



Savanna Fire Management Program | **ANNUAL REPORT 2022**



Australian Government
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation



The ILSC GROUP

PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.

Acknowledgment of Country

The ILSC acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands where we work and live and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. The ILSC recognise and honours the role of traditional fire management in caring for Country practiced across northern Australia for millennia.

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

Front cover image: Wagiman Traditional Owner and Ranger, Daphne Huddlestone leading a discussion around fire management on the Upper Daly and Wagiman Aboriginal Land Trusts at Daly River end of year fire planning meeting.

Inside cover: Aerial Tiwi Island burning

SAVANNA FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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Introduction

This annual report provides an overview of the sixth year of the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporations (ILSC) implementation of the Savanna Fire Management Program (SFM). The SFM Program aims to support the development and operation of fire management projects on Indigenous-held land in the Northern Territory (NT) by supporting groups with resources and training for on-ground, practical fire management as well as governance and sustainable business development.

Savanna fire management projects provides opportunity to deliver multiple benefits for Indigenous people including establishing a nature-based business, creating jobs, facilitating cultural practices, as well as supporting and promoting caring for Country.

Projects funded through the SFM Program apply Savanna Fire Management Methodologies under the *Carbon Farming Initiative Act 2011* to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from wildfires and increase carbon stored in the landscape in areas that receive over 600mm annual rainfall.

The SFM Program is resourced by INPEX Operations Australia (INPEX) on behalf of Ichthys LNG joint venture partners via a discretionary trust (SFM Trust) managed by Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd (Perpetual). INPEX committed these funds as part of a voluntary agreement with the NT Government to offset greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Ichthys onshore LNG facility in Darwin. INPEX appointed Perpetual to manage the SFM Trust, and the Indigenous Land

and Sea Corporation (ILSC) was engaged as the Program Manager for delivering the SFM Program. The ILSC and Perpetual entered the SFM Services Agreement on 12 December 2016, and operations commenced in April 2017.

The Program funds coordination, training, start-up and early operational costs for new projects. This enables Aboriginal groups, often with few alternative business development and employment options, to commence a carbon business. Projects funded through the SFM Program apply Savanna Fire Management Methodologies approved by the Clean Energy Regulator (CER) for areas that receive over 600mm annual rainfall, to reduce the frequency and extent of late dry season fires, resulting in few greenhouse gas emissions and more carbon being sequestered in dead organic matter.

Savanna Fire Management involves the principles of early dry season 'cool' patchwork burning, a method informed by the traditional Aboriginal fire management practiced across northern Australia.

This method of land management is associated with a broad range of globally recognised social, environmental, and economic benefits to the communities in which SFM Projects operate. These benefits include:

- more meaningful employment opportunities and training on Country,
- culturally appropriate employment in fire management activities,
- improvements for biodiversity conservation,
- increased capacity for self-determination,
- protecting cultural values,
- access to carbon industry development support and Indigenous-owned regional entity development,
- generation of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs).



Jeffrey Dixon - Garawa Ranger walking with drip torch to create cool, patchy burn patterns.



Rangers from Thamarrurr and Asyrikarrak Kirim take part in NAFI training at Wadeye.



Rangers have installed adjustable 'Stop' burning signs to encourage responsible use of fire on Tiwi Islands.

Summary of Savanna Fire Management Program Manager Activities in 2022

The SFM Program has achieved significant goals in 2022 with a number of projects making great progress towards achieving their long-term business development targets. The Judbarra, Garawa, Western Top End and Tiwi Projects successfully established governance committees to guide regional entity development for each respective carbon project. Negotiations involved considerable effort to bring together representatives from each language group, often traversing great distances for multiple-day meetings. Having focused committees embedded with Traditional Owner oversight will work to support decision-making through the process of transitioning SFM funded projects to a long-term support model.

Management of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated remarkable adaptability of project operators to participate with online communication, typically streaming from remote locations with minimal telecommunication infrastructure. However, the pandemic still poses a risk to communities, with groups continuing to be hampered in their opportunity to meet on Country and a number of cultural camps and governance meetings postponed over the year. Fortunate timing of Joint Management Committee (JMC) meetings held mid-year in Timber Creek for Judbarra National Park, enabled Traditional Owners from Ngarinyman, Karrangpurru, Malngin, Wardaman, Ngaliwurru, Numgali, Bilinara, Gurindji and Jaminjung language groups to meet in person for the first time since 2020. This event led to the realisation of a significant step for the Judbarra Project, as the JMC decided to form and appoint members to a Fire Subcommittee. Another significant achievement for the SFM Program was the passing of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Judbarra/Gregory National Park Carbon Emissions Reduction Project) By-Laws 2022*. These by-laws provide a statutory mechanism for the use of fire management activities for the purpose of reducing carbon emissions as part of an eligible offset project declared under the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011*. Importantly, this means that commercial carbon operations are supported through Joint Management Partnership arrangement in the Northern Territory. Previously, temporary agreements were made to facilitate fire operations on a yearly basis. The SFM Program has been assisting to develop an operational structure between the partners to build strong collaboration between fire management plans, policies and procedures. As the area has various fire management objectives, this framework is viewed as the foundation to reaching sustainable fire management outcomes.

The SFM Communications Strategy has demonstrated its value in supporting the Program to promote projects and communicate effectively between governing parties. A highlight for the year involved the Wardaman Project featuring on the prominent ABC NT Country Hour as well as Land Rights news. In February, the SFM Program supported the Annual Savanna Fire Forum (delivered virtually), bringing together carbon farming practitioners from across the NT, QLD and WA. This forum provided the opportunity for SFM project operators to share lessons and learn about innovative practices across northern Australia. Groups were able to connect again through a series of end of year fire meetings held at Timber Creek, Daly River and Borroloola. As part of these meetings, the Program facilitated fire planning and governance workshops. In December, the program developed a scope of work to create carbon project guides to assist Indigenous groups to develop their knowledge of the carbon industry, so that they can position themselves to maximise the benefits of projects for Country and community. Carbon offset reporting for the previous period demonstrated that 2021 was a difficult year as Garawa, Western Top End and Tiwi were unable to reduce emissions below their baseline. Various external and internal factors influenced these outcomes including the global pandemic reducing the ability for groups to deliver extensive burning, seasonal variability, burn

plan tactics and late dry season wildfires impacting project areas. This is a significant loss for projects who are working towards building sustainable ongoing business. While carbon abatement is only one of many benefits of the program, positive ACCU generation can provide consistent income to project proponents. Funding through the SFM Program has proven crucial to support groups through this learning phase. In 2022, Project Operators and Proponents had an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of the 2021 fire season. At pre-season planning meetings, groups analysed their fire management history and introduced new strategies, building on lessons learned from the 2021 fire season. With improved accessibility to Country, groups extended their burn operations, using satellite data and post-burn assessments to identify weak points and manage wildfire risks by returning to reinforce firebreaks with follow up burning. Rangers on the Tiwi Islands noticed that their burn plans had previously focused on roadsides leaving large areas vulnerable to wildfire. As a result, Rangers used helicopters to break up areas into smaller sections in effort to prevent the extent of area impacted by late dry season fires. Similar tactics were used in the Garawa and Western Top End, with Rangers applying mapping training received through the program to identify residual risks in their burn plans. This process will take time to get right but it will assist groups to increase their business resilience in the face of dynamic fire seasons.

