



Turtles such as these have a better chance of survival thanks to the management of North Australian waters by Indigenous rangers.

Protection of dugongs and turtles wins rangers national award

A new initiative by Aboriginal rangers that protects threatened dugongs and turtles in north Australian waters has been recognised at a national awards ceremony.

The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) was awarded top prize in the Indigenous category at the Banksia Awards ceremony in Melbourne for its Dugong and Marine Turtle project.

NAILSMA executive officer Joe Morrison said it was an honour to receive an award that acknowledged the management of Indigenous land and sea ranger groups across northern Australia for significant ecosystems.

"The project has taken a practical approach to dugong and marine turtle management by creating new Indigenous ranger programs and supporting existing

ones," Mr Morrison said. "It demonstrates that having Indigenous people on country managing their lands, delivering environmental benefits for all Australians is an important asset for the national good."

The project helps Aboriginal communities combine Indigenous knowledge with modern research and training. They undertake management activities such as mapping and monitoring populations, habitats, tracking turtle migrations by satellite and developing turtle and dugong management plans.

Partners in the project include the Northern Land Council, Kimberley Land Council, Carpentaria Land Council, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and the Torres Strait Regional Authority.

Indigenous rangers have long been championed by the NLC, which has worked with ranger groups in Arnhem Land for over 10 years.

Garrett meets with the NT's land councils

Northern Territory land councils took advantage of a visit to the Top End by the Federal Cabinet in July to meet with the Environment Minister Peter Garrett.

The Federal Government's ministerial contingent was in the Top End for a Community Cabinet in north-east Arnhem Land.

Representatives from the Northern Land Council, Central Land Council, Tiwi Land Council, and the National Aboriginal and Islander Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) met with Mr Garrett in Darwin to discuss a range of issues affecting Traditional Owners in the Northern Territory.

Those issues included

increased investment into remote Aboriginal communities; committing to Indigenous Protected Areas, feral animal control and improving the funding methods to Aboriginal land and sea managers.

Traditional owners spoke to Mr Garrett about control programs for the camel population in Central Australia; barramundi farms on the Tiwi Islands; buffalo management in northern Australia; and the clean-up of the Rum Jungle uranium mine site.

Mr Garrett said his government was committed to preserving the rights of Aboriginal peoples and would look at the potential effects on Aboriginal land management by climate change.



Representatives who met with Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett (centre front). (From left) Robert Tipungwuti, TLC Chairman (seated); David Ross, CLC director; Joe Morrison, NAILSMA; Samuel Bush-Blanasi, NLC deputy chairman; Kim Hill, NLC CEO; Dean Yibarbuk, Djelk ranger; Lindsay Bookie, CLC chairman (seated); and, Richard Ah Mat, Director Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation.