



Australian Government
Indigenous Land Corporation



The ILC GROUP

REGIONAL INDIGENOUS
LAND STRATEGY (RILS)
SOUTH-WEST
AUSTRALIA





THE INDIGENOUS ESTATE

The Indigenous Estate holds the key to successful economic development for all Indigenous Australians. Its significant tangible and intangible assets—not just land and waters, but people and the knowledge and intellectual property flowing from the heritage of Indigenous Australians—must be used for the benefit of all Indigenous Australians. The Indigenous Estate is the focus of the ILC’s efforts.

Cardabia windmill
Front cover image: Malimup Springs



The ILC GROUP

Message from the ILC Chairperson

Welcome to the Regional Indigenous Land Strategy (RILS) for the South-West Australia region—the first time the ILC has, through the RILS, recognised the particular environmental, social and economic features of this vast region.

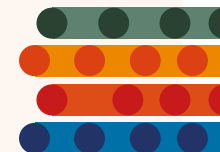
This RILS represents an additional, more focused layer to the ILC Group’s strategic direction as laid out in the National Indigenous Land Strategy (NILS) for the period 2018 to 2022. These are the first national and regional land strategies that I and the current ILC Board have had the honour of presenting to you, our stakeholders and partners in growing the Indigenous Estate.

As you will see throughout the strategies, the ILC is focused on becoming a trusted partner in developing the Indigenous Estate to achieve economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The ILC Board, staff and subsidiary companies are determined to apply the resources available to us to help transform Indigenous-held land and waters and our unique cultural assets into a source of prosperity for this and future generations.

Central to our strategies has been identifying the best ways to invest and partner with you, to make our collective resources go further. On behalf of the ILC Board, I thank those who participated in consultation sessions on these important documents. Your views have informed our way forward.

Please take the time to read through this regional strategy and the national strategy it accompanies. Also check the ILC website and follow us on social media. Most importantly, contact your local ILC office with any ideas you have for projects that fit with this strategy or would benefit from ILC partnership.

Mr Eddie Fry, Chairperson



INTRODUCTION

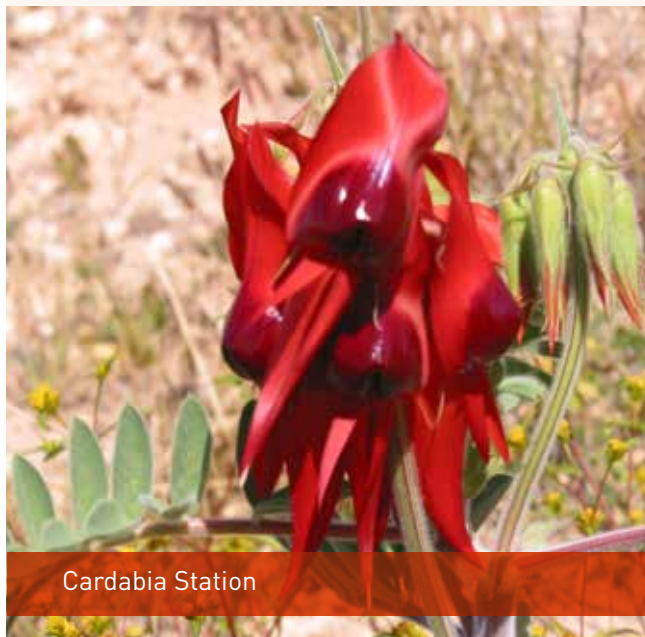
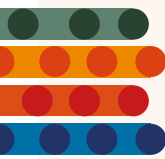
About the ILC

The ILC is an Australian Government agency established under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* (the ATSI Act) to assist Indigenous Australians to achieve economic, environmental, social or cultural benefits through land-related projects.

The ILC has two functions, as set out in the ATSI Act:

- to assist Indigenous Australians to acquire land
- to assist in the management of Indigenous-held land, however that land was acquired.

This makes the ILC an important institution in helping to define, enhance, and grow the Indigenous Estate.



