

Returning and managing Country

1
Indigenous people are growing the value of Country



Image: Andy Steven Photography & Goolwa Pipi Co.

2
they are managing their Country for future generations



3
they are driving policy and opportunities



Image: Annette Ruzicka & The Nature Conservancy

4
and through reconnection with Country, they are preserving and protecting culture



These are our **four long-term aspirations** for Indigenous communities as we work to unlock and grow the 'Indigenous Estate' – the physical Country and intangible cultural assets and knowledge that belong to Indigenous Australians.

The activities we fund are leading to change for Indigenous communities

In *Returning and managing Country*, we showcase how Indigenous people are generating benefits from owning and managing Country and invite you to work with us, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, to realise your own aspirations.

“The network that has been formed through ILSC support has been without doubt a turning point for our economic future and that of the industry.”

“Having a central premises has increased the acknowledgement and recognition of First Peoples and we have more opportunity to engage with non-Indigenous people in the surrounding area.”

“The younger generation and family of members are now showing greater interest in becoming active members of the corporation.”

“Gaining ownership of country has provided a platform to educate local, regional and global community on the true history of our culture.”

“People are finding their voice during the planning processes, with some speaking publicly in the context of large group meetings for the first time.”

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We plant the seed together, you harvest the fruit

We buy Country to give back to Indigenous groups. Our selection of case studies show how the return of Country can lay the foundation for positive change for Indigenous communities.

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From little things big things grow

Our smaller investments can lead to big things too. Here we profile some of our 'untold stories' which are driving change for Indigenous communities.

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What changed as a result?

We regularly ask our proponents how they are tracking and the changes they are seeing emerge from their funded activities. Here we profile a selection of the things we are told when we ask 'What changed as a result?'

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25 years supporting positive change

Since 1995, the ILSC has worked to redress dispossession, providing for a more prosperous and culturally centred future for Indigenous people. Our numbers tell the story.

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Partners in change

We partner with Indigenous groups across the broad diversity of Indigenous Australia from cities to regional and remote areas, and from inland to coastal environments.

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Unlock your change story

In profiling our success stories we want to inspire your involvement. Find out how you can get involved.

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Putting community at the centre

Where we are headed and an invitation to work with us to help us grow and improve.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this publication may contain the names or images of people who have passed away.

Throughout this document the term "Country" is capitalised in recognition of connection to land and sea. Please note in quotes where the "c" is not capitalised this has been left verbatim.



**We plant the
seed together,
you harvest the fruit**

272

PROPERTIES ACQUIRED

\$581m* / 6.3m ha

211

PROPERTIES GRANTED

\$269m** / 3.9m ha

Returning Country

Since 1995, we have been using our funding to buy Country to give back to Indigenous people.

This is our highest profile activity working towards redressing Australia's historic dispossession of Indigenous people through the restoration of an Indigenous land and water base.

We prioritise acquisitions that can be immediately granted to Indigenous titleholders enabling benefits to quickly flow to Indigenous people.

If required, we also offer an initial leasehold period to prospective titleholders, devising a plan for divesting the property while building experience, capability and expertise in property management.

And increasingly we are helping broker large partnerships between Indigenous corporations and existing commercial enterprises which can unlock new markets, capital, capability and capacity, and expand business potential for Indigenous products and services.

The return of Country - whether it be through the purchase of a large pastoral lease or a building in an urban or regional centre - is an immensely emotional experience. We are proud that over three quarters of the land and water assets that we have purchased are under the care and control of an Indigenous title holder.

Our case studies profile the full diversity of our land and water acquisitions and demonstrate how the return of Country lays the foundation for positive change for Indigenous communities.

* purchase price

** valuation at grant



Sacred Cullunghutti Mountain returned to Traditional Owners, NSW



“This ongoing cultural connection and attachment to Cullunghutti is still felt by the Jerrinja and other Aboriginal people in the region. This return of country will once again allow us to control and access this sacred site and ensure it is protected for future generations. We look forward to fulfilling our cultural obligations as custodians.”

Delia Lowe, Deputy Chair, Jerrinja Local Aboriginal Land Council

Sacred Country in Shoalhaven, NSW, covering parts of the Cullunghutti Mountain was returned to Traditional Custodians in 2021.

The 53 hectare property is of huge significance to the Aboriginal communities of the NSW South Coast. The mountain is a spiritually important cultural heritage site revered by the local Jerrinja people as a ‘stepping off’ place into the afterlife.

Having Cullunghutti in the care of the Jerrinja people will ensure its cultural heritage is protected, providing the Jerrinja with full control of the access track to the mountain summit, and safeguarding it from inappropriate development and insensitive tourism.

With the property adjoining the Cullunghutti Aboriginal Area - currently managed by the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service - and the Shoalhaven City Council Reserve, the acquisition will yield additional benefits in expanding the local Indigenous Estate, and enabling positive collaborations between the local Indigenous communities, Regional NSW and the Shoalhaven Council.

Cullunghutti Mountain will be the site of a pilot traineeship project for job seekers from Shoalhaven Aboriginal communities to assess, repair and maintain Country.

The partnership - between Regional NSW and Jerrinja, Nowra and Ulladulla Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) - aims to establish the first Aboriginal-led conservation land management team in the Shoalhaven region that will deliver fee-for-service land management activity on government and privately-owned lands, thereby providing the Jerrinja with an income stream and increased capacity to manage its own properties.

Since the Jerrinja acquisition, work has been underway to organise contractors and plan events and activities while additional caring for Country funding has been secured from the NSW Government.

The \$2.5 million grant enabled the Jerrinja LALC to acquire the property and came with the support of the broader Shoalhaven Aboriginal community and \$150,000 from the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council.



New home for Esperance Indigenous corporation more than just a building, WA



“Our ancestors successfully managed country in a sustainable way for thousands of years. In the new era of Tjaltjraak, we are rebuilding our relationship with country and rekindling cultural practices, and now we have a new home to enable us to do this.”

Gail Reynolds-Adamson, Chair, Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation

The Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) now have a permanent new home for their business activities and land management services in the heart of the Esperance township in south-east WA.

The 300 Indigenous member corporation represents several thousand Esperance Nyungar Native Title holders and employs 44 staff, 90 per cent of them Indigenous.

The purchase of the new commercial property reduces rental expenses and offers ETNTAC a secure, permanent base which will sustain its current activity levels and support sustainable growth, while providing the community with an accessible hub and employment opportunities.

With a permanent base and additional storage space, ETNTAC will be able to implement plans to employ additional Indigenous rangers and other staff as part of its Tjaltjraak land and sea enterprise programs.

And with the Tjaltjraak Ranger Program responsible for the implementation of the Esperance Nyungar Healthy Country Plan, the ETNTAC estimates expansion of its projects and programs will see an additional half a million hectares under Indigenous use, care and improvement.

The acquisition also supports the growth of ETNTAC's fee-for-service activities and ability to secure medium to long-term contracts; provides security for its agribusiness and seed collection enterprises; and generates employment opportunities for local Esperance Nyungar people in property management, sustainable harvest, regenerative agriculture and business development.

ETNTAC also has plans to create an interpretive centre, gift shop and gallery in the reception area, a space for the Esperance Nyungar community and visitors to experience Nyungar culture and an important income stream for ETNTAC and its members.

A \$759,000 ILSC grant provided for the property purchase, office design and fit-out, and the development of a Business Plan guiding the proposed interpretive centre.



Image: Concept design by C4 Architects

Aboriginal Independent Living Village to be built near 'Warriparinga', SA



"Adelaide has been our home for thousands of years. This is still our traditional lands, our Yarta, our country Pangkarra, but as the Traditional Owners we still do not own our own homes. KYAC is appreciative for the support shown from all the funding partners to allow the Aboriginal Elders Village to proceed."

Garth Agius, Chair, Kurna Nation Pangkarra Property Trust

Aboriginal Elders living in Adelaide, SA will be able to 'age in place' on culturally significant land once a new Aboriginal Independent Living Village is built in the southern suburbs of Adelaide.

The 1.5 hectare development announced in June 2021 will include 40 individual homes located close to 'Warriparinga', a traditional ceremonial meeting place for the Kurna people near the Sturt River ('Warripari').

The village will be known as 'Purrkanaitya' - translating to 'for the Elders' - and will address a significant need for independent housing in the southern suburbs of Adelaide for Indigenous people while also enabling its residents to connect on culturally significant land.

It will also promote the security and stability of 'ageing in place' - contemporary aged care policy that supports people to remain in their homes and communities for as long as they can - and enable social interaction between tenants through linkages to Warraparinga's cultural heritage including its Living Kurna Cultural Centre.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander not for profit housing provider Aboriginal Community Housing Limited (ACHL) will both oversee the Village construction - due to commence in 2022 - and manage its operations.

The construction phase is expected to create short-term employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people for both building works and monitoring of cultural heritage impacts.

New positions are also anticipated within ACHL to assist with Village operations including in business development, housing liaison, community development and maintenance.

The \$10 million Village is a partnership between the ILSC, Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC) - the native title holders of the Adelaide Plains area - ACHL and the SA Housing Authority with the ILSC contributing \$3.927 million to building design, approvals, planning and construction.

The Village is an outcome of a larger divestment strategy developed by the ILSC in collaboration with KYAC for a 5.8 hectare property first purchased by the ILSC in 2001. The property will be subdivided with the intention of divesting the 1.5 hectares earmarked for the Village to KYAC's subsidiary, Kurna Pangkarra Property Trust, before construction commences. The remaining 4.3 hectares will be sold on the open market providing Pangkarra with additional revenue to acquire commercial property to generate benefits on behalf of the Kurna community.



Image: Isabella Moore

Life-saving renal clinic for Coober Pedy, SA



"We were asked by Coober Pedy people to help them establish dialysis in their town so their family members could come home to receive treatment. The support from the ILSC has been crucial in getting us over the line with this project. We are so excited and proud!"

