

FIRE MANAGEMENT



Fire Management IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA



Fire is an important part of the Australian landscape, and although Central Australia contains some of Australia's most well-known deserts, bushfires are common.

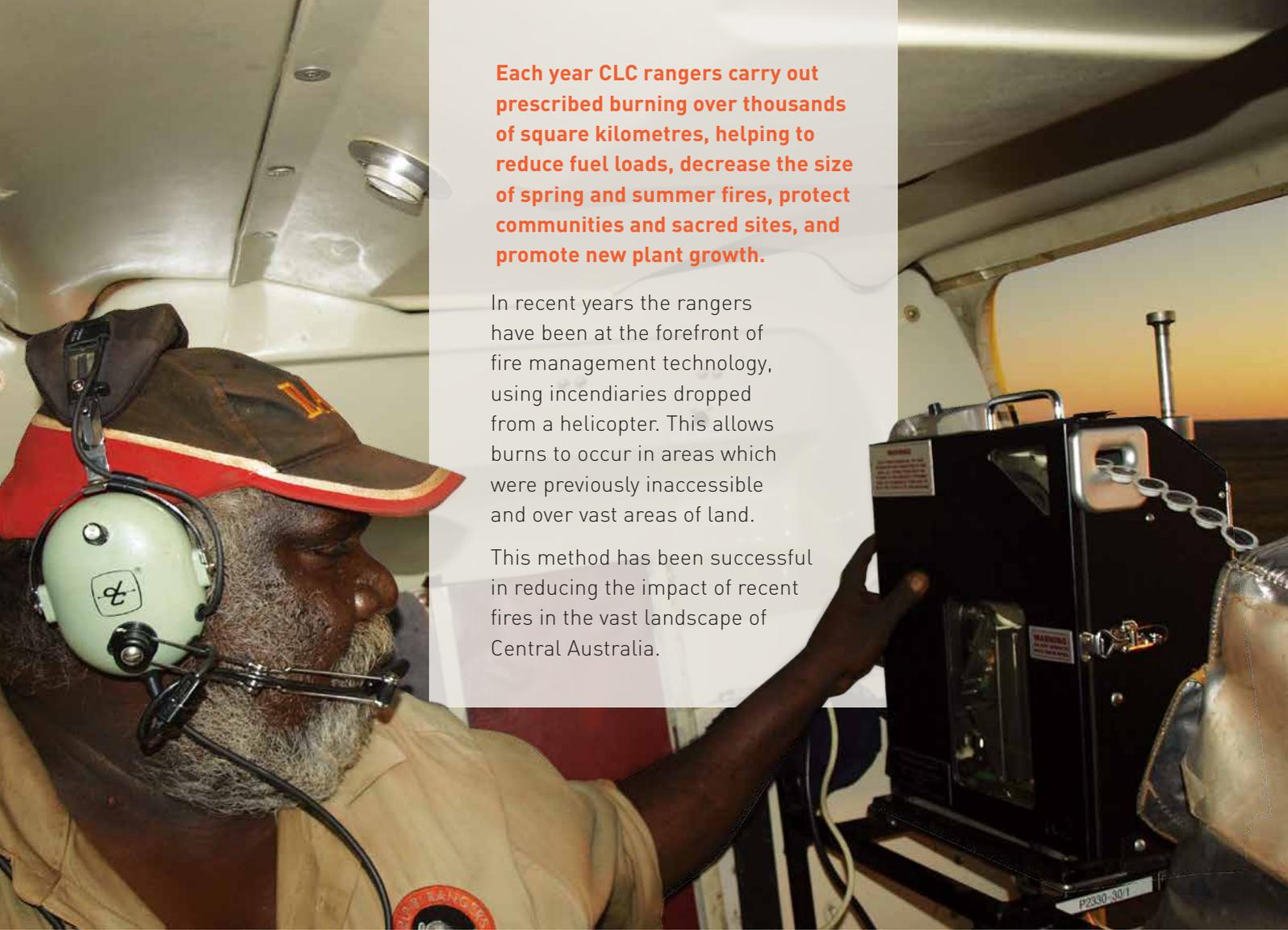
Wild bushfires can burn for weeks across vast and remote tracts of land in the Northern Territory. Sometimes they are destructive; sometimes they clean up country and promote new growth. All of the plants and animals in Central Australia react to fire in different ways, from needing it to survive, to being killed by it.

There is a chance that climate change will increase the incidence and impact of these fires and improved management is becoming more and more critical to deal with the cultural and ecological impacts of climate change.

In response the Central Land Council has expanded its role in fire management with more staff and more training of its ranger groups to deal with bushfires.

A large bushfire is burning in a landscape, with thick, dark smoke rising into the sky. The fire is visible in the distance, and the foreground shows a dense, dark forest. The sky is hazy and grey from the smoke.

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Each year CLC rangers carry out prescribed burning over thousands of square kilometres, helping to reduce fuel loads, decrease the size of spring and summer fires, protect communities and sacred sites, and promote new plant growth.

In recent years the rangers have been at the forefront of fire management technology, using incendiaries dropped from a helicopter. This allows burns to occur in areas which were previously inaccessible and over vast areas of land.

This method has been successful in reducing the impact of recent fires in the vast landscape of Central Australia.

The CLC has facilitated the formation of several regionally-based fire committees of traditional owners – local experts who know the country intimately and are best placed to direct fire management across Aboriginal land.

The Warlu Committee directs work across the Tanami while the Waru Committee operates in the south west of the Territory and directs work across three states.



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To maximise its efforts, the CLC works closely with other agencies such as Bushfires NT, Parks Australia and the NT Parks and Wildlife Service.

The CLC rangers have provided valuable support to pastoralists and other land holders fighting and containing fires in recent years, along with extremely valuable fire management during the cooler months of the year.

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