

Cover: KungKay and Yiipay-In Salmon Season by Rosella Namok, Winner of the Lin Onus Youth Art Award, Year 2000. Rosella Namok was born in 1979 and belongs to the Ungkum-speaking people of east Cape York in Queensland. Rosella's technique involves painting with her fingers, a method derived from the sand drawing style taught to her by her grandmother. This process is important in understanding the relationship between the painting's very tactile and sensual surface and the painting's subject matter. Her paintings make symbolic use of ovals and rectangles, and are often about family relationships and her country's landscape and weather patterns.

© Rosella Namok, courtesy Vivien Anderson Gallery www.vivienandersongallery.com

#### © Commonwealth of Australia 2012 ISBN 978-1-921733-60-4

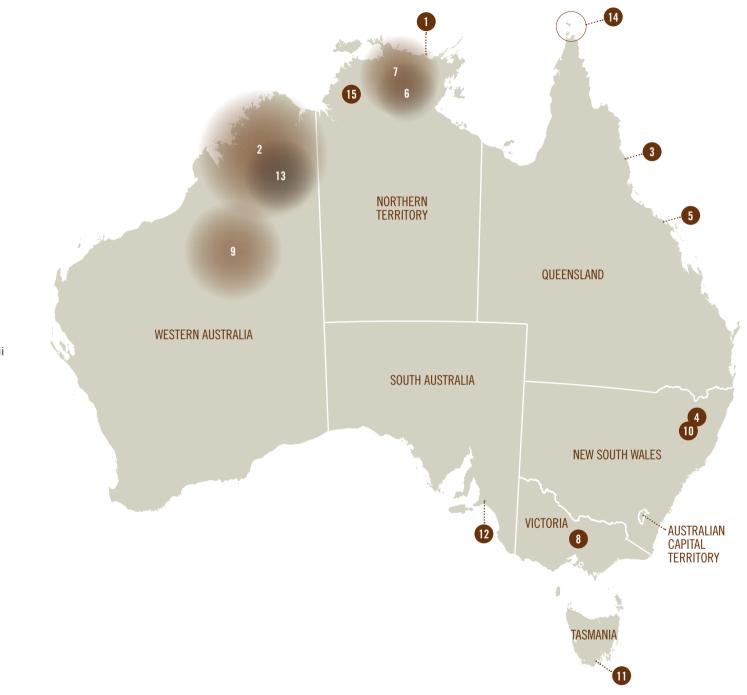
This work is protected by copyright law. Apart from any use permitted by the *Copyright Act 1968* (including research or study) no part may be produced by any process, reused or redistributed for any commercial purpose or distributed to a third party for such purpose, without prior written permission from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

All data included in this document are presumed to be correct as received from data providers. No responsibility is taken by the Commonwealth for errors or omissions, and the Commonwealth does not accept responsibility in respect to any information or advice given in relation to, or as a consequence of anything contained therein.

Every effort was made by the Department for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities to obtain consent from individuals, parents/carers and Indigenous community and organisation representatives for the photographs in this book. Please be aware this book may contain images and names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.

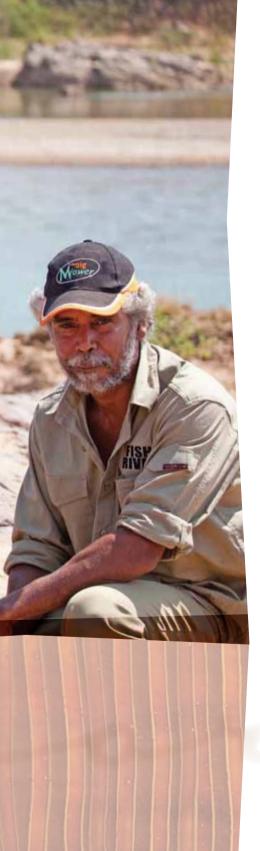
Design: Giraffe vcm





	CONTENTS	PAGE
	MINISTER'S FOREWORD	1
1	A Tribute to Australia's Indigenous Elders – Crocodile Islands, Northern Territory	2
	SHARING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE	
2	Heritage listing brings Aboriginal Stories to the Fore – West Kimberley, Western Australia	4
3	Putting Country Back Together – Trinity Inlet, North Queensland	8
	MAINTAINING CULTURE	
4	Connecting Youth to Culture and Country – Glen Innes, central western New South Wales	10
5	Protecting the Gungu – Bowen, North Queensland	12
6	A Hard Fought Win – Koongarra, Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory	14
	WORKING TOGETHER	
7	Orphan Country Program Abates Greenhouse Gases – Western Arnhem Land, Northern Territory	16
8	Working to Conserve Ramsar Wetlands – Gunbower, Victoria	18
	Battling the Silent Predators – Northern Territory, Torres Strait Islands, Western Australia, Queensland	22
	PICTORIAL FEATURE – Romnha Gurrku Mananha Dharkunuyuma	26
	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES	
9	Keeping Timeless Knowledge Alive – Western Desert, Western Australia	28
10	Healthy Land Healthy Community – Guyra, New South Wales	32
1	<b>Tasmanian Aboriginal Culture Lives on</b> – Putalina (Oyster Cove), Tasmania	36
	SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS	
12	Revitalising Country and Community – Raukkan, South Australia	38
13	Using Traditional Knowledge to Predict Climate Change – Great Sandy Desert, Western Australia	42
14	Rangers Help Islanders Maintain Land and Sea Country – Torres Strait Islands, Queensland	44
15	Sustainable Future for Fish River – Daly River, Northern Territory	46
	Glossary	50
	Australian Government funding Photo credits	53 54





## MINISTER'S FOREWORD

The wisdom and practices of Australia's Indigenous peoples are woven into the fabric of our nation. They are founded in a cultural responsibility to sustain and care for country and an appreciation of the interdependence of all living things.

We know that to have a prosperous country we need to conserve our precious environment. It took Australian governments a long time to recognise that the best way to manage landscapes is to use the expertise of communities which have been managing these landscapes for centuries.

I have seen firsthand the expertise and pride of Indigenous Australians in the work they do on the land that they love.

Today, Indigenous traditional practices continue to thrive. Elders pass on their stories to the young people. We see traditional knowledge partnered with modern science and land management techniques to manage country more sustainably in communities across regional and remote Australia.

The Australian Government has invested in a number of innovative programs recognising that protecting the environment is a shared responsibility. We have seen an opportunity to link this with efforts to support Indigenous people to work towards a better future. Key initiatives include the Working on Country Indigenous rangers, Indigenous Protected Areas, Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund and Caring for our Country.

The work of the Indigenous rangers is providing best practice environmental management of land and sea country.

We are also investing in protecting our natural and cultural heritage and we now have a National Reserve System to protect and conserve examples of our natural landscapes and native plants and animals for future generations.

These programs not only enable Indigenous people to maintain their cultural obligation to care for country they also provide employment, training, education and business opportunities. In this way they make a significant contribution to the Australian Government's commitment to close the gap of Indigenous disadvantage in this country.

The short case studies in this book are a testament to the resilience of Australia's Indigenous people and their communities and the significant contribution they have made towards conserving and protecting our environment and biodiversity.

The Hon Tony Burke MP

Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

On the Crocodile Islands in the Arafura Sea to Australia's north, 95 year old Laurie Baymarrwangga has spent her life working to conserve her culture and her country, passing on her traditional knowledge to countless younger generations.

Laurie is a reflection of Indigenous elders throughout Australia who work tirelessly, keeping culture strong, contributing to their communities' future wellbeing. Like so many Indigenous elders, she is an inspiration.

In 2012, this remarkable woman was recognised as Senior Australian of the Year.

With virtually no resources and no English, but with extraordinary courage, persistence and vision Laurie Baymarrwangga has worked ceaselessly to conserve her culture, her language and her lands for the generations that follow her.

Experiencing the arrival of the first missionaries, bombing in world wars and the changes wrought by modern civilization, her achievements are a testament to this Yan-nhangu traditional owner's concerns for culture and ecology.

With a donation of \$400,000 – the total sum gained after a long fight for back paid rent for her father's lands – she helped get the Crocodile Islands Rangers off the ground. The ranger program is enabling people living in their homelands to gain meaningful training and employment, as well as providing a means to use and pass on the Yan-nhangu language and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge unique to this area.

The community-supported Rangers and Junior Rangers protect their land, which includes 250 square kilometres of registered sacred sites as well as 10 000 square kilometres of sea country, from threats including marine debris and invasive plants and animals, as well as providing other environmental and community services.

Laurie has also set up a housing project and a school and, undaunted by her lack of English, she initiated the Yan-nhangu dictionary project to encourage the survival of her local language.

Good friend and colleague anthropologist Dr Bentley James describes Laurie Baymarrwangga as a 'national treasure', working in wonderful ways to create homelands and helping children learn their own language on their own country.

has been nationally recognised and it stands as a shining example of often unrecognised efforts of traditional elders protecting Indigenous culture across the country.

