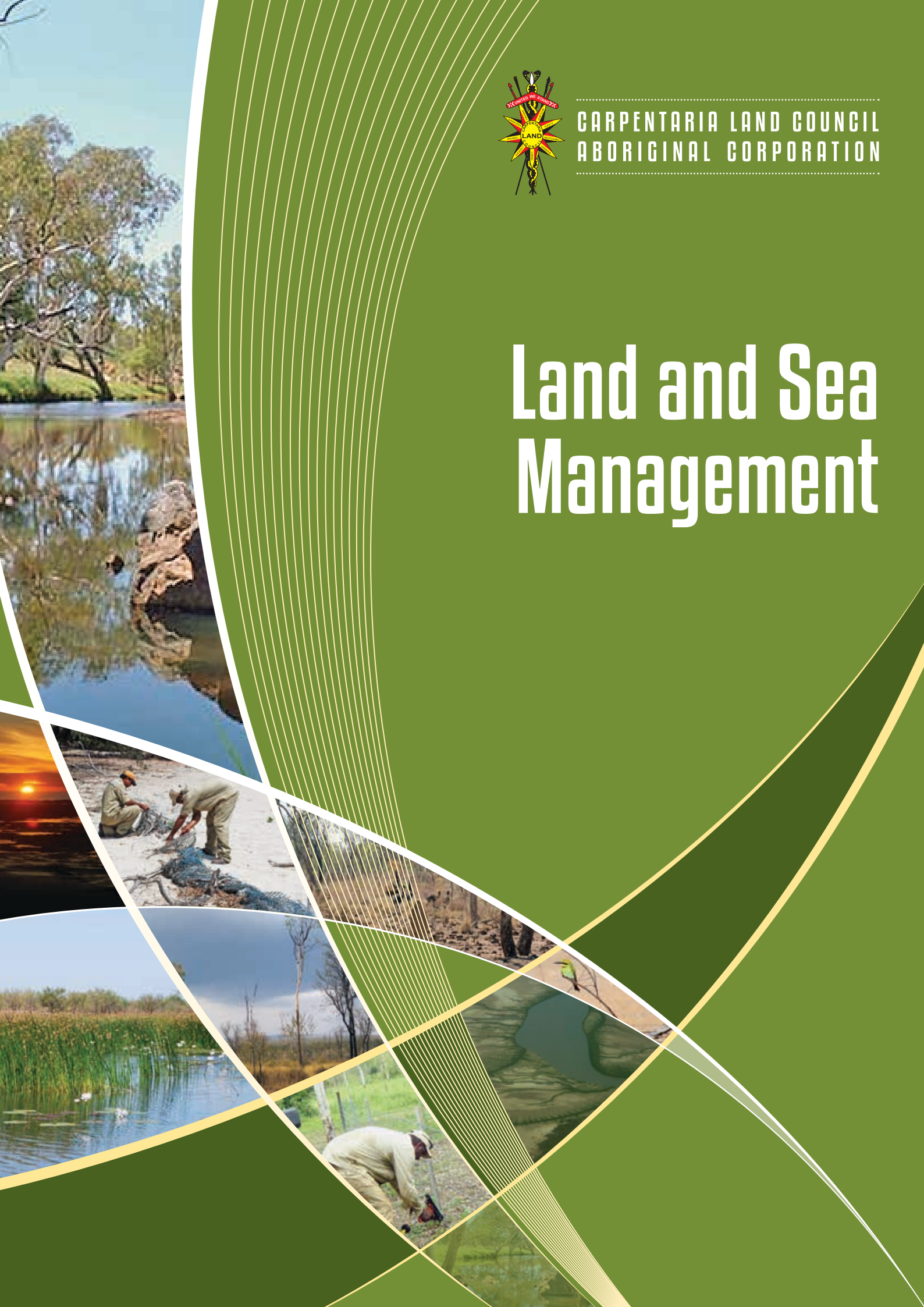




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CARPENTARIA LAND COUNCIL  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION  
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# Land and Sea Management



“ The CLCAC was established 30 years ago in Burketown to represent the rights and interests of Traditional Owners. Our members are drawn from the nine language groups whose traditional lands and waters are located in the in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria: the Lardil, Kukatj, Yangkaal, Garawa, Waanyi, Kurtijar, Kaiadilt, Gangalidda and Gkuthaarn people.

