

CLC RANGER PROGRAM REPORT



CENTRAL
LAND
COUNCIL

Supplement to the
CLC Annual Report

2019–20



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

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CLC Rangers Helen Wilson, Phillip Jimmy, 10 Deserts Project chair Andrew Minyardie, Benji Kenny and Josephine Grant at the World Ranger Congress in Nepal.

FOREWORD



In November 2019 I joined some of the rangers for the 9th World Ranger Congress in Nepal, where we compared experiences with colleagues from all over the globe. We learned about some rangers' battles against poachers and that they have similar problems to us, for example a lack of funding for people who want to look after their country. Some said that people from the cities were telling them how to manage their country, ignoring their traditional ways. Others complained about having to wait for outsiders to arrive before they can do the work they want to do. We also learnt about some exciting new technology being deployed by rangers across the world. I was proud to hear our rangers speak at the World Ranger Congress and represent Central Australia.

As this report shows, our rangers are experts at managing their country. They get their strength from the traditional owners of the land, who direct and guide their work and share their knowledge with them. Many rangers will become leaders of our communities and we will continue to support them to work across cultures.

The Australian Government promise to fund our rangers for seven years, from 2021 to 2028, was great news and will help them to plan ahead with confidence for the first time. I am happy that it has listened to us.

We still have areas without rangers and I will continue to ask the government to fund more ranger groups.

Sammy Wilson
Chair
Central Land Council



When I joined the Central Land Council, in 2019, I knew I would be in for a learning experience. I never expected a pandemic that would turn our lives upside down. Yet the CLC constituents, members and staff demonstrated leadership under pressure and did themselves proud.

On 26 March 2020, the federal Minister for Health declared biosecurity areas to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in designated remote regions of the Northern Territory and neighbouring states. In the CLC region, all remote communities where our ranger groups are based were inside these biosecurity areas. I immediately restricted access to our offices, limited our work to essential operations and directed staff to work from home where possible.

As this report outlines, among other developments, for our rangers the biosecurity declaration meant cancelling their main professional development and networking event, the annual ranger camp, and adopting hygiene and physical distancing practices. Despite the challenges, we progressed the development of emerging ranger teams in the Sandoval region and Kintore and protected waterholes that have significant cultural and natural values.

A ray of light during a difficult year was the commitment of the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, and the Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley, to fund the ranger program until 2028. This gives us the security we need to plan long-term projects and demonstrate the value of Aboriginal rangers protecting Australia's environment. I look forward to working with both ministers to develop detailed funding arrangements supporting the essential work of our rangers.

Joe Martin-Jard
Chief Executive Officer
Central Land Council

RANGER PROGRAM OVERVIEW 2019-20

OUR RANGER PROGRAM LEADS THE WAY

The CLC ranger program was established to manage cultural and natural resources on Aboriginal land and has shown itself to be of real value to the communities it serves. The program has received funding for more than a decade from the Australian Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation's real jobs programs. This funding has expanded the program's reach, with four ranger groups now managing indigenous protected areas, contributing more than 195,000 square kilometres to the national reserve system.

The high value that remote Aboriginal communities place on the ranger program is evident from the large numbers of residents who apply for the limited number of ranger jobs, and by the enthusiasm of traditional owners who direct and oversee the work of the rangers. This collaboration between the traditional owners and the rangers is critical and strengthens intergenerational knowledge transfer and community engagement.

The CLC's ranger employment model emphasises training and mentoring, and provides career pathways at the CLC and beyond. Rangers regularly transfer the skills and capacities they develop through the program to other employment and leadership roles.

The program continues to offer solid employment. Of the CLC's 87 rangers, 11 were employed fulltime, 54 worked parttime and eight were casuals. Twelve ranger group coordinators and nine program staff supported 12 established and two emerging groups.