Sarah Brown, CEO, Purple House

South Australia's Anangu community will no longer have to move hundreds of kilometres away from family and Country to access life-saving kidney disease treatment once a new renal clinic is built in Coober Pedy. Purple House, an Indigenous-owned and run health service, acquired a vacant block of land in Coober Pedy in November 2020 for construction of a new dialysis unit.

The organisation - also known as the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation - has been delivering dialysis and community services across 18 remote communities in SA, WA and the NT for over 20 years, and has significantly reduced the dialysis patient mortality rate in Central Australia.

The new renal unit is the result of years of community campaigning. Coober Pedy is a key service centre between Port Augusta and Alice Springs and for Anangu from Oodnadatta, Marla and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) communities.

Currently, people from Coober Pedy and surrounding communities must relocate 850 kilometres south to Adelaide to start dialysis and, once stable, if there is room, can apply for dialysis in Port Augusta or Whyalla, which are still over 500 kilometres from home.

Being forced to leave their homes and Country to receive treatment creates financial and emotional hardship for patients and their families. Language barriers can also present difficulties for patients for whom English is often not their primary language, adding to stress and anxiety.

Construction of the four-chair unit is expected to be completed in 2022 and will provide dialysis services to regional patients as well as create employment opportunities for nurses and community support workers.

It will ensure Anangu families stay together on Country and enable senior custodians to provide leadership, work for their community and transfer cultural knowledge to their children and grandchildren.

The \$470,000 ILSC contribution enabled purchase of the vacant block and funds towards construction, and combined with a \$200,000 SA Government grant and \$300,000 from Purple House's own fundraising.



New Indigenous manager for iconic Home Valley Station tourism facility, WA



“Home Valley is the gateway to Balanggarra country, and we are very committed to managing it in a way that honours our local culture and our country. We are doing things differently, directly engaging our people to ensure Home Valley is a unique Aboriginal managed and run tourism experience.”

Cissy Gore-Birch, Chair, Balanggarra Aboriginal Corporation

The ILSC-held Home Valley Station tourism facility located on the iconic Gibb River Road in the East Kimberley of WA – shutdown in 2020 due to COVID-19 – marked its 2021 reopening under the new management of Balanggarra Traditional Custodians. Set alongside the Pentecost River, Home Valley Station offers an insight into pastoralism in the Kimberley as well as a range of accommodation options, the famous Dusty Bar and Grill pub, tours and other activities on traditional Balanggarra and Wanjinna-Wungurr Wilinggin Country.

The ILSC-Balanggarra Ventures partnership has transitioned the Home Valley Station management from a non-Indigenous tourism business model to a Traditional Owner-led, community driven enterprise, focusing on tourism, conservation, culture and research.

It signals a new era for Traditional Custodians as agents of tourism on their Country and an opportunity to build capacity and generate greater social, cultural, environmental and economic opportunities and benefits for the local community.

Home Valley is already providing greater opportunities to Traditional Custodians through training and employment, which will soon extend to creating their own tourism offerings, telling their own stories and sharing their Country with visitors in an authentic way.

In preparation for reopening Balanggarra Ventures hired and trained around 30 staff, 85 per cent of whom are Indigenous, and most from the local community. Along with its famous pub, the facility features 36 rooms, campgrounds, a swimming pool, conference facilities and a general store.

Road to divestment

The ILSC originally purchased the Home Valley pastoral lease in 1999 with the purpose of returning the property to Traditional Custodians into the future. As part of a transition to eventual divestment of Home Valley and the pastoral lease, the ILSC has been working with Traditional Custodians to explore sustainable opportunities for the land and tourism assets under the terms of the existing pastoral lease.

With the Station managed by ILSC subsidiary Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia Pty Ltd for eight years, the management transition came after a 2020 expression of interest process led to an agreement with Balanggarra Ventures, a subsidiary of Balanggarra Aboriginal Corporation (BAC). The new partnership is a positive step towards divestment.



Image: Annette Ruzicka & The Nature Conservancy

Nari Nari people build property portfolio and sustainability, NSW



“This is a significant event for the Nari Nari people, who have been using traditional knowledge to sustain our country for thousands of years. Having the property back in Nari Nari hands will allow us to pursue sustainable sources of income such as carbon farming, grazing in non-sensitive areas and cultural eco-tourism and enable the intergenerational transfer of knowledge of caring for country.”

Ian Woods, Nari Nari Tribal Council Chairman

The December 2019 purchase of an 88,000 hectare property in southern New South Wales by its Traditional Custodians will ensure the ongoing protection of ecologically vital wetlands and significant Aboriginal heritage sites.

The traditional home of the Nari Nari people, Gayini (Nimmie Cairra) is an environmentally and culturally significant property on the Murrumbidgee floodplains, located between Hay and Balranald in NSW.

An important breeding ground for wildlife often referred to as the ‘Kakadu of the south’, since May 2018 Gayini has been the focus of an ambitious and collaborative wetlands restoration program. More than 2,000 cultural sites, including burial sites, middens and camp sites, have also been recorded on the property to date.

The official return of Country to the Nari Nari Tribal Council (NNTC) – the result of a successful partnership between the ILSC, The Nature Conservancy and the NNTC – will help preserve the Aboriginal heritage and enhance environmental water flows in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Nari Nari access and reconnection with Country will also enable the transfer of knowledge between generations and the development of new enterprises, with benefits flowing to the local Indigenous community.

With the NNTC already the owner of three ILSC-acquired properties – Lorenzo, Toogimbie and Glenhope – the Gayini acquisition galvanises a 20-year relationship between the ILSC and NNTC. Meanwhile, a further \$1.2 million ILSC funding to purchase vital land and water management equipment has removed the ongoing financial burden of equipment and contractor hire for NNTC and is enabling improved employment and training opportunities for local Aboriginal people.

Capital previously used to hire equipment or to engage contractors has been redirected to on-the-job training and work on Country for local Indigenous people and other projects that benefit NNTC members.

Building ongoing partnerships

Gayini represents a successful partnership between government, Aboriginal people and environmentalists. Gayini has been co-managed by the NNTC since May 2018 as part of a consortium including The Nature Conservancy, the Murray-Darling Wetlands Working Group and the Centre for Ecosystem Science at the University of NSW. The \$7 million Gayini purchase by the Nari Nari people was co-funded by the ILSC and NNTC.



Trelawney Station growing education and employment for Indigenous youth, NSW



“The handover of Trelawney gives the Aboriginal community important access to traditional country. Over the past five years, we have been able to use the facilities extensively for our school holiday programs, cultural learning days and training programs for high school students, as well as other community events. The assistance we received in putting our farm management plan and business plan in place will ensure the Tamworth LALC’s ongoing ability to use the land to its full potential.”

Harry Cutmore, Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council Chairperson

The handover of a mixed farming property in northern NSW to the Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council (TLALC) has seen an expansion of education, employment and social services for Indigenous people in the area.

Trelawney Station, a 766 hectare property near Somerton and Tamworth has a history of irrigated and dryland farming associated with livestock enterprises.

Its facilities and infrastructure support a wide range of agriculture and training activities including a homestead, woolshed and sheep yards, cattle yards, hay and machinery sheds, and accommodation and conference facilities.

Since the return of Country in February 2019, the TLALC has been working to diversify its income opportunities; undertake environmental works including weed and erosion control and revegetation; and pursue training and employment programs.

The agricultural business remains a key investment focus, while the property’s newly refurbished accommodation and conference facilities are providing an important source of revenue, hosting a steady stream of visitors as well as cultural and sporting events.

With Trelawney previously the site of heavy vehicle and excavator training, leading to subsequent employment for 10 participants, TLALC is pursuing opportunities to introduce education programs for Aboriginal youth and offenders.

Employment has been provided to one casual Indigenous consultant as well as a full-time caretaker.

The return of Trelawney to former lessee TLALC was the culmination of a five-year partnership with the ILSC to establish training, employment and social programs at the station; develop and implement a 10-year property management plan; and to put the property in a viable financial position for divestment.



Image: Andy Steven Photography & Goolwa PipiCo.

Ngarrindjeri launch commercial Coorong pipi venture, SA



“Kuti have been harvested, traded and consumed for thousands of years and hold significant cultural and economic importance for Ngarrindjeri people. It has long been an aspiration of the Ngarrindjeri nation to acquire a commercial fishing licence and participate in the fishing economy of our land and waters – the funding and support we have received from the ILSC and others has enabled our vision to come to fruition.”

Derek Walker, Kuti Co CEO and Ngarrindjeri leader

An historic multi-million-dollar commercial fishing venture on SA’s Coorong has unlocked a new income source from a traditional Ngarrindjeri food.

Since its December 2019 launch the Indigenous-owned Kuti Co has been commercially harvesting pipi – or ‘kuti’ in the Ngarrindjeri language – a small mollusc that occurs along surf beaches on the south coast of Australia.

Kuti Co has also become a major shareholder in Goolwa PipiCo, Australia’s largest pipi processing and marketing company, with the ground-breaking partnership enabling Goolwa PipiCo to grow its quota from 60 per cent to up to 85 per cent of the total fishery.

Pipi are sold to high-end restaurants, generating a significant annual financial return; ultimately this income will be reinvested in the Ngarrindjeri community and enterprises, enabling long-term economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for the Ngarrindjeri people.

Since its launch the venture has created full-time employment positions and training opportunities in harvesting and processing while also enabling Ngarrindjeri people to continue cultural practices and transfer knowledge associated with the sustainable harvest, trade and consumption of pipi.

Funding has been secured from the Murray Darling Basin Authority to acquire a barge and build an aquaponics facility that will support bait processing, and Kuti Co are now exploring other opportunities in Sea Country management and compliance, research, marketing and promotion and eco and cultural tourism.

Kuti Co is jointly owned by the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation, which represents Native Title holders, and Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation, a small organisation with experience in successfully managing land-based enterprises.

Majority funded by the ILSC, a \$5 million investment over four years enabled Kuti Co to acquire its fishing licence and a significant quantity of commercial pipi quota. The venture is the ILSC’s first investment in sea country assets.



