed an accredited training course, totalling 385 rangers.
- Other training – 950 employees undertook non-accredited training and all employees received 'on the job' training, building a range of skills that are transferable to other work.

3. Economic and social benefits

- Commercial activities – around 65 per cent of projects reported undertaking activities to generate additional revenue and jobs.
- Community engagement – over 70 per cent of projects, often with Traditional Owners, ran school programmes, excursions and other activities to engage school children and the wider community.
- Health and wellbeing – over 70 per cent of projects reported large improvements in the health and wellbeing of their ranger employees.

4. Environmental and cultural management

- Expanding the National Reserve System – Five IPAs were dedicated adding over three million hectares to the Australian National Reserve System. By the end of 2013–14, 65 IPAs covered 54 million hectares and comprised over 40 per cent of the National Reserve System.
- Natural and cultural management – all WOC and dedicated IPA projects undertook activities identified in their plans of management to look after their land and sea country.

Introduction

Working on Country (WOC) and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) are two complementary Australian Government programmes that support Indigenous Australians to use land and sea management as a framework for employment and conservation outcomes.

‘For the first time we have a meaningful framework to actually assist in the implementation of real management in a collaborative fashion with government agencies, stakeholders and traditional owners at one table.’

Vince Mundraby, Mandingal Yidinji Traditional Owner

Programme implementation

WOC and IPA are managed by the Environment Branch of the Indigenous Employment and Recognition Division within the Indigenous Affairs Group of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Branch staff are based in Canberra, Perth, Darwin, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy and Cairns.

The focus for future years is to build on the strengths of the programme and to align it with the employment, education and economic objectives of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) through the new Ranger Careers Strategy and adjustments to policy and programme support.

Short term tasks include reviewing data collection and reporting against IAS objectives, embedding the programme into the Indigenous Advancement Group and more broadly, ensuring it takes a whole of Government approach.

Medium term tasks include using evidence based research to capture environmental, social and economic impacts of these programmes and to communicate these to the Indigenous land and sea management sector across government, philanthropic and private organisations in the international community development area.

Indigenous Advancement Strategy

The Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) began in 2014 and aims to get results in the key priority areas of getting adults into work, children to school and building safer communities. Under this strategy, many individual programmes and activities have been streamlined into five flexible, broad based programmes:

1. Jobs, Land and Economy
2. Children and Schooling
3. Safety and Wellbeing
4. Culture and Capability
5. Remote Australia Strategies

Indigenous Protected Areas

Established in 1997, IPAs supports Indigenous landowners to dedicate and manage their lands as part of Australia’s National Reserve System, protecting the nation’s biodiversity for the benefit of all Australians.

IPAs are funded through the National Heritage Trust (NHT) and are part of the new National Landcare Programme. IPA projects have multi-year funding agreements in place until June 2018. The IPA budget allocation of \$73.08 million from the NHT for the period 2013-18 is fully subscribed. No new IPA projects have been supported since 2010-11.

Working on Country

Commenced in 2007 as part of the reforms to the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), WOC supports Indigenous aspirations to care for country by providing nationally accredited training and career pathways for Indigenous people in land and sea management in partnership with others.

Funding of \$335 million over five years was committed to supporting WOC projects to employ more than 730 Indigenous rangers from 2013–18. A further commitment of \$12.7 million over four years from 2013–16 through the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory created an additional 53 new jobs.

Building on success

‘Caring for country’ is a phrase used by Indigenous Australians to describe their deep spiritual connection to country and their responsibilities to look after it. Indigenous rangers carry out natural and cultural activities on IPAs and a variety of other land tenures, guided by management plans developed by their communities. These plans use a ‘two-way’ approach that combines traditional knowledge and responsibilities with contemporary conservation management.

‘The IPA (and WOC) are helping create good jobs, like rangers to take care of country. It is giving young people opportunities day by day. Young people really enjoy working on the IPA, and old people enjoy going out with them.’

Kumanjayi Jampijinpa Bunter, Northern Tanami IPA

WOC and IPAs encourage a community based approach to conservation management by supporting organisations to employ Indigenous rangers and build their capacity to manage country through training, on the job experience and networking opportunities. This in turn, helps ranger groups engage with the community and local schools and foster mutually beneficial partnerships. Building the capacity of Indigenous organisations and the ranger groups they manage also assists ranger groups gain fee-for-service contracts or develop other commercial activities to generate additional income and jobs.

Independent reviews¹ and growing body of evidence-based research confirms that WOC and IPA have consistently delivered cost effective environmental, cultural, social, health and economic benefits to Indigenous communities.²

¹ The Allen Consulting Group, 2011. Assessment of the Economic and Employment Outcomes of the Working on Country Program

Turnbull, W, 2010. Working on Country: Evaluation Report

² Hunt J, Altman JC and May K, 2009. Social Benefits of Aboriginal Engagement in Natural Resource Management, CAEPR Working Paper No. 60/2009, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra

The WOC programme was evaluated as successful, well managed and highly regarded by Indigenous communities across Australia.³ The true costs of the programme were at least 17–23 per cent less than the book costs when increased taxation revenue and decreased welfare payments were taken into account⁴. An evaluation of land management programmes in the Western Desert of Western Australia found that for every dollar spent, there were three dollars of social benefits⁵. An audit⁶ found that the IPA programme through consultative engagement with Indigenous landowners had effectively brought Indigenous managed land into the National Reserve System.

Part of these successes are based on:

- Bipartisan Government support
- Long term funding (5 years)
- Indigenous community and stakeholder support
- Community led approach to planning and management.

³ Working on Country program review, September 2011

⁴ The Allen Consulting Group, 2011. Assessment of the Economic and Employment Outcomes of the Working on Country Program

⁵ Social Ventures Australia Consulting, 2014 Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa Evaluative Social Return on Investment Report

⁶ Australian National Audit Office, 2012. The Auditor-General Audit Report No. 14 2011-12 Indigenous Protected Areas, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

CASE STUDY 1 – Large return on investment (WA)

With the cost of delivering Indigenous programmes in remote areas often questioned, the Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ) organisation has shown that giving Martu people meaningful work can also save the government millions of dollars.

A recent independent study by Social Ventures Australia found that the Martu people in the Western Desert of Western Australia have seen ‘transformative change’ through five WOC and IPA ranger programmes run by KJ that get them working on country.