Community demand for ranger employment and for the establishment of additional ranger groups remains high and the CLC continues to advocate for the expansion of the program. The 10 Deserts Project funded the CLC's work with the emerging ranger teams in the Sandover region of the northeast (Utopia Rangers) and Kintore (Walungurru Rangers) in the west. The Walungurru ranger team has the strong support of traditional owners, who met twice with the CLC to plan a work program for the group. The Walungurru Rangers attended the annual Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA) forum to learn from established groups. The emerging Utopia ranger group

Table 1: Ranger groups and where they work

Ranger group	Area of operation
North Tanami	Lajamanu and Northern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area
Warlpiri	Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Willowra and Southern Tanami IPA
Muru-Warinyi Ankkul	Tennant Creek Region
Tjuwanpa	Aboriginal land trusts around Ntaria and adjoining national parks
Kaltukatjara	Kaltukatjara and western half of Katiti-Petermann IPA
Ltyentye Apurte	Santa Teresa ALT and surrounds
Anmatyerr	Ahakeye Aboriginal land trust and wider (Ti Tree) region
Anangu Luritjiku	Papunya and eastern half of Haasts Bluff Aboriginal land trust
Murnkurumurnkurru	Dagaragu Aboriginal land trust and surrounds
Arltarpilta Inelye	Atitjere, Huckitta Station and surrounds
Tjakuṛa	Mutitjulu, Eastern Katiti-Petermann IPA
Anangu	Angas Downs IPA
Walungurru (emerging)	Kintore and western half of Haasts Bluff Aboriginal land trust
Utopia (emerging)	Arlparra and Ampilatwatja- Sandover region

started planning work activities, identifying prospective rangers and exploring training delivery. Table 1 shows the areas of operation of the 12 established and two emerging ranger groups.

RANGER PROGRAM FUNDING

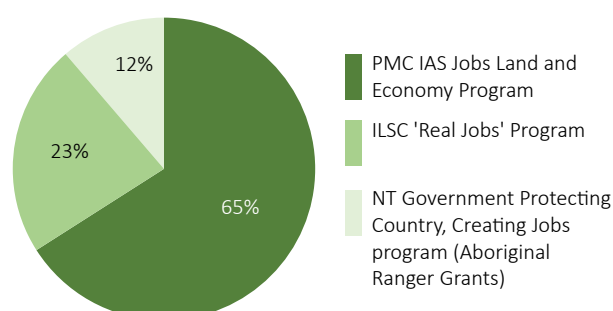
The federal government's decade-long funding of the ranger program was due to run out in June 2021. In 2020, the Minister for Indigenous Australians made a commitment to extend the funding until 2028 and also to consult about developing new guidelines for the program. Prior to this announcement, the CLC reviewed the allocation of its existing funding between ranger groups.

After assessment of the Anangu ranger group managing the Angas Downs Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), it reallocated 1.5 full time equivalent ranger positions to each of the emerging ranger groups at Kintore and the Sandover region. The Anangu Rangers will continue with IPA funding.

The Northern Territory Government also contributed to the ranger program. It provided \$1,350,000 for the grading of firebreaks and

access tracks to significant sites and outstations, as well as for the development of four land management plans for the Ltyentye Apurte, Tjuwanpa, Muru-warinyi Ankkul and Anmatyerr ranger groups.

FIGURE 1: RANGER PROGRAM FUNDING 2019-20



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on the ability of the rangers to undertake their normal work. On 18 March 2020 the Commonwealth declared that COVID-19 posed a human biosecurity emergency and introduced the *Biosecurity (Human Biosecurity Emergency) (Human Coronavirus with Pandemic Potential) Declaration 2020* pursuant to section 475 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. A week later, on 26 March, the federal Minister for Health gave a direction to prevent or control the entry and spread of COVID-19 in designated areas in the NT, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. The CLC immediately restricted access to its offices. It limited its work to essential operations and directed staff to work from home where possible.

This new direction, the *Biosecurity (Human Biosecurity Emergency) (Human Coronavirus with Pandemic Potential) (Emergency Requirements for Remote Communities) Determination 2020* effectively restricted access to all Aboriginal land and communities in designated biosecurity areas. The determination was amended three times and allowed access only to persons in defined circumstances, for example those who had undertaken 14 days of self-isolation.

For Aboriginal people living in the biosecurity areas in the CLC region, the determination meant that if they visited Alice Springs or Tennant Creek to buy affordable groceries and other essentials, they would have to self-isolate in those towns for two weeks before they could return home. This effectively shut remote community residents out of the towns, while leaving bush residents who lived outside the biosecurity areas free to move around.

