



Working for Our Country

A review of the economic and social benefits of Indigenous land and sea management

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Cover photo

Ngurrara ranger Karlas Shandley teaches Elijah Murray, the next generation, how to monitor the health of valuable fresh water in the Great Sandy Desert. Kimberley Land Council

This report was produced by Pew Charitable Trusts and Synergies Economic Consulting.

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Foreword

Indigenous Ranger jobs and Indigenous Protected Areas are providing essential environmental management and protection across vast areas of Australia. This work—controlling and eradicating feral animals and noxious weeds, protecting threatened species, reducing greenhouse gas pollution and supporting critical research—delivers results from which all Australians benefit.

The unique conservation and cultural management that Indigenous Rangers perform keeps lands and seas healthy in a multitude of ways. As this report shows, it also provides transformational improvement for Indigenous Australians and also many communities. The report, by Synergies Economic Consulting and The Pew Charitable Trusts, reviews facts behind the largely unrecognised success of Indigenous land and sea management. It will examine the economic and social benefits accruing to Indigenous Australians, as well as the broader Australian public, through this highly valuable and inspiring on-country work.

Men and women are lining up for available ranger jobs, which are resulting in improved health statistics and better educational outcomes. There is strong community ownership of the ranger and protected area programs, which facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge between old and young, as well as the ecological and management knowledge between scientists and Traditional Owners.

The beneficial effects of the Indigenous Ranger and Indigenous Protected Area programs go even deeper. There is evidence of reductions in alcohol-related issues and increased movement from welfare to work, lower rates of incarceration and inspiring stories of motivated kids who declare at school they ‘want to be a ranger.’

These powerful stories have been told to us many times by Indigenous people whose work Pew supports in remote Outback Australia. This report makes many of these stories public and reviews the broader national figures, trends and statistics.

“This is a contemporary story of opportunity and hope based on practical outcomes and alleviation of economic and social disadvantage.”

It is vital for Australian public policy that we all understand, own and support what are now world-leading programs. The challenge and opportunity exist to secure and grow this success with more communities, with more rangers and on more lands across Australia.

The evidence supporting a significant expansion of the Indigenous Ranger and Indigenous Protected Area programs is compelling. It backs recent calls for a long-term commitment from policymakers which would support viable futures for Indigenous Australians on their traditional country. It would also keep the environment of some of the most special parts of Australia, places of great beauty and natural significance, healthy and vibrant.

This report highlights the positive role that the Federal Government can play in securing these programs and increasing their beneficial effects. Australian governments of all persuasions have much to reflect on and address in terms of policy and programs that have failed to deliver for Indigenous Australians. It is vital that we collectively identify and support approaches and models that do succeed.

Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas are such models. This is a contemporary story of opportunity and hope based on practical outcomes and alleviation of economic and social disadvantages. It is about the future, but it builds on millennia of cultural strength and connection to country. The challenge for us all is to respond to the calls from Indigenous landowners and managers to strengthen, secure and invest in this work for the benefit of all Australians.

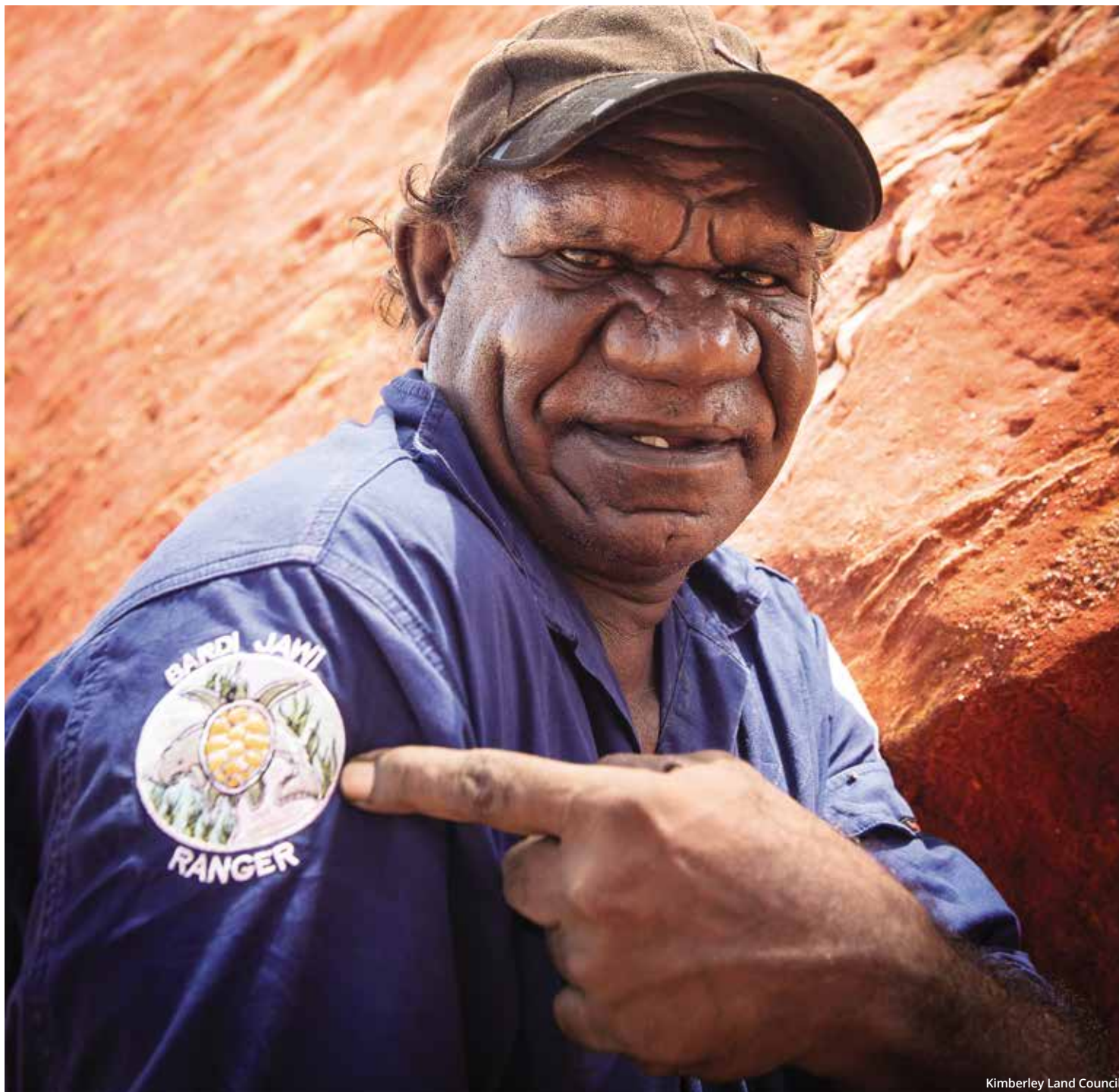
Barry Traill, Ph.D.
Director, Outback to oceans program
The Pew Charitable Trusts

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Kimberley Land Council

Long term ranger, Chris Sampi, shows off the Bardi Jawi emblem.

Executive summary

This report examines the important and diverse economic and social benefits being delivered by Indigenous land and sea management through ranger groups and Indigenous Protected Areas across the country. The Australian Government's Working on Country program has been running since 2007 and has funded the employment of 770 Indigenous Rangers across 108 groups, managing millions of square kilometres of land and sea country with an initial target (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2013) of meeting 730 full-time-equivalent ranger positions by June 2015. The initial target was met in July 2014 and then exceeded to reach the current total of 770 full-time-equivalent positions nationally (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2015), with some additional support from the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

Rangers undertake environmental work on country for national benefit, such as management of cultural sites, fire regimes, biodiversity and feral animal and weed control. The program recognises the importance of Indigenous ownership of work plans and works with the local authority of Indigenous elders to design and implement day-to-day operations and longer-term priorities.

Australian Government-supported Indigenous Ranger programs share a close relationship with another federal program—the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) program, which was initiated in 1996. IPAs are voluntary arrangements between Indigenous communities and the Commonwealth Government, in which Traditional Owners are given responsibility for managing protected areas based on an agreed plan. Many, but not all, Indigenous Rangers work within IPAs.

To date there has not been a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of these programs, primarily because many of the program benefits are 'non-market' and difficult to value.

This report draws on the literature and case studies to build a balanced, objective picture of the economic and social benefits

of Indigenous Ranger programs. The report explores the various factors underpinning the success of ranger programs and presents a compelling case for continued funding.

While the focus of this report is on federally funded Indigenous land and sea management programs, the Kimberley section of the report examines both federal programs and state-based approaches that have been adopted by the Western Australian Government and the positive outcomes of these programs. Recommendations are presented that will build on the successes achieved to date in the Kimberley.

Key benefits and achievements

The annual cost of Working on Country and IPAs (approximately \$67 million in 2012-13) represents just 0.2% of the estimated \$30.3 billion spent by all governments on Indigenous services nationally (SCRGSP 2014). It is also a small fraction (just 2%) of Commonwealth expenditures on specific Indigenous programs, estimated by the Productivity Commission to be \$3.28 billion in 2012-13.

Despite this relatively small share of funding, Working on Country and IPAs are delivering significant benefits. Working on Country has resulted in almost 800 full-time ranger jobs and many more casual, or part-time, positions. For example, 1,423 people were employed through the program in the six-month period from January to June 2012, of whom 95% were Indigenous. Flexibility around employment options, including casual employment, has also been a noted feature of the success of the programs.

Retention rates in the program are very favourable (80 to 85%) and demand for ranger positions is outstripping available jobs. These positions are created in remote areas where disadvantage is greatest and social problems most severe.

The program is not only benefiting those individuals employed. There are numerous spillover benefits to Indigenous communities in which rangers operate and to the wider,

national economy in terms of better health outcomes, less crime and improved environmental and heritage protection.

At a national level, economic benefits include:

- Increased labour productivity through improved Indigenous health, reduced alcohol consumption and other factors.
- Greater workforce participation—to the extent that the program helps Indigenous people to get jobs, leading to increased economic output.
- Cost savings to governments through lower expenditures on public health, policing, corrective services, public housing and welfare.
- Economic returns generated by new Indigenous business ventures, including the associated tax component of this revenue that is received by government.

For example, Social Ventures Australia has estimated that the on-country programs run by Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa in the western desert of the Pilbara, Western Australia, have produced cost savings of \$13 million over five years due to lower imprisonment rates, less alcohol-related crime and services delivered to the community, such as protection of cultural heritage sites (Social Ventures Australia 2014).

Economic benefits are also being generated for Indigenous communities through new business ventures. Approximately 40% of ranger groups are delivering services on a commercial basis—a positive sign that Indigenous communities, once they have stability, are starting to supplement their income by engaging in the market economy. One study estimates the value of commercially contracted work undertaken by Indigenous land and sea management groups in 2010 to be conservatively estimated at \$4-6 million per annum (May 2010).

While some ranger groups have performed at higher capacity than others, the overall conclusion by multiple independent reviews and evaluations is that the Working on Country approach to supporting Ranger groups is succeeding where other programs have failed.

Additionally, the IPA program provides a flexible but credible strategic planning framework locally developed against negotiated local and national criteria that strengthens local governance, fosters partnerships and opens up business opportunities. The key ingredients to the success of these programs appears to be the program's strong grounding in practical, locally implemented land and sea management (which is a high priority for Indigenous people); a high degree of local Indigenous ownership of work plans and governance; flexibility in utilising a range of employment options from full time to part time (casual); and ability to develop key partnerships with government agencies, industry, non-governmental organisations and other sectors.

The way forward

Administration of both the IPA program and Working on Country has recently been transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which is overseeing the new Indigenous Advancement Strategy. The future for these programs is unclear. We recommend the following principles for taking the programs forward.

- Maintain the Working on Country model of support for Indigenous Rangers so as to avoid the risk of eroding the very features that have made the program successful—that is, the program's flexibility, the devolved management principles, the capacity of Indigenous organisations to determine work priorities in negotiation with government, the capacity to address national environmental priorities, the strong grounding in land and sea management and the strong cultural foundations of the program.
- Pursue a funding strategy that involves increasing both the number of rangers within existing ranger groups with capacity to grow, supporting the development and funding of new groups and ensuring adequate operational funding to deliver key land and sea management outcomes.
- Investigate and develop an informed basis for setting a target

for the future number of Indigenous Rangers.

- A starting point would be to set targets based on the number of rangers needed to effectively manage 80 million hectares of land that is forecast to be protected in IPAs by 2018.
- Another factor that needs to be considered is the capacity of Indigenous organisations to provide sufficient support for additional rangers. If funding is made available, it may take time to recruit and train coordinators and establish satisfactory management systems to oversee a larger ranger network.
- Maintain secure funding to provide necessary planning certainty, which will maximise opportunities for ranger groups to establish sustainable partnerships with philanthropic organisations and external funding parties. We therefore recommend that a 10-year strategy and funding commitment be developed using the lessons learned from the Working on Country model as a template.
- Maintain and strengthen the IPA program as a world-leading model of protected area management enabling Indigenous partnerships with government and other sectors and assisting local governance and strategic land and sea management approach. It is also a means of providing an avenue through which Indigenous land can be voluntarily contributed to the Australian National Reserve System. The IPA program provides a platform through which Indigenous Traditional Owners can exercise management over land and sea areas with a significant degree of autonomy, and grow their ranger workforce to deliver management services with funding from Working on Country.

Hundreds of kilometres of ghost nets, like these ones being cleared by Dhimurru rangers Banula Marika, Deon Mununggurr and Nalkuma Burarrwang, are washed up every year.



Economic and social benefits

a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples shape and manage land and sea country over millennia

b Following European colonisation there is a continual determination to retain and reestablish connection, occupation, use and management of traditional land and sea country

c A growth of the grassroots-driven 'caring for country' model in Northern Australia begins in the 1990s

Indigenous land & sea management work underway



1423

people employed in ranger positions in a mixture of full time, part time and casual roles

Menzies School of Health reports people actively involved in land and sea management show consistently better health statistics

Indigenous Protected Area program introduced

Working on Country Indigenous ranger program introduced

Women hold close to half of casual ranger positions

1990

1997

2007

2009

2012



70th IPA declared, over
63m hectares
under management
in IPAs

2018
funding deadline



Approx. 40% ranger
groups deliver services on
a commercial basis



Target of 730 full time
equivalent positions
nationally exceeded



Reduced
alcohol and
substance
abuse where
ranger
groups active

\$67m

Federal Govt spending on both
Indigenous rangers and IPA
programs (2012-13)
– this is **2%** of Federal
funding on specific
Indigenous programs



Frequent reports of:

- a** Applicants queueing up for Indigenous ranger positions
- b** Indigenous organisations outlining land and sea management work they can achieve if funding cap lifted
- c** Ranger group instability with post 2018 funding unconfirmed.