KJ rangers are working all over Martu country – north, south, east and west. They are looking after waterholes and burning. The young people are learning about their grandfathers’ and grandmothers’ country. Every year, they learn more.

Muuki Taylor, KJ Senior Cultural Advisor

The study estimates that for every dollar spent on ranger and related land-based programmes, three dollars of social benefit is returned. Benefits include meaningful employment, a reduction in alcohol related health and crime issues and lower incarceration rates. This is in addition to managing Australia’s natural environment which was the main reason for the funding.

This environmental work is funded by a mix of Commonwealth, State, corporate and philanthropic funding. Recently there has been a shift towards non-government sources which made up around half of the organisation’s funds in 2014.

One of the key reasons for the ranger programmes success identified by the study was ‘the alignment between Martu interests and those of mainstream Australia’. It’s an approach that makes sense to Martu and works for government.



Jigalong rangers ready to plant trees with Greening Australia. Photo KJ website

Reporting against objectives

Both WOC and IPA are strongly aligned with the objectives of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (Table 1, Appendix 1) by providing employment and helping to build capacity through training and partnerships. They also deliver economic, social and cultural benefits to Indigenous communities while helping to protect natural and cultural resources into the future. This report is structured around demonstrating achievements against the key objectives of the IAS.

Indigenous Advancement Strategy and WOC and IPA objectives

Reporting area	IAS	WOC	IPA
Employment	Indigenous Australians into work	Support Indigenous ranger employment	Support Indigenous land owners to manage IPAs
Education and training	Pathways to further training and education and children in school	Provide accredited training and career pathways	Support integration of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge
Economic and social benefits	Economic and social benefits and fostering Indigenous business	Provide opportunities to deliver environmental services	Support enduring environmental, cultural, social and economic outcomes
Environmental and cultural management	Effective management of Indigenous land	Facilitate partnership approach to deliver environmental outcomes	Support partnerships in conserving Australia's protected areas

Table 1. Alignment of Indigenous Advancement Strategies with WOC and IPA objectives

Data collection and evaluation

Machinery of Government changes in 2013-14 moved the administration of WOC and IPA to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. One point of contact in government and joint reporting made it easier for WOC and IPA project coordinators in the field. It also simplified coordination with other Indigenous Affairs Group programmes allowed for increased integration and efficiencies across Indigenous programme delivery.

This report evaluates data collected and analysed from over 100 WOC and IPA projects across Australia. Indigenous organisations provided quantitative and qualitative data in the following reports:

- Part A: Environmental Activity Report (biannual)
- Part B: Economic and Social Benefits (annual)
- Part C: Budget (biannual)
- Part D: Wages (annual).

Data limitations

There are some inconsistencies in the self-reported data that limit its quality such as, differences in category interpretation, the level of detail provided and a small number of incomplete reports.

Key achievements

1. Employment

WOC and IPA create jobs for Indigenous men and women doing what they want to do – working and looking after country, particularly in remote locations where other employment opportunities are limited.

Employment	Main reported outcomes	Focus for policy or programme development
Indigenous employment	2191 Indigenous rangers and supervisors	New Ranger Careers strategy
Distribution	Over 70 per cent of employment is in WA and the NT	Largest area of IPAs is in WA and the NT
Gender	Women now make up about 34 per cent of rangers	Indigenous Women's Participation Strategy
Career progression	1 out of 3 supervisor positions now filled by Indigenous people	Leadership training and mentoring. Employee survey to capture career aspirations
Career pathways	A third of employees who left went onto other employment	Ranger Careers Strategy - WOC and IPAs a pathway into other employment

Table 2. Main reported WOC and IPA employment outcomes, 2013-14

1.1 WOC and IPA employment

In 2013–14, approximately 2,191 Indigenous Australians were employed (full-time, part-time and casual) in WOC and IPA programmes:

- 1,612 - WOC Indigenous positions (759 full-time equivalents)
- 579 - IPA Indigenous positions
- 182 - WOC and IPA non-Indigenous positions.

The majority of Indigenous people, 1,367 were working casually, with a further 402 working part-time and 422 working full-time, mostly as rangers.

WOC funded a further 116 (69 full-time and 47 part-time) and IPA 66 (47 full-time and 19 part-time) non-Indigenous employees. These were mainly project coordinator positions. Another 70 support staff were reported to have assisted the projects but were not funded by WOC or IPA.

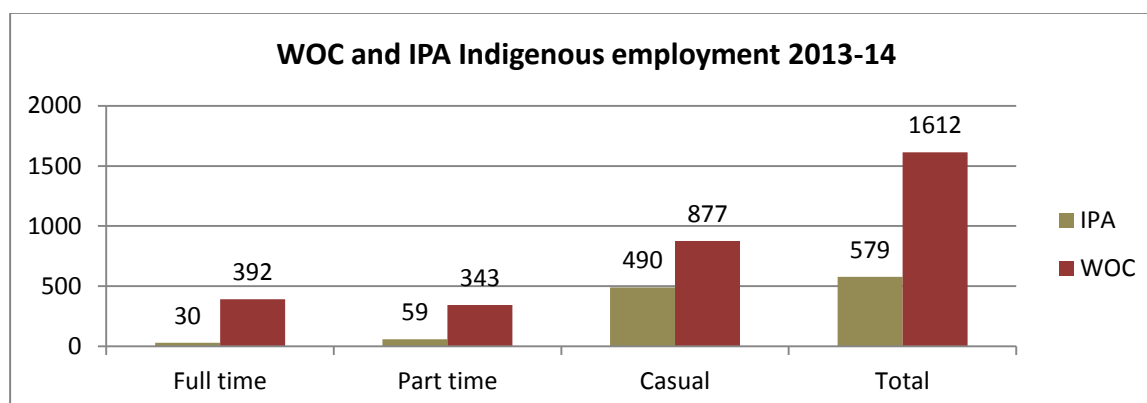


Figure 1. Number of Indigenous Australians employed by WOC and IPA programmes, 2013-14

