



Country Needs People Annual Report 2021-22

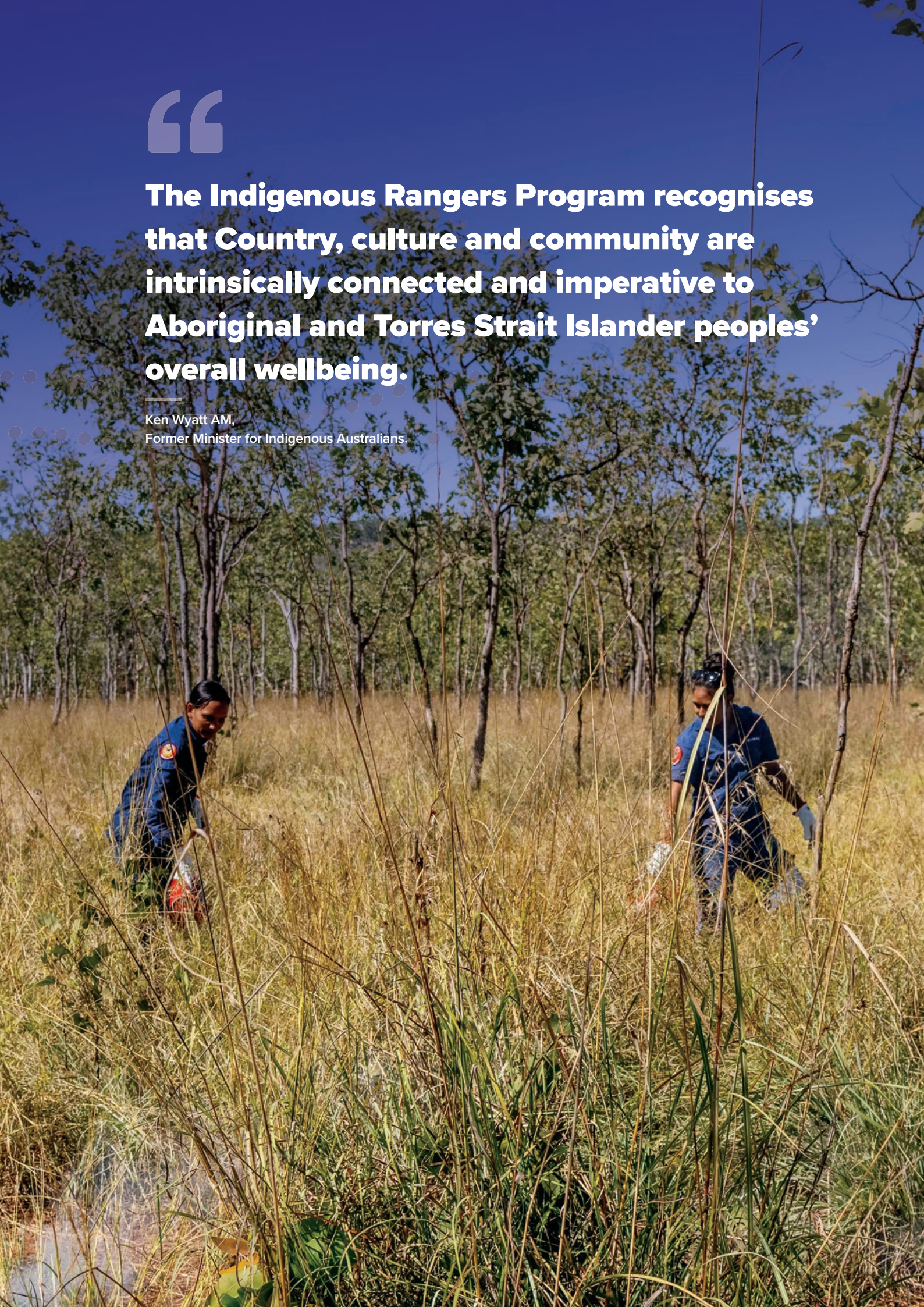
countryneedspeople.org.au



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The Indigenous Rangers Program recognises that Country, culture and community are intrinsically connected and imperative to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' overall wellbeing.

Ken Wyatt AM,
Former Minister for Indigenous Australians.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Country Needs People acknowledges traditional owners, Indigenous Ranger groups, Indigenous Protected Areas and their representative and host bodies around Australia who are working to protect Country for all of us.

This report, and Country Needs People's broader network and campaign, arises from the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the strength of their land and sea management support organisations. Country Needs People wishes to thank the organisations who feature in this report and have provided information and images. We love working with each of our partner organisations and look forward to more exciting work ahead. We appreciate the individuals who gave their time and energy to contribute to this report.

Country Needs People also recognises those who partner with ranger groups and representative organisations, including federal and state governments, business, universities and non-government organisations, donors and others. These partners are critical to further advancing the success of Australia's Indigenous land and sea management sector.

Front cover

Wuthathi Custodians (Rangers) out on Country, QLD.

Photo: Kerry Trapnell.

Inside front cover

Mimal women rangers conduct traditional burn work, NT.

Photo: Courtesy Mimal Land Management & Karrkad Kanjidi Trust.