Image: Mark Piovesan

Far West Coast community joins tuna industry, SA



“Indigenous people are under-represented in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries across Australia. Through Wanna Mar Stehr we can bring an Indigenous flavour to the Australian market, telling our story about our sea country and what we’ve been doing for thousands of years. Even overseas we reckon there are big possibilities.”

Paul Vandenberg, Wanna Mar Group Director, Wirrangul man and member of the Far West Coast Aboriginal Community

An Indigenous-owned commercial fishing enterprise operating on the west coast of South Australia will assist the region’s Native Title holders to capitalise on their traditional fishing areas.

The first of its kind in the area, the Wanna Mar Group commenced operations in May 2020 when it acquired 25 tonnes of Southern Bluefin Tuna quota and launched a 50-50 joint venture with Stehr Group, one of Australia’s largest tuna producers.

Wanna Mar is a term meaning ‘Food of the Sea’ in Wirrangul and Mirning languages.

The Far West Coast Indigenous community has a strong connection to Saltwater Country and participation in commercial fishing, where there are low levels of Indigenous participation nationally, has been a long-term aspiration.

Co-owned by the commercial arm of the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation – which represents the interests of the region’s Native Title holders – Wanna Mar intends to reinvest funds into commercial and social initiatives.

Since their launch, Wanna Mar have been working closely with Stehr Group to understand the industry and have plans to commence a training program for Indigenous people that would see graduates placed with other commercial fishing enterprises.

The company is also looking at investing in a sardine licence to value-add to the enterprise.

For Stehr Group, pioneers in the industry and leaders in sustainable Southern Bluefin Tuna management, the partnership is an opportunity for value-adding to their product through Indigenous branding, improved community engagement and new possibilities for business expansion.

The \$7.46 million joint venture combined \$3.56 million in ILSC funds with \$200,000 capital investment by Native Title holders and \$3.7 million Stehr Group capital and assets. It is an example of how ILSC funds and expertise can be leveraged to attract private capital for the benefit of Indigenous people.



Image: Matt Newton & Tasmanian Land Conservancy

Diana’s Basin protected from development after its return to Tasmania’s Aboriginal community, Tas



“This whole coastal area of north east Lutruwita, from St Helens all the way to Musselroe and beyond is the home of our old people, our direct ancestors. We can see their lives written all over this land. We can rejoice with their amazing ability to live securely in this environment for millennia as well as weep for the tragedy that saw them exiled from the land of their birth to die in pitiful circumstances and their graves robbed for the curiosity of the invaders after their death.”

Graeme Gardner, Chairperson, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

Tasmania’s Aboriginal community will be able to reconnect with Country and revitalise their language and culture after becoming custodians of a 195 hectare coastal bush property in north-east Tasmania, the first in the area to be returned to Indigenous ownership.

Located just south of St Helen’s, Diana’s Basin is of high environmental and cultural significance to Aboriginal Tasmanians, values well recognised by both the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (TAC) and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC).

The north-east of Tasmania is an area from which many members of Tasmania’s Aboriginal community are descended and from where Tasmania’s only extant Aboriginal language originates.

Diana’s Basin is of strategic conservation value as it is adjacent to a large coastal reserve, has a pristine intact coastline, uncommon on the east coast, and high-density old growth threatened vegetation communities.

Placing these environmental assets under Aboriginal control will contribute to protecting Tasmania’s biodiversity over the long-term.

In an area prone to residential development, the opportunity to purchase the property arose after it was listed for sale by its previous owner.

With an interim management plan in place, TAC’s rangers will be responsible for the property’s management, conducting weed and feral animal control and protecting endemic and threatened species.

A more comprehensive Healthy Country plan is intended in conjunction with the TLC while the long-term vision may include establishing a cultural tourism operation, yielding employment and training opportunities.

The \$1.2 million purchase in September 2021 was co-funded by the ILSC (\$655,185), TLC (\$500,000) and TAC (\$200,000). An additional \$100,000 ILSC grant will allow TAC to establish facilities that will enable families to visit and camp on the property.



20,000 year Garden Range rock art sites returned to Taungurung Traditional Owners, Vic



“The acquisition of the Garden Range rock art site is of substantial cultural significance to the Taungurung people, exemplified by a history that dates back more than 20,000 years. The return of this land will enable us to care for Country using techniques passed down by our ancestors, ensuring the location is preserved and protected for all Taungurung people – present and future – to see.”

Matthew Burns, Chief Executive Officer, Taungurung Land & Waters Council

Two rock art sites estimated to be over 22,000 years old in Euroa, Victoria have been afforded greater protection after they were returned to the Taungurung Traditional Owners in March 2020.

The two sites are part of a complex of four rock shelters featuring paintings using natural pigments located on the Garden Range, an eastern outlier of the Great Dividing Range.

The only known rock art sites on Taungurung Country, and a rare example of rock art in Victoria, the complex is of significant cultural importance to the Traditional Owners represented by the Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation (TLaWC).

They provide evidence of the Taungurung people's many thousands of years' occupation of Country and their depiction of ancestral beings are an important connection and focal point for the Taungurung's shared cultural identity.

While two of the four shelters are within the Mt Wombat-Garden Range Flora and Fauna Reserve, the two acquired shelters were located on privately-held land where they were vulnerable to unrestrained stock, particularly sheep taking shelter and rubbing against the art, feral animals and natural weathering processes.

With the return of the 22 hectare parcel of land, the sites are now under the protection of the Taungurung who have incorporated the property into their Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

A more specific site protection plan will be developed in conjunction with Parks Victoria while the land management activities will be undertaken by the TLaWC's natural resources management team.

ILSC funding of \$265,000 enabled the purchase of the land and the installation of boundary fencing and a gated access track.



Port Smith Bird Park - cultural gateway to the Kimberley, WA



A four hectare park at Port Smith near Broome, WA is to be the site of a Karajarri Tourism Hub and Cultural Base.

Situated in the Karajarri's Tourism Zone, the Port Smith Bird Park - or Purnturpurnturr - lies 170 kilometres south of Broome and is an acknowledged tourism 'hotspot' featuring a diversity of marine life, flora and fauna.

The Karajarri people are Traditional Owners of the land and intertidal zone along the south-west Kimberley coast, WA, and extending several hundred kilometres eastwards into the Great Sandy Desert.

The Karajarri Traditional Lands Association's (KTLA) long-held vision has been to transform the property into the Kimberley's 'Southern Indigenous Cultural Gateway' creating intergenerational employment, economic participation, wealth creation, social inclusion, cultural preservation, environmental conservation and, most importantly, regaining control over traditional lands.

The Tourism Hub and Cultural Base masterplan includes a café, bush tucker garden, a range of accommodation facilities, campground, special cultural areas, a visitors centre and shop, gallery and rangers facilities.

Since the property was returned to their management KTLA have a functional base for management of its Indigenous Protected Area and other environmental works and has invested in property clean up, visitor management, cultural site protection and hosting a range of events.

KTLA have finalised an investment attraction prospectus package with assistance from Ernst Young and continue to seek funding through a range of potential project partners and users of the facilities to realise their masterplan.

The property was purchased by the ILSC in 2017 for \$850,000 and is leased to KTLA with a view to future divestment.



Image: Matt Newton

Kings Run returned to Indigenous protection and management, Tas



“The purchase of Kings Run provides an important well-being benefit to the community, coming at a time when the Aboriginal community is struggling to achieve adequate protection of similarly valuable heritage places along the west coast. This change also provides opportunity to develop culturally and socially on this property.”

From ILSC Progress Report

The 2016 return of a 338 hectare property on Tasmania's north-west coast to the Aboriginal Land Council provides further protection to a significant piece of the state's Indigenous cultural heritage.

Kings Run lies near the coastal town of Arthur River within the National Heritage listed Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape and at the northern entry to the Tarkine wilderness area.

The property is home to numerous documented cultural sites and provides habitat for threatened species including the Tasmanian Devil, Orange-Bellied Parrot and Wedge-Tailed Eagle.

The handback to Tasmania's Aboriginal community was the latest step in the protection of the property.

In the hands of the King family since the 1880s, for over a century the property was run as a beef farm until the mid 1990s when it was destocked by the King's and placed under a voluntary conservation covenant with the Tasmanian Government that would protect its significant environmental values into perpetuity.

Today the handback has provided Tasmania's Aboriginal community with access and connection to their land and cultural heritage. Property management is delegated to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and there are aspirations to develop economic and employment opportunities through eco/cultural tourism and to prepare a Healthy Country Plan to guide the property management.

The handback of Kings Run to the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania was funded through a \$680,000 grant from the ILSC; \$385,000 from the Bob Brown Foundation and Tasmanian Land Conservancy; and a \$325,000 philanthropic gift from Wotif founder Graeme Wood.



Mt Tabor Station 'Goorathuntha' thriving post-divestment, Qld



The November 2016 handback of a 76,000 hectare grazing property to the Goorathuntha Traditional Owners Limited (GTOL) provided the foundation for the next stage of the property development.

Located 700 kilometres west of Brisbane, Mt Tabor Station was bought by the ILSC in 1997 for its cultural significance to the Bidjara people and the many cultural, burial, rock art and stencilling sites spread across the property.

From 1998 Keelan Mailman, Bidjara Traditional Owner and 2016 Australian and Queensland Mother of the Year, was employed as caretaker and Bidjara people were using the working cattle station for cultural events.

In 2011 formal divestment discussions commenced, leading to the GTOL leasing the property for three years.

During this time the remains of Bidjara Traditional Owners were repatriated to the property by the Queensland Museum along with numerous artefacts and stone tools, and in 2015, GTOL developed plans for the establishment of a healing centre to deliver programs to address social and emotional wellbeing needs of Indigenous people.

Today, since handback, the GTOL report Mt Tabor to be in 'the best of condition' with dams at full capacity due to good rainfall and a new three-year cattle lease agreement in place.

Significant infrastructure improvements have been made around the property to improve fire management and accommodation; timber yards have been replaced with steel posts and new troughs; and the GTOL continue to host healing events for the Bidjara people and are exploring opportunities for carbon offsets, tourism and agistment.