1.2 Distribution of Indigenous employment

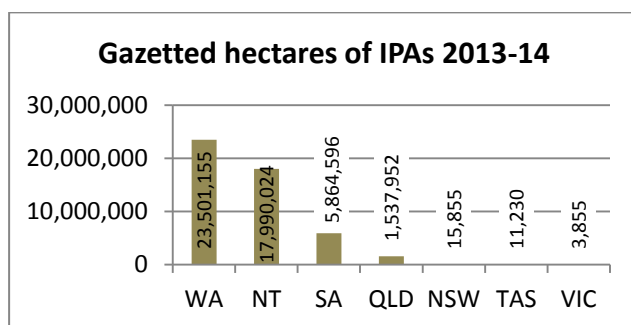


Figure 2. Distribution of IPAs, June 2014

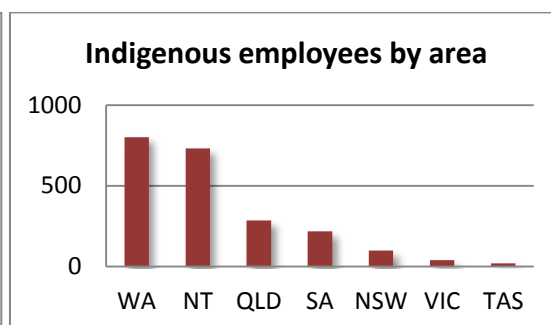


Figure 3. Distribution of employees, 2013-14

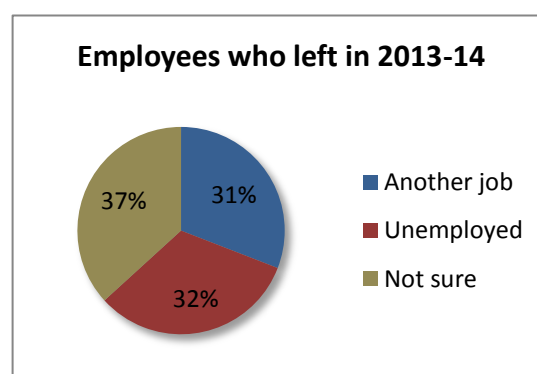
Around 70 per cent of the joint WOC and IPA employment occurred in Western Australia and the Northern Territory and correlates with a higher coverage of IPAs in these regions.

In 2013-14, WOC ranger groups supported over 60 per cent of Australia's 65 IPAs. The remaining WOC rangers worked on variety of land tenures which included, public lands managed by councils, state and territory parks services, privately owned lands, and Indigenous owned freehold lands.

1.3 Career pathways

The new Ranger Careers Pathway Strategy aims to support WOC and IPA ranger programmes act as a conduit for employment in other sectors. In 2013-14, over 30 per cent of projects had employees move into other employment. Although not specified where they moved to, opportunities exist in mining, pastoralism, tourism, environmental services, quarantine and customs.

In 2013-14, only 136 employees (6 per cent) were reported to have left the programme; this is a high retention rate and suggests a high level of job satisfaction.

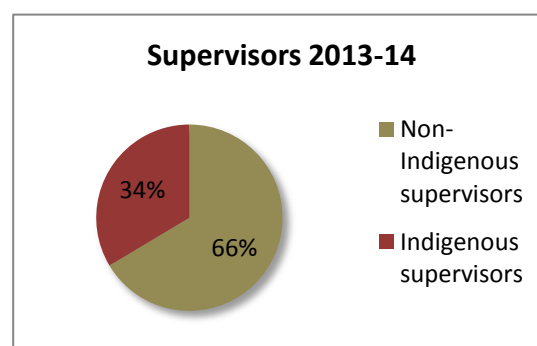


1.4 Career progression

Career progression opportunities amongst Indigenous ranger groups include the roles of senior ranger, supervisor and programme coordinator. In 2013-14, around a third of WOC and IPA coordinators and supervisors were Indigenous.

Some ranger groups have put in place succession strategies to mentor and support Indigenous staff to take on higher positions.

Administering organisations also offer employment opportunities in associated positions such as directors, managers, cultural advisors and training officers.



CASE STUDY 2 – Budj Bim: A successful training ground

The Budj Bim volcanic landscape in Victoria is providing the training ground for members of the local Indigenous community, the Gunditjmara, to develop skills and experiences beyond land management - setting them up to deliver long term contributions to their community.

In this part of rural Victoria, employment opportunities are limited, so ranger jobs are highly sought after. Currently 13 people are employed and training opportunities provided include public speaking, tourism, cultural heritage, conservation and land management and a host of practical and management skills.

'We are able to provide an entry point into the workforce for those who would not otherwise have such opportunity and then we give them the skills to move on.'

Matthew Butt, Project manager

The WOC and IPA projects have proven to be successful in building local capacity; moving Indigenous people on from ranger work into other employment further afield. Project manager, Matthew Butt estimates that over the past 11 years, 30 people have moved to other jobs in agriculture or with Parks Victoria, or to apprenticeships or further study.



Rangers carry out patch burning in the Budj Bim area. Photo Greg Shelton

1.5 Gender of Indigenous rangers

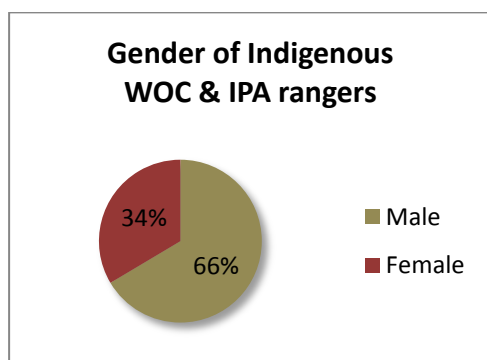


Figure 4. Indigenous rangers, 2013-14

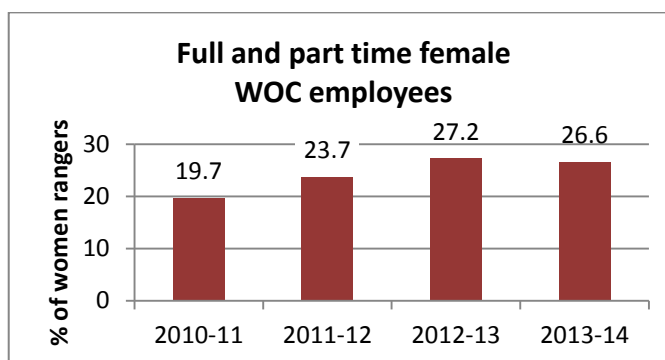


Figure 5. WOC Indigenous women rangers, 2013-14

An Indigenous Women's Participation Strategy started in 2011, since then there has been a general increase in the number of women engaged through:

- Increased part-time and flexible employment arrangements
- Projects employing a larger proportion of women or establishing women's ranger groups.

