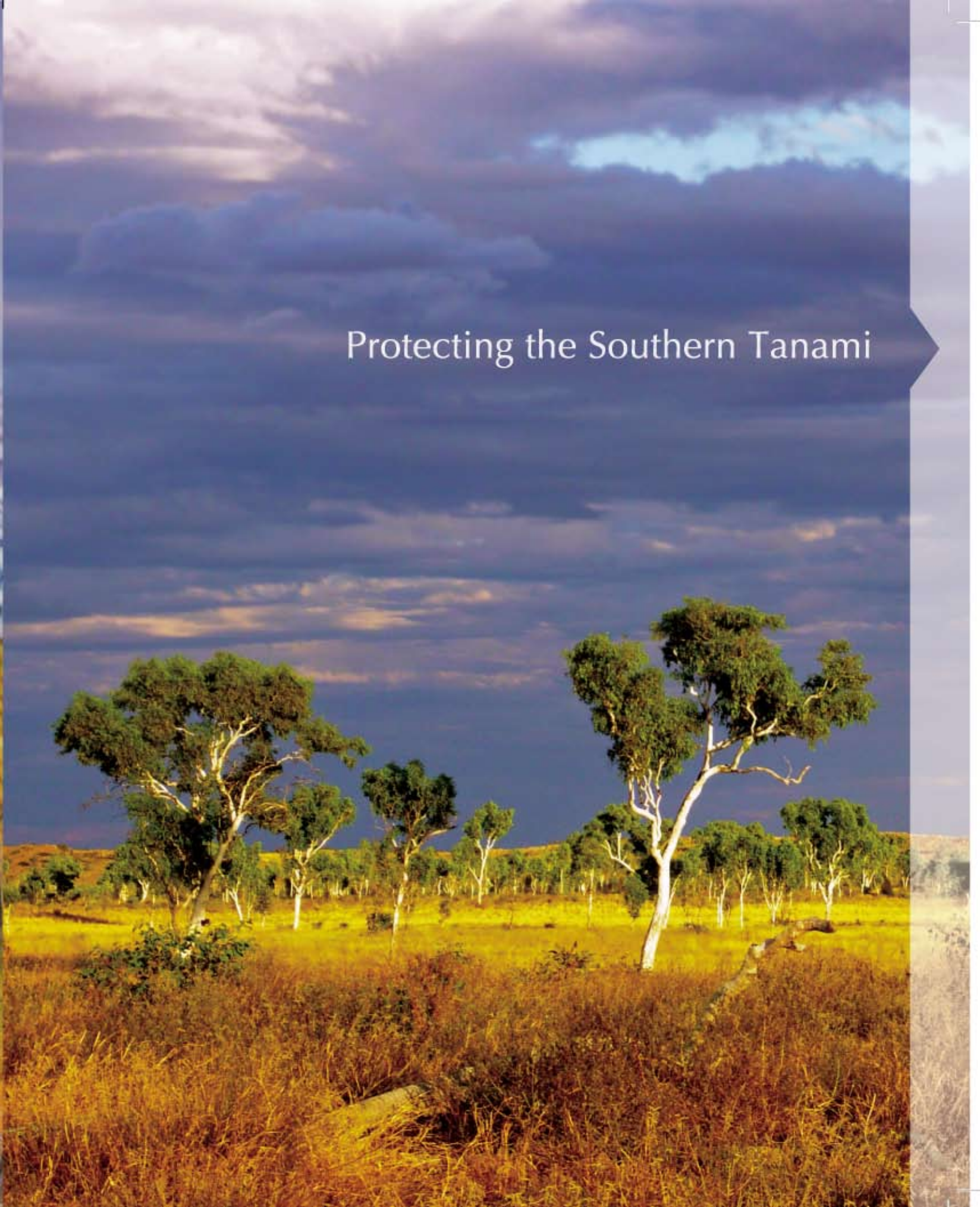


# Protecting the Southern Tanami





## Looking for partners in the Tanami

Partnerships will be essential to the ongoing management of the Southern Tanami.

The Southern Tanami IPA needs philanthropists, businesses and other organisations to help protect this vast, unique area.

For further information on the plans of traditional owners to protect the Southern Tanami, or to discuss getting involved, contact the Central Land Council's Land Management Section: (08) 8951 6211

*"Our IPA is a really big area of land and we want to work together with other people, partners, to look after it"*

Eddie Jampijinpa Robertson  
*IPA Coordinating Council executive member*

**THE LAND IS ALWAYS ALIVE**



**CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL**



## What are we protecting?

The proposed Southern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area encompasses near-pristine semi-arid ecosystems across an area 30 per cent larger than the state of Tasmania. If fully declared it would be the largest protected land area in Australia and help establish a strategic national network of protected areas.