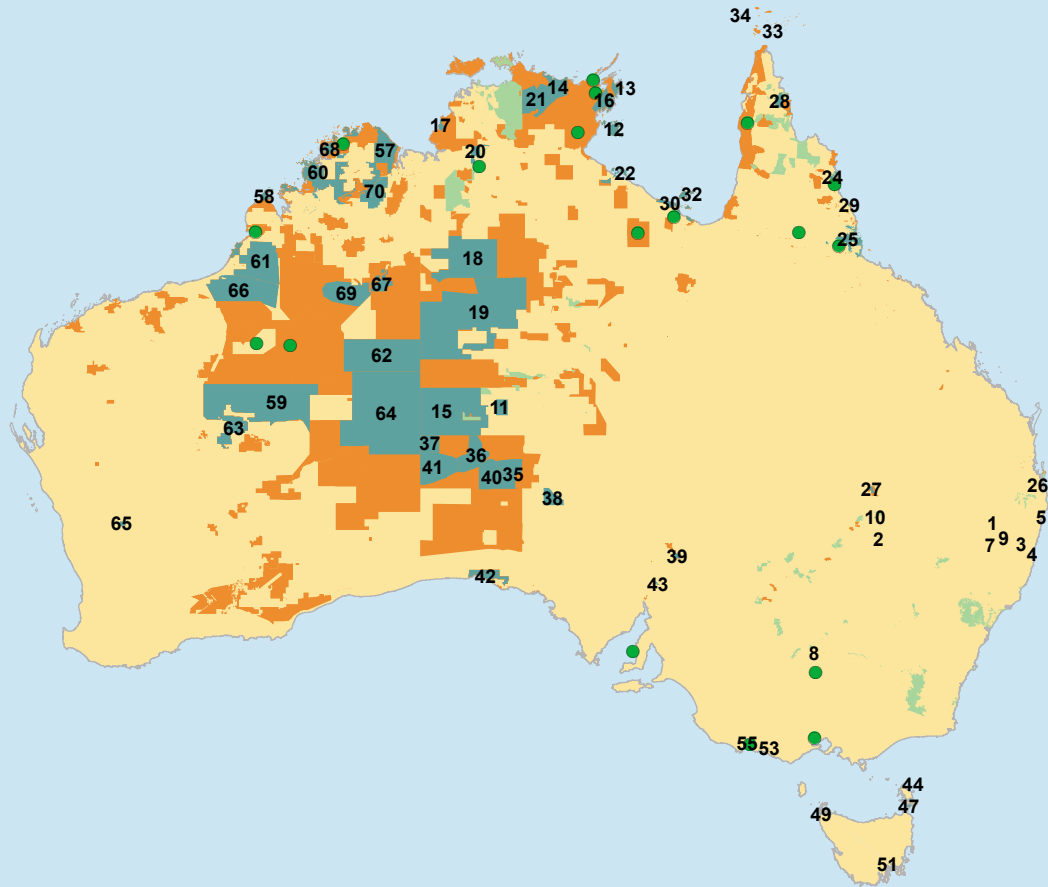
79 ranger groups engaged
in some form of
accredited training

2015

2018

Map 1

Indigenous Protected Areas



- Consultation underway for potential future Indigenous Protected Areas
- Declared Indigenous Protected Areas
- Joint managed conservation areas
- Indigenous lands

0 500 1,000 2,000 Kilometers

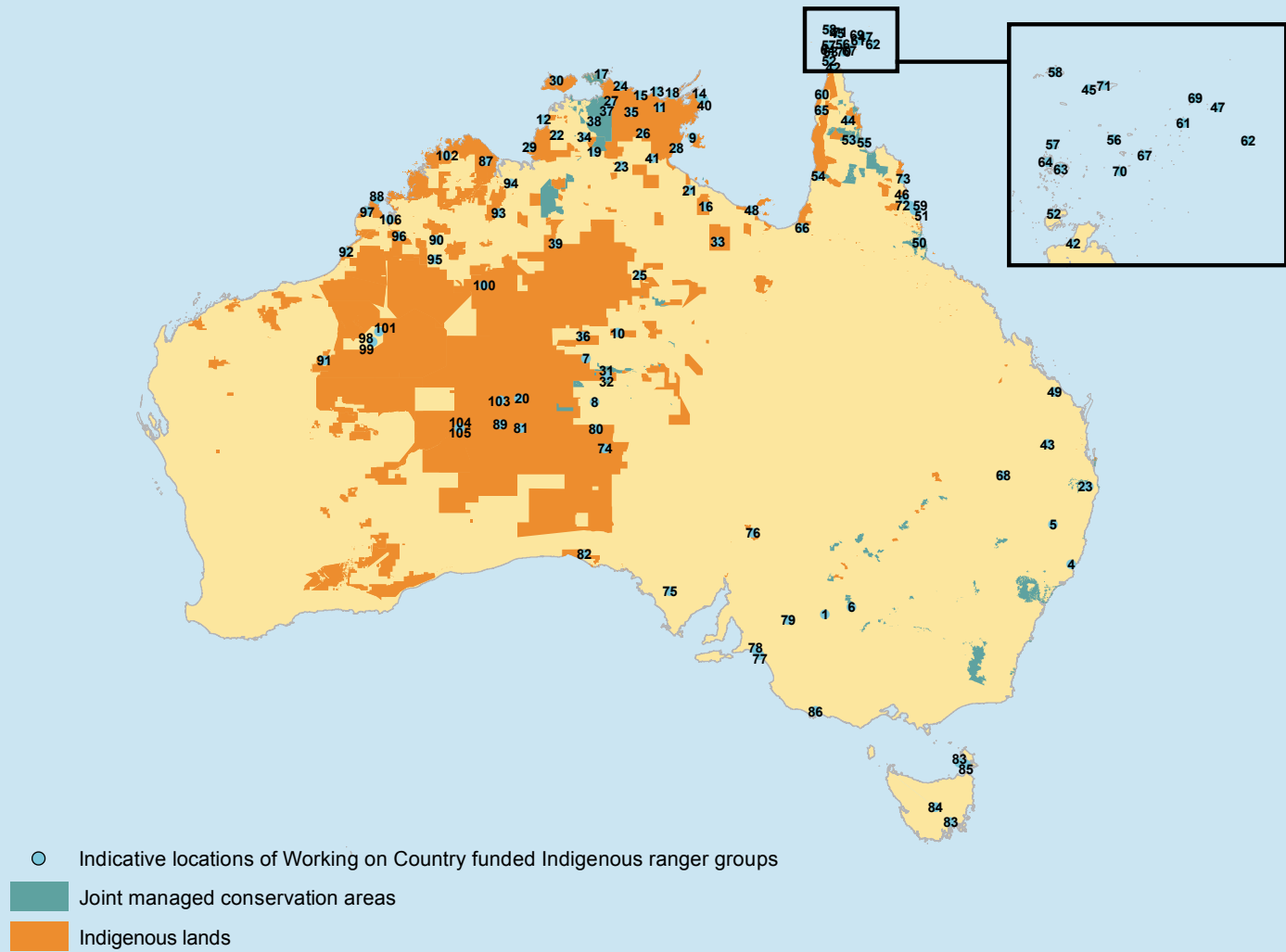
Map 1

Indigenous Protected Areas

1	Boorabee and The Willows	NSW	55	Lake Condah	VIC
2	Brewarrina Ngemba Billabong	NSW	56	Tyrendarra	VIC
3	Dorodong	NSW	57	Balanggarra	WA
4	Gumma	NSW	58	Bardi Jawi	WA
5	Minyumai	NSW	59	Birriburu	WA
6	Ngunya Jargoan	NSW	60	Dambimangari	WA
7	Tarriwa Kurrukun	NSW	61	Karajarri	WA
8	Toogimbie	NSW	62	Kiwirrkurra	WA
9	Wattleridge	NSW	63	Matuwa and Kurrara-Kurrara	WA
10	Weilmoringle	NSW	64	Ngaanyatjarra	WA
11	Angas Downs	NT	65	Ninghan	WA
12	Anindilyakwa	NT	66	Nyangumarta Warrarn	WA
13	Dhimurru	NT	67	Paruku	WA
14	Djelk	NT	68	Uunguu - Stage 1	WA
15	Katiti Petermann	NT	69	Warlu Jilajaa Jumu	WA
16	Laynhapuy - Stage 1	NT	70	Wilinggin	WA
17	Marri-Jabin (Thamurrurr - Stage 1)	NT			
18	Northern Tanami	NT			
19	Southern Tanami	NT			
20	Wardaman	NT			
21	Warddeken	NT			
22	Yanyuwa (Barni - Wardimantha Awara)	NT			
23	Angkum - Stage 1	QLD			
24	Eastern Kuku Yalanji	QLD			
25	Girringun	QLD			
26	Guanaba	QLD			
27	Jamba Dhandan Duringala	QLD			
28	Kaanju Ngaachi	QLD			
29	Mandingalbay Yidinji	QLD			
30	Nijinda Durlga	QLD			
31	Pulu Islet	QLD			
32	Thuwathu/Bujimulla	QLD			
33	Warraberalgal and Porumalgal	QLD			
34	Warul Kawa Island	QLD			
35	Antara - Sandy Bore	SA			
36	Apara - Makiri - Punti	SA			
37	Kalka - Pipalyatjara	SA			
38	Mount Willoughby	SA			
39	Nantawarrina	SA			
40	Walalkara	SA			
41	Watarru	SA			
42	Yalata	SA			
43	Yappala	SA			
44	Babel Island	TAS			
45	Badger Island	TAS			
46	Great Dog Island	TAS			
47	lungatalanana	TAS			
48	Mount Chappell Island	TAS			
49	Preminghana	TAS			
50	putalina	TAS			
51	Risdon Cove	TAS			
52	Deen Maar	VIC			
53	Framlingham Forest	VIC			
54	Kurtonitj	VIC			

Map 2

Indigenous ranger groups



Map 2

Indigenous ranger groups

1	Barkindji Maraura Rangers	NSW	55	Lama Lama Rangers	QLD
2	Githabul Aboriginal Rangers	NSW	56	Lamalgal Rangers	QLD
3	Ngulingah Nimbin Rocks Rangers	NSW	57	Mabuygiw Rangers	QLD
4	TIDE Rangers	NSW	58	Malu Kiai Rangers	QLD
5	Wattleridge & Tarriva Kurrukun IPA Rangers	NSW	59	Mandingalbay Yidinji Rangers	QLD
6	Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area Rangers	NSW	60	Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers	QLD
7	Anangu Luritjiku Rangers	NT	61	Masig Rangers	QLD
8	Anangu Rangers on Angas Downs	NT	62	Meriam Rangers	QLD
9	Anindilyakwa Rangers	NT	63	Mualagal Rangers	QLD
10	Anmatyerr Rangers	NT	64	Mura Badagal Rangers	QLD
11	Arafura Swamp Ranger Groups (3)	NT	65	Nanum Wungthim Land and Sea Rangers	QLD
12	Bulgul Land and Sea Rangers	NT	66	Normanton Rangers	QLD
13	Crocodile Islands Rangers	NT	67	Poruma Rangers	QLD
14	Dhimurru IPA Rangers	NT	68	Queensland Murray Darling Rangers	QLD
15	Djelk Rangers	NT	69	Ugar Rangers	QLD
16	Garawa Rangers	NT	70	Warraber Rangers	QLD
17	Garngi Rangers	NT	71	Wugagal Rangers - Saibai	QLD
18	Gumurr Marthakal Rangers	NT	72	Yirrganydji Rangers	QLD
19	Jawoyn Rangers	NT	73	Yuku-Baja-Muliku Rangers	QLD
20	Kaltukatjara Rangers	NT	74	APY Sandy Bore Rangers	SA
21	Li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers	NT	75	Gawler Rangers	SA
22	Malak Malak Land Management	NT	76	Nantawarrina Rangers	SA
23	Mangarrayi Rangers	NT	77	Ngarrindjeri Rangers	SA
24	Mardbalk Marine Rangers	NT	78	Raukkan Rangers	SA
25	Maru-Warinyi Ankkul Rangers	NT	79	Riverland Rangers	SA
26	Mimal Rangers	NT	80	Warru Kaninytjaku APY Rangers - Musgrave Ranges	SA
27	Njanjma Rangers	NT	81	Warru Kaninytjaku APY Rangers - Tomkinson Ranges	SA
28	Numbulwar Numburindi Amalagayag Inyung Rangers	NT	82	Yalata IPA Rangers	SA
29	Thamarrurr Rangers	NT	83	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Rangers -milaythina pakana	TAS
30	Tiwi Islands Land and Sea Management	NT	83	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Rangers -milaythina pakana	TAS
31	Tjuwanpa Rangers	NT	84	Tasmanian Aboriginal Trainee Rangers (statewide)	TAS
32	Tjuwanpa Women Rangers	NT	85	truwana rangers	TAS
33	Waanyi Garawa Rangers	NT	86	Budj Bim Rangers	VIC
34	Wagiman Guwardagun Rangers	NT	87	Balanggarra Rangers	WA
35	Warddeken Rangers	NT	88	Bardi Jawi Rangers	WA
36	Warlpiri Rangers	NT	89	Blackstone Rangers	WA
37	Warnbi Rangers	NT	90	Gooniyandi Rangers	WA
38	Werenbun Rangers	NT	91	Jigalong Rangers	WA
39	Wulaign Rangers	NT	92	Karajarri Rangers	WA
40	Yirralka Rangers - Laynhapuy IPA	NT	93	Kija Rangers	WA
41	Yugul Mangi Rangers	NT	94	Miriuwung Gajerrong Rangers for Reserve 31165	WA
42	Apudthama Rangers	QLD	95	Ngurrara Rangers	WA
43	Bunya Mountain Murri Rangers	QLD	96	Nyikina Mangala	WA
44	Chuulangun Rangers	QLD	97	Nyul Nyul Rangers	WA
45	Dauan Rangers	QLD	98	Parngurr Men Rangers	WA
46	Eastern Kuku Yalanji Rangers	QLD	99	Parngurr Women Rangers	WA
47	Erubam Rangers	QLD	100	Paruku Rangers	WA
48	Gangalidda Garawa Rangers	QLD	101	Punmu Rangers	WA
49	Gidarjil Rangers	QLD	102	Uunguu Rangers	WA
50	Girringun Rangers	QLD	103	Warakurna Rangers	WA
51	Gunggandji Rangers	QLD	104	Warburton Men Rangers	WA
52	Kaiwalagal Rangers	QLD	105	Warburton Women Rangers	WA
53	Kalan Rangers	QLD	106	Wunggurr Rangers	WA
54	Kowanyama Land Office Rangers	QLD			

1 Overview

It is almost eight years since the first Indigenous Ranger group was funded as part of the Australian Government's Working on Country initiative. There are now approximately 770 Indigenous Rangers full-time-equivalent positions across 108 ranger groups nationally, which were funded through the initiative plus some additional funding from the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

The primary policy objective of Working on Country was to provide employment opportunities for Indigenous people to deliver environmental services that protect and manage Australia's environmental and heritage values. It provides a flexible funding mechanism to achieve shared conservation goals that are in both the interest of Indigenous people and the nation.

The program has its origins in earlier initiatives that were driven primarily by Indigenous landholders, who in the 1980s negotiated joint management of parks in Northern Australia among other efforts to re-establish themselves as owners and managers of their traditional estates. These early beginnings for Indigenous land and sea management were later bolstered in the 1990s by federally funded conservation programs (Landcare, Coastcare and the National Heritage Trust, which made funding available to Indigenous organisations for environmental works) and existing employment programs (Community Development Employment Projects, or CDEP, and the Contract Employment Program for Aboriginals in Natural and Cultural Resource Management, which funded Indigenous Ranger positions).

Working on Country was created in 2007 in recognition that more secure, flexible and streamlined funding arrangements were needed to support the success and continuity of Indigenous Ranger work (Putnis et al 2007). At the same time the government began to wind down the CDEP program, which resulted in Working on Country effectively absorbing many of the ranger positions formerly supported under CDEP (about 30% of the rangers were formerly CDEP employees) (The Allen Consulting Group 2011).

Based on the results of multiple evaluations, Working on Country has been demonstratively successful. Indeed it has succeeded in delivering social and economic benefits to Indigenous communities where many other approaches have failed (for a review, see Mackie 2014).

Working on Country shares a close relationship to another federal program—the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) program, which was initiated in 1996. IPAs are voluntary arrangements between Indigenous communities and the Commonwealth Government, in which Traditional Owners are given responsibility for managing protected areas based on an agreed plan. An IPA is typically declared over Indigenous-owned land and occasionally adjacent sea, but can also operate across a variety of other tenures, if underlying consent of landholders is negotiated. Areas protected and managed under an IPA become part of the National Reserve System (NRS), thus increasing the size of the NRS and improving its comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness.

The IPA program aims to support Indigenous people to manage land and sea areas through the integration of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge with contemporary protected area management practices. Commonwealth funding is made available to Indigenous organisations based on a competitive, criteria-based assessment.

Various activities and expenses are eligible for funding, including the engagement of Indigenous Rangers. Organisations can therefore either obtain funding for rangers through the IPA program or through the larger Working on Country program. Many, but not all, federally funded ranger groups work on IPAs.

The program has proved to be very popular with Indigenous communities. As of the end of 2014 there were 70 declared IPAs, covering over 63 million hectares of land, with more under development (SEWPaC 2013a). Both IPA and Working on Country programs have attracted significant interest overseas as effective and progressive models of Indigenous land and sea management with strong grassroots support (Hume 2012).

Administration of both the IPA program and Working on Country-funded rangers was recently transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which is overseeing the new Indigenous Advancement Strategy. Prior to September 2013, the IPA and Working on Country programs were administered by the federal Department of the Environment. This process has yet to be fully bedded down, with some role still remaining for the Department of the Environment.

1.1 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to examine the important social and economic benefits being generated by Indigenous Ranger groups and IPAs across Australia.

Data and case study information from a number of Indigenous groups active in land and sea management and previous studies are assembled to present a balanced, objective picture of the benefits. The report explores the various factors underpinning the success of ranger programs and presents a compelling case for continued funding.

The report presents a number of principles and recommendations for future management and funding of ranger programs.

1.2 Structure

The report is organised into two parts.

1.2.1 Part 1: A national perspective

Part 1 contains a national perspective of economic and social benefits experienced by Indigenous communities where there is an active ranger and/or IPA program in place. The report commences with a brief overview of how the Working on Country and IPA programs operate, historical levels of investment and broadly what has been achieved over time.

A framework is established for identifying the economic and social contributions, and several case studies are presented to illustrate how ranger groups typically evolve and progressively benefit Indigenous communities. The report examines how these outcomes align to Australian Government priorities for Indigenous communities. The factors contributing to the success of the programs are reviewed. We also examine the importance of maintaining long-term funding security for the IPA and Working on Country programs.

Part 1 concludes with principles and recommendations for maintaining and building on the past achievements of these programs.

1.2.2 Part 2: Ranger groups in the Kimberley

Part 2 focuses on the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Indigenous land and sea management in the Kimberley is funded by both the federal and the state government. A variety of arrangements exist, wherein rangers are either employed directly by the state in salaried positions or are engaged by the state through contracts with Indigenous organisations. Most rangers work exclusively for Indigenous organisations such as the Kimberley Land Council and are funded primarily through federal government funding.

While the focus of this report is on federally funded rangers, primarily through Working on Country and the IPA program, the Kimberley section of the report examines state-based approaches by the Western Australian Government and their positive outcomes.