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**The Country needs people to look
after the Country. People need
Country and Country need people.**

Kathryn Njamme,
Ngururpa Ranger

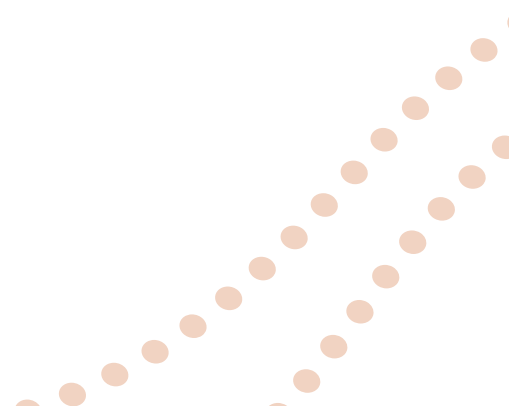


Ngururpa Rangers on Country in the
Ngururpa Indigenous Protected Area, WA.
Photo: Sam Frederick

Country Needs People Annual Report 2021-22

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A photograph of a desert landscape with red sand dunes and sparse vegetation. The sand is a deep orange-red color, and there are several clumps of dry, yellowish grass and some green shrubs scattered across the dunes. The lighting is bright, creating soft shadows and highlighting the texture of the sand. Overlaid on the lower left of the image is a large, stylized quote mark.

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Country Needs People has been a key advocate and driver of Indigenous Protected Area growth in Australia.

Denis Rose
Chair Country Needs People

Dingo Tracks at the Anangu Tjutaku
Indigenous Protected Area, WA.
Photo: Alan McDonald.

CNP Chair Denis Rose with Evelyn Nicholson and Jane Walker from Gunditj Mirring land and sea management team.
Photo: Exclusive Images Photography.



CHAIR'S REPORT

With another year of operating under the unprecedented conditions of the COVID pandemic it has been an interesting time for Country Needs People – full of challenges, but also full of many fantastic achievements for Indigenous land and sea management.

After many years of tireless advocacy, Country Needs People's national campaign to double Indigenous Rangers delivered, with cross-partisan support from all the major parties locked in by the federal election, and the new Minister for Environment Tanya Plibersek confirming Labor's commitment at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon. In addition, Country Needs People has been a strategic advocate and driver of Indigenous Protected Area growth in Australia on land and sea.

Strategic planning by the Board for 2023-2026 will ensure that we have the internal governance and administrative capacity to conduct our work sustainably and grow our operations in advocacy and partner support activities, fundraising and staffing.

This year our application for Deductible Gift Recipient status as a Registered Environmental Organisation was approved, with gifts to our Public Fund now tax deductible. We subsequently gained approvals for charitable collections in all states, and have established an online donations page on our website where we can receive donations from the public.

We have increased our staff capability over the past year including engaging an Operations Manager, Indra Esguerra, and Senior Land and Sea Planning and Analysis Officer Joel Turner. After many years working on Country Needs People campaigns and communications, we bid farewell and best wishes to Andy Leach who left us in April. We will be looking to broaden our communications team. Emily Ings who helped us through difficult times in the peak COVID period also moved on. Recruitment, as for many organisations, has proven challenging in a tight labor market as we look to broaden our staff capacity.

Cross-partisan support from all major parties locked in by the federal election.

Our partner organisation base has also expanded, and I am pleased to report that we now have 42 partner groups. Now that we are able to travel more freely we have been able to meet some of these groups this financial year, and will continue to help our partners secure funding and work with them to strengthen their land and sea planning work into the future. We also continue to assist and advise Canadian First Nations partners in their campaign for Indigenous Guardians and

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, and have begun building new relationships with Alaskan First Nations groups.

To sustain the amplification and scope of our activities, our funding needs will need to match delivery. While we are in a strong financial position now, having secured significant support from donors, we are looking to build secure longer term funding. We are also working to grow our donor base – both through philanthropic donors and smaller supporter donations - as well as a generous matched funding opportunity on the table for the coming 22-23 financial year.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff and board at Country Needs People for their work, commitment, and good humour through this challenging year, with covid lockdowns, travel restrictions and many staff and contractors sadly affected by floods. I would also like to thank our funding partners, members, partner organisations and supporters – you have played an invaluable role ensuring this laudable progress and a foundation for much more to come.

Denis Rose
Chairperson, Country Needs People



CEO'S REPORT

Significant outcomes for Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas despite complexity of our times.

The financial year of 2021-22 has been another complex operating environment impacted by COVID, however much was achieved at Country Needs People despite that complexity.

Whilst work and travel restrictions continued to affect our operations, I'm very proud to say that our team of staff, contractors and our amazing partner network have achieved many positive outcomes over this period.

There has been significant growth in Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) around Australia stemming directly from our work. In September 2021 we saw the announcement of seven new IPAs to enter the planning and development phase, followed by three IPAs completing their long planning journey to become operational - Olkola in Qld, Maringa in NT and Anangu Tjutaku in WA, plus funding for ten new Sea Country IPAs to begin planning announced in May 2022. We assisted a range of partners to apply for this funding and will be working with existing and potential new partners to help develop their plans.

The first rollout of new Indigenous Ranger jobs funded by the Queensland State Government was delivered with 54 new positions allocated across 13 organisations. The new jobs are directly due to Country Needs People's advocacy to the Queensland Government to create 100 new community hosted positions in their well-regarded Indigenous Ranger program.

Many of these will be the first ever ranger positions on Country for those traditional owner-led groups, including some in our partner network - as well as beyond - which we're really pleased about.

...the newly elected federal government committing to double ranger jobs nationally by 2030

In South Australia we engaged hundreds of SA locals to advocate for Indigenous Rangers and community-based Caring for Country through our online petitions. We aim to build on this work in the coming year. Our team provided a number of groups around Australia with assistance in strategic sea country management, advice and planning during the year.

We published a new report 'Strong

on Country' in December 2021, (reprinted June 2022 due to popular demand), which targeted government with specific recommendations to ensure the best conditions for traditional owner success in managing land and sea. The report has been well received by governments and partners and is being used to better inform land and sea management programs and funding.

Most significantly, our key advocacy goal of doubling Indigenous Rangers over 10 years and boosting Indigenous Protected Area funding took a major step forward, with the newly elected federal government committing to double ranger jobs nationally by 2030 and boost Indigenous Protected Areas by \$65m over five years.