It will also be the single largest contribution to the proposed Territory Eco-link, a globally significant conservation corridor 2000 kilometres in length, which will provide ecosystem resilience in a changing climate.

The area includes two internationally important sites for conservation – the South West Tanami Desert and Lake Mackay (Yininti warrku warrku) – as well as a further two places of national conservation significance.

These sites contain habitats critical to the survival of many of Australia's threatened species, such as the bilby, mulgara and great desert skink. There are also important wetlands, vital breeding sites for water birds, and rare and threatened plants.

The entire region is culturally significant and contains an enormous number of sites sacred to the region's traditional owners. The land owners retain strong language and culture and continue to look after the health of their country using customary practices.

Clarke Martin with the greater bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*) – 'Warlpajirri'

Foxes, cats and changed fire regimes have eliminated the greater bilby from most of its previous range across mainland Australia. The Southern Tanami IPA would secure one of the few critical habitats left for bilby in Australia

*"In the past our old people looked after country and kept it strong. Now there are new problems coming in, like weeds, feral animals and big wildfires... Today we want to work both ways [combining Aboriginal knowledge and Western science] to keep country healthy"*

Madeline Napangardi Dixon  
Senior Warlpiri Ranger, Yuendumu







## Two-way environmental education and law

The Tanami's future depends greatly on the ability of traditional and Western approaches to learn from each other. For that reason, partner organisations are being engaged to provide 'two-way' education about country. This includes professional development for rangers, education pathways (such as junior ranger and trainee ranger programs), creating Warlpiri education resources, strengthening customary law and providing localised environmental education in community schools.

## Jobs on country and economic development

Employment and sustainable economic development are critically important for the region. In addition to ranger jobs, the proposed IPA also offers some exciting economic opportunities, including providing environmental services to mining companies, pastoralists and community organisations, and the potential for future developments in tourism and carbon abatement.





## How we would manage the IPA

Warlpiri rangers operate out of each of the three communities in the proposed IPA, Nyirripi, Yuendumu and Willowra, developing their capacity to provide environmental services across the region. Four key management objectives form the backbone of the development of the IPA, and together with effective governance structures they are the key to its successes so far:

### Keeping culture strong

The proposed IPA is working to maintain the environmental health of the region by helping traditional owners to access their country, carry out customary land management and pass on critical ecological knowledge between generations. These activities are deeply embedded in the local culture, and bring important health and well-being benefits for the Aboriginal people involved.



### Keeping country strong

The IPA development process is already helping Warlpiri people to protect areas of high conservation significance against new threats to country, and at the same time preserve cultural resources. In many cases customary and Western management approaches are being combined to develop new solutions to particular challenges in areas such as fire management, camel management and weed control.



Images left to right; a rare inundation event at Lake Surprise; Lucy Martin passing on knowledge about Warlpiri plants; setting controlled fires to protect rock wallaby habitats; land management planning at Mt Bennet; Warlpiri rangers on a fauna survey at The Granites goldmine



## A cultural landscape

The Southern Tanami is an area rich in wildlife, including some of the highest densities of Australia's most threatened species. This is where you'll find vital populations of animals like the bilby, great desert skink and marsupial mole.

The whole region is also a cultural landscape, one that supports the spiritual and social well-being of its traditional owners, who are predominantly Warlpiri people.

For these reasons, the Warlpiri have spent four years working with the Central Land Council, scientists and land management experts in developing a plan to protect the region as an 'Indigenous Protected Area' or IPA. Declaring their vast country as an IPA would add more than 10 million hectares to Australia's protected area system.

A Southern Tanami IPA would provide the framework to protect and maintain ecological and

cultural assets of national and international significance. It would also create precious employment, education and training opportunities, and other social benefits for three different Aboriginal communities in one of the remotest parts of Australia.

Traditional owners are now ready with a plan, but to achieve the IPA's full potential and effectively manage an area of this size it is critical that adequate resourcing be available from the start.

The Australian Government's Caring for Our Country (CFOC) Program can contribute some of the resources required, but to make the Southern Tanami IPA a thriving reality other partners are needed.

The opportunity exists now for the corporate sector, philanthropists and other government and non-government agencies to become part of a social and environmental success story in the making.