”



# WHO WE ARE

In 2007 the CLCAC established a Land and Sea Ranger Program as an extension of its role as a native title service body.

The Land and Sea Program undertakes management activities that enhance the protection and management of natural resources for the long-term benefit of Traditional Owners and communities.

This Program has gone from strength to strength, and is considered one of the best Indigenous Land and Sea Programs of its kind in Australia, in terms of skill levels of employees and delivery of services.

The Land and Sea Program currently has 16 full-time Indigenous Rangers in two ranger units at Burketown and Normanton.

## Current activities include:

**01** >> Feral animal and weed control

**02** >> Wetland rehabilitation

**03** >> Fire management

**04** >> Turtle and dugong management

**05** >> Biodiversity survey and vulnerable species monitoring

**06** >> Protection and management of cultural sites

**07** >> Traditional knowledge transfer through school visits and the Junior Ranger Program

# WHERE WE WORK: THE GULF PLAINS

The spectacular natural environment of the Southern Gulf Region ranges from eucalyptus woodlands in inland areas through to lowland coastal plains, pristine wild rivers and seasonal and permanent wetlands to the rich marine resources of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Extensive mangrove forests, vast salt pans, estuaries, beaches, rocky shores, large seagrass beds, reefs and other marine areas typify the landscape.

The area is particularly significant for the extent and continuity of its wetlands and its importance as a rich breeding habitat for many waterbird and shorebird species, and encompasses rich hunting grounds and therefore many areas of cultural significance to Traditional Owners .

Sadly, uncontrolled wild fire, feral animals and weeds are threatening these unique places. Without significant expansion of the important land and sea work that the CLCAC undertakes these threats could alter this beautiful country permanently.

## Indigenous Protected Area and conservation reserve Management in the Gulf

**The CLCAC rangers manage two Indigenous protected areas, (Thuwathu/Bujimulla and Ngada Ardulkara); and assist in other conservation reserves in the region. The rangers have shown the way in conservation management in protected areas.**



Purple Crowned Fairy Wren



Golden Shouldered Parrot



Snubfin Dolphin

*“ We live in a relatively pristine natural environment with only minor development pressures... but threats degrade this landscape gradually, it is death by a thousand cuts. ”*

*- Murrandoo Yanner  
Carpentaria Land Council Director*



There are 23 flora and fauna species listed as threatened in the bioregion. These threatened species include Marine Turtles, Sarus Cranes, Gouldian finches, Golden Shouldered parrots, Gliders, and the Gulf Snapping Turtle.

Thirty-five threatened ecosystems exist in this region, the majority of which are in decline. Nineteen of these ecosystems are found only in this bioregion—they do not occur anywhere else in the world.

Fifteen nationally important wetlands occur within the Lower Gulf region - outstanding examples of rich, unique and diverse permanent and seasonal wetlands, providing critical habitat and breeding grounds for migratory waterbirds, freshwater turtle, fish, mammals and native plants, and supporting six sites of global bird conservation importance.

The southern Gulf of Carpentaria is an important habitat area for Turtle and Dugong. All six Australian marine turtle species occur in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria. Rangers have commenced marine turtle surveys along these coastlines and are protecting turtle nests against feral pigs with effective protection barriers.

The CLCAC supports two declared Indigenous Protected areas (IPAs) with the aim of providing the Wellesley Islands community along with the adjacent mainland Gangalidda People with the opportunity to enhance the capacity of its rangers, promote the invaluable work that they do on country in the protection and conservation of biodiversity, and to acknowledge their contribution as Traditional Owners in maintaining their environment for future generations.



# LANDSCAPE SCALE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The program has been successful in the strategic management of Weeds of National Significance and the eradication of feral animals, including the culling of tens of thousands of feral pigs in the Normanton region in recent years.