The pastoral property was bought by the ILSC in 1997 for \$1.2 million. The ILSC has also funded the establishment of a property management plan and major upgrades to water infrastructure, stockyards, buildings and fencing.

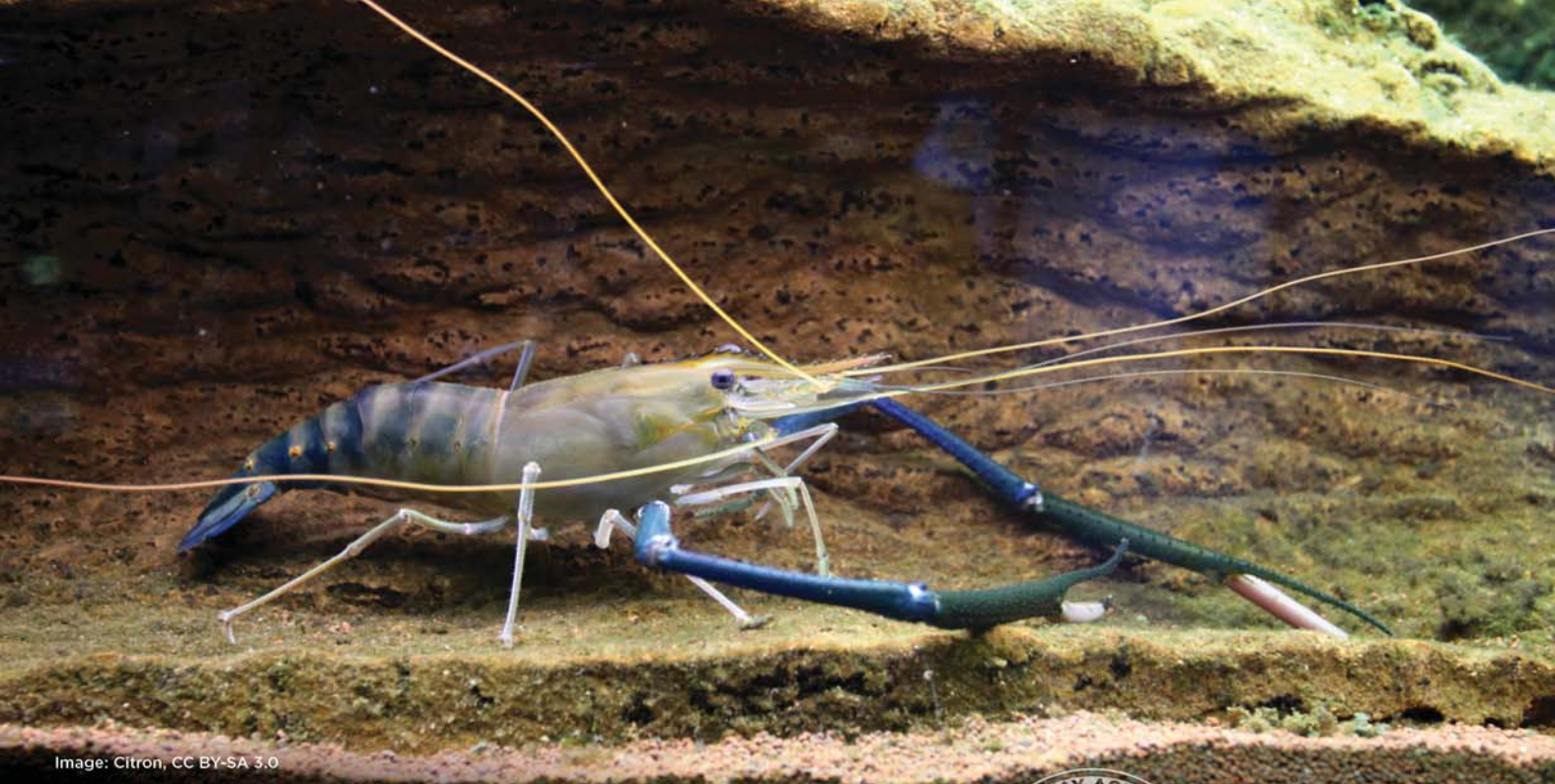


Image: Citron, CC BY-SA 3.0

Australia's first Indigenous cherabin breeding project takes shape, WA



“As well as cherabin, we hope we can create an aquaculture hub, expanding our current mud crab quota and breeding barramundi fingerlings, as well establishing a seafood processing and packing business. We hope to eventually launch a tourism business so that people can come to the property, tour our operations and sample freshly grown produce.”

Ben Burton, Operations Manager, Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation

The Derby-based Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation (ENAC) is continuing its work to become Australia's first organisation to commercialise the breeding of the northern Australian giant freshwater prawn.

ENAC has been operating in the Derby region of WA for 25 years providing various housing management, business development, training and community services, as well as operating a \$450,000 per annum landscaping, gardening and commercial cleaning business.

ENAC reinvests the profits from this business into growing, acquiring and generating new enterprises.

In the last five years ENAC has been proactively exploring opportunities to establish a commercial aquaculture hub that capitalises on the growing Indigenous bush food market and provides local employment.

A significant focus has been on cherabin. Cherabin – or Jarramba in the Nyikina language – are a native Australian giant freshwater prawn that have been part of the local Indigenous diet and culture for thousands of years.

Responding to local community concerns about depleting wild cherabin stocks, ENAC set up successful cherabin farming trials after seeing an opportunity to commercialise the species while also protecting the fishery into the future.

Since 2019, ENAC have been leasing an 89 hectare broadacre farm on the Derby Highway where they have been establishing their aquaculture and agriculture business hub, and creating training and employment opportunities for local Indigenous people.

With the recent completion of a tender process, work is underway to scale up their hatchery facilities and construct up to 60 ponds for cherabin grow-out and a processing facility.

ENAC also took over the small turf growing business operating on the property with the purpose of generating income from the land while setting up the aquaculture infrastructure. Since taking over the business, ENAC have invested in updating ageing and failing irrigation and infrastructure and in reskilling employees in turf production and irrigation pivot operations to ensure they can continue to deliver a consistent product to market.

Road to divestment

The ILSC purchased the \$850,000 Derby Highway property on behalf of ENAC in 2019 immediately divesting the turf business. The four-year lease agreement on the property will enable ENAC to establish its operations towards the ultimate goal of divestment of the property. Additional ILSC funding of \$956,280 was provided for the hatchery and grow out ponds



Women's refuge centre protects and educates against family violence, WA



“Our clients and staff continue to improve their understanding and awareness of the impacts of violence on our community. You can never underestimate the positive impacts that occur for Aboriginal staff working within the domestic violence sector. Staff and clients who work together at the refuge are on a journey of change for the best.”

From ILSC Progress Report

A Western Australian crisis accommodation and child support services continues its key role in providing safe accommodation for women and their children escaping family and domestic violence.

The purpose-built facility managed by the local Aboriginal Corporation employs and trains Indigenous staff in providing culturally appropriate and sensitive care to deliver support services for families who are escaping domestic violence and other family breakdown.

The purchase of new premises in 2017 enabled the refuge to expand to accommodate larger family groups, families with older boys and children with disabilities.

The capacity of services soon doubled thanks to additional funding contributions totalling more than \$7 million.

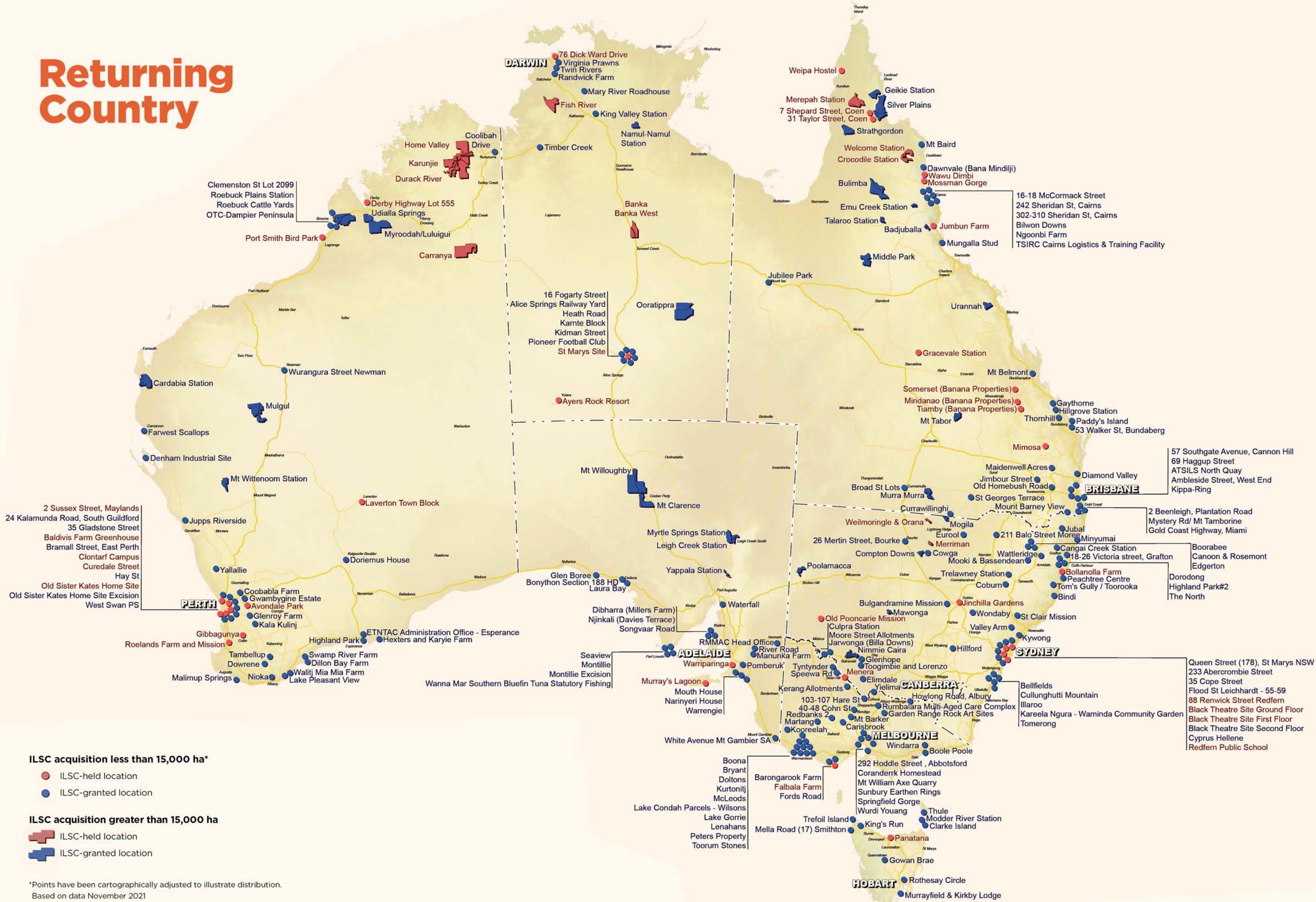
The majority of the refuge's clients identify as Aboriginal and 10 of the organisation's 15 staff are Indigenous including the Manager and Coordinator who have both been supported to complete a Diploma of Leadership.

