



FINAL REPORT 2018-23

Final update to the BHP Foundation



Nyangumarta and Kiwirrkurra Ranger Teams' 2021 exchange on Kiwirrkurra IPA



**Indigenous
Desert Alliance**
Keeping the desert connected

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Partners

We gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support and work of our project partners, conservation partners and the BHP Foundation

Project Partners



Conservation Partners



Enabled by



We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, their Elders past and present and their emerging leaders, wherever we work and gather. We honour Aboriginal peoples across the desert, who have been caring for their homelands since the beginning of time. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and sky and the contribution of Indigenous rangers who are protecting desert Country for future generations.

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L-R Clinton Geary and Ivan Wongowol, Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team, Dan Grant, pilot, Andrew Schubert, ecologist Richard Narrier, Anthony Geary, Geoffrey Stuart and Juan Geary, Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team and Stella Shipway and Aaron Eulenstein, ranger coordinators on a fire management trip at Eagle Bore, Biriliburu IPA



Foreword

We extend our gratitude to the leaders who have paved the way before us. Their vision, dedication and tireless efforts have laid the foundation upon which we stand today.

We deeply appreciate our partners who have journeyed alongside us, contributing their expertise, resources and unwavering commitment to our shared goals. It is truly inspiring to witness the remarkable achievements detailed within these pages, a testament to the collective impact of our collaborative endeavours.

Throughout the course of the 10 Deserts Project (10DP), we have gleaned invaluable lessons that resonate deeply with our desert communities. We have:

- reaffirmed that desert rangers working together are a strong force for positive change across the desert
- highlighted that our people possess the skills, strengths and understanding to best look after our beautiful desert now and for the future
- demonstrated our capacity to collaborate effectively and bring about transformative change when provided with the necessary support structures such as those offered through the 10DP.

Looking ahead, the Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA) will ensure that the legacy of the 10DP is reflected in our

steadfast commitment to prioritise:

- the needs of rangers and Traditional Owners (TOs)
- championing of Indigenous land management (ILM)
- advocacy for Indigenous leadership in the protection of our desert environment.

As we reflect on the journey, we are filled with gratitude for the opportunity offered by the BHP Foundation (BHPF) facilitated, in particular, by Mel Macleod and James Ensor. We are grateful to the members of the 10DP steering committee who drove this project. We are also grateful to our friend Peter See who pulled this project together in the first place.

Together, let us continue to forge ahead, guided by our shared vision of a vibrant and resilient desert landscape.



Andrew Minyardie
Founding Chair, 10DP



Peter Murray
Succeeding Chair, 10DP

Section 1: Introduction

This document serves as the final report for the 10DP. It details the outcomes achieved throughout the project's duration. This report has been compiled by the project team and incorporates insights gathered from:

- partners
- annual reports
- direct member feedback
- independent evaluation conducted by Social Ventures Australia (SVA).

The SVA report was completed in early 2023. It provided crucial guidance to both the project team and the BHPF, offering complementary perspectives for understanding the project's impact and trajectory.

Gratitude is extended to the enabling partner, BHPF, whose support paved the way for groundbreaking work in the desert. The 10DP emerged from the needs and aspirations of desert communities and built upon the foundations laid by Indigenous peoples and organisations. The project's outcomes continue to resonate within the deserts, enriching the lives of those who call these lands their home.

The success of the 10DP is a testament to the dedication and hard work of all involved. Appreciation is extended to the ILM partners, supporting organisations, committed individuals, staff, Indigenous rangers, steering committee members and TOs, whose tireless efforts have contributed to the project's achievements.

The journey continues and we eagerly anticipate further collaboration and progress alongside our Indigenous partners.

Background

The origins of the 10DP are deeply rooted in relationships forged during an initial scoping trip in November 2016. Facilitated by Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ), this trip brought together Elders, rangers, BHP staff and BHPF staff to visit significant water sites, witness ranger-led conservation efforts and hear Elders' accounts of their profound connection to Country. Inspired by the Martu TOs'

commitment to land stewardship, a vision emerged for an Indigenous-led partnership focused on fostering healthy Country and healthy people.

Eight key partners collaborated on the project:

- Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board (AWLB)
- Central Land Council (CLC)
- Desert Support Services (DSS)
- Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA)
- Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ)
- Kimberley Land Council (KLC)
- Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation (NWAC)
- Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation (YAC).

They were joined by conservation partners:

- Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC)
- The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Country Needs People
- The Nature Conservancy Australia

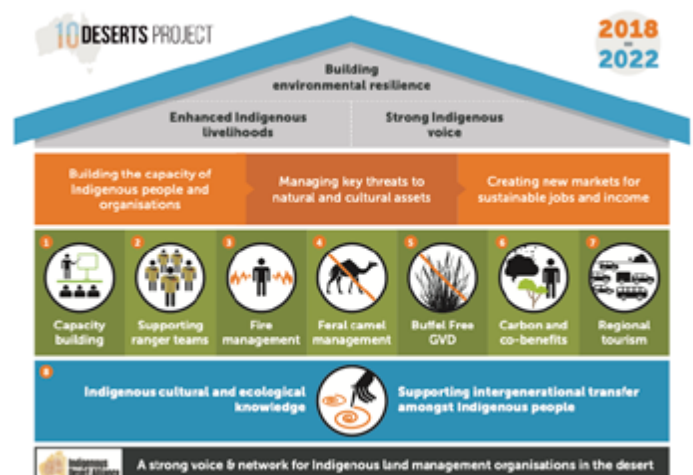
After 12 months of meticulous planning and design, the 10DP officially commenced in 2018. Its overarching goal was to support Indigenous people in preserving culture and Country, thereby enhancing the resilience of Australia's globally significant deserts. Although initially slated for a five-year duration from 2018 to 2022, the project was extended through to 2023 due to unforeseen challenges. These included delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for partners to enhance their capacity in managing project funds. Initially auspiced by DSS, the project transitioned to the IDA in 2021, in alignment with a planned project outcome for Indigenous control and stewardship.

Report Structure: Project strategies, streams and outcomes

Initially the project strategy was conceptualised as a house graphic with projects being delivered in support of three refined outcomes that were carved out of the overarching BHPF Global Signature Program (GSP) high-level, five-year outcomes (see next page).



Muuki Taylor, KJ's senior cultural advisor and Karen Wood, past chair of BHPF at Parngurr rock hole during the initial scoping trip for the 10DP in November 2016



10DP strategy house



BHPF GSP outcomes

10DP interpretation of BHPF GSP outcomes

BHPF	10DP
Improve outcomes in place-based projects	Building environmental resilience
Mobilise markets	Enhanced Indigenous livelihoods
Enhance policy frameworks	Strong Indigenous voice

The wording of the 10DP's initial outcomes was carefully chosen to reflect the essence of the work of the project. For instance, the focus on building environmental resilience underscores the ultimate aim of rangers to ensure the long-term resilience of the desert environment amidst mounting threats. Similarly, the emphasis on enhanced Indigenous livelihoods acknowledges the complexity of integrating markets and the desert environment, with a focus on improving the quality of life for Indigenous peoples. Lastly, the goal of enhancing a strong Indigenous voice has been central to the project, as it is fundamental to driving improvements in awareness of desert-related priorities, concerns and policy.

Midway through the project, the steering committee expressed concerns regarding the alignment of the strategy with the project's vision. This led to the formulation of the subsequent project strategy wheel. This wheel conceptualises outcomes from an Indigenous perspective.

In the project wheel, new leading outcomes - healthy Country, healthy people and a strong Indigenous voice - replace the previous outcomes and are viewed as interdependent parts of a holistic whole. For Indigenous participants, this holistic approach resonates with their intrinsic connection to Country, where Indigenous stewardship leads to the health and prosperity of both people and land.

"This way of seeing all projects and outcomes as connected reflects the way that desert mob see Country. When we go onto Country to do fire work, there is cultural knowledge being transferred, lessons passed on and water holes visited, kept clean and spiritually vibrant. When a ranger team is working to build a fence or clear a track, they see the pulse of the Country through the tracks in the sand, or flowers and fruits coming through from recent rain. Country is everything to desert people and the more chances there are to interact with it and come together in meaningful ways, the stronger people will all be together."

– Sam Murray, Deputy CEO, IDA

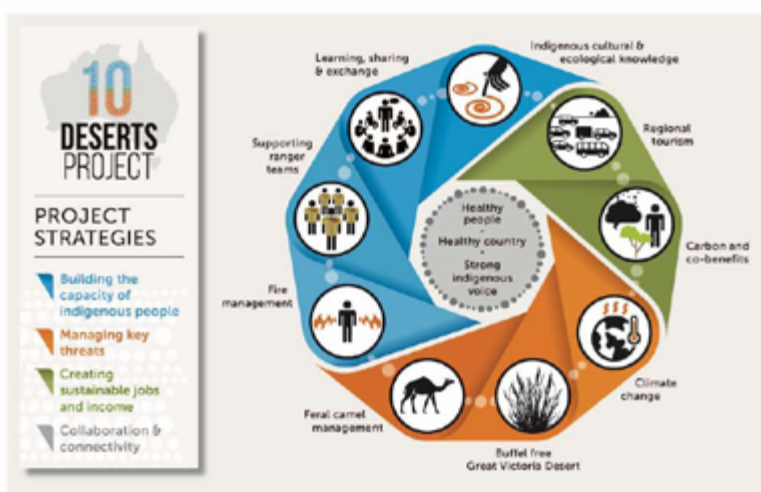
The mutually dependent outcomes of the 10DP project strategy wheel inform the structure of this report. The body of the report contains three main sections, each aligned with a foundational aspect of the strategy:

- building capacity for Indigenous people
- managing key threats
- creating sustainable jobs and income.

Within each section, a rationale is provided for the overarching strategy, along with an overview of the project streams supporting it. This is followed by specific insights garnered from various activities over the five years, as well as detail of successes, challenges, learnings, adaptations and any locally relevant outcomes achieved. Each section concludes with a detailed narrative summary of the five-year outcomes of the strategy showing how healthy Country, healthy people and a strong Indigenous voice have been facilitated by the activities that were conducted under various project streams.

Collaboration and connectivity are discussed alongside the three main project delivery strategies. However, they are, in fact, overarching features of the project. The report demonstrates how collaboration and connectivity have been enabled through the three project strategies.

Section five details insights gleaned from managing a project of this size. The conclusion reflects on how this project has contributed to realising the BHPF's vision for resilient natural environments that sustain cultures and communities, support livelihoods, preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services, and enable society to respond effectively to climate change.



10DP project strategies wheel



L-R Henry Burns, Jasper Burns and Dionne Kelly, Lajamanu Ranger Team with Harrison Irvin, pilot and Hannah Cliff, IDA, planning for flights on the first 10DP fixed wing trip, 2021, Lajamanu NTIPA

Section 2: Project strategy: Building the capacity of Indigenous people

“My name is Chantelle Murray and I work for the Ngurrara rangers and I’m the woman ranger coordinator. I’ve got a woman ranger team, a group of five rangers and as they started from casual and worked their way up to full time positions I’ve seen that they’ve really grown into the young, independent strong Indigenous women that they are now and taking on a lot of these roles and delivering out here on Country. Having this funding from 10 Deserts helped us achieve our ranger work out here on Country with the Traditional Owners.”

– Chantelle Murray, former Women’s Ranger Coordinator, Ngurrara Ranger Team



Chantelle Murray, former Women’s Ranger Coordinator, Ngurrara Ranger Team

The title of this project strategy might suggest a lack of existing capacity among Indigenous communities. However, the shift in the 10DP from building capacity to recognising and leveraging the existing strengths, diverse skill sets and extensive networks of Indigenous people has been a notable development during the project.

Throughout the project, focus was maintained on supporting Indigenous ranger teams to grow and develop, share best practice and foster supportive networks and alliances. Central to this endeavour was the preservation and centralisation of Indigenous Ecological

and Cultural Knowledge (ICEK), which served as a foundational platform for capacity building. Additionally, significant efforts were directed towards enhancing Indigenous rangers’ preexisting fire management skills and operational capacity.

The strategy’s success stemmed from its alignment with the needs and aspirations of the rangers, capitalising on their inherent abilities and resources. Rather than imposing external priorities, the flexibility of the 10DP management and funding enabled rangers to prioritise culturally significant projects that might have otherwise struggled to get off the ground.

The interconnection that existed among the various activity streams within this strategy enabled a high level of collaboration. For instance, the desire to enhance fire management skills was intricately linked with knowledge sharing during ICEK trips which were popular among rangers.

The following section details select activities and comments on outcomes achieved under each project stream within this strategy:

- learning sharing and exchange
- supporting ranger teams
- ICEK
- fire management.

The incorporation and development of the IDA was not a directly funded stream under the capacity building strategy and does not appear on the strategy wheel. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that without 10DP funding and the experience gained from managing the project, the IDA would not have evolved into the sophisticated organisation it is today. The final paragraphs in this section outline how the IDA’s progress was enabled by the 10DP.



"What they've established here in the desert with their rangers program, I see that as precedent setting and it's an honour and a privilege to be here and learn from them."

– Benjamin Young, Wuskwi Sipiik Nation, Canada



"It's nice to see that we all have the same goals to protect water, the land, the Country and the animals."

– Bobby Ballantyne, Misipawistik Cree Nation, Kanawenihcikew Guardians, Canada

Streams

Learning, sharing and exchange

This work stream embodies the practical application of collaborative learning and working methods that have been deeply ingrained in desert communities over generations. The 10DP played a pivotal role in fostering cohesion, enabling a stronger sense of connection among rangers and contributing to the emergence of the IDA as a professional best practice network for the desert. This enhanced connectivity has spurred increased collaboration across the desert, laying the groundwork for collective action and knowledge sharing.

The IDA conference, held at Yulara in 2019, represented a significant milestone, bringing Indigenous rangers together on their traditional lands. Over the course of the 10DP, four conferences were convened. Each proved immensely popular (see infographic page 9). Notably, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, rangers continued to actively participate, both in-person and online, underscoring the profound significance of these conferences within their communities. The transition to virtual platforms during COVID prompted partners to enhance their capabilities in online collaboration.

While there was a slight decrease in online attendance in the 2021-22 year due to meeting fatigue, participation rebounded strongly once face-to-face conferences resumed in 2022 with the IDA Conference at Uluru. This conference was the largest gathering of Indigenous rangers in Australia with 375 delegates from over 40 desert ranger teams making the journey to Yulara, Northern Territory (NT).

Throughout the 10DP lifespan, the conferences consistently followed a ground up approach, empowering Indigenous rangers to shape agendas that aligned with their needs. Over the course of five years, the IDA conferences featured diverse presentations and discussions on topics ranging from ranger exchanges and feral animal control to fire management and species conservation. These sessions facilitated collaborative

efforts, integrating traditional and Western methodologies on large-scale projects such as landscape management and healthy Country planning.