Fire management is a key feature of the work undertaken annually by the rangers. The rangers utilise early season mosaic burns to prevent destructive late dry season wildfires, ensuring the protection of much of the Gulf mainland country and islands.

Seagrass monitoring, ghost net disposal work and protection of sea turtle nesting sites enable the protection of critical marine resources. Erosion rehabilitation and monitoring is also carried out to ensure that fresh water is retained in the landscape and to prevent the destruction of wetlands and sea country.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT

The ranger groups employ traditional fire management of country and have developed a fire management plan incorporating both western scientific best-practice techniques and Traditional fire knowledge.

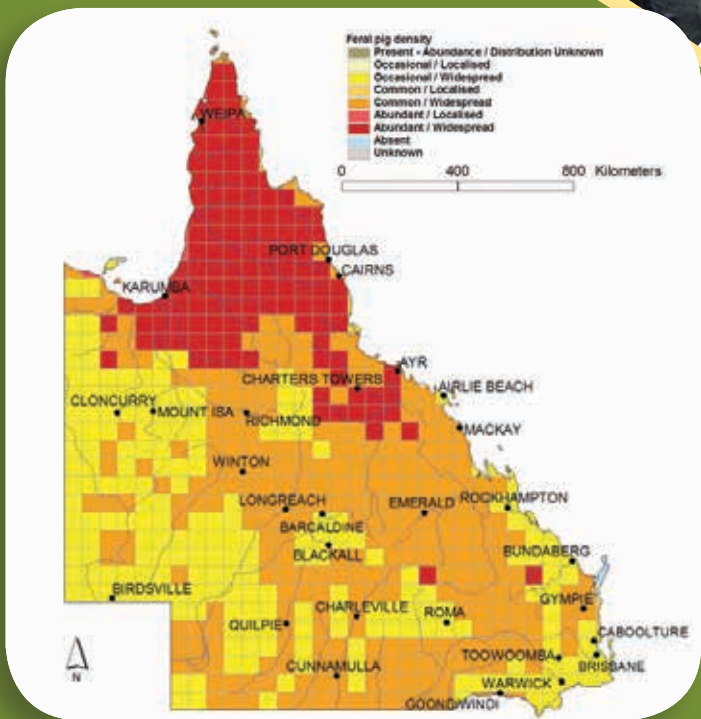
Rangers practice early season mosaic burning to reduce the incidence of devastating late-season wildfire. This reduces greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to a range of land management objectives, including better outcomes for pastoralists, control of environmental weeds, ecosystem restoration and protecting the fire sensitive habitats of a range of endangered species.



The Gulf savannah fire management guidelines was developed to provide a user friendly guide to hazard reduction and ecological burning. Using traditional knowledge and the best science available it is an exceptional tool for land managers in the gulf.



Left to right: The Carpentarian Rock Rat, the Carpentaria Grass Wren, and the Long-tailed Planigale – all species whose habitat is affected by severe wildfire.