We are particularly proud that this involved the direct advocacy of over 100,000 of our supporters, so many of our partner groups, traditional owners and rangers who shared imagery, worked with us on our events, and spoke up for their Country and of course our fantastic staff, contractors, board and donors.



On Country with the Crocodile Island Rangers in NE Arnhem Land, NT.

Everyone involved should pause to take credit for these globally significant commitments. Our non-partisan approach ensured that the Coalition committed to double ranger jobs along with the Greens, many 'Teal' independents, Jacqui Lambie Network and Senator Pocock. We think this could be the biggest single commitment of money to fund new Indigenous conservation related jobs in Australia.

The direct advocacy of over 100,000 supporters, so many partner groups, traditional owners and rangers.

These headline outcomes demonstrate the highly effective approach that Country Needs People is developing, and the value of persistence over longer time frames to deliver major results. By shifting the public and political narrative to a more positive view of Indigenous conservation and management, securing real system-wide funding gains, enabling new IPAs, Indigenous Ranger jobs and more, your support for us is making a real difference for Australia and beyond and we are excited to build on that even further.

Patrick O'Leary
CEO, Country Needs People



Turtle hatchlings on
Dhimurru Country, NT.

MEET THE BOARD

Lama Lama Country, QLD.
Photo: Annette Ruzicka.



Denis Rose, Chair

Gunditjmara traditional owner Denis Rose has had a long involvement in Aboriginal land and cultural heritage management. Denis led the first ever Australian Indigenous led World Heritage nomination for the Budj Bim cultural landscape in Western Victoria, was the CEO of Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation in Heywood from 2002- 2010 and was involved in the development of Australia's Indigenous Protected Areas Program from 1995 - 2002. Denis was awarded an honorary doctorate from Monash University in 2022 for his work in Indigenous land and sea management and continues to contribute to the sector in his own community and beyond through Gunditjmarring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and other representative roles.



Patrick O'Leary, CEO

The Founding Director of Country Needs People Patrick O'Leary has worked at the intersection of Indigenous land and sea management, policy and conservation for 25 years, with 12 years in the NT. With an Honours in Ecology from Monash University Patrick has worked with the Northern Land Council, developed policy for government, and worked on advocacy and communications for non-profit environment organisations. At Pew Charitable Trusts he developed a national approach to supporting community-based Indigenous land and sea management which led him to establish Country Needs People. Patrick has served on various boards and worked with traditional owners on protected area co-management boards, fisheries advisory committees, land care and natural resource management boards.



Bridgid Cowling

Bridgid Cowling is a Special Counsel in Arnold Bloch Leibler's public interest law and native title groups, advising a broad range of clients with a focus on charities and not-for-profit organisations, Aboriginal Land Councils and Native Title Representative Bodies. Bridgid has many years of experience working in native title and land rights law, co-management and governance of protected areas and within Land Councils, and has contributed to numerous law reform submissions. Bridgid is recognised by Chambers Asia Pacific in the area of 'charities' for her wealth of experience acting for the not-for-profit sector.



Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman

Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman is a Yolŋu woman and leader from NE Arnhem Land who has a passion for the environment and biodiversity. As the first female chair of the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation (a Country Needs People partner organisation), and as Manapanami (CEO) and founder at Djalkiri Foundation, Rarrtjiwuy has travelled the country meeting with politicians and stakeholders, which has provided the opportunity to advocate, lobby and provide strategic opportunities for Yolŋu people. Bilingual and with a Qantas Indigenous Corporate Leadership secondment and various leadership positions including at Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation under her belt, Rarrtjiwuy is an active leader and participant in community affairs.



Mikaela Jade

A Cabrogal Woman of the Dharug-speaking Nation of Sydney, Mikaela Jade is the CEO and Founder of Indigital which is creating opportunities for 400 million First Peoples in using and designing frontier technologies by teaching cutting edge digital skills through a cultural lens. Mikaela is a World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality member and Alumni of Tribal Link Foundation (NYC) and the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation. With a Bachelor of Science (Environmental Biology) and a Master of Applied Cybernetics (With Commendation), Mikaela is on Microsoft Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Board and Advisory Board for Project Rockit and the Pollination Foundation.



Bhiamie Williamson

Bhiamie Williamson is a Euahlayi man from north-west NSW and south-west QLD with family ties to north-west QLD who has extensive experience working with Indigenous Ranger groups in northern and southern Australia and First Nations groups in British Columbia Canada, assisting in the design of a First Nations Guardianship program. His many academic qualifications include a Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria in British Columbia. Bhiamie was an architect of the ACT cultural burning program, is currently enrolled in a PhD at ANU and continues to work and research with ranger groups, specialising in the rejuvenation of cultural burning in SE Australia.



Jayne Weepers

Jayne Weepers has had a highly successful career working in environmental policy, advocacy and with Aboriginal land councils, and is currently undertaking a PhD at UNSW and working as a consultant policy analyst. Jayne worked for the Central Land Council for 18 years, and as the Manager of Policy and Research was responsible for coordinating all aspects of the CLC's research and policy development work, including consultations with remote communities and their 90-member Council, managing government relations and negotiations. Jayne also has extensive prior environmental policy and advocacy work for various NGOs, including Environment Centre Northern Territory, Environment Victoria and on the council of Australian Conservation Foundation..



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We need long-term funding to rehabilitate country, to put the fish stocks back in the rivers, to ensure that country is healthy. Because we're not only looking after Country for our people but for us as a human race.

Gail Reynolds-Adamson,
Chair Esperance Tjaltjraak Corporation, WA

OUR VISION AND WORK

A healthy, biodiverse Country being cared for by vibrant communities strong in culture across Australia.