All project areas were faced with the challenge of early-onset fuel curing, reducing the opportunity to burn through the Early Dry Season. Project operators, Rangers and Traditional Owners continued to work together through the fire season to develop and refine strategic fire management tactics. In building this capacity, Rangers undertook an appreciable amount of training this year, including a number of nationally accredited fire units. Courses were often delivered regionally and on Country and involved units in Work Health and Safety, helicopter and ground burning, wildfire suppression, communications and satellite imagery for fire planning. The SFM Program has developed a 5-year strategy responding to recommendations made in the independent Program review conducted in 2021. The Strategy outlines clear future priorities for Program delivery. Priorities include developing culturally appropriate governance structures, co-benefit metrics for projects, consolidating projects through operations and facilitating the emergence of sustainable Indigenous-owned enterprise. The SFM Program is driven to support projects in achieving these outcomes with the annual work program and budget committed to improving communications, developing standardised metrics for projects, embedding strong governance and investigating two expressions of interest for new projects on the Waanyi ALT and Manggarayi/Southern Beswick ALTs.



Planning meetings such as the Daly River Weeds and Fire Meeting provides an opportunity for SFM Project groups to network and share lessons.



Tiwi Rangers promote healthy fire management practice through their annual Fire Roadshow.

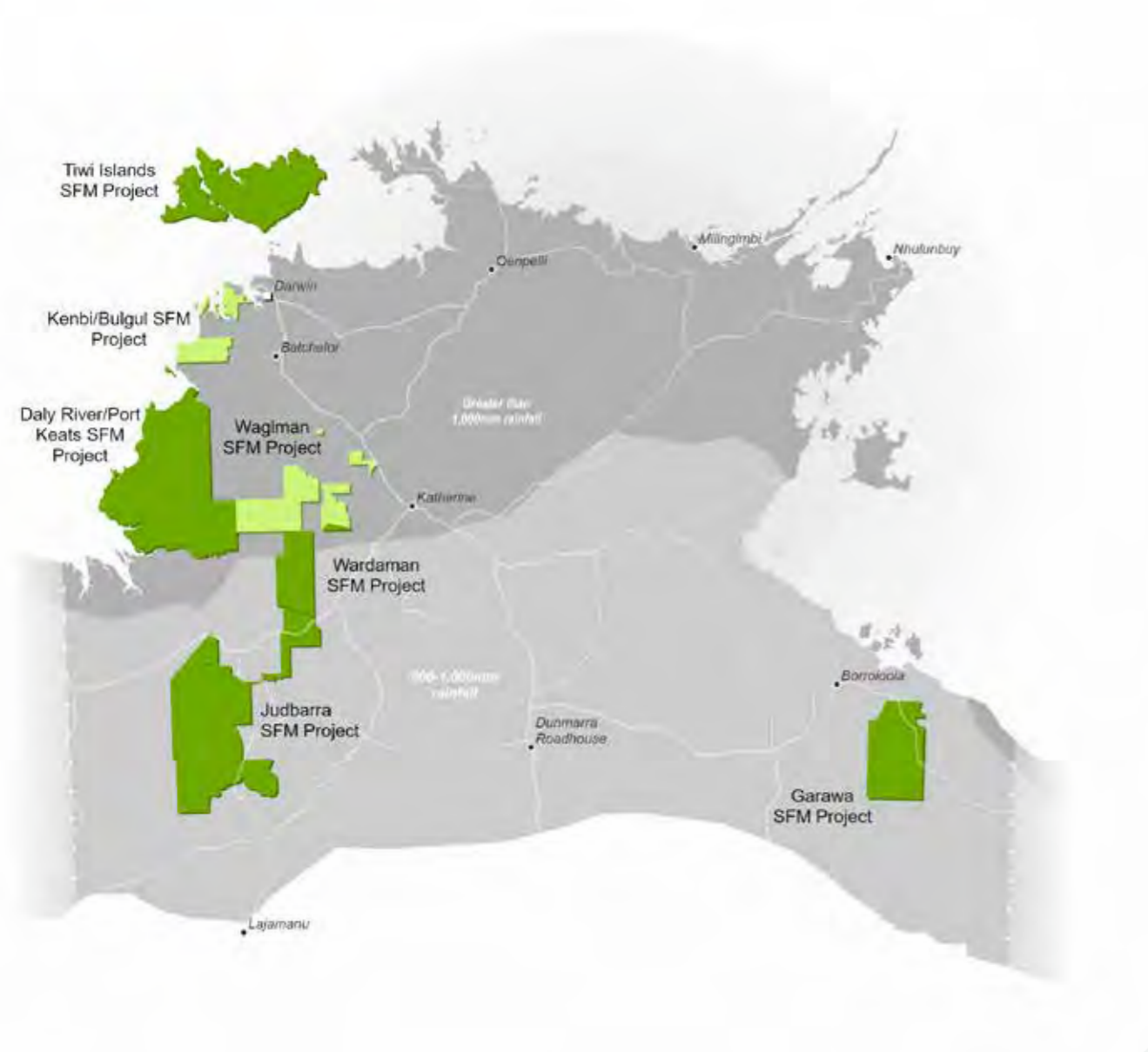
Savanna Fire Management Program

January 2023

Project areas of the Savanna Fire Management Program under a Phase 1 (Feasibility) and Phase 2 (Operational) agreement.

Northern Territory project areas by phase (ILSC January 2023)

- Phase 1 project funding agreement (current)
- Phase 2 project funding agreement (current)



By the numbers

39,000 KM²
LAND MANAGED UNDER THE PROGRAM (PHASE 2 PROJECTS)
IN 2022

4 NEW CARBON PROJECT COMMITTEES FORMED TO GUIDE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

40 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TRAINED IN FIRE/CARBON WORK

62 RANGERS EMPLOYED ON COUNTRY (MIX OF F/T AND CASUAL)
IN 2022

6 INDIGENOUS RANGERS COMPLETED NATIONALLY ACCREDITED CORE FIRE UNITS

6 INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS DIRECTLY FUNDED THROUGH THE PROGRAM GENERATED FROM SFM PROJECTS

12 INDIGENOUS RANGER GROUPS ENGAGED THROUGH THE PROGRAM
IN 2022

241,722
TOTAL ACCUS FROM SFM PROJECTS

56,608
ACCUs GENERATED
IN 2022
(FROM 2021 YEAR)

Project Structure

PHASE 1 FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Phase 1 projects involve due diligence and business development including business planning, feasibility assessments for viable ACCU production, priority co-benefits and Clean Energy Regulator (CER) eligibility requirements. Additionally, funding agreements for Phase 1 projects support groups to build an understanding of the carbon industry and to develop their fire management capability. Phase 1 projects are hosted with a local Indigenous enterprise, or through an Indigenous business where a local organisation has not been established.

Extensive consultation is conducted with Traditional Owners prior to the execution of contracts and the appointment of a hosting organisation. For a project to move into Phase 2, they must be considered to be commercially viable with the potential to become a fully independent commercial enterprise within 5 to 7 years of commencement of savanna burning operations.

PHASE 2 FUNDING AGREEMENTS

If a Phase 1 SFM Project meets commercial viability requirements, the project is eligible to proceed to a Phase 2 project funding arrangement. At this stage projects can start to earn ACCUs after registration with the Clean Energy Regulator (CER). A Phase 2 Project Funding Agreement (PFA) can be negotiated for the SFM Program to fund savanna fire management operations involving fire management, planning, prescribed burning operations and late dry season bushfire suppression. Along with operational funding, Phase 2 PFAs support project offset reporting, Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) audits and broader project development activities to establish sustainable Indigenous enterprise.

The following table provides a summary of active SFM projects in 2022:

Phase	SFM Projects involved in the SFM Program over calendar year 2022
1	Wagiman Project - Northern Land Council – feasibility assessment completed; S19 Agreement consultations postponed to 2023
1	Kenbi/Bulgul Project - NAILSMA – ongoing feasibility investigations; scheduled for final outcome Q1 2023
2	Tiwi Islands Fire Project - Tiwi Resources – fifth year of operation as an SFM Project. Proponents are preparing to transition to independent project management
2	Garawa Fire Project - NAILSMA –with a service agreement to NLC – fourth year of operation as a CER registered Project
2	Daly River/Port Keats Land Trust Project / Western Top End Project - Thamarrurr Development Corporation – third year of operation as a CER registered Project
2	Judbarra Fire Project - ILSC – third year of operation as a CER registered Project
2	Wardaman - Northern Land Council – second year of operation as a CER registered Project

A DETAILED OUTLINE OF EACH SFM PROJECT FOLLOWS.



Community leaders coordinate fire management through multi-day meetings and camps.



Phase 1 Projects

WAGIMAN PROJECT: PHASE 1

Land Management Group: Wagiman Rangers hosted by the Northern Land Council

The Phase 1 Wagiman Fire Project is planned for the Upper Daly and Wagiman Aboriginal Land Trust (ALT), situated approximately 2 hours south of Darwin, near Pine Creek. The Project Funding Agreement (PFA) for Wagiman was executed in December 2020 with the NLC as project proponent and operator. The Wagiman Project has one more stage to complete before being eligible for Phase 2 negotiations. Following the delivery the carbon feasibility report, the NLC are required to conduct consultations with Traditional Owners to gain consent for the abatement project to operate over the ALT. Consultations were cancelled in 2022 due to COVID-19 and community Sorry Business. The NLC have rescheduled consultations to February 2023. Wagiman Rangers have been working closely with their community, neighbouring Ranger groups and land managers to establish a sustainable fire regime and are determined to work towards developing a Phase 2 project as early as possible.

KENBI-BULGUL PROJECT: PHASE 1

Land Management Groups: Kenbi & Bulgul Rangers hosted by the Northern Land Council

A Phase 1 Project Funding Arrangement commenced for the Kenbi - Bulgal Project in December 2020 with NAILSMA as project proponent. The Project proposes to establish a carbon project on the Kenbi Aboriginal Land trust and Delissavale/Wagait/Larrakia Aboriginal Land Trust. The ILSC granted an extension for Phase 1 actions to be delivered over 2022, including the exploration of long-term business feasibility based on ACCU generation within individual ALTs. NAILSMA have assessed these options and inform that complex fire management is required to ensure long-term project viability due to the proximity of the project areas to the peri-urban environment. The host organisation indicates that this project will be terminated in Q1 2023, with final consultations with Kenbi and Bulgul Traditional Owners occurring over this period.

The Wagiman project provides the opportunity to share cultural knowledge between generations.

Phase 2 Projects

WARDAMAN PROJECT: PHASE 2

Land Management Group:

- Wardaman Rangers hosted by Northern Land Council

Ranger Participation: 8 Wardaman Rangers and 7 casuals involved in the SFM Project

Training Received: 8 Wardaman Rangers completing nationally accredited units including Aerial Incendiary Machine Operation, Safety around Helicopters, Prevent Injury, Assist with Prescribed Burning, Respond to Wildfire Prepare, Test and Maintain Response Equipment.

Additional Activities: The Wardaman Project (ERF 170671) is in its second year of savanna burn operations delivered by the Wardaman Ranger group on the Menggen and Yibulyawun ALTs. Since registration with the CER in December 2021, the Wardaman Project has successfully introduced strategic fire management over two fire seasons across the Land Trusts of which contain many sacred sites and areas of significance. All fire planning is completed with reference to maps of areas of significance and biodiversity features. In 2022 two Wardaman Traditional Owners accompanied Rangers to provide oversight of aerial incendiary ignition over their Country. In addition to consultation with Traditional Owners, Rangers engaged with neighbouring properties to establish relationships for shared boundary fire management. The early dry season was challenging for Rangers as Above Normal fire potential in the region led to rapid curing of vegetation. Before all prescribed burn operations were completed, a wildfire entered the Menggen Land Trust. Rangers campaigned for 12 hours to suppress the fire, supported by neighbours and a Fire Management Operations Support Officer employed through the NLC to support SFM Projects.

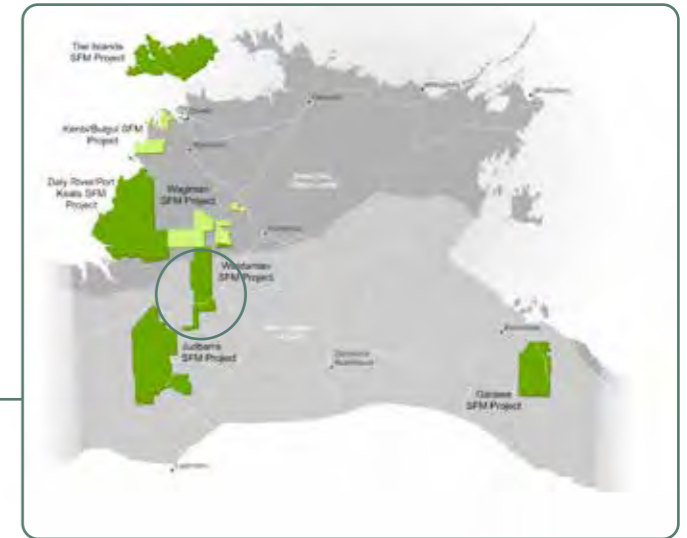
Wardaman Rangers continued to develop their savanna fire management capability over the year, with 8 Rangers completing nationally accredited fire management units. In addition to these fire units, Northern Australia Fire Information (NAFI) training was conducted in Katherine at the Jawoyn offices, providing an opportunity for Wardaman Rangers to network with Rangers from external carbon projects.



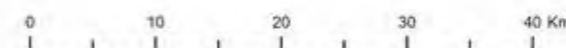
Top Left and Right: Aerial burning can be used to manage fire in remote areas where roads don't exist.

Bottom: Wardaman Ranger Timothy Allyson and Northern Land Council Fire Officer, Grant Hamilton, taking a break from ground burning with backpack leaf blowers on the remote Menggen Aboriginal Land Trust (ALT).

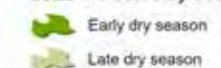
Wardaman Project Early Dry Season and Late Dry Season Fire Scars 2022



Wardaman SFM Project (ERF170671)



2022 fire scars by season (NAFI 2023)



JUDBARRA NATIONAL PARK PROJECT - NAILSMA: PHASE 2

Land Management Groups:

- Timber Creek Rangers hosted by Northern Land Council
- Wardaman Rangers hosted by Northern Land Council
- Daguragu Rangers hosted by Central Land Council
- NT Parks & Wildlife Rangers, Northern Territory Government

Ranger Participation:

- 10 Rangers & Traditional Owners

Training Received: 8 Wardaman Rangers completed nationally accredited fire units as mentioned under Wardaman Project Phase 2.

Additional Activities:

- Appointment of Fire Committee to oversee governance and business planning.
- Rangers participated in NAFI satellite imagery toolbox training in Katherine.

The Judbarra Project operates within ALTs leased to the Northern Territory Government as a National Park and managed through joint management arrangements with Traditional Owners. The Judbarra Project (ERF161545) was registered with the CER by the ILSC on behalf of the Traditional Owners in December 2020.

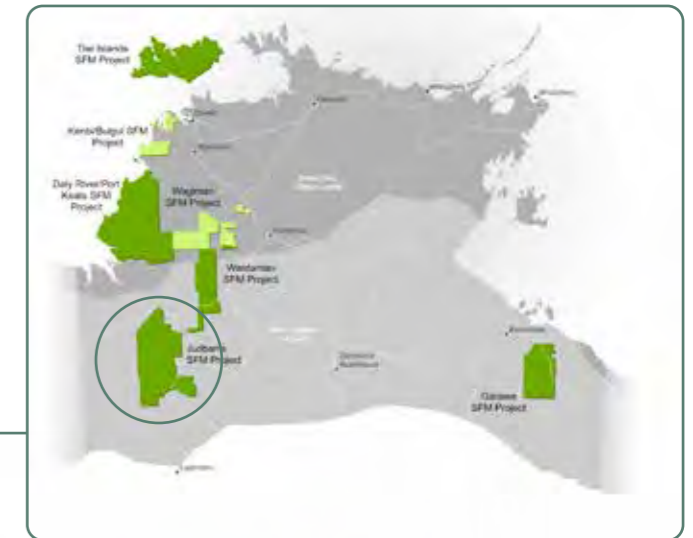
A focus of this project over 2022 was to establish a long-term legal and operational framework to enable the carbon commercial enterprise to operate within the scope of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (1976). In June, the Judbarra Joint Management Committee (JMC) met for the first time after 2 years of COVID-19 restrictions. This meeting provided an opportunity to progress decisions through consultation with Traditional Owners and identify remaining requirements to create a complete authorising environment for the project. In August, By-Law 16 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (1976) was drafted and authorised by the Central Land Council (CLC), Northern Land Council (NLC) and Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. This subordinate legislation was gazetted in November 2022, enabling savanna burning within the National Park to be delivered by the registered project operator for the purposes of a carbon emissions reduction project. This is significant achievement for the project and provides precedence for the establishment of future carbon enterprise established within jointly managed National Parks in the Northern Territory.

The Judbarra Project passed its first audit by the Clean Energy Regulator in July. The Project is in final stages of registration with the CER as it is currently conditionally approved. After registration is complete, the CER can distribute ACCUS generated in 2020 and 2021. Project operations were restricted this year due to the flow on effects of COVID-19 and as a result, less early dry season burning was achieved than had been planned. Despite these challenges, the ILSC and Project Operator, NAILSMA, have worked closely in 2022 to ensure that a strong governance framework is established to deliver fire management operations into the future. One of the results of this collaboration has been the establishment of a JMC Fire Subcommittee, containing representative landholder groups, to provide project oversight of annual fire management plans and business entity development.

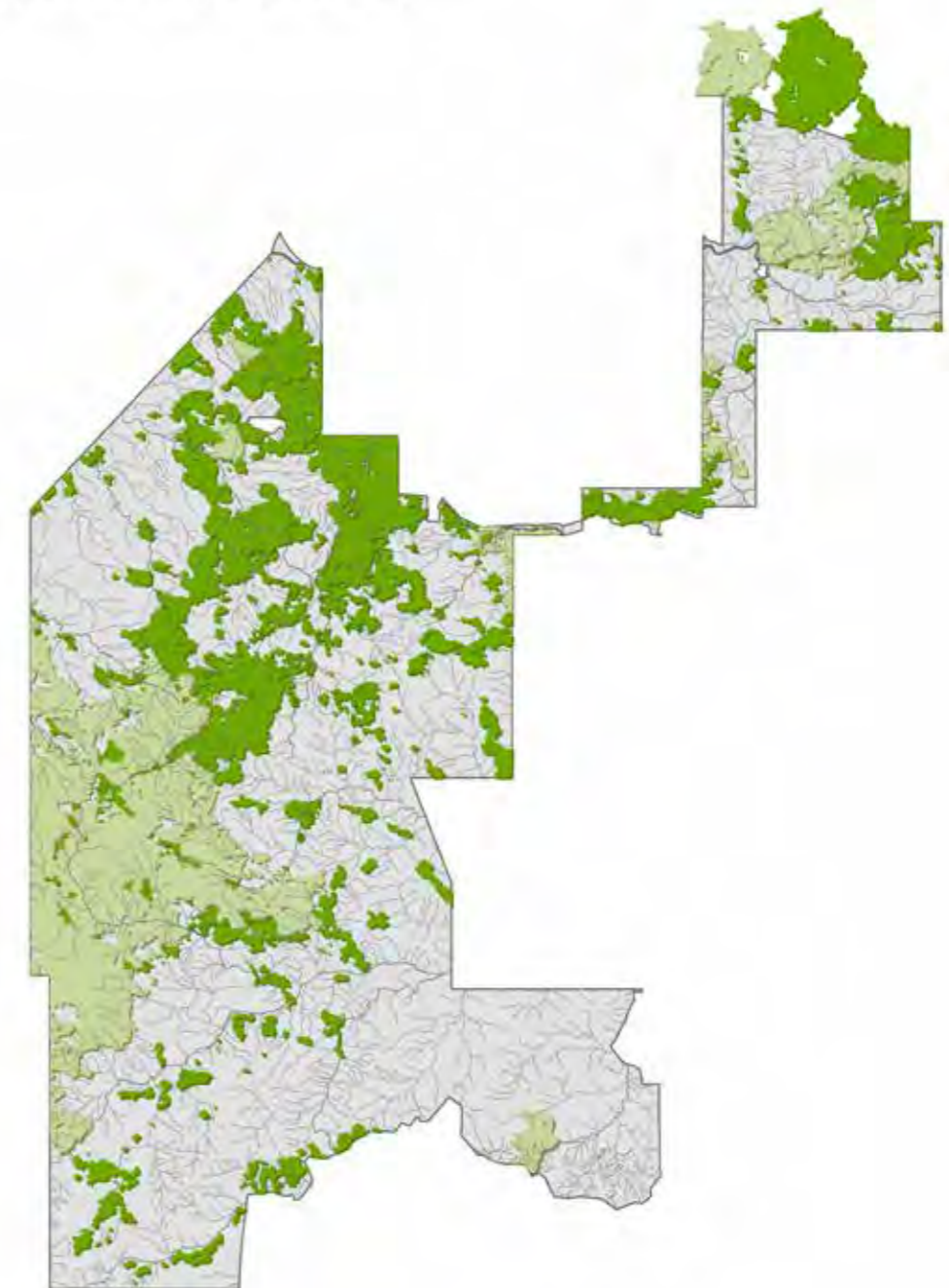


Collaboration is key to the success of the Judbarra Fire Project delivered within a National Park managed through Joint Management arrangement with Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Government.

Judbarra Project Early Dry Season and Late Dry Season Fire Scars 2022



Judbarra SFM Project (ERF161545)



2022 fire scars by season (NAFI 2023)

- Early dry season
- Late dry season

WESTERN TOP END SFM PROJECT: PHASE 2

Land Management Group:

- Thamarrur Rangers hosted by Tharmarrurr Development Corporation
- Wudicupildiyerr Rangers hosted by Northern Land Council
- Peppimenarti Rangers hosted by Deewin Kirim Corporation
- Emu Point Rangers (emerging)

Ranger Participation:

- 32 Rangers are employed on a casual basis between March and July

Training Received:

- 6 Rangers completed NAFI satellite imagery training

Additional Activities: Development of a Gamba Grass Action Plan and Threatened Species Plan.

The Western Top End (WTE) Fire Project (ERF160973) operates on the Daly River Port Keats Aboriginal Land Trust and was registered with the CER by Tharmarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) in December 2020. The Project commenced a Phase 2 Funding Agreement in April 2020. TDC lead project delivery through a sub-contracted agreement with the land management groups.

In its third year of operation, the Western Top End project is demonstrating sustained capability to coordinate and conduct large-scale fire management operations within the expansive and remote land trust. In 2022 the WTE Project have achieved key operational milestones including passing their first Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) audit. Each year, the Project brings Ranger groups together to deliver a series of mosaic burns along roads, sacred sites and around community infrastructure. Through adaptive management, the project operator is incorporating new methods to increase the efficacy of fire management operations. Coordinators have used new fine-scale satellite imagery technology to assess operational outcomes and identify residual fire risk. The TDC have developed a Gamba Grass Action Plan for the Port Keats ALT, proactively getting ahead of incursions. Additionally, The group are working to improve environmental management through the development of a Threatened Species Plan.

