



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS  
LAND AND SEA STRATEGY

# Caring For Country Factsheet

*This factsheet was drawn from the Caring for Country Discussion Paper developed from conversations with Dean Yibarbuk, Dr Otto Bulamaniya Champion, Cissy Gore-Birch and Shaun Ansell who collectively provide almost 100 years experience actively Caring for Country across the Top End of the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region of Western Australia.*

The Indigenous Australian approach to managing land and water – ‘Caring for Country’ – is built on a core belief: that country is held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that if you look after Country, Country will look after you. Thousands of years of Indigenous expertise in Caring for Country is increasingly being acknowledged and called upon. This is opening opportunities for Indigenous people to both Care for Country and generate an income.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations have developed land and water management enterprises and ranger programs which they are seeking to strengthen and diversify. For example, the growth of the carbon industry through savanna burning in northern Australia has enabled a welcome increase in ranger programs at a time when support for remote Indigenous communities and enterprise has been declining.

However, there are still major capacity gaps and an urgent need to support the continued training and upskilling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take on larger roles within their organisations. There has also been strong interest from non-Indigenous environmental and non-government organisations partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in caring for country. While this can bring some benefits, the values and aspirations of these organisations are not always in alignment with Indigenous people creating both opportunities and threats.

Future opportunities must remain true to ‘Caring for Country’ roots, ensuring country and people are healthier, providing opportunity to strengthen livelihoods and prosperity that come from the on-going connection to Country.

## Challenges

- Need for greater and longer-term resourcing – for capital and operational investments.
- Protection of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).
- Lack of effective representation through a peak organisation or other platform.
- Lack of regional scale planning focussed on and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- Succession planning and managing the impact of social issues on organisational sustainability.
- Governance and capacity gaps for independent organisations.



Kings Run,  
Tasmania



Sharing Indigenous  
Knowledge



Ranger performing  
a controlled burn

## Opportunities

- Investing in junior ranger programs to secure a Caring for Country future and the livelihoods of future generations.
- Building investment in Women Ranger programs and succession planning for our senior roles in leadership with the Prescribed Bodies Corporates (PBCs) and Ranger programs.
- Expanding the scope of Caring for Country organisations to ensure the opportunities on Indigenous-held lands are controlled by Indigenous people.
- Investing in sea and Country management and control.
- Supporting Indigenous groups to grow carbon and nature-based capital industries.
- Strengthening cultural knowledge and protocols into Caring for Country.

## Tell Us What You Need

### How can the ILSC best support your participation in Caring for Country? Should we:

1. Provide information on where the Caring for Country opportunities exist and how to take advantage of those opportunities?
2. Help to build your business planning and capabilities? e.g. feasibility studies, capacity building, links to technical advisors and networks
3. Link you with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and groups to learn from each other? eg. Sharing ideas, lessons and business models that work, supporting conferences etc
4. Actively support Indigenous-led organisations, networks, alliance, and initiatives to have a greater voice in industry development and government?
5. Provide funding support for projects?
6. Other suggestions?

## Projects supported by the ILSC

The ILSC has assisted with the acquisition of Gayini (Nimmi Cairra) in Hay, NSW a highly culturally and environmentally significant property, and provided funding for land and water management equipment to build training and employment opportunities. Purnturrpurnturr (Port Smith Bird Park) south of Broome, WA, is being leased to the Karajarri Traditional Lands Association (KTLA) with a view to future divestment. Once divested, KTLA will have a base for their Indigenous Protected Area management activities and be able to progress aspirations for the property to become the Southern Indigenous Cultural Gateway combining ranger facilitates, café, accommodation and camping, bush tucker garden, special cultural areas and a visitor centre.

To find out more about what we do please go to [www.ilsc.gov.au](http://www.ilsc.gov.au) and check out our Project Profiles.



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## Join The Conversation



**Come along** to one of our face-to-face sessions or join an online session. Visit our website to book in.



**Complete the on line survey.**



**Phone us on** 1800 818 490 for a confidential chat.



**Email** your submissions to [NILSS@ilsc.gov.au](mailto:NILSS@ilsc.gov.au) to share your thoughts.



**Get your full Information Pack:** visit [www.ilsc.gov.au](http://www.ilsc.gov.au), or email [NILSS@ilsc.gov.au](mailto:NILSS@ilsc.gov.au).



A feedback report summarising what we have heard from you and how we will use this important information will be available on the website.



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