Cardabia Station



Avondale

WHAT WE DO

- **ILC Functions**
Land Acquisition and Land Management

HOW WE DO IT

- **Subsidiary Operations**
 - National Centre of Indigenous Excellence
 - Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia
 - Australian Indigenous Agribusiness
- **ILC Program Mechanism**
Our Land Our Future
 - Dedicated Industry Strategies
 - Investment Principles
 - Priority Areas

WHAT WE ACHIEVE

- **Benefits**
Assist Indigenous People to Achieve Economic, Environmental, Social and Cultural Benefits

2018–2022 RILS

About the National Indigenous Land Strategy and Regional Indigenous Land Strategies

The **National Indigenous Land Strategy** (NILS), a requirement under the ATSI Act, is the ILC's key policy document. The directions laid out in the NILS inform other key documents, including our annual Corporate Plan. The latest NILS was tabled in Parliament in February 2018 and is available at www.ilc.gov.au/NILS

Also required by the ATSI Act are **Regional Indigenous Land Strategies** (RILS), which provide regions within Australia with an additional, layered framework for the interpretation and implementation of the NILS.

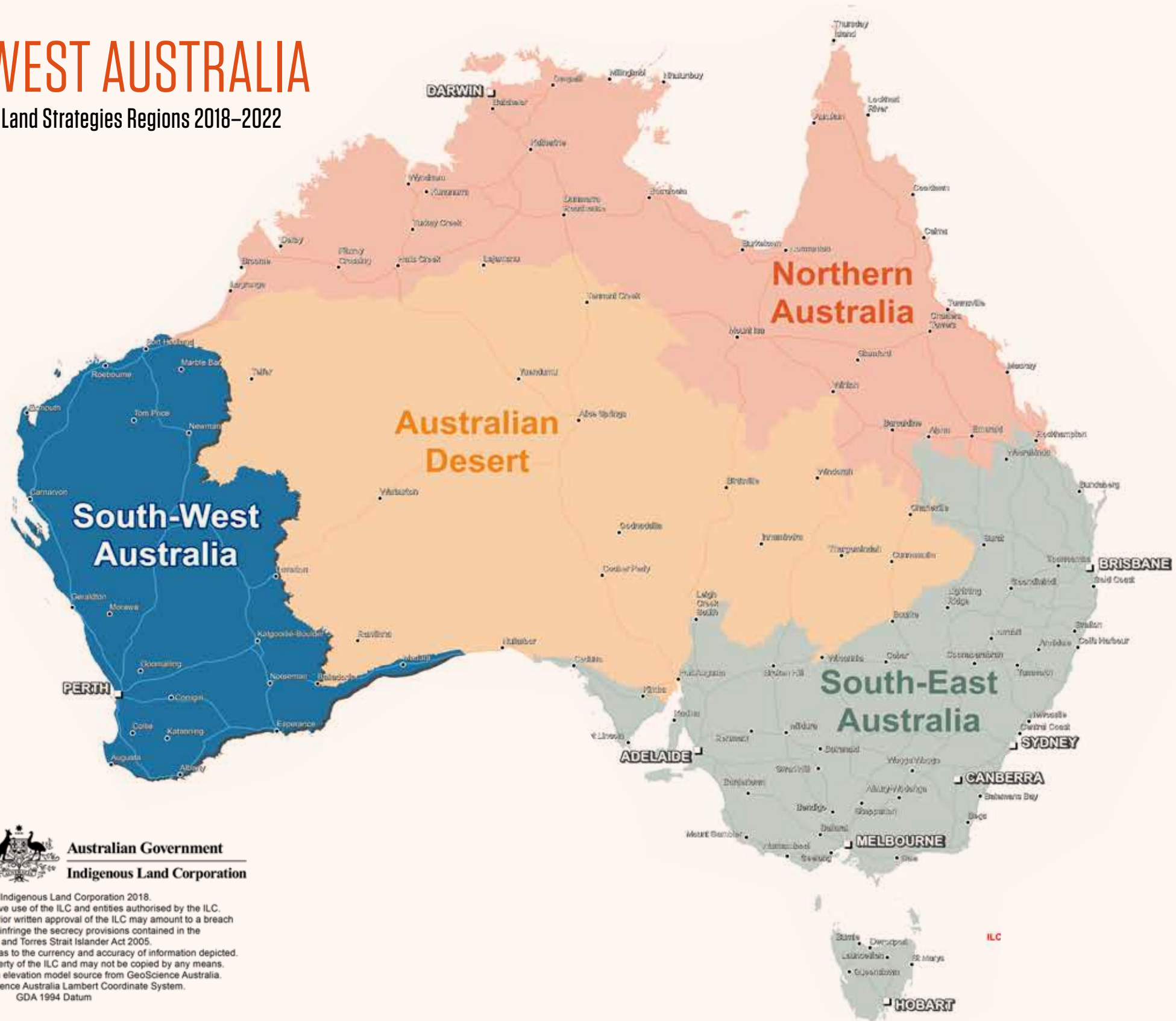
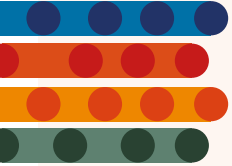
The RILS regions have been restructured for the current NILS period, 2018 to 2022. Previously ILC regions were the six states and the Northern Territory. Now they reflect eco-regions—highlighting important environmental, demographic and economic differences across the continent and the ways these are reflected in the different situations of Indigenous people. In making this change, the ILC Board recognises the opportunities presented through bringing together discrete, but aligned, land parcels within the Indigenous Estate to allow the development of joined-up projects and economies of scale.