One of the key objectives of the Project Service Agreement is to establish a project advisory committee consisting of custodians representing language groups to oversee fire management and drive the development of an independent carbon enterprise. Over the last 12 months a series of consultations were held with representative language groups to discuss governance arrangements for the project, culminating in a decision in August to establish a project subcommittee for the purpose of achieving this goal. The TDC have engaged a consultant to identify a governance structure and business model for the subcommittee to explore.



Fire plans are developed with Traditional Owners, providing knowledge and oversight of burn operations.

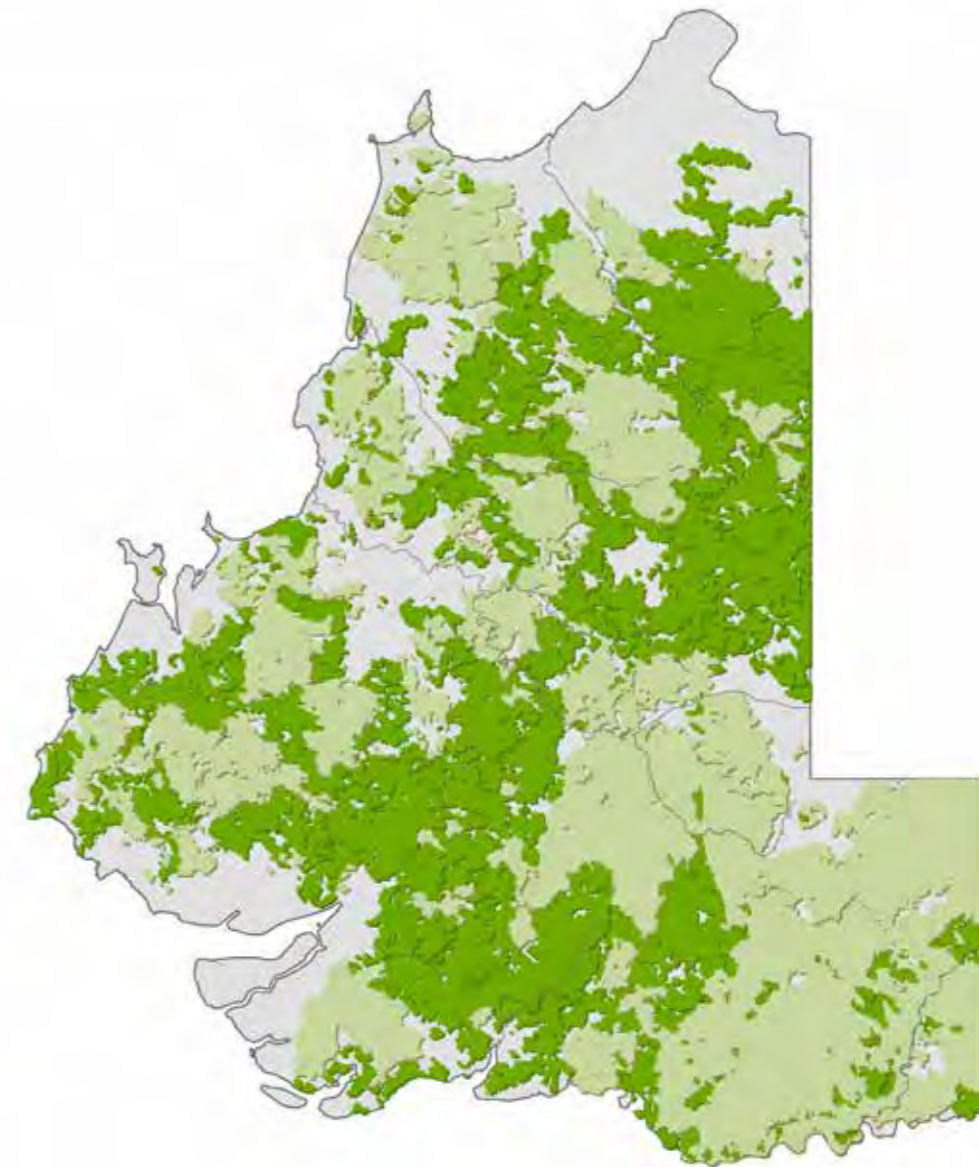


Thammarrur Ranger Stephen Dumoo developing a strategic firebreak from the road into Kultchill in the Western Top End.

Western Top End SFM Project Fire Scars 2022



Western Top End SFM Project (ERF160973)



2022 fire scars by season (NAFI 2023)

- Early dry season
- Late dry season

0 20 40 60 80 Km

GARAWA FIRE PROJECT: PHASE 2

Land Management Group:

- Garawa Rangers hosted by Northern Land Council

Ranger Participation:

- 6 casual Rangers and 7 FTE Garawa Rangers involved in SFM project delivery

Training Received:

- 20 Garawa Traditional Owners attended an information session on 'understanding carbon business'
- 5 Garawa Rangers completed training in Bush Mechanics, 4WD and CPR

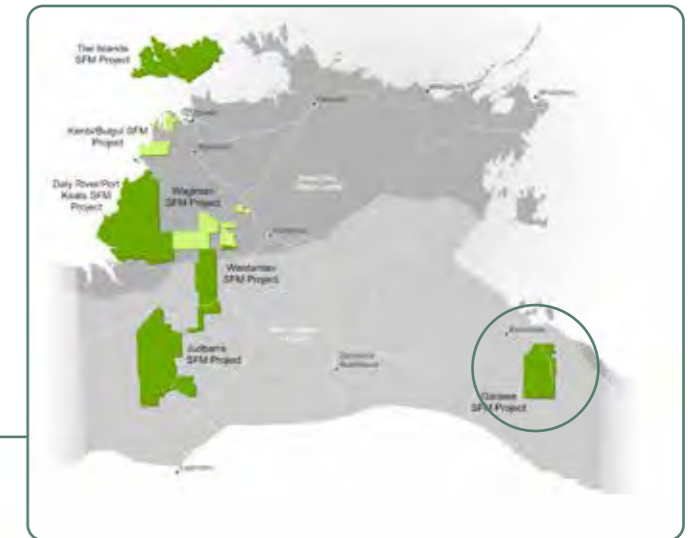
Additional Activities:

- 8 Traditional Owners participated in aerial and ground burning with Garawa Rangers.

The Garawa fire project operates within the Garawa Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). The IPA Committee provides a Traditional Owner governing body to provide oversight of project delivery. However, a key aspiration of this project is to establish a separate governing body to focus on carbon business development. In 2022, a significant step was made in achieving this aspiration, with the nomination of a Fire Project Committee to represent landowner interests. Since establishment, the Fire Project Committee have participated in business development workshops in effort to build their capability to develop a sustainable and independent business.



ILSC delivering workshops on carbon enterprise development at a Garawa fire planning meeting in Borroloola.



Garawa SFM Project (ERF130950)



2022 fire scars by season (NAFI 2023)

- Early dry season
- Late dry season

0 10 20 30 40 Km

Phase 2 operations have continued to be supported with the guidance of a skilled fire management practitioner who has been mentoring the Ranger team to plan and conduct prescribed burn operations. This approach has been effective in growing next generation fire practitioners applying traditional knowledge and cultural practices with contemporary technology. Garawa Rangers conducted substantial ground and aerial burning in the early dry season, using natural landscape features to diversify fuel loads and habitat. This work considerably reduced the impact of late dry season fire and estimates indicate a positive year for carbon emission avoidance.

“

"Late season fires do a lot of damage, burn everything - bush tucker, more smoke, leave the trees naked, kill everything"

- Uriah Crocombe - Thamarrurr Ranger

Traditional Owners fly with trained aerial incendiary operators, providing oversight of early dry season burns.

TIWI ISLANDS PROJECT: PHASE 2

Land Management Group:

- Tiwi Rangers housed by Tiwi Resource Corporation

Ranger Participation:

- Four Tiwi Rangers employed including a Tiwi Ranger Coordinator

Training Recieved:

- Fire Committee received 3 governance and business development training workshops delivered by Tamarind Consultants.
- Four Tiwi Land Rangers completed training in NAFI satellite imagery at CDU Casuarina campus.