Notable conference highlights include:

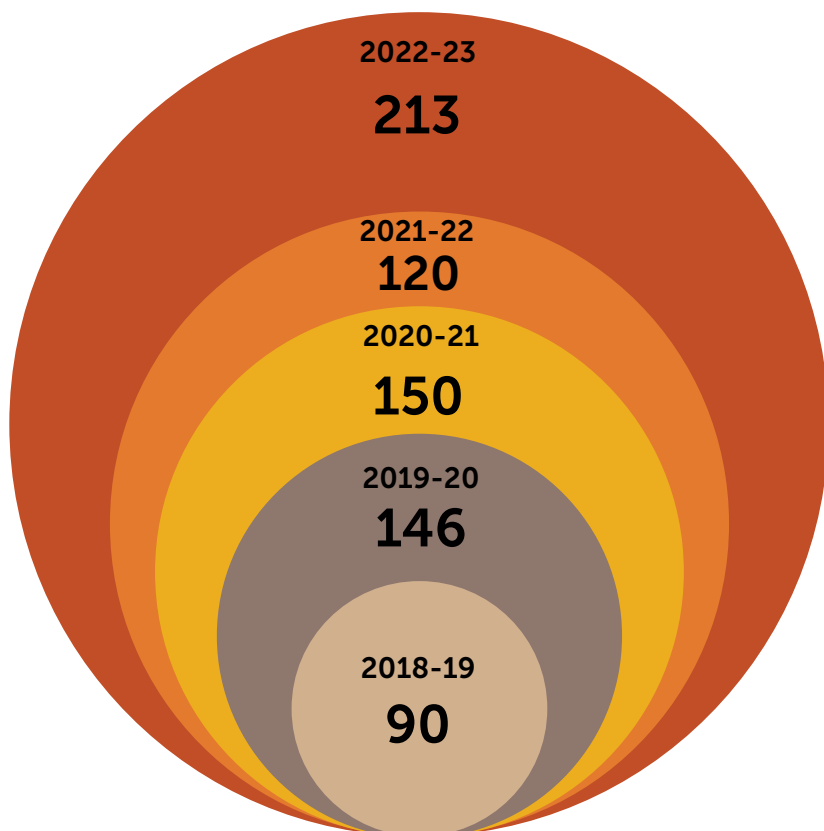
- engaging conversations on the 'Language of Fire and Country', featuring representatives from the esteemed KJ Martu Language Program
- launch of Yitaki Mani/Reading the Country, the Central Land Council's (CLC) innovative education initiative to pass on the traditional skills and knowledge of master trackers to the next generation
- facilitation of international attendees from other environmental resilience program partner projects including Indigenous and project leaders from Canada, Chile, Palau and Peru
- launch of the Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert (GVD) film which provided vital information on Buffel Grass control in both Pitjantjatjara and English language.

The international participants were in awe of the collaboration shown through the IDA conference. They were inspired to take insights and lessons from the conference back to their home communities. Desert rangers also learnt from the international visitors. They discovered common ground in the challenges to their stewardship of their land, shared potential solutions and celebrated their commitment to this important work.

The IDA Conference and forums served as invaluable platforms for networking and collaboration among desert Indigenous ranger teams. These gatherings facilitated the exchange of knowledge, best practice and lessons learned within desert communities. Over the course of the project over 100 rangers actively participated by delivering plenaries, facilitating workshops and organising field trips, thereby enhancing their public speaking abilities and serving as role models for their peers.



A key benefit of the conferences was the ranger-to-ranger forums. These exclusively-Indigenous sessions are the backbone of the IDA conference. They provide space and time for rangers to come together in their own way and discuss and elevate regional priorities for the desert. The rangers' priorities are documented and provided to the IDA management. They inform the strategic approach of the IDA as an organisation and provide a base for its on-ground work and activities.



Number of Indigenous attendees at IDA Conferences, 2018-23

Hosting meetings and forums proved to be highly beneficial for ranger teams, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing. The Species of the Desert Festival was spearheaded by the Paruku and Kumirrk Rangers from Paruku Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) in the Great Sandy Desert, Western Australia (WA) and supported by 10DP partner KLC. It was an inspiring gathering aimed at preserving and protecting threatened species. Rangers convened to strategise on the conservation of iconic species within their desert habitats, such as the recently rediscovered Night Parrot. Discussions also included the stewardship of culturally significant animals.



Regina Thirkall, Ngurrara ranger, L, participating in a ranger-to-ranger session at the IDA Conference 2022 facilitated by Sam Murray, IDA Deputy CEO, R



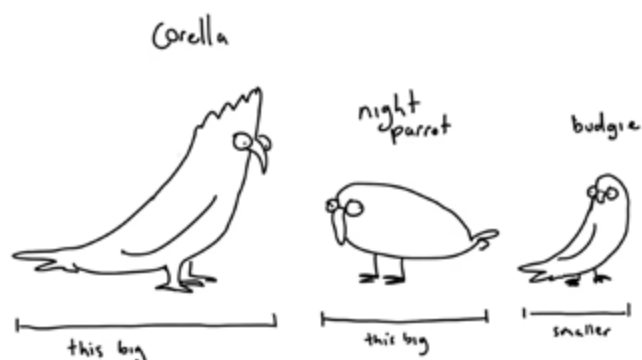
A ranger-to-ranger session at the IDA Conference 2022



The Species of the Desert Festival 2019

Remarkably, despite its remote location—one of the most secluded places on the planet—the festival drew approximately 300 attendees. Among them were ranger teams from WA and neighbouring regions in the NT, alongside scientists, politicians and even the acclaimed cartoonist, First Dog on the Moon. This convergence underscored the festival's significance as a pivotal platform for cross-disciplinary collaboration and collective action in safeguarding desert biodiversity.

The Birriliburu Ranger Team co-hosted the 2019 Southern Desert Ranger Forum. Project partner DSS evaluated this as a significant achievement during the 10DP project. It was the first time that the Birriliburu Ranger Team had organised and run an on-Country event of this scale. The immense pride felt by the team during the event was summarised in the comment by Indigenous coordinator Bryony Jackman, **'It's not easy this coordinator work, you gotta have support, but we can do it and we have showed we can do it'**.



Cartoon by First Dog on the Moon for *The Guardian*.
Link here: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/commentisfree/2019/jun/24/first-dog-on-the-moon-and-the-guest-of-honour-in-the-desert-who-never-turned-up>



2019 Southern Deserts Ranger Forum, Credo Station

Year	Event	# Indigenous participants	Links
2018-19	Southern Desert Ranger Forum Credo station, WA	50	https://youtu.be/qOTH31YUuc
2019-20	Southern Desert Ranger Forum Matuwa Kurarra Kurrara IPA, WA Hosted by Wiluna and Birriliburu Ranger Teams	96	https://youtu.be/2i3EylJgtQc
	Species of the Desert Festival Paruku IPA, WA Hosted by Kumirrk and Paruku Ranger Teams	150	https://youtu.be/LgS-WtdEjQw
2020-21	Southern Desert Ranger Forum Online (due to COVID)	140	
2022-23	Mulyamiji March Various desert locations	110	https://youtu.be/v6bQWSa80hU

As the 10DP progressed, there was a shift away from larger on-Country events after feedback was received that too many large events throughout the year drew rangers away from their core work. Concurrently, the 10DP team recognised a growing preference among rangers for smaller, targeted events that directly aligned with their workplans.

The 10DP pivoted from hosting many large on-Country events to featuring one large annual event complemented by smaller collaborative initiatives. For instance, in 2023, the Mulyamiji March event brought together 110 Indigenous rangers from 13 ranger teams across NT, WA and South Australia (SA). During this event, rangers used their expert tracking skills to locate Great Desert Skink burrows and gather scientific data which contributed to a new Indigenous-led National Recovery Plan for the species. Notably, this initiative received direct funding from the Australian Government's partnership with the IDA. This demonstrates that the foundational work of the 10DP has paved the way for future collaborations.



Summary of data collected by rangers during Mulyamiji March 2023 (<https://www.indigenoussdesertalliance.com/stories/mulyamiji-march>)

The IDA Seminar Series commenced early in 2022 as a platform for discussing topics and sharing information relevant to all those working in ILM across the desert. It is an online event that has been informed, developed and delivered with and for our members. The seminars have focused on such topics as:

- use of satellite data to support ranger work
- meaning of climate change for ranger work
- management of Great Desert Skink.

The IDA has hosted regular sessions for coordinators to come together as a network to learn from and support one another. These sessions also provide opportunities to delve into specific topics and for IDA to hear first-hand about pressing issues or support needs and to follow up as appropriate. Coordinators are often new to remote living and these sessions can help inexperienced coordinators to seek advice from their broader peer group on how to adapt to the unique challenges of life out in the bush.

The original vision for 10DP ranger exchanges emphasised connections at both interstate and international levels. However, early feedback from the rangers underscored a strong desire for closer connections within their own communities. Prioritising desert identity and the strengthening of familial and place-based ties, the rangers sought to build knowledge continuity across interconnected landscapes. As a result, ranger exchanges were structured from the ground up, driven by the rangers' motivation to share and collaborate on activities that they themselves identified.

These exchanges proved to be immensely popular and fruitful, yielding a multitude of benefits.

- **Sharing of knowledge:** Ranger exchanges enabled the dissemination of valuable insights and practices between different communities, enriching individual and team skills and expertise.
- **Sector strengthening:** New ranger groups benefitted from the experiences of more mature groups, contributing to the promotion of a stronger and more interconnected network of rangers united in pursuit of common goals.
- **Confidence building:** Participation in ranger exchanges fostered confidence and instilled a sense of purpose among all involved, empowering them to take on leadership roles within their communities. Ranger exchanges have demonstrated the value of peer-to-peer learning, capacity building and mutual support among ILM groups working at vast distances from each other.

An unforeseen benefit of 10DP ranger exchanges was the alignment with rangers' aspirations to engage in threatened species work, complemented by support from mainstream ecologists. Moreover, 10DP has significantly enhanced the overall capacity of rangers by providing ample opportunities to acquire traditional and mainstream land management techniques through various training initiatives and collaboration with ecologists.

Many ranger exchanges placed a strong emphasis on two-way science, facilitating collaborative efforts on significant species research, predator control and fire management. For instance, during the 2023 exchange trips involving the Birriliburu and Warnpurru Ranger Teams, activities encompassed joint burning practices, integrating traditional and modern approaches, alongside animal and plant surveys.

In another exchange initiative, groups from distant locations spanning hundreds of kilometres came together in a workshop held in Fitzroy Crossing. During this workshop, the Ngururrpa and Nyul Nyul Ranger Teams forged connections over a shared Tjukurrpa story about a bilby's journey from the desert near Ngururrpa to Nyul Nyul sea Country. This shared narrative ignited a mutual interest in expanding their understanding of bilby behaviour and habitat.

Subsequently, a ranger team exchange was organised between the two groups. Through this exchange, the



Melissa Sunfly, Richelle Galova, Clifford Sunfly and Dwayne Mosquito, Ngurrpa Ranger Team, during their ranger exchange visit to Beagle Bay, Nyul Nyul Country



Peter and Chantelle Murray, Ngurrara Ranger Team, during the international exchange in Nain, Nunatsiavut

Ngurrpa Rangers had the opportunity to learn about bilby surveys conducted by the Nyul Nyul Rangers for Main Roads Western Australia. This exchange of information is particularly significant as it will aid the Ngurrpa ranger team in conducting similar work in the desert, especially with the impending upgrades to the Tanami Road.

International ranger exchanges offer Indigenous rangers invaluable opportunities to situate their work in the desert within a broader global network and movement. They prompt critical reflections on rangers' roles within this expanded framework.

For instance, members of the Ngurrara Ranger Team underwent a transformative experience during their exchange to Nunatsiavut. Facilitated by Oceans North, the initial exchange to the Nunatsiavut lands in Eastern Canada in 2022 was reciprocated when representatives from Nunatsiavut visited WA in May 2023. Among the myriad outcomes, participants gained profound insights into the significance of strong Indigenous governance in setting research priorities and the substantial influence TOs exert in shaping programs within the Nunatsiavut region.

The exchange has sparked several follow-up discussions with the participating organisations, aimed at shaping future directions and best practices for potential exchanges. This collaborative effort has culminated in the development of an International Exchange Framework, outlined in the appendix.

These exchanges not only broaden perspectives but also create a space for cross-cultural learning and collaboration, enriching the collective knowledge base of Indigenous ranger teams and strengthening their capacity to address shared challenges on a global scale.

Ranger exchanges have been instrumental in enabling collaboration, knowledge sharing and skill development among Indigenous ranger teams, thereby contributing to the resilience and effectiveness of the desert ranger network. The IDA website contains information on all ranger exchanges: <https://www.indigenousdesertalliance.com/network/ranger-exchanges>.

Case study: Looking after Bilby: Kiwirrkurra and Gooniyandi ranger exchange

The Gooniyandi, Walungurru and Kiwirrkurra Ranger Teams made long journeys to each other's Country to share knowledge and skills about looking after threatened species like the Bilby. The Gooniyandi and Walungurru rangers were also able to learn from the Kiwirrkurra rangers and TOs on Kiwirrkurra IPA about techniques for catching feral cats such as:

- reading the desert landscape
- tracking on foot
- using motor vehicles as a means of covering more ground
- using motor vehicles as a tool to encourage cats back towards those moving on foot.

"We taught them how to look after Ninu. We put out camera traps to see if Ninu is doing ok. We also did tracking for feral cat to make sure they don't go near Ninu."

– Ian Newberry, Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team

The Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team felt happy to teach other ranger groups about the work they are doing to look after threatened species such as Ninu (Bilby) and teach them about their Tjukurrpa (dreaming stories) such as Tjitirurr which is Ninu dreaming.

During the return journey, the Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team travelled to the Bawoorrooga Community in Gooniyandi Country. They were shown Bilby burrows in a gravelly, patchy area where Bilbies camp during the wet seasons and found new burrows along the way. They were also shown different types of burrows in the same area, only to discover that these types of burrow are not found in Kiwirrkurra.

"The Gooniyandi rangers took us to their Ninu burrow sites. It was under a car. But before we checked the camera, a cat ran out from under there and that's when everyone decided to chase. The Gooniyandi Rangers were excited to see us catch it."

– Scott West, Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team

The cat hunt was unsuccessful during their time in Kiwirrkurra, due to unseasonal cool weather. During the trip to the Bawoorrooga Community the rangers were able to catch a cat that had been hanging around some of the Gooniyandi Bilby sites. It was cooked up and shared with everyone at a special spring in the afternoon.

Everyone had an amazing time together. The mutual exchange of information and skills helped strengthen the relationship between the ranger groups and also helped protect threatened species.

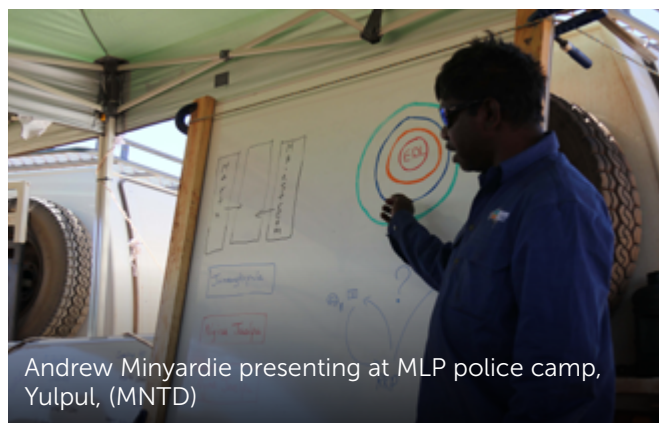
Martu Leadership Program

“To hear the testimony of emerging leaders who have courage, hope and imaginative solutions to age-old problems was one of the most inspiring things I have witnessed.”

– Mark Harrison, CEO, Australian Crime Commission, Participant in MLP police camp at Yulpul, Martu Native Title Determination (MNTD)

The Martu Leadership Program (MLP), initiated by KJ prior to the 10DP, has evolved over the life of the project, into a program with far-reaching effects. KJ leveraged original 10DP funding to secure significant additional support to enhance and extend the program across Martu lands which aligned with the partner’s desire to create a regional model. Additionally, Martu leaders played a central role in facilitating workshops on leadership and governance modules for other desert communities during the project’s initial years.