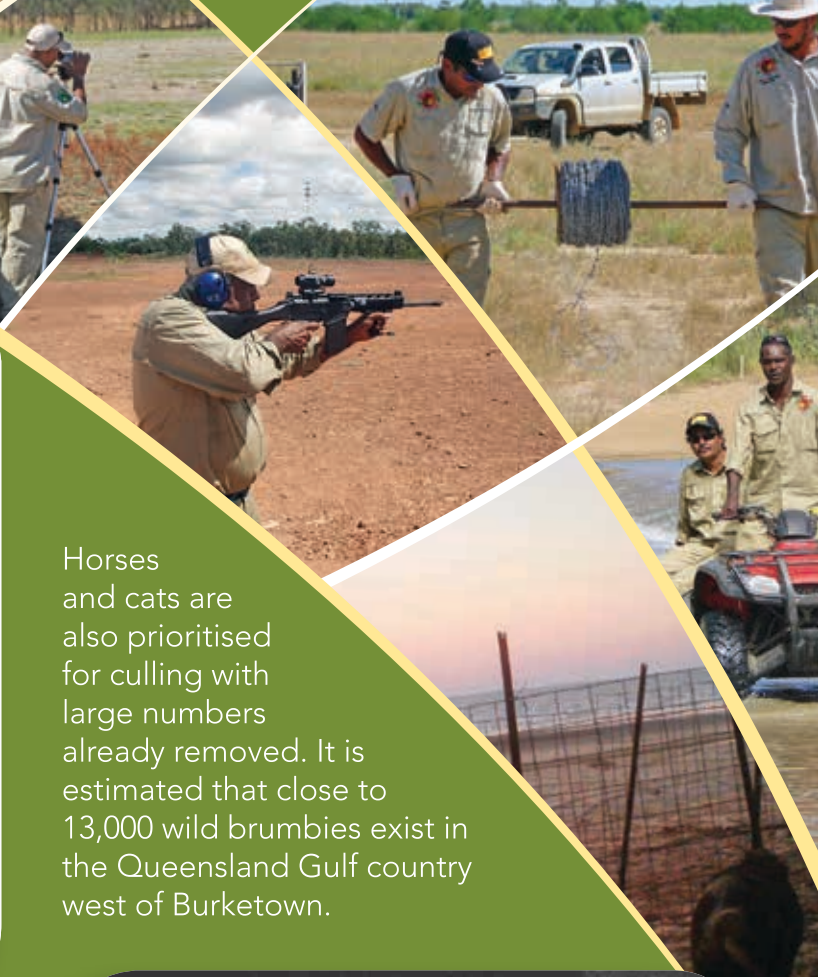
Compiled by the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre and the National Land and Water Resources Audit in collaboration with the Australian, State and Territory governments (2007).

## MANAGING FERAL ANIMALS

Feral pigs have a devastating impact on the environment. They destroy crops, stock and property, spread weeds and transmit diseases, and result in loss of habitat and food resources for native wildlife.

Indigenous rangers have been reducing pig populations in the lower Gulf since 2009 with over 50,000 feral pigs removed to date with a plan to remove 200,000 in the next 5 years. The rangers have established partnerships with local pastoralists to develop a long term feral pig management program, and train landowners in effective pest management. They conduct annual aerial culling, baiting and trapping, exclusion fencing of sites of significance, and conduct ongoing monitoring on impacts of control efforts.

Demonstrated expertise and effectiveness in feral pig management has resulted in the Normanton Ranger group securing an ongoing contract with the Carpentaria Shire Council to deliver their biannual baiting program to 35 pastoral leases as part of the Shire pest management strategy.



Horses and cats are also prioritised for culling with large numbers already removed. It is estimated that close to 13,000 wild brumbies exist in the Queensland Gulf country west of Burketown.



Feral pigs devastate threatened species populations like sea turtles and golden shoulder parrots as well as having enormous impact on bush foods like the long necked turtle and mud crabs.



Normanton rangers Lance Rapson, Phillip George and Paul Richardson conducting feral pig autopsies with AQIS.



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All rangers undertake accredited training, giving them the skills to perform as professional land managers and operate as a viable and successful business team. Training goes beyond conservation and land management and includes machinery operation licences, IT, Aerial Markmanship, HR and management, business management and financial services, and applied skills such as welding, fencing, chemical handling, land rehabilitation and first aid. Working in a professional team also builds self-confidence and leadership. Our ranger teams are leaders in their community.

*Working hard and earning a decent income enables people to support their family and experience the pride that comes with that. Our rangers know they are as good at this job as anyone, and that makes a big difference to self-confidence.*

- Murrandoo Yanner  
Carpentaria Land Council Director



Rangers are qualified for work across multiple industries should they choose to move on from the ranger program.

## VALUE FOR MONEY

All project funding can be directed to delivering actual NRM outcomes, since our rangers are "work ready". The indigenous ranger groups have proven their professionalism, reliability and cost effective delivery of quality NRM services, and as a result are now a competitive provider of private contracted NRM services in the area.