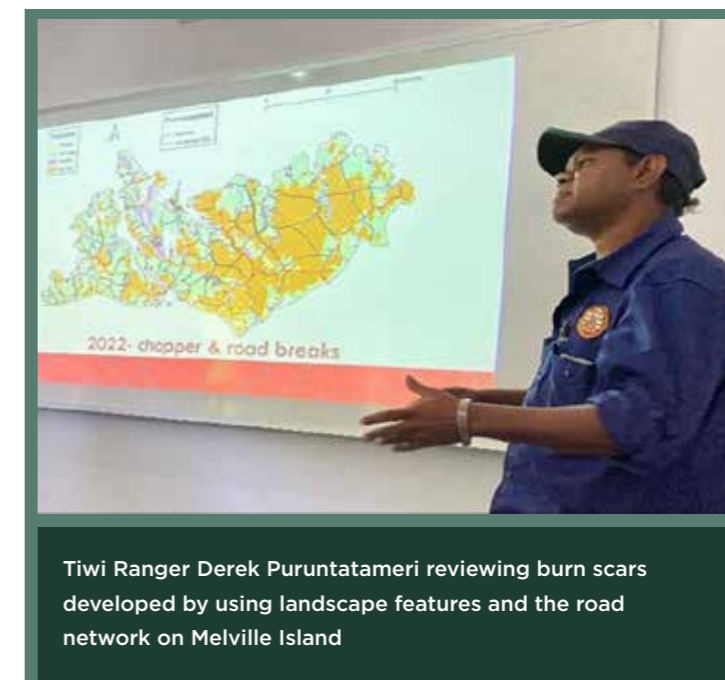
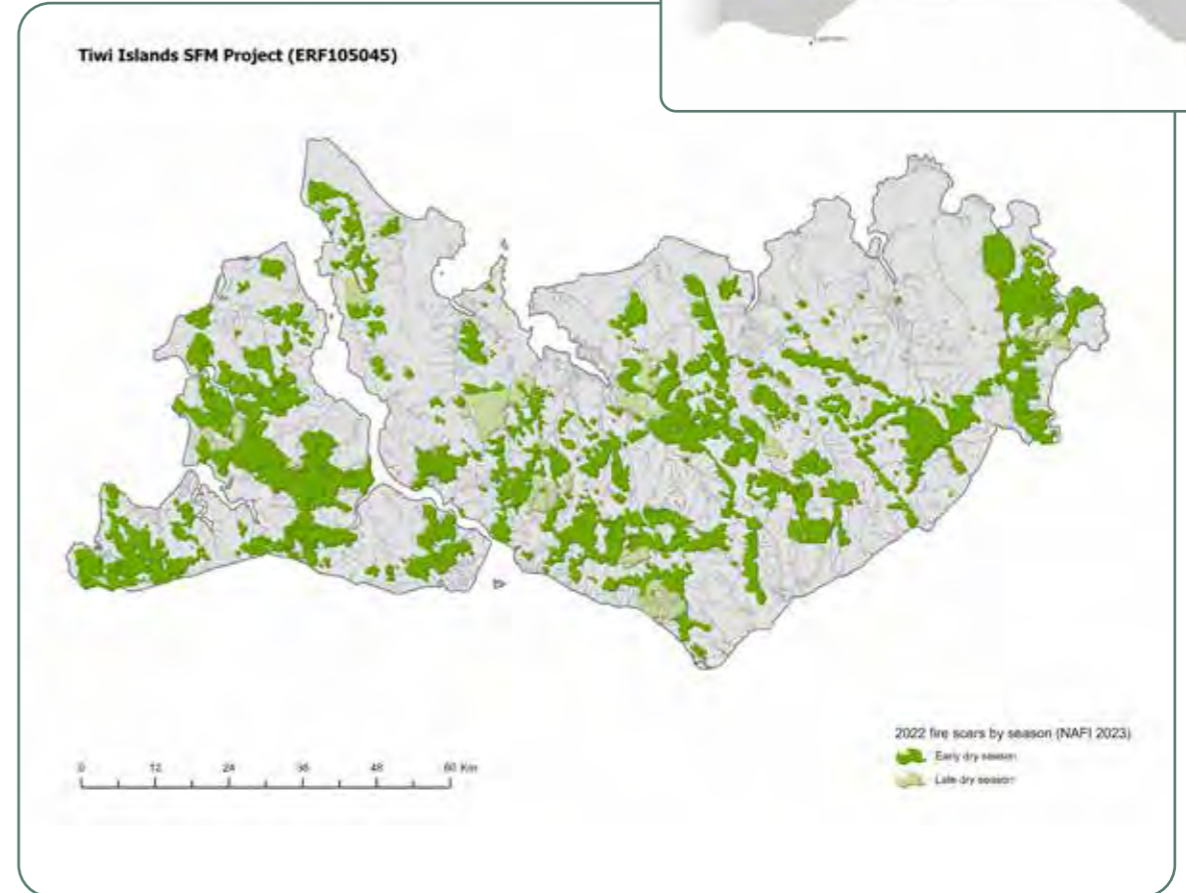
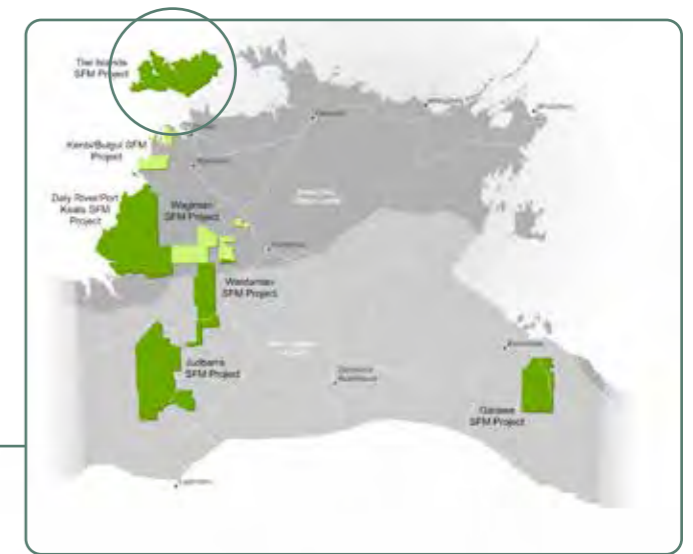
Additional Activities:

- Delivery of a multi-day Annual Tiwi Fire Roadshow
- Installation of fire danger roadside signage
- Small mammal monitoring program
- Appointment of the Tiwi carbon project governance committee

The Tiwi Project is progressing towards their long-term Phase 2 project goals and have experienced a successful carbon abatement year. An important priority for the project is to establish an independent business with capacity to undertake offset reporting and navigate carbon trading. Early in 2022, project partners met in Wurrumiyanga to establish a new Fire Project Committee, representing each of the 8 Tiwi Landowner groups. The newly formed Committee are tasked with overseeing the transition from SFM Program funding to business independence. Tiwi Resources have engaged carbon business consultants to work with the group to develop a business plan and a marketing prospectus. Importantly, consultants will assist the group to communicate the environmental, economic, and social co-benefits that savanna burning brings to the community.

Over a number of years Tiwi Land Rangers have collaborated with scientists from Charles Darwin University to monitor the interaction between savanna fire regimes and threatened mammal populations, including the brush-tailed rabbit-rat. This research is assisting fire managers to plan out fire regimes based on the niche requirements of different species on the Islands. Monitoring work continues to provide an opportunity for additional community members to work alongside Rangers through casual contracts.