As for CLC rangers, in response to the risk posed by COVID-19 they were stood down on full pay until it was deemed safe to return to work. The safety of remote communities was of the utmost importance. Some rangers started to return to work in late May 2020 under specific restrictions – for example, no more than two people allowed in a vehicle at the one time – however, the majority of rangers did not return to (almost) normal working arrangements until 9 June. This was a very disruptive time for rangers and impacted on their ability to complete key tasks in their respective work plans. The annual CLC Ranger Camp was also cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

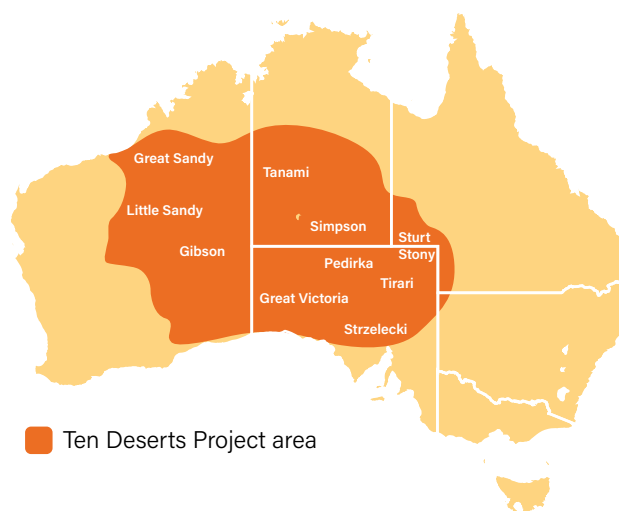
CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION

The CLC collaborates with two separate organisations that cross state and territory borders: the Indigenous Desert Alliance and Desert Support Services through the 10 Deserts Project. These collaborations support Aboriginal rangers to manage Australia's vast interior and share ideas and resources.

The CLC is a member of the Indigenous Desert Alliance, an incorporated coalition of indigenous land management organisations in desert regions of Western Australia, South Australia and the NT. The alliance aims to support Aboriginal rangers across the region to achieve cultural, environmental, economic and social benefits. Two CLC rangers serve as directors on the alliance's board and CLC staff attended its annual conference in Yulara in November.

The alliance is building its capacity to deliver the 10 Deserts Project, an indigenous-led partnership supporting traditional owners to manage approximately 2.8 million square kilometres of desert country of which the CLC is also a member.

FIGURE 2: DESERTS PROJECT AREA



■ Ten Deserts Project area

The project operates across the world's largest connected network of protected areas and Aboriginal – managed lands. The BHP Billiton Foundation currently funds the Desert Support Services to administer it on behalf of the members, who also include the Central Desert Native Title Services, Kimberley Land Council, Nyangumarta Warrarn, Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara, IDA, Arid Lands Environment Centre, Nature Conservancy and Pew Charitable Trusts.

As a member of the project steering committee and associated working groups, the CLC contributed to the development of the project's governance and the implementation of activities in the southern half of the Northern Territory. For instance, it consulted with traditional owners about work plans for the Walungurru Rangers, an emerging ranger group at Kintore on the Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust, and the Utopia Rangers on the Angarapa Aboriginal Land Trust. The CLC also encouraged the traditional owners to design a Walungurru Ranger logo. The design features the *tjapu-tjapu* (black-faced wood swallow), a character from an important story of the region.

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, the group managed to increase its numbers to 10 casual rangers. Two young group members gained experience in ground burning during a prescribed burn in the Southern Tanami IPA with the Warlpiri Rangers.

The CLC also set up a 'reading the country' project in response to requests by rangers and traditional owners for additional opportunities to learn from each other and balance mainstream education and training with learning from the elders.

The project aims to develop regular and structured opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transfer. It employed a project officer and organised a field trip and workshop with senior knowledge holders and rangers. Participants drew mind maps about tracking two animals to identify the information that is part of the tracking process, and expert trackers reflected on the difference between 'tracking to hunt' and 'tracking to teach'. Participants also identified key features of Warlpiri teaching and mentoring methods.

Ranger portrait: Michael Taylor



Hi, my name is Michael Taylor and I'm from Alice Springs. I'm a ranger support officer at the Central Land Council and my job is assisting the ranger coordinators in Atitjere, Ltyentye Apurte and Ntaria.