Although the number of WOC Indigenous women rangers was similar to last year, the number of female casuals has increased. Based on anecdotal information, part-time and casual employment provides women with greater flexibility to balance work with family and cultural responsibilities.

'Casual work offers women starting out in the workforce an opportunity to build skills and confidence before progressing into permanent positions.'

Tracy Carboon, Martu women's ranger programme manager

2. Education and training

WOC and IPA supported training for employees and were involved with a school pilot programme, Learning on Country, trialled by five Northern Territory schools.

Education and training	Reported outcomes	Focus for policy and programme development
Accredited training	60 per cent of projects organised accredited training for 385 employees	Barriers to accessing accredited training need to be addressed
Non-accredited training	Over 40 per cent of projects organised training in a range of areas to build skills	Need to align training with the Ranger Careers Strategy
School VET programmes	Ranger groups involved in providing work place experience	Reporting - collect number of VET students hosted by ranger groups
Learning on Country school programme	Learning on Country trialled by five schools and ranger groups in the NT	Report of the pilot due mid 2015
Junior Ranger programme	Over 25 per cent of projects participated in Junior Ranger activities	Reporting – improve capture of ranger involvement in schools

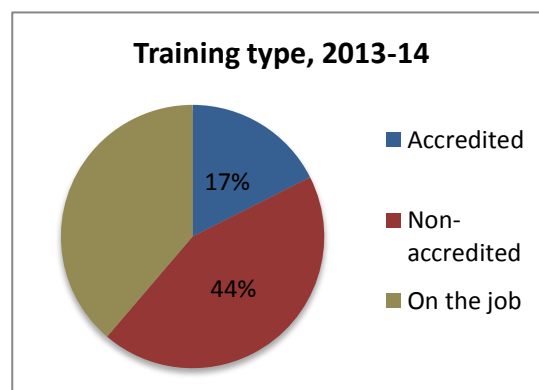
Table 3. Main reported WOC and IPA training and school programme outcomes, 2013-14

2.1 Training

Training is integrated into annual IPA and WOC project plans and helps Indigenous rangers undertake land management to standards set by the ICUN (for IPAs) or partners (such as National Parks agencies). Training includes accredited and more practically-based, non-accredited courses. In 2013–14 over 60 per cent of projects facilitated training for one or more employees. In total, 385 employees undertook accredited training and 950 employees non-accredited training, while the remainder received on the job training.

Around 50 per cent of ranger groups reported that it was difficult to source accredited training. Some of the reasons included:

- Minimum number of participants required
- Less training offered in remote areas
- Logistic and behavioural issues associated with training in town centres
- Barriers to accessing numeracy and literacy and Certificate 1 and 2 training.



Over 100 non-employees also participated in training funded through WOC and IPA indicating broader community benefits associated with the programmes.

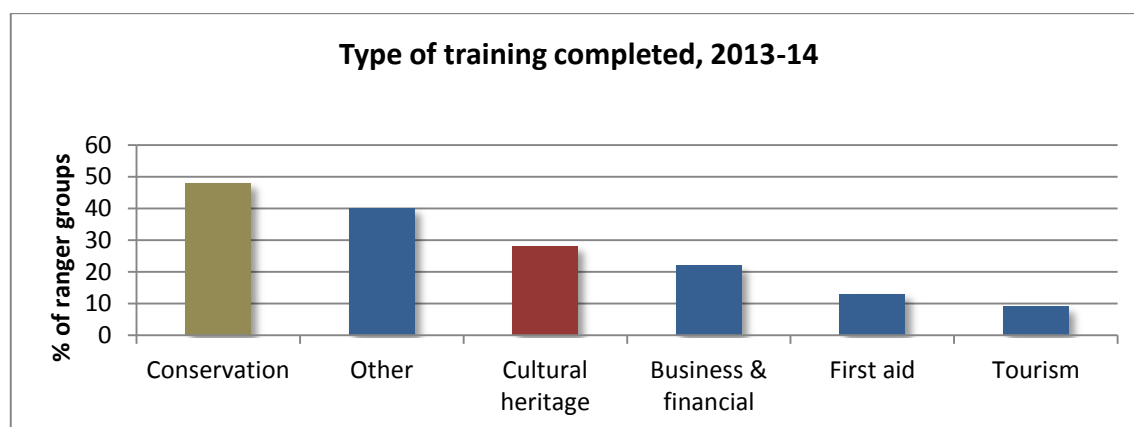


Figure 6. Courses undertaken by ranger groups, 2013-14

In 2013–14, nearly 50 per cent of ranger groups reported one or more employees were undertaking or had completed a conservation and land management certificate. Cultural heritage, business and financial management were another popular courses. The ‘other’ category of courses included, work health and safety, leadership and mentoring, money management, fisheries compliance, driver’s and coxswain’s licences, firearms handling, digital media, fire management, cultural site recording, field-based digital data recording, camera trap surveying and turtle monitoring.

A focus for the new Ranger Careers Strategy is to broaden the skills base of rangers to:

- Win commercial contracts and diversify income generation
- Move into more senior ranger and management positions
- Acquire skills for transferring in other employment sectors.

2.2 School Vocation and Education Training (VET) programmes

VET programmes (cadetships, traineeships and apprenticeships) offer students nationally recognised VET certificate courses and are typically delivered through partnership between schools, registered training organisations and industry. They often include opportunities for students to participate in structured workplace learning.

Although the number of VET school students hosted by ranger groups was not captured in this reporting period, some groups mentioned this activity in their written reports.

2.3 Children in school

A number ranger groups across the country reported working closely with schools and teachers to help motivate local kids to learn about their country and culture. The range of activities delivered includes school talks, excursions and Junior Ranger programmes. A recent review has also shown that rangers are positive community role models, providing a visible career option that encourages children to stay in school and further their education⁷.