Our role - to support Indigenous communities to protect, maintain, and restore biodiversity and sustain, strengthen, and transmit culture on Country.

We advocate - for strong Indigenous Land and Sea Management government programs and provide practical assistance to Indigenous peoples managing or aspiring to manage their Country.

Country Needs People has a solid track record of campaigning and working in partnership with Indigenous community organisations. Advocacy improves the funding and policy environment, strengthening Indigenous people's ability to access and manage Country.

We work alongside 42 Indigenous partner organisations building capacity and readiness to manage land and sea Country. Our non-partisan approach has achieved support across the political spectrum. In conjunction with our Indigenous partners and many thousands of Australians, we are proud to have secured funding for over 35 million hectares of new Indigenous Protected Areas and to double federally funded Indigenous Ranger jobs over the next decade.

Our structure and team

Country Needs People is overseen by a board with majority Indigenous and majority female directors with deep and diverse expertise in land and sea management. With oversight from our board, the Country Needs People team supports the Indigenous land and sea management sector through advocacy, public outreach, partner engagement and collaboration, and by maintaining a strong and resilient organisation. This work is informed by our growing network of Indigenous partner organisations who are at the frontline of managing rangers, Indigenous Protected Areas and caring for Country across Australia.

Country Needs People continues to build our team of skilled and experienced staff and contractors. On any given day, the Country Needs People team can be found working on a wide range of activities, from organising public awareness and engagement campaigns to assisting with IPA applications, working with partners to influence decision makers, liaising with funders, providing partners with strategic advice, and technical, planning and governance expertise on land and sea. Philanthropic and industry support, as well as new enterprise opportunities for the sector, is growing due to the sustained and increasing support from state and federal governments our work has delivered.

The success of the Country Needs People approach has gained international recognition. We have been fortunate to work closely with First Nations groups in Canada, who share a similar vision for Indigenous land and sea management. Our ongoing work in Canada with Land Needs Guardians, Indigenous Leadership Initiative and other global Indigenous community-led groups is a powerful reminder that our practical and strategic approach works.

CREATING IMPACT



More First Nations people-led management of land and sea Country



Increasing area of land and seas under First Nations' management



First Nations people working on Country in properly resourced ranger jobs and related roles



Biodiversity protection and improvements across Australia.



Federal, state and territory governments delivering long term, well-designed and properly funded support.

Michael Hogan, Simon Hogan and Head Spinifex Ranger Ethan Hansen on Country at Anangu Tjutaku IPA. *Photo: Alan McDonald.*



COUNTRY NEEDS PEOPLE ACHIEVEMENTS



Our Campaign Achievements

- **\$636 million** committed from Coalition to **double rangers**
- Garnered **crossbench pre-election support** to double rangers and IPAs
- New Federal Govt under Labor committed to doubling Indigenous Rangers, boosting IPA support by \$65 million and equity target for women ranger jobs
- WA Govt - CNP on advisory committee for **\$50 million** Aboriginal Ranger program
- CNP a strategic advocate and **driver of terrestrial IPA growth** in Australia:
 - 7 newly proposed IPAs were funded across **3.7 million hectares** across the Kimberley, Torres Strait and Cape York
 - **10 new sea country IPAs** funded for consultation and development
- QLD Govt rolled out their commitment to double rangers with **54 new rangers across 13 communities** this financial year
- **Engaged thousands of South Australians** in advocacy for more IPA and Ranger support, continuing SA Government dialogue.



Partner & Stakeholder Achievements

- **3 IPAs declared over 10 million hectares** - Anangu Tjutaku (WA), Oikola (QLD), Maringa (NT)
- **IPAs in development** for Mayala, Nyul Nyul, Nyikina Mangala, Ngurra Kayanta in WA; Umpila in QLD; Masig and Ima Islands in Torres Strait; and 10 sea country IPAs
- Helped multiple partners in our network **secure funding and strengthen planning**.



Mimal Ranger Jasmine Daly and Tiwi Islands Ranger Marbine Austral at Parliament House event, 2022.
Photo: Exclusive Images Photography.



**Indigenous Rangers
 Program doubles with
 \$636 million boost.**

Sydney Morning Herald, 29/3/2022



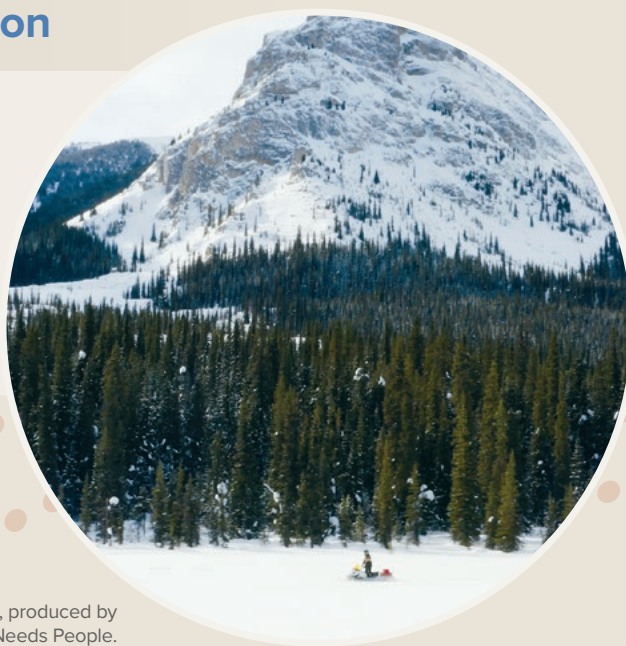
Partner & Stakeholder Achievements

- **Grew our partner organisations to 42**
- Achieved deductible gift recipient status
- Building **philanthropic** support
- **Online donation portal** launched
- Employed an operations manager
- **Strong on Country** report published and reprinted. Focus: to improve quality of government support for Indigenous land and sea management.



