

# Akityarre Rangers Healthy Country Plan 2022-2032



Supporting communities of the Plenty region to care for country

### Notes and acknowledgements

Warning: This plan contains images, names and references to deceased Indigenous Australians.

Special thanks go to the following people, communities, and organisations for assisting with the development of this plan:

- **Traditional owners:** from Huckitta Station, Dulcie Range National Park, Atula Station, Atnetye and Alkwerte Aboriginal Land Trusts, Engawala, Bonya and Atitjere communities.
- **Central Land Council:** Martin Campbell, Sam Kendal, Rachael Sutton and Michael Taylor.
- Akityarre rangers (Central Land Council): Garth Forrester (Ranger Group Coordinator), Maxwell Blue, Robin Bloomfield, Anthony Petrick, Troyden Fishook, Salbena Cleary, James Drover and Donna Mulladad.
- Northern Territory Government: Funded by the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program (Land Management and Conservation Fund).

Sam Bayley and Laura Mitchell of Conservation Management have prepared this Akityarre Rangers Healthy Country Plan based on consultations with Akityarre traditional owners and the Central Land Council.

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Graphic design: Kate Duigan, Words and Graphics.

**Design motifs:** From paintings by Raymond Reiff and Marie Bloomfield (page 17); and Christine Bloomfield (page 24).

Front cover art: Tanya Dixon, Atula (top) and Joy Turner, Ruby Salt Bush.

**Back cover art:** Janie Bloomfield, *Bush Tucker*. 'My family and I love going out to look for bush tucker. My painting shows the different colours of bush tucker fruit and their seeds.'

**Photographs:** Akityarre rangers, Martin Campbell, Sam Kendal, Sam Bayley and Laura Mitchell.

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# Akityarre Rangers Healthy Country Plan 2022-2032

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Healthy Country Plan camp at Atula Station (Atnetye ALT Plenty River) with traditional owners from Bonya, Walpeyangkere, Urlampe and Batton Hill.



# **Vision (Arrernte)**

Anwantherre Akityarre mapele apmere mwerrentye atnyenetyeke, arntarnte-aretyeke, ampe mape akaltyele-anthetyeke.

Apurtele-anteye apmere arntarnte aretyeke. Awantherre kwatye mwerrentye kilenemiletyeke, arntarnte-aretyeke, merne apurte-iletyeke, irrere alhetyeke, kereke inekele apeke, altyerre anwekantherrenhe rlterrke atnyenetyeke.

Anwerne apurte-le partnership arntwirrkeme-le aneme, nhenge ampe mape-le arlke arnterre akaltye-irremele training mpwaretyeke, itne anteme apeke-arle apmere arnarnte-areme-le anetyenheke.



# Vision (English)

We look after country by holding onto our traditional land and passing knowledge onto children.

We are coming together to look after country, keeping water places healthy, gathering bush tucker, hunting, and keeping culture strong.

By keeping our culture strong, young people will have better opportunities for training and jobs to care for country.

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Introductory Healthy Country planning meeting for the Plenty River region. Left to right – Alec Petrick, Kevin Bloomfield, David Blue, Martin Campbell, Bruce Petrick, Anthony Petrick, Albert Kunoth, Kevin Tilmouth, Herbert Bloomfield, Peppi Drover and Joe Ross at Atitjere CLC office.

**Dedication to elders** 

This plan acknowledges the special contributions of Akityarre elders past and present in their continued fight for land rights and dedication to keeping Arrente law and culture and ecological knowledge strong.



Maisy Rogers collecting *alkwe* medicine leaves from *arrankweye* bush plum, Huckitta Station.



Ken Tilmouth, Riley Williams, Len Tilmouth and Robin Bloomfield, Alkwerte ALT.



Riley Williams, David Blue and Alan Drover ready to cut up *kere aherre* kangaroo for lunch, Atnetye ALT.



Margaret Tilmouth, Mary Tilmouth, Joy Turner on *apmere* country, Alkwerte ALT.

### **Eastern Arrernte people**

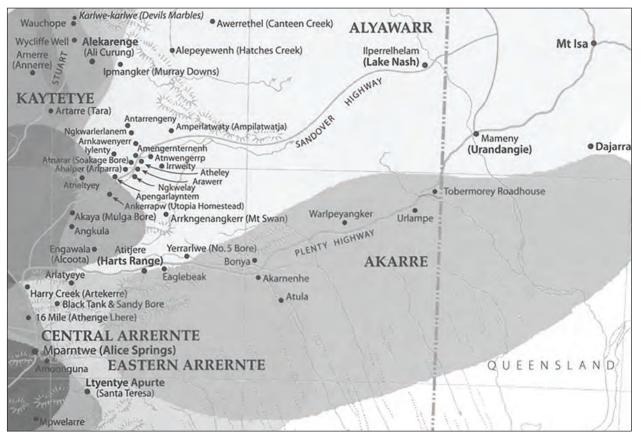


Figure 1. Section of an Aboriginal languages of Central Australia map (Hoogenraad and Thornley 2003, p7).

#### Eastern Arrernte people live across a large area of central Australia.

From the Stuart Highway in the west where there is the boundary to Anmatyerr Country, along the Plenty Highway to the Queensland border in the east. It goes north to Alyawarr Country around the top of the Dulcie Range National Park and Anatye ALT. It goes south roughly along the mountain ranges where it hands over to the Eastern Arrernte families in the south. About 1,800 people speak Eastern Arrernte and it is one of the widest spoken Indigenous languages in Australia. Akerre, a dialect of Eastern Arrernte, is the main language spoken across the Plenty region.

Eastern Arrernte systems of social organisation and land tenure arose from the actions of ancestral beings called *Altyerre*, translated as Dreaming in English. *Altyerre* are the ancestral spirits, the term is also used for the formative period when everything came into being. The travels of the *Altyerre* ancestral beings created the sacred sites, and these can form a 'story line' or 'track'. Some 'tracks' stretch over hundreds, even thousands of kilometres. The activities of others are restricted to a limited geographic area or one site. Dreaming tracks and sacred sites are the main units of landholding groups, however clear-cut boundaries may not be found with some areas and sites jointly owned by two or more landholding groups. Merging and transitional zones are even more apparent in deep desert areas such as on the Atnetye ALT as there are few sites within the dune fields. The desertfocused landholding groups still focus on a geographic area, (usually one of the major rivers or their flood-outs), due to the greater distance between sites, the area of shared responsibilities can be quite large.

In the Eastern Arrente region land is owned collectively by landholding groups, which are primarily descentbased, members of the groups tracing their connection from a known named ancestor. The landholding group are responsible for a cluster of sacred sites and the associated ceremonies, the name of the landholding group or the country is often the name of one of the sacred sites. Members of landholding are primarily descent-based groups are linked through the four primary lines of descent, which determine a person's roles responsibilities in ceremony and the associated sites:

- Arrenge (father's father)

   known as apmerek-artweye in
   Eastern Arrernte, 'boss' or 'owner'
   in English; they are responsible for
   being the main performers in landbased ritual.
- Atyemeye (mother's father)

   known as kwertengerle, they oversee land-based rituals, prepare the ceremony grounds and paint the designs.
- Aperle (father's mother)

   resulting in the position of kwertengerle; but in a subordinate role, they assist the senior kwertengerle.
- Ipmenhe (mother's mother)

  if the landholding holding group has very few adults with the arrenge (FF) connection, then some people with the ipmenhe connection might be trained up by knowledgeable kwertengwerle to assume to role of apmerke artweye, or if there are plenty of arrenge the ipmenhe may play a subordinate role to the arrenge in ceremony. The ipmenhe can step into this role because they have the same skin name as the arrenge.



Under Aboriginal tradition, the apmerek-artweye and kwertengerle hold customary interests in the land. When it comes to making decisions about country, the *amperek-artweye* and senior knowledgeable kwertengwerle have to be involved in making the decision — this is important to keep in mind when planning ranger work — the area of country needs to be defined so the landholding group and the *apmerek-artweye* and senior knowledgeable *kwertengerle* can be identified. Apmerek-artweye and senior knowledgeable kwertengerle need to be present when works are carried out. There are some landholding groups in the Plenty region that do not have any people with an arrrenge connection.

Not having the right people involved in visits to country risks danger from the Altyerre there. The landscape is alive and the beings are there, watching. Some areas are gender or age restricted, uninitiated males and women are at risk in some areas, other areas pose a risk to initiated males, or women of childbearing age because of the Altyerre residing there. There is a strong notion of cause and effect, car accidents or health issues may be attributed to a person having been somewhere they should not have been, or not having the right people with them when visiting a site, or not behaving correctly when at the site.