*They can get up and run the whole program.... Over the next five years I am hoping that they can get up and run the whole program on their own, that I'll just be put to the side and just be there as an advisor so if they need any assistance they can come and see me. For them to be able to function, manage their budget and manage their work on ground. That's the goal and I believe they will be able to reach that well before five years.*

- Mark Hogno,  
Regional Ranger Coordinator

*The training you get as a ranger, it opens those other doors.... None of us would have ever dreamed of doing this, that we'd be here doing the things we do. Never would have seen this. Writing reports and articles, comes back to all the training and confidence it gives you. The training you get as a ranger, it opens those other doors to a lot of other jobs if you ever decided to go that way - but not many people want to stop being rangers. It's my hope that we'll run the show in this community one day as TOs managing our land.*

- Paul Richardson,  
Normanton Senior Head Ranger





# CONTRIBUTING TO KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

## PAVING THE WAY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The CLCAC Ranger groups do great work supporting the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge through engaging TOs and young people in their work.

They run the Junior Ranger Program, conducting school visits and taking young people out on country to ensure the continuity of traditional knowledge and connection to land and culture. The Rangers are mentors and role models to kids in their communities, promoting the importance of education.

## PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Ranger groups work with TOs and Elders to record traditional ecological knowledge, which provides a rich understanding of their local landscape and historical land management practices.

## CONTRIBUTING TO SCIENCE

The CLCAC Rangers are also making significant contributions to scientific knowledge of the Gulf's environment. The federal government has recognised this bioregion is woefully under surveyed, and monitoring to increase understanding about the flora and fauna of the southeast Gulf is crucial.

CLCAC Rangers conduct extensive biodiversity surveys as part of long-term monitoring, involving multifaceted data collection methods including trapping, transects, opportunistic sightings, measuring weed abundance, vegetation cover, and extent of feral animal disturbance.

This work contributes to important baseline data on biodiversity in the Gulf Plains region; ongoing monitoring work for vulnerable fauna such as turtles and crocodiles; and assists the measurement of success of management activities.

*In 2013 one of our rangers Paul Richardson co-authored a paper with an established ornithologist, which has been published in the scientific journal Sunbird. This is a significant achievement with the paper being evidence and recognition of the high level of professionalism that exists in our Indigenous rangers.*

*“ Our rangers are taught by the best whitefella scientists and mentored by the best characters we can muster. Now, we have some of the best performing rangers in the country using both traditional knowledge and science. ”*