International Collaboration

- Continued to support and advise **Canadian First Nations partners** in their campaign for Indigenous Guardians and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas
- Began building new relationships with **Alaskan First Nations** groups.



A scene from documentary Guardians of the Future, produced by Indigenous Leadership Initiative & Country Needs People.

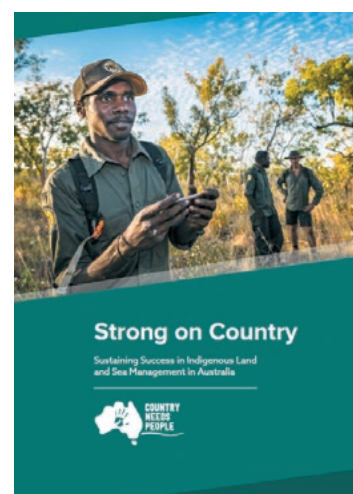


STRONG ON COUNTRY

In December 2021 Country Needs People published the Strong on Country Report, an in-depth comprehensive insight into the Indigenous land and sea sector, which aimed to target government to improve the quality of support for Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas.

The report sets out 28 practical recommendations for governments across 12 key focus areas, with case studies, recommendations and lessons drawn directly from the experience of Country Needs People's 42 frontline Indigenous partner organisations. It was distributed directly to politicians and federal, state and territory governments, as well as to Country Needs People's core supporters. Due to high demand the report was re-published in June 2022, with hundreds of downloads of the electronic version from our website also recorded.

Strong on Country includes case studies which highlight the work of traditional owners and Indigenous Rangers' work on the ground. The report features the work of Warddeken Land Management, Lama Lama Women Rangers, Budj Bim Rangers, the Nyangumarta Rangers, the Ngurrara Rangers, the Anangu Pitjantjara Yankunytjatjara Land Management, Mimal Rangers, Central Land Council Ranger training and mentoring, Kimberley Ranger Network, the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, Banbai Rangers and the Queensland Government's Indigenous Land and Sea Program.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS:

- 1** **Restore and maintain connection to Country and culture** - Government guidelines need to reflect the environmental and cultural objectives of Indigenous Rangers and IPAs and value how these objectives are leading to broader employment and social outcomes, and the contribution IPAs are making to Australia's National Reserve System.
- 2** **Locally led and planned** - Locally informed consultation and planning by IPAs and ranger organisations needs to be respected and funded, as well as learning on Country and community on-Country programs.
- 3** **Two toolbox approach** - A dedicated funding stream is needed which supports Indigenous Ranger partnerships with researchers, government agencies and other land managers, supporting projects that incorporate Indigenous and western science knowledge systems.
- 4** **Long-term funding** - Proper resourcing is needed to build sustainable organisations with long-term rolling funding packages, built-in review points for flexibility and fee-for-service opportunities which complement but don't undermine stable funding of the core environmental and stewardship role of rangers. The federal environment department and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) need to work together and consolidate long-term funding arrangements to grow the sector.
- 5** **Coordinators to support strong teams** - Ranger coordinators need to be adequately funded, with decisions about their employment determined by the ranger group. A national 'community of practice' would provide opportunities for staff and traditional owner-led organisations for training, knowledge sharing and building sustainable careers.
- 6** **Operational and capital funding** - Commonwealth, state and territory governments need to support infrastructure and assets of ranger teams through a parallel funding stream or built-in budget allocation.
- 7** **Proper wages and flexible work options** - Wages and conditions need to be competitive and indexed with ranger organisations able to provide appropriate entitlements and flexible work options. Ensure proper mentoring, training, internship and trainee opportunities are a priority, and grow and support equity and career paths for women ranger groups.
- 8** **Training and mentoring** - Training and mentoring budgets need to be provided that finance regional and national ranger training camps, career development, leadership, mentoring and networking which supports local priorities.
- 9** **Support for individual groups and regional networks** - Government needs to stay engaged with partners operating on the ground to ensure traditional owner led organisations are strengthened and properly resourced, with funding meeting the needs of traditional owners, ranger groups and regional support organisations.
- 10** **Government policies that support development of the Indigenous land and sea management sector** - NIAA and the federal environment department can work together to strengthen policy capability and create a stronger and more substantive sector, bringing together environment, cultural heritage and conservation objectives, policy, practice and technical know-how.
- 11** **Dedicated staff with the skills and capacity to work with groups** - Reinstate dedicated and experienced government staff who are mandated to provide practical and informed support to Indigenous-led community-based land and sea management projects.
- 12** **Robust planning and feedback mechanisms that value environmental and cultural outcomes** - Reinstate a more substantive, consistent and formalised role for the environment portfolio in tracking and assisting groups to deliver environmental and cultural heritage outcomes of rangers and IPAs, and strong reporting of ranger and IPA achievements against local management plans.

SPEAKING UP FOR COUNTRY

Behind the scenes of Country Needs People's successful campaign to double Indigenous Rangers and IPAs.

Country Needs People has always taken the view that governments have a responsibility to support traditional owners in looking after Country. Other parts of society should absolutely help and assist, but governments need to show they can seriously invest in people and nature, and particularly in traditional owners as the original owners and managers combining contemporary science and traditional and local knowledge - the 'two toolbox' approach so vital in challenging times for people, nature and culture.

Our campaign to double Indigenous Rangers and IPAs began its public phase in 2015, aiming to amplify and support the efforts of traditional owners over decades in Australia working to care for country. It was the first sustained and strategic national campaign of its kind for Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas. At that time there was significant uncertainty and risk around ongoing Federal Government commitment to the sector. The campaign ask was always consistent and clear – we ask Federal Government to double Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas. The team stuck to that message and didn't change it.