These workshops, conducted by Martu individuals directly for other desert communities focused on power dynamics between mainstream and Martu worlds, corporate governance training, public speaking, confidence building and effective engagement with mainstream stakeholders. Attendees found these sessions highly valuable, as they provided practical guidance, fostered leadership skills enhancement and facilitated knowledge exchange.



Andrew Minyardie presenting at MLP police camp, Yulpul, (MNTD)

The MLP not only empowered Martu participants but also inspired other Indigenous communities to consider establishing similar programs. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals lauded the confidence displayed by MLP participants and expressed support for the program’s mission. Martu participants expressed pride in the broader significance of their perspectives, enhancing motivation for their roles in the MLP.

Scaling the MLP presented challenges due to its reliance on Martu individuals and the unique vision and skills of the project’s founders. The MLP project also faced particular constraints due to limited funding. As a result, the original objectives of the project had to be scaled down. To address this issue, interested ranger groups

were provided with comprehensive documentation of the MLP, ensuring accessibility for those seeking to replicate the initiative. This documentation, available through the IDA members’ online hub, serves as a valuable resource derived from the 10DP project and contributes to the broader dissemination of Martu leadership practices.

KJ remains committed to sustaining the MLP and its associated initiatives which include:

- Wama Wangka - alcohol education program
- Yiwarra Kuju - Martu diversionary program contributing to community justice solutions
- Wangka Minyirpa - Martu cultural advisory panel informing bail and parole decisions
- Martu Prison Program - supporting incarcerated individuals.
- Jijiku Yiwarra - Youth diversionary program: engaging youth in positive activities.

These programs reflect a strong connection to cultural identity, connection to Country and a commitment to the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. This underscores KJ’s commitment to empowering Martu communities and preserving their cultural heritage.

Supporting ranger teams

“I work for ranger. I been work for 6 months. This my father’s Country. That’s why I’m learning for bush tucker, hunting, tracking, looking after the rock hole and all. My life is really strong and I’m really proud and happy working for ranger. I’m doing good exercise. ‘Cause I had a high sugar. When I been do lot of ranger work I been walking around, running, walking lots and my sugar level been going down and down. I’m eating a lot of bush tucker and drinking water, lot of rainwater and a good food, no sugar. I’m eating lot of bush tucker... I was learning from my auntie, Nolia. Nolia was teaching me. When I do all this work make me happy and proud because I love working for ranger, look after my father’s Country.”

– Maisie Ward, Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team



Maisie Ward, Kiwirrkurra Ranger Team

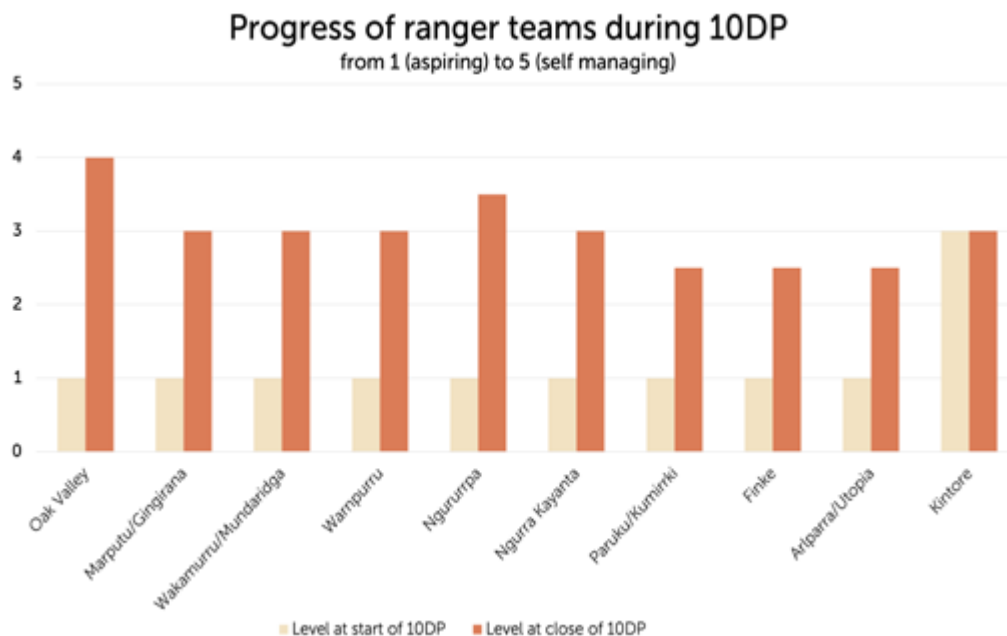
The commitment of the 10DP to bolstering 10 new and emerging ranger teams across WA, NT and SA was a motivating principle for partners engaging in the 10DP initially. The difficulty in obtaining funding for new ranger teams was a longstanding challenge for many organisations. Partners were of the opinion that small, well-timed investments and strong support from the 10DP would provide the kickstart needed for the development of ranger programs.

During the project definition phase, the method of gauging progress of new and emerging teams over the five years was a subject of intense debate. As a result, a ranger team maturity continuum was developed collaboratively by project managers and members of the steering committee to measure progress (see graphic).

As part of the SVA evaluation of the 10DP, this tool was used to rate teams on a scale from one (aspiring groups) to five (self-managing groups). The chart below illustrates the significant strides made by all teams during the 10DP. It has been encouraging to witness substantial and consistent growth across most of these teams over the project.



Ranger program maturity continuum



Cindy Watson, Oak Valley Ranger Team

An early highlight of the project was seeing the Kurmirrki Women's Ranger Team working with their long-established counterpart, the Paruku Men's Ranger Team. Together they provided the planning and support for the Species of the Desert Festival in 2019 (discussed on pages 9-10). Rangers from one of the most isolated communities in the world planned most of the festival and hosted more than 300 people for a week.

Seven ranger teams successfully capitalised on seed funding from 10DP to secure sustainable, long-term financial backing. For instance, in the 2020-21 year, the CLC secured \$8.3 million to support their three emerging ranger teams. Additionally, the Oak Valley Ranger Team earned recognition, clinching the ILM award at the Landcare, SA conference in 2019-20. By 2021-22, the Oak Valley Ranger Team informed 10DP partner, AWLB, and the 10DP team that they no longer required their remaining allocated funds, having secured seven years of support through the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

The Kintore Ranger Team started without regular members and evolved to boast 14 active participants within three years. They actively engaged in meetings, developed work plans, conducted controlled burns and organised on-Country visits.

The work of some of the newly engaged ranger teams was closely intertwined with the 10DP's focus on supporting ICEK. For instance, the CLC's Kintore rangers' visit to Worman Rocks provided an opportunity for Elders to share traditional songs and stories. This ensured the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge across generations and therefore enhanced the new ranger team's development.

Some of the key outcomes of this project stream include:

- The initiation and development of ranger teams supported by the 10DP led to increased employment opportunities for rangers, contributing to the growth and sustainability of Indigenous ranger programs.
- Many ranger teams successfully completed essential Healthy Country Plans (HCP), demonstrating their commitment to environmental stewardship and land management.
- Ranger teams actively engaged in critical activities such as monitoring and protecting threatened species, with some project partners using 10DP funds to enhance these conservation efforts.
- 10DP funding facilitated ranger participation in various events, including IDA conferences, ranger camps and desert forums, allowing for knowledge sharing, priority identification and the initiation of ranger-led projects. This support was essential for enabling participation, particularly for rangers from diverse groups who may not have had the means otherwise.

Case study: Kumirrkki Women's Ranger Team

The 10DP funding provided a significant opportunity for the women rangers and TOs of the Kumirrkki Ranger Team which was newly established at the time the 10DP began. This support enabled the Kumirrkki Ranger Team to:

- engage in Certificate II: Assist with Prescribed Burning and Incendiary Machine Operator (IMO) training
- secure employment in Mulan, Balgo and Bililuna communities
- foster collaborations with various external partners and stakeholders such as Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), pastoralists, Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), KLC, IDA, and Technical and Further Education (TAFE).

These efforts not only elevated the participation of women in Indigenous ranger programs but also enhanced the overall regional presence of ILMs in the far southeast Kimberley.

One of the key outcomes of this initiative is the strengthened professional relationships that the Kumirrkki Ranger Team developed with their partners and counterparts in the northern deserts. Through increased collaboration, particularly in joint operations involving fixed-wing and helicopter aerial burning, the rangers have expanded their capacity and expertise.

These collaborations also facilitated a greater understanding and appreciation among TOs for the significance of land management in the northern deserts, reinforcing the bonds to their Country and emphasising the importance of their ongoing stewardship efforts.

Overall, the support from the 10DP has empowered the Kumirrkki Ranger Team to build their capacity and establish themselves as vital contributors to ILM in the region. This case exemplifies the transformative impact of start-up funding in enabling the development of new Indigenous ranger teams and fostering meaningful partnerships for sustainable land management practices.

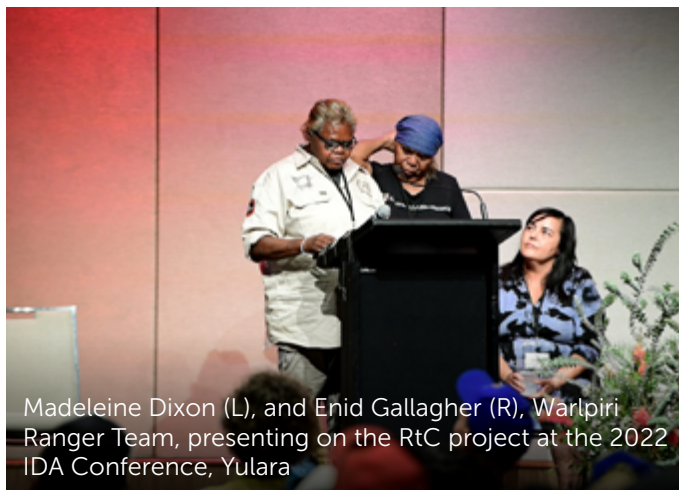


Bessie Doonday, Shirley Brown and Elizabeth Lulu, Kumirrkki Ranger Team, at the 2019 Species of the Desert Festival

Indigenous Cultural and Ecological Knowledge

"We don't want to lose our culture and our Tjukurrpa because it does belong to us and we want to keep it strong and pass it on to our young generation."

– Madelaine Dixon, Warlpiri Ranger Team, CLC, RtC participant



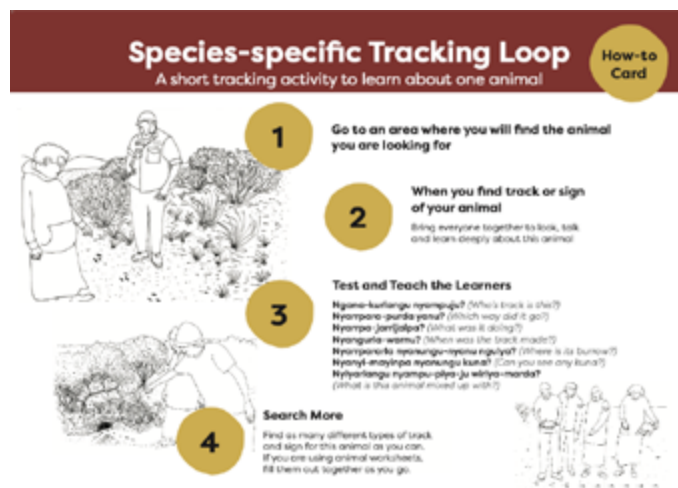
Madelaine Dixon (L), and Enid Gallagher (R), Warlpiri Ranger Team, presenting on the RtC project at the 2022 IDA Conference, Yulara

The ICEK stream stands as a cornerstone of ranger work, providing essential support for cultural and spiritual well-being during on-Country operations, while significantly enriching approaches to land management. Despite the profound cultural significance of ICEK, securing funding for these initiatives can be challenging, making the deliberate elevation of ICEK activities by the 10DP pivotal. The 10DP played a critical role in bolstering ICEK preservation and sharing, building upon existing ICEK initiatives. ICEK emerged as one of the project's most active and impactful streams, driven by bottom-up organisation rooted in community needs and desires, consistently delivering high-quality outcomes.

Integrating ICEK work into standard ranger team operations aimed to normalise and increase its visibility, effectively attracting greater recognition and support from funders. The ongoing commitment to advancing ICEK preservation and sharing is underscored by the IDA, emphasising the enduring significance of community-driven initiatives in safeguarding Indigenous knowledge and fostering sustainable land management practices.

Key activities undertaken throughout the project duration included:

- Implementation of the Yitaki Mani/Reading the Country (RtC) project supported by 10DP funds and led by the CLC. This innovative initiative aims to conserve and pass on the traditional skills and knowledge of master trackers to future generations through culturally appropriate education methods. The project, which includes curriculum development, training materials and resources, continues beyond 10DP's lifespan and is being integrated into ranger and other educational programs.



Sample education resource created by the RtC project

- Development and maintenance of cultural records databases and frameworks to safeguard knowledge for future generations. For instance:
 - Birriliburu established the Martu-ku information management system, comprising of site details, an interactive map, stories, videos, photos and ecological information. All were accessible to Birriliburu TOs, rangers and the Wiluna School.
 - Karajarri contributed stories, photos and locations related to their desert Country, enhancing their own cultural database.
- Publications sharing cultural knowledge and strengthening Indigenous languages. Examples included, *Mirrka Palya: Bush foods of the Kiwirrkurra people* and a waru (fire) dictionary in Pitjantjatjara.



Mantua James, Rachel Paltridge, Nolia Ward, Payu West, Kate Crossing, Kim West, Yalti Napangarti at the launch of the book *Mirrka Palya: Bush foods of the Kiwirrkurra people, 2023*

- Organising large-scale and logistically challenging on-Country cultural trips involving multiple generations to facilitate the transmission of cultural heritage. For instance:
 - KJ coordinated camps covering diverse themes such as bush medicine, fire management, generational family trips and Kalyuku Ninti (return to Country) journeys, fostering the passing down of traditional knowledge and oral histories.
 - Over 50 people from Oak Valley participated in a highly successful on-Country activity, integrating traditional burning, cultural mapping and site visits. This trip brought together Anangu Elders, rangers and community members on their traditional lands, with a focus on the transfer of traditional knowledge from older to younger generations. Visits were made to over 30 sites of cultural significance.
 - NWAC flew seven women by helicopter, including Elders and young people, to remote landscape features within the NW IPA, so that they could visit places they knew about from stories passed down to them. They visited six springs which were the most inland and remote in Mandora Marsh. Many of them had not been visited previously.
- Production of short films and oral histories highlighting a wide range of Indigenous Land and Sea Management (ILSM) practices. These films serve as a powerful tool for sharing and exchanging ICEK knowledge among rangers, while also serving as cultural records and raising public awareness about ILSM practices. Films can be viewed at the IDA YouTube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/@indigenoussdesertalliance>
- Partners were also supported in capturing life stories or anecdotes from Elders during on-Country visits, ensuring the preservation of invaluable cultural heritage that may otherwise be overlooked in town or community settings. For instance, Ngurra Kayanta TOs returned for the first time in decades to sites on their Country to tell their stories of walking the Country with family before encountering western civilisation for the first time.



Jupiter Bennie, Ngurra Kayanta Elder, being recorded by his grandson as he tells Tjukurrpa stories at a remote site

It is clear that the ICEK program has contributed to the goal of embedding cultural knowledge in ranger and land management programs and enhanced the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge.

Fire Management

"Fire is one of our main work that we do on Country. Burning Country, looking after Country the right way, you need training, a lot of training. 10 Deserts has helped us with training, getting rangers skilled up to work... helping us with helicopter, having TOs come out on Country with us for cultural clearances and vehicle support and gear, supplies and stuff. That 10 Deserts has been a big help to us right throughout the desert Country."