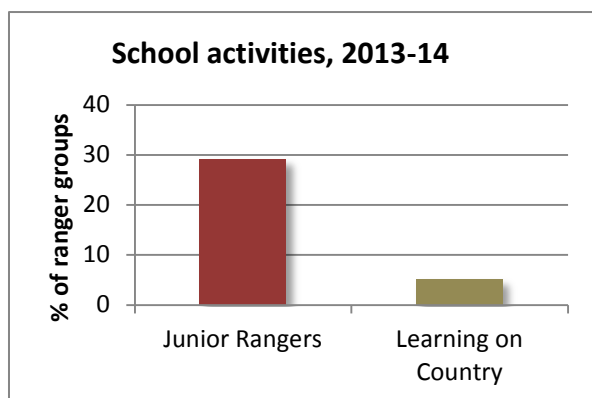


Figure 7. Ranger school activities, 2013-14



School excursion, Ngaanyatjarra Lands IPA

Learning on Country aims to improve the school attendance of kids by involving them in ranger activities and excursions that link to mainstream curriculum outcomes. Elders and rangers work with teachers to inspire kids to learn about their culture and the traditions of caring for country. Older students are also able to complete a VET certificate in conservation and land management.

The Government's Indigenous Ranger Cadetship Programme and the NT Government support the programme. It was trialled by 5 schools and ranger groups in the NT and a review of the programme is due in mid 2015.



A ranger explains turtle management.
Photo Dhimurru website

⁷ Symth, D. Review of the WOC and IPA programs, May 2011

3. Economic and social benefits

Economic and social benefits	Reported outcomes	Focus for policy and programme development
Commercial activities	65 per cent of projects undertook commercial activities	Emissions Reduction Fund opportunities
Partnerships	Over 90 per cent of projects developed or maintained partnerships	Capacity building and income generating opportunities
Community engagement	Over 80 per cent of projects ran community engagement activities	Continue to support community engagement activities
Health and wellbeing	Over 70 per cent of projects reported an improvement in ranger wellbeing	Consistent with research. Employee survey to capture details

Table 4. Main reported commercial activities, 2013-14

3.1 Commercial activities

Although WOC and IPA ranger groups are supported to manage their land for conservation, the Ranger Careers Strategy encourages commercial activities and enterprise development to provide additional income and jobs. IPAs are managed in line with the International Union for Conservation of Nature's guidelines and the majority are category VI, which allows for sustainable land use including commercial activity.

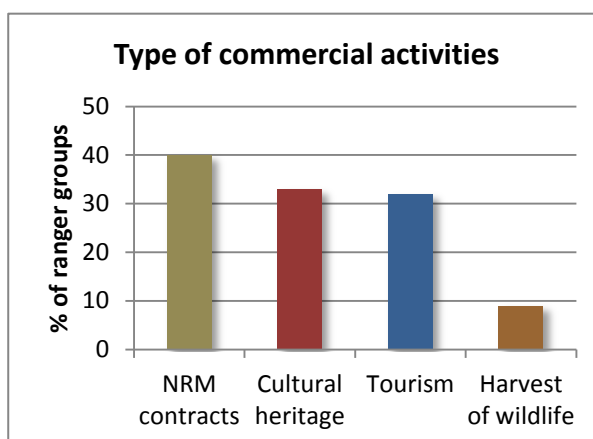


Figure 8. Commercial activities, 2013-14



Djelk rangers, Romeo Lane and Tara Rostron hold crocodile hatchlings that are being raised for sale

In 2013–14, 65 per cent of projects undertook commercial activities. The main activities were fee-for-service contracts (natural and cultural heritage) with conservation, mining and pastoral industries. Over 30 per cent of projects were involved with tourism activities such as managing campgrounds and conducting tours. Around 10 per cent of projects were involved with the sustainable use of wildlife. Products included mutton birds, crocodile eggs and hatchlings, Kakadu plums, personal care products and bush honey.

CASE STUDY 3 – Fire management provides income and jobs

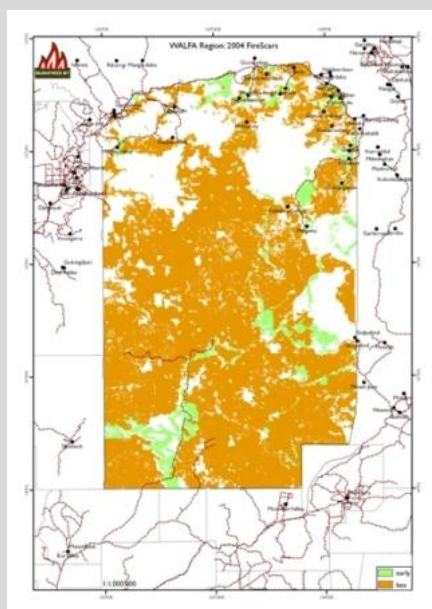


In a fire abatement contract, Indigenous rangers use fire management techniques to reduce wildfire. Photo Karrkad Kanjdji trust website

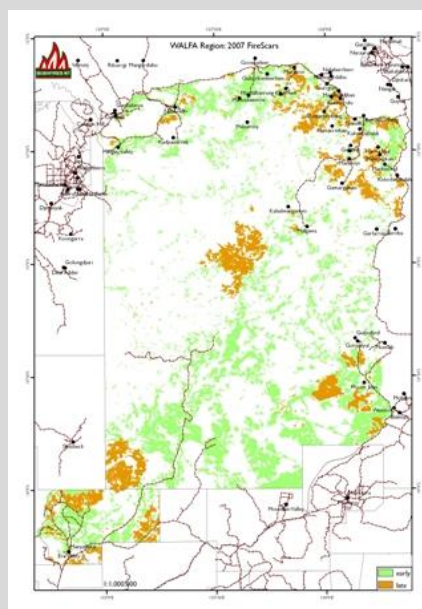
The West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project is a win-win situation — providing jobs for Indigenous rangers and offsetting a global gas company’s greenhouse emissions.

Warddeken, Djelk and several other Indigenous ranger groups have successfully implemented this fire abatement project since 2006 under a long-term contractual arrangement with the gas company, ConocoPhillips. Through this arrangement, Indigenous rangers use fire management techniques such as early cool burns to reduce the extent of later wildfires and greenhouse gas emissions across 28,000 km² of Western Arnhem Land. This then offsets greenhouse gas emissions from the company’s liquefied natural gas plant in Darwin.

In return, the company pays Indigenous ranger groups to provide this service, bringing new jobs, networks and educational opportunities to the region.