Recommendations are presented that will build on successes achieved in the Kimberley.

Part 1: A national perspective



Kerry Trapnell

Laura Land and Sea Ranger Roderick Doughboy and Lyndell Scobell of Cape York Natural Resource Management discuss land management issues at the Split Rock Escarpment in Cape York.

Box 1

State-Based Indigenous Ranger Models

Queensland

The Queensland Government funds an Indigenous land and sea ranger program which contracts 65 rangers in northern and western Queensland to care for land, waterways and protected species. In Queensland, most land and sea rangers are Traditional Owners of the land on which they work. They are employed through local Indigenous host organisations with funding for their employment provided by the Queensland Government. The programs work cooperatively with the federal Working on Country program to coordinate reporting and work planning for ranger teams and avoid duplication.

Western Australia

In Western Australia, the Department of Parks and Wildlife involves Aboriginal people in the management of parks and reserves through a variety of initiatives, including formal joint management arrangements, engagement with local Aboriginal communities and corporations, direct employment of Indigenous Rangers, and engagement of rangers from other organisations on a fee-for-service basis. The department currently employs approximately 65 Indigenous people in ranger positions.

Data sources: Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Queensland Indigenous land and sea rangers, <https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/ecosystems/community-role/ranger/location.html>; Question on notice No. 1415 asked in the Western Australian Legislative Council on 12 August 2014 to the Minister for Environment, and tabled paper No. 1880.

2 Overview of ranger programs

The Australian Government has invested in Indigenous land and sea management, including ranger groups and IPAs, for some time. The main program, Working on Country, has been operating since 2007. Funding for employing Indigenous people 'on country' as rangers, or in similar roles related to natural resource management, is also made available through the IPA program but with more of a strategic regional or local planning and organisation focus with some operational capacity. The operation, investment inputs and achievements of these programs are discussed in this section.

2.1 Working on Country

Under the Working for Country program, the Australian Government provides funding to primarily Indigenous and some non-Indigenous organisations to employ Indigenous Rangers to undertake work that has important environmental and cultural values on Indigenous country.

Working on Country was announced in 2007 as part of a larger initiative designed to support the transition of Indigenous people from CDEP, which was being phased out, into paid employment. The CDEP ceased on 1 July 2009.

Working on Country is structured and funded in a way that promotes Indigenous ownership of work plans and utilises the authority of Indigenous elders to design and enforce day-to-day rules and sanctions. Unlike the CDEP model, it offers core wages and operational funding dedicated to natural and cultural management of lands and seas, but importantly retains a degree of flexibility in work arrangements.

Indigenous Rangers undertake environmental work on country for national benefit, such as management of cultural sites, fire regimes, biodiversity, feral animal and weed control and biosecurity monitoring. The program is flexible in application in that it funds a mix of full-time positions, part-time (casual) positions, specialist contract work and targeted traineeship positions.

The objectives of Working on Country are to:

- Support Indigenous aspirations in caring for country.
- Provide opportunities for Indigenous people to deliver environmental services that protect and manage Australia's environmental and heritage values.
- Provide nationally accredited training and career pathways for Indigenous people in land and sea management in partnership with others.
- Facilitate a partnership approach between Indigenous people and others to deliver environmental outcomes. (SEWPaC Fact Sheet 2013)

Rangers typically work under the direction of local Indigenous groups. (An NGO, Aboriginal organisation, or local government authority can receive funding but not a state government agency.) In some cases rangers funded under the program work for Indigenous land councils as employees. In other cases, a more decentralised model exists in which rangers are deployed within the Indigenous community from locally based organisations.

Various state-based Indigenous Ranger programs operate using a similar but not identical model to the federal program. Models used in Queensland and Western Australia are summarised in Box 1.

2.1.1 Funding and governance arrangements

Working on Country funding is allocated through a competitive process. A call for applications is made within a particular funding round. Applications are assessed by a panel against a number of criteria, including the provision of Indigenous employment, the capacity of the proponent to administer the contract and funding, the support of Indigenous people such as Traditional Owners, the contribution to environmental priorities and the need to have a current environmental management plan (support is often provided to develop this) (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2014).

Funding is not to be used for supporting the administration, labour, or other operating costs of any commercial enterprise, but it may support some activities that could lead to a commercial enterprise such as tourism, aquaculture, or food production using traditional knowledge. Furthermore, the government encourages projects that develop skills and expertise, which could lead to commercial or contract opportunities outside of Working on Country.

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the government. Organisations can be funded for a single year or multiple years with many of the recent round of contracts extending five years. The agreement requires the organisation to provide half-yearly performance reports and a yearly performance report (provided by a qualified auditor) addressing progress against agreed outputs and the approved budget. They must also provide half-yearly wage reports.

A final report, which provides an assessment of project outcomes and an audited financial statement, is required at the end of the project or termination of the funding agreement. The funded organisation must also undertake monitoring and evaluation during the course of the project. In addition, the Australian Government regularly monitors the performance of projects, including a formal assessment of all Working on Country projects at least every four years.

2.2 Indigenous Protected Area program

Many, but not all, federally funded Indigenous Ranger groups operate within an IPA. The objectives of the IPA program are to:

- Support Indigenous landowners to develop, dedicate and manage IPAs on their lands as part of Australia's network of protected areas.
- Help Indigenous interests to develop cooperative management arrangements with state government agencies and other organisations in managing protected areas.
- Promote the integration of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge with contemporary protected area management practices. (SEWPaC 2013a)

Funding of up to \$450,000 per year is available for a declared IPA, but a typical IPA receives around \$150,000 on average. The level of funding provided for a declared IPA is determined by a formula taking into account remoteness, size, management complexity and whether the Indigenous organisation has received Working on Country funding. In addition, consideration is given to past performance of the organisation, what amount of funding it has historically received and what others of similar dimensions and circumstances are receiving. The budget allocations are checked by an independent reviewer.

Funded activities must be consistent with an IPA's management plan and generally focus on conservation of land and sea country and protecting cultural heritage (SEWPaC 2013a).

IPA funding may be used to cover the costs of engaging Indigenous Rangers and staff to work in the protected area, where it is consistent with the IPA's management plan or scope of work. This funding is subject to the condition that the rangers are not already fully funded by other Commonwealth, state, or territory funding initiatives—including through the Working on Country program.

This does not prevent Indigenous organisations running IPAs from applying for Working on Country funding to employ rangers. It simply means that proponents must ensure that the program implementation is complementary. There are currently 43 declared IPAs across Australia (out of 70 in total) that receive Working on Country funding for Indigenous Rangers to carry out land and sea management activities (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2014).

The IPA program also provides limited funding support for Indigenous organisations to develop cooperative management arrangements with state or territory conservation agencies. These can include co-managing IPAs with assistance from state and territory rangers or implementing cooperative management arrangements over existing protected areas (Department of the Environment 2011).

2.3 Investment in ranger and IPA programs

The amount of public money invested in Working on Country and IPAs represents a very small proportion of total spending by governments (federal, state and territory) on Indigenous programs and general welfare support to Indigenous people.

For example, in 2012-13 the combined Commonwealth Government expenditure on Working on Country and IPAs was approximately \$67 million. This represents just 0.2% of the estimated \$30.3 billion spent by all governments on Indigenous services nationally (SCRGSP 2014). It is also a small fraction (just 2%) of Commonwealth expenditures on specific Indigenous programs, estimated by the Productivity Commission to be \$3.28 billion in 2012-13.

Despite this, the employment of rangers through Working on Country and IPAs is delivering a number of very positive social and economic outcomes for a significant number of Indigenous communities.

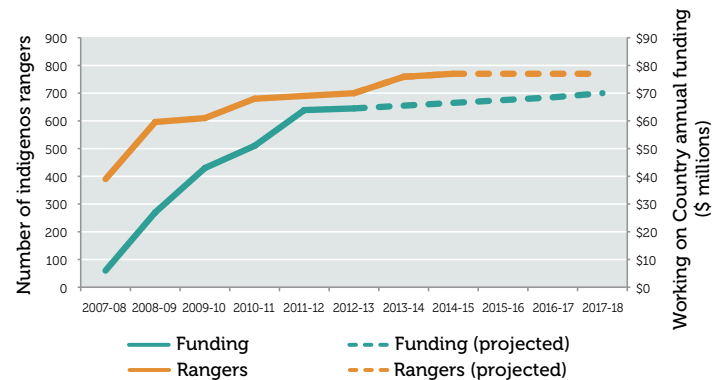
2.3.1 Working on Country

From 2007 to 2012, \$298 million was allocated to Working on Country (Mackie 2014). In the initial years of the program, annual funding grew from just \$10 million in 2007-08 to approximately \$50 million in 2010-11. Current funding is about \$65 million per year. The Australian Government has made a commitment to maintain program funding at current levels out to 2018 (or \$320 million over the five years from 1 July 2013). This funding supported the goal of having 730 Indigenous Rangers on country by June 2015 (SEWPaC Annual Report 2013).

As of November 2013, the number of rangers employed under the program had reached 690, spread across more than 90 groups primarily located in desert or coastal areas of remote and regional Australia (Figure 1) (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2014). This had increased to 729 full-time-equivalent positions by July 2014, and as of the time of writing 770 FTE ranger positions across 108 ranger groups were supported nationally through both Working on Country funding and additional funding from the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2015).

Figure 1

Cumulative Number of Indigenous Ranger Positions and Funding (Actual and Projected, 2007-18)



Notes: 1) Funding is in nominal dollars. 2) At any given time, the total number of Indigenous Ranger funded positions may be higher than the actual number of rangers employed due to turnover and other changes in work status.

Data sources: Ranger numbers from Caring for Our Country report cards 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12; funding data from Allen Consulting Group (2011), Assessment of the economic and employment outcomes of the Working on Country program, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/woc-economics.pdf>; Australia Department of the Environment, Working on Country, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry>, accessed November 2014



Kerry Trapnell

The Apudthama Land and Sea Rangers are a founding member of the Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance, which plays a key role in reducing threats to vulnerable and endangered marine turtles nesting on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula.

2.3.2 Indigenous Protected Areas

The amount of funding invested in IPAs is considerably less than that allocated to Working on Country. At present, the Australian Government is spending about \$14 million each year on the IPA program, which supports 70 declared IPAs.

Funding has increased progressively since the program started in 1996 (Figure 2). In the first 10 years, just \$12 million was spent. In 2008, the program received a funding boost when it became part of the new Caring for Our Country program. Funding was increased to \$50 million over five years with the aim of supporting the 50 IPAs that had been declared at the time and facilitating the development of new IPAs through new and continuing consultation projects (Department of the Environment 2013).

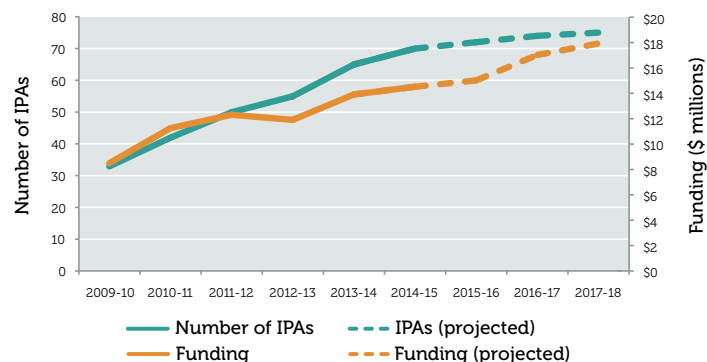
More recently, in 2013, the Australian Government renewed its commitment to the program with an extension of funding for a further five years, subject to the funds being used only for managing existing IPAs. For 2013-18, a total of \$78.3 million has been allocated (SEWPaC 2013a). If this funding is fully allocated as indicated, it would result in annual program funding reaching approximately \$17 million in 2018 and a capping of the number of IPAs to those already under consultation or already declared (Figure 2).

'I want to be a ranger and I've got four other blokes in town who would sign up today if we had the money. At the moment, those guys are just on Centrelink.'

— Andrew Minyardie, Kanyiminpa Jukurpa board member, Bidyadanga

Figure 2

Cumulative Number of Declared IPAs and Annual Program Funding (Actual and Projected, 2009-10 to 2017-18)



Note: Funding is in nominal dollars.

Data sources: Australia Department of the Environment (2013), 2013-18 Sustainable environment stream: Grants for Indigenous Protected Areas, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/pubs/grant-guidelines13-18.pdf>; Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications Legislation Committee (2013), Budget estimates Hansard, http://www.aph.gov.au/~media/Estimates/Live/ec_ctte/estimates/bud_1314/sewpac/program_1-1.ashx

2.4 Key achievements

In a relatively short period, the Working on Country program has delivered significant and meaningful achievements. These include strong demand for ranger positions in Indigenous communities, high levels of employee retention, good attainment of training and skills, and promising evidence of engagement in the market economy through involvement in commercial business activities. Further details about these achievements are provided below. The data presented are from reports submitted to the Australian Government by ranger groups from 2009 to 2012 (SEWPaC 2013b). Employment and training data are compiled from reports received from 79 ranger groups and all other information was collated from 63 groups.

2.4.1 Employment and demand for ranger positions

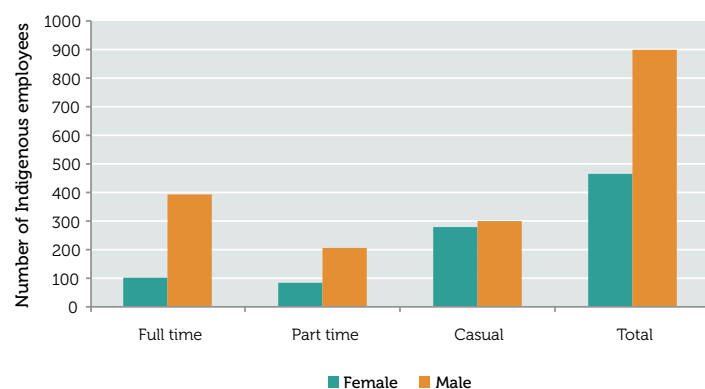
The official number of rangers employed through Working on Country and related federal funding was approximately 770 (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2015) at the time of this writing. But the total number of employees is significantly larger because casual positions are often filled for short periods on an as-needed basis. For example, 1,423 people were employed through the program from January to June 2012, of whom 95% were Indigenous. Demand for positions is high, and often there are many more applicants than positions available.

The majority of ranger positions represent new jobs for previously jobless individuals in remote areas where employment prospects are scarce, starting literacy and skill levels are low, social and economic disadvantage is extreme and standard models of labour markets and work arrangements have generally failed to deliver outcomes.

Women make up a significant proportion of the workforce. Just under 50% of casual positions are filled by women and across all employment categories women make up 34% of Indigenous employees (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Indigenous Employment by Status and Gender, Working on Country Program (2011-12)



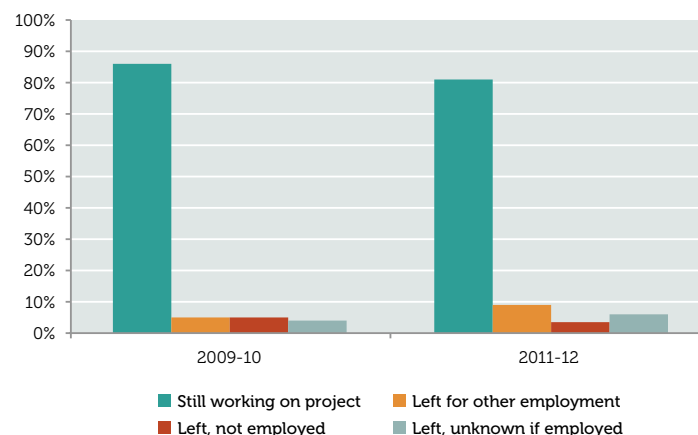
Data source: Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Working on Country: Reporting back to you, 2009-2012, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/woc-report-card.pdf>

2.4.2 Retention rates

Most ranger groups have a high staff retention rate. In 2009-10, 86% of staff that had been in the program in the previous 12 months had maintained employment as a ranger. A similarly high rate was achieved in 2011-12, with 81% retention (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Working on Country Staff Retention over a 12 month period (2009-10 and 2011-12)

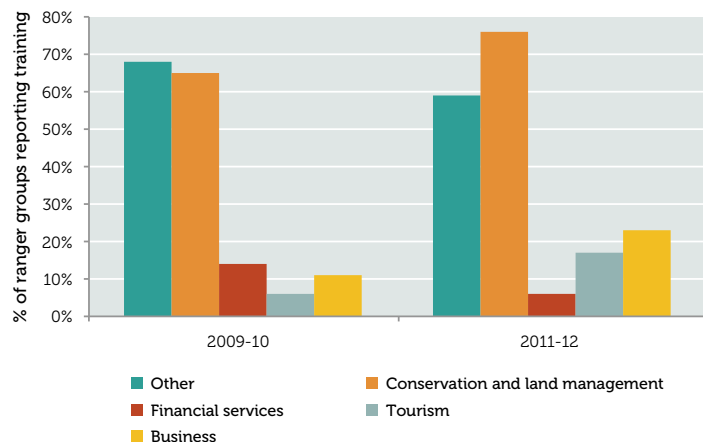


Data source: Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Working on Country: Reporting back to you, 2009-2012, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/woc-report-card.pdf>

2.4.3 Training and skills

In 2011-12, all 79 ranger groups that reported on their activities were engaged in some form of training. Approximately 76% of ranger groups reported participation in the accredited Conservation and Land Management Certificate. Between 2009-10 and 2011-12, there was a notable increase in business and tourism training (Figure 5). Access to relevant training has facilitated the transition of the 5 to 10% of rangers who leave the program each year for jobs in mining and other sectors.