Skin names, referred to above, are the foundational system organising or understanding the Eastern Arrente universe, everyone has a skin name, allocated based on the skin name of a person's father. This name governs how people relate to each other, with expectations of kinship behaviour, determining who is a potential partner, a potential mother-in-law, father-inlaw etc. These potential relationships may affect how people work together, for instance potential mother-in-laws and son-in-laws are expected to avoid each other. When visiting sites there will need to be in separate vehicles and consideration where each vehicle parks, potential mother in-laws should not be parked looking towards a vehicle containing a potential son-in-law.

A limited number of kinship terms are used and extended to cover all known persons. For instance, a person calls their father, father's brother, and father's father's brother's sons all by the term 'father'. Similarly, the term 'mother' is used for a person's biological mother and the mother's sisters, and mother's mother's sister's daughters. This is extended to people with the same skin name as a person's mother or father. These extended notions of family, coupled with the close-knit ties in communities, have significance when someone passes away. Sorry camps and funerals are attended by the kinship group, not just those who non-indigenous people consider immediate family. Family demands in community are prioritised over work demands.

# **Akityarre Country**

#### Akityarre Country has a variety of landforms and vegetation types.

It supports plants and animals of cultural and ecological importance e.g. bush foods, bush medicines, small mammals such as mulgara.

These include:

- Apwerte-apwerte Rocky hills
- Aywerte-aywerte Spinifex plains
- Urrenyenke Gidgee shrubland
- Artetye-artetye, artetye-utnanthe Mulga woodlands
- Plain country dominated by open woodlands (whitewood, corkwood, bloodwood, ironwood and supplejack)
- Swamps and clay grasslands (blue bush, lignum, and coolibah swamps)
- Cracking clay grasslands

- Apmere Ihere Alluvial plainswatercourses lined by river red gums and coolibah woodlands
- Apmere arlpe and hills

Although Natural Resource Audits were completed for Huckitta (Latz et al 2011) and Atula (Latz et al 2009), limited biodiversity surveys have been undertaken outside these areas.

'The fauna of Huckitta has not been adequately surveyed. Current records for the property are limited to 12 species of reptile, 102 bird species and 16 mammals. Based on records from adjacent areas of the Burt Bioregion, a comprehensive fauna survey is likely to reveal the presence of an additional 50 species of reptiles, 4 frog species, up to 60 birds and several mammals.' (Schubert, Paltridge and Latz 2011, p4).



### Land access and rights

### Under Australian law, Akityarre Country has been divided up into different tenures with different access rights for traditional owners.

The land the Akityarre rangers work on is a mixture of freehold land including Aboriginal Land Trusts, Park Land Trust, Community Living Areas, Perpetual Pastoral Leases, Native Title areas, and Reserves. The description and map below show the diversity of land and number of different stakeholders within the planning area.

#### 1. Aboriginal Land Trusts

An Aboriginal Land Trust is a legal body that holds land given back to Aboriginal people under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.* This legal body is made up of members who are the traditional owners of that piece of land Trust holds the title to. The Trust always holds the land into the future, even when members pass away, and new members are born.

The Trust and the members can never sell this land. They can lease the land if the traditional owners all agree to it, e.g. a grazing license. Traditional owners approve and set the conditions of these leases.

In this region:

- Anatye ALT leases their land through a grazing license called Warlpeyenkrere.
- Atnetye ALT leases some of their land through a grazing license called Atula Station.
- Alkwerte ALT has a grazing license over the area called Waite River Station, and is negotiating a grazing license over the area called Alcoota Station.

- Akekarrwenteme Ureyenge ALT includes two homelands called Spotted Tiger and Foxall's Well.
- Ilparle ALT, a location where three historical stock routes join.

#### 2. Community Living Areas

Aboriginal Corporations own other blocks of freehold land across the region. These can never be sold but can be leased.

In this region (from east to west):

- Urlampe
- Marperta (also known as Mapete 2)
- Bonya (Ortippa Thirra)
- Akarnenehe Well (Apiwentjye)
- Penyeme
- Ilperle (this homeland is near but not on the Ilparle ALT)
- Tyarne
- Atnwarle
- Ngkerralye (Webb's Block)
- Mt Eaglebeak (Inelye)
- Irrerlirre
- Atitjere
- Engawala
- Alatyeye
- Angula (Mulga Bore)



Rangers recording presence of native fauna at Batton Hill Camp, Atnetye ALT.

#### 3. Aboriginal owned and managed Perpetual Pastoral Leases

These blocks of land are better known as 'stations'.

Huckitta Station: with the help of Central Land Council, local traditional owners formed a corporation and bought the PPL on Huckitta Station to run as a business and employ traditional owners for that country. Part of the reason Akityarre ranger group was funded and formed was to assist with cultural and natural resources on Huckitta Station. While the cattle provide an important economic base and meaningful work for young people, traditional owners also want operations to be done in a way that is compatible with the other land uses, such as hunting, harvesting traditional foods and taking care of sites.

In this region:

- Huckitta Aboriginal Corporation owns the lease on Huckitta Station.
- Huckitta Aboriginal Corporation leases Atula Station from the Atnetye ALT.
- Waite River Station is currently leased by local Aboriginal people from the Alkwerte ALT.

#### 4. Other Perpetual Pastoral Leases

There are 15 other pastoral stations in the Akityarre rangers work area. All of these leases are held by non-Aboriginal people or companies. The names of these stations in Appendix 2. Akityarre people have varying amount of access to these lands and historically that has depended on a positive relationship with the station manager and Lease holder. Having the ranger group has opened up access to many stations, particularly through building confidence and purpose and having appropriate vehicles and drivers.

The rangers have a good working relationship with Mt Riddock Station and have also done work at Bonya within Jervois station and have undertaken work to look after sites on Dneiper and Tobermorey Stations. Under the Native Title Act 2003, traditional owners are working with Central Land Council to increase the amount of land covered by Native Title. This recognition gives Native Title holders rights to access their country and do activities such as getting water from soakages, hunting, collecting bush tucker, holding ceremonies, and looking after sacred sites. Native Title holders have the right to be consulted on developments and economic opportunities on their land but cannot interfere with station activities.

#### 6. Park Land Trust

A Park Land Trust is similar to an ALT but is land that has been given back to traditional owners under the Parks and Reserves (*Framework for the Future*) *Act 2003.* Atnwarle Park Land Trust leases the area called Dulcie Range National Park to the Northern Territory Government to manage.

The Dulcie Range National Park holds many important values for traditional owners including historical and cultural sites, water places and culturally and ecologically significant flora and fauna. The Akityarre rangers have undertaken activities in partnership with NT Parks and Wildlife staff to manage these values, for example doing biodiversity surveys and planning for visitor management. Rangers, traditional owners and Parks and Wildlife staff are working together on a Joint Management Plan for the Dulcie Range National Park; this will generate more opportunities to look after the park in a coordinated way. The ranger group has also protected two water places from cattle damage, conducted water surveys, recorded rock art, and run 'Back to country' cultural knowledge trips for local Aboriginal families. Where possible, rangers work with NT Parks and Wildlife staff to share knowledge and skills and build relationships.

#### 7. Future option: Indigenous Protected Area

An Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) is an area of land that is managed by traditional owners through a voluntary agreement with the Australian Government. Through this agreement, funding is provided to support traditional owners to implement a management plan for country e.g. a plan similar to a Healthy Country Plan. Funding pays for ranger jobs, training, vehicles, equipment, and professional services for activities such as fencing and biodiversity surveys. CLC has secured funding (2022-2024) to employ an IPA Development Officer to undertake a feasibility study and develop an IPA management plan for the Simpson Desert region of the Northern Territory This Healthy Country Plan will contribute to the development of the IPA plan and application, and for any other IPA proposals traditional owners may consider in the region. It is proposed that the Akityarre rangers will help traditional owners manage the northern part of the Simpson Desert region of Atnetye ALT, along the Hay track and eastern part of the Madigan track.

8. Akityarre rangers work region

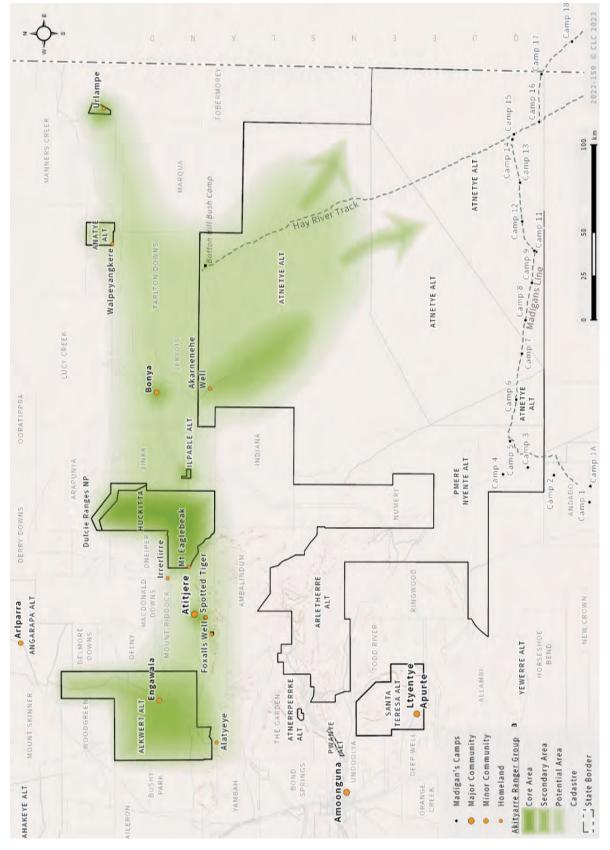


Figure 2. Akityarre rangers' work area shown in green.