All activities acknowledge Aboriginal culture and recognise that incorporating cultural connection into service delivery aids the healing process.

The expansion of the facility has proved timely in managing COVID-19, with its purpose-built nature enabling women and children to isolate in their own units while still having access to the necessary refuge support during lockdown periods.

The ILSC provided \$1 million for the purchase of the new property in 2017. Geographic and staff names have been withheld to protect staff and clients.

Returning Country



ILSC acquisition less than 15,000 ha*

- ILSC-held location
- ILSC-granted location

ILSC acquisition greater than 15,000 ha

- ILSC-held location
- ILSC-granted location

*Points have been cartographically adjusted to illustrate distribution. Based on data November 2021



**From little
things...
big things grow**

Kakadu Plum (Gubinge) in the Northern Territory

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**MANAGEMENT
PROJECTS**

Managing Country

We don't just buy and return Country - we also assist Indigenous people to manage their assets and realise their aspirations.

Our management projects are many and varied, ranging from building and infrastructure repairs and installations; education and training; and business planning, mentoring and support.

Since 1995, we have invested in kindergartens, schools and childcare; aged care; social enterprises; women's shelters and men's groups; health and wellbeing initiatives; community gardens; carbon farming projects; solar panel installations; art and cultural centres; farming equipment; and fire training; and we have financed numerous underpinning business cases and feasibility studies.

Often involving smaller investments, these projects can lead to big things.

Funds for a tractor, for example, can deliver greater productivity from an agricultural enterprise which in turn leads to revenue which can be driven back into a business.

Likewise, a simple investment in solar panels can both deliver on sustainability goals and drive down electricity costs freeing up precious funds for re-investment and business growth.

The following case studies are all excellent examples of how a simple ILSC investment can lead to the generation of significant social, cultural, economic and environmental capital that deliver for future generations.



Critical infrastructure repairs to return community to islands, Tas



“Tayaritja (Bass Strait Islands) are very special to the palawa people. The continued connection to these islands is very important to our people. This project has better helped the palawa community keep in touch with this country, share knowledge, and care for this country.”

David Lowery, Land Management Coordinator, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

Vital infrastructure repairs on two Tasmanian islands have restored access for Tasmania’s Indigenous community to share their stories and connections to the Islands.

Both Indigenous Protected Areas, Mount Chappell Island and Lungtalanana Island belong to the Furneaux Group of Islands in Bass Strait, a region 20 kilometres to the north-east of Tasmania known by its Indigenous name of ‘tayaritja’.

Renowned for their significant cultural and environmental values – Mt Chappell for its mutton bird (yula) breeding grounds and Lungtalanana Island for its Aboriginal occupation sites and environmentally significant Xanthorrhoea forest – ageing and unsafe infrastructure on the islands had restricted visitation.

Work undertaken by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (TAC) in early 2021 saw the Lungtalanana Island wharf and docking infrastructure refurbished, the workshop buildings repaired and solar power restored, while accommodation was repaired on Mt Chappell Island.

In addition to providing safer living and working conditions for the Islands’ six rangers, the improvements will enable the TAC to continue to implement the tayaritja Healthy Country Plan and realise its goals: to provide access for community to maintain cultural connections; to manage and protect the land to ensure it is healthy; and to protect its cultural heritage.

Community access to ‘tayaritja’ is essential to pass on, promote and strengthen ‘tunapri’ – knowledge and stories about Indigenous connection to the islands shared by practicing culture, mutton birding and visiting heritage and occupation sites.

TAC, an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation representing the political and community development aspirations of the Tasmanian Indigenous community – approximately 25,000 people – provides important social, cultural and land management services across Tasmania.

The work was carried out with a \$211,247 ILSC grant.



Solar panel investment to support next generation of Indigenous media professionals, Qld



“As the traditional custodians of this country, we have always nurtured the environment for the sustainability for future generations. We all have a corporate and social responsibility to source sustainable energy and help mitigate the causes of climate change. The 98.9FM Solar Project is our contribution to the future – a more environmentally sustainable future – and the future of our workforce.”

Jyi Lawton, CEO, Brisbane Indigenous Media Association

The financial savings made from the installation of a solar panel system to the Brisbane Indigenous Media Association (BIMA) premises are supporting a new generation of Indigenous media professionals.

BIMA’s 98.9FM Solar Project was carried out in June 2021 to reduce the electricity costs for the West End business with the forecasted \$22,964 savings used to employ a new Indigenous Trainer and Assessor to provide training in Certificate III in Screen and Media.

Up to 15 school-based Indigenous trainees across Queensland are expected to benefit from the 12 month program which will combine theory with a weekly

paid work placement exposing the trainees to the organisation’s experienced broadcasters, and to projects that contribute to the broader Indigenous community, including NAIDOC and other key community events.

The project meets BIMA’s commitment to a more environmentally sustainable future and to mitigating the causes of climate change.

The work was carried out with a \$76,470 ILSC grant.



Tidal Moon resurrecting centuries old sea cucumber trade, WA



“The Tidal Moon project is an acknowledgement to the history of Aboriginal commerce. Australia’s first export was trade of sea cucumbers and our goal is to preserve and enhance our heritage while creating a business that will last for years to come.”

Michael Wear, Mulgana Traditional Owner and Tidal Moon Managing Director

An Indigenous-owned wild sea cucumber harvesting business on Western Australia’s Coral Coast received funding in October 2019 to install start-up operating equipment.

Incorporated in 2017, Tidal Moon Pty Ltd is an emerging business looking to resurrect a centuries old trade route between Asia and Indigenous people.

The equipment – purchased to establish a dried sea cucumber onshore processing facility based at Denham, Western Australia – includes a heavy-duty cooker for blanching, a temperature-controlled greenhouse for drying, a specialised dive vehicle for harvesting and training, a dome shelter and storage shed, and related building and electrical works.

Since the funding Tidal Moon Pty Ltd has been establishing connections with the Asian sea cucumber market and improving its knowledge base around sea cucumber breeding, farming, sea ranching and aquaculture through various industry, university and government collaborations.

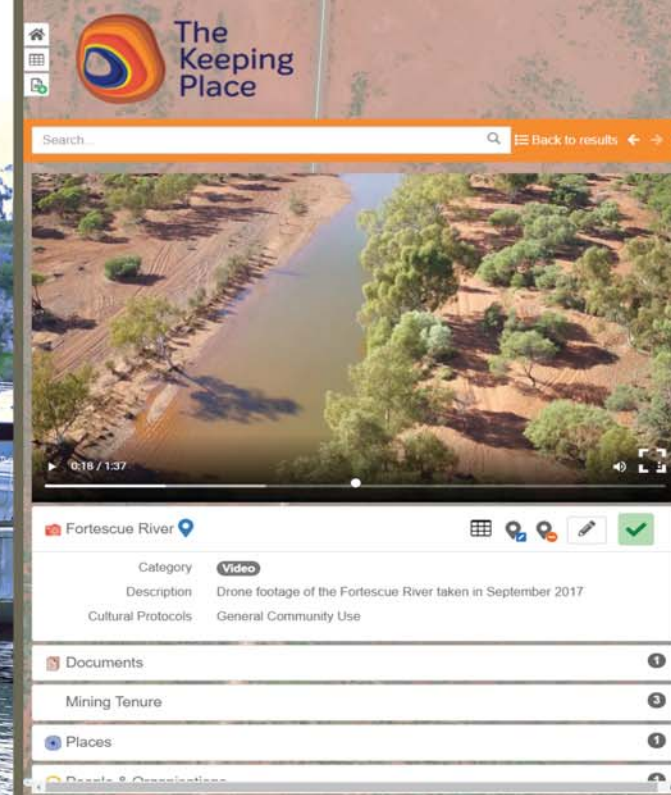
Tidal Moon is keen to collaborate with local Aboriginal communities and to see traditional knowledge passed from one generation to the next in support of social and cultural wellbeing.

The business has reported that it has now employed eight Aboriginal people including five trained as divers and two staff also completing their coxswain qualifications. Training is intended for 10 Indigenous job seekers, with employment expected to grow to 25-30 Indigenous people in the first five years.

Certified training in marine industry operations will be delivered through Tidal Moon’s partnerships with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), CSIRO, the South Metropolitan TAFE (Fremantle) and the Swan Maritime Institute.

The equipment was purchased with a \$91,799 ILSC grant.

Also known as beche-de-mer or trepang, sea cucumbers are considered a delicacy in Asia, prized for their culinary and medicinal properties. They are traditionally harvested, dried for preservation and then rehydrated before eating and were once traded between Macassan seafarers of modern-day Indonesia and Indigenous people from the Kimberley and Arnhem Land regions



The Keeping Place: online system protects and stores cultural knowledge

“The Keeping Place is important because it means we now have a program that can keep hold of our knowledge, language, and stories. The information can be looked after by our corporation and preserved for future generations.”