Dr Bentley James

Laurie Baymarrwangga with her Senior Australian of the Year Award 2012 and family at Murrungga Island Homelands. Photo: Bentley James





sharing traditional knowledge

# HERITAGE LISTING BRINGS ABORIGINAL STORIES TO THE FORE

The spectacular west Kimberley region stretches for millions of hectares across northwest Australia.

It holds the stories, the sites and signs which guide the lives of Kimberley Aboriginal people who are part of the world's oldest living culture maintaining strong traditional connections to this ancient landscape.

In August 2011, west Kimberley traditional owners celebrated the inscription of 19 million hectares of their country on a list of places that define Australia – the National Heritage List.

The west Kimberley is the largest area to be placed on the list since it was created in 2004. It was listed for its outstanding Aboriginal, historic, natural and aesthetic heritage values. The listing encompasses the awe-inspiring Kimberley coast, the Kimberley plateau with its impressive ranges and gorges and the mighty Fitzroy River. All of which has a profound place in Aboriginal culture with links to this land stretching back more than 40 000 years.

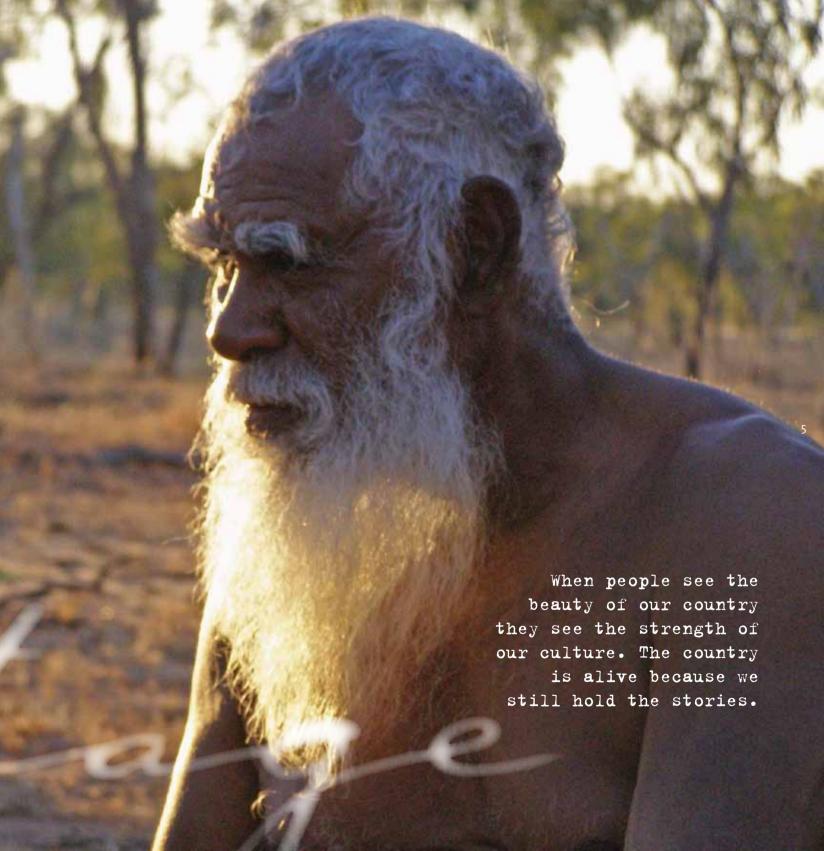
The three-year journey to include the west Kimberley on the National Heritage List required traditional owner support and more importantly, the sharing of their stories and their knowledge.

The west Kimberley assessment was one of the largest and most complex ever undertaken by the Australian Heritage Council, the Australian Government's independent expert advisory body on heritage matters.

Documenting all the reasons for listing this spectacular place was a lengthy process. When it came to identifying Aboriginal cultural values, elders and traditional owners throughout the Kimberley were consulted and shared moving stories about what makes the Kimberley such a significant place.

Janet Oobagooma, a traditional owner and cultural adviser to the Kimberley Land Council said, "National heritage listing captures the stories of our culture, our people and our country from the past present and future. We are one mob connected through the cultural landscape of the Kimberley."





The stories focus on a unique Indigenous cultural landscape and seascape and are reflected in remarkable rock art sites which are among the most spectacular in the world.

They include numerous giant images of the Wanjina creator figure. These figures embody the sacred life force permeating the cosmos and evoke the creation era, or Dreaming. The paintings of human-like beings, animals and plants are part of the living culture of the Wanjina-Wungurr people and are renewed regularly by senior law-men.

The striking rock formations of the Oscar, Napier and King Leopold Ranges and other natural features including the 'living waters' of the dynamic Fitzroy River are especially significant to the Aboriginal peoples of the region.

Traditional owner, Anthony Watson, stresses the role the river played in the culture and lives of the many Aboriginal groups that continue to rely on its waters as well as its importance to wildlife and animals unique to the region.



"We wanted it heritage listed to have protection for the long haul," he says.

The Kimberley's significance for today's Aboriginal communities however does not rest solely in the distant past or in the landscape. Through places like Noonkanbah station – the site of a dispute over mining on sacred sites in the 1970s – it evokes a strong emotional significance reflecting Aboriginal people's resistance, survival and adaptation to European settlement and development.

National heritage listing has allowed the traditional owners of the west Kimberley to share their stories and their knowledge of this magnificent part of the country with people all across Australia and around the world.







# **PUTTING COUNTRY BACK TOGETHER**

In just a few minutes by boat across Trinity Inlet from the tourist magnet of Cairns in north Queensland, sit the forested traditional lands of the Mandingalbay Yidinji people.

For thousands of years, the Mandingalbay Yidinji have cared for and been sustained by this rich country that includes a spectacular combination of tropical rainforest, beaches, mangroves and coral reef, straddling the World heritage listed Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef

Here elders like Vincent Mundraby are managing almost 10 000 hectares of country in a way that's a first for Australia.

In a recently established Indigenous Protected Area which was declared in December 2011, the traditional owners are involved in managing Mandingalbay Yidinji country, including national park, council reserve, forest reserve and marine park land under one umbrella.

"Its taken time, but now government and other land managers have recognised we wanted to go back to our traditional lands and to enhance and manage them in our own ways. Now we have an agreement to work towards the betterment of our country," says Vincent Mundraby, Chairperson of the Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation.

For the first time, government agencies and other land managers are working with the Mandingalbay Yidinji. Traditional owners see the new agreement as "putting our country back together" so it can be managed as a whole.

"We've made a vehicle for all of us to jump into. It means a lot and it's a new beginning," says Vincent.

As he sees it, the new agreement comes with great opportunities for the Mandingalbay Yidinji people. This includes the capacity to train people to become rangers and land managers to ensure country is cared for in a culturally appropriate way, and opportunities to share culture through tourism business ventures.

not only provides opportunities for our people, but respects the inherent management knowledge that we as traditional owners have over our country.

Vincent Mundraby, Mandingalbay Yidinji elder maintaining entture

#### CONNECTING YOUTH TO CULTURE AND COUNTRY

The Ngoorabul elders are taking young Aboriginals in the Glen Innes region of New South Wales back on country helping them regain their culture and giving them a sense of connection to their land.

Like the rest of the elders Trevor Potter had been worried that their children and grandchildren were lacking direction and missing out on their cultural links with country.

So they are taking them back to country on the 2900 hectare Indigenous Protected Area of Boorabee and The Willows owned and managed by the Ngoorabul and home to the clan's totem, the koala.

"The land is the way we can regain some of our culture. Boorabee and The Willows will give our young people knowledge of their own land; give them ownership again," says Trevor.

The local schools are supporting the elders, helping them with mentoring and culture camps on the properties. "It's hard to get young kids today to sit down with us and learn more about their culture, but over time, they are starting to come out with us from as young as three, up to 18 or 19 year olds," Trevor says.

"Just like the old days, we take girls and boys out separately on country for leadership and cultural activities as well as roaming the bush to learn bush skills."

Boorabee and The Willows have given the Ngoorabul people a base to regenerate their culture.

For the past two years Aaron Livermore has been learning about land management.

Aaron has taken on a role as the head ranger looking after the properties which include nine cultural sites that have been recorded and many more still to be documented

Traditional ecological knowledge is being used to gather bush foods and areas are being developed for cultural activities like basket weaving. To improve the records of heritage sites like camping places, burial grounds, scarred trees and dreaming stories the elders are helping develop heritage maps to keep culture alive.

Boorabee and The Willows
have deep spiritual
significance for the
Ngoorabul people. The
Willows' most famous
landmark - the Severn
River gorge - has its
own creation story of
the powerful magic man
Biamme who upon giving
chase and punishing a
greedy giant cod fish named
Goodoo created the gorge
providing all cod fish a
river to live in.



# PROTECTING THE GUNGU

Since time immemorial, sea country and everything within it has sustained and nourished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The cultural obligation and responsibility to look after sea country has been passed on for thousands of years.

