



Australian Government  
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation



The ILSC GROUP

PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.

# Returning and Managing Country

*Special 30-year edition 1995-2025*

The activities we fund are leading to change for Indigenous people.



“

*It makes me as an Aboriginal person feel really good that we've got such an asset for our people. It enriches our community, giving them access to Country and opportunities like our recent Rangers Gathering.*

Daisy Cutmore, Chair, Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council

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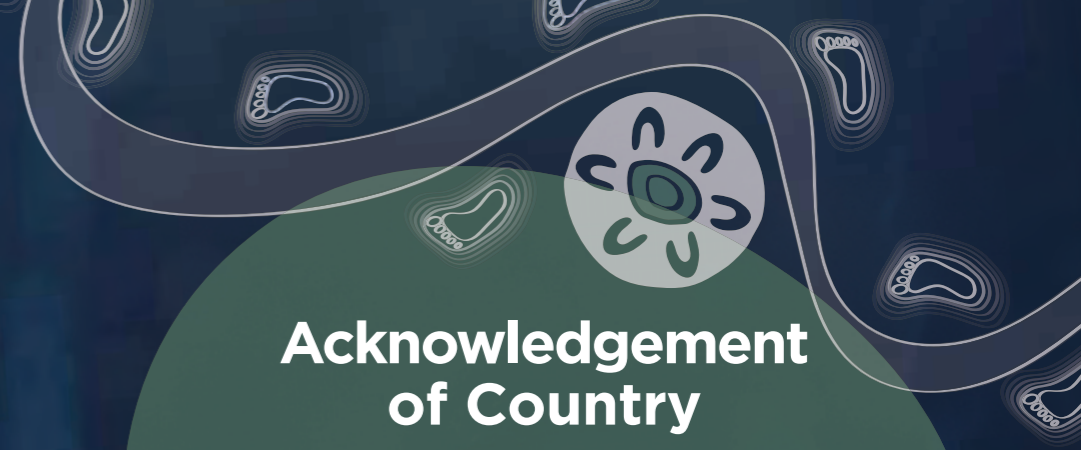
This page: Smoking ceremony for the divestment of the 'Bush Block' to the Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation in August 2022, Queen's Park, Noongar Country, WA  
Image credit: Cole Baxter

Cover: Walaaybaa Rangers Bareki Knox, Lachlan Power and Barega Knox at the inaugural Aboriginal Ranger Gathering held on Trelawney Station in June 2025 - see page 10 for more

Some artwork elements used throughout this publication are the work of Maisie Crawford-Owers, a proud Barkindji woman from Far West NSW.

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



## Acknowledgement of Country

In all our activities we pay our respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, waters and skies on which we live and work. We honour the resilience and continuing connection to Country, culture, and community of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

We recognise the decisions we make today will impact the lives of generations to come.

# 30 Years of Change

Welcome to our special edition of Returning & Managing Country. In this edition, we reflect on 30 years of the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC).

In 2015, a comprehensive history was documented to commemorate our first two decades as the Indigenous Land Corporation.

Now, with a 30-year perspective, a name change, and a focus on our third decade, we continue the story.

We showcase our impact through powerful stories of change, performance data, and a timeline of key events from 2015 to 2025.

We also profile our funded activities for 2024-25, a new generation of projects with First Nations groups that will deliver enduring outcomes for generations to come.

Together, these elements offer a deeper understanding of the ILSC's evolving role, the transformative impact of our work in facilitating the return and management of Country, and our lasting influence on the lives of First Nations peoples.



▲ 20 Year Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) history 1995-2015 publication.





Gayini (Nimmie Caira) on Nari Nari Country, Hay, NSW, was returned to Traditional Custodians in 2019 with ILSC support. Mark Brettschneider, Nari Nari Tribal Council land manager is shown here  
Image credit: Annette Ruzicka & The Nature Conservancy

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## What we do

In 30 years our mandate has remained the same – to buy Country and return it to First Nations peoples, and to support the management of that Country.

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This section records the many hands that have steered the ILSC in the last 10 years, from Chairs and Directors to Group Chief Executive Officers and Ministers, highlighting their commitment to economic empowerment, cultural integrity, and public accountability.





# 291

**PROPERTIES  
ACQUIRED**  
(1995-2025)

6.1m ha

# 251

**PROPERTIES  
GRANTED**  
(1995-2025)

\$234m\*\*/4m ha

# 1,179

**MANAGEMENT  
PROJECTS**  
(1995-2025)



## Returning Country

**For 30 years we have been using our funding to buy Country to give back to First Nations peoples.**

This is our highest profile activity working towards redressing Australia's historic dispossession of First Nations peoples 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 peoples. If required, we also offer an initial leasehold period to prospective titleholders, devising a plan for granting the property while building experience, capability and expertise in property management.

We also help broker large partnerships between Indigenous corporations and existing commercial enterprises that can unlock new markets, capital, capability and capacity, and expand business potential for Indigenous products and services.

We are proud that over three quarters (86 per cent) of the land and water assets that we have purchased since 1995 are under the care and control of an Indigenous title holder.

## Managing Country

**For 30 years, we've also assisted First Nations peoples to manage their assets and realise their aspirations by investing in management projects.**

Over the decades, we've funded an extraordinary diversity of initiatives. These projects have included everything from building construction and renewable energy solutions to equipment for Indigenous ranger programs and new commercial ventures.

We've supported the installation of bores to provide access to potable water, and funded business planning to help communities identify and pursue new opportunities.

These targeted investments are tailored to community needs and goals.

\*\*valuation at grant

All data as at September 2025

A solar array installed to power a new remote ranger base, Mithaka Country, Qld - see page 57 for the story



# 30 years generating change

...a conversation between Joe Morrison & Ian Hamm



To mark the 30-year anniversary of the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC), ILSC Group Chief Executive Officer Joe Morrison (Dagoman/Mualgal) sat down with ILSC Chair Ian Hamm (Yorta Yorta) on Wurundjeri Country in Naarm (Melbourne) for a wide-ranging conversation about the organisation's origins, evolution, and future.

**Joe:** Today we're looking back on the ILSC's origins and journey. I was reflecting this morning on Paul Keating's role in shepherding the bill<sup>1</sup> through Parliament. It was a pivotal time in Indigenous affairs.

**Ian:** Absolutely. The ILSC was born out of the Mabo decision and the Native Title Act [1993], but it was created for a different reason – for those Aboriginal people and communities who wouldn't benefit from Native Title. I remember the debates in Parliament – there was a realisation that the Act was restrictive. So the question became: 'What happens to those who can't claim?'

The government wasn't compelled to create the ILSC. They chose to. They could have said: 'We've done Native Title, that's it.' But they didn't. They recognised many Aboriginal people would miss out and created a mechanism for them to access land – by simply buying it.

That was a fundamental shift in the political dynamic. I remember when the ILC [then Indigenous Land Corporation] was set up, its funding seemed huge. In retrospect, compared to real estate costs, it was probably just a bit more than change down the back of the couch – but it was a start. And to see how much it's grown, and the good it's done, I think people haven't really grasped the impact it's had.

**Joe:** It was a moment when Indigenous people were brought back into the national consciousness. Keating's Redfern Speech, the Native Title Act – it all helped shift the narrative and First Nations peoples from the margins of development.

**Ian:** It moved us from being outside the conversation to being part of it. We weren't just struggling to be heard – we were struggling to speak. It was the start of where Australia had to confront the broader truth about itself.

**Joe:** The Yorta Yorta claim [1995] was an early test of the Native Title Act in terms of establishing continuous connection to Country – what did that outcome mean for you and your community?

**Ian:** That decision still hurts. Justice Olney said we'd been 'washed away by the tide of history.' That was deeply wrong. Our culture had to evolve rapidly over the past 200 years, but our connection to Country, and to that which defines us as the Yorta Yorta people remains. The Native Title Act set a very high bar, and many communities couldn't meet it – not because they lacked connection, but because colonisation disrupted the continuity.

**Joe:** That really shows why the ILSC matters – supporting groups who couldn't meet the Native Title bar to reclaim Country and support their self-determination journey. Over the past 30 years, the ILSC has evolved significantly. What stands out to you?

**Ian:** We started with a narrow remit – buying specific parcels of land for Aboriginal people who couldn't claim under the Native Title Act, and a lot of it was directed towards northern Australia, and for land management activities. Now we support economic development, cultural revitalisation, environmental stewardship...

We've matured, responding to the circumstances of the world around us but in particular, to First Nations peoples and their ambitions. We're not just a land-buying agency – we're a bridge between government and community, contributing to discussion at the highest levels of policy and strategy, and drawing from 30 years of accumulated knowledge. We've moved from just acquiring land to supporting communities in using Country to achieve their economic, cultural, social, and caring for Country goals.

**Joe:** Gunditjmara Country in south-west Victoria is a great example.

**Ian:** Yes, we helped acquire land that's now part of a World Heritage-listed cultural landscape – Budj Bim. Its eel traps and networks of channels, dams and weirs, are one of the largest and oldest waterways and aquaculture systems in the world. I remember visiting Lake Tyers, the old mission, in the late 1980s and hearing Elders talk about their dreams of getting their land back. The ILSC played a key role in making that dream happen – literally buying land as it came onto the market.

1. ATSIC Amendment (Indigenous Land Corporation and Land Fund) Bill 1994



**Joe:** Some properties have been held for a long time, like Karunjie and Durack in the Kimberley. Some say it's been too long. Others say it's a win – it's off the market and waiting for the right time.

**Ian:** It's a win in that it's in the holding bay. The challenge is supporting communities to get to the point where they're ready to take ownership. It's like the Tour de France – you can win a stage, but the real goal is the yellow jersey in Paris. We've won a stage by acquiring the land. The real win is when the community says: 'Thanks, ILSC – we'll take it from here.'

**Joe:** One of the things that the ILSC has been criticised about has been its investment in its subsidiaries. Today we're working through exiting some of these businesses.

**Ian:** From the outside, it did perplex me why the ILSC was accumulating assets and running businesses, but unless you're there, you can't really judge. The ILSC's purpose isn't growth for its own sake, but to transfer assets and capital from non-Aboriginal to Aboriginal ownership.

Sometimes that means holding property until recipients are ready, and that's why our assets have grown. But we're now focused on transferring subsidiaries and legacy properties to Aboriginal communities who want and can use them. Where assets aren't wanted, we're disposing of them to fund things communities *do* want.

**Joe:** The 2019 legislation change to include water rights was another big step. There's a huge demand from First Nations peoples, but it's also difficult to get into that market because water prices are so high.

**Ian:** Dhunggula – the Murray River – runs right through the centre of Yorta Yorta Country; it's the spine which all life comes from. For freshwater and saltwater peoples, water isn't separate from land; it's one and the same. The ILSC's role in acquiring water rights is a vital, natural expansion, even if the market is tough. We're catching up to where Aboriginal identity has always been.

**Joe:** You've spoken about the importance of economic empowerment in a post-referendum environment.

**Ian:** Post-referendum, we've seen the limits of social policy and rights-based approaches for bringing equity for Aboriginal people. Economic empowerment is about unlocking potential – not just closing gaps. The Dja Dja Wurrung in Bendigo are a great example. The ILSC has purchased properties and supported several enterprises. Now they're significant contributors to the Central Victoria economy – no longer on the margins, but at the centre.

**Joe:** Dja Dja Wurrung are also one of our first water acquisitions, with a Yabby farm underway.

**Ian:** Yes, they're expressing their full capability through the economy. That's a fundamental shift – they're an asset to be realised, rather than a deficit to be minimised. First Nations participation enriches the Australian economy. Economic realisation supports our social, cultural, and environmental ambitions, and reframes how people see us, not as a drag on Australia, but as contributors.

**Joe:** Yes, it's not about disregarding or ignoring social policy, but about lifting our gaze so we are part of nation building. You've attended many divestment ceremonies of properties that support a diversity of enterprises. What stands out?

**Ian:** The opening of the Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance – a cultural, public education, and arts centre – in the heart of Coffs Harbour was emotional. People told stories of being excluded from town as kids. Now they're front and centre and adding a sense of depth, identity, and wellbeing to the community.

**Joe:** And Purple House in Coober Pedy, South Australia – supporting renal dialysis on Country.

**Ian:** That's about care, dignity, and self-determination. Giving people the opportunity to receive treatment on their terms on their Country and not having to travel to Adelaide or Port Augusta. It's not about what the ILSC spends – it's about what it means to people.