### Akityarre ranger governance

#### **Central Land Council**

The Akityarre rangers are employed by the Central Land Council (CLC). The CLC is a council of 90 Aboriginal women and men elected by the communities in Central Australia to represent them and manage their land and realise the opportunities that come with the recognition of property rights.

#### Traditional Owner Ranger Advisory Committee

The Akityarre rangers are governed by a Traditional Owner Ranger Advisory Committee (TORAC). This is a regional governance body made up of traditional owners to provide cultural advice as well as being involved in planning and decision-making for the ranger group. It is made up of 8-10 traditional owners and they work with CLC Regional Land Management staff, the Ranger Group Coordinator and rangers to plan and decide on projects and the annual work plan.

#### Akityarre rangers (formerly Arltarpilta Inelye rangers)

The rangers used to be called Arltarpilta Inelye rangers until 2022. 'Arltarpilta Inelye' means a place where people get together and refers to the Atitjere area and Inelye Spring area near Mt Eaglebeak. In 2014, after a successful pilot project the year before, the CLC was successful in attaining funding to commence the ranger program. With support from the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) six permanent part-time ranger positions and one Ranger Group Coordinator were established to support local traditional owners and Huckitta Station to look after country.

....

During meetings with traditional owners from across the Plenty region in 2022 staff floated the idea of a name change for the Arltarpilta Ineyle rangers because the group's work area had increased to include Alkwerte in the west of the Plenty all the way to Urlampe in the east, representing a wide swathe of the Plenty region. This extended work area also included rangers potentially undertaking more work in the northern part of the Simpson Desert (Atnetye ALT) in the future to support the development and implementation of a Simpson Desert IPA plan. A name traditional owners thought of that reflected this extended work area was the word for the people of the region, the Akityarre people. So, during more meetings with traditional owners the name Akityarre rangers was decided upon.

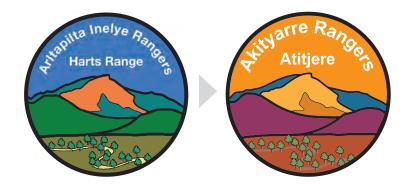
The Akityarre rangers are based in Atitjere, Harts Range, (215 km northeast of Alice Springs via the Plenty Hwy). The ranger's work involves protecting and fencing important cultural and heritage sites, waterhole and weed management, facilitating country trips to support intergenerational cultural knowledge sharing during, flora and fauna surveys, maintaining fire breaks, training and supporting meetings.



Painting and story by Raymond Reiff and Marie Bloomfield. In the words of the artists; 'Big circle in the middle represents the main workplace for the rangers — Atitjere community. Four smaller circles represent the outstations — Foxalls Well, Spotted Tiger, Mt Eaglebeak and Number Five. Yellow curvy tracks are the roadways to work. Green dots, yellow dots and brown dots represent the seeds of plants and trees that rangers look after and keep under control. Big brown circle is for the land. The big white circles are for the creeks and rivers and the big yellow circles represent the hills.'

The original ranger logo 'Arltarpilta Inelye' is of the mountain range at the back of the Atitjere community and of the Plenty River and represents the community boundary from east to west.

The logo was updated with the new name for the ranger group along with the colours and a change from the Anglicised name of Harts Range to the Arrernte name, Atitjere.



# How this plan was developed

#### This plan was developed using the Healthy Country Planning approach.

It was undertaken with traditional owners, rangers, and community members over three workshops held at Huckitta Station, Atula Station and Engawala Community from June to October 2021. It also builds upon previous meetings and work that the rangers have done, such as TORAC meetings and work plans.

During the workshops traditional owners talked about:

- The important things that Akityarre people want to look after on country, their Values.
- The things that people worry for country, problems that affect the health of Values, their **Threats**.
- What activities the rangers will do to fix the problems or make the values healthier, their **Projects/Strategies**.

An important part of the plan is that its hows how to **Monitor** whether the work rangers do is making the values stronger, how effective each strategy is, and the status of each of the values and threats. This plan is established on, and will be informed by, the process of adaptive management as shown on the right.



Group planning at Huckitta Station.



Healthy Country Plan camp at Engawala. From left to right: Rachel Sutton, Salbena Cleary, Margaret Tilmouth, Joanne Tilmouth, Mary Tilmouth, Ken Tilmouth, Len Tilmouth, Clifford Tilmouth, Davey Tilmouth, Riley Williams, Robin Bloomfield, Anthony Petrick, Kevin Bloomfield, Martin Campbell and Donna Mulladad.



Figure 3. Adaptive management planning.



Group planning at Atula Station.



Healthy Country Plan camp at Huckitta Station.



Group planning at Engawala community.





### Values

#### Traditional owners have identified the seven most important things for looking after on-country.

These values were discussed by Akityarre people at all three workshops. They are:

- 1. Altyerre Arrente Law and Culture
- 2. Important places
- 3. Kere bush meat and hunting
- 4. Arne rlkerte-kenhe bush medicine and merne bush tucker plants
- 5. Kwatye water places
- 6. Partnerships and access to country
- 7. Working on country

Sometimes some of these values act as an 'umbrella' for other important things. For example, when you look after *Kere* bush meat and hunting then you will also look after small mammals or insects. This can be done through good fire management.

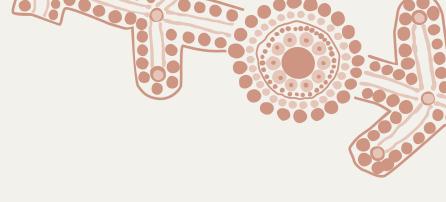
The values form the basis of the plan and allows the rangers to focus much of the operational work around these important things traditional owners have identified to ensure that each value becomes healthier or stronger over time.



Donna Mulladad reading out values suggested by traditional owners at Healthy Country Plan camp at the Huckitta Station.

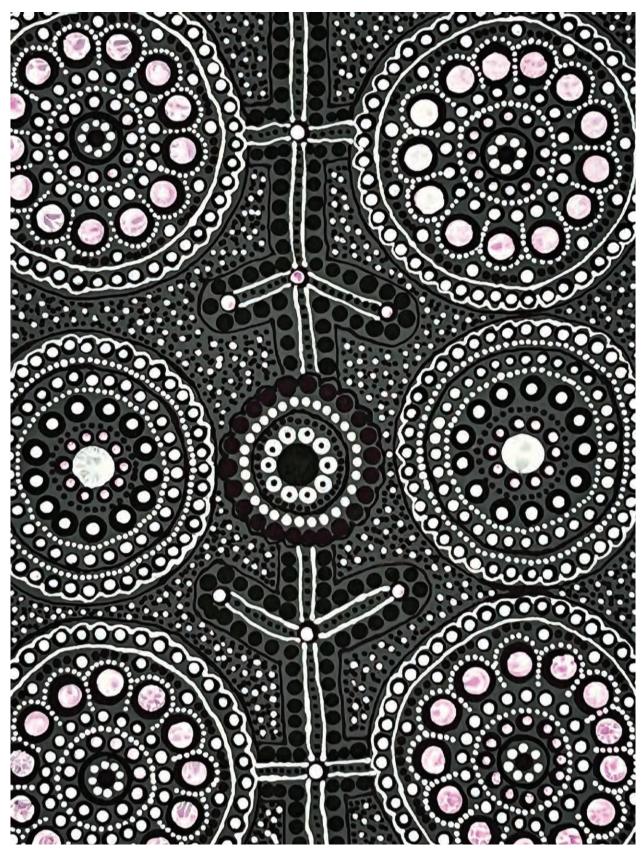


Cecilia Webb and Maisy Rogers collecting *Ilpengawe* bush medicines.





'Hunting for bush-tucker and gathering seeds, fruit and medicines on Atnetye ALT'. Painting by Tanya Dixon.



'Ladies sitting around collecting some bush tucker and bush medicine.' Painting by Christine Bloomfield.

#### Value health

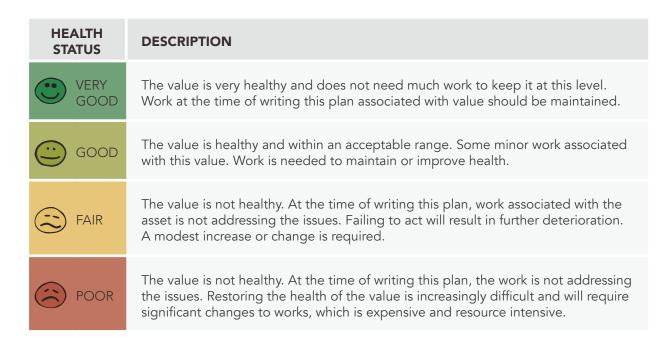
During the three Healthy Country Plan workshops traditional owner elders, community members and rangers spent time discussing and thinking about the health of values.