Figure 5
Type of Training Completed



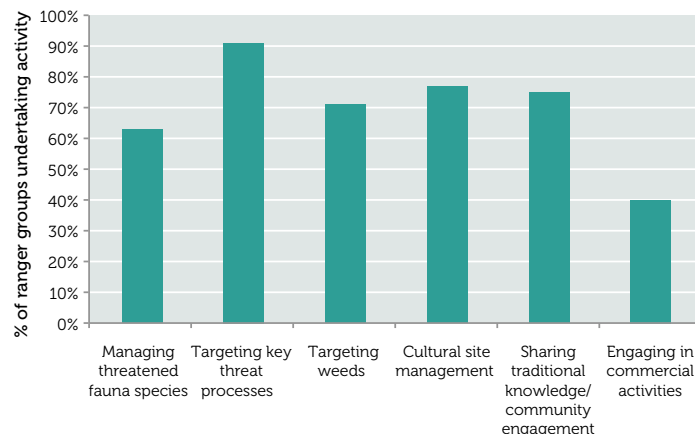
Data source: Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Working on Country: Reporting back to you, 2009-2012, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/woc-report-card.pdf>

2.4.4 Commercial activities

In addition to work undertaken as part of Working on Country funding arrangements, approximately 40% of ranger groups have delivered services on a commercial basis—a positive sign that Indigenous communities are engaging with the market economy (Figure 6). The main commercial activities being undertaken are cultural heritage survey work (47% of groups), tourism associated work (37%), natural resource management services (40%) and commercial harvesting of wildlife (12%) (Figure 7).

Two examples of the type of fee-for-service work being undertaken by Indigenous Rangers are the generation of carbon offsets and biosecurity surveillance (Box 2).

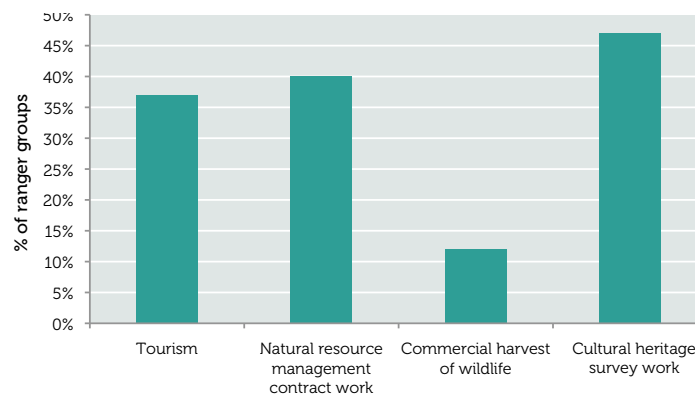
Figure 6
Ranger Groups Undertaking Environmental, Cultural and Economic Activities (2011-12)



Note: Targeting key threat processes includes activities such as culling feral animals and removing ghost nets.

Data source: Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Working on Country: Reporting back to you, 2009-2012, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/woc-report-card.pdf>

Figure 7
Types of Commercial Activities Undertaken (2011-12)



Data source: Commonwealth of Australia (2013), Working on Country: Reporting back to you: 2009-2012, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/woc-report-card.pdf>

Box 2

Environmental and Biosecurity Services Provided by Indigenous Rangers

West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement

In 2006, the West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement (WAFMA) was brokered by the area's Traditional Owners, the Northern Territory Government, Northern Land Council, Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre and ConocoPhillips to offset some of the greenhouse gas emissions generated at ConocoPhillips' liquefied natural gas plant in Darwin Harbour. This agreement recognises the significant greenhouse gas abatement achieved through savanna fire management carried out by Indigenous Ranger groups. For 17 years, ConocoPhillips has committed to pay around \$1 million a year to the WAFMA project to provide this fire management service.

Indigenous biosecurity surveillance reporting

Indigenous land and sea rangers are employed by the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture to assist with achieving biosecurity surveillance outcomes in remote parts of northern Australia. This area is vulnerable to the incursion of exotic animal pests and diseases. A new approach to the collection of surveillance data through ranger groups was established in 2012 to complement existing targeted surveillance activities undertaken as part of the department's Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy.

Under this approach, Indigenous land and sea ranger groups are paid on a fee-for-service basis for the collection, collation and submission of questionnaires. The questionnaires target syndromes associated with pests and diseases, including rabies, screw worm fly, classical swine fever, foot and mouth disease and highly pathogenic

avian influenza, as well as general disease syndromes. Data are gathered quarterly from targeted groups within each community, such as human health clinics, police stations, animal management or environmental health workers, hunters and private veterinarians.

The surveillance system relies on Indigenous community engagement, being based on local community members collecting and reporting disease information from a variety of sources. The aim of the project is to improve the sensitivity and timeliness of detection of exotic disease incursions and to improve the cost-effectiveness of data gathering. Analysis of reported results against published data shows that this method adequately captures baseline data. Notably, the Department of Agriculture recognises that this has been achieved in a challenging, remote environment for minimal cost.

Data sources: North Australian Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd, WALFA: West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project, <http://www.nailsma.org.au/walfa-west-arnhem-land-fire-abatement-project>, accessed 13 November 2014; Cookson B, Durr S and Ward MP, The Indigenous face of biosecurity: A syndromic surveillance reporting project in Northern Australia, <https://www.asid.net.au/documents/item/462>, accessed 13 November 2014



A fire break is lit by a Bardi Jawi ranger.

3 Economic and social benefits

Working on Country has been evaluated a number of times since it commenced in 2007. The findings of these evaluations have been largely positive, and many have identified economic, social and cultural benefits generated through the program.

The key studies examined for this report include:

- Allen Consulting Group (2011), Assessment of the economic and employment outcomes of the Working on Country program, prepared for the federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.
- Dermot Smyth (2011), Review of Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Area programs through telephone interviews, final report.
- WalterTurnbull (2010), Working on Country Evaluation Report, prepared for the Australia Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.
- Urbis (2012), Assessment of the social outcomes of the Working on Country program, prepared for the Australia Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.
- Social Ventures Australia (2014), Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa: Social return on investment report: Social, economic and cultural impact of on-country programs, prepared for Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa.

A common finding of these evaluations is that most Indigenous Ranger groups are highly motivated by the opportunity to embrace meaningful work that also enables their people to reconnect to country and retain cultural knowledge.

In addition to the direct employment provided to individuals engaged in the program, there are numerous economic and social benefits that extend to the wider Indigenous community within which rangers operate. This section uses a benefit framework to organise the various benefit streams identified

in the literature into economic, employment, cultural, social, health and well-being. By mapping these outcomes to the Council of Australian Governments priorities for closing the gap, we examine how the ranger programs are making positive inroads in addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

Some groups are more successful than others. The literature suggests that it takes time for ranger teams to operate as a cohesive unit and build capacity through training and experience. We present a conceptual model of how ranger groups typically develop and evolve. This development model helps to explain the nature and timing of program benefits. It is difficult to make generalisations about what makes a successful ranger group. Outcomes and drivers of success tend to be very dependent on local context. However, in this section we present observations from the literature on the range of factors that have contributed to successful outcomes.

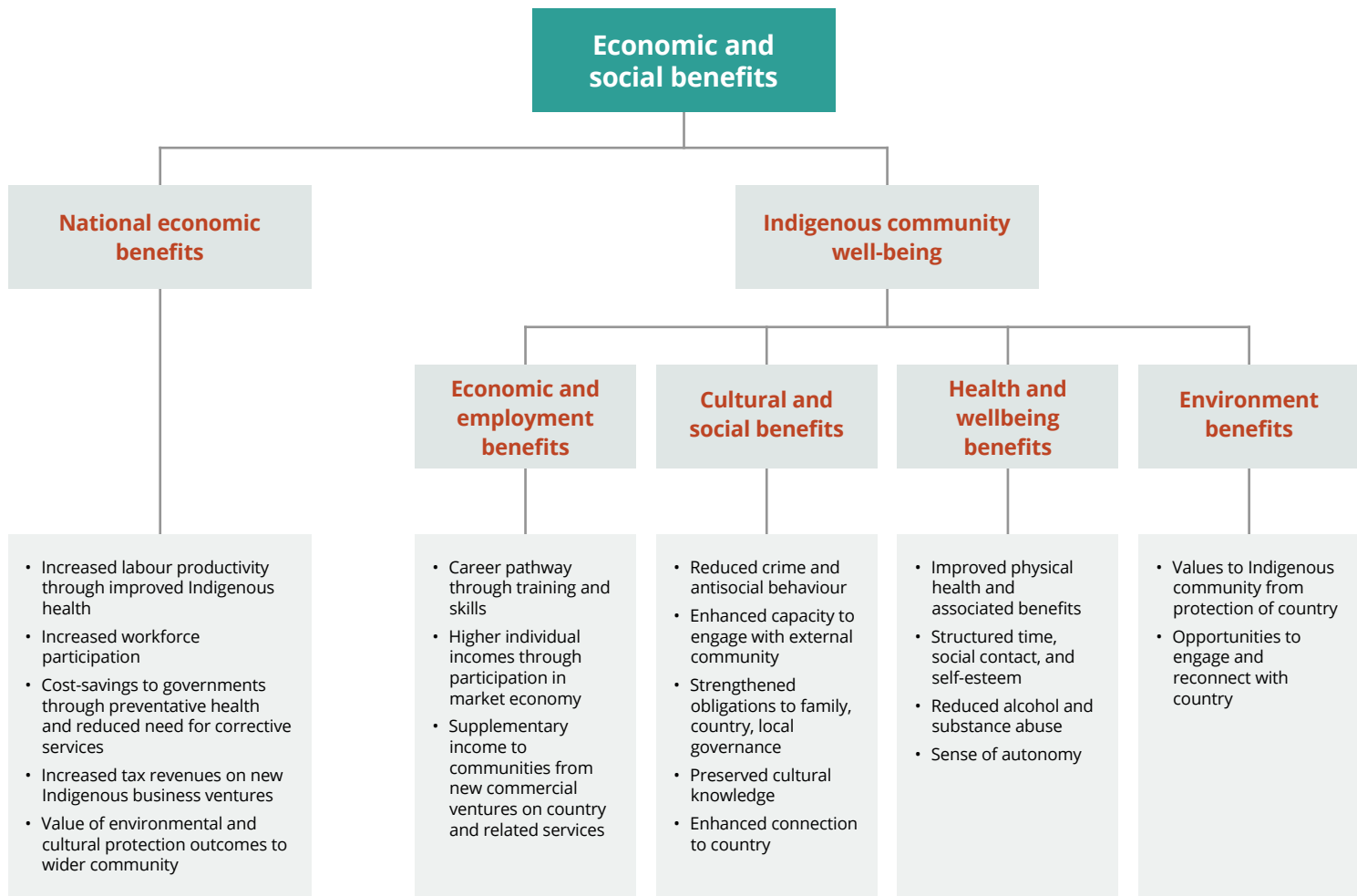
After five years of planning and training, Ngadju Conservation is independently managing its ranger program and has ambitious goals to employ more people like female ranger coordinator, Jasmine McPhee, to work on Ngadju country in the southern Goldfields and Nullarbor region.



3.1 A benefit framework

Figure 8 sets out a framework that categorises the benefits of ranger programs in two broad categories: Indigenous community well-being and national economic benefits.

Figure 8
Benefit Framework for Indigenous Ranger Programs



Data source: Synergies Economic Consulting summary

3.1.1 National benefits

At a national level, economic benefits include:

- Increased labour productivity through improved Indigenous health.
- Greater workforce participation, to the extent that the program helps Indigenous people get jobs, leading to increased economic output.
- Cost savings to governments through lower expenditures on public health, policing, corrective services and public housing.
- Economic returns generated by new Indigenous business ventures, including the associated tax component of this revenue that is received by government.

Ranger programs are having demonstrable positive effects on reducing social problems in Indigenous communities. It is almost always the case that prevention of social problems is cheaper than addressing the symptoms of neglect. Therefore, the cost savings to governments are potentially very large and represent a real benefit—even before considering the benefits enjoyed by Indigenous individuals and their communities from being healthier and having a lower incidence of crime.

Other national benefits

Other benefits include the value of Indigenous traditional knowledge and intellectual property about land and sea management, culture, medicinal properties of flora and fauna and so on. The ranger programs help keep this knowledge in active use and help disseminate it to new generations. This practice has potential economic value—currently and in the future. There are also non-use values associated with traditional knowledge, stemming from the importance of this knowledge to Indigenous culture, spirituality and belief systems. These benefits are difficult to measure in dollars but are nevertheless critical motivators for Indigenous participants and thus a key element of the success of the programs.

Ranger groups also make positive contributions to environmental outcomes and protection of Indigenous cultural

sites. These outcomes represent non-market economic benefits to the nation. As of 2013, ranger groups were managing over 1.5 million square kilometres (km²) of land and sea country (SEWPaC Annual Report 2013). The rangers are working on projects that have important environmental significance. The 2012 Report on the review of the Caring for Our Country initiative reported that 64% of ranger groups are managing key threatening processes, 41% are managing weeds of national significance and 35% are involved in protective activities relating to threatened fauna. While these benefits are not the main focus of this report, they are nevertheless an important component of program outcomes.

3.1.2 Indigenous community well-being

Ranger programs generate economic, employment, cultural, social, environmental and health benefits for Indigenous communities.

3.1.3 Economic and employment benefits

The economic benefits arising from ranger programs encompass both direct and indirect benefits. With respect to direct benefits, The Allen Consulting Group observed that the daily wages paid under the Working on Country program represent a significant improvement on the median gross income for Indigenous people, which in 2010 was \$278 per week (The Allen Consulting Group 2011). Additional income, and improved income security, can lead to financial independence, improved prospects of home ownership and the possibility of a career pathway.

A study by Smyth (2011) found strong evidence that ranger programs are preparing Indigenous people for a career. Most program participants interviewed by Smyth reported that being a ranger was the first experience of full-time work and the first time they had received targeted, personalised training.

‘The work stabilises people. They see that if you don’t come to work you are letting the team down. The rangers are learning that they owe the project their time—they’re working on company time. It’s a big step; we are trying to transition them into responsible employment behaviour. For example, when the manager isn’t there, they continue to work.’

— Riverland Rangers organisational stakeholder

As a result, individual ability, self-confidence and self-esteem improved markedly (Smyth 2011). In addition, financial security has improved the lives of rangers’ families.

The study also highlighted the role played by Indigenous Rangers in providing community leadership and role models. Interviewees reported a strong interest in ranger employment among school students and linked improved school attendances to being, in part, due to the prospect of possible future ranger employment. Some ranger groups have formed partnerships with schools to provide a junior ranger program and/or ranger traineeships as a part of the high school curriculum. Rangers also regularly visit schools as part of their liaison role.

The skills and experience Indigenous Rangers gain from being employed also increases their chances of being able to participate in the external economy. This is due to an enhanced capacity to interact with the external economy as a result of the training and work experience gained. Ranger groups are better placed to undertake contract work for external parties, such as payment for environmental services (PES) to mining companies, governments or non-governmental organisations. One study found that the value of commercial contracts and PES work undertaken by Indigenous land and sea management groups in 2010 was conservatively estimated at \$4-6 million per annum (May 2010).

Indigenous people in remote areas are uniquely placed to provide natural resource management services to government and other parties, given their location to and connection with areas of country with high biodiversity values and their knowledge and skill in caring for this country. For example, there may be eco-tourism opportunities in some regions, bioprospecting, fire management services, wildlife harvesting, feral animal and weed control, research support work, or being paid for carbon offsetting. This can benefit Indigenous communities by diversifying their economies through multiple sources of income.

3.1.4 Cultural and social benefits

The cultural dimension of ranger programs is a central factor in encouraging Indigenous participation in the workforce. One study found that in very remote communities, training and employment must be tailored to the cultural norms and values of people, particularly those who speak an Indigenous language (Guenther and McRae-Williams 2014). Working on Country is an example of a ‘hybrid economy’—that is, one which provides meaningful activities that connect work with land, culture, family and community (Moritz et al 2015). This type of employment provides a space for the development and implementation of local aspirations.

‘It is a big privilege to be working here. I was born and bred here; it means a lot to put back into the community. That’s what makes us who we are. ... I love working, I was working in Western society since I was 18 years old and I forgot about my country. Being able to work here has made my life. Coming back to my grass roots, I am proud of what I have done.’

— Raukkan Natural Resource Management ranger and elder (Cited in Urbis 2012)

Box 3

Social and Cultural Benefits of the Indigenous Ranger Program

Raukkan rangers, South Australia

Raukkan is an Aboriginal community of approximately 150 people located near the Coorong and Murray Mouth in South Australia. The Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corp., with funding from the Working on Country program, employs eight Raukkan rangers who undertake natural and cultural resource management activities in the area, including controlling weeds, planting seedlings and operating a nursery to provide plants for local groups.