Brian Tucker, Niyiyaparli Traditional Owner

The Keeping Place – an Indigenous-controlled social enterprise with an innovative online cultural heritage management system – was originally founded through a strategic collaboration between native title organisations, mining companies and the ILSC.

Established as a WA pilot project in 2016 through a collaboration between mining companies and Pilbara Native Title groups, the Keeping Place project responded to the need for a means to digitally return to the rightful custodians the enormous body of cultural and heritage information generated through resource industry archaeological surveys, ethnographies and research projects.

The result was an innovative technology solution for managing native title and related land management and development issues that also provided meaningful access to cultural information drawn from more than 40 years of heritage surveys conducted by resource companies.

Importantly, Traditional Owners developed the cultural protocols to be applied in the system that govern access permissions and ensure knowledge sharing is conducted sensitively.

Today, the not-for-profit company is making the technology available nationally through a subscription model that may enable other Indigenous corporations to join as owner-members of the company. There are currently six subscribers.

The innovative geospatial tool puts Traditional Owner stories told during the surveys and research projects into the hands of the people to whom they are most meaningful.

The tool can be used to collect, store and appropriately share cultural knowledge, perform desktop assessments of heritage surveys, plan land management projects, maintain compliance with land use agreements, and access knowledge repositories to support the protection of significant cultural heritage sites.

The initial project was a co-funded partnership involving the ILSC (\$1.56 million); native title groups Karla Niyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation and Yinhawangka Aboriginal Corporation; and resources companies BHP Billiton, Fortescue Metals Group and Rio Tinto, with support from the National Trust of Western Australia.



Kakadu Plum alliance proving a leader in Indigenous bush food market, WA/NT



“Through my training, people have set up their own small family harvesting businesses, and this micro-training has empowered and encouraged people to develop their businesses in their own areas/lands.”

Northern Australia Aboriginal Kakadu Plum Alliance Steering Committee member

The incorporation of the Northern Australia Aboriginal Kakadu Plum Alliance (NAAKPA) – a consortium of eight Aboriginal corporations based in the Northern Territory and Western Australia – is the latest step in its move to self-sufficiency.

Established with the assistance of the ILSC in 2016, NAAKPA has created a supply chain for Kakadu Plum – ‘gubinge’ in Western Australia – a native fruit that grows almost exclusively on Indigenous-held land across northern Australia, from the Kimberley to Arnhem Land.

Since 2019 NAAKPA members have collectively harvested over 52 tonnes of Kakadu Plum with a farm gate value of more than \$1.5 million; over 400 people, mainly women, have been involved in the harvest which generates significant economic, cultural and social benefits on-Country.

Through their alliance, NAAKPA have increased the operational capacity and capabilities of each of the Aboriginal enterprises by providing food safety audits; chemical and microbial testing of fruit; the development of marketing material; and the creation of marketing opportunities, including representation at the Asia Pacific Food Safety Conference.

Contract templates to protect traditional knowledge have been created and buyers can liaise with the enterprises through a single NAAKPA website.

On the ground, funding has been used to buy equipment including stainless steel benches, freezers, packing machines and all-terrain vehicles, and to support travel to facilitate training, networking and knowledge sharing among the Aboriginal member enterprises.

Today, the alliance has grown to become Australia’s largest Indigenous-controlled native food supply network, representing about 40-45 per cent of the total harvest in Australia in 2019 and with the industry expected to double in value (about \$3.5 million) and increase in volume production by 14 per cent by 2025.

Incorporation of the alliance is an outcome of the NAAKPA five year strategic plan and is expected to lead to long-term growth and sustainability of the Kakadu Plum and wider bushfoods sector in northern Australia.

The ILSC has supported the NAAKPA’s business development through \$1.2 million funding since 2016.



Vision for a world-class tourism experience near Cairns coming to life, Qld



“With the arrival of our commercial vessel and the completion of the visitor facilities at Hills Creek we are now ready to welcome independent travellers with a marketing plan targeting domestic and international visitors.”

Dale Mundraby, Executive Director, Djunbunji Ltd (Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation subsidiary)

The creation of a world-class tourism experience in Cairns – a vision for the Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation (MYAC) – is a step closer after the completion of Stage 1 of the project in 2021.

Located on environmentally and culturally significant land east of Trinity Inlet and just 15 minutes from the Cairns CBD, a prominent 1.1 kilometre boardwalk will connect three activity and observation towers enabling tourists to observe the site’s relationship to Cairns, the wildlife in the inlet, and significant mountain landscapes that are part of the creation stories of the Mandingalbay Yidinji people.

With its meeting spaces, educational and cultural courses, exhibition spaces, ziplines, abseiling opportunities and walking tours, the project is expected to attract the international tourist market to share and experience the Mandingalbay Yidinji people’s traditions, culture, environment and beliefs.

The five-stage project will enable MYAC to incrementally grow its existing Djunbunji Ranger program and small commercial tourism enterprises which operate via boat to the Trinity Inlet, building their capacity towards their ultimate vision for the East Trinity Environmental Reserve.

The ILSC contribution to Stage 1 included construction works, funding towards the purchase of a new 42-seat tour vessel, a Sales and Marketing Manager position, and a Business Sales and Marketing Plan.

Five Mandingalbay Yidinji employees were involved in the construction works – a new gangway, jetty, arrival and amenities shelter and landscaping – with two completing training in Civil Construction. The new infrastructure and commercial tour vessel are expected to improve visitor experience enabling expansion of the existing tourism enterprises and creation of up to five new jobs and additional training.

MYAC will continue to work with stakeholders, including the ILSC, to attract further investment to complete the project and realise their full vision.

The \$2.652 million project is funded by the Queensland Government (\$1.1 million), the National Indigenous Australians Agency (\$782,000) and an ILSC grant of \$770,000. The ILSC grant builds on previous funding in 2014 and 2015 to prepare technical reports and a property management plan which contributed to local council development approvals.



New signage for 'The Granites' raises profile and protection, WA



"Badimia Land Aboriginal Corporation (BLAC) Directors and Members are so proud of 'The Granites' and all Badimia People love spending time there with family. The ILSC grant helped us to take 'The Granites' to the next level by installing signage and a statue. BLAC now proudly does tours of 'The Granites' with groups of people that come to Mount Magnet."

Warren Walsh, Badimia Land Aboriginal Corporation Director

Ongoing efforts to protect and preserve The Granites, a site of significant cultural importance to the Badimia people and the focus of a UNESCO campaign, were boosted in September 2021 with the installation of new interpretive signage.

A series of eroded granite escarpments and the site of 9,000 year old rock art, The Granites are located approximately seven kilometres north of Mount Magnet in WA and are a focus for the Badimia Land Aboriginal Corporation's (BLAC) cultural tourism and land conservation activities.

The design, development and installation of the signage was an outcome of BLAC's Cultural Heritage Interpretation Plan which seeks to promote cultural awareness and develop cultural tourism to conserve The Granites site.

It included a facilitated two-day workshop with the Badimia community and close consultation with the Mount Magnet community and the Badimia Elders Committee.

While COVID-19 restrictions prevented some of the intended community involvement, the signage development and installation led to employment and improved knowledge and skills for Indigenous people.

The project also contributed to the broader goals of the Badimia Employment and Prosperity Program (BEPP) which is engaging the local Indigenous community through employment, training, development and capacity building projects focused on cultural preservation, cultural tourism, arts and land rehabilitation.

There have since been community calls to grant the Granites UNESCO 'geopark' status.

The BEPP project is co-funded by a \$71,964 ILSC grant, \$19,031 from the Shire of Mount Magnet and \$27,273 from the WA Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.



Clients and staff benefiting from renovations to legal service building, NT



"This grant has allowed NAAJA to purchase a permanent office building in Katherine which provides a centrally placed and well known head office to accommodate the staff required to meet the legal service demands for Aboriginal people in Katherine. The new office provides a focal point for Aboriginal people to obtain culturally appropriate legal services in criminal law, civil law, community legal education, Indigenous Prisoner Through care, Custody Notification Service and law and justice services."

Priscilla Atkins, CEO, North Australian Legal Justice Agency

Staff and clients of the largest legal service in the Northern Territory servicing Indigenous people are benefiting from the newly renovated premises in Katherine.

Struggling with inadequate leased premises to service over 3,000 clients per year, the Katherine branch of the North Australian Legal Justice Agency (NAAJA) purchased new premises in 2019.

August 2020 funding to renovate the new space provided for a significantly larger, fit-for-purpose, professional working environment with outdoor space, confidential meeting and interview rooms, a safe client space, and disability access.

Since the renovations, the organisation has consolidated its services in the new building and is benefiting from its proximity to the Katherine Magistrates Court.

NAAJA are reporting improved staff morale, productivity, and collaboration; a culturally safe space for their clients; rental savings of over \$50,000 per annum; and an increased number of Indigenous employees.

With offices in Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Alice Springs, Darwin and Tennant Creek, NAAJA has been providing legal services to Indigenous people for over 45 years and committed over \$1.2 million to the new building acquisition and expansion in Katherine.

The renovations - by an Indigenous construction company - were completed with a \$285,000 ILSC grant which also included a 10-year asset management plan for NAAJA's 15 properties.



Image: Warddeken Land Management Limited

Indigenous carbon farming business delivering fire management training, NT



“Hundreds of Indigenous rangers in Arnhem Land are engaged in fire management each year and to date, they have had limited access to appropriate fire management training that can recognise their skills and knowledge, continue to build their capacity and is contextualised for their operations.”

Jen Ansell, CEO, Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (NT) Ltd

An Indigenous-owned carbon farming business is seeking to secure its future and workforce through the development and delivery of accredited fire management training units specific to the needs of Indigenous ranger groups and the cultural environment in which they operate in Arnhem Land.

Emerging from the success of a 2006 Western Arnhem Land project which became the landscape-scale model for savanna burning methods, Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (NT) Ltd (ALFA) was created by Aboriginal Traditional Owners in Arnhem Land to support their engagement with the developing carbon industry.