Community engagement has developed into an important aspect of the Tiwi Project with Rangers delivering an Annual Fire Roadshow. The event is delivered over a number of days, covering both Islands and involves primary school children through to Elders. As part of the roadshow Rangers bring along large maps detailing their fire plans for the year, allowing for group discussion and consultation. Promotional material is distributed, to raise awareness of the benefits of early, cool burning, and problems caused by late dry season hot fires. Following the Fire Roadshow, Rangers installed 'Stop Burning' and 'Start Burning' signs in high-visibility locations. This infrastructure adapts the national Australian Fire Danger Rating System messaging, informing community about fire danger risk.



Tiwi Ranger Derek Puruntatameri reviewing burn scars developed by using landscape features and the road network on Melville Island



Rangers have installed adjustable 'Stop' burning signs to encourage responsible use of fire on Tiwi Islands



ACCUs generated by SFM Program Operators

As per CER regulations, ACCUs are not credited to Projects until they have passed an initial Project audit. Tiwi Resources have been issued ACCUs for reporting periods 2018-2021. Garawa, and Judbarra projects have passed initial CER audits and have provisional estimated ACCUs awaiting distribution from the CER through to project proponent accounts. The Western Top End Project has received ACCUs for their first reporting period, 2020. These ACCUs are now ready for distribution to INPEX. The Wardaman Project will submit their first offset reports for 2021-2022, upon availability of 2022 abatement calculations in Savbat. Data for the 2022 reporting period is anticipated for release in March 2023.



Wardaman and Wagiman Rangers participated in nationally accredited aerial bombardier training at the Menggen ALT.

Table 1. ACCUs generated by SFM Projects under Phase 2 Project Funding Agreements

Project	Total ACCUs 2018	Total ACCUs 2019	Total ACCUs 2020	Total ACCUs 2021	Proportion attributed to SFM Funding	Number of ACCUs transferable to INPEX
Tiwi	42,250	13,429	44,269	Zero ACCUs generated	63.6% (2018) 88.5% (2019) 66.9% (2020)	68,374
Garawa	N/A	2,727	7,779	Zero ACCUs generated	69.8% (2019) 73.2% (2020)	7,598
Western Top End	N/A	N/A	33,823	Zero ACCUs generated	81.9% (2020)	27,691
Judbarra	N/A	N/A	40,837	56,608	TBC	TBC
					TOTAL	103,663

Tiwi - The Tiwi SFM Project is up-to-date with abatement reporting and crediting. Tiwi Resource Corporation has received all ACCUs generated since 2018 and have transferred proportional allocations to INPEX.

Garawa - The CER awarded ACCUs generated between 2019-2020 to proponent, NAILSMA. Proportional allocations to INPEX are planned for transfer in Q1 2023.

Western Top End - The CER has awarded ACCUs generated for 2020 to proponent Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC). The TDC will be transferring INPEX allocations in Q1 2023.

Judbarra - The Judbarra Project is conditionally registered with the CER and has passed its first audit in July 2022. As all conditions for project registration have been met, the ILSC has applied to the CER to change the project status from registration 'conditional' to registration 'complete'. When this status is updated, the CER can award ACCUs for the periods 2020-2021 and proportional allocations can be transferred to INPEX.

2021 - Judbarra was the only SFM Project to produce ACCUs in 2021 with Garawa, Tiwi and Western Top End exceeding their baseline emissions. Discussion around this issue is outlined in this report under 'Summary of Savanna Fire Management Program Manager Activities in 2022'.



"Lots of early fires here and there and all over. When its dry in the dry season that fire will come and stop here, won't spread everywhere. Slow down late fires when they come".

- Cariss Jones, Thamarrurr Ranger

SFM Program Financial Summary 2022

A signed Statement of Income and Expenditure is included as an attachment to the report.

Table 2. SFM Program Financial Summary 2022

INCOME			
Q1 SFM Payment	\$673,260	\$673,260	\$ -
Q2 SFM Payment	\$673,260	\$673,260	\$ -
Q3 SFM Payment	\$673,260	\$673,260	\$ -
Q4 SFM Payment	\$673,260	\$673,260	\$ -
Total Payments 2022	\$2,693,040	\$2,693,040	\$ -
Balance held by SFM Program (1 Jan 2020)	\$535,943	\$535,943	\$ -
TOTAL INCOME	\$3,228,943	\$3,228,943	\$ -

EXPENSES			
	BUDGET	YTD ACTUAL	VARIANCE
PHASE 2 PFAs	\$2,234,76	\$2,212,268	\$22,495
Judbarra Phase 2	\$358,951	\$746,2430	-\$387,479
NAILSMA Garawa	\$247,890	\$267,890	-\$20,000
Wardaman Menggen	\$189,000	\$160,000	\$29,000
Thamarrurr Development Corporation	\$500,000	\$500,000	-
Wagiman (NLC)	\$250,000	-	\$250,000
Tiwi Resources	\$688,922	\$537,948	\$150,974
PHASE 1 PFAs	\$29,000	\$54,000	-\$25,000
Kenbi/Bulgul (NAILSMA)	\$15,000	-	\$15,000
Wagiman (NLC)	\$14,000	\$54,000	-\$40,000
Third Party Service Providers	\$350,000	\$58,963	\$291,037
SFM Project Direct Costs	\$453,000	\$226,897	\$226,103
Staff Salaries & On costs	\$350,000	\$135,102	\$214,898
Office- Accommodation & Expenses	\$47,000	\$55,371	\$8,371
IT and comms equip	\$2,000	\$1,689	\$311
Conferences and meetings	\$3,000	\$2,394	\$606
Vehicle Running Costs	\$7,000	\$5,348	\$1,652
Fuel	\$6,000	\$1,412	\$4,588
Travel	\$30,000	\$21,191	\$8,809
Staff - Corporate Training	\$3,000	-	\$3,000
Marketing & Comms	\$5,000	\$4,390	\$610
ILSC Overhead Costs (fixed)	\$162,220	\$162,220	-
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,228,983	\$2,717,348	\$514,635



Traditional Owners involved in helicopter burning facilitate culturally appropriate fire practices.

Summary of Variance from 2022 Budget

Several stakeholder meetings were cancelled in 2022 due to COVID-19 outbreaks and Sorry Business. Following 5 years of successful Program delivery, ILSC Program resourcing was reduced this year due to staff changeover and delays in recruitment with impacts from the current national labour shortage. Overall expenditure was close to the amended 2022 budget and funds were able to be drawn down from the balance held by the SFM Program. The following details any significant variance in expenditure against the budget:

- SFM direct costs and wages were underspent due to delays in recruitment of ILSC SFM staff based in Darwin.
- Both the Judbarra Project and Garawa Project were overspent due to an error in the 2022 budget. All expenditure in 2022 relates to the Judbarra Phase 2 Project Schedule within the executed contract between the ILSC and NAILSMA.
- Wagiman Phase 1 requires s19 land-use consultations with NLC as the final activity. This was scheduled for June and again in November and is postponed to Q1 2023.
- Third party service contracts were delayed in 2022 due to delays in ILSC SFM Program recruitment. Initiatives have been rolled over to the 2022 workplan. A contract was drafted for provision of NAFI training and satellite imagery services for 2023 in Q4. Further, a Request For Quote has been submitted to vendors for the development of communications material (carbon project) to be awarded in Q1 2023.
- Travel, fuel and vehicle running costs were underspent due to a lower level of staff travel to remote areas due to ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks, community mourning and reduced staffing capacity.
- The Tiwi Project are underspent due to a delay in submission of their final 2022 Milestone Report.

Performance Evaluation of the SFM Program

Table 3. Performance evaluation of the Principles of the SFM Program.