My career as a ranger began back in 2007, when I started out as a trainee ranger at Ingkerreke Outstations. At the time, I was just going to apply for a casual position, but the coordinator of the group asked me to join them on the first day. We headed out to do some work at Corkwood Bore Outstation which was building a shed. I didn't know much about ranger work when I first started, but I did love working outdoors. I stuck around for a bit to see where it would lead me, and that's when I realised that this was the perfect job for me. From there I started to learn a lot about native plants and animals. I've also learnt a lot about introduced plants (weeds), feral animals and the impact it has on country especially the impacts it has on springs, sacred sites, native animals and the natural habitat itself.

I've worked in various positions around Alice Springs, but nothing really caught my interest until I started my ranger training with Ingkerreke. I really enjoyed going out camping, working out on country and meeting new rangers. The first CLC ranger group I ever worked with was the Tjuwanpa Rangers. While working with Ingkerreke we did a lot of work with the group and were always invited to do fire control with them around Hermannsburg and Owen Springs. I completed my Certificate II and III in conservation

and land management while working at Ingkerreke.

In 2011, I left the ranger group to try municipal work which was doing clean-ups around outstations. I also did some construction work on town camps for a bit with companies from South Australia and Queensland.

In 2015, I got an opportunity to work for NT Parks as an apprentice ranger at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station. While employed there, I worked in areas such as Chambers Pillar, Rainbow Valley, Henbury, Jessie Gap, Emily gap and Trephina Gorge. I completed six of my 11 units in Certificate IV while based at the Telegraph Station.

In 2017, I started working for the local Night Patrol, but I always felt like I wanted to get back into doing ranger work and completing my Certificate IV. A position became available with the CLC, involving ranger work, in 2019. So I put in an application and was successful in gaining the position I'm in now.

The best part about being a ranger is that I get to work in some of the most stunning and secluded places. Working with traditional owners is also very interesting, especially listening to them tell their stories and being shown around their country.

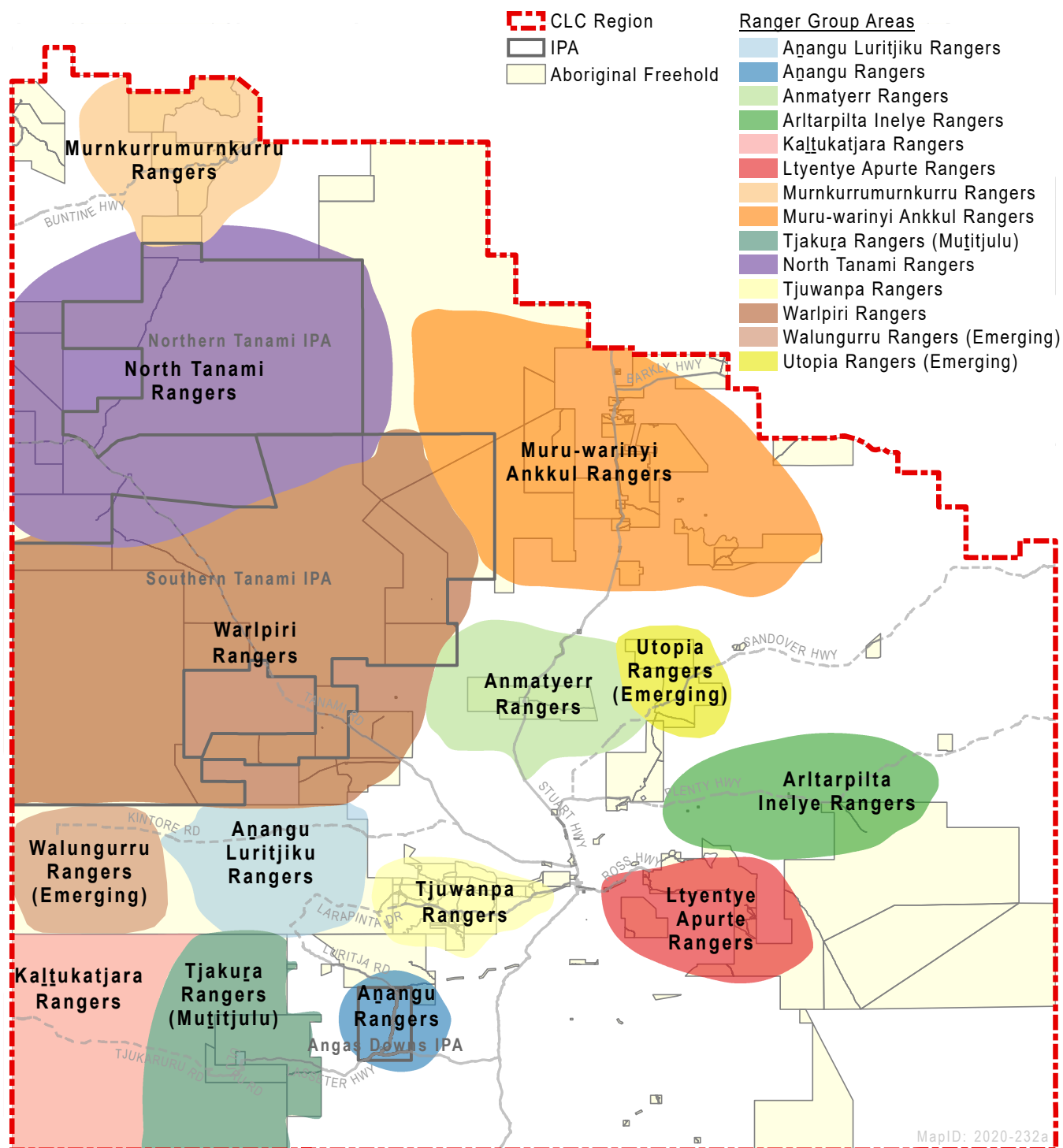
My goal now is to complete my Certificate IV, and see where it will lead me. For now, I would like to complete my contract and see where I would go from there.