For each value they discussed what makes it healthy, how they can check up on its health (monitoring) and what level of health is it now.

Outlined below is the health of the values in 2021, when the workshops were undertaken. The aim is to improve the health of the values over the life of this 10-year plan. The rangers will use this Healthy Country Plan to develop two important tools:

- Work plan: The ranger annual work plans will focus on maintaining or improving value health and removing or reducing threats.
- Monitoring plan: The ranger monitoring plans (check-ups) will focus on checking up to see whether the work that they do is helping, or not.

To gain an idea on what the ranking means.



#### Value 1: Altyerre - Arrernte Law and Culture

HEALTH: FAIR	GOAL:	By 2032, all kids will know and use their language, songs and dances and cultural responsibilities. There would be more on-country trips for children to learn their culture and stay strong.
WHAT MAKES THIS VALUE HEALTHY?		<ul><li>Kids knowing stories and language</li><li>Ceremony and cultural activities supported and happening right way</li></ul>

Akityarre *Altyerre* Law and Culture is the most important thing for maintaining and managing country for Akityarre people.

Altyerre is remembered rather than written down and relies on older or senior people teaching and guiding younger members of the community. In recent times due to many reasons, there has been less opportunity for the community to participate in law and cultural activities and learnings. In all the consultations trips for this plan people stressed the urgent need for, and importance, of young and middleaged people to learn law and culture from their senior people.

Akityarre Altyerre includes:

- taking care of language
- song and dance
- ceremony
- respecting old people
- sorry business
- kinship
- family trees and responsibilities
- country
- connection
- dreamtime places and stories
- traditional ecological knowledge

This value was ranked as having fair health. Although *Altyerre* activities are carried out, there needs to be more trips on country with knowledge holders and young people. This needs to be integrated into ranger work activities. As this is a big task, the ranger program can seek support from partner organisation to work together to support *Altyerre* activities in the region to enable knowledge transfer from older generations to younger.

**Ceremony is the most** important thing for keeping singing and dance strong.

Bring young people out to learn. Plants, animals ... all have songs. Many recordings have been done before with organizations like the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA). There are however many songs, 'smaller songs' not recorded. Some elders haven't learnt songs because they worked and moved away.

Traditional owners

#### Value 2: Important places

HEALTH: POOR	GOAL:	By 2032, priority important places are known, clean, protected and being managed by Akityarre people.
WHAT MAKES THIS VALUE HEALTHY?		<ul> <li>Kids knowing stories and language</li> <li>People visiting and looking after places</li> <li>Sites are not being damaged</li> <li>Rangers and traditional owners continue to protect sites</li> </ul>

Akityarre country is a living cultural landscape with many important places which people want to visit, to tell and teach the stories, to protect, to reconnect and to keep the spirit alive. People, Land and Law are all connected; they survive and die together.

Important places include:

- art sites
- rock carvings
- story lines
- trees
- Altyerre places
- poison places
- men's and women's sites
- birth sites
- old camping places
- soakages, springs and waterholes
- harvesting and hunting areas
- grave sites, and heritage sites

This value was ranked as poor in health. Traditional owners feel that many of their important places are in bad condition because younger generations do not know the stories, or how to take care of them. Important places have an Apmerek-artweye 'owner' and a *Kwertengerle* 'manager'; these are the terms used to ensure that somebody is looking after the sites both culturally (keeping the story safe) and practically (keeping the site protected and healthy).

#### **Each site needs a** 'manager/offsider', someone who holds the knowledge of that place and looks after it.

#### Traditional owner

When people visit important places, it must be done 'right-way', according to the *Apmerek-artweye* and *Kwertengerle*. This means that the right people have to be there, permission has to be sorted out, and rules have to be followed. Many places may be dangerous, or restricted to men, or women, or to certain seniority levels, and visiting them the 'right way' protects both the visitors and the owners, and the place.



#### Value 3: Kere bush meats and hunting

FAIR	GOAL:	By 2032, we will see more <i>kere</i> bush meat and people hunting right season, people knowing how to cut up, prepare, cook and distribute meat right way.
WHAT MAKES THIS VALUE HEALTHY?		<ul><li>Plenty of <i>kere</i> bush meat</li><li>People hunting right way</li></ul>

### Hunting for *kere* bush meat is an important pastime.

It offers many benefits such as passing traditional and ecological knowledge about different animals on to the younger generation, teaching hunting, tracking, cutting up and distribution knowledge and skills, exercise time; healthy eating; time spent with family on country and saving money.

There are many popular bush meats the main ones talked about are *aherre*, *Inarlenge/Inape*, *atywenpe*; *alewatyerre*, *tyape*, and *arleye*. Some have a season when the animal is fat and best to eat, for example, echidna is best to hunt in the wintertime, perenties in the summertime, and kangaroo and emu you can get all year round. When there is rain, you can head to the hills for euro and wallaby.

#### It's important to teach tracking — little ones need to know how to track kere meat.

Traditional owner

This value was ranked as fair in health. This is because people told stories that when hunting they have to travel further distances to find *kere* compared to in the past. Some people travel all the way towards the Queensland border to find *kere*, when in the early days they could find it closer to Atitjere, or home. There could be many reasons for this such as drought, disease, cattle, wrong way fire and over-hunting.

There are protocols for hunting. People must hunt the right way, cut the right way, and distribute the meat right way. Watching an elder cut up a kangaroo you soon learn that every cut of meat and body part has a different name. These are the things that children must learn. There is other knowledge for *kere* such as using them for bush medicines/ healing ailments, for example you can mix bearded dragon and porcupine fat with bush medicine and rub on your baby if they are sick.

Akityarre people use a system of hand signals, which is like another type of language used for tracking and hunting. They use it so as not to make noise.

# Value 4: Arne rlkerte-kenhe bush medicine and merne bush tucker plants

GOOD	GOAL:	By 2032, plants are healthy, people know the right season and time for flowering, fruiting , harvesting and rain making. Children know and use bush tucker and medicine plants.
WHAT MAKES T VALUE HEALTH		<ul><li>Plenty of bush tucker</li><li>Akityarre knowledge/people know</li></ul>

#### Harvesting bush medicine and tucker plants is still an important part of Akityarre life.

Bush tucker can be food from plants, fruits, seeds, grubs and honey and nectars found in ants, nectar from flowers of bloodwood or ironwood trees. It can only be found in certain seasons and taking kids out on-country to teach them about how to collect and use bush tucker and medicine is an important part of ranger work, particularly for the women in the region. Elders would like to teach younger generations about sustainable harvesting and respecting ownership in different areas of country.

This value is referring to bush tucker such as *urltampe* bush honey; *utyerrke* bush fig; *atwakeye* bush orange; *alangkwe* bush banana; *katyerre* bush tomato; *njartjc* sweet potato; *yalke* bush onion; *arrutnenge* passionfruit; *atnyemaye* witchetty grub; *yerrampe* honey ants; bush mushroom; *anatye* bush yams and *aperaltye* bush lolly.

The bush medicine in the region is aluke white cypress pine; ilpengkwe (Eremophila duttonii); arrethe rock fuchsia (Eremophila freelingii); sap from the bloodwood tree; utnerrenge emu bush (smoking ceremonies); alkwe (drink for kidney health); *ingkwerlpe* bush tobacco and *tanalpu* ash from the ironwood tree.

Traditional owners ranked this value as good, as they can easily find bush tucker and medicine in the region.

**F F** Pirtwerre bush tobacco is mixed with ashes and chewed. It grows after the rain in the sandhill country on Atula Station. There is a stronger variety that grows in the hills (ingkwerlpe). It requires good fire management.

Traditional owner





#### Value 5: Kwatye water places

POOR GO	<b>L:</b> By 2032, important <i>kwatye</i> places have clean water, the right type of water insects, animals visiting, and kids know all the places.
WHAT MAKES THIS VALUE HEALTHY?	<ul><li>No animal damage and water is clean</li><li>Akityarre knowledge/people know</li></ul>

*Kwatye* places have been important to Central Australian Aboriginal people for thousands of years and is a highly valued resource. Not only did water places sustain Akityarre ancestors, they also are important in *Altyerre*.

They used to be cleaned and managed regularly, however in recent years they are being degraded by cattle and feral herbivores. There are many *Kwatye* places in the region including rock holes, wells, lakes, springs, swamps, underground water and soaks. These are all important for traditional owners to take care of and teach younger generations about. The health of this value is poor, as many people felt like their water places were being destroyed by cattle and feral animals, and not visited regularly or cleaned. Traditional owners were also concerned about the underground water and the unregulated taking of this water for mining, roads, pastoral activity, and other development. Regularly visiting these water places and making plans on how to take care of them is important to traditional owners throughout the region.