**Joe:** Where should the ILSC be in 30 years?

**Ian:** Ideally, not needed. That would mean our people have equity, ownership, and self-determination. We weren't set up to serve government – we were set up to serve Aboriginal people. So, until then, our role is to listen – like we did with the current National Indigenous Land and Sea Strategy. And we need to evolve, and empower communities, especially young people, through economic opportunity, policy influence, and purpose-driven leadership that responds to where communities want to go. Our responsibility is bigger than our remit – we must be brave enough to meet it.



The ILSC has supported the return and management of properties that are part of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, Gunditjmara Country, Vic  
Image credit: Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation / Tyson Lovett-Murray



Joe Morrison & Patrick Dodson



David Ross & Joe Morrison

### '30 years of the ILSC' podcast

This article is paraphrased from the new *30 years of the ILSC* podcast. Listen to the full yarn and Joe's chat to David Ross, the ILSC's first Chair, where he reflects on those early years of the organisation's inception.

Other interviewees include Peter Yu, Patrick Dodson, Barry Hunter, Pauly Vandenberg and Jo Taskas.



Available on  
YouTube and Spotify



# Stories of change

As Joe and Ian allude to, 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 intensely emotional experience.

The financial security inherent in ownership of Country can often lead to the development or expansion of enterprises, improved Indigenous employment, strengthened communities and cultural practices, and better protection of Country. This critical economic, cultural, social and environmental capital continues to generate over time to benefit future generations.

Often involving smaller investments, our management projects can lead to big things too. For example, funds for a tractor can deliver greater productivity from an agricultural enterprise, in turn leading to revenue which can be driven back into a business. Investment in building or upgrading a ranger station can provide Traditional Owners with greater access to, and ability to manage, their Country.

And financing strategic or business planning can help a corporation consider new income streams and opportunities for Country.

The following case studies show how the activities we fund are generating positive changes for First Nations peoples in:



*Growing the value of Country*



*Owning and managing Country sustainably*



*Driving policy and opportunity*



*Preserving and protecting culture*

These are the four long-term outcomes we aspire to for all Indigenous communities as we work together to grow Country – land and water – and support their rights to a self-determined future.

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



## CASE STUDY

# Trelawney – a site of cultural renewal and economic opportunity, NSW



The 2019 Trelawney Station divestment ceremony

Former TLALC Chair Harry Cutmore, Deputy Chair Yvonne Kent (deceased), Neville Sampson (deceased), ILSC Board member Roy Ah See and NSWALC Councillors Charles Lynch (far left) and Anne Dennis (far right) and other TLALC and ILSC representatives

Six years ago, the ILSC handed back Trelawney Station on Kamilaroi/Gomeri Country to Indigenous care and control. Today, under the stewardship of the Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council (TLALC), the property is transforming into a thriving centre for cultural renewal, economic empowerment, and community-led development.

We spoke with TLALC Chair Daisy Cutmore and CEO Fiona Snape – a powerhouse combination who have helped shape Trelawney’s journey for over a decade, drawing on their extensive experience in Aboriginal community health, land management, and governance.

Trelawney has long held significance for the Kamilaroi/Gomeri people.

Originally purchased in the 1980s through the Aboriginal Development Commission\*, the 751-hectare property located 40 minutes from Tamworth, was transferred to the then Indigenous Land Corporation in 2005.

Situated on prime cropping, cattle and sheep country on the Peel River, in those early days the station supported cattle grazing and hosted a shearing school, providing valuable training and employment opportunities.

In 2009, when Fiona joined TLALC, the Board and community were ready to lead Trelawney into its next chapter.

This also marked the beginning of a new relationship between TLALC and the ILC – one defined by collaboration, strategic planning, and a shared vision.

‘It was about building trust,’ Fiona said. ‘Neither of us compromised our values or obligations, and that’s why it worked – we came to a mutual understanding that’s been very beneficial to the local Aboriginal community.’

‘There’s also been tremendous growth within the Land Council here,’ added Daisy. ‘Our membership has grown and been more stable, our Board members are diverse in age, and we work well with our CEO and staff who implement our Community, Land and Business Plan.’

That renewed relationship took shape over the next few years, with TLALC eventually taking on a five-year lease in 2013.

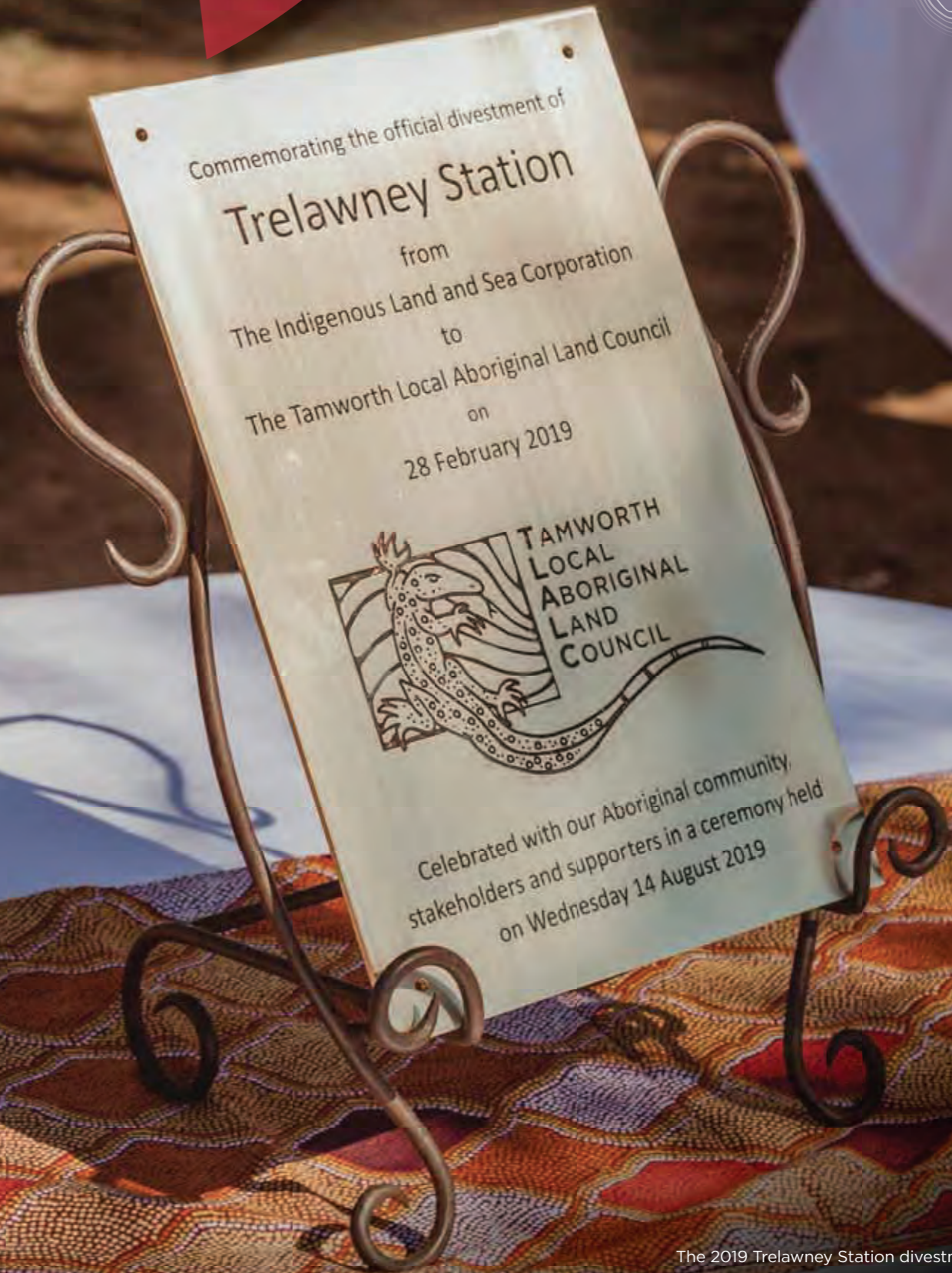
Initially, the group ran its school holiday and cultural activities, and continued its shearing schools.

But with Trelawney central to their Community, Land and Business Plan, they were keen to unlock new income opportunities from farming.

\* predecessor to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

*‘It makes me as an Aboriginal person feel really good that we’ve got such an asset for our people. It enriches our community, giving them access to Country and opportunities...’*

**Daisy Cutmore, Chair, Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council**



The 2019 Trelawney Station divestment ceremony



In 2016, TLALC commissioned a 10-year property management plan and, later, sub-let paddocks to local Aboriginal farming enterprise Judd Park under a lease and profit share arrangement.

Under the agreement, the experienced farmers would run their own cattle, while also upgrading infrastructure, and improving pasture. The option was also there for Judd Park to manage an additional herd that, in time, would be purchased by TLALC.

Community members, volunteers, staff, lessees and contractors worked together to implement the management plan – improving riparian fencing, installing tanks and troughs, controlling weeds, and planting native grasses and trees. Accommodation, the homestead, and conference facilities were also refurbished.

By 2019, when the property was officially divested from the ILSC to TLALC, the group's vision for Trelawney was well underway and they were ready to revisit their goals.

A 2022 revision of the property management plan identified that new cattle yards, laneways and fencing were essential if the land was to support more cattle – these would ultimately be co-funded by TLALC and the ILSC, and delivered in partnership with Judd Park.

'Those infrastructure improvements meant we could safely truck cattle along the laneways and properly handle them in the cattle yards – and the new fencing supported rotational grazing, ensuring our pastures and stock remained healthy,' Fiona reflects. But managing water, sometimes lots of it, was also proving a challenge.

'Trelawney was in poor condition when we took it over,' explained Fiona. 'The access road was atrocious; every time it got rained on, we couldn't access it. We'd have events and it would flood out.'

More recently, funding from other agencies has helped install culverts and repair the road, while a new amenity block added showers and toilet facilities.

'These improvements mean we can safely and reliably host our shearing schools – as well as larger events like our recent Aboriginal Rangers Gathering or International Womens Day event.'

TLALC's path to economic development has been measured but determined.

Income from the Judd Park lease has given the group time to build its capacity and explore new revenue streams.

Trials of barley and canola crops have generated good yields, and Trelawney's water licence is now a source of passive income.

'Trelawney's got a big water licence but we've never used the irrigation infrastructure – it's old and doesn't work,' Fiona said. 'And we would never sell the water licence but we're trading the water under an agreement that, even where there's no annual water allocation [in dry times], we receive a water licence fee.'

Meanwhile, the Walaaybaa Ranger Program, introduced in 2023, offers another emerging income opportunity through caring for Country and education programs.

A team of rangers now operate on a fee-for-service basis across the region while also managing Trelawney – and recently they proudly hosted the first Aboriginal Ranger Gathering, welcoming over 150 rangers from NSW, the ACT, and NT to Trelawney for the five-day event.

Trelawney is also the site of several education and research projects.



'Accommodation, a dance circle, a yarnning circle, our fire pit – all those facilities will support our existing events, but also our bigger picture of running cultural immersion events on Country'

A patch of Country is being monitored to examine the long-term ecological benefits of cultural burning, while a 'tiny forest' – complete with a yarnning circle – will support TLALC's junior ranger program.

'Currently the junior ranger program operates in five schools and involves about 70 kids – the fast-growing, tiny forest will bring the kids to Trelawney so they can see what insects and birds are attracted to the ecosystem, and link it back to the school science curriculum.'

TLALC is also exploring cultural immersion experiences as a tourism offering, aiming to attract visitors from Tamworth, the broader region, and metropolitan markets like Sydney.

'Accommodation, a dance circle, a yarnning circle, our fire pit – all those facilities will support our existing events, but also our bigger picture of running cultural immersion events on Country.'

And the shearing shed, once central to Trelawney's early training efforts, continues to be used for occasional shearing schools through TAFE, but also has tourism potential.

TLALC's early ambition to run cattle of their own and transition from leasing to direct management is not far off.

'The Country is looking really good – the weeds are under control and there's native grasses coming back which our rangers will manage,' Fiona said. 'And, where once we were looking at a loan, TLALC is in a position now, with surplus funds and Judd Park's support, to purchase our own stock.'

That also means considering how to exit the lease with Judd Park, whether in stages or all at once.

While those options are being considered, TLALC is also focused on the skills development and career pathways required to support the transition – many of which are already embedded in its programs.

The ranger program offers one avenue: 'I know the ranger team has shown some interest in wanting to take some of that on – we could exit one of the rangers to do that,' said Fiona.