So when green turtle numbers were dropping around Bowen in Northern Queensland the Birri Gubba Juru community was worried.

As Birri Gubba Juru elder Jim Gaston explains, "the 'Gungu' (turtle) was being affected by fishing, boat strike and loss of sea grass, as well as by hunting the elders hadn't sanctioned."

The elders wanted to make sure that turtle populations were sustainable and that their communities retained the right to hunt turtle for traditional ceremonies.

"We only hunt turtles for ceremonies like funerals and weddings," says Jim. "No hunting is allowed during the breeding season from October to March and breeding females can't be killed." And according to Jim the numbers harvested for these culturally appropriate events are usually way below the prescribed limits.

An agreement with government agencies now gives the Birri Gubba Juru elders the right to impose a limit on turtle take. In the past, it was governments, through a permit system that placed

This system did not recognise the significance of the cultural links to conservation between Indigenous people and the Gungu.

So the elders went to government agencies to discuss their concerns and finally all agreed to the present system where elders are issued with a permit. They then issue authorities to their people to hunt turtles for culturally appropriate purposes only.

Also of great significance, the Birri Gubba Juru elders voluntarily stopped all dugong hunting by their community within their sea country – one of the first Aboriginal clans to do so.



The Birri Gubba Juru also found a creative way to link turtle conservation together with a plan to keep young people actively connected with the Gungu – a turtle tagging conservation program that has been taken up by other Indigenous communities in Australia and overseas.

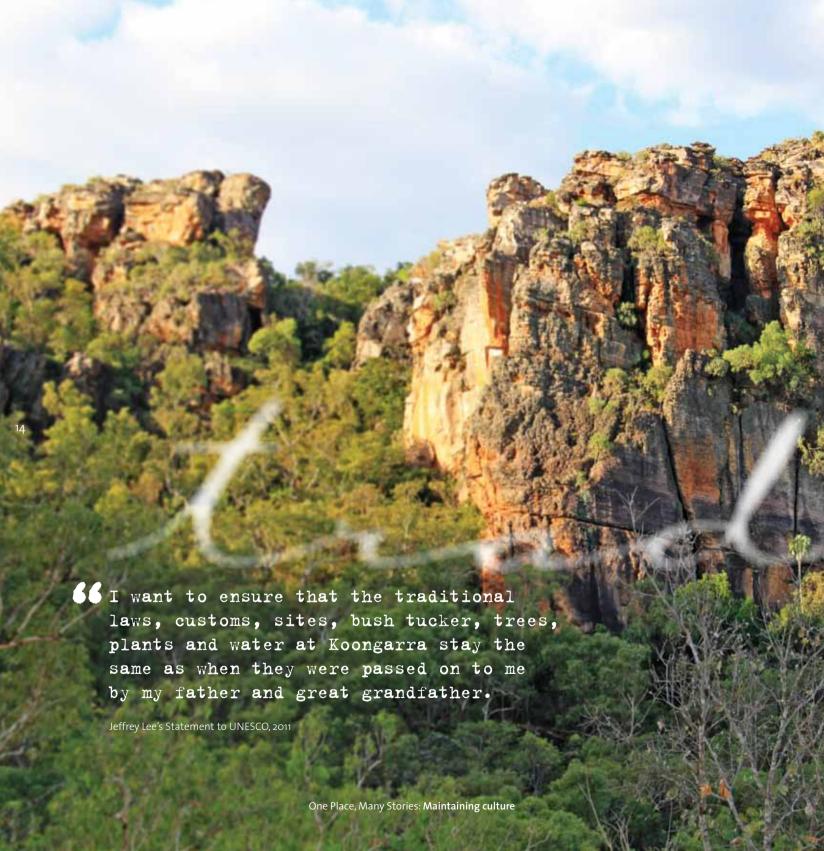
It was set up by elders who take to the sea country with young future Aboriginal leaders to teach them about their cultural links with turtles and about using both traditional and western methods to care for them. The youthful participants have all the excitement of 'hunting'

by leaping into the water to catch a turtle, but then after tagging it and recording details, they release it back into the ocean.

"It gives young people the opportunity to maintain their culture by connecting physically, culturally and spiritually with the Gungu and at the same time learn western scientific ways of collecting data on these very special sea creatures to ensure their sustainability," says Jim.

"Our people are now once again able to accept the responsibility of caring for sea country as passed onto us by those that came before us – this is very important to our social and cultural well being as a people."

66 It's empowering for the elders who have a cultural obligation to protect the Gungu to be directly involved in decision making. One Place, Many Stories: Maintaining culture





working together

## 'ORPHAN COUNTRY' PROGRAM ABATES GREENHOUSE GASES

Rain makes much of the awe-inspiring sandstone plateau of western Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, inaccessible for five to six months of the year. But this doesn't hamper the determination of a dedicated group of traditional owners to care for their country.

Getting back on country to compensate for the impact of loss of population last century, the traditional owners, the Bininj Kunwok clans have re-established an out station community at remote Kabulwarnamyo. They are reinstating traditional land management and combining it with modern scientific knowledge to help their 'orphaned country' recover from decades without traditional owners living on and walking the land.

The Warddeken rangers have many tasks to undertake from weed and feral animal control to recording and maintaining the region's many rock art and other cultural sites. But it's dealing with the impact of uncontrolled late season wild fires and their devastating effect on the region's biodiversity that has presented rangers with one of their most critical tasks.

Their efforts in bringing back traditional fire management to the land accompanied now by scientific research and modern technologies have produced award winning results.

In 2007, the Warddeken were part of a team that won the Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Innovative Solutions to Climate Change.

And, with five other Indigenous groups, Warddeken Land Management scored a win in 2011 at Australia's 'environmental Oscars' – the Banksia Awards – taking out the Caring for Country Indigenous Award for a greenhouse gas abatement partnership.

The winning project in both cases was the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project (WALFA). This is an innovative partnership involving traditional owners and Indigenous ranger groups working with the Northern Territory Government, the Northern Land Council and private enterprise – Darwin Liquefied Natural Gas (DLNG) – to control fires across some 28 000 kilometres and offset some of DLNG's greenhouse gas emissions.

WALFA involves skilled Indigenous fire managers using traditional fire management techniques based on increasing the proportion of controlled burns early in the dry season to create fire breaks and patchy mosaics of burnt and unburnt country. These early burns help minimise destructive late dry season wildfires.

Says Chairman of Warddekan Land Management, Dean Yibarbuk, "Fire is one of our management tools, not only for creating mosaic burns but because of its spiritual value. It's an element that can kill, but that can also bring life."

Modern measuring and accounting revealed that this Indigenous fire management has offset the greenhouse gas emissions from the liquefied natural gas plant by the equivalent of more than 100 000 tonnes of emissions each year over the past five years.

In return, Darwin Liquefied Natural Gas is paying the Indigenous fire managers around \$1million a year to abate its emissions. This brings in social and economic gains for the communities through new jobs, networks and educational opportunities.

And according to Dean Yibarbuk, "It not only helps people get work it also helps with programs that get families and young people back into the bush and onto the plateau for a short time."







# WORKING TO CONSERVE WETLANDS SITES

oward Galway has an enviable workplace. It covers the internationally recognised complex of lakes and swamps of Kerang and the River Red Gum forests of Gunbower in central Victoria, filled with reminders of Indigenous habitation and alive with migratory and local birds.

These Ramsar listed wetlands have a special significance to the Barapa Barapa and Yorta Yorta communities who have connections to country going back thousands of years.

Howard, a Barapa Barapa man, is the leader of a five member Indigenous work crew employed by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, to help conserve the wetlands by controlling feral rabbits and foxes and managing the ever present threat of invasive weeds.

The Indigenous crew works closely with other land managers and contractors sharing their traditional knowledge in helping identify middens, mounds and other culturally significant sites, and together they find ways to protect them. As a result previously unknown links with the past have been recorded and can now be protected and proudly presented to current and future generations.

Experienced eyes are vital if these practical steps to protect this ecologically complex land are not to inadvertently destroy precious cultural heritage sites at the same time.

"We've been able to share our skills and knowledge and that's given us a lot of respect for one another," says Howard, "We've learnt how to use tools like state of the art electronic mapping devices, different ways of controlling pest plants and animals and at the same time we've helped the other land managers and contractors understand how to recognise culturally significant sites.

"This means they too can make sure these significant sites are not destroyed when rabbits and weeds are being controlled."

It's also a process which has alerted the wider interest of the region's Indigenous peoples, reminding many of the sometimes forgotten history of their country.

The crew is currently working in the wetlands, developing professional skills and receiving accredited training, giving them the opportunity to build careers in a growing natural resource management industry.

Eco-tourism and bush tucker ventures are also on the radar for the future.

"Partnerships and good working relationships on the ground are really important in a project like this," says Howard. "Traditional knowledge also plays a vital role because it means that we can pass on our knowledge to co-workers and together help conserve Indigenous culture."