The birds and animals will show us where the water places are — budgies, galahs, finches, rock pigeons, lizards, echidnas.

Akityarre ranger

#### Value 6: Partnerships and access to country

FAIR	GOAL:	By 2032, Akityarre people have access to their country and have good relationships with pastoralists and mining companies. They are respected and engaged as a key stakeholder for managing country.
WHAT MAKES THIS VALUE HEALTHY?		<ul> <li>People are working and have access to country</li> <li>Rangers have respected relationships with other landowners and managers, especially pastoralists and mining companies</li> </ul>

Akityarre elders talk strongly about the need for people of all ages, but particularly young people, to connect with their country, to know the storylines and to take over from the old people to look after country.

This cannot happen unless people can access their traditional homelands. Some traditional owners have trouble accessing their country when pastoralists and miners lock gates. Some relationships are hard to develop when people are closed-minded and not willing to change their attitude.

Improving access will require effort in different areas. Firstly, roads, homelands and water infrastructure need to be well maintained to allow easy access and work in the area. Secondly, funded projects and programs need to be established to assist traditional owners to get out on country, together with elders, youth, men, and women. This is particularly important for Akityarre people residing in towns or away from country. Thirdly, good relationships must be developed and maintained with pastoralists and mining companies to remove locked gates.

Underpinning the effort outlined above is the need to develop respectful and productive partnerships. Partnerships with pastoral stations, different levels of government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and communitybased organisations will help Akityarre people achieve the vision of this plan. For instance, Children's Ground can support on-country trips; Harts Range and Engawala Schools can help in getting children out on-country to support the transfer of knowledge; Tangentyere Council and Waltja can support men's culture camps, and Weeds NT can help control the spread of weeds. This was just a few discussed, however more will evolve over the life of this plan.

The health of this value was ranked as fair as people felt they had a certain level of access to country and good relationships with others in the region, however this still needed to improve for some areas in particular.

#### Value 7: Working on country

GOOD	GOAL:	By 2032, there are more ranger jobs and teams based across the work area supported by the Akityarre rangers. In 10 years, there will be as many women rangers as men.
WHAT MAKES THIS		<ul> <li>More Akityarre people employed as rangers, including women</li></ul>
VALUE HEALTHY?		and youth <li>Number of people completing training</li>

Seven rangers are based out of Atitjere, however, with such a vast area to cover and large amount of work, traditional owners would like to establish more ranger bases and work opportunities throughout the region.

Satellite ranger bases would enable rangers to stay in their communities while servicing the wider area, instead of having to travel into Atitjere.

Career development and mentoring for the rangers is important to provide a vibrant and professional program.

Job specialisations, seniority levels and greater options will provide for better staff retention, job satisfaction and opportunities for other community members, especially young people.

They would also like to see more jobs on pastoral stations. Pastoral station work can complement ranger work and many people enjoy the variety that comes from the two options. A healthy pastoral and ranger workforce would benefit the Akityarre region tremendously.

This value was ranked as good in health, as the rangers are working and training across the region, however they would like to see more funding for more work, especially in Engawala community.

Traditional owners would like to employ 50% women rangers as part of the program because Aboriginal women hold special knowledge that is vital to caring for country. They have knowledge of bush foods, plants, burning and women's cultural sites.

To achieve this, we will need to address the barriers that women face when becoming rangers especially for younger women. These barriers could include funding, childcare responsibilities and male dominated workplaces to name a few. The first step in dealing with this as outlined in strategies is the development of a women's development strategy to identify the issues in the region and then ways to address them.

# Managing threats

Healthy Country Planning involves managing values (important things/values) and threats (what people worry about). Not all threats are the same; some threats are a big worry while others just need to be checked from time to time.

The table right lists the 10 biggest threats to country, and their ranking.

The ranking gives an idea on where to focus effort, a benchmark to look back on to see if things are improving, and a starting point for conversation with the community and partners. The aim through this plan is to reduce the threat ranking for each threat. For example, Lack of knowledge transfer and respect for old people is ranked Very High in 2021. In 5 years during the mid-point of the plan, it will hopefully be reduced to High or Medium due to the strategies being implemented in this plan. The table below shows the overall threat ranking for each threat in the plan.

THREAT RANKING	THREAT DESCRIPTION
VERY HIGH	The threat has potential or is likely to destroy or remove part or all of a value if the current situation or rate of damage continues. If this happens, it may be impossible to improve the health of the value.
НІGН	The threat is likely to cause serious damage to part or all of a value if the current situation or rate of damage continues. If this happens, it would be very expensive and difficult to improve the health of the value.
C MEDIUM	The threat is likely to cause serious damage to part or all of a value if the current situation or rate of damage continues. If this happens, it would be very expensive and difficult to improve the health of the value.
LOW	The threat is likely to cause a limited amount of damage to part or all of a value if the current situation or rate of damage continues. If this happens, it will require minimal effort and resources to improve the health of the value.

THREAT	VALUES IMPACTED	THREAT RANKING - 2021
1. Lack of knowledge transfer and respect for old people	<i>Altyerre</i> Arrernte Law and Culture; Important places; <i>Kere</i> bush meat and hunting; Bush medicine and bush tucker plants; <i>Kwatye</i> places; Partnerships and access to country; Working on-country	VERY HIGH
2. Not enough resources and support for the Akityarre rangers to meet land management needs across the region	<i>Altyerre</i> Arrernte Law and Culture; Important places; <i>Kere</i> bush meat and hunting; Bush medicine and bush tucker plants; <i>Kwatye</i> places; Partnerships and access to country; Working on country	HIGH
3. Town life and distractions for young people	<i>Altyerre</i> Arrernte Law and Culture; Important places; <i>Kere</i> bush meat and hunting; Bush medicine and bush tucker plants; <i>Kwatye</i> places; Partnerships and access to country; Working on country	HIGH
4. Lack of access to country	Important places; <i>Kere</i> bush meat and hunting; bush medicine and bush tucker plants; <i>Kwatye</i> places; Partnerships and access to country	HIGH
5. Wrong-way fire ( <i>ure</i> )	Important places; <i>Kere</i> bush meat and hunting; bush medicine and bush tucker plants; <i>Kwatye</i> places; Partnerships and access to country	MEDIUM
6. Wrong-way visitation	Important places; <i>Kere</i> bush meat and hunting; bush medicine and bush tucker plants; <i>Kwatye</i> places; Partnerships and access to country	
7. Mining and development	<i>Altyerre</i> Arrernte Law and Culture; Important places; <i>Kere</i> bush meat and hunting; Bush medicine and bush tucker plants; <i>Kwatye</i> places; Partnerships and access to country; Working on country	MEDIUM
8. Feral animals (donkeys, cattle and camels)	Important places; <i>Kwatye</i> places	LOW
9. Weeds	Important places; <i>Kwatye</i> places	LOW
10. Lack of coordination amongst service providers	Important places; <i>Kwatye</i> places	LOW

## Threat 1: Lack of knowledge transfer and respect for old people

Contraction Contra

**THREAT** By 2032, there will be more programs teaching *Altyerre* to younger **GOAL:** generations and elders will be respected and valued.

#### A primary value within this plan is Eastern *Altyerre* Arrente Law and Culture.

The main threat to this value is not enough knowledge transfer from knowledge holders to others. Song, dance, ceremony, stories, traditional cooking and hunting, place names, preparation of bush medicines and kinship responsibilities and roles are all things people want to make sure children know.

While *Altyerre* is strong it is important to make the most of this time now, while elders are living and before more old people pass away. As many knowledge holders now live in town, opportunities must be set up to help these people pass knowledge on to the younger generations. In addition, many Akityarre people have not had the opportunity to learn from their old people due to reasons such as families moving away from the area e.g. schooling and work opportunities. Through partnerships, the ranger program will establish ongoing knowledge transfer programs to assist on the passing down of knowledge to middle aged and young people. Working with schools, communities and organisations such as Children's Ground the rangers will assist in bringing knowledge holders and learn together.

**G G** There's only unhealthy food from community and station stores, young people can't cook, can't cook kangaroo tail, can't find honey in a tree.

Traditional owner

### Threat 2: Not enough resources and support for the Akityarre rangers to meet land management needs across the region

HIGH

THREAT GOAL:

**EAT** By 2032, we will have secured resources to support more ranger jobs, training, and ranger bases in other communities.

#### Traditional owners have many identified land management needs which are too numerous for the capacity of one ranger group based in one location.

From the size of the workload in the annual work plan and the number of projects that must be postponed due to staffing and availability of resources, such as vehicles, there needs to be more resources and support in the Plenty Region.