The new Yilaan.gaal Dhina (the Fresh Footprints program) – a diversionary employment and skills program for local Indigenous youth at risk of crime – offers another.

'These young boys worked tirelessly alongside us, mowing and cleaning up for our recent Ranger Gathering – and our new business development manager has already got lawn mowing contracts with [Tamworth Regional Council] to grow this as a social enterprise.'

Daisy agrees: 'The Yilaan.gaal Dhina participants would be ideal to progress to working on the farm – it's the immediate success that these kids can see that helps change their lives, and the program builds in succession planning opportunities that could include the farm.'

Judd Park, through its co-owner and now-retired police officer Trevor Roberts, has also supported local youth in cattle handling.

'When Trevor was a cop he led their youth program and would take kids out to Trelawney to run short theory and cattle handling courses,' Fiona said. 'We've been fortunate that Judd Park are open to students doing cattle work if it's part of their curriculum.'



Minister for Indigenous Australians Malarndirri McCarthy with Trelawney's Fresh Footprints participants and visiting ranger groups at Ngarringilanha (Sitting Together), the inaugural Aboriginal Ranger Gathering held on Trelawney Station in June 2025





The 2019 divestment ceremony



Setting up for Careers on Country event

‘And it’s not just pure farming – we’ve had Landcare out there planting trees along the river so it’s also the environmental outcomes and learnings that young people want.’

Another pipeline for farming talent may come from TLALC’s long-standing Opportunity Hub which works with Aboriginal kids from Year 5 to one year post-school, helping them build aspirations and plan careers.

An annual highlight is their unique Careers on Country event.

‘We have about 13 or 14 service providers – the Army, police, universities, supermarkets – who come out on Country over two days,’ Fiona said. ‘It’s like speed dating. The kids rotate through each provider, ask questions, and revisit the ones they’re interested in – some have gone on to jobs.’

‘The service providers like it because the kids are more engaged – and the schools like it because it’s structured and the kids are actually learning stuff.’

After years of planning, partnership and persistence, TLALC’s vision for Trelawney is taking shape – not just in creating a productive, sustainable property, but as a powerful example of what community can achieve with the handback of Country.

With its infrastructure in place and new income streams emerging, TLALC is on the path to its ultimate goal of launching a Community Development Scheme that will reinvest profits into broader community benefit.

As we close, Fiona points out that Trelawney is the first parcel of land in the TLALC boundary that can be freely used by community to generate the economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits that come with the handback of Country.

‘It makes me as an Aboriginal person feel really good that we’ve got such an asset for our people,’ said Daisy. ‘And the beauty of it is that through our Community Land and Business Plan, community gets to make decisions on Country.’

‘They’re introduced to different concepts like the Careers on Country and the Rangers Gathering. It enriches our community, giving them access to Country and opportunities.’

**ILSC investment** \$173,442 for the farming infrastructure

**Partners** Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council, Judd Park

*The group would also like to thank New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council for additional funding support.*

## About Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council

The Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council (TLALC) was established on Kamilaroi/Gomeroi Country in 1984 under the *NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* to help address the dispossession of Aboriginal land. Over 30 years, TLALC has secured 20 residential properties and its head office in Tamworth on behalf of its members and the broader Aboriginal community.

TLALC works to protect heritage, preserve culture, and promote wellbeing by drawing on its assets, people, and traditions to create opportunities that foster pride, respect, self-worth, and economic empowerment. A Native Title claim over Gomeroi Country was lodged in 2011.



TLALC are keen to explore more intensive agricultural enterprises; this trial of a canola crop generated good yields

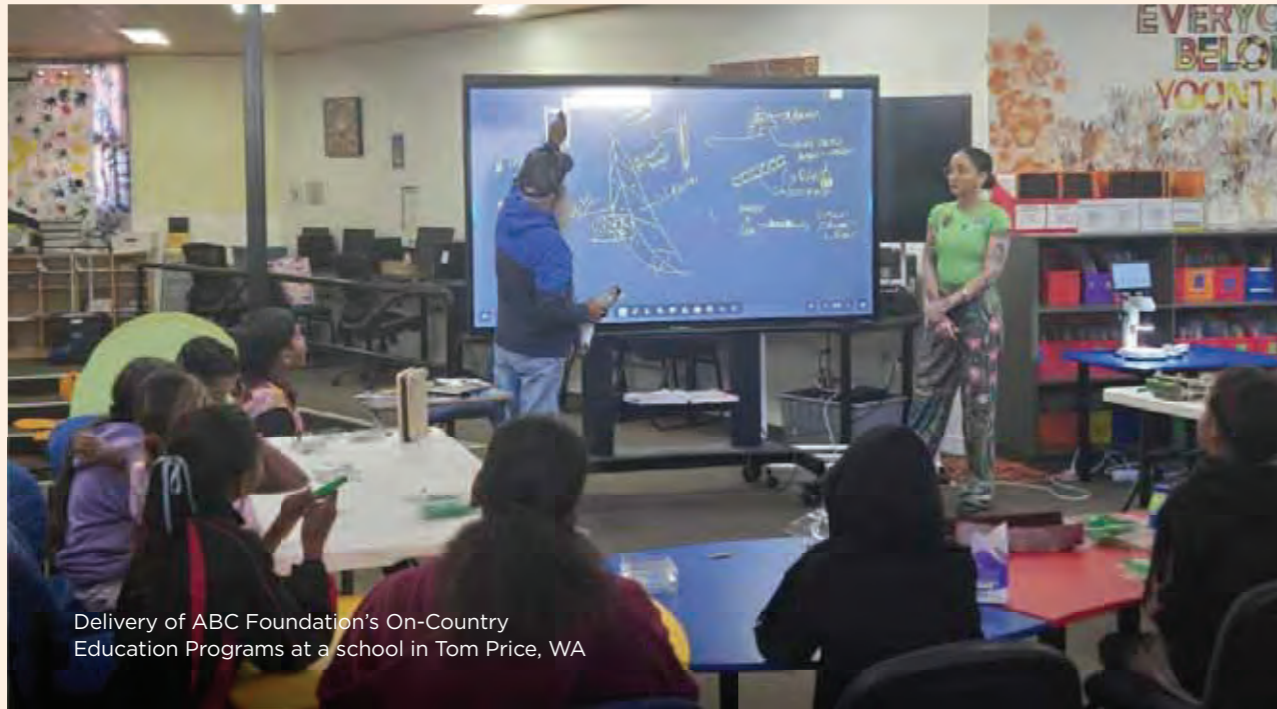




LONG TERM OUTCOMES

## CASE STUDY

# Building people for Country: ABC Foundation's community-first model, WA



Delivery of ABC Foundation's On-Country Education Programs at a school in Tom Price, WA

ABC Foundation, majority-Aboriginal owned and on track for full Aboriginal ownership, has spent the past decade refining its unique social enterprise model. Partnering with Aboriginal organisations across regional and remote Australia, the Foundation strengthens governance, builds economic independence, and supports community-led programs in education, wellbeing, and environmental stewardship. Its approach is simple: build the people, and the people will care for Country.

We sat down with Alison Vidal, ABC Foundation's Executive Finance & Strategy Adviser and a founding director, to explore the Foundation's evolution and how ILSC support has helped lay the groundwork for long-term impact.

In 2016, ABC Foundation re-launched as a not-for-profit social enterprise, having previously operated as a consultancy business supporting the start-up and development of Indigenous ranger programs across the Pilbara.

'Changing the entity's business model was about addressing the founding directors' concerns that young rangers were disconnected from culture and community,' Alison explains.

'Restructuring meant we could have revenue arms reinvesting into social programs.'

With minimal resources, the founding directors - two of them Indigenous leaders - initially focused on developing education programs, while continuing to support building ranger programs, and shaping the new social enterprise model.

The Foundation's first break came from Regional Development Australia Pilbara, which funded its new Ranger 4 Life program for 3-12-year-old children in Tom Price.

By 2018, backed by the Pilbara Education Fund, the program had expanded into a bilingual curriculum that could be embedded in mainstream education, connecting 0-18-year-old kids with Country, and offering a foundation that would support a new generation of emerging rangers.

This is now known as **On-Country Education**.

Later, with COVID-19 sparking additional requests for wellbeing support, the Foundation created an additional social arm - **On-Country Care**. These programs focus on supporting community health and wellbeing. Food for the Mob™, for example, trains Aboriginal women in food production and service, and delivers meals to vulnerable communities.

In 2017, the Foundation moved its head office from Tom Price to Carnarvon, to take up economic opportunities in the Gascoyne, and to deliver Community Development Program training and employment.

*'The ILSC recognised that true sustainability comes from strengthening Aboriginal regional communities. Their support and understanding has helped us put our social enterprise model into practice. It's a partnership built on shared belief in economic independence and self-determination.'*

**Helen Slater, CEO, ABC Foundation**



Delivery of ABC Foundation's On-Country Education Programs at a school in Tom Price, WA





Kellum Steele (Chair) and Lewis Sailor (Director) of Embracing Our Shadows Aboriginal Corporation, Larrakia Country, Darwin, NT



Alison Vidal (ABC Foundation), second from right, with Goldfields Aboriginal Community Services Board members, Kalgoorlie, WA

'One of the biggest challenges working in regional and remote communities is the costs associated with delivering projects,' Alison stated.

'So, from the beginning, we formed partnerships with local Aboriginal organisations where they would deliver our programs within their communities.'

These partnerships then inspired another revenue arm: the **On-Country Partners** program.

'On-Country Partners responds to another challenge we were seeing in terms of overall Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) health,' Alison explained.

'We saw an opportunity to work with Aboriginal organisations and other Indigenous-led businesses to strengthen governance, develop strategic plans, and build operational capacity.'

Delivered through consultancy arm ABC Management Services, early-stage, pro-bono support assists eligible ACCOs explore their potential to transition into sustainable community businesses.

Once the group generates revenue or secures funding, it may progress into a formal management service agreement with ABC Management Services, paying a fee for the service.

'We support ACCOs to become community businesses, building the skills and systems they need to stand on their own, source independent income, and reduce reliance on government funding.'

'This then empowers them to meet the needs of their community, delivering high quality services in the areas in which they operate.'

#### A model for community-first impact

By 2023, Helen Slater, an Indigenous leader and previous ABC Foundation Chair, took on the role of CEO, a vital step that enabled the Foundation to evolve into a multi-arm organisation comprising:

- a suite of On-Country Care and On-Country Education programs delivered in partnership with ACCOs
- revenue raising arms in waste management, carbon (see page 20), and On-Country Partners
- a Futures Fund operating as a small grants program.

Together, these form a self-sustaining ecosystem designed to build capacity, reduce reliance on government funding, and support Aboriginal organisations to deliver community-led programs.

'The revenue from our businesses flows back into the Foundation, which we then allocate to our operations or invest in the Futures Fund.'

The Futures Fund then supports ACCOs to deliver On-Country Education, On-Country Care, and other initiatives.



Participants in the Aboriginal Women's Research Assistant and Evaluation Training Project (AWRAE) on Arrernte Country, Alice Springs, NT



ABC Foundation's Helen Slater and Alison Vidal - first and second from left - with Yulella Aboriginal Corporation Board members, Meekatharra, WA

### Creating space for women's voices

In 2020, with support from the ILSC, ABC Foundation piloted the Aboriginal Women's Research Assistant and Evaluation Training Project (AWRAE). The program aimed to build on-Country evaluation capability among Aboriginal women, while responding to growing concerns around Indigenous data sovereignty.

'At any one time there's 100 researchers on the Gibb River Road, none of them Indigenous, and they're all researching Indigenous topics,' Alison said. 'We wanted to change that.'

'At that time, we also saw that Aboriginal women were not always the first to be employed in ranger programs or land management-based programs,' Alison said. 'We could see that there was a gap.'

The program trained 32 women across multiple regions, with most of the women finding employment, and one cohort forming a consulting firm in Kalgoorlie. Participants completed community evaluations and gained skills in research, data collection, and program analysis. While the program faced challenges - COVID disruptions, shifting policy priorities, and high delivery costs - the Foundation is now working to digitise the training to make it freely available to remote communities.

'We're looking at creating that whole training model and putting it online for free,' Alison said. 'So we can reach Aboriginal women in any remote community.'



### New permanent base in Carnarvon

In 2023, ILSC funding helped ABC secure a permanent base in Carnarvon – a physical home for its operations, training, and community engagement.

This acquisition marked a turning point. It provided space to host workshops, store equipment, and support a growing network of ACCO partners – especially critical once the Foundation took on the Cash for Containers waste management contract, one of its key revenue sources.