2004 - Pre WALFA – late burns (orange) show extensive, wildfire damage and high greenhouse gas emissions



2007 - Post WALFA – early burns (green) prevent extensive wildfire damage and lower greenhouse emissions

3.2 Partnerships

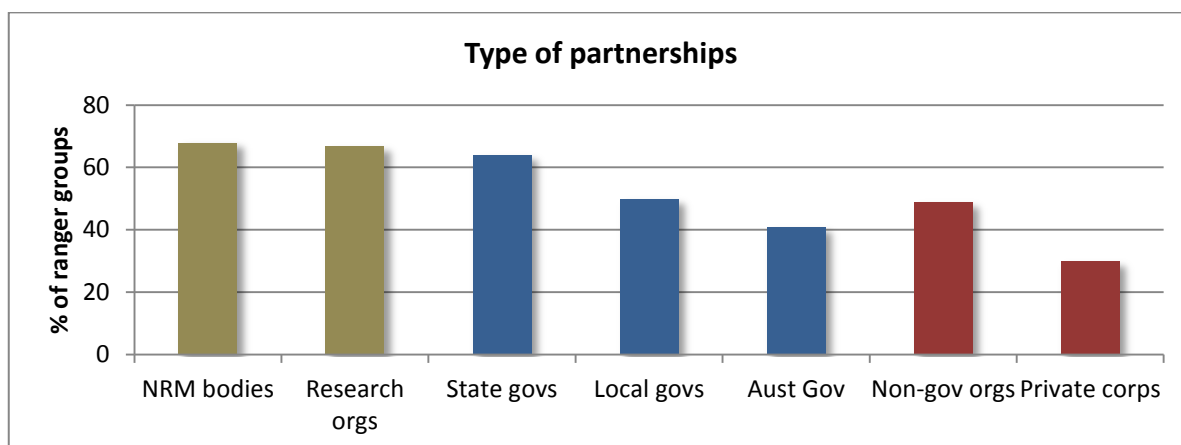


Figure 9. Types of partnerships developed by Indigenous ranger groups, 2013-14

Indigenous ranger groups work on IPAs, national parks, council reserves and private lands, which has initiated the development of many mutually beneficial partnerships. In 2013–14, ranger groups collaborated with a range of government, environmental, research, philanthropic and industry partners.

3.3 Community engagement

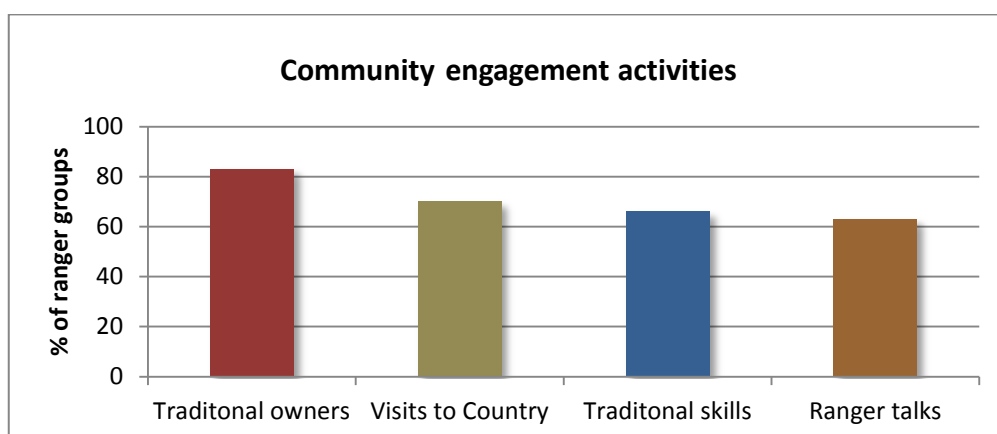


Figure 10. Types of community engagement, 2013-14

In 2013–14, almost 80 per cent of groups reported undertaking community engagement that included consulting Traditional Owners, visits to country, sharing traditional knowledge and ranger talks.

3.4 Networking

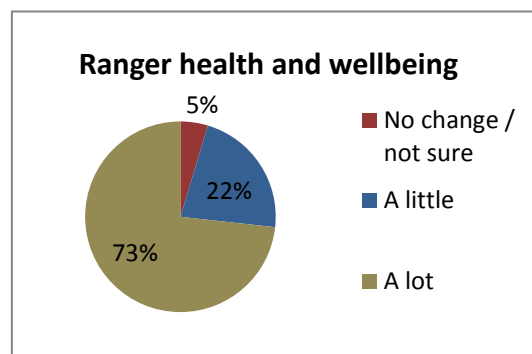
A number of meetings, workshops and exchanges between ranger groups were detailed in the reports. The Southern South Australian WOC and IPA Workshop in February was the only major workshop organised by the Department during 2013–14. Approximately 50 Indigenous rangers and managers from across southern South Australia and Victoria attended to share success stories, discuss issues, develop partnerships and plan future activities.

National Land and Sea Management Network

Environment Minister Hunt recently announced a leadership role for a National Land and Sea Management Network that would involve all WOC and IPA projects.

3.5 Health and wellbeing

In addition to providing meaningful employment for Indigenous people, WOC and IPA also provide benefits in education, health and social cohesion⁸. In 2013–14, 70 per cent of WOC and IPA projects reported an improvement in the health and overall wellbeing of their rangers. Some reports noted rangers were spending less time in town drinking and getting into arguments.



CASE STUDY 4 - Social benefits for the Raukkan community

Raukkan is a small Aboriginal community in South Australia that was struggling in the wake of changes to the Community Development Employment Project.

The WOC programme employed up to 15 local rangers, bringing stability and a regular income into the community. This allowed the community to open a store employing two local staff as well as promoting healthy eating.

A further benefit of additional ranger jobs was an increase in school enrolments that triggered extra staff and resources into the school. A community nursery established and managed by rangers has been key in leveraging additional fee-for-service work and contracts to supply plants for major revegetation projects. It also hosts senior students on school-based apprenticeships.



Ngopamuldi Nursery at Raukkan. Photo Community Nurseries Network website

⁸ Working on Country review, September 2011

4. Environmental and cultural management

Indigenous land management	Reported outcomes	Focus for policy and programme development
Declared Indigenous Protected Areas	5 IPAs dedicated adding over 3 million hectares of land to the NRS	Support 20 remaining consultation projects to dedicate
Cultural heritage management	Over 80 per cent of projects undertook cultural heritage activities	Continue to support language and cultural heritage projects
Natural resource management	Over 90 per cent of projects reported undertaking natural resource activities	Review reporting in relation to using National Landcare MERIT system

Table 5. Main reported Indigenous land management outcomes, 2013–14

4.1 Indigenous Protected Areas

Indigenous communities own or control an estimated 16 per cent of the Australian continent⁹. One of the main objectives of the IPA programme is to support Indigenous landowners to dedicate and manage IPAs on their lands as part of Australia's network of protected areas.