Today ALFA is the largest producer of Australian Carbon Credit Units generated through the management of fire in northern Australia's tropical savannas, supporting Traditional Owners to manage five fire projects across over 8,000,000 hectares.

With available training packages in northern Australia ad hoc, piecemeal and primarily based on basic wild-firefighting, ALFA have initiated a new accredited training model specific to Aboriginal fire practitioners engaged in registered savanna burning projects.

Developed over three years and encompassing six accredited units of competency – including early dry season fire planning, aerial ignition practices and late dry season fire suppression – the model will combine traditional fire management practices with western tools and technology and on the job training and mentoring.

Indigenous rangers undertaking this training with ALFA will be able to continue to use these skills and competencies to improve the condition and resilience of Country through fire management. ALFA commenced the project in March 2021 and have developed and trialled the delivery of training materials and assessment methods for four units with rangers from six of their nine partner Aboriginal ranger groups across Arnhem Land.

On completion, the program will be eligible for state/territory training funding and will be widely applicable to other savanna fire projects across northern Australia.

The intellectual property for the training resources will remain with ALFA.

The training is being developed and delivered by ALFA in partnership with a local Registered Training Organisation with the ILSC contributing \$279,250 in addition to funds from the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust and ALFA.

Repairs to Central Australian arts centre help visitor expansion strategy, NT



“The most significant outcome of this project is the changes to the facilities at the art centre: the plumbing is up to code now; the toilets can be used and are appropriate. The art centre is now in a state in which artists can work comfortably in the facility.”

From ILSC Progress Report

The first arts centre established for the women of the Western Desert Art Movement has undergone essential repairs as part of ongoing efforts to capitalise on the growing West McDonnell Ranges tourism market. Situated 250 kilometres west of Alice Springs, Ikuntji Artists has been based in the same building in Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff) since its establishment in 1992 and neglected maintenance issues had led it to become unsafe and unfit-for-purpose. With the arts centre the main employer in the community and a cultural, social and tourism hub, the mounting health and safety issues were creating a deterrent for visitors and artists.

The October 2019 repair works – including new gutters, rainwater tanks, security screens, seating, signage and internal plumbing works – complemented other projects seeking to attract tourists and improve the visitor experience. This includes accommodation units constructed with Ikuntji Artists own funds, enabling overnight stays, and additional grants to strengthen the Ikuntji Artists' marketing, infrastructure and art operations.

Since 2012, the centre has rapidly expanded as a tourist destination; annual visitor numbers have increased from 50 in 2012 to 1,000, with tourists comprising 70 per cent of the centre's market. Today the new facilities provide greater comfort for artists and visitors alike.

Ikuntji Artists represents 81 members, all of whom are Indigenous, and six staff, four of whom are Indigenous, and has recently introduced screen printing as an additional income stream.

Having fulfilled the goals of their five-year business strategy in less than three years, the organisation is preparing a new plan which will include additional upgrades.

The repairs were funded through a \$100,000 ILSC grant to the Ikuntji Artists Aboriginal Corporation with \$10,928 from the NT Government.

New campground to generate economic benefits to Dampier Peninsula, WA



A new \$3.67 million campground that will be built by the Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation (DAC) will improve visitor access to cultural tourism experiences on Western Australia's remote, predominantly Indigenous-controlled, Dampier Peninsula.

The Djarindjin Junction Campground will take advantage of recent road sealing works, providing large vehicles, caravans and camper trailers with a key service point and access to many of the region's Indigenous-controlled tourism offerings.

With no current caravan and camping overflow site and many of the peninsula's tourism operators unable to accommodate large vehicles, tourism enterprises often book out in the peak dry season.

The campground will include multiple caravan sites, campsites, car bays, ablution and laundry blocks, kitchen and eating areas as well as fencing and road infrastructure.

Positioning the campground at the intersection of the road leading to the communities on the west of the peninsula and the road into the northern peninsula, will help manage the influx of visitors during the dry season, particularly those in large vehicles.

The new campground will combine with the existing Djarindjin Junction Roadhouse and other site facilities, where travellers must stop for fuel and provisions.

The campground augments DAC's current tourism business approach in the northern Dampier Peninsula and is expected to generate economic and employment benefits for the many Indigenous-controlled businesses beyond the campground.

DAC already operates basic chalets from its Roadhouse and operates the Kooljaman Resort together with the Ardyaloon Aboriginal Corporation.

Djarindjin's contribution to the accommodation supply will enable the award-winning Kooljaman Resort at Cape Leveque to focus on higher yielding visitor accommodation types, and Lombadina community and bush camping to develop its more intimate community immersion experiences.

Other Aboriginal-controlled tours in the region expected to benefit include the Gumbanan Wilderness Retreat and Ardyaloon Trochus Shell Hatchery.

With an additional 13-15 positions expected to be created within existing tourism businesses, DAC is also exploring new Aboriginal tours and experiences operating from the campground and roadhouse.

The project is funded by Tourism Western Australia, Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council, the ILSC and DAC with ILSC funding (\$949,113) for foundational civil engineering works.



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INDIGENOUS
GROUPS FUNDED

What changed as a result?

Large or small, we want all our investments to generate long-term positive outcomes for Indigenous people.

We regularly check in with our proponents to ask them how they are tracking and the changes they are seeing emerge from their funded activities.

The following are a selection of the things we are told when we ask "What changed as a result?"

With this help we have successfully repaired 90% of the water infrastructure, decreased [stock] fatalities, and now have better land utilisation overall. The properties are moving toward a more integrated and reliable production hub. This is stabilising the business and will see an increase in future opportunities for us, the Indigenous Shareholders, local businesses and people alike.”

Activity Developed grazing management infrastructure to protect cultural sites and improve productivity on a 402,769 hectare pastoral property in north-west WA (granted in 2019).

Outcome Infrastructure improvements have provided 550 additional Indigenous people with access to country; greater enterprise efficiency after installing solar water points to reduce costs; and the employment of up to 27 Indigenous staff per year.

Investment \$1,000,000, Walalakoo Land Holding Aboriginal Corporation and Kimberley Agriculture and Pastoral Company Pty Ltd as Trustee for KAPCO Performance Trust, Derby WA, 2019

Ownership of the centre has allowed us to survive and so continue to manage and build these other services.”

Activity Grant to enable Indigenous ownership of a property leased by 10 existing Indigenous service providers.

Outcome Indigenous ownership has safeguarded service continuity to over 4,000 Indigenous people per year; ensured retention of 32 existing Indigenous employees; and avoided the costs of finding alternative accommodation for the 10 service organisations. Granted in 2019, the property has supported up to 14 employees per year; involved 28 Indigenous people in ongoing planning activities; supported 50 community cultural events with 856 participants; and delivered services to 2,880 Indigenous people, including exercise and nutrition programs, play group, women’s group, and language classes.

Investment \$550,000, Gurehlgam Corporation Ltd, Grafton NSW, 2019

Community members have been empowered and self-determined by this process. This will be the first Aboriginal medical service to own property on the central coast. Community members are inspired to be part of this process.”

Activity Development of a comprehensive building needs assessment and accommodation plan for a purpose-built, integrated community-controlled healthy facility.

Outcome The assessment and accommodation plan provided the group with a clear understanding of its future building needs and can now be utilised to identify suitable properties in the Wyong area.

Investment \$17,000, Yerin Aboriginal Health Services Limited, Wyong NSW, 2021

This project has brought an instant, recognisable enthusiasm and interest in working on country and bringing the long term vision of the Elders to fruition. The site looks the best it has and country is happy.”

Activity Purchase and installation of a sustainable, off-grid power and water solution at a healing and resource centre.

Outcome The infrastructure upgrades have improved enterprise efficiency by reducing costs, improving the health and safety of centre users, enabling irrigation of the bush medicine garden and improving the capacity of people and programs that can be operated at the centre. The investment has also enabled delivery of eight events involving 390 Indigenous participants, including hosting the NT Women’s Healthy Country forum.

Investment \$105,000, Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation, Tindal NT, 2021

Indigenous rangers and students now have the ability to use this vessel for inshore training, sea country work and maritime training activities. It provides additional capability to respond to search and rescue incidents, assisting Police if required.”

Activity Purchase of a boat and trailer to help manage Sea Country in an Indigenous Protected Area.

Outcome The boat and trailer have enabled improved access to Country for an additional 16 Indigenous people; eight participants in five cultural activities; improved management (crocodile management, seagrass and cultural mapping) and training undertaken by 17 people (crocodile trap installation and servicing, harpoon training, oyster surveying, and accredited maritime training).

Investment \$64,000, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, Nhulunbuy NT, 2021



Children are becoming more resilient and able to confide in community members and/or workers about issues affecting them personally.”

Activity Grant to enable Indigenous acquisition and development of a commercial building.

Outcome Indigenous ownership has enabled consolidation and expansion of the property’s existing family and medical services, and the creation of a cultural hub for people to come together for cultural activities, celebrations and sorry business. 270 additional Indigenous people now have access to Country; 740 are accessing culturally-safe services; 11 are employed; and 12 have undertaken additional training.

Investment \$2 million, Njernda Aboriginal Corporation, Echuca Vic, 2019



We have created safe, clean, tidy areas for our people to relax and spend time together, telling stories and cooking kangaroo tails. Everything looks so good and well maintained and that gives everyone a good feeling too.”

Activity Purchase of a tractor and slasher to improve access to homelands.

Outcome Use of the tractor and slasher has improved access to the homelands, enabling the development of year round tourism and a community gathering place where 25 Indigenous people have engaged in six cultural activities, including caring for Country activities (weeding, snake management, road maintenance, growing bush medicine plants), yarning, and sharing culture with the younger generation and tourists. Works have also improved health with resulting dust suppression reducing asthma, itchy skin and ticks.

Investment \$78,000, Kathleen Buzzacott, Alice Springs NT, 2021



Through facilitated bush trips, the maintenance of culture is nurtured through connecting with community members and country. It also enables engagement with the elderly and youth in exchanging culture to emerging generations.”