WHERE WE WORK

The rangers are the eyes and ears of the bush, responding to natural and cultural resource management issues across most of the CLC region — half of the Northern Territory. Traditional owners identify priority areas to use the CLC's limited resources wisely and develop

projects that best meet their aspirations for their country. There are never enough jobs for all the people who want to work as rangers and many communities want to set up their own ranger groups.

FIGURE 3: WHERE RANGERS WORK



RANGER WORK PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

By employing rangers the CLC is not only benefitting individual rangers but also developing the capacity of traditional owners to develop and oversee ranger work plans. Working through our

traditional owner ranger advisory committees and IPA management committees, traditional owners are able to incorporate their own land management aspirations into the ranger program.

FERAL ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

The CLC helps traditional owners to manage feral animals through planning, consultation and partnerships.

As the drought in Central Australia continued unabated, the lack of water and food saw thousands of feral cattle, horses, pigs, donkeys and camels congregate around a few remaining water sources and often perish there. Polluted water sources kill native animals.

Aboriginal land trusts don't usually support feral animal culls, but for the second year in a row traditional owners from the Santa Teresa, Ntaria, Rodna, Roulpmaulpma, Ltalaltuma and Pmere Nyente agreed to them. The 10 Deserts Project funded a camel cull across

the Pmere Nyente, Ntaria, Ltalaltuma and Roulpmaulpma Aboriginal land trusts. A total of 2,992 feral animals, many perishing or in poor condition, were culled or sold.

Fifty-four feral cattle from the Angas Downs IPA that were fit for transport were sold with the CLC's assistance. The CLC also facilitated a land use agreement that allowed the Ngaanyatjarra Camel Company to sell 245 camels from the Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust under an agreement with a contractor. Table 2 provides a summary of this year's feral animal management activity.

Table 2: Feral animals removed, 2019-20

Location	Camels	Horses	Cattle	Total
Santa Teresa		309		309
Hermannsburg Area	461	933		1,394
Angas Downs	38	21	54	113
Pmere Nyente ALT	520	411		931
Petermann ALT	245			245
Total	1,264	1,674	54	2,992



Anangu Luritjiku Rangers burned camel carcasses at Karrinyarra.



Tjuwanpa Rangers cleared out bones from a water course.



Tjakura Rangers Glen Woods (left) and Danieal Breadon set up bird recorders to find if there are night parrots around.



Ashley Paddy released a ningau in the town of Yulara during their threatened species survey with Steve Eldridge.