An important element of the project is that rangers increase their knowledge of and interest in cultural practices. By doing so, the rangers and other community members strengthen the community's cultural identity. Cultural activities include revegetating burial sites, identifying cultural artefacts, mapping cultural sites, learning about traditional plants and food and participating in traditional land management practices such as hunting.

The Raukkan rangers Working on Country project has built community capacity by creating opportunities for employment and the retention of local skilled workers. Families are returning to Raukkan, the temporarily closed school has reopened, and the community now experiences less antisocial behaviour.

Anmatyerr (Ti Tree) rangers, Northern Territory

Six Anmatyerr (Ti Tree) Aboriginal rangers are employed by the Central Land Council with funding from the Working on Country program. Ti Tree is located halfway between Tennant Creek and Alice Springs in the Northern Territory and has a population of approximately 120 people. Covering more than 770,000 km² of remote land, the Central Land Council region includes culturally

significant sites, biologically significant wetlands, sites of botanical significance and threatened species. The Central Land Council operates a network of seven established ranger groups employing over 115 Aboriginal rangers on a permanent or casual basis in areas with few other employment opportunities.

Social benefits of Indigenous Ranger programs that have been reported include:

- Increased communication, relationships and cooperation across traditional country and language groups as rangers from different groups interact through joint training.
- Increased independence and autonomy of rangers through an increased ability to manage their finances. For example, rangers are building skills and capacity in financial management through employer training, with rangers assisted in managing their tax, superannuation, bank accounts and salary sacrifice schemes. It has been reported that around half of the rangers did not previously have bank accounts.
- Greater confidence and ability to access mainstream services such as government agencies, banks and private rental.
- Better ability to advocate for themselves when dealing with their employer, showing a greater willingness to talk about and seek help for personal issues at work.
- Greater capacity to deal with policy issues and bureaucratic processes has meant rangers are now helping with native title claims, sacred site identification, management of claims and federal court determinations.

Data sources: Commonwealth of Australia (2012), Case Study: Working on Country, Raukkan rangers, South Australia, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/casestudy-woc-raukkan.pdf>; Commonwealth of Australia (2012), Case study: Working on Country, Anmatyerr (Ti Tree) rangers, Northern Territory, <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/casestudy-woc-anmatyerr-rangers.pdf>, accessed 18 November 2014

A key feature of Working on Country and the IPA programs is the engagement these programs foster between community elders and younger generations and the capacity to pass on traditional ecological knowledge. This serves to enhance connection to country and family obligation (AIATSIS 2011). These factors result in an increase in 'social capital'.

Working on Country explicitly aims to protect Indigenous heritage and knowledge. This is recognised as a powerful force in fostering social capital, which in turn has the potential to increase labour force participation outside of the program in the broader community. Case examples of demonstrable social and cultural benefits are presented in Box 3.

Reduced crime and antisocial behaviour

Increases in social capital through ranger programs have been demonstrated to decrease crime and antisocial behaviour in Indigenous communities (The Allen Consulting Group 2011). This is partly a result of the fostering of partnerships between Indigenous people and formal systems with which they may not previously have had constructive relationships, such as educational institutions, government and community organisations, employers, land managers and health services (AIATSIS 2011).

Further, given the strong links between criminal behaviour and unemployment, the jobs created through a ranger program serve to reduce antisocial behaviour and alcoholism. Social Ventures Australia (2014) reports specific evidence of the ranger program in the Martu community having a positive effect in reducing alcohol consumption, primarily through reducing the number of days that young rangers spent in town.

Health and well-being

Another important benefit of ranger programs is the improvement in health and well-being of Indigenous Rangers. The gap in health outcomes for Indigenous people is underpinned by a disproportionate burden of disease linked to inactivity, malnutrition, social disorders and socio-economic

disadvantage. Indigenous ranger programs, through their focus on outdoor activity and meaningful work are positively influencing health behaviours and the social determinants of health.

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

– Raukkan Natural Resource Management ranger (Cited in Urbis 2012)

The Menzies School of Health Research has conducted studies that find evidence of a link between participation in land and sea management activities and better health outcomes in Indigenous communities (Burgess et al 2009). Mental and physical health is improved through young men and women benefiting from having more structured time, social contact and self-esteem. Moreover, meaningful employment results in better lifestyle choices, such as reduced alcohol and substance abuse. Examples of health benefits are summarised in Box 4.

Box 4

Improved Health Outcomes

Improved nutrition and better physical and mental health are often identified as positive outcomes of Working on Country programs. Some examples cited in the 2012 Urbis evaluation of social outcomes of the Working on Country program include:

- **Thamarrurr Rangers Land and Sea Management Project.** The rangers' work on the land and waterways has provided them with increased access to fresh fish and bush tucker. Also, since their employment through Working on Country, their knowledge of healthy eating habits has improved.
- **Mapoon Land and Sea Centre.** From their Working on Country wages, the rangers report being able to afford better-quality food. Some have also purchased cars, enabling them to shop for groceries in town, where they are able to access a greater variety of food.
- **Lama Lama and Kalan ranger groups.** These groups receive regular visits from a local health care professional who does a general check-up.



- **Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe.** The Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Associations (NLPA) has implemented a drug- and alcohol-free workplace policy, and employees are subject to regular testing, with a number of employees supported by the NLPA to address their drug and alcohol issues. Breaking the dependency cycle for these families is valued by the broader Aboriginal community and is considered to be a positive influence on the younger generation.
- **Wunggur rangers.** The Wunggur rangers program has implemented a suicide-prevention initiative with some of the rangers undertaking training in suicide intervention. This includes learning how to identify signs of depression and risky behaviour and gaining skills in approaching family, friends and members of the broader community.

Data sources: Urbis (2012), Assessment of the social outcomes of the Working on Country Program: Report – May 2012. Report prepared for the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. Australian Government. <https://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/publications/pubs/woc-social.pdf>

Desmond Daly and Jeff Long are members of the Fish River Rangers, who manage the 178 000 hectare Fish River Station in the Northern Territory.

Environmental benefits

Indigenous Rangers are making real improvements to the environment on IPAs and other natural areas. This provides not only a conservation benefit for Australia. It is also highly important for the Indigenous communities that live on country as they derive use benefits, through having access to resources that are sustainably managed for fishing and hunting, and spiritual benefits through their close connection to country. The evidence of this is extensive, though beyond the scope of this project to examine in detail (Moritz *et al* 2015).

3.2 Valuing the benefits

To date no comprehensive cost-benefit analysis has been done of Working on Country, primarily because many of the program benefits are non-market and difficult to value. However, estimates of returns on investment have been made for some individual ranger groups. For example, Social Ventures Australia estimated that the on-country programs run by Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa in the Western Desert of the Pilbara, Western Australia, generate a benefit of \$55 million in present value over five years (against a program investment of \$20 million) (Social Ventures Australia 2014). The benefits to government were valued in terms of:

- Costs avoided—for example, due to lower imprisonment rates and alcohol-related crime.
- Costs saved in delivery of particular outcomes—for example, heritage protection of cultural sites.
- Costs saved due to reduction in income support payments.

Collectively these benefits were valued at \$13 million. Public health benefits, through cost savings to the public health system, were not included in the analysis.

Benefits to the local Indigenous communities were estimated to be worth \$38 million. This includes (but is not limited to) higher incomes to individuals employed as rangers (the differential between welfare payments and a ranger wage), the transfer

of knowledge from elders to young people (valued using undergraduate university tuition fees), improved pride and self-esteem (valued at the costs saved from less intensive counselling) and the generation of additional hours of support to young men over and above standard ranger duties (valued at the ranger wage rate).

The remaining \$4 million of program benefit was estimated to accrue to other organisations associated with the program. The benefits were valued in terms of corporate reputation and direct increase in income for community corporations.

The Social Ventures Australia study provides a starting basis for assessing program outcomes in a social cost-benefit framework and points to considerable cost savings to government. Further refinement of the estimates is required as some of the cited economic benefits are fiscal transfers as opposed to net benefits.¹

3.3 Contributions to closing the gap

Indigenous disadvantage, relative to the Australian community at large, has long been recognised by governments as a complex and challenging problem. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has committed to six targets to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage:

- Closing the life expectancy gap within a generation (by 2031).
- Halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under 5 within a decade (by 2018).
- Ensuring that all Indigenous 4-year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years (by 2013).
- Halving the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade (by 2018).

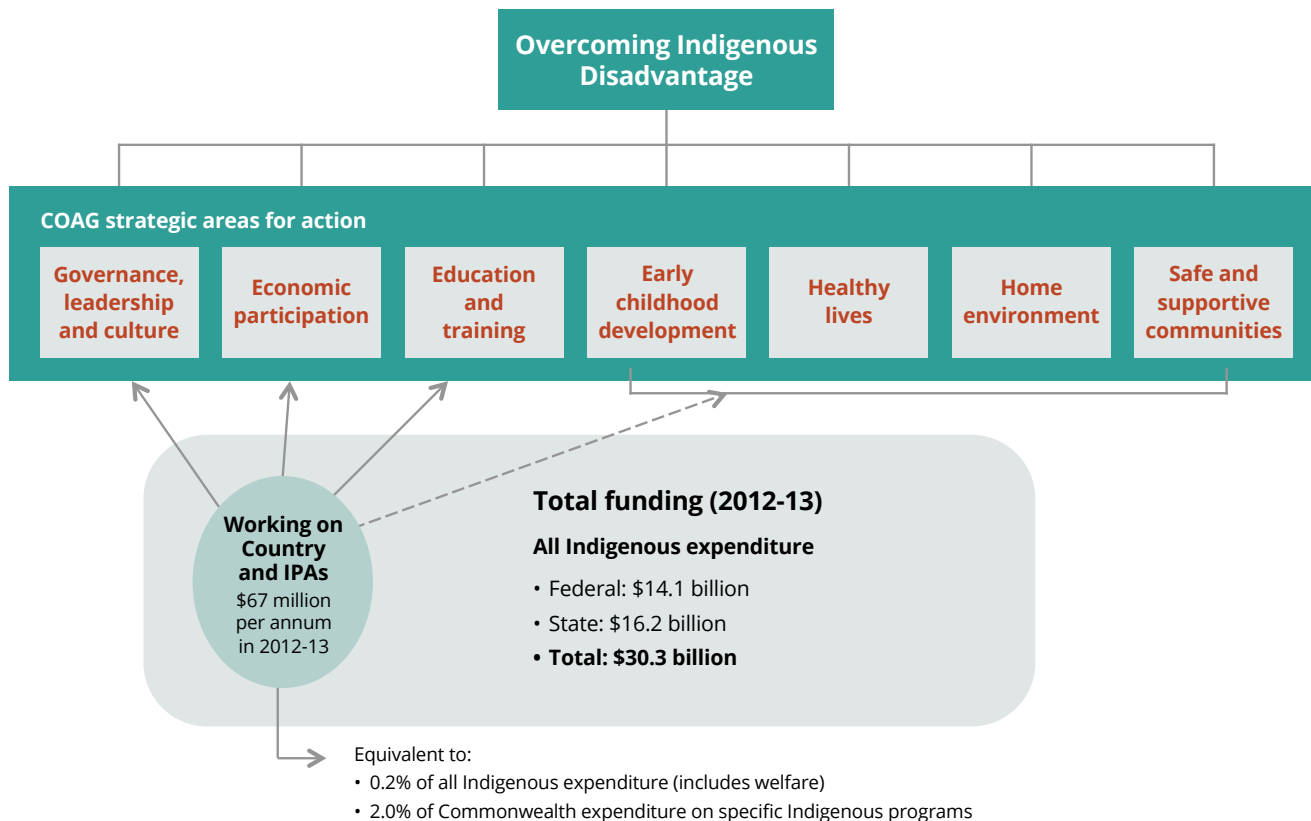
¹ For example, reduced welfare support payments (due to ranger wages replacing income support payments) and increased income taxation revenue on the ranger wages are transfers, not net economic benefits.

- Halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment rates or equivalent attainment (by 2020).
- Halving the gap in employment outcomes within a decade (by 2018).

The Productivity Commission’s report on progress towards these targets finds that over the last five to 10 years, there has been some improvement in a number of indicators, including some of the COAG targets above. However, the task of closing the gap remains a very big challenge (SCRGSP 2014).

The Productivity Commission did not evaluate the impacts of individual programs on indicators, but there is considerable evidence that ranger programs are contributing directly to COAG’s strategic priorities for closing the gap. In particular, Working on Country promotes Indigenous governance, leadership and culture; economic participation; and education and training. These linkages are shown by the solid lines in Figure 9. Ranger programs are also contributing strongly to health, improved home environments and safe and supportive communities. Whilst these contributions are tangible, they are less direct outcomes and are therefore represented by a dashed line.

Figure 9
Alignment of Indigenous Ranger Programs to Strategic Priority Areas for Closing the Gap



Data source: Synergies Economic Consulting chart, drawing on expenditure data from the Government of Australia Productivity Commission (2014), Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: Key indicators 2014, <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/recurring/overcoming-indigenous-disadvantage/key-indicators-2014/key-indicators-2014-report.pdf>

Ranger programs are targeting those communities that are most disadvantaged and that stand to gain the most through ranger jobs, higher income and associated improvements in self-esteem. This is because ranger programs are mostly located in remote areas of Australia where 22% of the Indigenous population resides and where Indigenous disadvantage is greatest (SCRGSP 2014).

3.4 Success factors

The Working on Country program has been evaluated by multiple reviews and audits as being largely successful, notwithstanding some ranger groups performing better than others and opportunities for further refinements to program operation (The Allen Consulting Group 2011; Smyth D 2011; Urbis 2012; WalterTurnbull 2010). On many accounts, Indigenous land and sea management through Working on Country and the system of IPAs has succeeded in empowering individuals and communities, where many other Indigenous programs with similar aims have failed. In this section we examine why ranger programs have been successful and what factors typically govern successful establishment and ongoing operation of a ranger group.

3.4.1 Why ranger programs have been successful

A number of observations can be drawn from the literature about factors that have contributed to program success.

Adequate resourcing

The Working on Country program has been adequately funded and makes allowance for wages, operational costs and overhead. This has enabled rangers to be paid at award rates, which are substantially higher than payments available under the CDEP. When Working on Country was introduced, annual income for a ranger increased from around \$12,000 (based on CDEP payments) to an average of \$45,000 under Working on Country. This policy shift has meant that Indigenous people

now view ranger work as 'real jobs' and something to aspire to (Mackie 2014).

In-built flexibility

The program makes provision for a suite of employment options, including full time, part time and casual. There is also the flexibility for rangers, and Indigenous organisations in receipt of Working on Country funding, to pursue other income through fee for service. Red tape in application for program funding and reporting has been kept to a minimum.

Focus on cultural heritage and environment

Working on Country has a specific focus of keeping Indigenous people connected with their land, protecting their cultural heritage and the environment. This has been particularly well-received by Indigenous people. Ranger activities increase

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

– Gumurr Marthakal organisational stakeholder (Cited in Urbis 2012)

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

– Riverland Rangers external stakeholder (Cited in Urbis 2012)

engagement with community elders, and traditional knowledge is imparted to younger generations.

The program is viewed very favourably by Indigenous people because it recognises traditional activities as interwoven with contemporary land and sea management (e.g., fire management) and thus as legitimate elements of employment (Urbis 2012).

Indigenous ownership

Working on Country projects are led by the local community and supported by community ownership and actions. The importance of this aspect is highlighted by concerns about the failure of the Remote Jobs and Communities Program, which was introduced in

'[E]mployment outcomes ... have been dismal. ... It's clear applying mainstream-style employment models in remote areas that have limited or no real labour markets has been a comprehensive failure.'

(Quoted in Karvelas 2014)

2013 but which failed to engage Aborigines in work. According to the Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion:

In contrast, Working on Country has been able to garner the support and endorsement of Aboriginal elders, which in turn enhance the elders' authority in applying rules and disciplinary actions.

Funding certainty and stability

The certainty of ongoing funding has been critical to the success of ranger groups and the program more broadly. At present, funding is provided under a three- to five-year contract. Funding certainty fosters increased confidence to invest in training, encourages long-term planning and assists with attracting co-funders and potential project partners (WalterTurnbull 2010). Funding certainty and stability also improve the overall effectiveness of the program by allowing Indigenous organisations to implement long-term strategies and projects for biodiversity

and cultural heritage management. This is important as many environmental management activities, such as weed and feral animal control, are effective only through sustained effort over a long period. This was not achieved before Working on Country (Smyth 2011).

A lead agency with technical capacity in land and sea management

The Working for Country and IPA programs have, until recently, been managed by a lead agency that has a technical capacity in environmental and cultural Indigenous land and sea management. This has been an important element in the success of these programs to date. The programs have been grounded in their technical focus and understanding of local and national environmental management pressures and issues, combined with a solid understanding of program delivery in a remote Indigenous context, which necessarily involves working with Indigenous organisations and forming lasting partnerships.