# **BATTLING THE SILENT PREDATORS**

host nets are silent predators trawling the seas and killing indiscriminately as they go.

Turtles, sharks, dugong, large and small fish and even crocodiles fall victim to these walls of death as they drift the ocean's tides and currents long after they've been lost or abandoned from fishing boats.

The United Nations General Assembly has identified ghost nets and marine debris as an issue of international concern. And it's certainly a major concern for northern Australia and its many saltwater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The nets drift ashore bearing their heart-breaking cargo in some of the most isolated places in Australia. Ten thousand nets have been collected on northern beaches since 2004 and a disturbing total of 2035 nets were found in 2011.

These figures are gleaned from a remarkable initiative, Ghost Nets Australia. This alliance of 30 Indigenous communities and more than 200 Indigenous rangers from remote communities in coastal northern Australia spreads across Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland including the Torres Strait.

Under the Ghost Nets program community rangers scour the beaches, regularly going to places where they know from experience that nets are likely to wash up. From nets that are many kilometres long and often enmeshed in sand, they release any turtles and other animals they are lucky enough to find alive.

The rangers who are trained in data collection, examine and code the nets to determine the type of net and country of origin. These details are logged together with GPS information on where they were found. Finally the rangers tackle the physically demanding job of dragging the nets off the beach to a boat or four wheel drive vehicle.

Clearing away several tons of ghost nets to return a week or so later to again find nets on the beach can be discouraging. But the rangers continue to deal with their self chosen task with pride and enthusiasm and say, "Our lives revolve around the sea, and as custodians it's our duty to conserve our natural heritage."



Isolation makes disposal of these nets a major problem and they usually end up in landfill or burned, but community innovation and creative thinking have come to the fore with ideas to recycle the nets, which are proving to be a remarkable success.

Indigenous weavers have been creating art works ranging from baskets to a Torres Strait Island ceremonial headdress. Woven out of colourful elements of the nets the works have featured in exhibitions and some are now gracing public buildings and private collections in Australia and overseas.

And in local schools teachers are using the nets through a hands-on approach giving the young students a way to better engage in classroom lessons from maths to ecology.

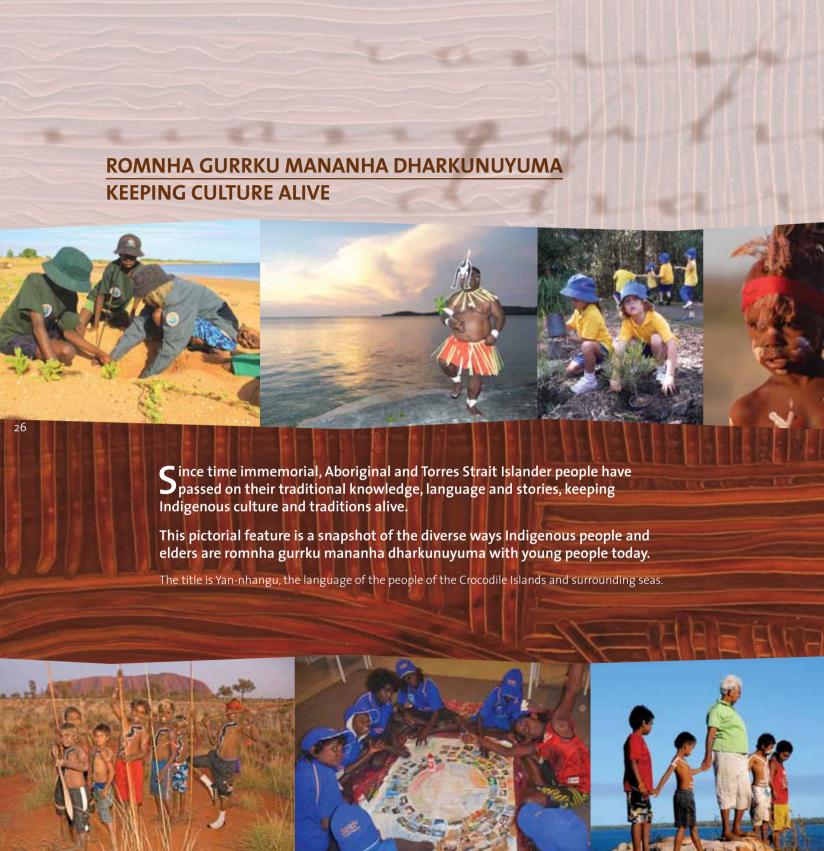
Ghost nets drift beyond Australia and can be seen in the middle of the Arafura Sea which surrounds the Aru Islands of eastern Indonesia.

Ghost Nets Australia has set about working on an international collaboration to find a solution.

Riki Gunn, project coordinator of Ghost Nets Australia recently ran a workshop at Ambon with fishermen who work in the Arafura sea.

"We need to work together to find solutions to a common problem," she says. "This is an early step towards developing community based programs and may lead to activities like cross border exchange programs between rangers."









resilient committees



#### **KEEPING TIMELESS KNOWLEDGE ALIVE**

The Martu people's traditional connection to their desert lands in Western Australia goes back for tens of thousands of years. Today these connections are felt as strongly as ever.

"It's the songline and the land around this area; it's so special to us. We connect with the land – it's our dreaming, our spirits, our culture. It's my life," says Clifton Girgiba, a young Martu man.

Their country, a 136 000 square kilometre area of the Western Desert is one of the harshest and most remote places on the Australian continent.

Priceless traditional knowledge of this land rests with elders who grew up in and walked the desert as their ancestors had for thousands of years. The Martu have maintained their connection to country and much of their cultural knowledge, even though they were moved into townships many decades ago.

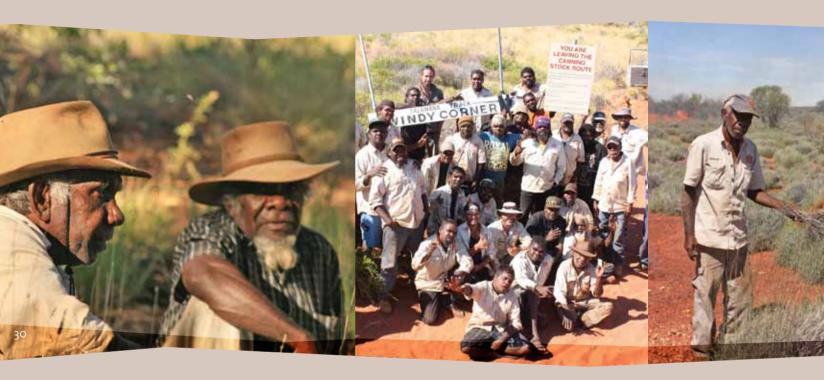
Here in this desert landscape that can surprisingly abound with life, the old people are passing on precious knowledge of country and culture that may have been lost, if not for the support of the Working on Country ranger program.

Martu senior rangers teach the young rangers the cultural significance of their land, its Dreaming, and its distinctive flora and fauna.

Using traditional knowledge of their elders as well as western science to manage new threats, the rangers protect biodiversity in country that includes threatened or vulnerable desert animals, like the greater bilby, black flanked rock wallaby and marsupial mole.

They dig out and clean long unvisited rock holes polluted by feral camels. Going back a year later they are greeted by the 'fantastic' sight of holes alive with frogs and visiting birds, surrounded by lizard tracks and filled with the clean water so vital for native animals and humans in this arid land.





And in the face of large uncontrolled wildfires, the elders teach the young rangers traditional fire management. This brings the rangers out early in the season to set fire to the spinifex, to encourage new growth and reinstate small mosaic burning patterns created by Martu as they walked this country since time immemorial.

The Martu women-vital to community wellbeing-also have an important role in managing the biodiversity of their country.

They monitor threatened species and work to reduce threats and promote growth of bush tucker sought after by both Martu and native animals. Young Martu woman, Hayley Atkins, says, "It's good that we go out on country – the elders are sharing their knowledge with us. We've got to listen; we need to carry on the old people's stories, keep learning and keep our culture strong."

The traditional owners are not the only people traversing this land, with increasing numbers of tourists in four wheel drive vehicles venturing along the Canning Stock Route that crosses Martu country.



Armed with knowledge about their country and its sites, the rangers are able to actively manage the impact of tourists on their land. They share their stories about open sites and artwork as another step in encouraging appreciation and respect for this ancient land.

66 We are losing a lot of older people... I need to learn more. I need to record what the old people are saying to try and look after our culture, law and the land. It's all Martu people's ancestors, our great grandmother's and grandfather's. We need to keep studying it... So we need to protect Martu culture and the land and the community that lives around it.

Clifton Girgiba, Martu traditional owner



The Banbai clan is back on their country at Wattleridge near the New England township of Guyra, New South Wales (NSW).

"When I was a kid we were always told, 'this is your land,' but we never had any land to actually go to," says Lee Patterson, a Banbai traditional owner.