Five IPAs were declared in 2013–14 adding over three million hectares to the National Reserve System (NRS). At the end of the reporting period, there were a total of 65 dedicated IPAs protecting over 54 million hectares and comprising 40 per cent of the NRS.

IPAs are an import part of the NRS as they include some of Australia's rarest and most fragile environments. The NRS aims to protect 17 per cent of Australia's bioregions by 2020.

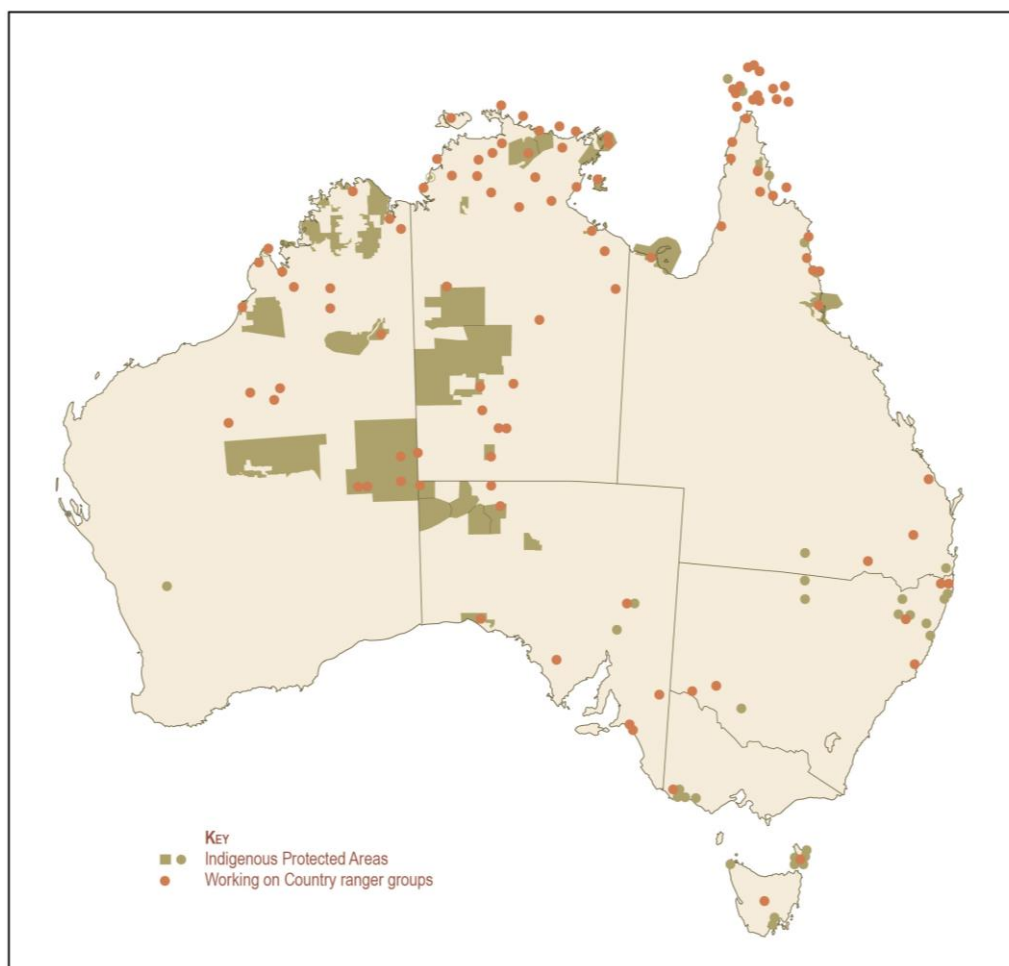
<i>IPAs dedicated</i>	<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Hectares added to NRS</i>
<i>Thuwathu/Bujimulla (Stage 1)</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>124,966</i>
<i>Yappala</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>10,855</i>
<i>Karrajarri</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>2,480,567</i>
<i>Wardaman (Stage 1)</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>224,704</i>
<i>Nijinda Durlga (Stage 1)</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>186,852</i>
<i>Total</i>		<i>3,027,944</i>

Table 6. IPAs dedicated in 2013–14

A further 20 IPA projects were in the consultation phase in 2013–14, which involves planning meetings and trips to country with the community and stakeholders to produce an IPA management plan. Once dedicated, these IPAs will potentially add a further 20 million hectares to the National Reserve System, taking the percentage contributed by IPAs to over 50 per cent.

The rate of declarations is expected to decline towards 2017–18 to reflect the cessation of recruitment of new projects into the programme since 2012–13.

⁹ Indigenous Land Corporation 2014 (unpublished) in Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2014, Productivity Commission



Map 1. Indigenous Protected Areas and Working on Country ranger groups, June 2014

4.2 Environmental and cultural activities

In 2013–14, all ranger groups reported looking after the natural and cultural heritage of their land and sea country as directed by their management plans. Routine management activities included community consultation and engagement, managing native plant and animals and controlling threats such as fire, feral animals and weeds.