‘None of our contracts were making enough margin to secure property, and property is expensive in north-west WA,’ Alison said. ‘We were jumping between sheds.’

Originally intended to support waste management logistics, the old transport site quickly became a collaborative community hub.

‘It’s a place to bring people together, expand our programs, and build trust.’

### Partnering for change

ABC Foundation’s impact is most visible in the ACCOs it supports, many of which were navigating instability and unable to access mainstream funding.

Through its On Country Partners program, ACCOs receive tailored support in governance, financial recovery, strategic planning, and program delivery.

One example is Yulella Aboriginal Corporation.

‘They’re now the largest Indigenous employer in Midwest WA,’ said Alison. ‘They’ve got healthy reserves and their board is making independent investment decisions, funding local football and netball teams, and supporting youth programs.’

Another is Goldfields Aboriginal Community Services in Kalgoorlie.

‘We supported them to restructure and rebrand after they suddenly lost their native title money, and now they’re turning over more than a million each year.’

In Darwin, ABC Foundation is supporting Embracing Our Shadows Aboriginal Corporation, a startup ACCO focused on wellbeing and economic empowerment for the Rainbow Family, particularly Aboriginal Brotherboys and Sistergirls.

‘We’re working with them to create a safe space and an economic base,’ Alison said.

### Looking ahead

Today, ABC Foundation is proudly led by a team of Aboriginal managers and is a direct employer of 35 Indigenous people.

The group is also about to release its new five-year strategic plan, which will formalise its shift towards full Indigenous ownership.

‘We started with re-building ABC Foundation, and we’ve been quietly building the capacity of other ACCOs for 10 years now – it’s taken a while to get the model right.’

The next step is growth – of both the Foundation and the Future Fund – and ABC Management Services is seen as a key vehicle for achieving that.

A new joint venture and revenue arm is also launching – **My Country Care** will be the first 100 per cent Indigenous-owned NDIS and aged care provider nationally. Meanwhile, the ILSC is supporting an impact evaluation of the organisation.

‘We are an environmental organisation but we’re not native title; we don’t have pockets of land and we’re not planting trees or looking after them.’

‘Instead we’ve got a unique model which builds the capacity of Aboriginal organisations to better care for Country, not compete with them.’

‘And we want to make sure we are delivering impact.’

The main support the ILSC has provided, Alison reflects, is in enabling the Foundation to build a sustainable socio-economic model that could first support its own operations – before then seeking to support other ACCOs.

‘We’re all becoming experts on how to run community business so we can reduce reliance on government funding,’ she said. ‘That to me is the biggest learning.’

‘The ILSC’s contribution has allowed us to pivot, stay flexible, and trust in a model of self-determination.’

**ILSC investment** \$880,929 for the Carnarvon acquisition, carbon project, AWRAE and impact evaluation

**\$\$ Partner:** WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

### Unlocking carbon opportunities

In 2019, ABC Foundation began exploring carbon farming as a potential economic driver for Indigenous pastoral stations. ‘The Human Induced Regeneration (HIR) model is about allowing native vegetation to naturally regenerate in areas where it has been previously suppressed – for example, through feral plant/animal control or grazing exclusion,’ explained Alison.

‘We saw that this could be both an environmental and economic driver for Indigenous pastoral stations, many of which were in poor repair.’

With support from the ILSC, the Foundation conducted a review of viable sites and partnered with ethical carbon developers to assist Indigenous landholders to establish carbon projects and manage their carbon accounts. When 2021-22 regulatory changes effectively halted new HIR projects, the Foundation pivoted to education – training landowners, ACCOs, and communities on carbon markets, consent, and sustainable land management. Carbon now accounts for 40 per cent of the Foundation’s income, with federal funding supporting agriculture-focused training. They have also established Aboriginal Carbon and Environmental Services, a for-profit arm ready to deliver Indigenous-led carbon projects when market conditions allow.

‘We have our own Australian National Registry of Emissions Units and we’re all set to be an Indigenous-owned and controlled carbon developer – we just need to wait for the right time.’



ABC Foundation CEO Helen Slater with Elder Thomas Cameron from Wattandee Littlewell Aboriginal Corporation, Mingenew and Three Springs, WA



## From land to water

On 1 February 2019, Parliament passed amendments to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* to expand our operations to include water acquisition.

This was a momentous achievement that marked a new era in our history – one that recognised the importance of saltwater and freshwater Country to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As the rightful owners of Country, Indigenous peoples hold a profound responsibility to care for water and its surrounding environment.

This is based on traditional law and customs, and the inter-connectedness of skies, land, and water.

For many years, Indigenous access, ownership and decision-making regarding water management have been drastically lacking across Australia.

This has impacted First Nations peoples' ability to care for Country, generate wealth, and sustain cultural practices for future generations.

The 2019 amendments followed a nationwide consultation process where the changes were strongly supported and welcomed by Indigenous organisations across Australia.

Addressing the legacy of water dispossession also emerged as a high priority for the ILSC during consultation on the National Indigenous Land and Sea Strategy 2023-28.

Today, the water-based management and acquisition projects we fund are generating new economic, cultural, social and environmental outcomes.

Funding to purchase sea-faring vessels for Wuthathi (page 56) and Gamay Rangers (page 57), for example, will expand Indigenous access and care for Sea Country.

A new ferry for Tribal Warrior (page 59) is opening up opportunities in cultural tourism in Sydney Harbour, one of Australia's premier tourist spots.

And in Mapoon in Far North Queensland, a new barge is creating fresh commercial, environmental and tourism opportunities for the First Nations peoples living on Tjungundji Country.

We're also enabling greater Indigenous participation in fisheries and aquaculture, lucrative industries from which First Nations peoples have been locked out.

Since the amendments, we've also funded a commercial vessel, crab pots and fishing licence for a mud crab venture run by Indigenous-owned start-up On Country Seafood near Cairns, Qld, and a dive vehicle, cooker and dryer for the Tidal Moon sea cucumber venture operating from Shark Bay, WA.

We've also acquired tuna, pipi, and abalone quotas as well as a water licence for a yabby farm – see next page.

And in May 2025, in progressing our NILSS commitments, we launched a Future Industries Initiatives grants program and outlined the actions we will take to further increase First Nations participation and leadership in the inland water and fisheries and aquaculture sectors.



Mapoon Rangers were supported to purchase a new barge (old one shown here) to support their commercial, tourism, and caring for Country activities on Tjungundji Country, Qld  
Image credit: Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council



# Our water acquisitions



*'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.'*

**Derek Walker, Kuti Co CEO and Ngarrindjeri leader**

**ILSC investment:** \$5m towards a fishing licence and commercial pipi (kuti) quota

Harvesting kuti (pipi), Ngarrindjeri Country, SA  
Image credit: Andy Stevens Photography & Goolwa PipiCo



*'This is a step on the road towards self-determination - a step towards a strong and diverse economic base for Dja Dja Wurrung People. Along with business profits, the [DJAKITJ bush foods and yabby] farm will also create employment opportunities.'*

**Rodney Carter, Former Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO**

**ILSC investment:** \$4.1m for the purchase of a water licence and to establish a commercial yabby farm

DJAKITJ launch - Joe Morrison (ILSC GCEO), Rodney Carter (former Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO), Cassandra Lewis (DJAARA General Manager) and Trent Nelson (Chair of Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation), Djandak Country, Vic  
Image credit: Stuart Walmsley



*'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.'*

**Pauly Vandenberg, Wanna Mar Group Director, Wirangu man and member of the Far West Coast Aboriginal Community**

**ILSC investment:** \$3.56m towards the Southern Bluefin Tuna joint venture with Stehr Group, one of Australia's largest tuna producers

Wanna Mar Stehr tuna fishing, SA  
Image credit: Mark Piovesan



*'This is our food. It's our resource and it was taken away from us. We've been getting locked up for too long when we try to take it back. This opportunity can turn all that around.'*

**Rodney Dillon, Palawa Elder and Chair, Land and Sea Aboriginal Corporation of Tasmania**

**ILSC investment:** \$700,000 towards abalone quota acquisition and management

Bruny Island, site of the abalone acquisition agreement signing, Palawa Country, Tas  
Image credit: Takver from Australia, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons





## Our impact

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 data we collect\* shows the activities we fund are contributing to positive outcomes.

Our work is supporting First Nations groups to create or improve Indigenous-owned enterprises, generating training and employment opportunities, and enabling more First Nations peoples to access culturally appropriate services.

More First Nations peoples also have access to Country. This has led to more cultural events and knowledge sharing, a growing expanse of Country under the care and control of Indigenous peoples, and more culturally-significant sites being managed.

\* Data discrepancies may occur between annual reports due to ongoing data cleaning

Myroodah Station, one of the biggest pastoral leases in the Kimberley, was returned to Traditional Owners in 2019, Nyikina Mangala Country, WA





# 8,212

**Indigenous people**  
with improved access to Country  
on average each year\*\*



'Having a central hub...enables our Elders to pass down their cultural knowledge and practices.'

**Chandel Eyre, Former General Manager, Queensland Murray Darling Catchment Ltd**

**ILSC investment** \$576,300 for property acquisition and repairs

QMDCL Chair Tim Knox (left) with former General Manger Chandel Eyre, celebrate their new home base with ILSC and NIAA staff, St George, Qld

\*\*on average/year, 2011-25

# 78

**majority owned**  
Indigenous enterprises created and/or improved on average each year\*\*



Boola Boornap Tree Farm seedlings ready for sale, Noongar Country, Northam, WA

Image credit: NLE Group

\*\*on average/year, 2011-25

'Purchasing the native tree farm (Boola Boornap) was NLE's first foray into having a major business that was truly culturally appropriate and commercially sustainable and in doing so allowed us to heal boodja (Country) and heal people.'

**Madeline Anderson, Chairperson, Noongar Land Enterprise Group**

**ILSC investment** \$277,195 towards the Boola Boornap tree farm management





# 1,472 projects

293 acquisition projects  
1,179 management projects

# 291 properties acquired

6.1 million hectares  
4 water interests acquired  
86% under Indigenous care and control



'The Banatjarl Strongbala Wimun Grup are stepping up. We now have good power which means we can cook and host people from different places and share our culture and Country. We continue to grow and plan for the future and this is so important to our Elders and young people working together.'

**Andrea Andrews, Jawoyn Board Director**

**ILSC investment** \$105,136 towards power and water supply

Banatjarl Strongbala Wimun Grup members Shikira Henry, Laneise Hall and Pip Gordon with Healing Facilitator Antonia Nangalama Burke (left) at the Ngalmuka Healing Camp on Jawoyn Country, NT

Image credit: NT Government

Reflects ILSC lifetime data, 1995-2025



Djimbaya (kindergarten) outdoor area, Dja Dja Warrung Country, Bendigo, Vic

Reflects ILSC lifetime data, 1995-2025

'ILSC funding was instrumental in securing the land for our purpose-built kindergarten and enabling the expansion of services to Community. We know that if we can create connections with young people at an early age to their Community, Culture and to BDAC, it will support better health and wellbeing outcomes for our Community.'

**Dallas Widdicombe, CEO, Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative**

**ILSC investment** \$510,030 towards the purchase of the property for constructing the new kindergarten





# 4,748

Indigenous people participated in training, planning and cultural knowledge sharing on average each year\*\*

**1,920** training courses completed\*\*



'The project provided training experiences for three young Noongar men aged 15-18 years. As a result, these young men have shown interest in the farming business.'

**From ILSC Progress Report**

**ILSC investment** \$623,187 towards Walitj Mia Mia Farm management

Rounding sheep on Walitj Mia Mia Farm, Noongar Country, Albany, WA

\*\*on average/year, 2011-25

# 704

Indigenous people employed on average each year\*



'The ILSC's investment has enabled a vibrant, culturally safe space for Indigenous employment, wellbeing and cultural learning for people from across Australia. What happens in that space is transformational.'

**Sarah Brown AM, CEO, Purple House**

**ILSC investment** \$547,438 for Purple House Social Enterprise property plans, approvals, renovation and fit-out

Purple House Bush Balm staff Kianah and Tamara, Alice Springs, Arrernte Country, NT

\* on average/year 2018-25; figure represents employees enabled through *Our Country Our Future* projects only





# 546

## culturally significant sites managed\*\*

on average each year



'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...'