"In the past, land owners would be straight onto you and say you're trespassing and a lot of our people had been prosecuted for trespassing, but the beauty of it now is, since we went through the process of getting our land back, it has brought back pride, jubilation and elation for our people. You can't describe it."

Today, at Wattleridge the Banbai, young and old, are energetically and enthusiastically restoring the land and developing opportunities for their community.

"It's about building a healthy land and healthy community," says Tanya Patterson a traditional owner and manager of Banbai Business Enterprises.

Wattleridge, declared an Indigenous Protected Area in 2001, covers some 645 hectares of bushland on granite country containing species not found elsewhere in the district. Here rocky ridges and a rolling landscape are separated by forested valley flats, picturesque creeks and tumbling waterfalls.



It has the only recorded axe-grinding groove sites and fully recorded art sites in the local area as well as canoe trees and burial mounds.

"Wattleridge has brought people together who haven't had much interaction in recent times," says Tanya. "Now relationships are building up as people get to know one another at a different level and as part of a common effort.

"Around 12 Working on Country rangers and office staff are employed on the property and most of them are traditional owners, so they have great pride in looking after their country. And it's a community based project so when community members go out there they see the place looking fantastic and they also feel proud."

The traditional owners and rangers are making big efforts to control feral animals like foxes, rabbits, wild dogs, cats, pigs and goats on their property as well as invasive weeds such as blackberry, nodding thistle and fireweed. Fire management is a looming priority and they're developing a detailed fire management plan.

A native plant propagation program is providing plants for revegetation as well as training people in horticulture and setting up seed banks.

School children and other visitors are taken on cultural tours across the property and the rangers in partnership with TAFE NSW and NSW National Parks, have built cabins, walking tracks, viewing platforms and interpretative signs as steps to building an eco-tourism venture.

The contribution of the Banbai to their local community continues to grow and a number of the Banbai are now trained volunteers with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

In the long run the aim is to enable Wattleridge to be self sufficient but Tanya Patterson stresses the need to take things one step at a time to build up capacity and self esteem.

"When we talk about resilience for our communities, its not just in building capacity and skills for people to run their own businesses it's also about ensuring our young people know about our history and our culture," Tanya says.



"Wattleridge gives us that sense of place and pride in who we are, making sure our people and communities remain strong today and well into the future." spirits are here and we can feel their presence.
We've got our country back and we feel very proud and very strong.

Elizabeth Lulu, Banbai traditional owner





#### TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CULTURE LIVES ON

every year the Tasmanian Aboriginal community converges on putalina – or Oyster Cove – south of Hobart in Tasmania for a vibrant music festival of local artists and performers from around Australia.

This get together of people from across Tasmania is a recognition and celebration of Aboriginal culture and resilience at the site of the first land area reclaimed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in 1984, and officially returned to Tasmania's Aboriginal people in 1995.

The festival which supports and promotes issues relating to the aspirations and wellbeing of the Aboriginal community, brings a sense of 'togetherness and strength' says Andry Sculthorpe, Land and Heritage project officer with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre that runs the festival.

"It plays a role in helping maintain a sense of community for Tasmanian Aboriginal people who suffered profoundly following European settlement in the nineteenth century." says Andry. In 1847, Oyster Cove station was an ex-convict government settlement where 47 Tasmanian Aboriginal people arrived to take up forced residency. They were a small group of the remaining 200 Tasmanian Aboriginal people who had been compulsorily removed from across Tasmania and taken to Wybalenna on Flinders Island.

Today, putalina is an Indigenous Protected Area, one of many sites that are part of milaythina pakana – Tasmanian Aboriginal land – that is being cared for by Working on Country Aboriginal rangers who continue to meet their cultural and spiritual responsibility to country.

Employed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, nine rangers spread their efforts from putalina in southern Tasmania to the Furneaux Island group in the Bass Strait to the north.

In the Furneaux Islands, migratory shearwaters, known as mutton birds return each year to roost, having undertaken a 30 000 kilometre return flight across the globe.



"These seabirds are an important cultural resource for our people who have harvested them for generations," says Andry. Today the population is sustainably managed through a rookery lease system for harvesting during a short season declared each year.

The rangers' role comes into play rehabilitating and managing rookeries on the islands and monitoring bird numbers and condition, as well as constructing walking tracks.

Rookeries are on fragile sandy soils covered by vegetation such as poa tussock that can easily erode, so rangers take steps to stabilise sites and protect vegetation including controlling weeds like African boxthorn. They monitor burrow density and bird numbers and make chick counts when parent birds are at sea during the day.

The rangers' brief is wide ranging. They care for ancient sites like stone tool quarries and shell middens which reveal Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples' long history of occupation, protecting the sites from erosion and public impact. And there is the on-going work of protecting and restoring the natural environment by controlling weeds and feral animals and revegetating areas that have been degraded by clearing. Moves like these help improve habitat for threatened species like Cape Barren geese, eastern barred bandicoots and Swift parrots.

"The work of the rangers is important in maintaining connections to land in some areas and in restoring the broken links in other areas where connections remain in spirit," says Andry.

matainable livelihoods

#### **REVITALISING COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY**

On the edge of Lake Alexandrina in South Australia's Coorong region a crew of Working on Country Aboriginal rangers take out their GPS to note the burrows of that scourge of rural Australia – the rabbit.

They'll then drive back along the dusty road to their headquarters at Raukkan and produce a sophisticated computerised map identifying the positions of each burrow ready for baiting, fumigating and later ripping.

Says ranger Dennis Rigney, "Rabbits destroy all the revegetation and crops. If we don't get them under control we'll have no plants left."

Dennis is one of eight rangers from the 150 strong Aboriginal community of Ngarrindjeri people living at Raukkan. Employed by Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation, they have all received accredited natural resource management training. Their current priority is to rehabilitate at least 4.5 kilometres of land in a Ramsar listed Wetland of International Significance near their town.

The Ngopamuldi Cultural rangers' work is part of wider efforts involving governments and other agencies to restore the health of the Coorong's lower lakes, located at the downstream end of the Murray-Darling river system.

On-going drought has had devastating environmental and social impacts in communities across the region. Rain in the past couple of years has increased water flows, but problems remain.

Overcoming some of the physical problems involves much more than eradicating rabbits. A big effort has gone into growing and planting tens of thousands of seedlings from the Raukkan nursery, a solidly-based venture that provides plants not only for Raukkan but for other revegetation exercises in the region.

And when not propagating and planting or rabbiting, the rangers are controlling weeds like South African boxthorn and artichoke thistle; surveying bird species with a special eye out for the endangered Orange Bellied Parrot; identifying native plants like a threatened orchid, or taking creative steps to restore the land.



The lands and waters of the Ngarrindjeri are extremely important, because we believe that the lands and waters is us... and if our lands and our waters die, then we die. So, that's how close we are to our land.

Tom Trevorrow, Ngandjerri elder







They have re-established off-shore reed beds to prevent erosion and re-snagged the wetlands and lake edge with trees for fish habitat. Increasing numbers of locally threatened fish and growing numbers of black swans and other wetland birds are counted among successes from these exercises.

Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation Managing Director Derek Walker says, "We're hoping that the rangers will get enough qualifications and experience for them to build a career and future employment opportunities with other land management organisations."

By providing employment and training and engaging the community in restoring the country around their town, the Ngopamuldi Cultural rangers' work has had a positive impact on the community at large.

"What this project has meant to our community is quite amazing," says Derek. "It's enabled us to be involved in a program that means we're able to work

on country undertaking restoration and rehabilitation with the opportunity to add cultural character. There's cultural affirmation in that process."

The community and the rangers have learnt a considerable amount about significant sites, plants and animals as part of the project. "It's really about the opportunity to understand cultural heritage in a restorative framework ...about revitalising country," Derek says.

The rangers have extended their work into the local school as a way of providing cultural affirmation. Derek is uplifted to hear young people talking enthusiastically about the opportunity to work on country restoring the character of the land.

"It really helps them understand about their heritage and does a lot for their sense of self esteem and who they are," he says.

#### USING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE TO PREDICT CLIMATE CHANGE



or thousands of years Ngurrara people of the Great Sandy Desert have used their knowledge of seasonal cycles to ensure sustainable livelihoods and cultural wellbeing.

Understanding these knowledge systems and how they are changing is important for preserving country and cultural practices in today's world.

"Our traditional knowledge tells us how weather effects plants and animals," says Peter Murray, Coordinator of the Ngurrara rangers.

"Indicators like the Pujurl (Desert spade foot frog) which comes out after the jikjik (first rain), tells us to start preparing for the wet season, are changing and we need to understand how this affects our country."

Using their traditional knowledge of country, the Ngurrara people have been working to develop land management tools to understand the effects of climate change.

This knowledge, based on observations of change in their environment, is the link between climate, annual weather patterns and the response of plants and animals on their country. It reflects a social relationship with their environment, providing a holistic understanding of their country.