History has shown that the community have been successful in securing more resources for ranger work. In 2013, the current ranger group began with 4 FTE casual rangers working three days a week. It has progressed in response to growing demand of work projects, commitment from local communities to the program, and taking advantage of funding opportunities that become available. The group became permanent in 2014 and, over time, has increased the number of staff to 7 FTE.

Traditional owners want to see the ranger program grow. They want to see increased ranger jobs in communities, increased opportunities for woman and youth and greater support for working and living out on country. By 2032, traditional owners want to work towards:

- Securing funding for establishing a ranger base and vehicles at Engawala and Bonya communities and the Dulcie Range National Park.
- A separate women's ranger group to support women across the region.

By growing the capacity and professionalism of the ranger team and establishing staff and satellite bases in communities' traditional owners and their homelands will have increased support and access to the program (e.g. fire management, cultural site maintenance). Increased rangers and bases would allow for more ranger time on country servicing the community and homeland areas.

The ranger program will need to work with their existing partners (e.g. CLC) to further increase their funding streams and partnerships, for example the Federal Government Indigenous Protected Area program or establishing a partnership with a non-government organisations or philanthropic trust.

#### Threat 3: Town life and distractions for young people

HIGH

THREAT GOAL:

T By 2032, Akityarre people living in town and communities will have greater access to culture and country leading to increased physical, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing.

While living in regional town centers such as Alice Springs or further away can offer many benefits for Akityarre people, such as employment and education options, it can also have its down sides.

For example, it's much harder to participate in cultural events e.g. Law or Sorry business, look after important places or undertake cultural responsibilities, visit country and connect with the land and family.

Contemporary life offers significant distractions not just in regional centers but also communities and outstations. With the advent of increased internet connection and smart phones many young and middle-aged people are becoming addicted to social media e.g. Tik Tok, Facebook, watching movies and gaming. Increased opportunities for drug and alcohol use is also taking its toll on Akityarre communities. All these things contribute to the disengagement of youth from cultural life as well as schooling and education. Traditional owners expressed their deep desire for the ranger program to assist in taking young people and community members out on country to connect with old people, country and culture to find identity, purpose and learn to walk in both worlds.



Online distractions. Photo Sayan Gosh, Unsplash.

#### Threat 4: Lack of access to country

HIGH

THREAT GOAL: By 2032, Akityarre people have access to their country and have good relationships with pastoralists and other land managers. They are respected and engaged as a key stakeholder for managing country.

For traditional owners to access country many things sometimes must be in place, such as permissions from the land owner/ managers; access to motor cars; access to fuel; maintained tracks or roads; access to food and water for longer trips; access to swags/ tents/ outstations for longer trips; access to programs or projects for people who do not have opportunity; access to knowledge about country or their legal land rights.

Having good relationships is about gates not being locked and having respectful two-way relationships with land managers, allowing traditional owners to carry out cultural obligations e.g. to look after important places. Having adequate infrastructure is about aiding traditional owners to travel out and stay on country. This can include work to maintain roads and tracks, access to utilities such as solar and water, airstrip management and others.



James Drover attaching flags to allow oncoming traffic to see our vehicles when crossing dunes on the Madigan track, May 2022.

For many, access to country takes the form of assisting participation in cultural events such as Law and Sorry business and back to country trips run by the rangers and others.



#### Threat 5: Wrong-way fire (ure)



GOAL:

THREAT By 2032, there will be less wrong-way fires than at the beginning of the plan.

#### Wrong-way fire is fire that burns too hot, burns too much and at the wrong time of year.

It can destroy or damage important cultural places, it can change vegetation structure affecting bush plants and bush tucker supplies. Fire also alters the food resources for animals that the community relies on, such as bush meats such as wallaby, kangaroo, and emu. Fire contributes and makes existing problems bigger such as erosion and weed infestations, can kill large trees and make the landscape too scrubby (e.g. Acacia thickets).

Traditionally, *ure* fire in Akityarre country was used by traditional owners for many reasons, such as to keep country open for travelling and for the growth of fresh green grass to attract animals for hunting.

Since colonisation and pastoralism traditional owners have been stopped from using fire as a management tool and many people are now nervous to burn country.

Every year rangers have requests from traditional owners across the region to reduce fuel loads around homelands to protect houses and people. This is complicated as homelands are surrounded by cattle stations. Burning requires a lot of planning and communication with station managers and BushFires NT. So far, they have been able to do small, controlled burns to create firebreaks around homelands at Mt Eaglebeak and at Batton Hill and more freely in remote areas on Atnetye ALT. With every burn rangers grow in their capacity and confidence to manage fire.

#### Threat 6: Wrong-way visitation

 THREAT:

 MEDIUM

THREAT GOAL: By 2032, people are visiting Akityarre country right way, respectfully acknowledging the traditional owners of the area and the cultural protocols that are established.

When people visit country without permission and do not follow cultural protocols traditional owners can get deeply upset and worry.

Often worry is for the visitors hurting themselves. If visitors don't know the story for the country, they could potentially stumble across dangerous places or restricted men's and women's sites e.g. tourists in the Dulcie Range National Park.

Other times traditional owners and a pastoralist are working towards a respectful relationship and outside people can enter onto land without permission, undertaking activities (e.g. leaving a mess, hunting wrong way etc.) that can put that relationship at risk.

Unfortunately, most of the concern for wrong way visitation on Akityarre country was for people harvesting bush medicines or bush meats without asking permission from the local community or traditional owners. Concern was also bought up about people hunting out of season, not following hunting protocols and taking too much. Wrong way visitation could be reduced by developing community education strategies around cultural protocols for visiting country for various activities (harvesting, hunting etc.).



#### **Threat 7: Mining and development**

THREAT: MEDIUM **THREAT**By 2032, Akityarre people are respected and engaged as a key**GOAL:**stakeholder for current and future mining or development projects.

#### Pastoralism and mining have irreversibly changed Akityarre country.

As early as the 1870s, cattle and sheep were established, with cattle remaining till this day in the form of a vast pastoral industry. In the late 1880s garnet, gold and mica mining commenced, with mica reaching its peak around the World War II. In more recent times mining exploration has focused on metals such as gold and copper.

People worry about mining as they have seen damage to sacred sites occur, hazards such as open mine shafts left open to community members, a lack of respect (from some companies) in acknowledging them as traditional owners and no effort to create partnerships that may benefit the community. They see lot of other people making lots of money from their land. Pastoral stations are always expanding and developing, such as creating new paddocks which involves the grading of land and removal of vegetation for fences or installing new water infrastructure such as dams, irrigation, and bores for underground water. Unregulated water extraction has the potential to temporarily or permanently affect the water table which in turn affects important culture and Kwatye places.

Road development also has a negative impact. Grading and expanding of existing roads and the development of new roads impacts vegetation, habitat for animals and important places. Poorly made and maintained roads can impact land systems creating erosion, which is worsened by cattle, fire and heavy rain.

Akityarre people want to be acknowledged as traditional owners and be able to work in partnership to create mutually beneficial development.

#### Threat 8: Stock and feral animals (horses, donkeys and camels)

CON THREAT: LOW

THREAT GOAL:

By 2032, feral animals (donkeys, cattle and camels) will be causing significantly less damage to priority water places.

Many Akityarre people have a strong affinity for animals that have established themselves on country through pastoralism or colonisation – such as horses, camels, cattle and donkeys.

Rather than seeing these animals as 'feral' and the need to eradicate them completely, traditional owners prefer to see a balance within the landscape. For example, donkeys play a role in protecting young calves from wild dogs and people believe it can be bad luck to shoot them.

#### **G G** People like donkeys and camels but understand they need to be controlled.

#### Traditional owner

Rangers and community members do however understand that problems exist and need to be fixed, such as how cattle fall into rock holes and foul the water up; or how cattle and camels often damage cultural sites by trampling or rubbing across them. Many sites are left unprotected either by the absence of a



Unfenced waterhole on Alkwerte ALT resulting in dead animal fouling the water.

fence, alternate water point for stock or by gates being left open. This includes rock holes, springs and other sacred sites.

At the time of writing this plan, Engawala and Atula pastoral leases had limited stock however it was noted and discussed that this could change in the future, and it is important to protect cultural sites if high stocking rates were to occur.

#### **Threat 9: Weeds**



**THREAT** By 2032, priority *Kwatye* and important places as well as key station **GOAL:** water points will be free from weeds.

Many weeds exist on Akityarre country such as rubber bush, athel pine, thorn apple, parkinsonia, white cedar tree, bullrush, cactus, mimosa, buffel grass and others.

Weeds have the potential to take over native vegetation, native pasture, cultural sites, camping and swimming places and alter fuel loads contributing to hotter, more destructive fire. Weeds are often concentrated around bores and water places and rangers are currently managing these occurrences with success on Huckitta Station.

Greater work is needed to understand where weeds are and if new weeds are establishing on country.

#### Threat 10: Lack of coordination amongst service providers

CON THREAT: LOW

**THREAT** By 2032, service providers are working together to provide services **GOAL:** that benefit Akityarre people.

#### People are tired from talking to agencies and organisations about issues that have remained unchanged for many years.