– Sumayah Surprise, Ngurrara Ranger Team



Sumayah Surprise, Ngurrara Ranger Team using a drip torch during burning on Ngurrara NTD

Fire has a multifaceted significance for desert communities beyond being a mere management tool. It has historically served as a fundamental element in the functioning of desert landscapes and forms an integral part of people's connection to their Country. Recognising this, fire management emerged as a pivotal aspect of the 10DP. The project's investment in fire management went beyond conventional approaches. It provided funding to implement fire practices and support communities that had previously lacked resources for proper burning programs as well as assisting others to extend existing programs to manage their Country effectively.

The 10DP illuminated the critical need for sustained and dedicated funding for fire management efforts in perpetuity, underscoring its vital role in environmental stewardship and cultural preservation. The fire management activities provided by the 10DP served as the platform for the IDA's Right-Way Desert Fire (RWDF) program. Under this program the IDA managed a landscape-scale fire management collaboration project across the desert. This RWDF project is now largely funded by the Australian government.

The project embarked on targeted regional activities, including comprehensive training programs, on-ground fire operations and the development of a versatile pool of contract staff for ILM organisations. These initiatives not only supported ecological resilience but also broader functions such as cultural reconnection and skill development.

Training programs conducted during the 10DP

FY	Funding source	Training type	# Ranger teams	# Indigenous participants
2018-19	10DP	Accredited	4	13
		Non-Accredited	6	*
2019-20	10DP	Accredited	2	7
		Non-Accredited	15	60 +*
2020-21	10DP	Accredited	9	26
		Non-Accredited	10	76
2021-22	RWDF/10DP	Accredited	9	23
		Non-Accredited	13	176
2022-23	RWDF/10DP	Accredited	1	5
		Non-Accredited	17	207
2023-24**	RWDF/SDRWF	Accredited	1	6
		Non-Accredited	5	56
TOTAL # trainings successfully completed by participants				655*

Notes:

Accredited includes IMO training (also known as aerial incendiary training)

Individuals will be counted multiple times in the # Indigenous participants column if they received training at multiple events

* Some incomplete records mean that numbers are larger than total shown

** 2023-24 period covers six months

One of the significant outcomes of the 10DP was the profound understanding it cultivated within the broader ecological community regarding the pivotal role of Indigenous cultural and ecological fire knowledge in effective Country management. This revelation stemmed from the project's emphasis on implementing right-way fire practices, deeply intertwined with ICEK.

Through right-way fire initiatives, Indigenous fire management practices were intricately linked with the transfer of knowledge from Elders to younger generations, fostering a renewed intimacy with Country for both rangers and TOs. This approach not only facilitated community engagement but also helped remote communities connect more deeply with their lands as they witnessed individuals spending significant time engaging with Country.

Fire work has provided opportunities for genuine two-way collaboration between Indigenous rangers, TOs and other knowledge holders. The blending of skills and practice on the ground is now well established. Scientifically monitored and managed, as well as culturally informed and motivated land management practices have been built by recognising the skills held by



L-R Liza Multa, Jessica Burdon, Claire Brereton, Henry Multa and Herman Whisky, CLC rangers.

The Cleland Hills aerial burning and Country visit, provided an invaluable opportunity for TOs to explore remote Country. The CLC noted that this experience was only made possible by 10DP assistance.

experts from varied backgrounds. Notably, the integration of deep cultural knowledge with modern techniques garnered praise from experts and project partners. DSS,



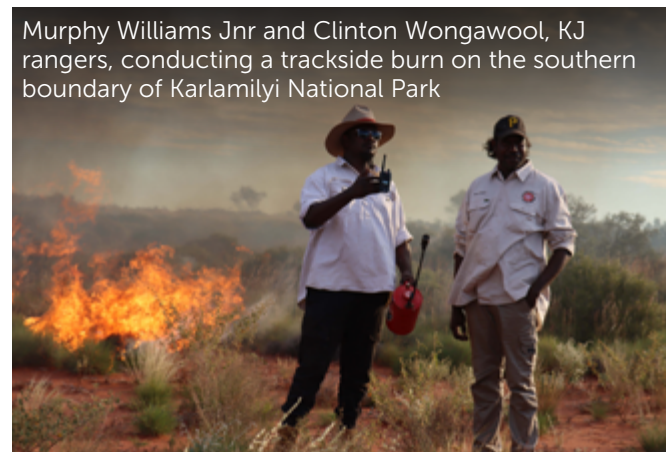
KJ and Birrilburu Ranger Teams taking off to conduct burning to protect Black-flanked Rock-wallaby habitat.

wrote that the integration of knowledge and practice ensured a successful two-way program that addressed both cultural and biodiversity priorities.

As the 10DP progressed, more ranger teams were integrated into fire management activities, showcasing ongoing efforts to build capacity in this crucial space. Initiatives such as Yilka Heritage and Land Care's (YHLC) inaugural fire trip in April 2021 and engagement with Spinifex Land Management (SLM) in Tjuntjuntjara highlighted the project's commitment to expanding participation and knowledge exchange. The project also continued its partnership with emerging groups like YHLC, facilitating the integration of strategic burning programs into expanding land management operations.

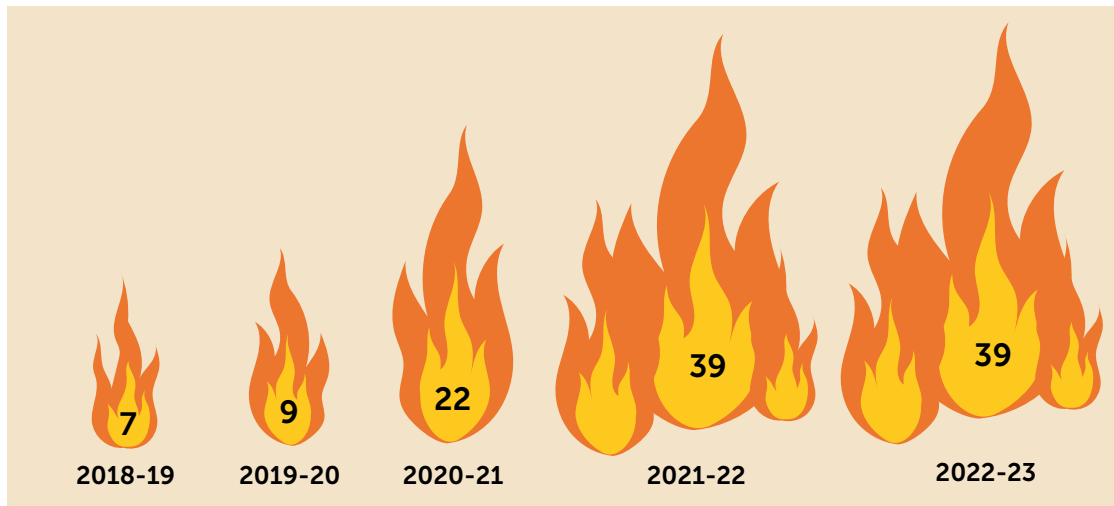
KJ emphasised the importance of integrating Martu fire expertise with external stakeholders' knowledge, leading to more resilient fire management approaches. This collaboration not only enhanced the understanding of controlled burning and biodiversity conservation but also contributed to maintaining the ecological health of ancestral lands and preserving unique ecosystems.

The 10DP has not only facilitated tangible improvements in fire management practices but has also catalysed a broader movement toward collaborative and inclusive approaches rooted in Indigenous wisdom and ecological stewardship. As the project continues to evolve, sustained support for such initiatives will be paramount for ensuring the long-term resilience and sustainability of desert landscapes and communities.



Murphy Williams Jnr and Clinton Wongawool, KJ rangers, conducting a trackside burn on the southern boundary of Karlamilyi National Park

Fire trips

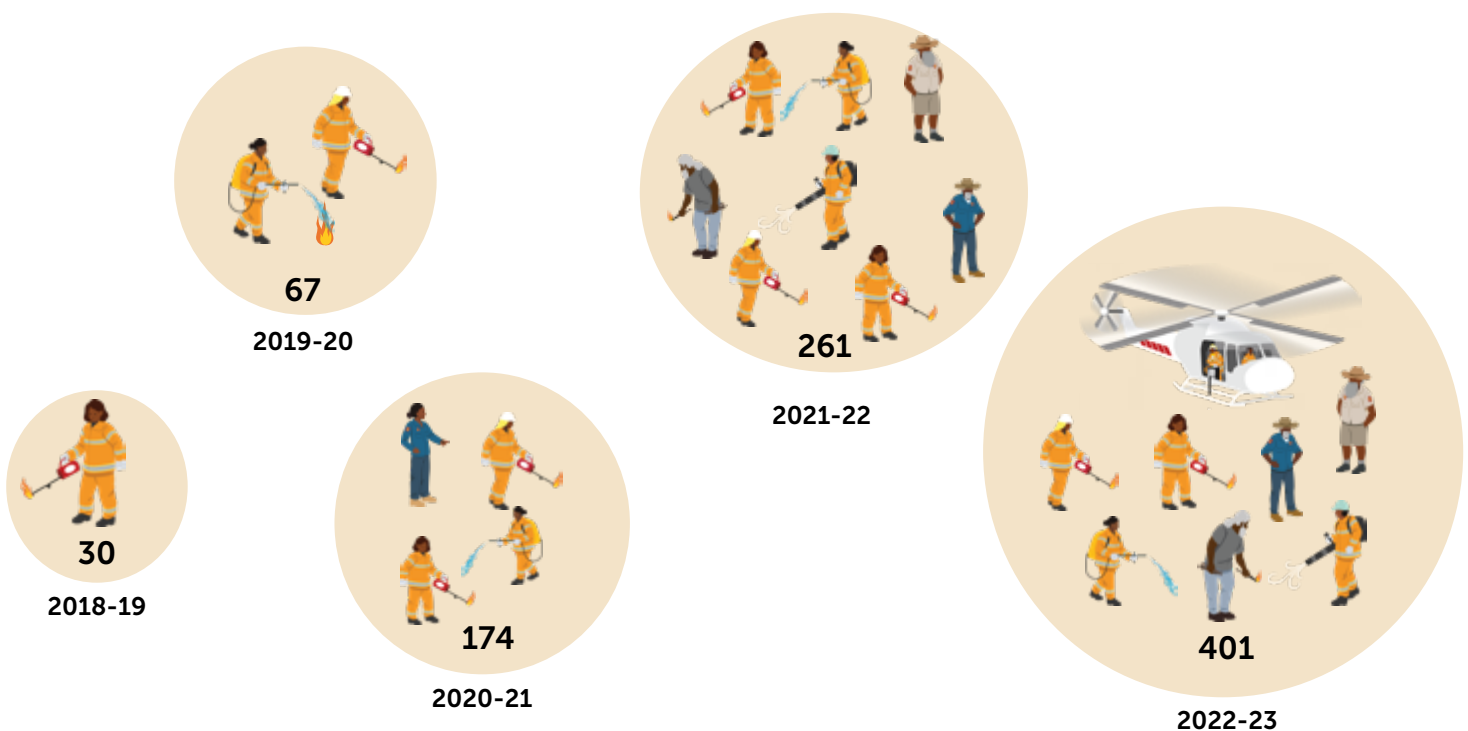


Number of fire burning, training and consultation trips, 2018-23

Case study: Fire management

The culmination of increased strategic fire coordination was evident in 2022 when two collaborative and large-scale fixed-wing aerial burning trips took place. These efforts spanned 12 airstrips, covered over 30,000 km and used over 40,000 incendiaries. Fourteen ranger groups, from a diverse array of Indigenous communities, actively participated in these initiatives. Over the course of the trips more than 80 Indigenous rangers and TOs were engaged, underscoring the widespread impact and significance of collaborative fire management efforts. DSS emphasised the critical value of continued and scaled-up support for such collaborative fire programs.

Braedon Taylor, Christopher Taylor, Karajarri Ranger Team, Daniel Johanson, IDA, Sharee Dolby, Hayley Mulardy, Courtney Brown, Karajarri Ranger Team, Trish Curry, OMNI Executive, prior to 2022 aerial burning on Karajarri IPA



Number of Indigenous participants on fire related trips, 2018-23



Kiwirrkurra and Nyangumarta Ranger Teams sharing knowledge on their 2021 exchange

The Indigenous Desert Alliance

“The IDA is a strong organisation, good at listening and is a respected partner that the BHP Foundation supports as the right group to deliver the long-term and ambitious outcomes of the 10 Deserts Project. We are proud to have walked this path beside you while the IDA has grown and we are excited about the journey we will continue together, with you in the lead.”

– James Ensor, BHPF

The IDA significantly benefited from the investment provided by the 10DP. Initially this empowered the IDA, as a partner organisation in the project, to embed its key network function for Indigenous rangers in the desert. Over time, through conducting activities such as conferences, ranger exchanges and member engagement, the IDA transitioned to become a centralised voice for Indigenous rangers and a much-needed regional coordination organisation for collaborative efforts.

Member engagement is the driving force of the IDA. The financial support from 10DP was instrumental in enabling the IDA to develop and embed key activities and roles that enhanced its function as a network or alliance of ranger groups.

Managing the 10DP project provided invaluable opportunities for learning and skill development within the 10DP team, who have become core IDA staff. The experience gained by these staff in running the project enhanced the organisation’s operational efficiency, project management capabilities and overall effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

Additionally, the 10DP facilitated networking opportunities and collaborations with other organisations, governments and stakeholders involved in similar

initiatives. These connections broadened the IDA’s reach, facilitated access to additional resources and strengthened advocacy efforts for Indigenous rights and environmental conservation.