The following regions underpin the RILS from 2018:

- **Northern Australia** - includes northern Western Australia, the northern areas of the Northern Territory and North Queensland. The climate, environment and general economic-development opportunities in northern Australia differ significantly from the rest of Australia. For example, savanna burning for emissions reduction is viable in this broad region and not in others.
- **Desert Australia** - includes the desert regions of Western Australia, northern South Australia, the Northern Territory, south-west Queensland and north-west New South Wales. As with the Northern Australia region, Australia's arid regions are unique and projects benefit from economies of scale. There is value in considering the opportunities arising in these areas in their own right.
- **South-West Australia** - includes the southern coastal areas of Western Australia west from the south Australian border across to Perth and north to Port Hedland.
- **South-East Australia** - includes southern South Australia, all of Victoria and Tasmania, most of New South Wales and south-east Queensland.

SOUTH-WEST AUSTRALIA

Regional Indigenous Land Strategies Regions 2018–2022



15-May-2018
ILC Map No. 2822-sw



Australian Government
Indigenous Land Corporation

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Clontarf Campus



Cardabia Station



Jupps Riverside



Grant ceremony, Noongar Mia Mia

THE SOUTH-WEST AUSTRALIA REGION

Landscape

This region covers approximately 1.2 million square kilometres and incorporates the south-west corner of Western Australia, north into the Pilbara and south-east across the South Australian border. It encompasses all of the Western Australian sub-regions of Great Southern, South West, Peel, metropolitan Perth (the major population centre), Wheatbelt and Gascoyne, and the more coastal areas of Goldfields-Esperance, Mid West and the Pilbara.

Within this region the landscape varies quite significantly. The south-west corner of the

region, home to the iconic jarrah forest, is relatively flat with poor soil quality. Moving further north and into the Pilbara the landscape varies from tussock grasslands and rocky landscapes to picturesque gorges and mountain ranges such as Mt Meharry, Western Australia's highest mountain, which sits at 1245 metres above sea level. The Wheatbelt is a vitally important region for agriculture that produces most of Western Australia's cereal crops and contributes other agricultural products such as canola, olives, vegetables, wine grapes, honey, citrus fruits and livestock.

Vegetation in this region varies greatly depending on location. The south-west corner, which incorporates the city of Perth up to Carnarvon, is considered one of the planet's major biodiversity hotspots as it contains more than 2,400 plant species, representing one sixth of Australia's higher plant species. It has the largest remaining 'Mediterranean' shrub land/woodland left on Earth. This area is considered an 'island' as it is quite isolated from other ecosystems, bordered by oceans to the south and west and arid lands to the north and east.

The vegetation of the South-West Australia region is mainly woody. This includes the jarrah forests of the south-west of Western Australia, dominated by the jarrah, marri and karri species that are well adapted to poor soils and fire. The karri tree is one of the biggest trees in the world. Among the jarrah forests are areas of scrub and mallee heath. Moving north towards the Pilbara the vegetation changes, incorporating more tussock grasslands.





Clontarf Campus

Climate

The region's climate also varies significantly, ranging across Mediterranean to dry, hot tropical to sub-humid to semi-arid.

The south-west corner of this region has a Mediterranean climate: hot and very dry summers with an average temperature of 34° and cool wet winters with an average temperature of 16°. Moving north the climate gradually turns to semi-arid and semi-tropical. The Pilbara straddles two bioclimatic regions, with the northern and inland areas being considered a semi-tropical desert environment, while the rest of the region has a desert climate. Average daily temperatures in the Pilbara region sit higher than in the south-west, with an average winter temperature of 25°.

Rainfall in the eastern Pilbara is most influenced by tropical and monsoonal drivers, predominantly active in summer and autumn. Rainfall in the western Pilbara is also influenced by southern mid-latitude drivers, such as frontal systems during autumn and winter.