Multiple agencies and organisations are consulting with community members often about the same issues. This lack of coordination along with high staff turnover rates is creating 'meeting burnout' for community members and a lack of trust and willingness to engage. Going forward Akityarre people can share this plan with stakeholders, pastoralists, outstations to engage service providers on the needs and projects that they have identified. Organisations can get clear direction on the strategies that Akityarre people want to help make country, culture and communities healthier.

## Implementation projects and strategies

#### Making a list of strategies

The traditional owners at the three camps thought about the important things they had written down and the threats that would make the important things *arntetye* (weak and unhealthy).

They came up with 38 strategies, ideas for what work rangers can do to reduce the threats and make the important things *iterrke* (stronger) or *mwarre* (good/well/safe).

#### Organising the strategies

When the traditional owners looked at the strategies, they saw that there was a pattern. Some of the strategies had strong relationship to each other, they looked a bit the same. When they were grouped together the strategies showed 8 main areas of work, which we called Projects. Within these projects there are actions or work that the rangers will undertake.

#### The 8 Projects are:

- 1. Altyerre Cultural knowledge and education
- 2. Cultural heritage management
- 3. Plants, animals and soil
- 4. Kwatye water management
- 5. Partnerships and funding
- 6. Training and ranger development
- 7. Feral animal and weed management
- 8. Fire management



#### Project 1: Altyerre Cultural knowledge and education

- **Record songs and Altyerre** with elders to preserve for future generations.
- **Support ceremony** (singing and dancing) and on-country trips to teach younger generations about Akityarre law and culture.
- **Support family bush trips** to pass down knowledge on hunting the correct way, tracking and finding water. Trips discussed for teaching knowledge in the East were Kwatye Dreaming Site, Mount Knuckey and Carolyn Lakes.
- Support Law time activities at 720 waterhole.
- **Run school holiday programs** to teach kids about culture, bush tucker and medicine, dancing, stories and important sites.
- **Leadership Programs:** Rangers will run mentoring programs and camps for men and women to learn to become new leaders and take over cultural responsibilities from elders.
- **Bringing Family Home:** Rangers will work with partners to support townbased people and lost generations to participate in cultural and on-country activities in the region.

#### Project 2: Cultural heritage management

- **Develop a cultural heritage management plan** for each zone (East, Central, West) to identify and prioritise important places for ongoing management.
- **Regularly visit important sites (men's and women's)** with traditional owners to do a 'check-up' on the health, clean and teach about place and visiting the right way.
- Protect sacred sites by fencing and placing signage to educate people at;
  - In east Kwatye Dreaming ceremony site at Penyeme outstation, women's sites around Bonya; Mount Knuckey sacred site, Carolyn lakes area; Yalla Ants sacred site, Jervois mine burial site, Women's birthplace tree, Cockatoo Dreaming men's site and restrict access to Mount Winnecke sacred site.
  - In west Red Ochre site at Bushy Park, Waite River (Rain Dreaming), Engawala Creekline (Night Dreaming), Mt Bleechmore (Bulla Bulla)/ Black Hill, Anamare Creek and Atarpita Rock (close to HWY/Gem Tree) dangerous place.
  - Central region IIthe Cave and Irlperrkngawe Gorge (Dulcie Range National Park), Old Huckitta Station, Men's place (restricted) and survey marker tree.



Len Tilmouth teaching about a special rock hole on Alkwerte ALT.



#### Project 3: Plants, animals and soil

- Rangers will make **educational products** such as an Akityarre seasonal calendar, maps and bush tucker, medicine and hunting books.
- Rangers will run **field trips with children** to teach protocols on how to find, harvest, process, and check up on bush medicine and bush tucker.
- Rangers will run community-based **biodiversity surveys** (with relevant support) to build knowledge on culturally and biologically important plants and animals e.g. Night parrot, Mulgara.
- Work with ALT station managers to **improve grading practices** and try to fix existing erosion problem areas e.g. Huckitta Station.

#### Project 4: Kwatye water management

- Regularly visit, monitor and clean important *Kwatye* **places** (link to cultural heritage management plans).
- **Protect important** *Kwatye* places that are being damaged by cattle and feral animals by fencing or installing rock holes covers.
  - In the east Penyeme, Umballa, Unga, Andina and Arramwelke rock holes, Blue-bush (Alkerangke) swamp – Perentie Dreaming, Corner bore/well – cover the well and Thring Creek soakage Bonya area.
  - In the west Assess rock holes in Bushy Park, Ned Tanks Soakage, Scrub Hole, 720 Waterhole (Ambarka), Tjirpi soakage visit, Aquaringo and Alkarlayra rock holes, Yalguka rock holes and Mount Bleechmore (Bulla Bulla) Black Hill.
  - Central region Ataperreperre and Atnweale Springs.
- Identify important Kwatye places that may be affected by unregulated water extraction and work with partners to establish suitable monitoring regimes.
  - Water monitoring at rock holes around Jervois Station where there are a large number of bores determine impacts rock holes water levels.



Matthew Furber and Mary Mulladad cleaning Ahertemetye rock hole.

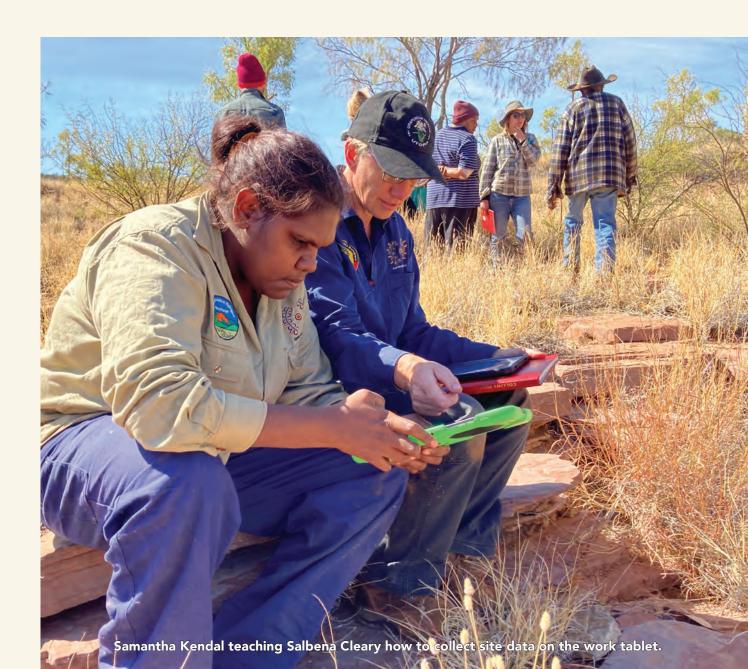


#### **Project 5: Improve relationships, partnerships and funding**

- Rangers will work to create good relationships with **pastoralists** on Akityarre country to support access to country.
- Develop a **relationship** with megafauna scientists and NT government to look after the fossil site on Alkwerte ALT and look into the opportunity for enterprise development.
- **Meet with Children's Ground** and other community-based organisations to discuss and establish partnerships for taking children and elders out to country.
- Continue to work with **NT Parks** for managing values and threats within the Dulcie Range National Park.
- Support Akityarre families who are interested in doing **cultural tourism**.
- Work with CLC and the Australian Government to dedicate an **Indigenous Protected Area** on Akityarre Country.
- Develop an external **communication strategy** to promote the Healthy Country Plan to existing and potential partners.
- Develop and implement a **monitoring plan** and **work plan** to operationalise this Healthy Country Plan.

#### **Project 6: Training and ranger development**

- Employ **casual rangers** in Engawala and Bonya to support work in these zones.
- Develop **succession and pathway plans** to support the career development of rangers to move up to senior level positions.
- Undertake a women rangers development strategy alongside the CLC Women's Ranger Development Coordinator to increase the number of women rangers.
- Plan a **women on-country camp** for the region to discuss ranger work, barriers to employment and how to increase women rangers.
- Develop a **junior ranger program** to engage and stimulate youth for ranger work.



#### Project 7: Feral animal and weed management

- Start discussions with CLC and TORAC around obtaining extra funding to support the employment of more rangers across the regions.
- Work with CLC to maintain broad knowledge of cattle and feral animal **population numbers** on Akityarre country, especially on ALT land.
- Develop a **feral animal action plan** to guide future ranger work for feral animal control on Akityarre country.
- Work with NT Parks and Wildlife staff to manage horse and donkey numbers in and around the Dulcie Range National Park.
- Develop a **weed action plan** to guides future ranger work for strategic weed control. Including current activities such as;
  - Control and monitoring of buffel grass at Inelye Spring, bullrush, mimosa, athel pine and cactus at Huckitta, aquatic plants at Ataperreperre Spring, parkinsonia, thornapple and rubber bush on Alkwerte ALT.