3.4.2 What makes for a successful ranger group?

Success is very context-specific, and different ranger groups are successful for different reasons. It is therefore difficult to identify a universal set of success factors. However, successful groups are generally characterised as having:

- Good leadership and coordination.
- Strong governance by an Indigenous organisation with adequate managerial capacity and experience.
- Strong support from elders.
- Support for the group within the wider community (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous).
- A degree of remoteness from urban influences (the program has experienced greater success in remote areas as opposed to areas closer to regional centres). (Mackie 2014)

Ranger teams need a dedicated coordinator to provide day-to-day management oversight, administration, mentoring and 'pastoral care' to young rangers. The most successful groups operate with the administrative support of well-organised, capable Indigenous organisations. Groups benefit greatly from having the support of elders who reinforce the value of ranger work for young people, lead by example and provide cultural authority and guidance for the groups' services.

Groups that have managed to garner the broader support of the community are generally more successful than those that operate in isolation. Rangers benefit from engaging in their community, both formally and informally. In turn, proactive community engagement by rangers facilitates relationship building between individuals, clan groups, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and local and external organisations. This engagement increases the likelihood of group success.

3.5 Developmental phases of ranger groups

As ranger groups establish, evolve and mature, they are able to provide a wider range of more effective services. Because the Working on Country and IPA programs empower Indigenous groups to responsibly manage their own land, these ranger groups gain skills not just in conservation and land management, but also in project administration and governance. This allows mature ranger groups to successfully engage with the market economy through provision of contract ranger services, tourism and other commercial activities. In the Northern Territory, the growing capability of ranger groups has already been recognised at a national level, with Aboriginal rangers playing important roles in border security and quarantine protection (Northern Land Council 2014).

Figure 10 is a conceptual model developed by Synergies that depicts ranger groups as progressing through four developmental phases. As groups develop, they reach achievement milestones and progressively deliver a suite of

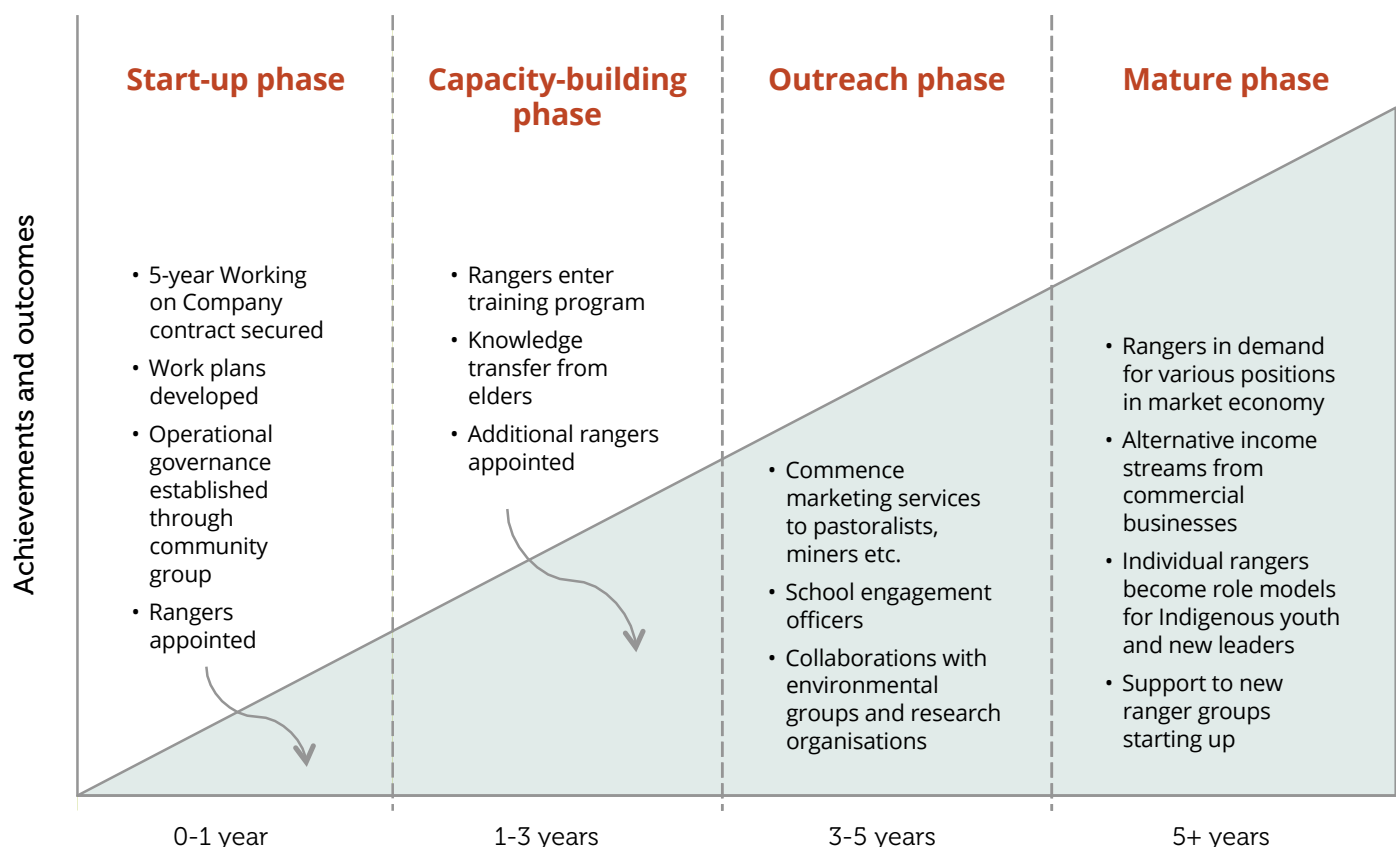
beneficial outcomes. Some groups progress through all four phases (as illustrated by the case studies in section 4). Others, for a variety of reasons, may stay longer at a particular stage. The timeline in Figure 10 is indicative. The speed of progression through the four phases varies from group to group.

3.5.1 Start-up phase

In this initial phase, a ranger group takes the first steps to access funding. This may often be preceded by a period of extensive consultation, firstly within the relevant traditional Indigenous community of interest and sometimes with potential stakeholders or partners, to ensure that there is clear local 'ownership' of the decision to go forward. This includes establishing the operational and governance arrangements necessary to administer the ranger program and to undertake ranger activities. It also requires the development of an environmental management plan for the country managed under the program. With Working on Country funding (or IPA funding) secured, a ranger group needs to appoint a coordinator, further develop its work plans and recruit and appoint rangers. Training of rangers, often in some of the essential basic skills, such as obtaining a driver's licence, and in the skills required to manage country (fire management, weed control and so on) will also be required at this stage. Before this stage, there may be varying levels of preparatory work outside the Working on Country program, preceding projects, and consultation depending on local context.

Figure 10

Conceptual Model of the 4-Stage Developmental Pathway for a Ranger Group



Data source: Synergies Economic Consulting

3.5.2 Capacity-building phase

Once the ranger group is established, it may grow its capacity over time by appointing additional rangers and undertaking further training. The capacity of the group to both undertake ranger work on country as well as to administer the contractual and funding aspects is further developed during this phase. In particular, the capacity of the ranger group is enhanced through experience, further training and the transfer of traditional knowledge from elders.

3.5.3 Outreach phase

During the outreach phase, the ranger group is well-established and skilled at undertaking the ranger work, as well as in managing the administrative aspects. This places the group in a position to take the skills it has learned from the program and seek to apply them elsewhere. With the experience and reputation of an established and well-functioning ranger group, it may reach out to other entities to pursue

new opportunities. For example, this may be in providing land management services to pastoralists, universities and research institutions, other government agencies, the tourism sector, mining companies and non-profit conservation organisations. The ranger group will also be well-placed to undertake collaborations with agencies such as universities and environmental groups.

The ranger group will also be extending its outreach within the Indigenous community during this phase. This will likely include engagement with schools and possibly the development of work experience/junior ranger programs. This community engagement is very important given the position of Indigenous Rangers as role models within their community and the continuing need for community consultation, oversight and information exchange to support genuine community ownership.

3.5.4 Mature phase

During the mature phase, ranger groups are well-established and experienced in engaging with the external economy. Individual rangers are skilled and in demand for positions in the market economy. In addition to undertaking its ranger program tasks, the ranger group is able to enter into commercial arrangements with other entities (such as mines or government agencies) on a contractual, or fee-for-service, basis. Individuals or the group may also draw on skills gained in the ranger program to develop business enterprises such as ecotourism.

These opportunities enable the group to develop alternative income streams from commercial activities to supplemental income, or, for others, to rotate out of the program into other jobs and create space for new entrants. Although such work is beyond the scope of the ranger program, the capacity of the group to undertake commercial work has developed from the skills and experience gained as part of the program. However, this additional income is unlikely to be sufficient to self-fund a ranger group. Government funding will need to continue to form the base.

Ranger groups in this phase are important role models for other Indigenous community members and, in particular, Indigenous youth. The success of the ranger group demonstrates a viable employment and career path for Indigenous people, helping to encourage youth to stay in school. The mature ranger group will have an established role in community engagement and mentoring.

3.5.5 Model implications

The model presented above is consistent with observations in the literature that ranger groups will be able to deliver immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes (Social Ventures Australia 2014). The implication for policy and funding is that success should be measured over a long time frame (decades) as opposed to five to 10 years. Funding needs to be allocated on this basis, recognising that upfront investment is needed for a payoff in the longer term.

Notwithstanding this, multiple lines of evidence suggest that there are some shorter-term social and economic benefits arising from having a functional local ranger group delivering tangible jobs, and these benefits are significant.

4 Case studies

The development phases for ranger groups outlined in the previous section represent a conceptual progression, in which the skills and capacity of individual rangers and ranger groups develop over time, enhancing their ability to engage in the external economy. It should be noted, however, that there is a diversity of outcomes amongst ranger groups in terms of

when and how successfully they develop. Some groups are in different phases of development and some have gone on to achieve more advanced outcomes.

The case studies presented in this section provide examples of successful ranger groups. The studies have been selected to illustrate the potential for ranger groups to progress through to maturation.

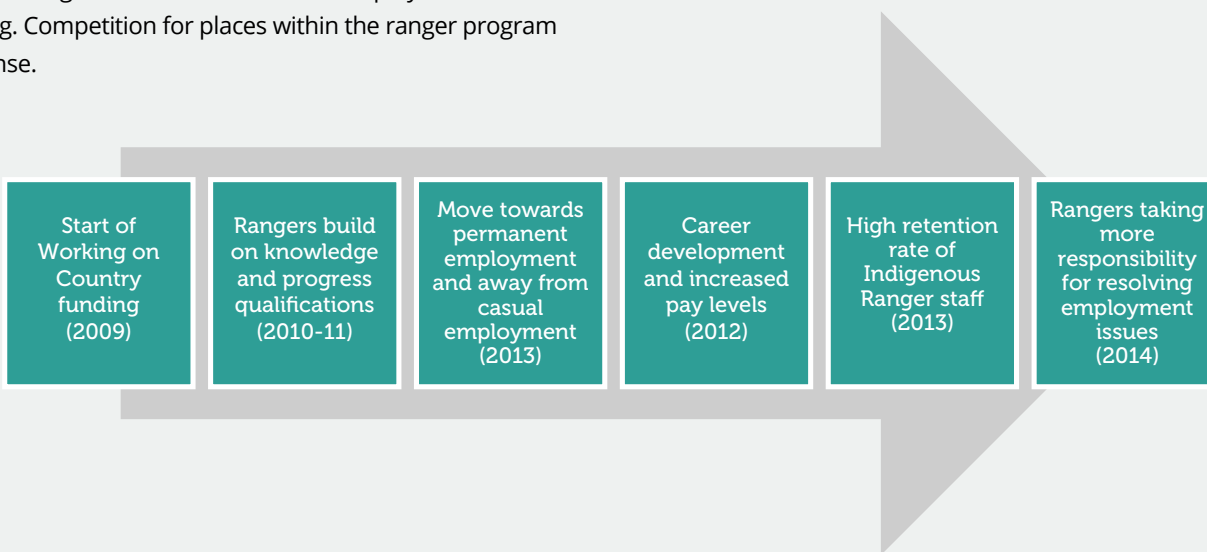
Box 5

Case Study: Central Land Council

The Central Land Council (CLC) is an Australian Government Statutory Authority responsible for representing Traditional Owners in the southern half of the Northern Territory. The CLC's region covers 776,549 km². In 2013 and 2014, more than 143 Indigenous people were employed across 11 ranger groups, both permanently and in short-term casual contracts. Building on the rangers funded by the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), the Working on Country ranger program has been a notable success, with a range of significant achievements in employment and training. Competition for places within the ranger program is intense.

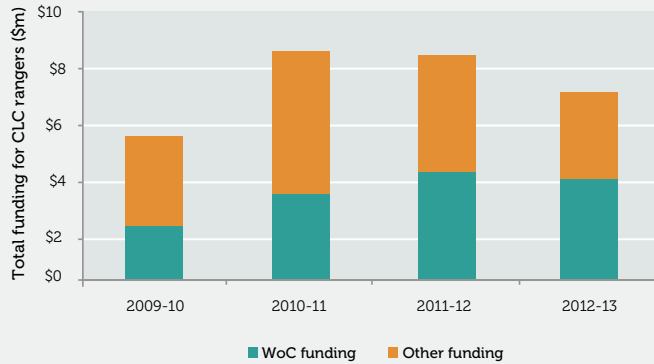
According to the CLC, long-term Australian Government funding for the community ranger program has assisted the program in continuing to outperform nearly every other program in Aboriginal affairs in terms of outcomes in employment, education, lifestyle skills, land management and other markers.

The CLC ranger program has achieved a number of notable outcomes. These trends reflect the development stages of successful Indigenous Ranger groups, with progressive capacity improvements, skills development and delivery of economic and social benefits.



Funding

- CLC rangers receive funding from the Working on Country program, in addition to other sources which include Indigenous Land Corp.'s Real Jobs Program funding, grants from the Aboriginals Benefit Account and income from fee-for-service work.
- Working on Country funding increased from around \$2 million in 2009-10 to just under \$4 million in 2012-13.
- CLC rangers Have operated under a consolidated funding model for four years (CDEP previously funded ranger positions in CLC).



Data source: Central Land Council, http://www.clc.org.au/files/pdf/388725_text_CLC_AR_final_reduced.pdf

Achievements

Employment

Over the period of consolidated funding from 2009 to 2014, a total of 402 Aboriginal people have been employed as CLC rangers either in permanent (part- and full-time) positions or under short-term casual contracts.

Achievements over this period include:

- A move towards permanent employment and away from casual employment.
- An 11% decrease in rangers employed in casual positions in 2013 compared with 2010.
- Pay levels of rangers have increased, reflecting increased permanency of employment and career development.

Training

Over the period from 2009 to 2014, rangers:

- Participated in 74 separate training events.
- 89% of these training events were in units of competency from nationally accredited training packages.
- 24,014 hours of training was provided across all groups in the program in accredited units of competency from nationally recognised qualifications, as well as 1,416 hours of non-accredited training.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
107 rangers	87 rangers	97 rangers	91 rangers	97 rangers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% permanent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18% female • 56% permanent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% female • 59% permanent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% female • 58% permanent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% female • 65% permanent

- Growth in skills and abilities of rangers, reflected in the creation of senior ranger positions.
- Improvement in the quality of job applicants and general job readiness skills noted in interviews for ranger positions.

Retention rates

- A high retention rate of Indigenous Ranger staff. Average annual retention has been 66% over the five years from 2009 to 2013. This is relatively high compared with other remotely based Indigenous employment programs.

Value of commercial activities

- Income generated by rangers' engagement in contract-based environmental service delivery has remained a relatively minor source, reaching 2.6% of total program funding in 2013.

Indigenous community well-being

- There has been a significant shift towards rangers taking more responsibility for resolving issues affecting their ongoing employment.
 - CLC provides ranger mentoring support. Mentors have given a particular focus to building the capacity of rangers to self-manage attendance and performance in the workplace, including personal, financial, cultural and lifestyle issues.
 - A positive flow-on benefit of this is that rangers have passed on skills and referrals to other family and community members.
- Increasing emphasis on school-based outreach programs to provide motivation for students to stay in school to improve their employability and provide role models.

Success factors

- Skills and capacity development, facilitating career progression for rangers.
- Funding continuity, allowing for creation of senior ranger positions as skills/careers develop and permanency of employment.
- Provision of mentoring support to rangers to build their capacity to self-manage workplace attendance and performance.
- Emphasis on school-based outreach to enhance social benefits of program.

* Central Land Council, Annual report 2010-2011, <http://www.clc.org.au/publications/cat/annual-reports>.

Data source: Central Land Council annual reports, <http://www.clc.org.au/publications/cat/annual-reports>



Elder Joe Jangala Bird shares his knowledge with North Tanami ranger Jeffrey Matthews Junior while conducting a prescribed burn at Paprinnya near Kurpurlunu.

Box 6

Case Study: Central Desert (Wiluna Land Management Team)

Central Desert

Central Desert Native Title Services (CDNTS) is a recognised native title service provider for the native title claimants and holders of the Central Desert Region of Western Australia. This geographic region covers 830,935 km², or approximately one-third of the total area of Western Australia.