Traditional owners, Indigenous Rangers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations were and continue to be always at the forefront of our work, speaking up for Country. They were at parliamentary events, in the media, on social media, at advocacy meetings and speaking to government agencies, philanthropists and supporters about Indigenous land and sea management. They represented Country, traditional knowledge, and continuous living culture directly to parliamentarians, decision-makers and the broader Australian public.

The Labor Party and Australian Greens were early adopters of the campaign asks.

Momentum started to build in every state and territory. Country Needs People's Indigenous partner organisation network grew steadily from 14 to 42 and many leading Indigenous and non-Indigenous spokespersons added their voice to the cause – Pat Anderson AO, Chris Sarra, June Oscar, Nyapuru Rose, Ken Henry, Nova Peris, Fred Chaney to name a few. Online support began to grow around Australia, other NGOs got behind the campaign, a groundswell was happening.

Country Needs People has always been non-partisan, aiming for the broadest political spectrum to back the cause. The Labor Party and

Australian Greens were early adopters of the campaign asks, committing right from the beginning. Doubling Indigenous Rangers and IPAs was formal ALP policy at both the 2016 and 2019 elections.

By 2020 there were over 100,000 Australians from all walks of life who had joined the campaign, backing the call for the Federal Government to get behind Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas. Australians were coming together to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people caring for Country. Australians wanted to see government support Indigenous Rangers to protect biodiversity – manage and control wildfires, feral animals and noxious weeds, care for threatened wildlife, protect sacred sites and practice traditional knowledge and continuous living culture.



Rob Briggs from Ngijambandigay Wajaar Aboriginal Corporation with Ken Wyatt at Parliament House event, 2022. *Photo: Exclusive Images Photography.*



Promoting Indigenous Rangers in the Top End as part of the campaign.

Country Needs People kept up the pressure online, via emails, in meetings and advocating directly to politicians across the spectrum. In March 2021, in the midst of pandemic and uncertainty, the Minister for Indigenous Australians Ken Wyatt responded by extending existing Ranger contracts to 2028, giving much needed security. In August 2021, the new Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese recommitted Labor to doubling Indigenous Rangers by 2030, increasing annual funding to IPAs, providing longer term funding security for Indigenous Ranger teams and Indigenous Protected Areas, and having an equity target for women rangers.

2022 was another Federal Election year, and Country Needs People kept up the pressure. In the lead-up to the 2022 Federal Election Country Needs People called on all political parties and candidates to:

1. Double the number of Indigenous rangers over 10 years
2. Double the funding for the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) program over four years
3. Create a fund for ranger training, capacity building, networking, and infrastructure costs
4. Ensure equal employment opportunities for women rangers by 2030.

On the 29th of March another breakthrough. On behalf of the Coalition Government, Ken Wyatt committed to one of Country Needs People's major priorities of doubling federal funding for rangers in the federal budget, to the tune of \$636 million. For the first time there was cross parliamentary support for this measure. By the federal election day in May as well as both major parties, Country Needs People had secured the support of 9 independent candidates including Monique Ryan, Andrew Wilkie, Zali Steggall and David Pocock, Allegra Spender, Helen Haines, Kylea Tink, Rebekha Sharkie as well as retaining the longstanding support of the Greens and the Jacqui Lambie Network.

Our persistence, positivity, and collaborative strategic advocacy side by side with our multiple grassroots Indigenous partners had truly changed the narrative and secured practical gains.

The Labor Party went on to win government with three key Country Needs People's policy asks substantially supported :

1. Doubling federally funded Indigenous Ranger jobs by 2030,
2. Significantly boosting annual funding for Indigenous Protected Areas,
3. Having a job equity target for Indigenous women rangers.

(Below) Independent Senator Tammy Tyrrell with Patrick O'Leary, Marbine Austral and CNP Director Rarrtjiwuy (Melanie) Herdman.

Photo: Exclusive Images Photography.



When fully rolled out this will be the biggest single injection of new funding to the Indigenous community led land and sea management sector in Australian history and will create thousands of local jobs Australia wide.

Country Needs People's advocacy across the 8-year campaign together with the tireless work of traditional owners around Australia was the decisive factor in this monumental outcome, likely the single biggest contribution to conservation jobs in Australia ever. Our campaign work alongside Indigenous partners and thousands of supporters continues to be the single biggest driver of growth in Indigenous Protected Areas over the last decade.

Now the work starts again. We have to ensure the rollout over the coming decade truly supports traditional owners to deliver quality land and sea management. Strong, locally-led community based Indigenous organisations protecting nature and culture and sustaining vital jobs on Country is what we're working for.

Country Needs People aims to be there working alongside traditional owners to keep people, nature and culture strong.



TIMELINE

Doubling Indigenous Rangers Campaign

• 2015

Country Needs People launch with Double Rangers and IPAs Campaign - 'Protecting Nature, Transforming Lives'.

• 2016

Labor and Australian Greens get behind campaign. Labor Opposition takes it to 2016 election as policy.

• 2016-2018

Campaign ramps up on mainstream media, digital media & billboards with the key positive message 'Indigenous Rangers. It's Working'.

...

We work with Greens and Coalition to create a fund for 19 new Indigenous Protected Areas.

• 2019

Labor Party again takes campaign to federal election as policy.

• 2020

Campaign grows to 100,000 people.

• 2021

July

Coalition commits to 2028 funding extension for existing Indigenous Rangers.

August

Anthony Albanese re-commits to doubling Indigenous Rangers and IPAs to 2030 in his Closing the Gap speech to Parliament.