**Graeme Gardner, Chair, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre**

**ILSC investment** \$655,185 towards property purchase

Diana's Basin was the first landholding in north-east Tasmania returned to Aboriginal ownership. The 2021 purchase was co-funded by the ILSC  
Image credit: Matt Newton & Tasmanian Land Conservancy

\*\*on average/year, 2011-25

# 32,111

## Indigenous people accessing culturally appropriate services on average each year\*\*



2025 marked the start of construction of Purrrkanaitya, an Aboriginal Elders Village based at Warraparinga, Kurna Country, Bedford Park, SA

\*\*on average/year, 2011-25

'Our Elders have needed a place like this for a long time; their needs can't be met at a typical aged-care facility, and this village starts to fill the gap. Our elders deserve nothing less.'

**Tim Agius, former Chair, Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation**

**ILSC investment** \$6.05m towards village construction, design, planning and approvals; plus ILSC-held land divestment





# 5.8 million hectares

with environmental or heritage values managed\*\* on average each year

'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 our location is preserved and protected for all Taungurung people - present and future - to see.'

**Matthew Burns, CEO Taungurung Land and Waters Council**

**ILSC investment** \$265,000 towards land acquisition, fencing and access track

Garden Range rock art site, Taungurung Country, Vic

\*\*on average/year, 2011-25

# 688 cultural events\*\*

on average each year  
12,059 Indigenous participants  
7,628 non-Indigenous participants



Divestment ceremony for the new Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance Aboriginal Corporation headquarters, Coffs Harbour, Gumbaynggirr Country, NSW

Image credit: Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance / And the Trees Photography

\*\*on average/year, 2011-25

'The new premises are a wonderful fit for our organisation, providing an amazing office environment to work, with ample room to grow. The ground floor gallery, workshop and retail space will allow us to support a larger number of Aboriginal artists from within our region to become more self-sufficient.'

**Rick Gonsalves, General Manager, Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance Aboriginal Corporation**

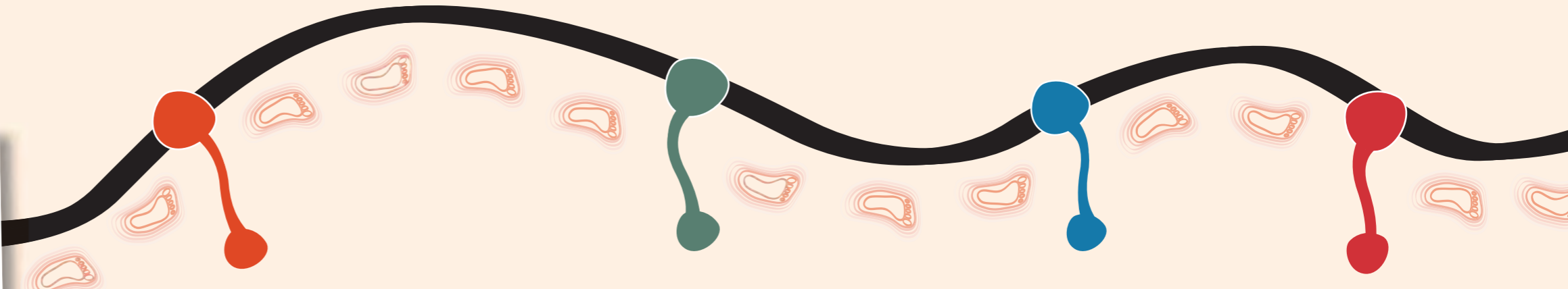
**ILSC investment** \$2.2m towards property acquisition





## Tracing our journey 2015-2025

Our 20 year publication set out the major events that characterised our first two decades. Here's a snapshot of the key events that shaped our last 10 years.



### 2015

**January**  
The ILC's Training to Employment Program was relaunched as Our Land Our Jobs, putting subsidiaries National Indigenous Pastoral Enterprise (NIPE) and Voyages at the helm of the Board's employment and training strategies. These programs aimed to create lasting employment pathways for First Nations peoples through accredited training and on-the-job experience, especially in rural and remote areas.

**March**  
The ILC's main funding program was restructured as *Our Land Our Future*, merging acquisition and management streams. It introduced open timelines, simplified processes, and a partnership-based approach to project development.

**July**  
The Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-18 was launched during the ILC's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, reaffirming its commitment to reconciliation and partnership-building.

**October**  
Edward Fry, a Dagoman man, was appointed Chair, replacing Dr Dawn Casey. His leadership marked a period of reform and strategic expansion, including ventures into water-based projects and commercially-focused land acquisitions.

### 2016/17

**June**  
John Maher, an experienced agribusiness leader, was appointed GCEO, replacing Michael Dillon.

**June**  
NIPE was renamed Australian Indigenous Agribusiness Company Pty Ltd, later becoming Primary Partners Pty Ltd. The subsidiary continued managing the ILSC's pastoral portfolio, supporting Indigenous employment, training and enterprise development.

**December**  
Tricia Button, a Kungarakan and Warumungu woman, became the first Indigenous woman appointed Deputy CEO.

**December**  
The 18-year, \$34 million Savanna Fire Management Program was launched in the NT, supporting Indigenous-led fire management to reduce carbon emissions, generate income via carbon credits, and revitalise cultural practices. Funded by INPEX under a voluntary offsets agreement with the NT Government. See case study, page 42.

**December**  
Board-initiated Expert Advisory Panel report makes seven recommendations for legislative reform principally relating to the Land Account's investment parameters and management.

**June**  
*Our Land Our Future* funding program refreshed to reduce grant funding to smaller projects, and provide a set of new investment products to underpin larger projects including repayable grants, joint ventures, and equity partnerships for major projects.

**July**  
Nationwide consultation process on the future of the Land Account and asking Indigenous peoples whether the ILC operations should be expanded beyond land to salt and fresh water.

### 2018/19

**November**  
Bill passes to rename the ILC to the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and expand its remit to include water-based rights and interests.

**January**  
The Agribusiness Investment Program was launched to broaden the ILSC's agricultural focus beyond pastoralism into aquaculture, bushfoods, and horticulture. It was later absorbed into the *Our Country Our Future* program amid changing Board direction.

**February**  
Legislation passes so the ILC officially became the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC), with its remit expanded to include land, sea, and freshwater projects. The Land and Sea Future Fund was also established to replace the Land Account, managed by the Future Fund Management Agency to ensure stronger, long-term financial returns.

**September**  
The ILSC's chief funding program was renamed *Our Country Our Future* to reflect the expanded remit.

**October**  
The first National Indigenous Land and Sea Strategy (NILSS) 2019-22 was launched, identifying key focus areas including water-based activities, niche products, conservation, urban investment, agribusiness, and tourism. This was the fifth national strategy produced in the ILC/ILSC's lifetime, superseding the short-lived fourth NILS (2018-22).

**November**  
The ILSC funded the National Indigenous Bush Foods Symposium, leading to the creation of the First Nations Bushfood and Botanicals Alliance which drives Indigenous participation in Australia's lucrative bush food market.

**December**  
Kuti Co, a Ngarrindjeri-owned pipi (cockle) harvesting enterprise, was launched in SA with \$5 million ILSC funding, marking its first water-based investment.

### 2020/21

**January**  
The ILSC established an emergency response grant of up to \$20,000 for Indigenous corporations directly affected by the Black Summer bushfires; a similar package was offered again in May 2021 for catastrophic east coast floods.

**May**  
The ILSC invested \$3.5 million in Wanna Mar, a 100% Indigenous-owned tuna fishing venture in Port Lincoln, acquiring quota and infrastructure.

**January**  
Joe Morrison, a Dagoman/Mualgal man and former CEO of the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance and the Northern Land Council, was appointed ILSC GCEO.

**August**  
The refreshed NILSS 2021-23 was launched, signaling a shift from owner-operator to partner/facilitator and foreshadows a nationwide engagement process to reset the ILSC's relationship with First Nations peoples.

**December**  
Ian Hamm, a Yorta Yorta man with 30 plus years in Aboriginal affairs, was appointed Chair. His appointment was part of a substantial transition of Board members that occurred in 2021-22.



# 2022

## February

The ILSC released its first community-facing annual report, *Returning and Managing Country*, showcasing funded projects and outcomes.

## March

The ILSC supported Tasmania's first commercial Aboriginal fishery, granting the Land and Sea Aboriginal Corporation of Tasmania access to abalone units in Furneaux waters.

## May

The ILSC launched its most comprehensive engagement process, involving over 400 participants across 44 locations to shape future direction.

## May

ILSC supported the development of DJAKITJ, a bushfood and yabby enterprise led by Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

## June

The NCIE land in Redfern was divested to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, beginning ILSC's subsidiary divestment strategy.

## June

The ILSC was appointed as agent Prescribed Body Corporate (for the first time under Native Title regulations) for the Birriman-gan Common Law Holders.

## July

The ILSC commences extensive engagement with Anangu on their aspirations for the divestment of the Yulara block, the land including and surrounding Ayers Rock Resort.

## December

The Real Jobs Program celebrated 15 years of Indigenous employment outcomes in the NT, with a major forum in Darwin. The ILSC has delivered the federally-funded program with host employers since 2007. See case study, page 44.

# 2023

## June

The NILSS 2023-28 was launched, making 27 commitments that will shape the ILSC to reflect First Nations aspirations and accelerate divestment from agribusiness and subsidiaries.

## June

The Indigenous Employment Strategy 2023-28 was released to position the ILSC as an employer of choice for First Nations talent.

## July

Quick Response Recovery Grants were launched as an annual, rolling program, offering up to \$20,000 to Indigenous organisations for disaster recovery and climate resilience.

## October

Following the Voice to Parliament referendum result, the ILSC recommits to pursuing economic self-determination for First Nations peoples.

## November

The ILSC signed an historic agreement with First Nations organisations in Canada and Australia to address global Indigenous economic exclusion.

## December

New Regional Indigenous Land and Sea Strategies were released for Central, Eastern, and Western regions.

# 2024/25

## March

Primary Partners Pty Ltd – including its remaining agribusiness, Roebuck Export Depot – was divested to Nyama Buru Yawuru Ltd marking the end of the ILSC's direct involvement in pastoral operations.

## April

Expressions of interest were sought for new operators to manage NCIE Ltd's services, continuing divestment efforts.

## August

The ILSC divested the last of three floors of Redfern's Black Theatre site – held since 2005; the entire building is now under Indigenous ownership.

## August

The ILSC initiated the sale process for Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia's assets, including Ayers Rock Resort and Mossman Gorge Cultural Centre.

## October

The ILSC's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-26 was launched, aligning with NILSS priorities and enhancing staff cultural capability.

## December

The first NILSS Progress Report is released summarising our progress in delivering Year 1 of the NILSS 2023-28.

## May

The Future Industries Initiatives publication and a small grants program were launched to support Indigenous ventures in carbon, renewables, environmental markets, and aquaculture.

## June

The ILSC celebrated 30 years of impact with a podcast series.



Founding Iwantja artist Alec Baker with Eric Barney in the Iwantja Arts studio with their intergenerational collaborative painting *Ngura (Country) 2023*. Courtesy of the artists and Iwantja Arts; see story page 54

Image credit: Rhett Hammerton



# Our funded programs



## Real Jobs Program: a catalyst for Indigenous economic development



Jodi Woods (centre), began in an entry-level role with RJP partner Nitmiluk Tours on Jawoyn Country and now leads boat tours. Recently featuring in NT Tourism promotions, she is a testament to the RJP's ability to support future leaders

**'Working at Nitmiluk is about more than tourism - it's about sharing Jawoyn Country with the world. With the ILSC's partnership, we've been able to strengthen our connection to Country and create pathways that support our people and culture.'**

— Jodi Woods

From its early roots providing jobs on pastoral country to broader support for the tourism and ranger sectors today, the ILSC's Real Jobs Program (RJP) has evolved into a cornerstone of Indigenous economic empowerment in the Northern Territory. While its primary focus is jobs, the program also drives economic development for Indigenous host organisations.

Keeping people and knowledge on Country, and building participant skills and confidence, has enabled Indigenous organisations to generate new enterprises and income streams, grow existing ones, and strengthen self-determination.

In tourism, enterprises like Nitmiluk Tours Pty Ltd and Kakadu Tourism Pty Ltd have used RJP to replace backpacker labour with local Indigenous staff, creating career pathways for community members. At Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia – known for its National Indigenous Training Academy offering training and employment to First Nations peoples at Ayers Rock Resort (NT) – the RJP partnership supports career pathways for local Anangu peoples.

In the ranger sector, RJP has supported organisations like Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation in East Arnhem, whose female ranger group (Miyalk Rangers) have developed a bush medicine enterprise. This grassroots business is a model of self-determined enterprise – leveraging women's plant knowledge to create a meaningful revenue stream that complements their caring for Country activities.