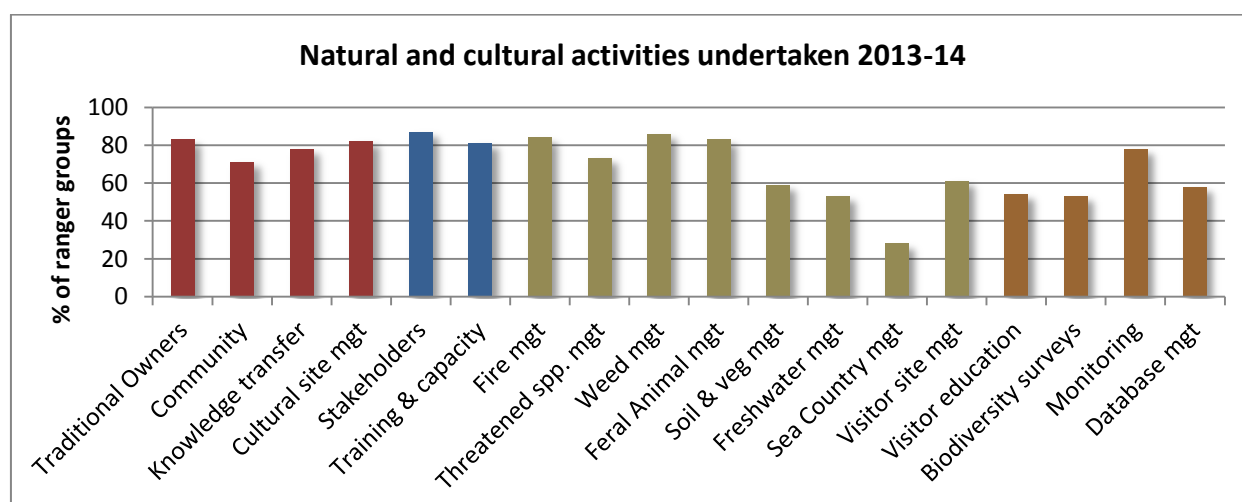


Figure 11. Range of activities carried out by ranger groups, 2013-14

Cultural heritage management

In 2013–14, over 80 per cent of ranger groups reported involvement in cultural site management. Significant sites such as rock art, waterholes, fish traps and burial sites were managed; traditional knowledge and stories recorded; and cultural heritage signs installed. Other community based activities included cultural camps and walks, language classes and ceremonies.

Fire management

Patchwork burning is an important traditional land management tool. Around 85 per cent of ranger groups conducted fire management activities. Details from the reports show that in many areas, traditional patchwork burning was integrated with contemporary objectives such as asset protection and habitat and management. A number of groups from New South Wales reported undertaking cultural burning as part of the Firesticks Project.

Threatened species management

Over 70 per cent of ranger groups carried out threatened species activities. Motion cameras used by a number of groups are providing new information about threatened species distributions. Some species were absent from previously recorded areas but some, such as the black-footed rock-wallaby and central rock-rat were recorded in new areas. Among the species receiving a concentrated effort in 2013–14 were the flatback and olive ridley turtle, dugong, greater bilby, black-footed wallaby, mallee fowl and the Gouldian finch.

Feral animal management

Over 80 per cent of ranger groups reported managing feral animals. Priorities included reducing impacts on threatened species and endangered ecological communities.

Feral cats or pigs were a key target for around a third of ranger groups. Foxes and camels have a smaller distribution and were also targeted by ranger groups operating in the areas they occur.

Weed management

Over 85 per cent of ranger groups undertook weed management. Most weed control was directed towards managing Weeds of National Significance (WONS) and included parkinsonia, mimosa, olive hymenachne, lantana, boxthorn and gamba grass.

Sea Country management

Over a quarter of ranger groups undertook a range of coastal management activities such as marine patrols, debris collection and turtle and dugong management.

Surveys and monitoring

Over half the ranger groups carried out one or more biodiversity surveys while nearly 80 per cent of groups undertook environmental monitoring. Reports showed motion cameras, a relatively new technique that uses heat-sensing cameras to remotely take photos of passing animals were used by a number of groups.

Visitor management

A large number of Indigenous ranger groups are engaging with tourists. Over 60 per cent of groups managed facilities for visitors while 50 per cent of groups provided information through signs, ranger talks, websites or pamphlets. Activities were also directed at managing visitor impacts at important natural and cultural sites as well as supporting commercial enterprises.

Case Study 5 - Rangers find new revenue streams

Tourism opportunities, feral goat control and aerial surveys are just some of the new revenue streams the Nantawarrina rangers are pursuing to create economic opportunities for their local communities.



Feral goat mustering on the Nantawarrina IPA, SA. Photo Nick Rains

Six full-time and four part-time rangers manage the IPA that sits in the heart of traditional Adnyamathanha lands in the northern Flinders Rangers. They are employed by Nipapanha Community Council, which has established an Adata Madapa Tourism business arm to oversee the implementation of their tourism strategy and build community capacity.

A number of tourism infrastructure projects were completed in 2013–14 that has allowed the IPA to set up a permit system and fee structure to begin collecting revenue. This revenue is returned to the business arm of the Community Council to allocate to further tourism and community projects. A café and guided tours will eventually see community members outside the ranger group employed as well.

A similar arrangement for sharing benefits has been put in place for feral goat mustering. Rangers removed around 900 animals from the IPA in 2013–14 reducing the grazing of native plants which benefits local wildlife while generating revenue.

Rangers are now looking to build their capacity through specialised training in Vegetation Impact Assessment (particularly around the impacts of feral goats) and Aerial Survey Techniques to secure future contract work outside of the IPA and reduce their dependence on government funding.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Objectives - IAS, JLEP, WOC, IPA

Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS):

1. Getting Indigenous Australians into work, fostering Indigenous business and ensuring Indigenous people receive economic and social benefits from the effective management of their land and native title rights
2. Ensuring children go to school, improving literacy and numeracy and supporting families to give children a good start in life
3. Increasing Year 12 attainment and pathways to further training and education
4. Making communities safer so that Indigenous people enjoy similar levels of physical, emotional and social wellbeing as that enjoyed by other Australians
5. Increasing participation and acceptance of Indigenous Australians in the economic and social life of the nation
6. Addressing the disproportionate disadvantage in remote Australia.

Jobs, Land and Economy Programme (JLEP):

1. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in real jobs
2. Train more people for local jobs in their communities
3. Help more people get jobs as Indigenous rangers
4. Progress land and Native Title claims
5. Negotiate more township leases.

Working on Country (WOC) Programme:

1. Support Indigenous aspirations in caring for country
2. Provide opportunities for Indigenous people to deliver environmental services that protect and manage Australia's environmental and heritage values
3. Provide nationally accredited training and career pathways for Indigenous people in land and sea management in partnership with others
4. Facilitate a partnership approach between Indigenous people and others to deliver environmental outcomes.

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) Programme:

1. Support Indigenous land owners to develop, dedicate and manage IPAs on their lands as part of Australia's network of protected areas
2. Support Indigenous interests to develop partnerships in conserving Australia's network of protected areas
3. Support the integration of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge with contemporary protected area management practices, to deliver enduring environmental, cultural, social and economic outcomes.

JLEP Environment – key performance indicators

1. Number of Indigenous Australians employed in land and sea management and supporting activities.
2. Proportion of rangers who received OHS induction training
3. Number of environmental activities (in project plan) completed in the reporting period.
4. Maintenance or improvement in targeted (POM) environmental activity.
5. Number of Indigenous rangers receiving accredited (or relevant) training in the reporting period.