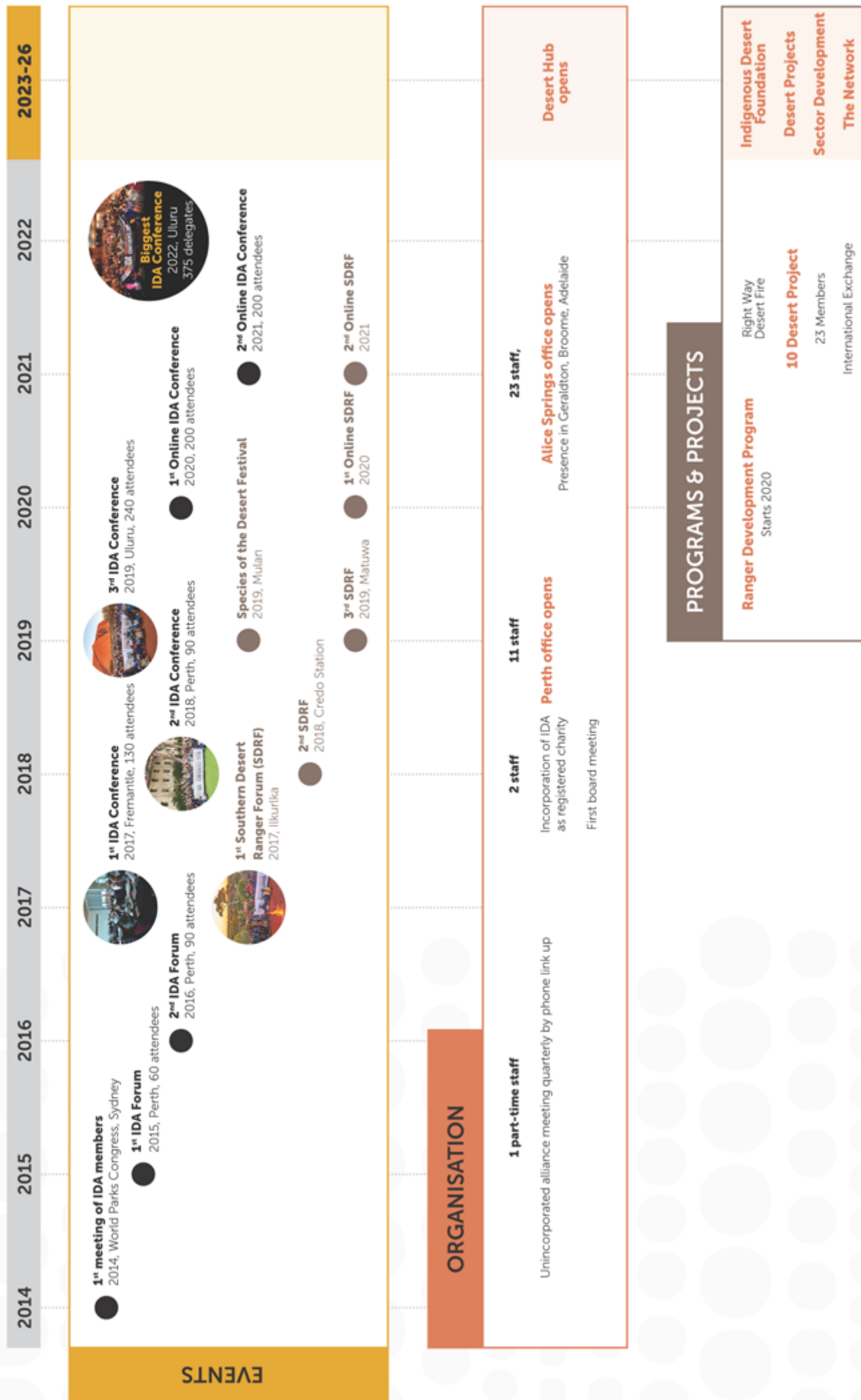
In the transition of the 10DP to the IDA, a change management approach was followed over the course of a year. During this time various structures and systems were put in place to enable the successful management of a project of this size by a small and developing organisation. Undertaking the management of the 10DP enhanced IDA’s strategic planning skills, improved monitoring and evaluation processes, strengthened governance structures and fostered leadership within the team.

The SVA evaluation offered insights into the evolving impact of the IDA as it has matured and developed with support from the 10DP. In reflecting on the transition of the 10DP from the auspice of DSS to the IDA, one TO encapsulated the collective sentiment, expressing optimism for a closer, clearer and stronger united voice for the desert communities. They remarked,

“The transition from 10DP into the IDA will bring our people even closer. We will have an even clearer and stronger united voice for the desert as we come together, making sure people know the desert is on the map.”

– SVA, 2023, p8

IDA TIMELINE



ORGANISATION

1 part-time staff Unincorporated alliance meeting quarterly by phone link up First board meeting	2 staff Incorporation of IDA as registered charity	11 staff Perth office opens 	23 staff, Alice Springs office opens Presence in Geraldton, Broome, Adelaide	Desert Hub opens
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PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

Ranger Development Program Starts 2020	10 Desert Project 23 Members International Exchange	Indigenous Desert Foundation Desert Projects Sector Development The Network
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Outcomes

"I do this job because it's part of my culture. We learn more from our people. We're always talking language so talking more, learning more words about the plants and the animals. Just helps me by knowing we have a place and a purpose, keeping our culture strong, keeping our people strong."

– Patsy McGinty, Ngurrara Ranger Team

Strong Indigenous Voice

Indigenous voice was central to the development and design of 10DP activities in the four project streams under this strategy. This strong Indigenous voice was evident at early IDA conferences where ranger priorities were put forward to inform the shape of projects and activities. The IDA grew alongside and in response to the voices of Indigenous people which were centralised through conferences and events. The IDA is now a strong representative voice for Indigenous rangers that has been directly informed by Indigenous voices that were enabled through this project strategy.

Ranger exchanges strengthened the network of relationships that supported an alliance of partners to learn and share with each other. Importantly it emboldened rangers to speak as one united voice for the desert, knowing that they were amongst peers who shared similar interests, aspirations and priorities for the desert.

This strong voice was further enhanced through ICEK projects. These ensured cultural information was given primacy within mainstream environmental management approaches such as fire management. Over the course of the project Indigenous fire knowledge has been elevated. Indigenous rangers' knowledge and use of fire is frequently sought out and rangers are speaking about the traditional use of fire and increasing their spheres of influence. In addition, the Martu Leadership team inspired their peers to stand up at IDA conferences and talk with confidence and passion about their work.

The 10DP engaged with government departments at both state and federal level to improve the standing of Indigenous ranger programs and the work they undertake. This was time consuming but was an important role of the project. The 10DP team used their expert voice, supported by the steering committee and Indigenous rangers, to ensure that the desert was being included in research, publications and agendas regarding national environmental strategies. The significant contribution that the 10DP made to the State of the Environment report and to the listing of fire regimes that cause declines in biodiversity as a key threatening process on a national scale are good examples of this.

Healthy people

The project's strategic approach to capacity building among Indigenous ranger teams has led to the attainment of the outcome, healthy people. This term encompasses a deep sense of empowerment and resilience.

Through initiatives focused on fire management skills and training development, Indigenous rangers have honed

their expertise. They have also been instilled with pride in their work and recognised as valuable professionals within their communities.

Ranger exchanges and conferences have provided crucial platforms for rangers to come together, exchange knowledge and strengthen bonds. This fostered a sense of camaraderie and pride in their shared identity as custodians of their ancestral lands.

Projects such as those facilitated through the ICEK stream have enabled Indigenous individuals to reconnect with their cultural heritage while gaining valuable insights from Elders. This further reinforced their sense of identity and strength. The broader Indigenous community, witnessing the dedication and impact of these ranger teams, has rallied behind them, feeling a profound sense of pride and support for their efforts.

Healthy Country

The capacity building strategy implemented by the 10DP has led to significant healthy Country outcomes. By enabling Indigenous TOs to return to their Country, the project ensures that those with the deepest knowledge of the land are actively engaged in its stewardship. Indigenous TOs have been empowered to provide detailed observations on the health of their Country and offer guidance on interventions and activities to improve its well-being. Crucially, this Indigenous knowledge has been meticulously documented and managed into databases and other resources, ensuring the preservation of Indigenous voices and land management concepts for future generations.

Furthermore, the project has provided support for the development of new ranger teams, leading to an increased number of skilled rangers across the desert. This expansion of ranger capacity enhances the collective ability to care for the desert environment effectively, contributing to the overall health and sustainability of the desert.



Bevan Bent, Ngurrara Ranger Team, operating an aerial incendiary machine



Buffel grass on APY Lands

Section 3: Project strategy: Managing key threats

The project sought to build capacity for a coordinated approach to threat management and initially targeted Buffel Grass and feral camels. Over the five years of the 10DP the focus shifted from addressing threats as discrete problems to aligning management strategies with Indigenous perspectives on land stewardship. While the project initially mirrored mainstream practices of mitigating or removing threats, it gradually became evident that Indigenous approaches to land management prioritised connecting with and enhancing the value of Country. As a result, project areas emphasising Indigenous engagement with Country, such as fire management, ICEK and emerging ranger teams, experienced greater uptake and success compared to those focusing solely on threats.

Streams

Buffel Grass



Rangers eradicating Buffel Grass on APY Lands

"Buffel Grass is killing our Country and threatening our communities and culture... we need to be resourced to manage it."

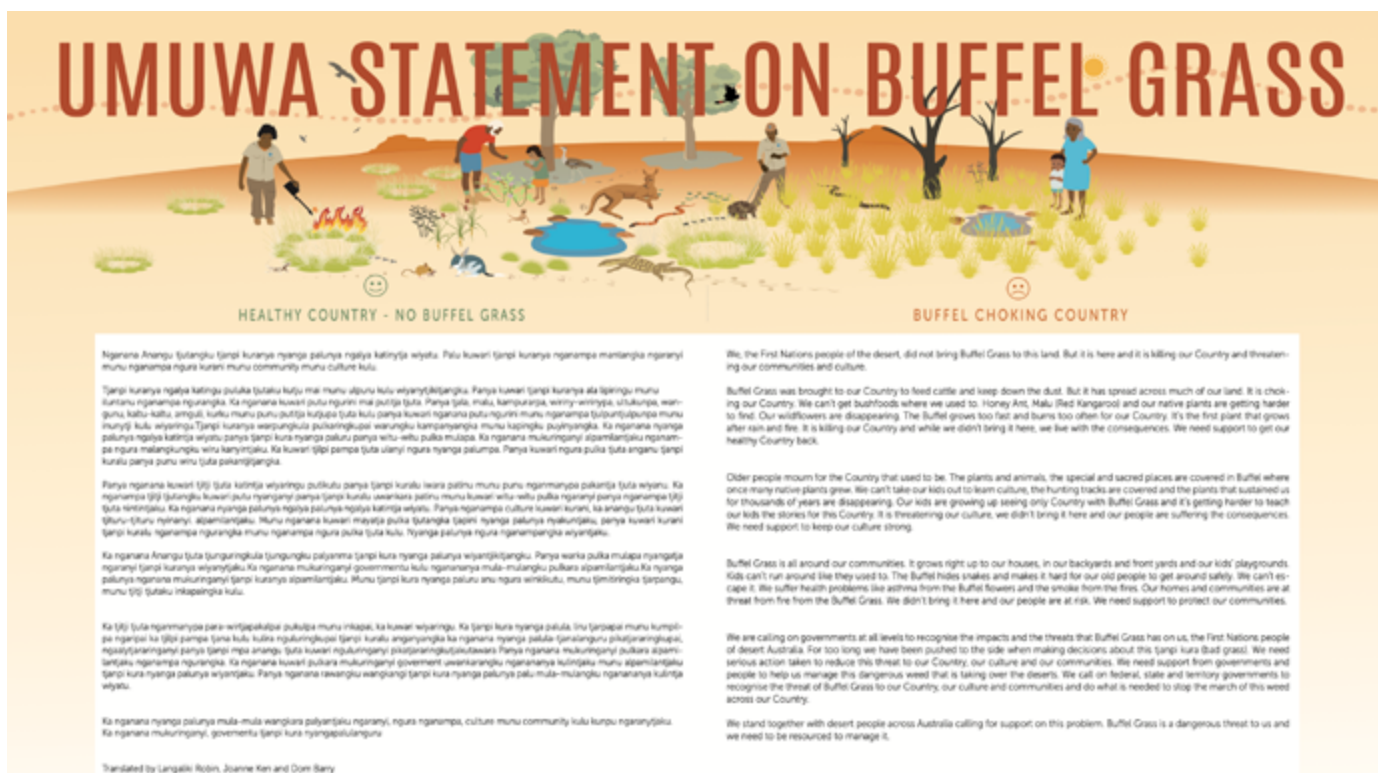
– Umuwa statement on Buffel Grass, 2022

The 10DP aimed to address the threat of Buffel Grass on Country, initially focusing on training, surveillance and control efforts. While progress was initially slow, endeavours gradually gained momentum. For instance, in 2021, rangers from SA and WA participated in an on-Country workshop on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands to exchange ideas and strategies for limiting Buffel Grass infestations. Additionally, awareness-raising efforts, such as producing posters, were undertaken to inform rangers about the issue.

However, challenges arose as many desert areas had not yet experienced the full impact of Buffel Grass, leading to difficulty in engaging all rangers in this activity stream. Moreover, the mid-term evaluation of the project underscored the importance of accompanying local actions with national advocacy, including efforts to have Buffel Grass listed as a Weed of National Significance. Despite these challenges, the APY rangers demonstrated unwavering dedication to addressing the Buffel Grass issue. They conducted surveillance and control efforts on their Country while simultaneously deepening their understanding of the problem. This commitment culminated in the development of the Umuwa Statement, a poignant call to action against the detrimental effects of Buffel Grass on First Nations people of the desert. The



APY Ranger Team promoting their Umuwa Statement at the 2022 IDA conference at Yulara



Umuwa Statement on Buffel Grass, developed by APY Ranger Team (<https://www.indigenoussouthalliance.com/publications/umuwa-statement-on-buffel-grass>)

APY Ranger Team showcased the Umuwa Statement at the IDA conference in 2022, leveraging the event as a platform to garner support and advocate for government action. They also met with Linda Burney in late 2022 to further discuss the Buffel Grass issue and present the Umuwa Statement. As a result of these advocacy efforts, Buffel Grass has gained increased national attention, culminating in the SA Government's million-dollar investment in a Buffel Grass program with 10DP partner, AWLB. Through leveraging networks and platforms like the IDA conference, Buffel Grass has been elevated as a priority on the national agenda, demonstrating the impactful outcomes of these collaborative efforts.

Feral camel management

The 10DP focused on addressing the pressing challenge posed by the burgeoning population of feral camels, estimated to exceed one million across the desert. Camels traverse an expansive area of 3.3 million km² of rangeland, spanning Aboriginal lands, pastoral leases, conservation areas and other crown lands. They wreak havoc on infrastructure, natural and cultural sites, and communities alike.

The 10DP aimed to foster collaboration and coordination among government agencies and Indigenous organisations from three jurisdictions, the NT, SA and WA, to effectively manage the feral camel population. This collaborative effort marked a significant step forward, as such coordination had not occurred since the conclusion of the National Feral Camel Management Project in 2013.

Despite the challenges posed by the fluctuating camel

population, which is affected by factors such as weather patterns, vegetation growth and water availability, 10DP efforts bore fruit. Though it was initially challenging to garner support for feral camel control measures, culls were successfully conducted during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 years across all states.

In 2020, the 10DP established a feral camel working group comprising partners, external agencies and feral animal managers. This group provided a vital platform for information sharing and expertise exchange, facilitating a collaborative, cross-border management approach that yielded significant outcomes. Notably, reduced camel numbers within the Northern Tamami IPA were celebrated as an important achievement by the CLC.

Moreover, the feral camel working group developed practical resources to aid in camel management, including a feral camel management toolkit in 2021 and an information poster in 2022. Despite these accomplishments, the disbandment of the feral camel working group in 2023 signalled both decreasing camel numbers and the inherent challenges of managing feral camels across borders.

While the 10DP decreased collaborative on ground efforts as the project progressed the project has contributed to a more coordinated and informed approach to feral camel management. Despite the challenges encountered, the 10DP commitment to mitigating the impact of feral camels on the desert landscape has laid the groundwork for continued progress in this critical area of environmental stewardship.



CLIMATE CHANGE CAUSES AND IMPACTS ON COUNTRY



Climate change poster co-designed by the 10DP steering committee and the IDA for sharing climate information with rangers

Climate change

"It's getting hotter and harder to read Country. Singing songs to bring the rain aren't working like they used to... all the rain on the east coast now."

– Atitjere Rangers cited in Cocking, 2023

Initially overlooked in the design of the 10DP, climate change emerged as a critical concern voiced by TOs during the 2019 IDA conference. Recognising the significance of this issue, the project pivoted to incorporate climate change in its strategy under the category of managing key threats.

The 10DP centred on communication and engagement with rangers about climate change. Understanding the importance of Indigenous perspectives in addressing climate change, the project prioritised efforts to capture and amplify the voices of TOs. By actively seeking to understand Indigenous perspectives on climate change, the 10DP aimed to create and capture a deeper appreciation of the nuanced ways in which Indigenous people were interacting with and responding to environmental change.

Climate change engagement workshops were conducted with rangers in Central Australia (Atitjere, Tjuwanpa, Tjakura and Ltyentye Apurte Ranger Teams), organised through the CLC. Presentations and workshops were also held with ranger coordinators and the broader IDA network.