"That's why we started the Ngurrara seasonal calendar project to record our traditional understandings of the country and compare that with what scientists are telling us," says Peter.

The project was established with funding from the Shell social investment strategy in partnership with the Warlu Jilalaa Jumu Indigenous Protected Area, Ngurrara Working on Country ranger program, Kimberley Land Council and the University of Melbourne.

Over the last 12 months Ngurrara rangers have been actively documenting traditional knowledge of weather, plants and animals while working with scientists to set up scientific equipment to measure changes on their country. This information is then downloaded into a database to create a seasonal calendar model that the rangers are using to identify work that needs to be done on country.

"The rangers through combining traditional knowledge and modern science are developing a monitoring and evaluation tool to assess the impacts of climate change on our country," says Peter.

"It's allowing our people to understand scientific predictions about climate change on our own terms using traditional knowledge.

"And just as important, it will help us to develop management plans that will protect our country for future generations."





Troy Stow is looking forward to using his coxswain's ticket when the new ranger boat comes to Badu Island in the Torres Strait.

He's one of 40 Indigenous rangers working on the complex system of islands sitting between mainland Australia and Papua New Guinea.

So far his work has largely been land-based, spraying and pulling out weeds by hand, trapping feral pigs and cleaning up beaches as well as monitoring sea grass. However in these islands, located amongst a multitude of cays, sandbanks and coral reefs on a continental shelf that teems with life, the rangers' remit covers both land and sea.

The Islanders' connection with their natural surrounds is intrinsic to their identity and the Working on Country

ranger program is underpinned by the need to help communities maintain country, identity and culture.

Managed by the Torres Strait Regional Authority, Working on Country provides employment, training and mentoring support for the rangers who now include three female members among their ranks.

Priorities for the rangers' work are set by traditional owners and rangers working together, and for Troy, the community engagement and education aspects of their job as one of its great benefits. "It's a good program and you can really make a difference in your community," he says.

"We engage directly with elders and community members. They help with our work on the islands, imparting some of the knowledge that we learn from



Each of the island communities has a turtle and dugong management plan and while the rangers don't have any compliance powers, they play a major role in ensuring that islanders, and especially hunters, are aware of their responsibilities under the plans. Conserving the habitat of these animals is fundamental to the rangers' as they take their work from land to sea.

A long term aspiration of traditional owners in the Torres Strait, the ranger program in this sea locked region is now flourishing and set to grow. "At the start of the ranger program people were a bit hesitant about it, but now because of the work we do together with the elders and communities, we can see how good it is for all of us and our future," says Troy.

#### SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR FISH RIVER

ish River, a 180 000 hectare conservation treasure on the mighty Daly River in the Northern Territory is alive with the energy of a dynamic new venture.

Indigenous clans with strong ties to Fish River - Wagiman, Labarganyan, Malak Malak and Kamu peoples – are reconnecting with their country. They are benefiting from a partnership that's conserving the property's astounding biodiversity and at the same time providing work for Indigenous rangers and encouraging sustainable Indigenous economic development.

Fish River was purchased in a ground-breaking collaboration between the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC), the Australian Government's National Reserve System, and conservation not-for-profit organisations, the Nature Conservancy and Pew Environment Group with support from Greening Australia.

Indigenous rangers are employed to carry out vital conservation and land management work on the property. Their work spans the property's diverse landscapes ranging from the magnificent Daly River – home to a cultural icon, the pig-nosed turtle – to savannas, rainforest pockets and spectacular ranges supporting 225 recorded animal species. There are sugar gliders, wallabies, kingfishers and eagles as well as threatened animals like the northern quoll, Gouldian finch, northern masked owl and freshwater sawfish.

Innovative thinking has turned feral animal control to good account. Feral buffalo are being removed from the property and transported to an Indigenous-owned business, Gunbalanya abattoir in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. The buffalo are humanely processed to provide fresh, affordable meat to local Indigenous communities. In nearby resorts, this specialty meat can be seen on tourists' plates and it is also supplied to Sydney restaurant markets in New South Wales.

The future looks good for the community and new employment prospects are emerging in Australia's new carbon economy. Fish River will soon be generating employment and income for Indigenous people, from carbon credits, with the ILC establishing a scientifically-based savannah burning regime across Fish River, which will produce carbon credits for sale.

"By burning early in the dry season, you can reduce, or prevent, intense fires late in the season. The methodology is Australian Government approved under the Carbon Farming Initiative. There's an overall reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by managing the land this way, and the property will earn carbon credits," says Dawn Casey, ILC Chairperson.







Credits generated on Fish River can be sold in the Australian carbon farming scheme, and possibly on international carbon markets. The plan deploys an innovative mix of traditional Indigenous pattern burning, carbon accounting, remote sensing and mapping, and aerial ignition in a large-scale fire project.

"The income from the sale of the credits will be invested into land management for Fish River, to ensure its viability and create sustainable jobs for Indigenous people. It will act as a demonstration project with the aim of benefiting other Indigenous landholders in Australia's Top End," says Dawn.

The property's conservation status is now assured with its declaration as part of the Australian Government's National Reserve System - Australia's most secure way of protecting native habitat.





# **GLOSSARY**

Australian Heritage Council	The Australian Heritage Council is the Australian Government's principal adviser on heritage matters. It assesses nominations for the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List.		
Banksia Awards	The Banksia Environmental Awards are regarded as the most prestigious environmental awards in Australia. They are sponsored by the Banksia Environmental Foundation, a national not-for-profit organisation that promotes environmental excellence and sustainability through its Awards program and other associated events.		
Caring for our Country	Caring for our Country is an Australian Government program administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) It funds projects across the country that improve biodiversity and sustainable farming practices and that achieve national targets. Funding supports regional natural resource management groups, local, state and territory governments, Indigenous groups, industry bodies, land managers, farmers, landcare groups and communities.		
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC)	The department is responsible for implementing the Australian Government's policies and programs to protect our environment and heritage, and to promote a sustainable way of life.		
Ghost Nets Australia	Ghost Nets Australia is an alliance of 30 Indigenous communities from coastal northern Australia across Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland. The program was established with funding from the Australian Government and is still funded by the government. It supports Indigenous rangers to remove ghost nets that have drifted into their sea country and beaches after being lost from fishing boats in neighbouring seas. The project also assists Aboriginal communities to maintain stewardship over their customary lands and seas.		
Greening Australia	Greening Australia is a not for profit, community based organisation with over twenty years experience in native vegetation management in the Northern Territory. The organisation works with landholders, landcare groups, community organisations, Aboriginal groups, schools and research institutions, government and industry to increase awareness, knowledge, skills, confidence and environmental action		
Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)	The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) is an Indigenous-controlled statutory authority established to assist Indigenous Australians to acquire and manage land in a sustainable way to achieve cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits.		
Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA)	An Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) is an area of land and/or sea that traditional owners have dedicated or declared as a protected area, recognised by the Australian, State and Territory governments and managed for its cultural and natural values according to customary laws and practices. These areas make up almost 25 per cent of Australia's National Reserve System. The Indigenous Protected Areas program is funded under Caring for our Country and administered by SEWPaC.		
Kimberley Land Council (KLC)	The Kimberley Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (KLC) represents traditional owners in the Kimberley region, Western Australia. Its primary responsibility is to protect traditional land and waters and to protect, enhance and gain formal status – legal, social and political – for the customs, laws and traditions of Kimberley traditional owners.		

National Heritage List	The National Heritage List is made up of natural, historic and Indigenous places of outstanding national heritage value to Australia. It is compiled and maintained by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. Listed places are protected by Australian Government laws and agreements with state and territory governments and with Indigenous and private owners.		
National Reserve System	The National Reserve System is Australia's network of protected areas, conserving examples of unique landscapes, plants and animals for future generations. It includes more than 9400 protected areas covering nearly 14 per cent of the country – almost 106 million hectares. It is made up of Commonwealth, state and territory reserves, Indigenous lands and protected areas run by non-profit conservation organidsations, through to ecosystems protected by farmers on their private working properties. The National Reserve System is administered by SEWPaC.		
Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation	The Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation is situated at Raukkan on Lake Alexandrina near the Coorong and Murray Mouth in South Australia. Set up in 2004 it aims to increase the capacity of Aboriginal people to participate in the management of natural resources.		
North Central Catchment Management Authority	The North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) coordinates and monitors natural resource management programs in north central Victoria including those funded through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program. Its aim is to protect and improve rivers and the natural environment in the region.		
Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd	The Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd (NGRMG) in the Northern Territory is a not-for-profit community based company. As the designated Regional Natural Resource Management body for the region it administers and manages projects funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program.		
Northern Land Council	The Northern Land Council is an independent statutory authority of the Commonwealth of Australia. It is responsible for assisting Aboriginal peoples in the Top End of the Northern Territory to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas.		
NSW National Parks	The Australian State of New South Wales has 879 national parks and reserves. NSW National Parks protect landscapes from rainforests and rugged bush to marine wonderlands and outback deserts.		
Parks Australia	Parks Australia is the the Australian Government National Park agency conserving Australia's biodiversity and cultural heritage. They manage the Commonwealth's terrestrial protected areas, including six national parks (three jointly managed with their traditional owners) and two botanic gardens. Parks Australia also helps build the National Reserve System, and supports Indigenous landholders declare Indigenous Protected Areas. Parks Australia is administered within the SEWPaC.		
Pew Environment Group	The Pew Environment Group is the conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a non-governmental organisation that applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improving public policy. They work with Aboriginal organisations, conservation groups, industry and government agencies across Australia to conserve the country's critical wilderness and marine habitats through long-term protection, good management practices and the elimination of threats.		