Activity A bespoke fitout for Marrawuddi Gallery including an art gallery, cultural hub, coffee shop and retail outlet.

Outcome The productivity of the art gallery and its two associated Indigenous-owned enterprises has been improved. Local Indigenous artists have access to a collaborative space to attend workshops, create art and more easily sell their work. An additional three Indigenous people have been employed; and 511 people have participated in 30 community cultural events, including sharing knowledge about traditional stories, painting methods, language and collecting materials from country.

Investment \$100,000, Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, Jabiru NT, 2021



Activity Acquisition and grant of Kooreelah, a property used for cattle fattening and as a base for social and training programs and community events.

Outcome As well as improved enterprise productivity, the project has enabled access to Country for an additional 300 Indigenous people; up to nine employees per year; delivered legal, mental and physical health services to 276 people; improved the knowledge and skills of 39 people; and has hosted 55 cultural community or caring for Country events attracting 188 Indigenous participants, and 20 non-Indigenous participants.

Investment \$421,000, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, Powers Creek Vic, 2014 (granted 2018)



Training is improving staff confidence in decision-making on the property.”



Carbon workshop outcomes include greater autonomy and understanding in relation to the operation of a carbon project.”

Activity Expansion of seven Indigenous enterprises' carbon projects across the Kimberley.

Outcome The expanded carbon projects have enabled on-ground fire operations, monitoring and associated training activities across 11 million hectares; an additional 21 Indigenous people employed and 69 able to access Country; four new enterprises have been established and two expanded productivity; 150 Indigenous people have undertaken training, and 241 have participated in planning activities; and 236 Indigenous people and 49 non-Indigenous people have participated in 67 cultural events relating primarily to traditional knowledge sharing.

Investment \$550,000, Kimberley Land Council, Broome WA, 2017



The presence of a RMMAC office is building the profile of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee (FPRMM) across the Riverland. The central location is encouraging business and organisations to meet and engage with us.”

Activity Grant to enable Indigenous ownership of a commercial building.

Outcome Indigenous ownership of the property has provided a central office location for up to 42 employees, meeting space and provided rental income from existing leaseholders. This has resulted in increased enterprise productivity; engagement and training of one additional Indigenous employee; and three cultural events.

Investment \$387,000, River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, Berri SA, 2020



Having a nice, new greenhouse has increased the pride and happiness for the staff working here. It feels world-class. They want to take care of it, and they are proud when visitors come.”

Activity Upgrade of Karguru Camp nursery facility including new shadehouses, storage shed, training facility and air conditioner.

Outcome The infrastructure improvements have increased the nursery's productivity; enabled the engagement of four additional Indigenous employees; improved the knowledge of five nursery staff; and supported 15 community events at the nursery.

Investment \$94,270, Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation, Tennant Creek NT, 2019

25 YEARS

SUPPORTING POSITIVE CHANGE

Since our establishment in 1995, \$1.26 billion has been invested through 1,261 projects. This includes 959 management projects and 302 acquisition projects. The acquisition projects have led to the purchase of 270 land interests covering 6.3 million hectares, and two water interests (pipi and southern bluefin tuna quota).

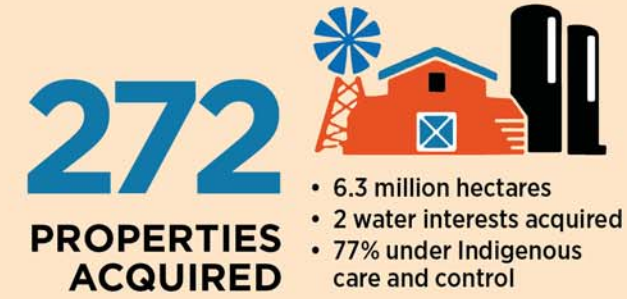
As of June 2021, over three quarters (77 per cent) of our land and water acquisitions – 211 properties – were under the care and control of an Indigenous title holder.

We have supported Indigenous people to bring products and services to market - this includes cultural and ecotourism ventures such as Djarindjin Campground (p 37) and Port Smith Bird Park (p 19); niche Indigenous products such as Kakadu plum (p 32) and sea cucumber (p 30); and the provision of culturally-led ecosystem services such as carbon farming and traditional fire management (p 36).

And we have assisted Indigenous people to strengthen knowledge and culture through ventures like the Northern Australian Kakadu Plum Alliance (p 32), Kuti Co (p 15); through the protection of culturally significant Country such as Cullunghutti Mountain (p 8); and through the provision of culturally appropriate services such as the North Australian Legal Justice Agency (p 35), Warriparinga (p 10) and Purple House (p 11).

Since 2018, ILSC projects have enabled 765 Indigenous people to be employed on average per year, while 2,370 Indigenous people have completed training related to the development of land and water-based opportunities on average per year since 2011.

Since 2011, on average per year through our projects, the environmental and/or heritage values of over 4.2 million hectares of Country has been managed; 9,371 Indigenous people have improved access to Country; 429 culturally significant sites have been managed; and 9,800 Indigenous people – and 3,012 non-Indigenous people – have participated in 712 cultural events on Country.



*on average/year, 2018-21
**on average/year, 2011-21
Unmarked total, 1995-2021.

Unlock your change story

The activities we fund are leading to change for Indigenous Australians

“Community members are continually connecting and talking about the potential this property has and the opportunities that will come in the future as a result.”

“Community days have been a resounding success in bringing communities together to share cultural and social activities.”

“We are now actively on-country and working hard with a young dedicated team doing positive things.”

“Indigenous directors have improved their skills and understanding of the various internal and external factors that contribute towards the long-term success of a commercial enterprise. Governance has improved through better strategic planning and oversight.”

“Properties are now functioning on a positive commercial basis – infrastructure is being progressed with a focus on production efficiencies.”

“The workshop connected participants from more than 12 different native title groups and a range of commercial tourism enterprises to discuss opportunities and issues, share expertise and network.”

Unlock your change story

How can we help you generate change for your community?

We offer a wide range of assistance to Indigenous groups including:

- **Direct funding** for purchasing, managing and/or developing land or water-related interests
- **Advice and capability support** for property owners including information, knowledge, training, systems for project development and delivery
- **Facilitation, advocacy and negotiations** to develop partnerships, markets and other opportunities

We work across a range of sectors including tourism, urban investment, conservation and healthy Country, agribusiness, niche Indigenous products, and water-based enterprises and assets.

We work towards four long-term outcomes where Indigenous people are:

1. Growing the value and productivity of Country
2. Sustainably owning and managing Country
3. Preserving and protecting culture through reconnection with Country
4. Driving and influencing policy and opportunity for Country

What would you like to do? If your project aligns with our long-term outcomes and you meet our eligibility criteria, we can help you:

- Conduct on-ground management activities to maintain or improve the condition of Country (land, water, biodiversity, cultural heritage)
- Address urgent health and safety issues on Country (people, livestock, environment)
- Develop opportunities for formal and informal training and/or employment
- Enable or improve access to Country with cultural significance
- Commence or expand a land or water-based enterprise
- Undertake planning and/or feasibility assessment
- Build or upgrade infrastructure, plant or equipment
- Purchase a land or water-related interest
- Maintain, support and revitalise culture

Contact your local ILSC office to discuss your ideas: 1800 818 490

Putting community at the centre

In the pages of this publication, you have seen the wide diversity of activities that the ILSC supports and the foundations proudly laid for positive change through our acquisition and management projects and our work directly with Indigenous corporations.

Of course that's not all that the ILSC does to drive positive change for Indigenous people.

We also deliver major strategic programs that leverage our skills, scope and scale – initiatives like the Real Jobs Program and the Savanna Fire Management Program in the Northern Territory, the North West Indigenous Pastoral Program in South Australia, and the Reef Trust Project in Queensland – and we have a long history investing in agribusiness programs.

Likewise, we have operated subsidiaries – currently Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia Pty Ltd, the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence Ltd, and Primary Partners Pty Ltd – all geared to leveraging opportunities and benefits for Indigenous people, while the ILSC holds assets for future divestment.

And, as one of Australia's foremost statutory bodies for Indigenous affairs we seek to be key influencers of the national agenda driving policy and reform which see the voices, aspirations and opportunities for Country amplified for Indigenous people.

The ILSC is also undergoing change.

In 2022 we have a brand new Board who will build on the work of those before them and lead us through our next phase of growth.

We are also moving away from being owner-operators of businesses to focus more on being a partner and facilitator in Indigenous ventures. Our focus is on supporting owners of land and water Country to operate their assets with the support of investment, capability and operating partners better placed than the ILSC.

But regardless of shifts in our strategic direction, we remain committed to you – our communities. Assisting you to own and manage assets and realise your aspirations is our inspiration and you remain at our centre. Our vision of Indigenous Australians enjoying the rightful benefits of owning and managing Country is at the heart of our fundamental view that Indigenous people must be agents for social, cultural, economic and environmental opportunities on their Country. We seek to play our part in supporting this.

We thank you for reading about what we do and hope it inspires ideas and innovation.

Joe Morrison, CEO ILSC
February 2022

Help us grow and improve

If you have ideas on how we can better deliver and develop our programs contact our local office on 1800 818 490 to share your thoughts.



Australian Government
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation



The **ILSC GROUP**

PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.

Our Board and Leadership



Ian Hamm
Chair



Claire Filson
Deputy Chair



Joe Morrison
CEO



Nigel Browne
Director



Kristy Masella
Director



Gail Reynolds-Adamson
Director



Kate Healy
Director



Roy Ah See
Director

Established in 1995 under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act*, we provide for the contemporary and future land needs of Indigenous people, particularly those unlikely to benefit from Native Title or Land Rights. We work with our Indigenous partners to grow their economic, environmental, cultural and social capital by supporting their acquisition and management of land and water interests. In redressing dispossession, we provide for a more prosperous and culturally centred future for Indigenous people.



www.ilsc.gov.au
FREECALL 1800 818 490

The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation is a Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*