This work brought the voice of Indigenous rangers to the fore with commentary direct from rangers. Observations from various ranger groups across desert landscapes reveal a consistent narrative: the climate is changing and temperatures are rising. TOs and rangers alike have noticed significant alterations in weather patterns, affecting both flora and fauna.

Reports of extreme heatwaves have led to distressing scenes, including kangaroos and horses perishing, and birds falling from the sky. The drying up of once-

abundant waterholes has resulted in substantial losses, with reports of widespread horse deaths. Additionally, heavy summer rains have caused erosion, further highlighting the impact of changing weather conditions on the delicate desert ecosystem.

The landscape is undergoing noticeable transformations, as reported by various ranger groups across desert regions. TOs and rangers express concerns about the changing conditions, noting challenges in interpreting the land and its natural cues.

Buffel Grass invasion is a prevalent issue, displacing vital bush tucker and medicinal plants, while wildfires fuelled by invasive species burn with increased intensity. Shifts in seasonal patterns affect the timing of natural phenomena, such as flowering and hinder the regeneration of young trees, leading to areas of barrenness. Traditional practices, including singing songs to invoke rain, are proving less effective, with rainfall patterns diverging from the norm.

"Changes are everywhere. All the flowers are coming out at different times. Flowers don't see them like we used to."

– Atitjere Rangers, cited in Cocking, 2023

Ranger groups across desert regions are grappling with the tangible impacts of climate change on resource availability and their daily operations. At the forefront of their concerns is the absence of a climate change strategy in their local planning processes, highlighting a crucial gap in addressing this pressing issue. It was reported that changing weather patterns are shortening field seasons, necessitating adjustments in work schedules, such as early morning starts to avoid extreme heat. Integrating climate change considerations into HCPs is becoming imperative, reflecting the urgent need for adaptation strategies.

"We have no KPIs in our plans on climate change."

– IDA Ranger Coordinator Forum cited in Cocking, 2023

The strong Indigenous voice on climate change that 10DP facilitated through these workshops was integrated into a report, *Climate Change and Desert Rangers* (Cocking, 2023). The key recommendation of this report that we were able to progress during this project timeline was to start developing a comprehensive communications strategy, including the production of videos, posters and reports that would empower rangers to start having the conversations that they need to have to shape and influence the work that they are doing on a changing Country.

Climate change video developed with Purple House Language Program in Alice Springs, to communicate climate change and adaptation principles to rangers participating in the climate change engagement workshops



Climate resilience poster co-designed by the 10DP steering committee and the IDA for sharing climate information with rangers

Outcomes

Strong Indigenous Voice

Indigenous voice is central to the delivery of the 10DP. This is evidenced by the pivot of the project to activities that fit with the Indigenous worldview which focuses on connecting to Country rather than on specific threats.

The 10DP was instrumental in enabling a strong Indigenous voice through various activities, particularly in addressing threats like Buffel Grass. The creation of the Umuwa Statement, written in Pitjantjatjara language and launched at the IDA conference in 2022, underscores this empowerment. This statement, signed by a significant number of Indigenous rangers, highlights the impact of Buffel Grass on Country and culture, ensuring that external stakeholders and politicians are made aware of this major threat.

The production of camel and Buffel Grass information posters in collaboration with Indigenous rangers amplifies their voices. It also enhances communications which address these issues.

Furthermore, the climate change work within the project demonstrates another example of the enablement of a strong Indigenous voice. Through workshops and reports like *Climate Change and Desert Rangers* (Cocking, 2023) Indigenous perspectives on climate change have been brought to the forefront. This informs more holistic approaches to climate resilience and land management that are relevant to TO priorities.

These initiatives collectively highlight the project's

commitment to empowering Indigenous voices and ensuring their meaningful participation in environmental stewardship efforts.

Healthy Country

The awareness raised about the threat of Buffel Grass has led to increased funding for AWLB, enabling them to address the issue at an appropriate level. Additionally, camel culls conducted in priority areas had a tangible impact on reducing camel numbers. By empowering Indigenous ranger teams and integrating Indigenous knowledge, the project has enhanced the IDA's understanding of how threat management must form part of a larger approach to management of Country.

Healthy People

The project's shift towards addressing climate change reflects a forward-thinking strategy that centres on empowering desert communities by prioritising Indigenous perspectives and local voices. The 10DP acknowledges the profound wisdom and knowledge inherent within these communities which enables them to develop resilient strategies suited to their unique environments. This approach recognises that desert residents possess a deep understanding of their landscapes and ecosystems, making them best equipped to identify solutions that protect their communities from the effects of climate change while sustaining the achievement of the healthy people outcome.



Section 4: Project strategy: Creating sustainable jobs and income

The transformation of the desert region into a hub for job creation and economic development has predominantly relied on government funding, with Indigenous ranger programs emerging as a notable success story.

However, there has been a longstanding aspiration to shift from reliance on programmatic funding towards fostering an entrepreneurial and market-based economy for desert rangers.

This transition is viable only with continued substantial government investment, which serves as the foundation upon which potential products and opportunities can be leveraged. Indigenous ranger teams and IPAs have emerged as pivotal components in this endeavour, providing the impetus for exploring avenues for rangers to engage in tourism ventures, manage permit systems and undertake preliminary investigations into nature-based markets. This section of the report delves into the exploration of these opportunities, highlighting the potential for sustainable economic growth and cultural preservation within the desert landscape.

Streams

Regional tourism

In an effort to cultivate local economic opportunities and tap into the tourism market, this activity stream focused on development of a tourism strategy for the desert that set out recommendations for things like joint marketing of desert tourism, collaborative permit systems and equipping Indigenous communities with appropriate digital technology to serve as tour guides. However, activating regional tourism as a sustainable income stream proved to be complex, requiring careful consideration to mitigate potential harmful effects on cultural and environmental values.

While some initiatives within this activity stream yielded significant success, others saw limited progress. Tourism, it became evident, presents a unique set of challenges due to the high-level skills and infrastructure required, as well as the need for central, visionary leaders to spearhead such work.



Kuju Wangka working group meeting, 2023. Back row (L-R): Donovan Japaljarri, Aaron Eulenstein, Frankie McCarthy, Kevin Tromp, Kelman Patch, Rewi Lyall, Stuart Bradfield. Front row (L-R): Maxine Samuels, Miranda Gore, Caroline Long, Joycelyn McCarthy, Lena Long.

One of the most active participants in the regional tourism initiative was 10DP partner DSS, which notably supported the Birriliburu land management company's tourism venture and the cultural and tourism management project, Kuju Wangka.

Birriliburu Tourism Venture

Birriliburu TOs had long desired to develop a tourism venture. The 10DP funding, in tandem with DSS support, enabled them to gain an understanding of how tourism can provide a healthy way for people to be on Country, maintain culture and pursue economic development. During the life of the 10DP, Birriliburu TOs attended a Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC) conference, participated in a study tour to visit and learn from Ngurrangga Tours in Karratha, and conducted workshops with WAITOC to prepare a business development plan. At the close of the 10DP,

DSS reported that the Birriliburu Ranger Team's tourism business plans have been strongly advanced through 10DP support and they are very close to having a tourism product ready for the market.



Kuju Wangka: One Voice for the Canning Stock Route

The coalition of native title groups along the Canning Stock Route, known as Kuju Wangka, faced setbacks due to COVID-related closures, impacting revenue sources. Nevertheless, with 10DP support, progress was achieved in governance planning and budgeting, enhancing program sustainability through income generation from tourist fees.

These groups have worked together since 2008 and had obtained an Aboriginal managed tourism permit for the CSR. In 2019, the 10DP funded a meeting for the Kuju Wangka working group facilitated by YAC and the KLC. However, between 2020 and 2022, the CSR was closed to keep communities along the route safe from COVID. This deprived Kuju Wangka of any revenue sources.

From 2021 to 2022, the 10DP funded secretariat support and a project officer role for the Kuju Wangka working group, and great strides were made in this project. By the close of the 10DP, members of the Kuju Wangka working group had endorsed the Kuju Wangka governance plan and budget. Sustainability of the Kuju Wangka program is strongly enhanced by agreement from all partners to use income from tourist fees to help run the program. This is an advantage for the group as they seek external funding to continue the important development work undertaken during the 10DP.

Desert Journeys

Initially, the 10DP aimed to create a web-based portal to guide desert tourism, facilitate access to routes, permit applications, trip planning and provide information on cultural protections. Considerable time, resources and effort were invested in development. However, it became evident near the completion of the project that obtaining and maintaining the necessary Indigenous land access consents essential for the smooth functioning of this portal would be exceedingly challenging and, at times, political. This experience underscores a significant lesson from a regional project: while common priorities can lead to success, regional disagreements can present major obstacles to a project's overall success.

Smaller 10DP endeavours exemplify ongoing efforts to

enhance tourism amenities and experiences in the desert region. KJ worked on an on-Country app which is currently in development. Six walking Country lines, which include 51 waterholes and 52 stories, have been uploaded and the app has been trialled with four desert communities. NWAC worked on infrastructure enhancements along the Nyangumarta highway which are now complete.

Experience demonstrated that tourism initiatives tend to thrive when:

- a ranger group possesses a compelling story or potential tourism offering they wish to share
- there is existing demand for tourism opportunities in their geographic or thematic area
- the tourism offering has supportive structures.

Conversely, attempts to artificially create demand for new tourism opportunities often yielded little to no success.

In summary, while the journey towards activating regional tourism as a sustainable income stream was fraught with challenges, the 10DP experience shed light on key factors that contribute to the success or failure of such initiatives. Moving forward, it is imperative to build upon these lessons and leverage existing demand and resources to support Indigenous-led tourism initiatives effectively.

Carbon and co-benefits

The development of carbon and co-benefits products were ambitious targets. While they have not been fully achieved the progress made by the end of the 10DP has allowed the sector to come out near the front of the curve in this emerging area. It is clear that a focused vision, patience and persistence are key to success.

The work on this activity stream was managed first by the 10DP and latterly by the IDA. The IDA was uniquely suited to the role because of their status as a representative body for desert rangers and the skillset of their staff group which includes scientists and ecologists. It was also appropriate because of the IDA's ability to coordinate the work without need for reward as it will be many years before the financial benefits of this work come to fruition.

Great strides have been made in the accomplishment of the underlying research and the extension of a current methodology (the savanna burning method) which will make it possible to derive Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCCU) from land management work in the northern arid zone. However, the completion of this work is dependent on external bodies. For example, although advice received indicates that the northern arid zone will be included in the savanna burning methodology in 2025 the regulator is so busy that it will be some years before this is officially approved.

The IDA will continue this work past the close of the 10DP. They have already secured new funding for a collaborative education project facilitating TOs to better understand carbon and co-benefits so that they will not be vulnerable to potentially unscrupulous opportunism by individuals and organisations that seek profile and profit in this space.

Fire management plans at the project outset did not align with on-ground conditions. Specifically, plans for a desert carbon abatement trial in the Kintore region weren't possible because of a severe drought during the 2018-

20 period. However, by 2020-21 the 10DP had entered a partnership with the ILSC, the NT Government and Charles Darwin University to investigate the potential for adjusting the low rainfall savanna methodology for the northern deserts.

The project team trademarked the name Healthy Country Credits (HCC) as a concise descriptor for the program of work aimed at expanding efforts in this area. They particularly focused on sites for potential biodiversity products resulting from the development of nature markets in the desert. This initiative addresses a multifaceted and complex set of objectives, encompassing various aspects of nature-based market development in desert regions.

The 10DP facilitated the development of an externally recognised and scientifically validated framework that desert ranger groups can use to quantify the environmental benefits that result from their land management programs. It is called the Desert Habitat Method (DHM). This environmental accounting method has been accredited by Accounting for Nature (AfN).

The DHM is based on the theory that traditional fire regimes managed by Indigenous people have been disrupted, leading to detrimental impacts on flora and fauna. By supporting ILM organisations through projects like the 10DP, capacity and capability to manage Country at scale using fire are enhanced, leading to benefits such as reduced wildfire threats, improved biodiversity and enhanced livelihoods for Indigenous communities.

In collaboration with 10DP partners and the Pollination Foundation, the project team organised a workshop on nature markets. The primary objective was to explore how partners within the 10DP and the broader IDA community could engage in discussions surrounding nature markets. A key insight gleaned from the workshop was the importance of defining what Indigenous-led means in practical terms for this emerging market. This entails bridging the gap between on-the-ground efforts to improve biodiversity and meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to commercial packaging without disrupting existing work and ensuring Indigenous control over the products.

A notable recommendation arising from the workshop emphasised that the success of the market in desert regions hinges on the active involvement of Indigenous peoples at all stages. It was underscored that this process will require time and careful consideration, starting with the IDA's continued provision of information and opportunities for Indigenous communities to explore their participation in nature markets.

This workshop highlighted the imperative to ensure that Indigenous peoples who are actively stewarding their lands benefit from the opportunities presented by biodiversity or nature markets. By prioritising Indigenous involvement and control over the products, these initiatives can contribute to both economic empowerment and the conservation of biodiversity in desert environments.

Outcomes

Strong Indigenous Voice

The project's initiatives in regional tourism and carbon and co-benefits products have significantly amplified the

Indigenous voice, ensuring that Indigenous communities play a central role in decision-making processes. The project prioritised Indigenous voice in the design of tourism strategies that respect cultural and environmental values not just economic opportunities. Examples like the Birriliburu Tourism Venture and Kuju Wangka underscore the importance of Indigenous narratives and aspirations driving tourism initiatives, with support from partners like DSS. Collaborative workshops with organisations like the Pollination Foundation highlighted the need for Indigenous participation and representation in emerging markets, ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard and respected as key players in the development of these emerging markets.

Healthy Country

Spending time on Country with custodians and TOs is central to the Birriliburu tourism product. This creates a deeper connection to the land for participants and promotes a respectful approach to tourism. The approach recognises the importance of engaging with Indigenous communities as custodians of the land, highlighting their pre-eminent role in keeping Country healthy. Similarly, Kuju Wangka's approach to strategy development prioritises the principle of looking after Country, ensuring that tourism activities are managed in a way that respects and preserves the natural environment. The discussion and design of tourism strategies featured the insight that they would need to support ongoing protection of Country and culture. Healthy Country Credits were set up to achieve direct and measurable healthy Country outcomes in the future based on the successful implementation of the DHMethod.

Healthy People

This project strategy achieved the significant outcome of Indigenous leadership in designing and establishing new markets for the deserts. This marks a shift in economic empowerment. Historically, Indigenous people in the desert have had limited opportunities to spearhead economic projects aligned with their priorities and guided by their decisions. This strategy provides a transformative opportunity to reshape the landscape of economic development in the desert regions under Indigenous leadership, fostering a sense of agency, ownership and empowerment from the outset. The 10DP has highlighted that a shift must be made towards Indigenous-led economic initiatives that not only promise economic advancement but also revitalise people's connection with and care for Country.



Nathan Sunfly, Rita Minga, Gary Njamme and Mickey Bennie at the Ngururra IPA Dedication celebration

Over 80 Martu from Jigalong, Parnngurr, Punmu, Kunawarritji, Newman, Bidyadanga and Hedland gathered together on Country for five days to learn from their Elders and participate in ranger training including 4WD, first aid and firearms training as well as fire work



Section 5: Project insights

New funding streams for the desert

The activities undertaken through the 10DP have not only enhanced the visibility of partner organisations but also attracted attention from government and other sector agencies. They have led to positive profiles and opportunities to secure funds for ranger-led initiatives.