1971 – known as the Ramsar Convention – is an intergovernmental treaty. Australia is a signatory to this treaty which commits member countries to maintain the ecological character of designated Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the sustainable use of all of the wetlands in their territories.  TAFE NSW  TAFE NSW is Australia's leading provider of vocational education and training with mor than 500 000 enrolments each year.  The Nature Conservancy  The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a leading conservation organisation working around the world to protect ecologically important land and water for nature and people. TNC plays a critical conservation leadership role in Australia: convening stakeholders; enabling the capacity of key partners; providing scientific, conservation planning, policy and management expertise, and driving and leveraging successful large-scale conservation results.  Torres Strait Regional Authority  (TSRA)  The Torres Strait Regional Authority is an Australian Government Statutory Authority established on July 1994 under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Act 2005. The TSRA aims to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait region.  University of Melbourne  Established in 1853, the University of Melbourne in Victoria is a public-spirited institution that makes distinctive contributions to society in research, teaching and engagement.  This IPA, declared in November 2007, covers 16 million hectares of arid scrub and desert wetlands in the north-west of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert. The IPA is cared for by its traditional owners, the Ngurrara people. It is named after the fire they use to keep the land healthy (wariu), and the permanent waterholes (jila or living water') and seasonal soaks (jumu) that are the IPA's key sources of water.  Working on Country  The Australian Government established Working on Country recognising that protecting and conserving the environment is a shared r		
The Nature Conservancy  The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a leading conservation organisation working around the world to protect ecologically important land and water for nature and people. TNC plays a critical conservation leadership role in Australia: convening stakeholders; enabling the capacity of key partners; providing scientific, conservation planning, policy and management expertise; and driving and leveraging successful large-scale conservation results.  The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)  The Torres Strait Regional Authority is an Australian Government Statutory Authority established on July 1 1994 under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Acr 1989, which is today known as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Act 2005. The TSRA aims to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait region.  University of Melbourne  Established in 1853, the University of Melbourne in Victoria is a public-spirited institution that makes distinctive contributions to society in research, teaching and engagement.  Warlu Jilajaa Jumu Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)  This IPA, declared in November 2007, covers 16 million hectares of arid scrub and desert weltands in the north-west of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert. The IPA is cared for by its traditional enable with the Aboriginal people. It is named after the fire they use to keep the land healthy (warlu), and the permanent waterholes (jila or 'living water') and seasonal soaks (jumu) that are the IPA's key sources of water.  Working on Country  The Australian Government established Working on Country recognising that protecting and conserving the environment is a shared responsibility and to provide sustainable employment for Indigenous people. Indigenous people, is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning. Working on Country builds on Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage their lines some of our most environmental protections natural assets and,	Ramsar	1971 – known as the Ramsar Convention – is an intergovernmental treaty. Australia is a signatory to this treaty which commits member countries to maintain the ecological character of designated Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the
the world to protect ecologically important land and water for nature and people. TNC plays a critical conservation leadership role in Australia: convening stakeholders; enabling the capacity of key partners; providing scientific, conservation planning, policy and management expertise; and driving and leveraging successful large-scale conservation results.  Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)  The Torres Strait Regional Authority is an Australian Government Statutory Authority established on July 11994 under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989, which is today known as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Act 2005. The TSRA aims to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait region.  University of Melbourne  Established in 1853, the University of Melbourne in Victoria is a public-spirited institution that makes distinctive contributions to society in research, teaching and engagement.  Warlu Jilajaa Jumu Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)  This IPA, declared in November 2007, covers 1.6 million hectares of arid scrub and desert wetlands in the north-west of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert. The IPA is cared for by its traditional owners, the Ngurrara people. It is named after the fire they use to keep the land healthy (warlu), and the permanent waterholes (jila or 'living water') and seasonal soaks (jumu) that are the IPA's key sources of water.  Working on Country  The Australian Government established Working on Country recognising that protecting and conserving the environment is a shared responsibility and to provide sustainable employment for Indigenous people. Indigenous people have long-held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country. They own an estimated 20 per cent of the Australian continent, upon which lies some of our most environmentally precious natural assets and, for Indigenous people, is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning. Worki	TAFE NSW	TAFE NSW is Australia's leading provider of vocational education and training with more than 500 000 enrolments each year.
established on July 1994 under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989, which is today known as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Act 2005. The TSRA aims to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait region.  University of Melbourne  Established in 1853, the University of Melbourne in Victoria is a public-spirited institution that makes distinctive contributions to society in research, teaching and engagement.  This IPA, declared in November 2007, covers 1.6 million hectares of arid scrub and desert wetlands in the north-west of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert. The IPA is cared for by its traditional owners, the Ngurrara people. It is named after the fire they use to keep the land healthy (warlu), and the permanent waterholes (jila or 'living water') and seasonal soaks (jumu) that are the IPA's key sources of water.  Working on Country  The Australian Government established Working on Country recognising that protecting and conserving the environment is a shared responsibility and to provide sustainable employment for Indigenous people. Indigenous people have long-held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country. They own an estimated 20 per cent of the Australian continent, upon which lies some of our most environmentally precious natural assets and, for Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country. Over 680 Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country. Over 680 Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country. Over 680 Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country. Over 680 Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country on the list is made by the World Heritage Commit which is made up of representatives from countries that are signatories to the World Heritage Commit which is made up of representatives	The Nature Conservancy	the world to protect ecologically important land and water for nature and people.  TNC plays a critical conservation leadership role in Australia: convening stakeholders; enabling the capacity of key partners; providing scientific, conservation planning, policy and management expertise; and driving and leveraging successful large-scale
that makes distinctive contributions to society in research, teaching and engagement.  Warlu Jilajaa Jumu Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)  This IPA, declared in November 2007, covers 1.6 million hectares of arid scrub and desert wetlands in the north-west of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert. The IPA is cared for by its traditional owners, the Ngurrara people. It is named after the fire they use to keep the land healthy (warlu), and the permanent waterholes (jila or 'living water') and seasonal soaks (jumu) that are the IPA's key sources of water.  Working on Country  The Australian Government established Working on Country recognising that protecting and conserving the environment is a shared responsibility and to provide sustainable employment for Indigenous people. Indigenous people have long-held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country. They own an estimated 20 per cent of the Australian continent, upon which lies some of our most environmentally precious natural assets and, for Indigenous people, is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning. Working on Country builds on Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country. Over 680 Indigenous rangers across 85 ranger teams are employed across Australia to deliver environmental outcomes. It is expected the around 730 rangers will be trained and employed through Working on Country by June 20  World Heritage List  To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value humanity. The final decision on entry on the list is made by the World Heritage Commit which is made up of representatives from countries that are signatories to the World Heritage Convention. Australia is a signatory to the convention and has 19 places inscrib	Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)	established on July 11994 under the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act</i> 1989, which is today known as the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Act 2005</i> . The TSRA aims to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of the Torres Strait Islander and
wetlands in the north-west of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert. The IPA is cared for by its traditional owners, the Ngurrara people. It is named after the fire they use to keep the land healthy (warlu), and the permanent waterholes (jila or 'living water') and seasonal soaks (jumu) that are the IPA's key sources of water.  Working on Country  The Australian Government established Working on Country recognising that protecting and conserving the environment is a shared responsibility and to provide sustainable employment for Indigenous people. Indigenous people have long-held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country. They own an estimated 20 per cent of the Australian continent, upon which lies some of our most environmentally precious natural assets and, for Indigenous people, is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning. Working on Country builds on Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country. Over 680 Indigenous rangers across 85 ranger teams are employed across Australia to deliver environmental outcomes. It is expected th around 730 rangers will be trained and employed through Working on Country by June 2c  World Heritage List  To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value humanity. The final decision on entry on the list is made by the World Heritage Commit which is made up of representatives from countries that are signatories to the World Heritage Convention. Australia is a signatory to the convention and has 19 places inscrib	University of Melbourne	Established in 1853, the University of Melbourne in Victoria is a public-spirited institution that makes distinctive contributions to society in research, teaching and engagement.
and conserving the environment is a shared responsibility and to provide sustainable employment for Indigenous people. Indigenous people have long-held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country. They own an estimated 20 per cent of the Australian continent, upon which lies some of our most environmentally precious natural assets and, for Indigenous people, is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning. Working on Country builds on Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country. Over 680 Indigenous rangers across 85 ranger teams are employed across Australia to deliver environmental outcomes. It is expected th around 730 rangers will be trained and employed through Working on Country by June 2c.  World Heritage List  To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value humanity. The final decision on entry on the list is made by the World Heritage Commit which is made up of representatives from countries that are signatories to the World Heritage Convention. Australia is a signatory to the convention and has 19 places inscrib	Warlu Jilajaa Jumu Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)	for by its traditional owners, the Ngurrara people. It is named after the fire they use to keep the land healthy (warlu), and the permanent waterholes (jila or 'living water') and
humanity. The final decision on entry on the list is made by the World Heritage Commit which is made up of representatives from countries that are signatories to the World Heritage Convention. Australia is a signatory to the convention and has 19 places inscrib	Working on Country	and conserving the environment is a shared responsibility and to provide sustainable employment for Indigenous people. Indigenous people have long-held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country. They own an estimated 20 per cent of the Australian continent, upon which lies some of our most environmentally precious natural assets and, for Indigenous people, is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning. Working on Country builds on Indigenous traditional knowledge to
	World Heritage List	Heritage Convention. Australia is a signatory to the convention and has 19 places inscribed