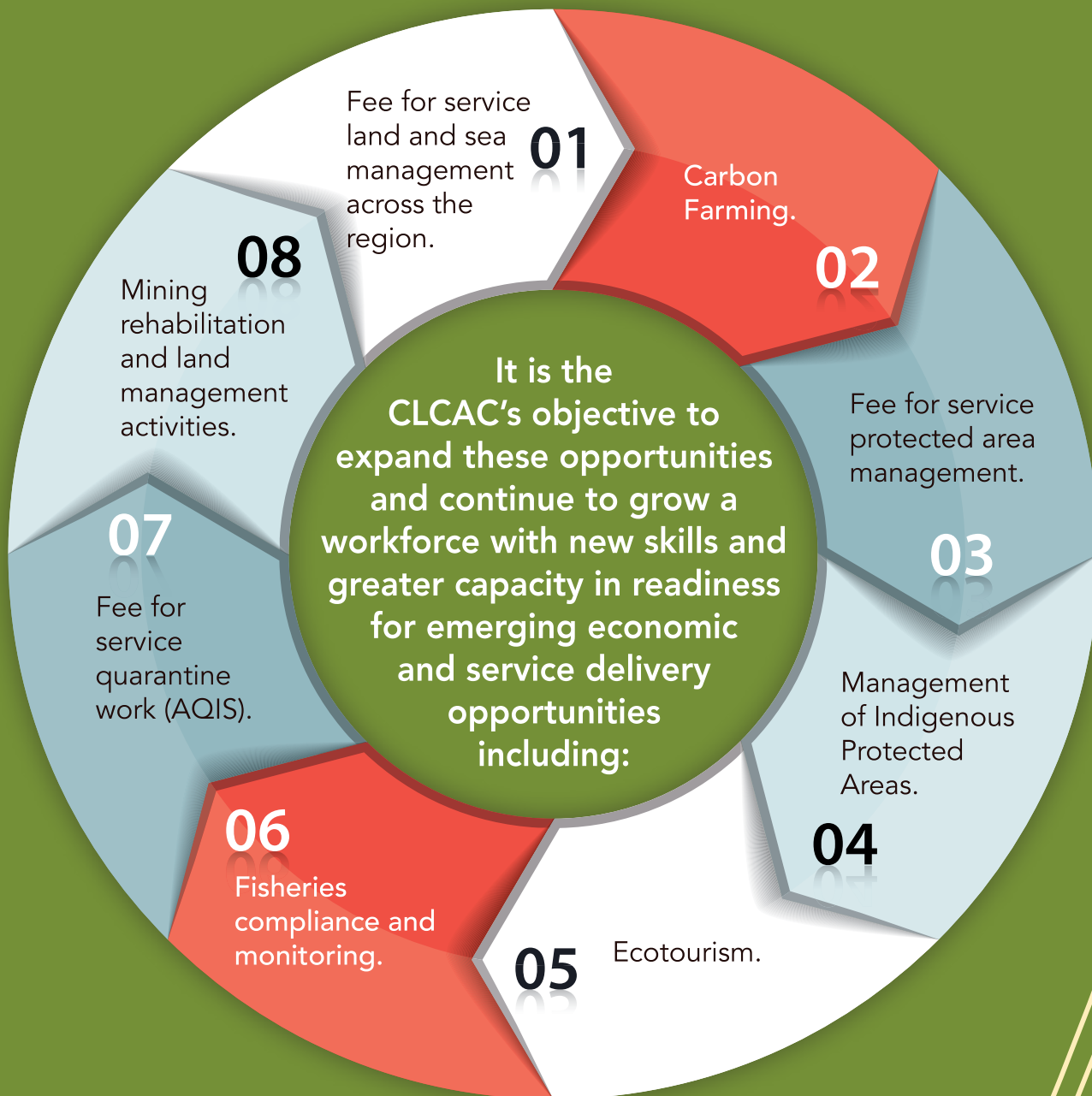
*- Murrandoo Yanner  
Carpentaria Land Council Director*

*The Normanton Rangers have conducted the first ever large-scale documentation of waterbird breeding colonies (herons, ibises, cormorants and allies) in the lower Gulf of Carpentaria. Engaging renowned Ornithologist Roger Jaensch, and conducting aerial surveys over five years (2009-2013), the Normanton Rangers have recorded 32 active colonies, 28 of them described for the first time. The results have been published in the Sunbird Journal of the Queensland Ornithological Society, co-authored by the Normanton Senior Head Ranger Paul Richardson.*

# FUTURE GROWTH IN LAND AND SEA

The Land and Sea unit has significant capacity in natural resource management. This growth in capacity has led to significant demand for a fee for service and contract opportunities for

rangers especially with local Shire Councils, mining companies and Australian Quarantine and Inspection service.



This workforce is the embryo for future economic prosperity in the region. It will be able to provide the skills for a future economy in a climate constrained ecologically compromised world and provide sustainable roles in emerging industries like ecotourism, Carbon Farming and mining rehabilitation.

It also provides a stark contrast to welfare dependency for future generations. The Rangers' children, nieces and nephews see the challenging and meaningful work being undertaken by rangers and they aspire to be like them, to work in all industries. This leads to greater effort at school and a cultural shift from the intergenerational welfare dependency we see in much of remote Aboriginal Australia.





# CURRENT PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (QLD)

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet-Indigenous Affairs

Department of Industry

Department of Environment

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (QLD)  
(includes biosecurity)

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

Department of Community Safety

Burke Shire

Carpentaria Shire

Southern Gulf Catchment

Northern Gulf Resource Management Group

Morr Morr Pastoral Company



Australian Government  
Department of the  
Prime Minister and Cabinet



Queensland  
Government

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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