SFM Program Principles	Notes	Evaluation
Avoiding negative reputational risk to key stakeholders and maximising the potential to reflect positively on the reputations of all stakeholders	The SFM Communications Plan has provided guidance for managing reputational risk, outlining roles and responsibilities of project partners in identifying, triaging, and managing any perceived reputational risk that has arisen in 2022. Projects continue to attract positive attention, with the Wardaman project featuring on the prominent ABC NT Country Hour and featuring in Land Rights news.	Good
Supporting and enabling the development of sustainable, viable Indigenous enterprises and the delivery of economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits for Indigenous people	All Phase 2 Projects have implemented the Savanna Fire Management methodology delivering important globally recognised outcomes in sustainable development. Project operators undertake fire management planning and prescribed burning with oversight from Traditional Owners. The Program has brought opportunity to train and mentor future land managers, create jobs, and support regional economies.	Excellent
Providing business and employment opportunities for Indigenous people via SFM Project Operators	<p>Significant employment opportunities for Indigenous Rangers were created by the Program across the Projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western Top End - In 2022 there were 32 casual fire rangers employed to deliver fire operations in July 2022. A further 6 Rangers participate in the SFM Program and are employed on a permanent basis through separate funding. Garawa - Casual ranger employment has increased dramatically, with 8 casual employees engaged to deliver fire management activities and a further 8 full-time Garawa Rangers employed through separate funding supporting SFM actions on the ALT. Wardaman - there are 8 Wardaman Rangers and 7 casuals involved in the SFM Project. Tiwi - 4 Full-time Tiwi Rangers including a Tiwi Ranger Coordinator. 10 Casual Rangers on the Judbarra Project <p>Four business development focused governance committees were established in 2022 for the Tiwi, Garawa, Western Top End and Judbarra Projects. Committee members have had opportunity to receive training and workshops in carbon business development.</p>	Excellent

Promoting the use of sound land and environmental practices	Through application of savanna burning, all operational projects use environmental data to plan fire regimes that promote biodiversity outcomes. The Western Top End Group are working to develop a Threatened Species and Healthy Country Plan. These documents will help Rangers prioritise outcomes for vulnerable to critically endangered species found within the project area. With continued participation of the Tiwi Land Rangers in small mammal research, the Tiwi Project has gained insight into threatened species populations and how their fire management can promote their conservation.	Good
Spreading community and social benefits of the Ichthys Project beyond Darwin into regional areas of the Northern Territory	The SFM Program has brought social and community benefits to the regions in which they operate including sharing of traditional knowledge around fire practices and neighbour meetings to discuss fire planning. The Wardaman Rangers conducted a series of meetings with neighbouring Ranger groups, Traditional Owners and pastoralists building cooperation around cross-boundary fire management. Community members of all ages are involved in Tiwi fire planning through the Tiwi Fire Management Roadshow. As part of this event Tiwi Rangers travel around communities showcasing their plans, fire safety and healthy country messaging. Roadside signage infrastructure has been installed across both Islands to improve fire danger awareness and encourage responsible fire management. The Judbarra Project have purchased a 3D model of the project area to be used as a community engagement and fire planning tool. The model can be used to look at terrain, weather, community infrastructure and factors influencing the behaviour of fire. The Garawa project has brought together landowners to plan infrastructure development for On Country Camps and fire management.	Good
Developing the capacity of Indigenous groups and SFM Project Operators; Enhancing the skills and knowledge of all stakeholders in carbon management, including carbon policy and implementation of practical carbon farming projects	<p>Rangers involved in the SFM Project completed a substantial amount of national accredited training to build capacity of their teams to deliver strategic savanna fire management. Additionally, SFM Projects have made great progress this year in developing the governance capacity of Indigenous groups involved in the Program. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six Western Top End Rangers completed NAFI satellite training. Approximately 20 Garawa Traditional Owners received carbon business development workshop sessions delivered by the ILSC and NAILSMA. Representatives from each Tiwi language group have participated in a series of governance and carbon enterprise development workshops delivered by an external consultant. These workshops involved topics on climate change, the carbon market and ACCU Scheme. 8 Wardaman Rangers completing nationally accredited units including Aerial Incendiary Machine Operation, Safety around Helicopters, Prevent Injury, Assist with Prescribed Burning, Respond to Wildfire and Prepare, Test and Maintain Response Equipment. 5 Garawa Rangers and 6 Wardaman Rangers undertook Bus Mechanics, 4WD and CPR training. 	Excellent

<p>Minimising, managing and mitigating all relevant risks appropriately, particularly workplace health and safety risks</p>	<p>All staff involved in fire management operations are employed through the Northern Land Council, Central Land Council, Tiwi Resource Corporation, Thamarrurr Development Corporation and North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance. These organisations have comprehensive Work Health and Safety (WHS) policy and procedures and systems to support their implementation. Policies at the NLC are updated every 2 years as a response to changes in legislation and immediate actions are taken place to manage any raised incidents. All operational partner agencies record incidents through online reporting tools.</p> <p>Across the projects, fire management equipment and Ranger bases are inspected on an annual basis and equipment is inspected before each use, with safety reports submitted to relevant managers.</p> <p>SFM Program staff travel to remote field locations to facilitate and participate in project meetings. The ILSC have rigorous WHS practices, and all staff are required to have currency in Remote First Aid and Operate Vehicles in the Field.</p> <p>Through SFM Phase 1 and Phase 2 project delivery, operators are required to undertake a project risk assessment to identify and manage identified hazards and risks.</p> <p>One WHS incident occurred during delivery of the SFM Program in 2022. This incident was incurred through a service provider (project operator) and managed in-line with their WHS policy.</p>	<p>Excellent</p>
<p>Protection of Indigenous cultural and heritage sites</p>	<p>Senior Traditional Owners are consulted on their priorities for burning, incorporating culturally significant and environmentally sensitive sites into project fire management plans. An appropriate person accompanies Rangers to oversee burn operations on ground or by helicopter. Mapping data is used to support this process, allowing groups to visualise fire hazards and risks that may impact these significant sites.</p>	<p>Excellent</p>
<p>Protection of Indigenous cultural and heritage sites</p>	<p>Through the fire planning meetings held before EDS burning senior Traditional Owners are consulted on their priorities for burning, incorporating culturally and environmentally sensitive sites into their fire planning. These priorities are translated into the burning program to ensure that sensitive areas are protected from destructive fires, and the appropriate person is conducting the burn.</p>	<p>Excellent</p>
<p>(i) generating ACCUs; and avoiding emissions and thereby having a positive impact on climate change mitigation</p>	<p>Five SFM Projects are delivering savanna fire management under a CER registered methodology. All operational SFM Projects delivered early burning operations in 2022 in effort to avoid GHG emissions, with the exception of Judbarra. Total ACCU generation for 2022 will be estimated upon release of data available for carbon accounting in March 2023.</p>	<p>Fair</p>

Excellent = principles and purpose being met beyond expectations

Good = expectations of principles and purposes are being met

Fair = expectations of principles and purposes are not currently being met but progress towards these is apparent.

Poor = expectations are not being met and look unlikely to be met.

Inside cover: Aerial Tiwi Island burning.

Backcover image: Wardaman Rangers analyse fire history derived from satellites to develop burn plans.





Australian Government
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation



The ILSC GROUP

PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.



**Western Division
(WA)**

Level 20, 140 St Georges Terrace
 Perth WA 6000

PO Box 7502 Cloisters Square
 Perth WA 6850

T (08) 9420 6300

E westernoffice@ilsc.gov.au

**Central Division
(SA, VIC, TAS, NT)**

Level 7, 70 Franklin Street,
 Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 652
 Adelaide SA 5001

T (08) 8100 7102

E centraloffice@ilsc.gov.au

**Eastern Division
(QLD, NSW, ACT)**

Level 18, 100 Creek Street
 Brisbane QLD 4000

GPO Box 5212
 Brisbane QLD 4001

T (07) 3854 4600

E easternoffice@ilsc.gov.au



www.ilsc.gov.au
FREECALL 1800 818 490