### **AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

AU	SINALIAN GOVERNMENT TONE	/IIIG
PAGE	STORY TITLE	FUNDING PROGRAM
2	A Tribute to Australia's Indigenous Elders	Caring for our Country
4	Heritage Listing Brings Aboriginal Stories to the Fore	Heritage
8	Putting Country Back Together	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
10	Connecting Youth to Culture and Country	Indigenous Protected Areas
12	Protecting the Gungu	Caring for our Country
14	A Hard Fought Win	Parks Australia
16	Orphan Country Program Abates Greenhouse Gases	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
18	Working to Conserve Ramsar Wetlands	Caring for our Country
22	Battling the Silent Predators	Caring for our Country
24	Keeping Culture Alive	Parks Australia and Caring for our Country
28	Keeping Timeless Knowledge Alive	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
32	Healthy Land Healthy Community	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
36	Tasmanian Aboriginal Culture Lives on	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
38	Revitalising Country and Community	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
42	Using Traditional Knowledge to Predict Climate Change	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
44	Rangers Help Islanders Maintain Land and Sea Country	Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas
46	Sustainable Future for Fish River	National Reserve System

## **PHOTO CREDITS**

ii	From left, Fish River Manager, Shaun Ansell, ranger Desmond Daly, Minister for Environment, Tony Burke and ranger Geoff Long at official celebrations held to mark the launch of the Fish River project. The Nature Conservancy.
3	Senior Australian of the Year for 2012, Laurie Baymarrwangga holding her trophy with family on her homeland on Murrungga Island. Bentley James.
5	Wisdom of the elders, John Watson, Jarlmadangah Burru community, Kimberley. Darrel Combs
6	Traditional owner, Alfie White, next to paintings of Wanjina and the Wunggurr snake at Ngallangunda Rock Art site, Ngarinyin Language Country. Kimberley Land Council
7	Aerial view of King George river Falls on the north Kimberley coast. Tourism West Australia.
8	TOP: Final stages of building a dukal (traditional shelter). Djunbunji Land and Sea Program BOTTOM: (from left to right)
	Collecting paper bark for the dukal. Djunbunji Land and Sea Program
	Djunbunji Land and Sea rangers building a walking track. Djunbunji Land and Sea Program
11	Aaron Livermore, head ranger Boorabee and The Willows. Parks Australia
12-13	Green turtle. Robert Thorn
14	Koongarra. Parks Australia
15	Jeffrey Lee, senior traditional owner of the Djok clan at Koongarra. James Hunt
17	Dry season river scene in the Warddeken IPA. Wardekken Land Management
	BOTTOM: (from left to right)
	Rangers Marcus Cameron, rear, Victor Garlngarr, right and front Warddeken senior ranger Nigel Gellar. Peter Eve
	Oenpelli python. Wardekken Land Management
	Wardekken rangers fire management. Peter Eve
18	Gunbower Forest. John Baker
20	LEFT: Aerial view of Gunbower Forest. Jim Mollison
	RIGHT: Wetlands Enhancement crew treating tamarisk-a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) at Reedy Lakes, one of the Kerang Ramsar listed wetlands. Carl Gray
21	Gunbower Forest. John Baker
22-23	Dhimurru Rangers clearing ghost net log at Bremer Island, Northern Territory. Jane Dermer Dead turtle in ghost net. Steve Strike
24	Fighting to save Cape York sea turtles. Kerry Trapnell

	•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
25	TOP: <i>Yirralka Rangers removing ghostnets.</i> Yirralka rangers
	BOTTOM: (from left to right)
	Anindilyakwa men and women rangers collecting ghost nets on Groote Eylandt. Anindilyakwa Land Council.
	Helping hand. Phil Wise
26-27	TOP: (from left to right)
	Big boss, Laurie Baymarrwangga digs eggs with Crocodile Island junior rangers. Bentley James
	Island dancer Mabuiag Pulu Island. Torres Strait Regional Authority
	Booderee National Park Junior Rangers, Timothy and Keyala. Parks Australia
	Blackstone and Jameson children performing the emu dance. Gordon Sanders
	Booderee Junior Rangers with Booderee Education Officer, Karen Watson and Booderee Parks Service Officer and traditional owner, Kain Ardler. Parks Australia
	Uluru new sunrise. Grenville Taylor
	BOTTOM: (from left to right)
	Uluru new sunrise. Grenville Taylor
	Kakadu National Park Junior Rangers. Parks Australia
	Bardi Jawi Elder, Irene Davey with children at One Arm Point, West Kimberley. Kimberley Land Council
	Celebrating the launch of the Lajamanu Indigenous Protected Area. Parks Australia
28	Pinpi (Durba Springs). Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
29	Jigalong Rangers near Durba Hills. Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
30	LEFT TO RIGHT:
	Arthur Samson and Waka Taylor at Yulpu. Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
	Jigalong and Parnngurr ranger teams. Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
	Arthur Samson burning country. Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
31	May Brooks and Hayley Atkins. Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
32	Boulders at Wattleridge Indigenous Protected Area. Philippa Carmichael
33	Banbai Rangers, a day on the rock. Darien Torrens
34	Wildflower. Tanya Patterson
35	Babbai rangers, Robert Jerrard, Jacob Patterson, Daniel Cutmore. Tanya Patterson
36	TOP: (from left to right)
<i>)</i> -	Traditional Owners, Wayne Maynard and Stuart Wheatley at Babel Island overlooking Flinders Island. Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
	Cape Barren geese. Andrew Tatnell

37	TOP: (from left to right)
	Revegetation for rookery on Babel Island. Tasmania Aboriginal Centre Enjoying the Putalina festival. Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
••••	
39	Coastline, Coorong National Park. Bruce Gray
40	Salt tolerant plants beside the Coorong Lagoon near Policemans Point. John Baker
41	TOP: (from left to right)
	Royal Spoonbills in Coorong National Park. Paul Wainwright
	Rocky outcrop, Coorong National Park. Bruce Gray
	Salt Creek in the Coorong. Debra Jeisman
42	TOP: (from left to right)
	Tartaku-Desert Coconut (Hemiptera Eriococcidae). When the Tartaku first buds each year it indicates to the Ngurrara people that the cold season has started. Sonia Leonard
	Ngurrara Rangers worked with scientists to install the weather station on Lake Pirinirni. David McKenzie
	Ngurrara Rangers Coordinator, Peter Murray measuring the water depth at a rockhole in the Great Sandy Desert to help understand how water levels change at different times of the year. Sonia Leonard
43	Pujurl-Desert Spade foot frog (Notaden Nichollsi) comes out from hibernation after jikjik (first rain) to indicate the wet season will soon begin in the desert. Sonia Leonard
44	Boat ramp on Thursday Island. Kerry Trapnell
45	LEFT: Badu channel, Torres Strait. Kerry Trapnell
	RIGHT: (Top to bottom)
	Darnley Beach, Torres Strait. Kerry Trapnell
	Ten year old Kyle Miguel Bani-Hankin spear fishing at Pulu Islet, Torres Strait. Torres Strait Regional Authority
	(From left to right) David Amber, Troy Stow, Dick Williams (cap) and Terrance Whap inspecting rock art. Torres Strait Regional Authority
	Badu Beach, Torres Strait. Kerry Trapnell
47	The mighty Daly River. Indigenous Land Corporation
48	TOP: Feral buffalo crossing wetlands on Fish River. Indigenous Land Corporation
	BOTTOM: (From left) Ranger Geoff Long and Fish River Manager, Shaun Ansell. The Nature Conservancy.
49	Controlled burning at Fish River. Indigenous Land Corporation
	······································