#### **Project 8: Fire management**

- Build capacity of the rangers to undertake controlled burning on Akityarre country through **training**, **partnerships and exchange trips**.
- Develop and implement annual fire management plans for ALT areas by undertaking fire planning meetings with community, elders and partners to identify burning priorities and protection of assets/values:
  - important places e.g. cultural sites
  - infrastructure e.g. outstations
  - species/habitat e.g. night parrot, Kere bush meats
- Establish and integrate Akityarre traditional fire knowledge into the fire project to clean country, teach, protect sacred trees and bring kangaroos and emus back.
- Baton Hill area conduct cool season burning to protect sites and vegetation.

## Implementation of the Healthy Country Plan

#### Workplans

Implementation of this Healthy Country Plan will be through annual work plans.

Every year the rangers, together with the TORAC, will develop and then carry out a work plan. Developing the work plan will involve going through the strategies within this healthy country plan and stepping out the following:

- What are the actions that need to happen this year to deliver on the projects and strategies?
- Who is the person responsible for the action?

- When should the action occur?
- What are the desired outputs from doing the action?

See below for an example on making a work plan using the Healthy Country Plan strategies. The strategy is up the top with the actions down the side. To ensure success, each strategy needs to be planned and implemented in a steppedout approach. The process for doing this is referred to as a Road Map. A key part of using this plan will be for the rangers to develop road maps by discussing what results they want to see, and the actions or work required to meet this.

STRATEGY: MANAGE AND CONTROL WEEDS					
Action	Responsibility	Cost	Deadline	Output	Comments
Conduct a survey to find out which weeds are there	Organisation A	\$2000	2 weeks	Weed survey with weeds identified	Involves identifying invasive plants
Work with locals to do weed removal	Organisation A	\$3500	Spread over 3 months	Weed control group formed	Involves getting locals on board and engaged

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#### Monitoring and adapting

Implementation of this healthy country plan is only one step in the Healthy Country Management Framework. Deciding if the plan is working is another important step.

By undertaking regular check-ups and developing a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) plan rangers will ensue that they stay on track for achieving the Vision of this plan.

The Akityarre rangers with support from the CLC undertake annual Check-ups. The following pages shows the process for the team will refer to this when reporting back to traditional owners during their December and June TORAC review meetings.

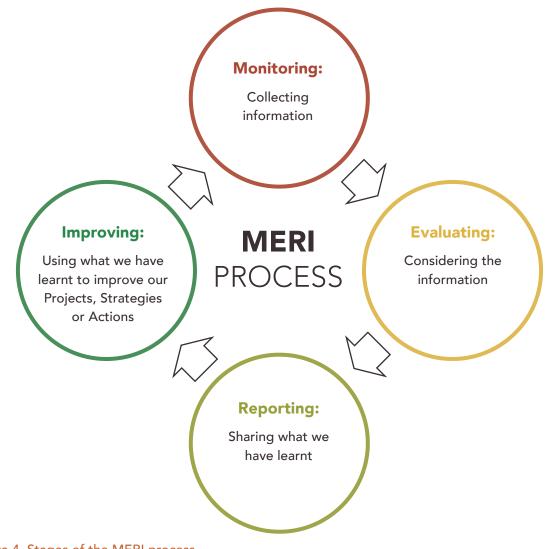


Figure 4. Stages of the MERI process.

Monitoring or 'checks ups' are done at three levels.

#### 1. Implementation /Outputs – Is the plan being used?

At least once a year (preferably twice) rangers will check each strategy in the plan and highlight any issues using a ranking guide.

The table below can be used during the TORAC meetings to monitor if the strategies are on-track and the plan is being used.

#### 2. Outcomes – Are ranger activities working?

Outcome monitoring is looking at strategies in the plan and checking whether they are achieving their intended outcomes (e.g. less wrong way fire).

#### 3. Impact – Is country getting healthier?

Impact monitoring involves checking if the health of the values is improving, and things are on-track for reaching the Vision.

The key indicators below can be used to monitor if the health of the values is improving for monitoring the outcomes and impacts (2 & 3) above.

RANKING	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Not specified		We really don't know and have no information.
Scheduled	For future implementation.	We have not got around to this yet, but we will.
On-Track	Ongoing, generally on track.	We are doing it, and it is all going as we expected (more or less).
Minor Issues	Ongoing, has minor issues that need attention.	We are doing it, but there have been some delays due to weather/technical problems.
Major Issues	Ongoing, major issues that need attention.	We are doing it, but there have been some significant delays that we are not sure we can resolve.
Completed	Successfully accomplished.	We did it.
Abandoned	No longer relevant or useful.	We don't think we need to do this anymore.

#### **Key indicators**

For monitoring the Outcomes and Impacts a series of Indicators have been identified. These may change in time or new indicators may be developed as the ranger group develops and/or as new information comes to hand on the health of country (e.g. increased information on small mammal distribution). Further support from partners on western science-based work (e.g. biodiversity specialists), may be sought to develop indicators that help show whether the plan is working.

INC	DICATORS	
1.	Elders' satisfaction of <i>Altyerre</i> e.g., stories and language, is strong and being passed on.	9. Level of disturbance by feral animals in <i>Kwatye</i> places.
2.	Elders' satisfaction that ceremony and cultural activities are supported and happening right-way.	10. Elder satisfaction that Akityarre people are spending time on country, learning and looking after (country).
3.	Elders' satisfaction that cultural sites are being looked after.	11. Number and diversity (gender, location) of people employed as rangers is increasing.
4.	Priority cultural sites are identified and protected for each zone e.g., West, Central and East.	12. Number of ranger related training opportunities for community members.
5.	Elders' satisfaction on the availability and taste of <i>Kere</i> bush meat.	13. Number of partnerships established.
6.	Small mammal populations abundance and diversity.	14. Health and wellbeing of Akityarre people.
7.	Elders are happy with the availability and taste of food and medicine plants.	15. Number of controlled burns undertaken by rangers.
8.	Elders' satisfaction that <i>Kwatye</i> places are accessible, healthy, and children know them.	16. Number of weed incursions identified and treated.

## References and relevant resources

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#### Appendix 1: Value attributes discussed at the workshops

The table below shows the attributes for each of the values identified in the Healthy Country Planning camps. Attributes are what makes each value healthy.

VALUE	ATTRIBUTES
Arrernte law and culture	<ul> <li>People knowing stories</li> <li>People visiting and looking after places</li> <li>Right people visiting places (men's/women's)</li> <li>Sites are protected from damage (feral animals/erosion)</li> <li>Right way visits (welcome/following rules/introducing visitors)</li> </ul>
Bush medicine and bush tucker plants	<ul> <li>Colours of the fruit are bright</li> <li>Its green after rain</li> <li>Protected from bushfire</li> <li>Protected from cattle</li> <li>Protected from stealing</li> <li>There is lots of it!</li> <li>Tastes good</li> </ul>
<i>Kwatye</i> places	<ul> <li>No dead animals in the water</li> <li>Knowledge of the water place, song and location</li> <li>Good taste</li> <li>TOs accessing sites</li> <li>Not taken over by plants</li> <li>Bugs present</li> <li>No-one stealing water/rising water table</li> <li>No damage from pastoralists and sites are protected</li> <li>Birds are present/drinking</li> </ul>
Working on country	<ul> <li>Training for rangers and community</li> <li>Ranger jobs for younger people</li> <li>More women in jobs</li> <li>Training for traditional owners for areas of land trusts and stations</li> <li>Ranger bases to cover more area</li> <li>Ranger specialisation</li> </ul>

#### **Appendix 2: Land Tenure**

Total **estimated** area for where the Akityarre rangers potentially operate equals 94,264.33km.

ABORIGINAL OWNED STATIONS	CLC AREA
Alkwerte (Alcoota Grazing License Area)	2,509.11 km²
Atula	3,913.97 km²
Huckitta	1,697.01 km²

NON-ABORIGINAL OWNED STATIONS	CLC AREA
Mt Riddock	2,697.14 km²
Bushy Park	1,701.18 km²
Delny	822.54 km²
Delmore Downs	373.02 km²
MacDonald Downs	2,062.89 km²
Dneiper	894.33 km²
Jinka	1,965.20 km²
Jervois	2,837.04 km²
Tarlton Downs	3,095.82 km²
Lucy Creek	4,057 km²
Marqua	4,359.51 km²
Tobermorey	6,021.86 km²
Manners Creek	6,717.52 km²
Indiana	3,085.94 km²

ABORIGINAL LAN	ID TRUST	AREAS
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Akekarrwenteme Ureyenge	5.18 km²
Ilparle	13.69 km²
Alkwerte (Includes Alcoota Station and Waite River Station)	2,972.26 km²
Anatye	201.50 km²
Atnetye (Includes Atula Grazing License)	36,608.66 km²

#### ABORIGINAL LAND LEASED TO NTG PARKS AND WILDLIFE

Dulcie Range NP

190 km²