Other ranger groups, such as Kenbi Rangers and Larrakia Rangers – who respectively look after Cox Peninsula and the greater Darwin region on Larrakia Country – have used RJP to build thriving fee-for-service operations, undertaking biosecurity work, grounds maintenance, and military base contracts. These activities have generated significant revenue, enabling reinvestment in equipment and infrastructure, and supporting Larrakia peoples – who have limited ownership of their traditional Country – to move closer to financial sustainability.

RJP partners are unlocking economic opportunity in carbon too.

Warddeken Land Management Ltd has used RJP funding creatively to augment success in securing carbon contracts and philanthropic support. Though funded for just five FTEs, over the past six years, they have supported seasonal employment for up to 75 Traditional Owners annually to conduct savanna fire management, demonstrating how RJP can be a flexible partner in Indigenous-led development.

An independent 2021 review found host organisations reporting stronger workforce stability, local capacity, and community wellbeing through keeping people and knowledge on Country.

RJP roles build skills, confidence, and pride, benefiting families and communities, with employment offering a pathway to broader economic, social, and cultural opportunity.

In regions with few jobs, RJP enables host organisations – often the main local employers – to recruit and train young Indigenous people, support

gender-diverse teams, and ensure all aspects of Country are cared for.

The review led to a shift in focus to generating immediate on-Country benefit and working only with Indigenous-owned and operated host organisations, ensuring funded projects align with community priorities.

This shift reinforced the program's role in supporting place-based economic development, where job creation also drives cultural, environmental, and social benefits.

Over its nearly 20-year history, RJP has seen \$156 million invested, with some of its partners among the longest-standing relationships in the ILSC's portfolio.

These enduring partnerships have provided stability for host organisations, enabling them to plan, grow, and maximise RJP impacts.



Miyalk (women) Rangers Gawumala Gumana, Marrarrathala Gaykamangu, and Djurrayun Murrunyina on their ancestral homeland of Gänggaṅ. Through RJP support they have developed their own range of bush medicines living and working on their homelands

### About the program

Since 2007, the ILSC has delivered RJP to provide employment opportunities in three key sectors – conservation/healthy Country, tourism, and agribusiness. Initially established to transition Indigenous people in the Northern Territory from the former Community Development Employment Projects program into mainstream employment, the program has supported 1,598 Indigenous employees. Its Indigenous-owned and controlled partner organisations are supported to employ local Indigenous people, with RJP funding wages, training, coordination, and operations. Participants receive authentic employment and targeted training to build confidence, skills, self-esteem, and wellbeing. RJP is funded by the Federal Budget on a three-year funding cycle.



# Our funded programs



LONG TERM OUTCOMES

## Savanna Fire Management Program: Leveraging traditional expertise to build First Nations carbon enterprises



The SFM Program holds an annual forum where Indigenous fire managers can attend presentations and discuss their operational plans and ideas with peers. The 2024 forum, shown here, was held on the lands of the Kungarakana and Wari people in Batchelor, NT in November

Since 2016, the Savanna Fire Management (SFM) Program has been partnering with Indigenous groups across the Northern Territory to establish carbon enterprises based on traditional fire management.

The program is enabling eligible First Nations ranger groups to apply the savanna fire management methodology (see box below), limiting greenhouse gas emissions released from destructive, late dry season wildfires.

In effect, it is supporting groups to carry out what they've done for millenia to manage Country - implementing cooler burns in the early dry season.

In a world grappling with climate change and biodiversity impacts, this reduces the fuel loads that cause wildfires, while also supporting First Nations' culture, access to and care of Country, and enterprise development.

Today, five registered projects are supported by the SFM Program - Judbarra/Gregory, Garawa, Wardaman, Wagiman, and Western Top End - collectively covering 3.9 million hectares of Indigenous-held land in the Northern Territory. A sixth - the Tiwi, covering 0.7 million hectares - has now progressed to its own independent enterprise (see next page).

### SFM methodology origins

The savanna fire management methodology was an outcome of research and development undertaken by Charles Darwin University and CSIRO, and led by the North Australian Indigenous Land & Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA). Since 2008, NAILSMA has worked with Indigenous land managers across northern Australia to demonstrate how early dry season burns can reduce the severity of late dry season wildfires and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The methodology was formally approved under the Australian Government's *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011*, enabling registered projects to earn Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs). Today, the methodology is a global reference point for Indigenous-led fire management, inspiring similar initiatives in the Americas, Africa and the Asia-Pacific.



Traditional Owners, project partners and supporters came together to celebrate the independent carbon enterprise at a community event in Wurrumiyanga on Bathurst Island, Tiwi Country, NT

### Tiwi SFM project

*'We are proud to lead this project, which not only helps us maintain our traditional practices but also supports our community economically. It reflects our dedication to self-determination and our commitment to managing our land in a way that honours our culture and preserves our environment.'*

Tiwi Resources Pty Ltd spokesperson



Tiwi Islanders celebrated an important milestone in October 2024 when the Tiwi Islands Fire and Carbon Project became a fully independent, Indigenous-owned and operated carbon enterprise. Operated by Tiwi Resources and Tiwi Rangers, the project spans approximately 8,000 square kilometres of Aboriginal freehold land on Melville and Bathurst Islands. It was officially registered with the Clean Energy Regulator in 2016 and commenced operations under the SFM Program in 2018.

By late 2024 it had generated 159,666 ACCUs. Income from the sale of some ACCUs is now supporting the enterprise and broader community aspirations. Through the Tiwi project, Tiwi Traditional Owners, Rangers and the local community have been engaged and trained in annual fire planning, delivery, and biodiversity monitoring.

**SFM Program funding: \$3.6 million**

### How it works

SFM Program funding supports eligible projects to progress through two phases.

#### Phase 1 - start up and capability building

This involves extensive community consultation, vegetation mapping, and viability assessments. It prepares groups to manage a carbon enterprise and register with the Clean Energy Regulator.

#### Phase 2 - Project Funding Agreements (PFAs)

PFAs provide SFM funding for wages, infrastructure, and support for emissions reporting, and audit compliance. On-ground fire management activities then commence, generating Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs). Projects that graduate from the SFM Program (i.e. exit the PFA phase) can become fully independent, Indigenous-owned and operated carbon enterprises. They continue to generate ACCUs that may be sold to create income for the enterprise.





*'This was my first year and first burn on Country. It is a good experience to learn from Elders on Country and also keep Country healthy and work well with other ranger groups.'*

Murnkurrumurnkurru Ranger Helma Bernard of Dagaragu burns Country near her home in Judbarra/Gregory National Park  
Image credit: Central Land Council



**Impacts**

By generating and selling carbon credits, First Nations communities are creating new income streams that support local employment, infrastructure, and training.

At the same time, strengthened connection to Country and culture is supporting the transfer of traditional knowledge to new generations.

The program also reduces barriers to First Nations' participation in the carbon economy, enabling Aboriginal groups to engage in land management and business development on their own terms.

The \$34 million SFM Program is funded by the Ichthys LNG Joint Venture and operated by the ILSC. It is part of a \$91 million voluntary offsets package agreed with the NT Government, pursuant to the environmentally and socially responsible development of the INPEX-operated Ichthys Onshore LNG facility. Eligibility criteria require projects to be on Indigenous-held land, cover at least 30,000 hectares, and fall within a rainfall zone of greater than 600mm. Program funding is secure until at least 2030.

**6 SFM projects**

**7 ranger groups**

**142 Indigenous people**  
trained in fire and carbon work

**205 Indigenous people**  
employed on Country  
*(full time and casual)*

**4.6 million hectares**  
total project area

Celebrating the independent Tiwi carbon enterprise in Wurrumiyanga on Bathurst Island, Tiwi Country, NT



# Returning Country 1995-2025

## ILSC acquisition less than 15,000 ha\*

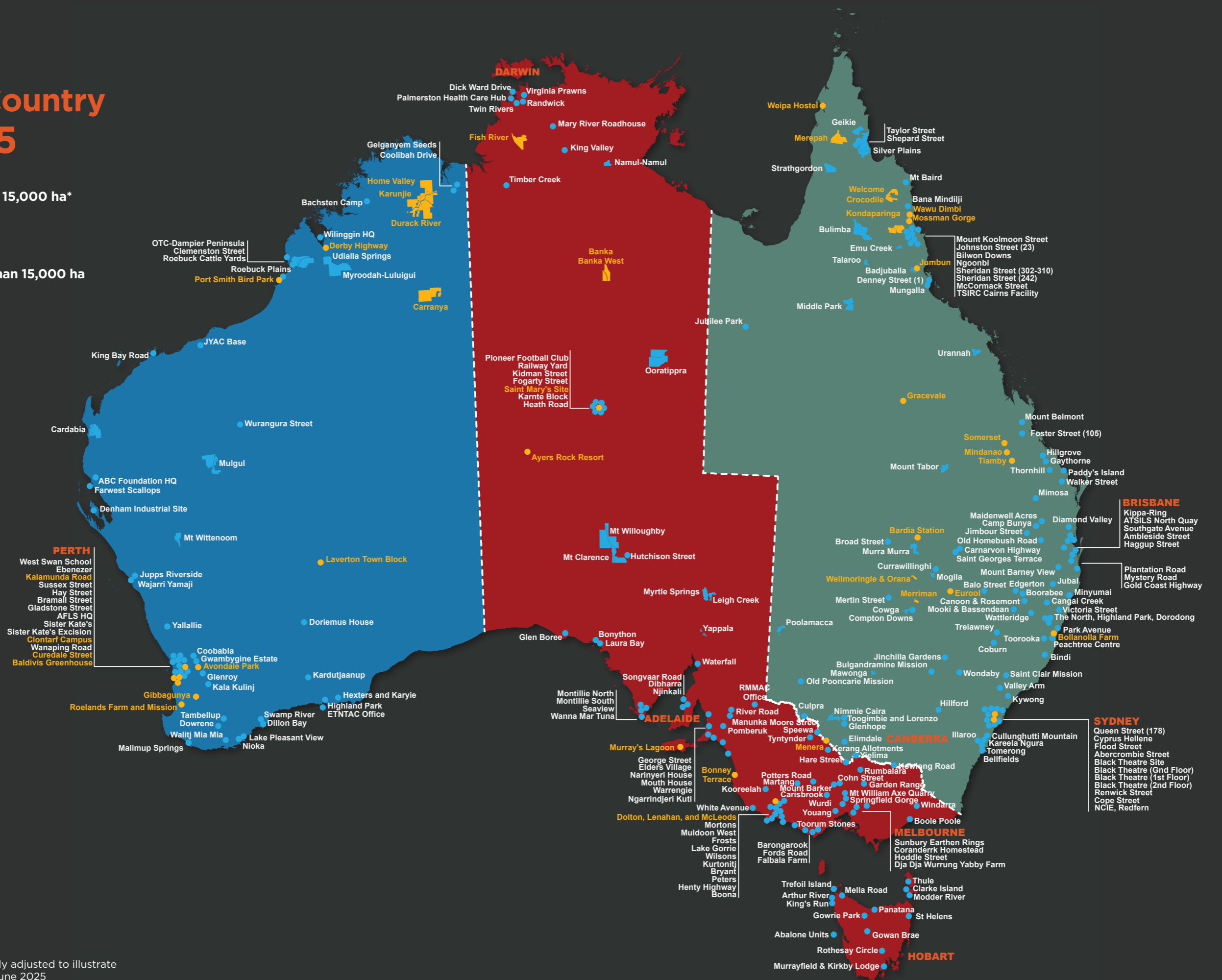
- ILSC-held location
- ILSC-granted location

## ILSC acquisition greater than 15,000 ha

- 📍 ILSC-held location
- 📍 ILSC-granted location

## ILSC regions

- Western
- Central
- Eastern



\* Points have been cartographically adjusted to illustrate distribution. Based on data 30 June 2025