While the Indigenous people in the Central Desert region do not receive Working on Country grants to employ Indigenous Rangers, land management activities and ranger employment are funded through the various IPA projects in effect across the region. The ranger teams are then able to leverage off the consistent IPA funding to expand into more sophisticated fee-for-service

arrangements.

Wiluna Land Management

This flagship Indigenous land management program in the Central Desert region, based in Wiluna, has experienced great success in developing an effective land management and employment program. Since the initial start-up investment in 2009, the core group of Indigenous employees has consistently increased both the number of workdays supplied and the sophistication of its service offerings.



Partnership	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Northern Star Resources Jundee mine site management	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Department of Parks and Wildlife (WA)		\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	Extension option	Extension option
Australian Government IPA project		\$105,000	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$105,000
Rangelands National Reserve Management (WA)		\$90,000	\$90,000			
Toro Energy				\$50,000 est.	Ongoing	Ongoing
Roslyn Hill Mining				\$130,000 est.		
Wiluna Shire Council maintenance				\$20,000 est.		
Telstra infrastructure maintenance				\$20,000 est.		

Funding and commercial activity

The Wiluna Land Management team receive core funding through the IPA program, as well as through fee-for-service contracts with a range of business partners. The estimated value of these service contracts are listed above:

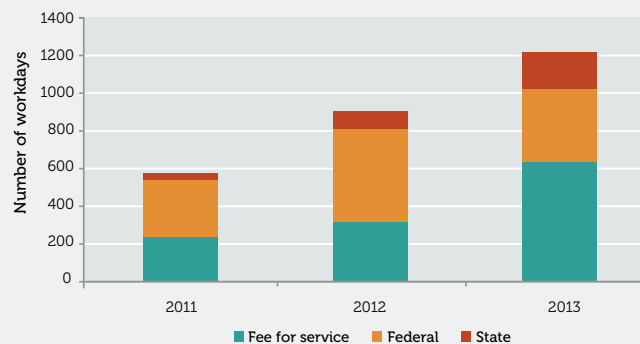
Achievements

Employment

Achievements over this period include:

- Provided 1,220 days of land management services in 2013.
- Established a female ranger team in early 2013 to create work opportunities for Indigenous women in Wiluna.
- The core group of employees has been supplemented by participation in land management activity and other services from an additional 45 men and 50 women in the Wiluna region.

- Across the entire Central Desert region, Indigenous Rangers supplied an increasing number of workdays between 2011 and 2013. The total number of workdays increased from 566 in 2011 to 1,220 in 2013, with commercial fee-for-service work expanding by the largest amount. This represents a significant increase from the initial year of operation in 2008, when 20 days of land management work were delivered overall.



Training

In 2013 and 2014:

- 10 Wiluna and Birriliburu rangers are undertaking Certificate III training in Conservation and Land Management.
- 8 participants have completed Certificate II training in Conservation and Land Management. Wiluna rangers completed radiation safety training in preparation for land management work for Toro Energy at the uranium mine south of Wiluna.
- Significant on-the-job training has been provided to Indigenous employees.

Indigenous community well-being

- The Wiluna Martu rangers are working with the Wiluna Remote Community School on a junior 'bush ranger' program, funded by the Department of Parks and Wildlife in Western Australia.
- Flexible employment models from fee-for-service contracts with mining companies have allowed Indigenous employees to meet cultural obligations without having to quit full-time jobs.

Success factors

- Leveraging off core IPA funding to expand into more sophisticated fee-for-service work.
- Effective governance from the CDNTS.
- Utilising flexible employment models to provide land management services

Data Source: Central Desert Native Title Services publications, <http://www.centraldesert.org.au>



Central Desert Native Title Services

Frankie Wongawol supervising the Wiluna Martu Ranger Team doing erosion repair work in a threatened species reintroduction enclosure.

Box 7

Case Study: Torres Strait Regional Authority Ranger Program

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) ranger program is funded by the Working on Country program and is delivered by the TSRA Land and Sea Management Unit. The TSRA delivers the initiative with participating Registered Native Title Bodies Corporates (RNTBCs) and communities across the 13 outer islands (14 communities) supporting 13 ranger groups.

The program employs Torres Strait islander and Aboriginal people in roles from trainees to senior ranger supervisors to deliver natural and cultural resource activities across the region. Working on Country ranger plans have been developed for all communities that have rangers. Since its inception in 2008, the TSRA ranger program has been implemented through a staged approach, ensuring that groups have established priorities and procedures in place to support the program.

The network of Indigenous Ranger groups operating in the Torres Strait Islands is one example of the

successful development of ranger groups. The TSRA ranger network has grown from three rangers to 45 in six years. The network of 13 ranger groups now can perform work at higher skill levels, including university research collaborations.* Rangers now work with accredited organisations to gain experience with turtle and dugong management, tide gauge maintenance and coral and seagrass monitoring, in addition to their many land and sea management roles within their own communities. This progression through a start-up phase, capacity-building phase and outreach phase is shown in the diagram.

Funding

Funding for TSRA rangers under Working on Country commenced in 2008. In 2013 to 2014, the TSRA secured a \$42 million commitment to continue the ranger program for a further five years, until 2018.



Achievements

Employment

2008-10	2011	2012	2013	2011
N/A	21 rangers in 14 communities	33 rangers in 14 communities	38 rangers in 14 communities	45 rangers in 14 communities

- A total of 36 full-time ranger positions across 14 outer island communities: Mabuiag, Badu, Iama, Erub, Boigu, Mer, Moa (St Paul's and Kubin), Saibai, Dauan, Warraber, Poruma, Masig and Ugar.
- Three Torres Strait islander trainees were employed and successfully completed training to gain a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management. All three have now transitioned into other roles within the ranger project.
- Six community-based ranger supervisor positions and 11 support staff (including senior ranger supervisors, coordinators and administration).
- The career progression of local Indigenous staff through the land and sea ranger program is proving to be a valuable benefit from the longer term commitment to the program.

Training

- In 2013, the TSRA formed its first snorkel team to work alongside coral reef researchers. The team, comprising 13 TSRA Environmental Management Program staff, primarily rangers, completed training in reef health and impact survey, coxswains and manta tow benthic survey monitoring methods.
- Community volunteers and rangers successfully undertook seagrass monitoring at 14 sites in eight Torres Strait communities. The monitoring program

seeks to establish seagrass growth and abundance trends and detect any early effects of climate change. Environmental Management Program staff and rangers collaborated with the Australian Institute of Marine Science in a Torres Strait coral reef biodiversity survey project.

- The TSRA had a strong focus on accredited training for rangers to enable them to perform better for their communities and also to gain qualifications that could enable them to be employed in a wide range of roles both within the Torres Strait and beyond.
- Rangers are actively working towards their Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management.

Success factors

- Long-term funding commitment, allowing:
- Career progression and skill development of rangers.
- Creation of new ranger groups on other island communities.
- Development of ranger skills and organisational capacity, allowing for collaborations with external agencies.
- A staged implementation approach, which ensured that groups have established priorities and procedures in place to support the program.
- Strong community ownership and involvement in decisions-making.
- Organisational capacity, good partnerships and regional support for the project from leadership.
- Community aspirations incorporated into planning ranger activities.

*Australia Department of the Environment (2014), Caring for Our Country achievements report: Northern and remote Australia 2008-2013, <http://www.nrm.gov.au/system/files/resources/a98dcec2-41a6-44aa-b989-14b01ae15607/files/achieve-report-nrs.pdf>

Data sources: Torres Strait Regional Authority annual reports, <http://www.tsra.gov.au>

Box 8

Case Study: Carpentaria Land Council

The Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corp. (CLCAC) operates three ranger groups, comprising 17 permanent Indigenous Rangers, in the Gulf of Carpentaria region. The rangers manage over 7,000 km² of land. According to CLCAC, Traditional Owners have both the opportunity and responsibility to manage and protect their traditional lands given current and prospective Aboriginal ownership of significant areas of land in the Gulf region. CLCAC's rangers undertake land and sea management activities to protect the natural resources in the southern Gulf area. The program also aims to build on these activities, so that ranger groups are able to establish and maintain fee-for-service arrangements that generate sustainable employment and economic development opportunities as well as contributing to effective land and sea management.

Ranger groups that have operated under the CLCAC's auspices include:

- Gangalidda Garawa (Working on Country-funded, four rangers and a coordinator).

- Wellesley Island sea rangers (Working on Country-funded, eight rangers).
- Normanton ranger unit.

Funding

The CLCAC rangers are funded by a mix of federal and state monies. Of the 17 permanent Indigenous Rangers employed by the CLCAC in 2013, 12 were state-funded and five were federally funded through the Working on Country program.

In 2013, the CLCAC received funding for two pilot projects: the federally funded Caring for Our Country Reducing the Impacts of Feral Pigs in the Staaten River Catchment and Coastline Project and the Woodslake Rehabilitation Project (funded by the Queensland Government). The federal government funded \$240,000 in 2012 for the pig control project under the Caring for Our Country program.



Achievements

Employment

2011	2012	2013	2014
24 full-time rangers	22 full-time rangers	17 permanent rangers	16 rangers

Mix of state and federal funding

Community engagement

- Hosted the Department of Environment and Resource Management's junior ranger pilot program, in conjunction with the Normanton State School and Gulf Christian College.
- Exchange visits, liaison with schools and other community organisations and joint patrols with other agencies.

Indigenous well-being

- Program is life-changing for those involved; provides financial security and pride associated with the work:
- 'Financially it's a 12-month-a-year job. A lot of work in the region up there is seasonal, so they get that financial security.... A lot of pride comes with the job, because the Carpentaria Land Council rangers are looked - Mark Hogno, Carpentaria Land Council ranger co-ordinator

Capacity building

- The CLCAC ranger groups have undertaken major natural resource management tasks and have demonstrated a capacity to deliver large-scale projects.
- Normanton rangers chemically treated an area of at least 2,500 hectares and more than 26,000 individual plants in the Staaten River catchment, Morning Inlet catchment and Mutton Hole Wetlands.

- Saltwater People Network Project: This project aimed to build on the Dugong and Marine Turtle Project that extended across the Kimberley, Top End of the Northern Territory, southern Gulf of Carpentaria, Cape York and the Torres Strait. This project was utilised by CLCAC to build capacity in the Wellesley and Gangalidda Garawa ranger groups and improve governance, and for land management data collection. The project was completed in June 2012.

- Between 2009 and 2012, rangers were significantly responsible for the removal of over 25,000 feral pigs in the Staaten River catchment. Pigs were eradicated by aerial shooting and trapping. CLCAC has funding under Caring for Our Country to undertake further comprehensive feral pig management in partnership with local pastoralists. The project is informed by monitoring the effectiveness of management activities and underpinned by science on the impact of feral pigs.
- Rangers undertake biosecurity patrols and ghost net removal on a fee-for-service basis.

Success factors

- Recognition that the ranger program has performed a valuable role in skill and work culture development and could be developed further as a stepping stone into business and commercial activities for those with the necessary skills, interest and capability (CLCAC 2013).
- Capacity building of ranger groups has enabled them to take on larger-scale activities and fee-for-service arrangements with external parties.

Data sources: ABC Rural, Aboriginal rangers target feral pigs, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-07-18/feral-pig-rangers/4827896>, accessed 12 December 2014; Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corp. annual reports, <http://www.clcac.com.au/search/site/annual%20report>

5 A principled approach for the way forward

A review of evidence shows that Working on Country, and related ranger activities that have been funded through the IPA program, has been very successful. It has achieved a wide range of outcomes in terms of environmental protection, Indigenous community well-being and tangible contributions to closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. Further beneficial outcomes are likely to follow as the various groups mature.

It is now timely to consider future directions for the Australian Government's investment strategy into Indigenous Ranger programs and IPAs. A number of recommendations emerge from this study:

- Do not make changes to the Working on Country model of support for Indigenous Rangers that risk eroding the very features that have made the program successful—that is, a need to preserve the program's flexibility, devolved management principles, capacity of Indigenous organisations to determine work priorities in negotiation with government, strong grounding in land and sea management, and the strong cultural foundations of the program.
- Pursue a funding strategy that involves increasing both the number of rangers within existing ranger groups with capacity to grow, supporting the development and funding of new groups where capacity can be developed or exists, and ensuring adequate operational funding to deliver key land and sea management outcomes.
 - But a proportion of funding should be reserved for new groups being proposed by Indigenous organisations that do not currently have a ranger program (provided sufficient due diligence is conducted to ensure funds can be managed effectively, the potential social returns from investing in these new groups could be high).
- Investigate and develop an informed basis for setting a target for the future number of Indigenous Rangers.
 - A starting point would be to set targets based on the number of rangers needed to effectively manage the 80 million hectares of land that is forecast to be protected in IPAs by 2018.
 - Another factor that needs to be considered is the capacity of Indigenous organisations to provide sufficient support for additional rangers. Even if funding is made available, it may take time to recruit and train coordinators and establish satisfactory management systems to oversee a larger ranger network.
- There is a need for ongoing, secure funding to provide necessary planning certainty, which will maximise opportunities for ranger groups to establish sustainable partnerships with philanthropic organisations and external funding parties. We therefore recommend that a 10-year strategy and funding commitment be developed using the Working on Country model as a template.
- Maintain and strengthen the IPA program as a world-leading model of protected area management enabling Indigenous partnerships with government and other sectors and assisting local governance and strategic land and sea management approach—also as a means of providing an avenue through which Indigenous land can be voluntarily contributed to Australia's National Reserve System. The IPA program provides a platform through which Indigenous Traditional Owners can exercise management over land and sea areas with a significant degree of autonomy, and grow their ranger workforce to deliver management services with funding from Working on Country.

Case studies



West Arnhem Fire Management, Northern Territory

- Agreement made to offset greenhouse gas emissions through savannah fire management. ConocoPhillips has committed to pay around \$1m a year for this service



Wunggur, North Kimberley

- Implemented suicide prevention initiative
- Training includes identifying signs of depression and risky behaviours



Wiluna Land Management Team, Central Desert

- >\$1.5m earned through fee-for-service contracts
- Established women's ranger team
- more than doubled the number of workdays from 566 in 2011 to 1220 in 2013
- Wiluna Martu rangers working on a junior 'bush ranger' program



Remote Northern Australia

- Fee-for-service for biosecurity surveillance by Indigenous ranger groups in remote parts of northern Australia.
- Analysis shows this surveillance has achieved its targeted results for a minimum cost



Raukkan rangers, South Australia

- Working on Country project employs eight rangers
- Increased knowledge and interest in cultural practices thanks to activities including revegetating burial sites, mapping cultural sites and participating in traditional land management practices such as hunting



Torres Strait Regional Authority

- Ranger network has grown from three rangers to 45 in six years
 - Career progression reported as 'valuable benefit'
-



Central Land Council, Central Australia

- Employed 402 people in ranger positions from 2009 to 2014
 - More than 24 000 hours accredited training provided
 - Emphasis on school-based outreach to enhance social benefits
-



Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Far North Queensland

- 17 permanent Indigenous rangers managing over 7000km²
 - Removed over 25000 feral pigs through Caring for Country program, significantly impacting turtle hatching sites
-



Ngarrindjeri Working on Ruwe, South Australia

- Drug and alcohol-free workplace policy, including testing and support to address drug and alcohol issues
-

Part 2: Indigenous Ranger groups in the Kimberley, Western Australia



The Wunggurr head ranger, Robin Dann, has been pivotal in leading his ranger group.

6 Kimberley Indigenous Ranger groups

6.1 Introduction

The Kimberley region of Western Australia is one of the world's last untouched, natural areas, containing unique terrestrial and marine ecosystems and a strong and vibrant Indigenous culture. The region covers a land area of 424,500 km²—almost twice the size of the state of Victoria. About 5% of the region is in national parks and conservation reserves, which collectively attract around 300,000 visitors each year; 25% is unallocated Crown land with the majority held under exclusive possession native title (Kimberley Land Council, 2015); and 12% is in Aboriginal reserves.

The Kimberley is experiencing increased interest for its development potential, ranging from offshore petroleum, expansion of irrigation in the Ord Irrigation Scheme and increased demand for ecotourism.

In recognition of the region's cultural, environmental and economic importance, in 2011 the Western Australian Government prepared a Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy for 2011 to 2015 and committed an initial \$63 million to implement it. The intent outlined in the original strategy included measures to promote Indigenous Ranger employment in park management (landscape-scale fire, feral animal and weed control) and nature-based tourism. The aim was to build on ranger programs currently run by the Kimberley Land Council and other Aboriginal corporations.

At the core of the strategy is a proposal to establish a major interconnected system of marine and terrestrial parks in the north Kimberley (referred to as the Kimberley Wilderness Parks). The state has a policy of providing opportunities for Traditional Owners to jointly manage these parks, through direct employment as rangers and through being involved in management decisions, planning and implementation of land management activities. A specific goal is to:

Support a network of Aboriginal rangers to operate in marine and terrestrial parks and across other tenures and provide opportunities for long-term employment, mentoring, training and career pathways for Aboriginal people. Where possible, rangers will be employed to work 'on country'. This initiative will support ranger programs already in place under the Kimberley Land Council (Government of Western Australia 2011).

