



**THE HON MARK DREYFUS QC MP**

**Cabinet Secretary**

**Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency**

**Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **AUSTRALIA'S FIRST SAVANNA BURNING PROJECT APPROVED UNDER THE GILLARD GOVERNMENT'S CARBON FARMING INITIATIVE**

Australia's first savanna burning project, the Fish River Fire Project, has been approved under the Federal Government's Carbon Farming Initiative.

The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC), which owns the property, will be able to earn 20,000 CFI carbon credits a year for strategic fire management on Fish River, a 1,800km<sup>2</sup> property 200km south of Darwin.

"Under this carbon farming methodology, savanna is purposely burnt earlier in the dry season, reducing the fuel load and the severity of late season fires. Savanna is also burnt to create fire breaks in the landscape. Both actions reduce the high level of pollution that would otherwise be generated by out-of-control wild fires," said Mark Dreyfus, Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

"The ILC's carbon credits can be sold to big polluting businesses that need to offset their carbon price liability. The extra income will be used to help conserve the significant biodiversity of the Fish River property, support Indigenous jobs and training and investigate other investment opportunities for the property by traditional owner groups," he said.

ILC Chairperson Dr Dawn Casey said today's announcement was a significant milestone as the Fish River Fire Project was Australia's first Indigenous project approved under the CFI.

"This project has been developed carefully with traditional owners," said Dr Casey.

"It marries traditional burning practices with the latest satellite tracking and mapping technologies and provides employment for Indigenous Australians on their traditional country.

"The reduction of wildfires at Fish River helps protect the many rare and threatened animal and plant species found on the property. Traditional pattern or mosaic burning has been used to protect country from devastating hot burns, which in turn helps to protect fragile ecosystems and important cultural sites," she said.

"The ILC has learnt a great deal in developing this project and now looks forward to sharing its experiences with other Indigenous landowners across northern Australia."

Fish River was purchased by the ILC in collaboration with the Australian Government's National Reserve System and conservation groups, The Nature Conservancy and the Pew Environment Group.

The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) has worked closely with the ILC to develop the Fish River Fire Project. NAILSMA CEO, Joe Morrison, says CFI approval for the Fish River Fire Project is a win for environmental management across northern Australia, Indigenous economic development and traditional owners.

“Fish River used to be hit hard by uncontrolled fires and historically 69% of the property would be badly damaged each year,” Mr Morrison said.

“By using traditional knowledge supported by modern technology, in the last two years much cooler fires have resulted in less than 3% of the property now being burnt by late season wild fires, which has also helped to protect adjacent pastoral properties,” he said.

“Across northern Australia, Indigenous rangers are developing savanna burning projects on Indigenous lands and across much larger landscapes than Fish River. The experiences of developing the Fish River Fire Project and securing CFI approval will serve as an important demonstration project and assist in the development of new carbon biosequestration methodologies from strategic fire management.”

Approved CFI projects are listed on the [Register of Offsets Projects](#) on the Clean Energy Regulator website.

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