• 2022

February

An additional 10,000 people across the country support campaign in the lead up to Federal Election and write letters to their local MPs.

March

Independents back the campaign – Jacqui Lambie Network, and Independents Zoe Daniel, Helen Haines, Kylea Tink, Andrew Wilkie, David Pocock, Monique Ryan, Allegra Spender, Zali Steggall, Rebekah Sharkie.

...

Coalition Government announces the doubling of Indigenous Ranger jobs, as policy. The \$636.4 million commitment is included in the March 2022 Federal Budget.

May

Labor wins government and commits to three key priorities of Country Needs People.



Minister for Environment Tanya Plibersek at CNP Indigenous Rangers event Parliament House, 2022.
Photo: Exclusive Images Photography.

CASE STUDY

2

WUTHATHI PEOPLE BACK ON COUNTRY

Approximately 200km south from the tip of Cape York Peninsula, the Wuthathi people have fought long and hard for their Ngaachi (land) and Karakara (sea). Their hard work over the decades is finally reaping rewards, bringing Wuthathi back onto Country.

Wuthathi Country currently returned contains 118,000 hectares of Australia's mainland, coastal and offshore islands, with 807,000 hectares of sea resting within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. One third of their Country is National Park and two thirds Aboriginal freehold land. The 41 islands, islets and cays in Wuthathi Karakara includes Thukuruu (Raine Island) - the largest green turtle rookery in the world - recently listed as one of the key priority places in the Australian Government's Threatened Species Action Plan.

Heathlands, wetlands, rainforests and savannahs of Wuthathi Ngaachi preserve cultural heritage and sacred sites, and the tropical parabolic dune systems are seen as internationally significant. Seagrass meadows also hold high ecological values providing a habitat for endangered species such as the green sea turtle and dugong. Nine of the fifteen seagrasses found in Queensland occur in Wuthathi Karakara. Wuthathi have fought hard to protect their country over many years including from sandmining of the spectacular Shelburne Bay, and agreements with the Queensland Government to commit some of their Country to national park.

The fight for Wuthathi Country began in the early 80's and turned a corner in 2000 when the Ten Islands was handed back under the Ten Islands claim. In 2015, the federal and state governments rightfully returned Wuthathi people their land. Now, after many years of planning, consultation and culmination of knowledge, Wuthathi people have submitted their Indigenous Protected Area Plan to the Australian Government, and once approved, will be another step in their aspirations to return all of Wuthathi Ngaachi and Karakara back to the ownership and management of traditional owners.

Heathlands, wetlands, rainforests and savannahs preserve cultural heritage and sacred sites.

In Queensland, only 9% of the state is protected under the national reserve system and only 1% of Queensland is Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs). However, the Queensland Government has run a strong and successful Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers Program which supports practical collaboration with Indigenous Protected Areas by funding ranger jobs managed by local traditional owner-run organisations.



These rangers can work across IPAs, national parks and other traditional owner-managed Country.

Country Needs People's advocacy ensured the Queensland Government doubled their commitment to supporting rangers through this program, by adding another 100 funded positions across the state. In turn Wuthathi accessed funding from this program to support the first ever Wuthathi Land and Sea Custodians (rangers) working on Country.

(Top)
Wuthathi Country from above.
Photo: Kerry Trapnell.



(Left to right) Katharine Robinson JCU Trop Water, Ashley Wilson Wuthathi Custodian (WC), Clayton Enoch Wuthathi Custodian Coordinator, Rex Pablo WC, Len McKenzie JCU Trop Water, Cameron Wilson Senior Custodian, Lucas Langlois JCU Trop Water, Davis Wilson Custodian, Sophie Holt IPA Coordinator. **Photo:** Courtesy Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation.



“It has taken a long time to get to where we are today”, says Clayton Enoch, Land and Sea Custodians Coordinator at Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation. “The planning for the ranger base alone began when I started my position in Wuthathi in 2019, and because of wet seasons, COVID and Sorry Business we didn’t have our first Custodians (rangers) on Country till 2022.”

The Mintha Kuntha Wuthathi Ngaachi Indigenous Protected Area Plan will protect 11 Values of Country through 12 operational programs which the Wuthathi Council of Elders, Directors, Wuthathi Traditional Owners and the Wuthathi Land and Sea Custodians have developed. This holistic, First Nations place-based approach includes cultural heritage management, Duwu (Our Way Cultural Burning), Waathia Ngaachi (Return to Country), biosecurity management, Sea Country management, Thukurruu (Raine Island) management, visitor management and compliance, research, Wuthathi rights and advocacy, climate change, ‘Wuthathi development Our Way’, and healthy Wuthathi governance.

The IPA will also ensure Custodians can better protect culturally and ecologically significant animals such as the Yawaa (manta ray), Uthiini (cassowary), nesting Rukuy (turtles) and the Uutakaa (dingo), prevent invasive species such as black rats (non-native rats), cane toads, feral pigs and cattle and manage marine debris and the impact of climate change.

“

The best part is being on Country and getting to know the Country.

Clayton Enoch, Land and Sea Custodians Coordinator

Country Needs People is proud of the support the organisation has been able to give the Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation to develop their Custodian team and Indigenous Protected Area, working alongside the organisation and Custodian team to advise and to assist, and advocating for solid government support and funding both nationally and at a state level.

“The best part of the Wuthathi Land and Sea Custodians work is being on Country and getting to know the country because of the work we do. Talking with Elders, listening to their

wishes of what they would like to see on Country, and them passing on their knowledge”, says Clayton Enoch.




On Country with the Wuthathi Land and Sea Custodians. **Photo:** Kerry Trapnell.