At present the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) manages a network of 13 ranger groups comprising 69 full-time rangers, six part-time administrative officers and 86 regular casual rangers (Kimberley Land Council 2014a). The network also employs local leaders and elder Traditional Owners as cultural advisers and directors of its work.

The State Government also funds and oversees a number of ranger groups, which work on Kimberley parks and reserves. These groups are administered by the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW).

Further details of these Kimberley ranger programs are provided below.

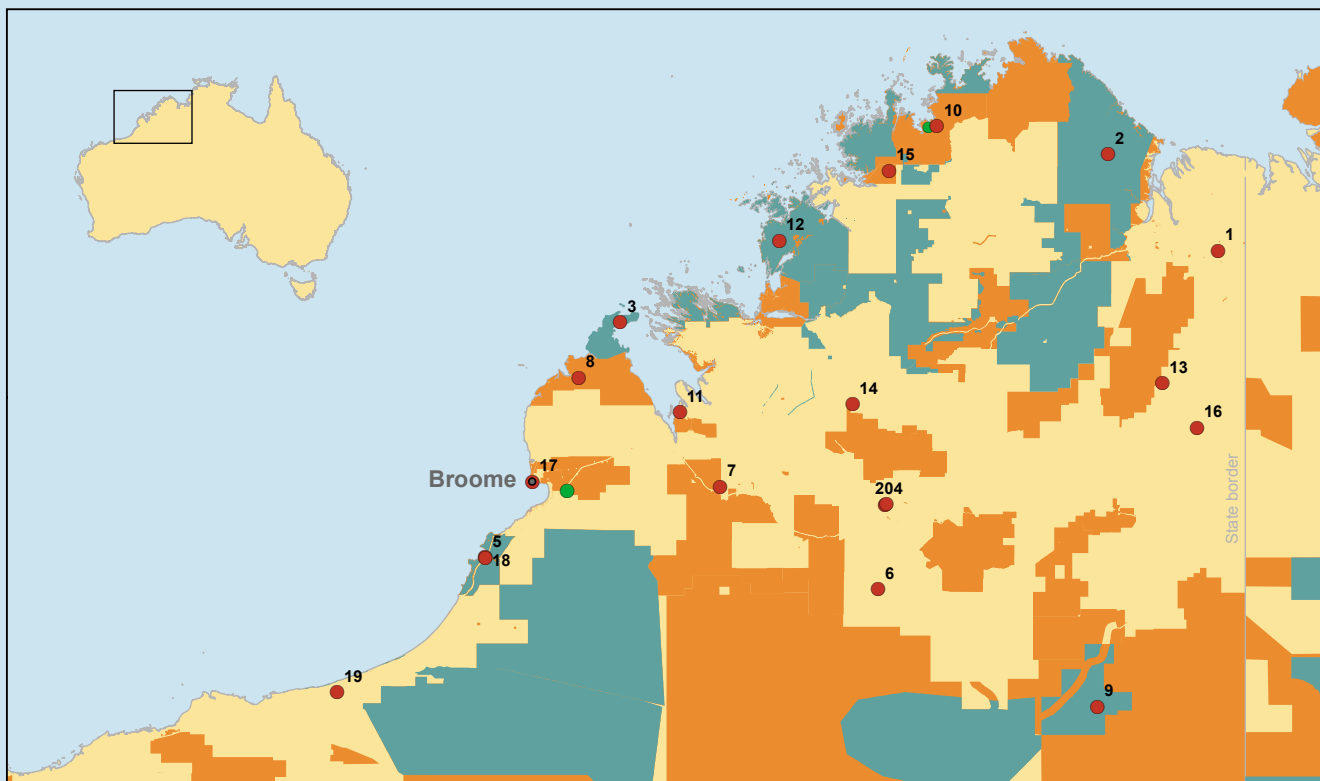
6.2 The Kimberley Land Council's ranger network

The KLC established the Kimberley ranger network in 2008 with funding from the Working on Country program. In the first five years of the program (to 2013), the ranger network was awarded approximately \$10 million in funding. In August 2013, this commitment was renewed and expanded to \$35 million over the period to 2018. In the same year, a further \$15 million of federal funding was awarded over five years to support activities in IPAs and to assist Kimberley Traditional Owners in investigating carbon farming opportunities (Walsh 2013).

The network of 13 ranger groups look after land and sea country across 12 native title estates covering an area of 378,704 km², including management of eight IPAs located

Map 3

Kimberley Indigenous Ranger Groups and Indigenous Protected Areas



- Indicative locations of Indigenous Ranger Groups
- Consultation underway for potential future Indigenous Protected Areas
- Declared indigenous protected areas
- Aboriginal lands

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Miriuwung Gajerrong Rangers for Reserve 31165 | 13 Gija Rangers |
| 2 Balangarra Rangers | 14 King Leopold Range Conservation Park casual ranger program |
| 3 Bardi Jawi Rangers | 15 Mitchell River National Park casual ranger program |
| 4 Gooniyandi Rangers | 16 Purnululu National Park ranger program |
| 5 Karajarri Rangers | 17 Yawuru Rangers |
| 6 Ngurrara Rangers | 18 Nyangumarta Rangers |
| 7 Nyikina Mangala | 19 Ngarla Rangers |
| 8 Nyul Nyul Rangers | 20 Bunuba Rangers |
| 9 Paruku Rangers | |
| 10 Unguu Rangers | |
| 11 Wungurr Rangers | |
| 12 Dambimangari Rangers | |

0 100 200 400 Kilometers

across the Kimberley region and covering an area of more than 90,000 km². They also perform fee-for-service conservation work for the State Government (next section) and other parties. While the KLC is the responsible organisation for supporting and administering the ranger network, the ranger groups themselves are based in their local or regional communities and are managed by Traditional Owners and cultural advisers within the native title estates. Responsibilities at the local level include recruitment, performance monitoring, budgeting, work planning and disciplinary action. The Traditional Owners develop annual work plans that are approved by the KLC and federal government and that are linked to each of the IPAs.

According to the KLC, demand for entry into the ranger program is very strong. It is common for 10 or more applications to be received for every position advertised. Participants are attracted to Working on Country under the guidance of their cultural advisers, and this is regarded by the KLC as one of program's key success factors. The Traditional Owners are highly motivated by the program because it facilitates the handing down of knowledge of Aboriginal elders to the next generation.

In some regional communities, the program accounts for 50% of the jobs. Therefore, rangers are well-known in their community and held in high regard as role models. All groups are involved in school engagement activities, which strengthens their presence in the community.

The KLC has a strategy of progressively building on Working on Country core funding by developing stronger capabilities to deliver commercial services relating to natural resource management, cultural services and ecotourism. There are plans in the medium term to develop a business hub for social enterprises on country. The hub will work with native title Aboriginal corporations and their ranger groups to build enterprises to support people living on country in remote communities.

Some of the achievements of the Kimberley ranger network are outlined below.

6.2.1 Remote employment pathways

The Kimberley ranger network is one of the largest employers of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region, with 73 people currently in full-time ranger and ranger coordinator positions, six as remote ranger administration officers and more than 80 engaged in regular casual employment in 2013-14. Youth employment continues to be a major focus of the ranger network with 31% of rangers 25 or younger in 2014.

The ranger network has established a clear employment model for Aboriginal people living in remote communities, including a career pathway commencing with work readiness through the Remote Jobs and Communities Program and also through casual work, and enabling a pathway through to head ranger or specialist rangers, and then on to ranger or IPA coordinators or other managerial roles. The increasing number of rangers moving along these employment pathways is shown in Table 1 (Kimberley Land Council 2014b).

Table 1
Growth of Kimberley Ranger Network Employment Outcomes (2011-14)

Partnership	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Senior rangers	0	11	13
Total number of waged ranger positions	51	58	70
Aboriginal ranger coordinators	3	2	3
Aboriginal IPA coordinators	1	2	3

Data source: Kimberley Land Council (2014), Ranger Development Business Case, Submission

6.2.2 Training

The KLC has a partnership with the Kimberley Training Institute, which is engaged to provide training to all rangers in the program. The training all relates to cultural natural resource management and spans a broad range of subject areas, including certificates in business and conservation and land management. Since 2011, between 15 and 24 rangers have graduated with Certificates II and III in these areas (Kimberley Land Council 2014b). The ranger training program not only helps recruits to perform ranger duties but also prepares them for long-term careers in other places of employment. Box 7 lists the subjects in which participants are receiving training.

Box 9

Training Program Subjects

- Conservation and land management
- Business and financial services
- Tourism
- Cultural heritage
- Coxswain
- Remote first aid
- Native title
- Literacy and numeracy
- Cultural database
- Water monitoring
- Cybertracker
- Camera trapping
- Use of aerial incendiaries

6.2.3 Mentoring

In 2011, mentor positions for rangers were introduced. Since then, the average length of employment for rangers and ranger coordinators has doubled, with average attendance in the 10 Working on Country ranger groups at 93% in 2014.

6.2.4 Participation of women in ranger programs

With the assistance of dedicated women's ranger development coordinators, funded by the Indigenous Land Corp., women make up between 24% and 37.5% of casual rangers in the Kimberley Ranger Network (Kimberley Land Council 2014b).

6.2.5 Indigenous business development

The Kimberley Land Council manages fee-for-service work for nine Indigenous groups. Across these groups, fee-for-service earnings grew steadily from \$89,000 in 2011-12 to \$297,000 in 2013-14. Other Indigenous groups manage their funding through their Aboriginal corporations, so this represents only a portion of fee-for-service work across the Kimberley.

In some areas, the program accounts for 50% of the jobs in the community. Therefore, rangers are well-known in their communities and held in high regard as role models. All groups are involved in school engagement activities, which strengthen their presence in the community.

The KLC has a strategy of progressively building on Working on Country core funding by developing stronger capabilities to deliver commercial services relating to natural resource management, cultural services and ecotourism. There are plans in the medium term to develop a business hub for social enterprises on country. The hub will work with native title aboriginal corporations and their ranger groups to build enterprises to support people living on country in remote communities.

6.3 State-managed ranger groups

The State Government provides approximately \$3 million in funding each year to ranger programs in the Kimberley

(Legislative Council of Western Australia 2014). This facilitates the employment of approximately 20 full-time rangers and up to 100 on a casual basis—either as direct employees of DPaW or as contractors (Table 2).

Table 2
Ranger Groups Funded by the Western Australian Government (2013-14)

Ranger program	Organisation funded	Number of rangers	Full-time-equivalent positions	Contracted hours of service	Funding (2013-14)	Projected funding
Miriuwung Gajerrong ranger program	Department of Parks and Wildlife	7	7	N/A	\$734 892	\$742 000
Miriwoong Gajerrong Reserve 31165 ranger program	Department of Parks and Wildlife	4	4	N/A	\$199 596	\$202 000
King Leopold Ranger Conservation Park casual ranger program	Department of Parks and Wildlife	1	0.2	N/A	\$11 414	\$50 000
Mitchell River National Park casual ranger program	Department of Parks and Wildlife	1	0.8	N/A	\$41 598	\$67 000
Purnululu National Park ranger program	Department of Parks and Wildlife	3	1	N/A	\$192 746	\$160 000
Yawuru ranger and administration services	Department of Parks and Wildlife	7	7	No data	\$502 485	\$500 000
Other West Kimberley ranger and administrative services	Department of Parks and Wildlife	4	3.1	No data	\$297 713	\$250 000
Subtotal		27	23.1		\$1,980,444	\$1,971,000
Bunuba ranger program	Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corp.	8	6	No data	\$208 902	\$200 000
Paraku ranger program	Kimberley Land Council	-	-	27	\$1 200	\$10 000
Gidja ranger program	Kimberley Land Council	-	-	220	\$10 000	\$10 000
Karajarri ranger services	Kimberley Land Council	-	-	No data	\$11 594	\$12 000
Broader Kimberley ranger services	Kimberley Land Council	Approximately 100 casual rangers	-(K	No data	\$912 339	\$1 000 000
Subtotal		100+	-	-	\$1,144,035	\$1,232,000
TOTAL		127+	-	-	\$3,124,479	\$3,203,000

Note: N/A is not available.

Source: Question on notice No. 1415 asked in the Western Australian Legislative Council on 12 August 2014 to the Minister for Environment, and tabled paper No. 1880.

6.3.1 Engagement models

DPaW engages Indigenous Rangers through three models.

6.3.2 Model 1: Rangers employed and funded directly by State Government

DPaW has permanent recurrent funding from the State to employ seven rangers, who are engaged in partnership with the Miriuwung and Gajerrong (MG) people. The rangers perform conservation works on six nature reserves (or conservation parks) in the East Kimberley, which is the traditional country of the MG people.

This ranger program commenced in June 2008 and was initiated under the Ord Final Agreement. The rangers are DPaW employees and have access to the department's professional development program, training and facilities. The works program for the ranger group is overseen by the Yoorooyang Dawang Regional Park Council, which comprises Traditional Owners and three DPaW representatives.

6.3.3 Model 2: Rangers employed by State Government under a service agreement with Traditional Owners

Under this model, DPaW hosts four rangers in its offices. Their salaries are paid with Working on Country funding (secured by MG Corp.), while accommodation, equipment and other operational expenses are funded by the State Government. The rangers work on the Miriuwung Gajerrong Reserve 31165, which covers approximately 127,000 hectares of land at the southern end of Lake Argyle. The work program is overseen by the Reserve Joint Management Committee.

6.3.4 Model 3: Rangers contracted by DPaW from Indigenous organisations on a fee-for-service basis

Under this model, DPaW utilises the services of Indigenous Rangers from Aboriginal corporations on a casual, fee-for-service basis. The rangers are drawn from various ranger groups. The groups are employed by the Aboriginal corporations (for example, Kimberley Land Council) with funding from Working on Country and other sources.

6.3.5 Achievements

According to DPaW, its Indigenous Ranger groups are performing very well (Bentley pers. comm. 2015). In particular, the group managed in partnership with the MG people (Model 1) has produced good results. It is well-funded and has certainty of funding due to the backing of the Ord Final Agreement. Key achievements include:

- Several of the rangers have attained their Certificate III in conservation and land management. It is anticipated that most of the MG rangers, from the initial 2008 intake, will have completed their Certificate III by early 2013. These rangers will have the opportunity to take up permanent positions within DPaW and benefit for career progression through the department.
- Further specialised training has been undertaken by the rangers, including firefighting, feral animal management and recreational site planning.
- Some recruits have moved on to other industry sectors. Two have been employed by the Argyle diamond mine, another with the Kimberley Agricultural Co. and a fourth has started his own lawn mowing business.
- There is strong demand from Indigenous youth to secure a ranger position. According to DPaW, it gets an average of two

inquiries every week. Rangers are held in high regard by the MG people.

- The group has been expanding its environmental management work capacity into fee-for-service contracts with various commercial industry groups, including LandCorp, Ord Irrigation Cooperative and local Indigenous organisations. The work has included control burning, scientific surveys, chemical weed control, ecological habitat restoration and landscape maintenance.

Rangers engaged under the other two models are also delivering good results; but given funding constraints, progress in training is somewhat slower.

6.4 Future directions

The economic and social contributions being made by Kimberley ranger programs mirror the successful outcomes being made more widely by groups at a national level. In the Kimberley, the policy challenge is to ensure that the success factors of different models are understood by all parties and that complementarity between state and federal programs is maximised. This will enable maximum social and economic returns on investments in Indigenous Ranger programs.

A number of issues emerged in the course of preparing this report that relate to potential areas of inconsistencies that need to be investigated and, if material, be resolved:

There appear to be institutional constraints to Traditional Owners engaging in carbon offset creation in national parks in Western Australia. Under the Australian Government's Carbon Farming Initiative, specific fire management regimes are eligible for carbon credits in IPAs but the identical regimes are ineligible for credits in national parks.

There is potential for duplication and inefficiencies in having state-funded Indigenous Ranger programs being operated in parallel with federally funded programs. The objective should be to ensure that when planning for the delivery

of environmental priorities there is also a firm focus on maximising the opportunities to improve remote Indigenous community outcomes, recognising that different models may work better in some contexts than others.

IPAs, national parks and state reserves afford different levels of protection for environmental and cultural assets, due to different legal tenure arrangements in each. The rights and responsibilities of different parties in relation to land and sea tenure become complex when national parks and reserves overlay IPAs. From our consultations, it is apparent that more needs to be done to develop a shared understanding of the opportunities and constraints of different tenure and management arrangements in the Kimberley region.

It is not within the scope of this report to examine these issues in detail. However, it is recommended that every effort be made to ensure that the respective strengths and limitations of state and federal models are well-understood by both governments and Traditional Owners and their representative bodies, and that arrangements are designed to ensure that the environmental, social and economic outcomes for Indigenous people are maximised.

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Dhimurru Rangers are at the forefront of tackling marine debris and 'ghost nets' (discarded fishing nets) in the Northern Territory, carrying out projects to clean up and monitor the coastline surrounding the Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area.

"It is vital that we collectively identify and support approaches and models that do succeed." – Dr Barry Trill, Director, Outback to Oceans Program, Pew Charitable Trusts

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