Access to initial funding is crucial, as it serves as a catalyst for leveraging additional resources. Securing the first major grant is often the most challenging, but once obtained, it opens doors to further financial support. Establishing ranger programs with proven momentum and clear plans for ongoing work significantly improves the likelihood of securing funding, as evidenced by the successful attraction of additional funds by most emerging ranger teams.

Assisting small organisations to develop work plans, expand networks and access funders is vital for overcoming the hurdles of securing startup funding. The momentum generated through the 10DP has facilitated the integration of funded activities into ongoing, well-resourced programs, paving the way for continued sustainability and expansion.

The 10DP partners reported that during the project they leveraged \$10.6 million in funding for ranger teams, IPA programs and other land management work. In addition, the IDA directly leveraged more than \$10 million for programs with members. Funding highlights include the \$1.2 million leveraged by AWLB for Buffel Grass work, almost \$5 million leveraged for fire management programs and approximately \$600 000 directed into research to support the development of carbon and co-benefit products.

It needs to be acknowledged that the 10DP is part of a broader system and is not the sole source of grants used to leverage opportunities in the desert. The greater pool of funds utilised by partners is unknown. However, it is clear that all partners have directly benefited from the 10DP funding and positively reported further leveraged funding opportunities. At a conservative minimum we can say with confidence that the original BHPF support has been matched by leveraged funding.

Governance of the project



L-R Phil Sparrow, James Back, Shelley Doyle, Hannah Cliff, Tim Leane, Natasha Williams, Leah Fueheherdt, Ben Puglisi, Jamie Brown, Zan King, Stu Bradfield, Andrew Minyardie, Nyapuru Rose, Katrina Shaw, Lindsey Langford, Mick Haynes, Zack Wundke, Josie Grant, Peter See and Peter Murray, 2019, 10DP steering committee meeting, Perth

In the early stages of the 10DP, the steering committee faced significant challenges due to a lack of a strong Indigenous voice and ownership over the project's direction. It became evident that many committee members were unsure of their roles, with the committee often serving as a report back mechanism for partners rather than a platform for meaningful decision-making.

One of the key challenges faced was managing a project with seven members while ensuring meaningful Indigenous engagement. To address this, the approach to governance was gradually shifted, allowing Indigenous participants the time and space to reflect on their priorities and articulate their needs.

Recognising the need for Indigenous partners to have a more prominent role, efforts were made to re-energise their participation through workshops aimed at redefining the committee's purpose and ensuring alignment with initial project priorities. These discussions gradually influenced the shape of the project, although it became apparent that some longer-term aspirations of partners were not being fully realised.

As a result, larger discussions with the BHPF were initiated to explore alternative pathways for achieving the project's high-level outcomes. Over time, the steering committee grew more comfortable in expressing their ideas and priorities, signalling a maturation of their involvement. This evolution was accompanied by a deepening relationship with the BHPF, based on mutual trust in the partners' ability to manage their respective roles effectively.

Despite these challenges, the project experienced notable successes in adapting its governance structure to better accommodate Indigenous perspectives. This shift not only empowered Indigenous partners to shape the project's trajectory but also ensured that their voices were heard and respected throughout the decision-making process. Ultimately, this collaborative approach led to more effective outcomes and a stronger sense of ownership among all stakeholders involved in the 10DP.

Collaboration and connectivity



Collaborative fire planning workshop at the 2022 IDA conference, Yulara

The collaborative essence of the desert identity, deeply entrenched in a cultural imperative to share ideas, culture and resources across vast landscapes, found fertile ground in the 10DP. From its inception, the project recognised the necessity of enabling strong partnerships to thrive.

Initially under the management of DSS, the 10DP swiftly acknowledged the role of the IDA in facilitating collaboration across the desert. The IDA, established prior to the 10DP, emerged as a crucial partner entrusted with the task of enabling connectivity between project partners and stakeholders, eventually taking over project management in mid-2021.

A myriad of activities, spanning conferences, ranger exchanges and collaborative fire management efforts, acted as catalysts for fortifying connections and sparking collaborative ventures. DSS observed that these initiatives instilled a sense of belonging and empowerment among supported ranger groups, while partners like KJ lauded the project staff's instrumental role in delivering

successful collaborative projects.

The project underscored the imperative of ground-up consultation for successful collaboration. This necessitated dedicated efforts in member outreach and robust steering committee governance to ensure effective decision-making processes. Nevertheless, challenges to collaboration persisted, evident in endeavours such as regional camel work and the regional Desert Tours tourism portal. It proved difficult to gain momentum in these streams due to differing priorities.

The 10DP experience offered invaluable lessons, showing the importance of building upon existing efforts, embracing strengths and advocating for local actions alongside cross-desert initiatives. In doing so, the project not only forged lasting partnerships but also nurtured a collaborative spirit that will continue to shape the desert landscape for years to come.

Challenges

COVID 19

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as the most significant obstacle during the 10DP. The restrictions imposed by the pandemic hindered on-ground activities and led to a reduction in spending by partners and a halt in travel across the desert for nearly a year. While partners on the ground persisted in their work, external support became unfeasible due to the inability to access these partners. The challenges posed by COVID-19 underscored the complexities of running a regional project that necessitates on-ground contact and work. It highlighted the resilience and adaptability required to navigate such unforeseen circumstances.

Funding

"The partnership that we're in with 10 Deserts allows for flexibility. Basically, they understand what it's like to work in the desert and to achieve land management and cultural outcomes in the desert."

– Kevin Tromp, Country Manager, Ngurrara Ranger Team

The 10DP funding was substantial and the flexibility in allocating funds improved over the course of the project. However, there remained a persistent challenge of insufficient resources to adequately support the multitude of project streams. The complexity arose from attempting to implement numerous projects simultaneously, which increased the strain on available funds.

Climate change

The Fitzroy Valley experienced extreme flooding during this period, resulting in substantial disruptions to field season work for partners involved in the 10DP. These unprecedented climate events had significant impacts on project operations. In response, the project team swiftly mobilised 10DP funding to support flood recovery efforts undertaken by the Yanunijarra Ranger Team, leveraging a targeted Expression of Interest (EOI) opportunity.

In addition, the project team adopted flexible and adaptable approaches to accommodate delays caused

by the flooding and rescheduled field trips and other activities as needed. It is evident that climate change is exacerbating challenges faced by our partners and we remain mindful of its increasing impact on their work.

Travel

“Most parts on the Country you can’t access with vehicles. It’s very hard. So that’s when you come in with choppers and planes.”

– Sumayah Surprise, Ngurrara Ranger Team

The logistical challenges associated with operating



in remote desert regions are immense and often overlooked. These challenges encompass the complexities of accessing, working within and returning from these environments, which require significant financial resources to address. Beyond funding for project activities, substantial amounts must also be raised to cover the costs associated with transportation, accommodation and other logistical necessities.

Moreover, organising trips to these remote locations demands meticulous planning and coordination due to long travel times as well as the need to address challenges autonomously in isolated settings. This underscores the importance of employing staff who possess not only technical expertise and cultural sensitivity but also exceptional patience, initiative and a sense of humour. The nature of this work can lead to burnout among staff more quickly than anticipated, necessitating special care and support.

One significant aspect of these challenges is air travel, which has become less consistent and more expensive following the pandemic, particularly on routes such as Perth to Alice Springs. Flights now often involve multiple legs, long transfers and frequent delays, further exacerbating the time and cost constraints associated with travel. As a result, opportunities for face-to-face meetings among project partners have been limited, prompting the project team to prioritise virtual communication methods to maintain collaboration and engagement.

Capacity building

One of the significant challenges encountered in running this project was the difficulty of servicing remote individuals and communities with one-on-one capacity-building efforts. Working with people in these remote and isolated settings demanded sustained engagement, which proved to be both time-consuming and resource

intensive. The geographical distance and isolation posed considerable obstacles, requiring tailored approaches to education and training that accounted for the unique needs and contexts of individuals and communities. Balancing the need for extensive capacity-building initiatives with limited time and resources presented a formidable obstacle, highlighting the complexities of working in remote environments and the importance of adaptable strategies in overcoming such hurdles.

Staffing

Staffing difficulties present significant challenges within the ILM sector, impacting both host and supporting organisations as well as ranger teams. High turnover rates contribute to burnout among remaining staff, pose operational hurdles and affect program sustainability. Efforts to address this issue have seen some success, such as the IDA internship program recruiting new staff to the sector. However, retention remains a persistent challenge due to the sector’s inherent difficulties and competition from higher-paying adjacent sectors like mining.

Attracting and retaining dynamic individuals passionate about their cause is crucial. Creating an environment where staff can thrive involves allowing them space to grow and take ownership over projects aligned with their values. Sufficient investment in staff and organisations is essential for successful program facilitation, as demonstrated by the impact of staffing issues on various project streams, such as fire management.

Achieving gender parity in land management programs remains a challenge. While some programs show progress, sustained efforts are needed to ensure long-term prospects for women in the sector align with their male counterparts. Addressing staffing challenges requires ongoing sector development efforts and a commitment to supporting staff growth and retention despite external factors beyond the sector’s control.

Key insights from 10DP project team

Working on strengths not threats

By the conclusion of the 10DP the narrative had shifted from solely addressing deficits as this approach proved less engaging than highlighting the strengths of the landscape, such as its resilient waterholes. This shift in focus has been a significant practical learning, as it has become easier to engage both rangers and funders when emphasising the positive aspects of the environment. However, there remains the key challenge for project staff and partners to genuinely value Indigenous priorities and perspectives on Country as a holistic entity. It is essential to celebrate these perspectives through project work, rather than fragmenting tasks based on external priorities. This approach ensures that projects align more closely with Indigenous values and priorities, leading to more meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

Complementary efforts

The endeavours of the 10DP have consistently aligned with and supported existing initiatives within the land management sector. Throughout all 10DP initiatives, there has been a deliberate focus on leveraging and building upon the achievements of Indigenous organisations and communities. By doing so, the project ensures a seamless integration with ongoing work in the sector, thereby maximising its overall impact and

effectiveness.

This approach recognises the valuable contributions and accomplishments of Indigenous groups in land management and conservation efforts. Rather than reinventing the wheel, the 10DP sought to amplify and complement existing endeavours. By working hand in hand with Indigenous organisations and communities, the project can leverage their expertise, knowledge and cultural connections to the land, ultimately enhancing the success and sustainability of conservation initiatives across desert regions.

Through its complementary efforts, the 10DP not only acknowledged the importance of existing work but also demonstrates a commitment to partnership and collaboration in achieving shared conservation goals. This collaborative approach ensures that resources are used efficiently, avoids duplication of efforts and maximises the positive impact on desert ecosystems and Indigenous communities alike.

Relationships with partners

Maintaining strong relationships with project partners is paramount and requires continuous effort to cultivate, nurture and adapt to changing dynamics. The fluid nature of personnel changes, shifting motivations and fluctuating levels of interest underscores the importance of actively managing relationships within the alliance of partners united by a common goal.

Effective relationship management involves ongoing communication, collaboration and mutual respect to ensure alignment and commitment to shared objectives. As personnel changes occur and priorities evolve, efforts to re-establish connections and reaffirm commitments become essential for sustaining momentum and fostering collective engagement. By prioritising relationship-building efforts and staying attuned to the evolving needs and interests of partners, 10DP enhanced collaboration, promoted trust and maximised the impact of the alliance in achieving its overarching goals.

Project structure and expectations

Initial enthusiasm for the project gradually diminished over time. As incoming managers faced the reality of high demands and limited budgets they perceived the project as less of a long-term partnership opportunity. This turnover reflects the evolving nature of the sector, highlighting the need for adaptability and resilience at all levels. Early commitment to funding subcontracts restricted flexibility as new partners emerged, while compliance demands disproportionately affected smaller organisations, disadvantaging them in favour of larger, more established entities.

Partners also faced their own direct challenges, including the need for substantial resources to support desired outcomes, limited interest in certain project components and insufficient funding hindering momentum for specific aspects, notably emerging ranger teams. These experiences underscore the importance of adaptability and effective resource allocation for the success and sustainability of large-scale projects.

Reflecting on the project's evolution, partners noted a shift towards greater flexibility and adaptability over time, with the transition to the IDA playing a crucial role in enabling this change. As momentum grew, the project expanded from seven partners to 26 members of the IDA, yet the 10DP structure did not fully accommodate the

shift towards smaller organisations within the sector.

Recommendations for future work include streamlining key evaluation questions, reporting indicators and data collection methods, as well as reducing the reporting schedule for partners. Additionally, incorporating social measures and storytelling to capture a more holistic view of the project's implementation and achievements is suggested for future projects. These insights emphasise the importance of continuous learning and refinement in project design and management to effectively address the dynamic needs of communities and stakeholders.

Engagement with government

The 10DP team came to understand and use its voice for its partners in government discussions and decision-making processes, leveraging its extensive experience and connections within the sector. With few others working across such a broad landscape, the project team's advocacy efforts are crucial in ensuring that the voices and concerns of Indigenous communities are heard and addressed at all levels of governance.

The 10DP team has played a vital role in engaging with government entities at both the state and federal levels, advocating for the recognition and support of Indigenous ranger programs and their conservation efforts. This engagement has included significant contributions to national reports, such as the State of the Environment report, where the listing of fire regimes that cause declines in biodiversity as a key threatening process was achieved through the project team's efforts.

These contributions are viewed as additional tasks that the project team is uniquely positioned to deliver, given their expertise and broad reach across desert landscapes. While engaging with government departments has been time-consuming, it remains an essential role of the project team to enhance the standing of Indigenous ranger programs and the valuable work they undertake.

Project team depth

The 10DP has cultivated a dedicated and skilled team capable of undertaking extensive background work, offering invaluable support to rangers and their host organisations. This team's efforts have served as a proof of concept for the IDA, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaboration and coordinated action in achieving project objectives.

As the project progressed, the capacity of the 10DP team to deliver on the ground significantly expanded, thanks to positions created through successful grant acquisitions. This growth enabled the team to effectively address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities encountered in desert landscapes.

Within the IDA, a cohesive team has emerged, characterised by close collaboration and shared commitment to project goals. This team's collective efforts transcend the traditional boundaries between the IDA and project work, emphasising their interconnected nature and the synergy derived from working together towards common objectives.

By leveraging the expertise and dedication of its team members, the 10DP has not only enhanced its operational capacity but also fostered a culture of collaboration and innovation essential for addressing complex conservation and land management challenges in desert regions.



Section 6: Conclusion

Through its life, the 10DP achieved a remarkable feat. It empowered a desert wide network of Indigenous led land management organisations and rangers to play a central role in landscape scale environmental management, fostered developmental platforms for sustainable economic development and centralised a united voice for Indigenous rangers.

From the project's inception, Indigenous voices were prioritised, shaping its direction and objectives. Early conferences provided vital platforms for Indigenous rangers to voice their concerns and ideas, steering the project to align with Indigenous values and aspirations. As the project progressed, ranger exchanges played a crucial role in building networks and alliances, uniting Indigenous voices across the desert.

Central to the project's success was the integration of Indigenous knowledge. Initiatives like ICEK projects highlighted traditional Indigenous fire practices, leading to their wider recognition and adoption. Additionally, the project nurtured Indigenous leadership, inspired confidence and passion among Indigenous leaders and enabled broader community engagement.

Advocacy efforts ensured that Indigenous ranger programs received the support and recognition they deserved from government bodies. This collaboration resulted in desert-related concerns being included in national environmental agendas, amplifying the Indigenous voice on a broader scale.