“

The Elders dreamt of having a ranger base and Wuthathi people back on Country looking after it. It’s so rewarding seeing their wishes come to light, it makes me think of them old people who are not here anymore to see what they have fought for.

Clayton Enoch, Land and Sea Custodians Coordinator

An aerial photograph showing a group of people wading in shallow, rippled water over a vast expanse of seagrass. The seagrass appears as a textured, greenish-brown carpet under the water. The people are small figures in the distance, wearing hats and waders, engaged in monitoring activities.

“

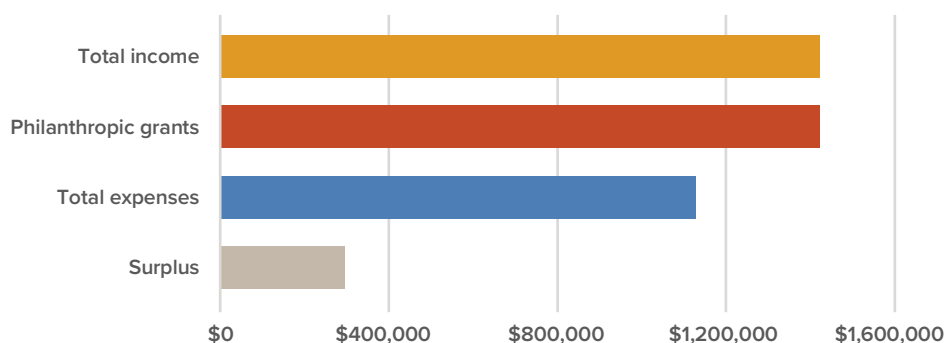
These rangers are the next generation of leaders.

Meaghan Scanlon,
QLD Minister for the Environment and the
Great Barrier Reef.

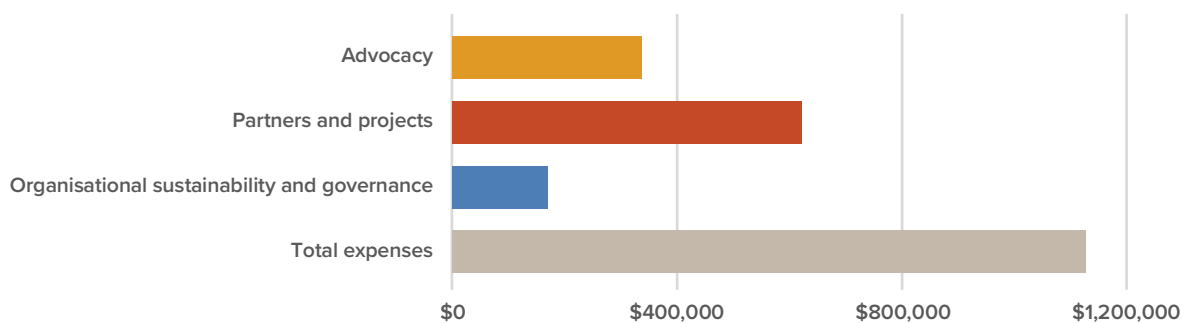
Seagrass monitoring on Wuthathi Country.
Photo: Courtesy Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation

FINANCES AT A GLANCE

2021 - 22 Financial Summary



2021 - 22 Expenditure



Country Needs People's income is provided by philanthropic trusts and foundations and a growing number of individual donors.



THANK YOU

Rangers & IPA Managers at
Parliament House, 2022
Photo: Exclusive Images Photography.

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Australian Communities Foundation
Elm Grove Sanctuary Trust
Holmes Family Foundation
Maple-Brown Family Foundation
Pew Charitable Trusts
PMF Foundation
Reichstein Foundation
Walkers Journal

We also thank our donors who wish to remain anonymous, and the many members of the community who have supported us in this year.

We acknowledge the hard work and commitment of employees and contractors whose collective efforts are responsible for our achievements this year:

Patrick O'Leary	CEO
Indra Esguerra	Operations Manager
Peter See	Senior Officer, Strategy and Projects
Andrew Leach	Campaign and Communications Officer
Kataya Barrett	Saltwater Project Officer
Andrew Cheetham	Digital Campaign and Communications
Penelope Tod	Finance
Esther Abram	Organisational development
Julia Martin	Communications
Joel Turner	Land and Sea Planning and Analysis
Nic Gambold	Partner support
Tina Bain	Partner support
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Melissa Nursey-Bray	Partner support
Miya Isherwood	Partner support
Melanie Duffer-Hyams	Partner support
David Moodie	Communications

Rowena Mouda, Patrick O'Leary,
Kataya Barrett in Canberra.
Photo: Rafael Florez.



COUNTRY NEEDS PEOPLE PARTNER NETWORK

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

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Dulabed Malanbarra and Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation

Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation

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Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

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Land Council

Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation

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Karajarri Traditional Lands Association

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Lama Lama Rangers, Yintjingga Aboriginal Corporation

Oak Valley (Maralinga) Aboriginal Corporation

Mimal Land Management

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Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

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Aboriginal Corporation

Ngadju Conservation Aboriginal Corporation

Ngarang-Wal Gold Coast Aboriginal Association

Ngarrindjeri Land and Progress Association

Ngoorabul - Glen Innes Local Aboriginal
Land Council



Pormpuraaw Rangers on Country, QLD.
Photo: Adam Ferguson.

Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation

Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation
RNTBC

Olkola Aboriginal Corporation

Pormpuraaw Rangers, Pormpuraaw Aboriginal
Shire Council

Spinifex Land Management - Pila Nguru
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Yindjibarndi Ranger Program – Yindjibarndi
Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation

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Aboriginal Corporation

Yuku Baja Muliku

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Budj Bim Ranger Aaron Morgan, VIC.
Photo: Rodney Dekker.



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