Indigenous population

The South-West Australia region has an Indigenous population of approximately 55,000. Most of the Indigenous population within this region live in and around the Greater Perth area, with the city of Perth having a population of around 32,000. The relative percentage of Aboriginal people in the region's population varies, with greater proportions in more arid parts.

Case study: land acquisition

Over its history the ILC has made many land purchases across this region, including the very first ILC acquisition, the site of the former West Swan Primary School granted to a local corporation in 1996. Acquisitions have included farms across Western Australia's South West and Great Southern regions, where the ILC is currently working with a collective of Indigenous land-holders on business development through the Noongar Land Enterprises Group.

A number of urban properties providing a base for new or expanded service delivery have also been acquired. For example, the ILC provided funds to Perth's Aboriginal Alcohol and Drugs Service (now Wungene Aboriginal Corporation) to purchase a site for expansion of Wooree Miya Women's Refuge crisis accommodation and child-support services. The ILC's commitment helped to secure funding from other parties of more than \$7 million to build new premises, doubling the capacity of the service. The new refuge was officially opened in January 2017. Its staff are Indigenous, providing culturally appropriate and sensitive care.

In 2013, the ILC was gifted the iconic Clontarf property located on the banks of the Canning River. Clontarf was a former orphanage and later home to a number of significant Aboriginal educational and cultural resource organisations, including Marr Mooditj, Abmusic and Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation. The campus accommodates the Clontarf Aboriginal College, a secondary school providing day and boarding education to Aboriginal students from across the state. The ILC is working with Indigenous owners in this region to progress a divestment strategy for this important property.



Property Landscaping at Decca Station



Gibbagunya

Indigenous-held land

Land-tenure in this region is dominated by freehold and pastoral lease land regimes. Indigenous-held land is not as extensive as in the Desert or Northern Australia regions; however, much of the area is subject to yet-to-be-determined native title claims. Large areas of non-exclusive native title have been determined in the Pilbara. The South West Native Title Settlement is Australia's most comprehensive native title agreement. Negotiated between six Noongar groups and the Government of Western Australia the latter represents the full and final settlement of all native title claims in the south-west of the state in exchange for a settlement package. It involves around 30,000 Noongar people and 200,000 square kilometres of land.

Issues

The South-West Australia region has been impacted variously by urbanisation, agricultural use, and mining, as well as altered fire regimes.

The major threats facing this region are:

- land clearing and fragmentation
- dieback due to the fungus *Phytophthora*
- dryland salinity
- altered hydrology
- weeds and feral pest species
- inappropriate fire regimes
- climate change, which is likely to increase average temperatures, continue the trend of decreasing winter rainfall, and produce harsher fire-weather conditions.

OPPORTUNITIES

Given the diversity of this region it presents many Indigenous economic-development opportunities.

Agribusiness

All forms of agriculture are practised in the South-West Australia Region from rangeland pastoralism, through cropping to intensive horticulture. The ILC is looking to assist Indigenous land-holders to increase their presence in agribusiness, including diversification of traditional cropping and

grazing land uses. The ILC is also looking for opportunities in agribusiness supply chains that add value to basic agricultural products, including 'beyond farm gate' infrastructure investment.

Mining and land rehabilitation

Given the importance of mining over much of this region, Indigenous businesses have successfully entered the mining-services industry. The retreat of the minerals boom and mine closures also present a need for commercial land-rehabilitation projects. Across the region economic opportunities arise from projects that conserve biodiversity or protect and manage environmental values.

Case study: land management

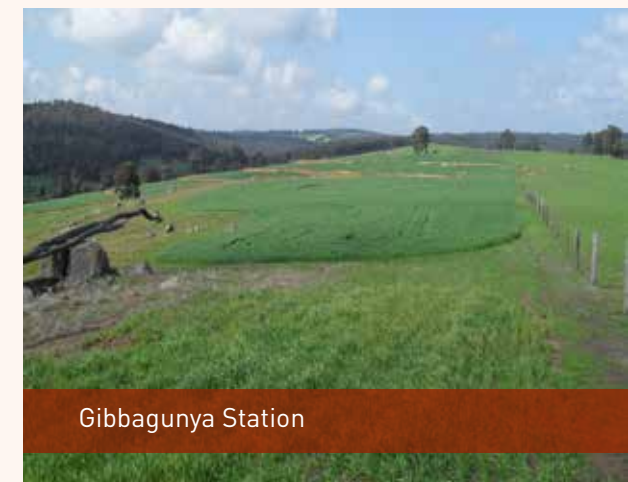
The ILC provided land management investment to assist Bundarra Contracting Pty Ltd to obtain a sublease over the Yakabindie pastoral aggregation in the northern Goldfields area. The aggregation comprises four pastoral leases: Albion Downs, Mount Keith, Yakabindie and Leinster.