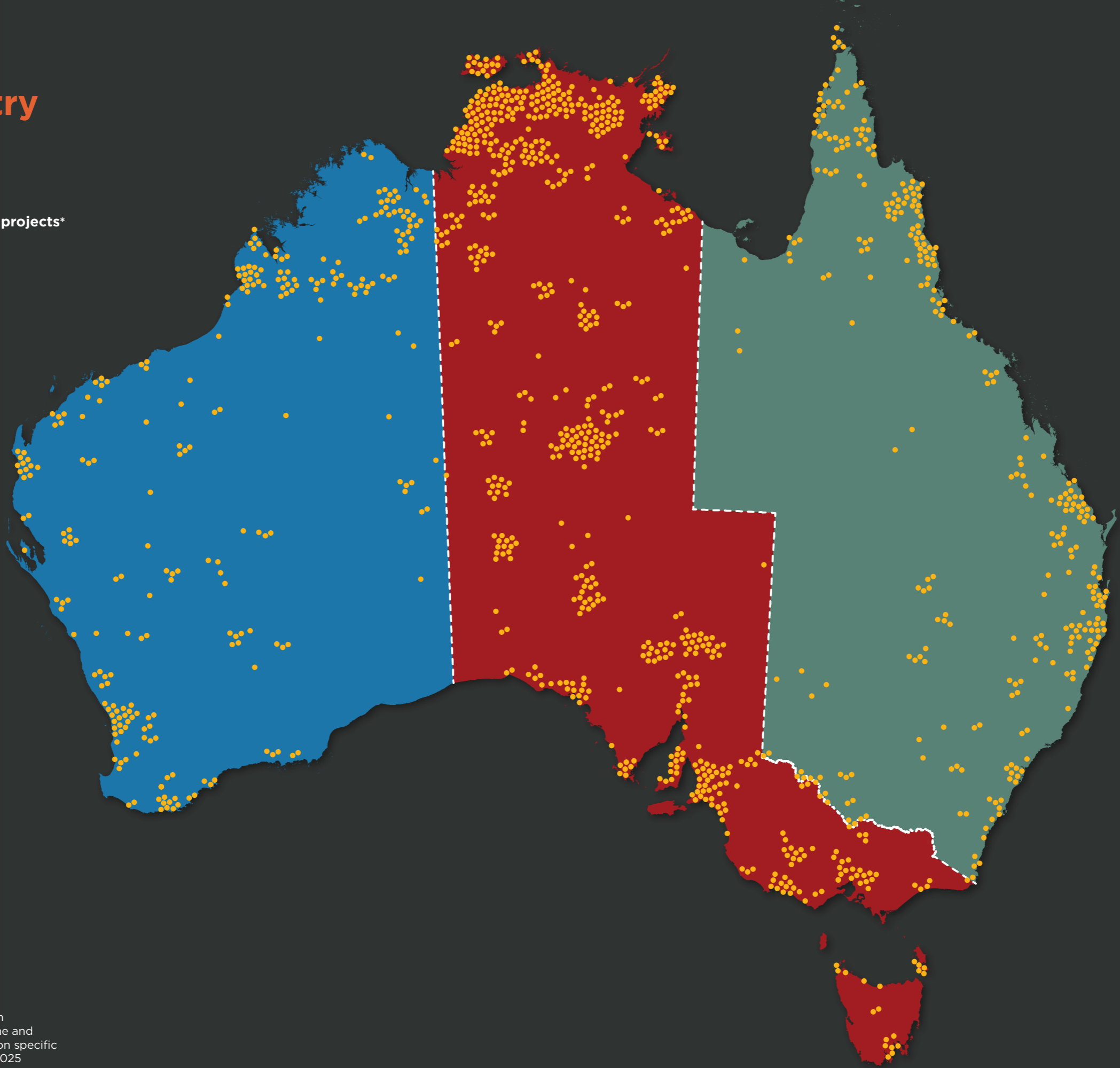


# Managing Country 1995-2025

● Location of funded management projects\*

## ILSC regions

- Western
- Central
- Eastern



\* Locations are indicative only. Points have been cartographically distributed to illustrate volume and distribution. Only land management projects on specific locations are shown. Based on data 30 June 2025





## Partners in change

We partner with Indigenous groups to deliver projects across the broad diversity of Indigenous Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, from cities to regional and remote areas, and from inland to coastal environments. These projects leverage financial and in-kind contributions from 619 third-party project partners including government, NGOs, industry groups, consultancies, and private organisations.

# 699 619

**INDIGENOUS GROUPS FUNDED** **PROJECT PARTNERS (THIRD PARTY)**







Growing the value of Country



Owning and managing Country sustainably



Driving policy and opportunity



Preserving and protecting culture

## Continuing the legacy

### Our 2024-25 projects



#### Art centre upgrades to support new generation of Iwantja artists, SA

Iwantja Arts – home to multiple internationally-renowned First Nations artists – will undergo long overdue upgrades to its more than 40-year-old building to support the next generation of emerging artists. Located in the remote community of Indulkana, on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in far north SA, Iwantja Arts existing facilities were built by the local community with a capacity for only approximately 20 artists. Today, the enterprise has grown to supporting over 50 practising artists with demand to accommodate up to 15 more emerging artists. Upgrades to the building and facilities will double the existing floor space, and significantly contribute to community vitality through increased artist income and art centre revenue; increased ability to engage and employ young people; the upskilling of new and existing artists and arts workers; and improved cultural and inter-generational knowledge transfer.

**\$\$ Partner** Iwantja Arts and Crafts Aboriginal Corporation (Iwantja Arts), Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Program, SA Department of Premier and Cabinet  
**ILSC investment** \$403,220



Gelganyem Seed Operation is now Gelganyem Land Management with the new site expanding operations

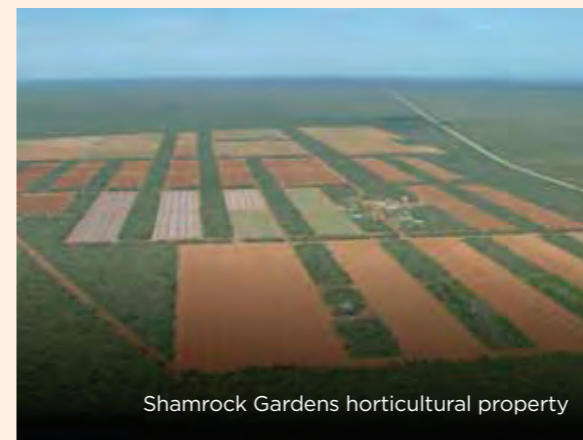


#### Indigenous seed enterprise to grow with new Kununurra property, WA

Gelganyem Limited has acquired a 5.56-hectare property in Kununurra to expand its 100 per cent Aboriginal-owned business, Gelganyem Land Management (GLM).

Founded in 2019 during the Argyle Diamond Mine closure transition, GLM is now one of Australia's largest Aboriginal-owned native seed enterprises, managing over 80 species and integrating Traditional Owner knowledge into landcare. The new site will double capacity, create 16 Indigenous jobs, and support a second seed collection team. It will also serve as a training hub for Traditional Owners and Community Development Program participants, fostering skills and employment pathways. Environmental benefits include land rehabilitation, native species regeneration, and carbon offsetting. The initiative strengthens cultural identity, community wellbeing, and economic independence through on-Country work and seed collection informed by traditional knowledge.

**\$\$ Partner** Gelganyem Limited as Trustee for the Gelganyem Trust  
**ILSC investment** \$1,936,027



Shamrock Gardens horticultural property



Bidyadanga Fresh Food produce  
Image credit: Bank Australia



#### Remote Bidyadanga horticultural enterprise to expand with major acquisition, WA

Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community La Grange Incorporated (BACLGI) has acquired Shamrock Gardens, a 300-hectare horticultural property near Bidyadanga, WA's largest remote Aboriginal community. The relationship with the property began in 2021 when COVID-19 halted backpacker travel and left the farm and its then owners without harvest workers.

The property owners turned to the Bidyadanga community for help, ultimately forming a joint venture – Pijarta Produce Pty Ltd – trading as Bidyadanga Fresh Food. Now producing 1,000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables annually, the venture provides vital employment and income for community members.

With the property up for sale, BACLGI acted swiftly to secure the only freehold land within 200 kilometres and just a 25-minute drive from Bidyadanga. The acquisition ensures long-term access to Country for five language groups and 800 Aboriginal people, while expanding business success, employment, and revenue.

The site will support youth training, cultural and farm tourism, fresh produce for the community store, land rehabilitation, and the revival of traditional farming practices.

**\$\$ Partner** Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community La Grange Incorporated, Bank Australia  
**ILSC investment** \$3,778,291



#### Darumbal depot to support enterprise, jobs and Country, Qld

A new, fit-for-purpose property in Rockhampton will support the growth of Darumbal People Aboriginal Corporation (DPAC), replacing residential premises that no longer meet operational needs. The new industrial site will house essential equipment, support ranger operations across 36,000 square kilometres of Darumbal Country, and host programs like the Junior Ranger and Trainee Ranger initiatives. It will also support DPAC's entry into the civil machinery hire industry, forecast to generate significant new revenue and Indigenous jobs. The site will accommodate training, workshops, and cultural education, while improving access to Country, including parts of the Great Barrier Reef.

This investment will strengthen DPAC's leadership in renewable energy and on-Country contract work, support long-term sustainability, and help Darumbal people reconnect with Country while delivering lasting cultural, environmental, and economic benefits.

**\$\$ Partner** Darumbal People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC  
**ILSC investment** \$811,000.00



#### Support to explore economic potential of former pastoral lease, WA

Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (YAC) is assessing the cultural heritage and economic potential of the former Ardjorie Station, now Unallocated Crown Lease, in the Kimberley region, WA. With exclusive Native Title over part of the area, YAC aims to secure tenure to benefit the Ngurrara people. A working group of Traditional Owners and experts will visit the site, explore land use options, and develop recommendations to guide YAC's proposal to the WA Government. The project will support informed decision-making, protect culturally significant areas, and help unlock long-term social, cultural, and economic opportunities for the community.

**ILSC investment** \$120,384.00





Girringun Aboriginal Corporation rangers will have better access to Sea Country from their new base



### Ranger base to transform Sea Country access and management, Qld

A new property in Dungeness via Lucinda, Qld will provide Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) with a permanent new base for their rangers. Located within GAC's southern footprint, the property offers vital access to Sea Country and addresses limitations at the existing base. It will enable tide-independent vessel launching, expanded operational capacity, and support increased local employment and career pathways, particularly for local Bandjin, Nywaigi, and Warrgamay peoples.

**\$\$ Partner** Girringun Aboriginal Corporation  
**ILSC investment** \$620,185



Wuthathi Senior Custodian Cameron Wilson and Sea Operations Manager Andrew Simmonds with Sean Walsh (Reef Authority)



### New vessel increases Wuthathi access to Sea Country, Qld

Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (WAC) currently relies on external partners for support to enable their access to manage their vast Sea Country. A new offshore vessel (plus towing vehicle and storage shed) will significantly improve ranger presence and independent access, and support cultural and environmental stewardship. This support is already unlocking new partnership opportunities for WAC – and it will continue to strengthen WAC's role in joint management of the Great Barrier Reef, and support long-term self-determination.

**\$\$ Partner** Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation, Great Barrier Reef Authority, Nobel Industries  
**ILSC investment** \$1,783,316



### Remote ranger base improves access to and protection of Country, Qld

Rangers from Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (MAC) will have better access to manage over 55,000 square kilometres of Mithaka Native Title land in far south-west Queensland. The construction of a remote ranger base on MAC-owned land in Betoota and new equipment, including a skid steer and off-grid system, will improve ranger mobility and operational reach across the vast, arid, and flood-prone landscape. With a permanent base and better tools, MAC Rangers can more effectively care for Country, including land restoration, environmental management, and the protection of up to 800 cultural heritage sites.

**\$\$ Partner** National Indigenous Australians Agency  
**ILSC investment** \$565,811



Construction of the Mithaka ranger base



### New vessel for Gamay Rangers expands access to Sea Country, NSW

A new vessel will enable the Gamay Rangers to expand their care for Sea Country across coastal Sydney, supporting cultural and environmental outcomes for the La Perouse Aboriginal community. The vessel will replace an ageing boat and support significant expansion of marine management to 27,300 hectares, including Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay, and Port Hacking. The Gamay Rangers, honorary rangers with NSW National Parks funded through the Commonwealth Indigenous Rangers Program, restore marine habitats, protect cultural sites, and conserve biodiversity. The vessel will support whale disentanglement, habitat monitoring, and access to remote cultural sites. It will also enhance cultural knowledge sharing, employment, and partnerships with research institutions, helping raise the profile of First Nations leadership in marine conservation and deliver long-term cultural, environmental, and economic benefits.