The project significantly contributed to achieving healthy Country outcomes by prioritising the use of Indigenous knowledge and practices, particularly in fire management. This emphasis led to improved fire management practices and increased recognition of Indigenous expertise in managing Country.

Moreover, the project's capacity-building initiatives supported the recording, use and transmission of Indigenous environmental observations and practices, contributing to the sustainability of desert ecosystems. New ranger teams were also developed, enhancing the collective capacity to care for the land.

The project's impact extended beyond environmental

outcomes, promoting a profound shift towards empowerment and resilience among Indigenous communities. Through capacity-building initiatives and collaborative platforms, Indigenous rangers gained pride in their work and strengthened their bonds with each other and their ancestral lands.

The project's emphasis on Indigenous leadership in economic initiatives marked a significant milestone in community empowerment. By empowering Indigenous people to lead economic projects aligned with their priorities, the project revitalised Indigenous interest in pursuing initiatives with a market focus.

One unexpected outcome was the emergence of a skilled project team, serving as proof of concept for the IDA. This collaboration significantly expanded the capacity of the IDA team to deliver on the ground a range of collaborative projects that have now come to define the IDA. Furthermore, these regional collaborations were successfully conducted on an unprecedented scale, laying the groundwork for future significant investment based on the model that was established.

The establishment of the IDA provided a strengthened governance platform, enhancing the capacity of Indigenous groups for managing Country. A significant milestone was achieved in 2023 when the IDA secured a five-year funding agreement with the BHPF, ensuring the continuity of the 10DP's core objectives within the IDA member network. Initiatives like the IDA RWDF program and support for sector-wide endeavours, including the establishment of an Indigenous managed fund for the desert, the IDA Foundation, and nature market opportunities, highlighted the seamless transition of the 10DP's vision into the IDA's operational framework.

Furthermore, the establishment of a Desert Hub, an idea surfaced through IDA conferences supported by the 10DP, signified a continuation of the connections and visibility nurtured by the 10DP. The Desert Hub aims to amplify the strong voice of Indigenous rangers and promote the desert's significance to a wider audience by serving as a focal point for idea generation, project launches, ongoing partnership development and advocacy efforts.

Ultimately, the success of the 10DP demonstrated the power of centring Indigenous voices in environmental management and highlighted the importance of ground-up initiatives driven by Indigenous priorities and values. Through targeted investment, collaboration, advocacy and capacity-building, the project empowered Indigenous partners to shape a broad agenda for the desert on their terms. This agenda is a legacy of the project that is already informing the next decade of collaboration across the desert.

Sustainability

The investment by the BHPF in the 10DP over the past five years represents a pivotal shift in the landscape of desert land management and Indigenous-led environmental stewardship. This commitment stands as the single largest private investment in the sector, catalysing significant advancements across the desert land management sector.

The 10DP, under the guidance of the IDA, has enabled an unprecedented level of collaboration among desert rangers. This initiative enabled ranger teams to adapt and refine their approaches to meet the ambitious goals of the project. It also ushered in a new era of broad-scale collaboration across the desert.

Looking ahead, the IDA's strategic plan, informed by the lessons and achievements of the 10DP continues and expands this legacy. The focus is on embedding a network for scaling Indigenous-led collaboration across the Australian deserts, ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of these vital ecosystems. Thus, the project's impact extends far beyond the immediate scope of its activities, setting a new standard for environmental management and Indigenous partnership in Australia and potentially serving as a global model for similar initiatives.

Element	Future direction
Financial	Achieving financial sustainability is a cornerstone legacy of the 10DP. The partnership with BHPF has been instrumental in pioneering a culture-first, decolonized approach to funding and partnerships. This sets a precedent for the IDA's future financial strategies. The IDA will replicate and enhance this model with other philanthropic entities and government partnerships. The establishment of the IDA Foundation is a strategic move towards creating a long-term, scalable funding mechanism for Indigenous land management. This initiative aims to generate \$20 million over five years by cultivating a diverse portfolio of philanthropic supporters dedicated to empowering local Indigenous groups in the desert. These funds are earmarked for capacity-building activities that align with the groups' priorities, ensuring support is both meaningful and will engender a positive impact. Moreover, the IDA envisions a future where its core operations are significantly supported by philanthropy, aiming for more than 50% of its funding to come from philanthropic sources by 2028. The IDA intends to minimise reliance on government funding, which is traditionally seen as inconsistent and restrictive, to less than 15% of the IDA's income stream. This approach seeks to safeguard the organisation from potential vulnerabilities through diversified and stable financial streams.
Political	A significant outcome of the 10DP has been the enhancement of the political profile and leveraging capabilities of the IDA. The IDA's network of Indigenous ranger teams has empowered the IDA to amplify its advocacy efforts, positioning it as a formidable voice for desert conservation and management. From 2023, the IDA committed to scaling up its advocacy approach, ensuring that the concerns and priorities of desert rangers are heard loudly and clearly at all levels. The IDA's strategy involves solidifying its role as the peak body for desert land managers. This includes creating and maintaining trusted communication channels for rangers to express their priorities for the desert, crafting impactful messages and disseminating these through a variety of media outlets to ensure wide-reaching visibility. Additionally, the IDA is focused on ensuring that desert rangers have consistent opportunities to engage directly with government officials and key stakeholders, establishing a regular presence at important discussions and decision-making tables. Through these efforts, the IDA not only amplifies the voice of Indigenous rangers but also reinforces their critical role in sustainable desert land management. By fostering a strong political profile and leveraging its network effectively, the IDA aims to influence policy, secure ongoing support and promote the importance of Indigenous leadership in environmental stewardship. This strategic approach derives from the IDA's commitment to advancing the interests and autonomy of desert communities.

Element	Future direction
Social	A key legacy of the 10DP is the significantly enhanced capacity for Indigenous rangers to foster connections, share knowledge and build a robust peer-to-peer network. Enhanced connectivity through the IDA network has been instrumental in ensuring that rangers have more frequent opportunities to come together, both physically and virtually, to exchange insights, experiences and best practices. The importance of maintaining and strengthening these connections cannot be overstated. The IDA network facilitates a variety of platforms and opportunities for engagement, including on-Country events, conferences and ranger exchange programs. These gatherings are crucial for building and deepening relationships among rangers and fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. They also serve as vital avenues for collaborative on-Country work programs, allowing rangers to directly contribute to each other's projects and initiatives. The project has also played a pivotal role in ensuring that mainstream audiences are regularly engaged with the stories emerging from the desert. By bringing these narratives to a broader audience the IDA will amplify the visibility of Indigenous rangers' work and the unique challenges and successes of managing some of the most remote landscapes on Earth. This increased awareness not only garners support but also fosters a deeper appreciation and understanding of the critical role that Indigenous rangers play in environmental stewardship and conservation. Continued investment in these connections and the sharing of desert stories is vital. It not only sustains the momentum gained from the 10DP but also ensures that the invaluable work of Indigenous rangers remains at the forefront of conversations about land management, conservation and Indigenous leadership in these critical areas.
Organisational	The IDA incorporated in 2019, with pivotal support from the BHPF-enabled 10DP. Since then, it has rapidly emerged as a critical, trusted and well-regarded body that connects rangers and stakeholders across vast desert landscapes. This evolution marks a significant stride towards establishing a strong organisational foundation capable of addressing the complex needs of desert management and conservation. The IDA's rapid and strategic growth reflects a focused effort to provide essential support, representation and project management services at a landscape scale. The organisation is expanding its reach and deepening its impact through effective, sustainable practices and policies that resonate with the needs and priorities of desert rangers and their communities. In the next five years the IDA will maintain a comprehensive focus on enhancing governance structures, operational management and recruitment pathways. Such advancements are aimed at attracting and retaining talent from Indigenous desert communities, thereby ensuring that the organisation is not only led but also staffed by those it serves and reflects their values, knowledge and aspirations. The IDA prioritises resilience, professionalism and a culture that celebrates and incorporates Indigenous leadership and wisdom. It aspires to set a new standard for environmental stewardship and community empowerment.
Environmental	The collaborative or regional approach to land management in desert areas, initiated by the 10DP, has evolved into a specialized division within the IDA, the Desert Projects team. This transformation marks a significant legacy of the 10DP initiative. The Desert Projects team is primarily composed of former employees of the 10DP. This continuity has ensured that the invaluable expertise and capabilities in desert land management developed under the 10DP are retained and further nurtured within the IDA. As a dedicated arm of the organisation, the Desert Projects team represents a strategic effort to maintain a group of the most skilled and capable desert land management practitioners. This setup not only offers these professionals continued career development opportunities but also ensures that desert ranger teams have access to a core group of experts who might have otherwise transitioned to different careers. Now, this team spearheads the expansion of regional environmental initiatives, such as the RWDF program which empowers Indigenous people to implement right-way fire on their Country and the Significant Species Program which empowers Indigenous people to protect and improve the status of significant species that occur on their Country. The work of the Desert Projects team is also part of a broader vision to eventually establish a nature market for the desert.

Element	Future direction
Climate Resilience	The 10DP was instrumental in bringing the issue of climate change to the forefront for Indigenous communities across Australia's deserts. By facilitating the IDA to spearhead climate discussions, the 10DP reshaped the dialogue around climate change, a topic that has long been dominated by the realms of science and politics. This shift marks a significant moment for Indigenous people in the desert, as it presents an unprecedented opportunity to integrate local knowledge and perspectives into the broader conversation on climate adaptation and mitigation. Climate change is now an acknowledged concern among desert communities, highlighting the pressing need for action and adaptation strategies. This acknowledgement is a critical step forward, as it allows for the inclusion of Indigenous wisdom and traditional practices when developing responses to the changing climate. The project has enabled the IDA to lead the way in advocating for a more inclusive approach to climate change discussions, one that recognises and values the contributions of Indigenous people. This focus on bringing Indigenous knowledge into the conversation not only empowers desert communities but also enriches the overall understanding and approach to climate change action. By ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard and that their knowledge is incorporated into planning and response strategies, the IDA is helping to lead a more culturally sensitive and effective approach to addressing the impacts of climate change in Australia's deserts. This initiative represents a critical step in ensuring that climate change action is informed by the deep, place-based understanding which Indigenous people hold, offering new insights and pathways for sustainability and resilience.

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produced by the 10DP

10DP Indigenous tourism strategy, including toolbox and market research

<https://www.indigenousdesertalliance.com/members-hub/resource/indigenous-regional-tourism-strategy-toolbox>

Integrated Buffel Grass management plan for the Great Victoria Desert

https://www.indigenousdesertalliance.com/assets/asset_volumes/member-resource-assets/Integrated-buffel-grass-management-plan-for-the-Great-Victoria-Desert-v3.pdf

Invasive Buffel Grass poster

<https://www.indigenousdesertalliance.com/publications/buffel-grass-poster>

Seasonal fire management in the Australian deserts brochure

https://www.indigenousdesertalliance.com/assets/asset_volumes/member-resource-assets/SFM-brochure-22.5.20.FINAL.pdf

Seasonal fire management poster

<https://www.indigenousdesertalliance.com/publications/traditional-fire-management-poster>

Acronyms

used in this report

Acronym	Full term
10DP	Ten Deserts Project
AfN	Accounting for Nature
ALT	Aboriginal Land Trust
AMYAC	Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation
APYLM	Anangu Pijantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Management
ARP	Aboriginal Ranger Program
AWLB	Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board
BHPF	BHP Foundation
CLC	Central Land Council
CSR	Canning Stock Route
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
DFES	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
DHM	Desert Habitat Method
DSS	Desert Support Services
EoI	Expression of Interest
GVD	Great Victoria Desert
HCC	Healthy Country Credits
HCP	Healthy Country Plan
ICEK	Indigenous Cultural and Ecological Knowledge
IDA	Indigenous Desert Alliance

ILSC	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
ILSM	Indigenous Land and Sea Management
ILM	Indigenous Land Management
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
KLC	Kimberly Land Council
KJ	Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
KW	Kuju Wangka – One voice for the Canning Stock Route
MLP	Martu Leadership Program
MNTD	Martu Native Title Determination
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NWAC	Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
RtC	Yitaki Mani/Reading the Country
RWDF	Right-Way Desert Fire
SLM	Spinifex Land Management
SVA	Social Ventures Australia
TO/s	Traditional Owner/s
WAITOC	Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council
YAC	Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation
YHLC	Yilka Heritage and Land Care

Appendix:

International Exchange Framework



L-R Helen Wilson, Sammy Wilson, Phillip Jimmy, Andrew Minyardie, Benji Kenny, Josie Grant at the 2019 World Ranger Congress in Nepal

Indigenous people across the globe face similar challenges. International exchanges can connect people in meaningful ways, building relationships, skills and experience to strengthen the collective global Indigenous voice.

Benefits

- Peer to peer connection
- Shared experience
- Improved outcomes through exposure to policies and programs in action in other parts of the world.

Requirements

- Dedicated staff time, relationships and funding to coordinate international exchanges
- Relationships built slowly – not everyone wants to prioritise international relationships
- Exchanges – topical, themed, streamed and resourced to a level that provides confidence in success.

Possible partners

- Indigenous-led organisations
- Organisations that work on behalf of Indigenous groups
- Indigenous leaders who are not associated with an organisation
- Government conservation agencies.

Exchange streams

- Indigenous leadership and spokespeople
- Rangers and guardians
- Researchers and research assistants.



Benjamin Young from Wuskwi Sipihk Nation, Canada, addressing the 2022 IDA Conference as part of the Ampliseed delegation



Representatives from the Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation and the Indigenous Desert Alliance meeting with representatives from Oceans North and Nunatsiavut, a self-governing Inuit region in northern Labrador



Johannes Lampe, President of the Nunatsiavut Government meeting Peter Murray, CEO of Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation

Stream one: Indigenous leadership and spokespeople

- For organisational/exceptional leaders
- Time constrained
- Outcomes focused
- Targeted at developing a consistent and supported voice on international issues
- Potentially focused on:
 - climate justice
 - COP meetings and similar high-profile events.

Stream two: Rangers and guardians

- For Indigenous people working on country or on the land
- Can include longer trips based on field operations
- Supported trips with appropriately qualified personnel assisting
- Immersive, providing a deep experience for participants.

Stream three: Researchers and research assistants

- International exchanges for researchers
- Include Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers
- Allow researchers to share skills and experience engaging in research with Indigenous communities in a meaningful way
- Build a network of best-practice researchers
- Potential for longer more immersive trips, based on supporting field research operations.

Outputs

- Each exchange should have a formalised plan for reflection
- Insights should be documented so participants can learn from them and share them
- Exchanges should have a media and communications plan. This is agreed by all organisations prior to commencement
- Bespoke products may be developed, such as research papers from stream three, or films and articles from any stream. These should be agreed prior to the trip, or worked up collaboratively during and post the trip.

Next Steps

1. Seek feedback from recent international exchange participants on the proposed model
2. Focus on developing international leaders first, with other streams to follow
3. Seek an international organisation to run or fund future exchanges
4. Find others who are doing international exchanges and collaborate - don't reinvent the wheel.



Collated by the
Indigenous Desert
Alliance.



Sam Murray, Indigenous Desert Alliance Deputy CEO with Uziela Achayap from Alto Mayo Awajun Communities Landscape/Bosque de las Nuwas, Peru at the 2022 COP15 in Montreal as part of the Ampleseed delegation



Visiting international Ampleseed network meeting with Anangu Traditional Owners, 2019 IDA Conference, Yulara



Ngurrara ranger, Bevan Bent (right), sharing information with Deputy Minister Isabella Pain, Nunatsiavut Government, Ngurrara NTD



Ngurrara Elders leading a Welcome to Country for the Nunatsiavut delegation, Ngurrara NTD



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