Bundarra is an Indigenous-owned mining construction and civil works contracting business operating in the Goldfields region since 2001. Bundarra's co-owner is a Traditional Owner of the area in which the Yakabindie Aggregation sublease is located.

ILC support assisted Bundarra to buy a grader, tractor and stock-management equipment which were requirements to obtain the sublease for a 10-year term with a further 10-year option. Bundarra was able to focus on diversifying its business, building on its strong track record in providing training and employment opportunities for local Indigenous people. As a result of this project more than 570,000 hectares of land were brought under Indigenous management and over 30 significant cultural sites are being maintained and protected.



Divestment ceremony, Wooree Mira Women's Refuge, Perth



Gibbagunya Station

Renewable energies

Australia needs to transform its energy sources to meet internationally agreed emissions-reduction targets (the UN Paris Agreement). If suitable, Indigenous-held land could be used to generate solar, wind or geothermal energy for sale to energy retailers. The roll out of renewable-energy technologies could also assist Indigenous communities in this region, including communities off the electricity grid, to ensure energy supply and cut costs.

Water-based activities

The Australian Government's National Aquaculture Strategy (September 2017) aims to double the value of Australia's aquaculture industry over ten years, and recognises that Indigenous rights and interests must be considered in developing projects.

The ILC is currently working with the Australian Government to change its legislation to enable the corporation to invest beyond land to salt and fresh water. This may include support for Indigenous aquaculture or water-based tourism businesses, the purchase of fishing licences, or assisting Indigenous groups to care for and reconnect with water country. Fishing and aquaculture are important industries in this region.

Urban development

Perth is the major population centre in this region. Given that most Indigenous people now live in cities and towns, the ILC is looking to strengthen the Indigenous presence in urban areas. This may involve development of service hubs, cultural precincts or urban property-development portfolios that provide income for Indigenous groups.

Niche Indigenous products

Across Australia Indigenous people are the custodians of traditional cultural and environmental knowledge. Indigenous land holders could develop enterprises based on growing or wild-harvesting native plants for food, pharmaceutical or cosmetic uses, or the harvesting of protein from native (e.g. kangaroo) or feral animals (e.g. goats, camels). Investment is needed to research potential products, build markets for them, and establish Indigenous people's participation in niche-product supply chains. Opportunities in this region include the harvesting of bush foods (youlks), honey and native wildflower essences.

Tourism

This region has a varied and lively tourism industry, based on spectacular natural landscapes. Indigenous people's connection to land and culture are valuable assets in the tourism industry. These opportunities are supported by the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council, a peak body for Aboriginal tours and experiences in Western Australia, promoting authentic cultural experiences in the domestic and international tourism markets.



Roelands Farm



Mt Wittenoom Station



Karijini National Park, Pilbara



Karijini National Park, Pilbara



Roelands Mission

RELATIONSHIPS & LINKS

Relationships & links

The ILC always seeks to consult and partner with local and regional organisations in taking advantage of opportunities on Indigenous-held land. Collaboration is a core principle underpinning ILC projects. Over the period of this RILS, the ILC will focus on three levels of alliance building: networks linking Indigenous land holders through their engagement with the Indigenous Estate; partnerships with the ILC on key projects and activities; and strategic alliances, formal arrangements involving the ILC, Indigenous land holders and industry and charitable groups. The ILC will work with stakeholders to leverage knowledge of what works from previous and existing projects, tailored to local aspirations and expertise. Where possible, projects will be strengthened by input across multiple sectors—government, community, private and charitable.

The native title representative bodies and service providers across this region are:

Goldfields Land and Sea Council, WA
www.glsc.com.au

South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, WA
www.noongar.org.au

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, WA
www.ymac.org.au



Malimup Springs

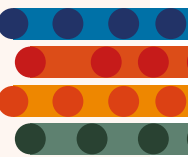
APPENDIX: RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Commonwealth

- Native Title Act 1993
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Western Australia

- Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972
- Aboriginal Communities Act 1979
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972
- Aboriginal Heritage (Marandoo) Act 1992
- Land Administration Act 1997
- Titles (Validation) and Native Title (Effect of Past Acts) Act 1995



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