**\$\$ Partner** La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, National Indigenous Australians Agency  
**ILSC investment** \$286,895



### Tagalaka considers cultural and economic development options for vacant land, Qld

Planning is underway for a proposed Tagalaka Hub on Country near Croydon in northern Queensland. The Tagalaka Croydon Reserve Land Trust (Takalaka CRLT) is working with a consultant to deliver a property management plan and strategic business case that will assess feasibility and guide investment priorities for nearly eight hectares of vacant land. Through community workshops, Tagalaka People will shape a vision focused on cultural revitalisation, job creation, economic development, and self-determination. These planning activities will enable informed decisions on land use, paving the way for sustainable development and stronger community ownership of Country. Tagalaka CRLT Board member contributions are voluntary.

**ILSC investment** \$89,985





### Land acquisition to support culturally-appropriate health care hub, NT

A new land acquisition in Palmerston, NT will enable the construction of a purpose-built Health Care Hub by Danila Dilba Biluru Butji Binnilutlum Health Service Limited, a provider of culturally appropriate care for over 30 years. With \$17.1 million secured for construction, the Hub will expand services in youth health, aged care, allied health, and chronic disease management. It will improve access by reducing wait times and meeting the needs of Palmerston's growing First Nations population. Land ownership ensures long-term control over the hub and will support self-determined, community-led health care delivery.

**\$\$ Partner** Australian Department of Health and Aged Care, NT Aboriginal Investment Corporation, Australian Department of Social Services  
**ILSC investment** \$1,499,650 for the land



### Redevelopment for health facility servicing islands off Arnhem Land, NT

The Nalkanbuy Wellness Centre in Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island, NT) will be transformed into a culturally safe, purpose-built hub offering allied health, mental health, NDIS, and public health services. Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation is the sole health provider on the island located off the coast of Arnhem Land. With the existing clinic struggling to meet rising demand, the redevelopment is critical to meet the needs of the growing Yolŋu population. The upgraded centre will address safety issues, support holistic care, and is expected to open in July 2027, improving community health outcomes.

**\$\$ Partner** Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation; Australian Department of Health and Aged Care; National Indigenous Australians Agency  
**ILSC investment** \$500,000



Wirawi, Australia's first Indigenous-owned and operated ferry  
Image credit: Paul Bramble



Galari Farm



### Agricultural enterprise bolstered by new equipment and upgrades, NSW

Property works, infrastructure upgrades, and new farming equipment for Galari Farm will enhance land productivity and enable Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation (WCC) to expand access to Country. Located in the Lachlan Shire, western NSW, Galari Farm is the base for WCC's agricultural enterprise and cultural programs, supporting youth development, employment pathways, and community connection. Improved operations will position WCC to access additional land in future, strengthening its long-term goal of building a sustainable, culturally grounded farming business that benefits the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

**\$\$ Partner** Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation, Evolution Mining  
**ILSC investment** \$985,033



### New ferry to support cultural cruises on Sydney Harbour, NSW

Wirawi, Australia's first Indigenous-owned and operated ferry, will undergo refurbishments that enable Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation (TWAC) to launch cultural cruises on Sydney Harbour. With a capacity of 600 passengers, the vessel will feature a galley, bar, and immersive virtual reality experiences to showcase Indigenous heritage. TWAC's vision includes maritime training, enterprise development, and expanded employment, creating at least eight full-time roles annually across cultural, hospitality, and crew services.

**\$\$ Partner** Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation, The Redfern Foundation, Transport for NSW  
**ILSC investment** \$593,783



### Renovations to create culturally-safe space for family violence social services, Vic

Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd (BADAC) will undertake a culturally informed renovation of its newly acquired property in Ballarat, Victoria. Located near BADAC's existing medical centre, the new site will enable the expansion of its Family Violence Unit to create a dedicated, purpose-designed, culturally safe family violence service. The fit-out will create space for up to 30 staff, five consult rooms, and flexible, welcoming spaces designed to reflect and celebrate culture. This project will enhance service accessibility, support community healing, and strengthen BADAC's role in delivering holistic, culturally-safe care.

**\$\$ Partner** Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd  
**ILSC investment** \$400,000





Waralungku Arts Centre creations



## Arts Centre to undertake management planning to surface new income streams, NT

Waralungku Arts Centre in Borroloola, NT, is the subject of detailed management planning to strengthen its operations and unlock new income opportunities. Led by Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Indigenous Corporation, the planning aims to enhance sustainability, upgrade infrastructure, and explore tourism expansion.

Supporting around 80 artists, the 20-year-old centre plays a key role in cultural preservation and community development.

By building on its Keeping Place and improving its operations and systems, the management plan is expected to help position Waralungku Arts for long-term investment, benefiting artists and community members.

**ILSC investment** \$66,840



## Return of Country in culturally-rich Tarkine region transformative, Tas

A 106-hectare property at Marrawah in north-west Tasmania will provide Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC) with its first culturally significant parcel of Country.

The property is located within the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape and near the Tarkine rainforest, areas rich in heritage and biodiversity. It will support CHAC's first ranger team, cultural tourism, and on-Country programs for youth.

Proximity to ancestral lands and cultural sites makes it ideal for education, ceremony, and traditional practices. With over 1,800 participants in CHAC's cultural visits last year, the property will deepen engagement with Country. Currently focused on community services, CHAC's custodianship of Marrawah will expand its role to land management, cultural education, and conservation. The site may also serve as sanctuary for threatened species. CHAC is the second-largest Aboriginal corporation in Tasmania, representing the 12 tribes of the Tarkine region. The acquisition marks a transformative step toward self-determination and long-term cultural, environmental, and economic outcomes.

**\$\$ Partner** Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation  
**ILSC investment** \$486,000



Community members at the Marrawah property



## Reliable, renewable power system opens new chapter in Maralinga history, SA

A new hybrid power system will help Maralinga Tjarutja Inc unlock the full potential of Maralinga Village, located on culturally-significant lands in far west SA. The project will install solar PV, battery storage, and backup diesel generation, to replace the village's outdated and costly diesel-only system. This investment will support reliable, clean energy for community meetings, ranger operations, tourism, and cultural events.

Maralinga Village sits within Section 400, a site deeply scarred by British nuclear testing in the 1950s and 1960s. Today, it is a place of renewal, where Traditional Owners are reclaiming and revitalising their Country.

The new power system will significantly reduce annual operating costs, enabling reinvestment into upgrades, educational programs, and cultural tourism. Plans include educational activities blending traditional knowledge with STEM, and renovations to support community-led governance on Country. This project marks a significant step in shifting the narrative of Maralinga from its painful past and creating new opportunities for the Maralinga Tjarutja community.

**\$\$ Partner** Maralinga Tjarutja Inc, Maralinga Piling Trust  
**ILSC investment** \$345,007



## Stage 2 underway of new program to develop community-owned Aboriginal fisheries, NSW

Three NSW-based Aboriginal Corporations – Yaegl Traditional Owners, Joonga Land and Water, and Wonnarua Nation – will receive ILSC support for business and feasibility planning under Stage 2 of the new Aboriginal Fisheries Business Development Program (AFBDP).

This multi-year initiative, established by the NSW Government and partners in 2022, aims to foster viable, community-owned, and operated fisheries businesses across NSW. By investing in planning, training, and employment, the program seeks to promote economic empowerment and sustainable development in Aboriginal coastal and inland communities. Stage 3 will seek further investment to bring these businesses to life.

For more information on the AFBDP visit:  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

**\$\$ Partner** Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development  
**ILSC investment** \$150,000



## New ranger base to support Caring for Country, jobs and enterprise, Tas

A new off-grid ranger base at Little Musselroe Bay will support Melaythenner Teeackana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation (MTWAC) in caring for Tebrakunna Country in north-east Tasmania. The facility will include solar power, rainwater tanks, workshop, training room, kitchen and garaging space. Project funding also purchased a pontoon boat for Sea Country activities. Tebrakunna Country holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for the Pairrebeenne/Trawlwoolway clan of the Coastal Plains Nation.

The base will strengthen MTWAC's ranger programs, including the Tebrakunna Ranger Program, Junior Ranger Program, and Women's Ranger Team, while supporting cultural tourism, education, and enterprise.

With funding secured and a long-term, right-to-use land licence in place, the base is a key priority in MTWAC's 2030 Strategic Plan, promoting cultural practice, employment, and self-determination.

**\$\$ Partner** Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet, ACEN Australia  
**ILSC investment** \$685,972





## Wilderness village to be reimagined as a leading Aboriginal-owned cultural tourism destination, Tas

Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation (SRAC) has acquired Gowrie Park Wilderness Village, paving the way for a new Aboriginal-owned tourism and cultural experience business in Tasmania's central north. Located on culturally significant Country at Roeboyveerertunno/Gowrie Park, beneath Turanmerer/Mount Roland, the site is surrounded by sacred landscapes and ancient Aboriginal pathways.

The acquisition returns important Country to its custodians and provides a base for expanding SRAC's cultural education, tourism, and ranger programs. The site will offer training and employment for Palawa, and on-Country experiences and accommodation for visitors. SRAC's five-year vision aims to reimagine Gowrie Park as a leading Aboriginal destination that celebrates culture, supports community development, and protects heritage. Profits will be reinvested, and partnerships will support biodiversity initiatives like seed harvesting and carbon offsetting.

**\$\$ Partner** Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation, Indigenous Business Australia  
**ILSC investment** \$672,000.00



Gowrie Park Wilderness Village



## Vital upgrades to Coober Pedy social service facilities, SA

Umoona Community Council in Coober Pedy, SA will undertake essential upgrades to three key community facilities: the Sobering Up Centre, Tjitji Tjapu Tjuta (Childcare) Centre, and the administration building.

The project will deliver vital repairs and improvements to sanitation, structure, and safety, creating more functional, welcoming, and secure spaces for community members, staff, and visitors. These upgrades will support the Council's continued delivery of services and programs that promote the wellbeing and advancement of First Nations peoples living in and around Coober Pedy.

**ILSC investment** \$166,547



Roebuck Plains Station, a major cattle station on Yawuru Country near Broome, was returned to Yawuru Traditional Owners through ILSC divestment in 2014, marking a significant step in economic self-determination. On 28 March 2024, the ILSC divested Primary Partners Pty Ltd, the company overseeing the associated Roebuck Export Depot, to become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nyamba Buru Yawuru Ltd (NBY), further strengthening Yawuru control over Country and enterprise



## Leading the change 2015-25

### Ministers for Indigenous Australians

Malarndirri McCarthy (2024-  
Linda Burney (2022-24)  
Ken Wyatt (2019-22)  
Nigel Scullion\*\* (2013-19)

### Chairs

Ian Hamm (2021-  
Edward Fry (2015-21)  
Dr Dawn Casey PSM FAHA (2011-2015)

### Group Chief Executive Officers

Joe Morrison (2020-  
John Maher\* (2016-19)  
Michael Dillon\* (2013-15)

\*Non-Indigenous

#Minister for Indigenous Affairs

### Directors

Kristy Masella (2022-  
Lynette (Gail) Reynolds-Adamson AM (2022-  
Claire Filson\* (2021-  
Roy Ah-See (2019-  
Nigel Browne (2021-25)  
Kathryn (Kate) Healy\* (2021-24)  
Patricia (Trish) Crossin\* (2015-21)  
Bruce Martin (2015-21)  
Dr Donna Odegaard AM (2017-21)  
Joseph Elu AO (2017-20)  
Daniel Tucker (2019- 21)  
Anthony Ashby (2016-19)  
Tanya Hosch (2016-19)  
Alison Page (2013-17)  
Lisa Gay\* (2013-17)  
Ian Trust (2005-15)  
Graham Atkinson (2011-15)  
Olga Havnen (2011-15)  
Neil Westbury PSM\* (2011-15)

See our 20-year publication for  
Ministers, Chairs & GCEOs for  
the 1995-2015 period.



## Unlock your change story

The stories in this publication showcase  
how the activities the Indigenous Land  
and Sea Corporation funds are leading  
to change for First Nations peoples.

Talk to us about how we can help  
generate change for your community:

call 1800 818 490.



The 20-year anniversary celebration of Gelganyem Group  
- representing Traditional Owners of Country in the East  
Kimberley, WA - was held at River Farm Road near Kununurra  
in 2025. The property was purchased in 2024 with ILSC  
support. At the event were Anjelia and Gia; Mickayla and  
Mickalus; and Bernadette and Harmony - see page 54

Image credit: Landi Bradshaw





**Australian Government**  
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation



**The ILSC GROUP**

**PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.**



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Established in 1995, and now operating under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*, we provide for the contemporary and future land needs of Indigenous peoples, 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. In redressing dispossession, we provide for a more prosperous and culturally centred future for Indigenous peoples.

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



[www.ilsc.gov.au](http://www.ilsc.gov.au)  
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