RANGER GROUP ACTIVITIES 2019–20

ANANGU RANGERS



The CLC's Anangu Rangers deliver cultural and natural resource management for the Angas Downs IPA in the southwest of the CLC region by implementing biodiversity surveys, weed and feral animal control, fire management and rock art conservation. The group is based in Imanpa and works with traditional owners and neighboring pastoralists to maintain fences protecting water places and sites of cultural significance.

Angas Downs Indigenous Protected Area

Throughout the first half of the financial year, the Angas Downs ranger team invested a lot of energy in involving Anangu traditional owners in the management of the Angas Downs IPA. From July to September, the rangers refurbished Wilbiya Camp on the IPA, making it ready for a community open day on 26 September 2019. The day was attended by 29 Anangu traditional owners and 10 CLC staff. Rangers, traditional owners and the IPA coordinator used the occasion to begin a review of the IPA plan of management.

In October, an Angas Downs ranger accompanied the IPA coordinator on a trip with senior male Anangu traditional owners from the Areyonga (Utju) community. The men visited culturally significant water sites on the IPA, such as water holes, soakages, wells, a water-holding desert oak and a water site accessed by a small cave entrance. Many of these

places are part of the Seven Sisters songline. The men shared stories, discussed the sites' significance and reminisced about childhood days spent on country. They also noticed how some of the sites have changed since then and discussed how to protect them.

Throughout 2019, the rangers monitored feral horse and camel numbers around the IPA. Numbers fluctuated throughout the year. As many animals were in poor shape due to the dry conditions the traditional owners agreed to aerial culling. The cull, on 14 December, was part of a larger operation during which 21 horses and 38 camels were culled. Reports indicate that many other animals escaped to adjacent properties.

Country trips scheduled in the second half of the financial year had to be postponed due to sorry business and COVID-19 travel restrictions.



Des Kunoth, Mario di Giuseppe and Preston Connick inspected Irrowa waterhole on the Angas Downs IPA.

ANANGU LURITJIKU RANGERS



The Papunya-based Anangu Luritjiku Rangers deliver cultural heritage projects, feral animal management, weed control, biodiversity surveys and monitoring on the eastern half of the four-million-hectare Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust, around Papunya, Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff) and Mount Liebig. The land trust contains the internationally significant Talipata Springs wetland and is home to threatened species, such as the mulgara, great desert skink, Slater's skink, princess parrot and the black-footed rock-wallaby. It is part of a corridor of IPAs and Aboriginal land linking the NT's tropical northwest and its desert southwest.

Grading heavily eroded tracks on the Kaṯiṯi Petermann IPA

The Kaṯiṯi Petermann IPA was awarded funding from the NT ranger grants program to clean up washed-out roads and prevent further erosion of bush tracks. An inspection with an erosion consultant showed that there were some ephemeral swamps that were being completely drained by the washouts and that the roads were getting worse with every rain. This was preventing Anangu from visiting important cultural sites and outstations and running tourism activities.

The Anangu Luritjiku Rangers have more experience working with heavy machinery than the Tjakuṛa and Kaltukatjara ranger groups who normally look after this IPA, so they decided to help their colleagues. First rangers from the three groups spent three days in training with an erosion and machine operation specialist to make sure that they were able to use the best techniques for dealing with the desert sand and clay, then got to work with the grader and the bobcat.

Some of the washouts were two metres deep but the rangers still



Anangu Luritjiku Ranger Preston Kelly greased the grader.

managed to refill every washout with soil from wind rows and drainage lines. They needed to install lots of traffic-slowing diversions, to ensure that the roads remain in good condition for longer after rain.

Once the works were complete the Tjakuṛa Rangers marked every new whoa-boy (earth banks that divert water off dirt

tracks) so locals wouldn't be surprised by the changes. Now the rangers can work with the bobcat and the track sweepers they are keeping the tracks in good condition. The Anangu Luritjiku Rangers managed to finish more than 70 kilometres of track and are proud to have worked together with the other ranger groups.



Backfilling erosion on the Kulpitjata track on the Kaṯiṯi Petermann IPA.

ANMATYERR RANGERS



From their base at Ti Tree, the Anmatyerr Rangers protect culturally significant water places, manage weeds, fires and feral animals, educate the community, map country and record indigenous ecological knowledge. The group works mostly on the Ahakeye Aboriginal Land Trust.

Young people learning about country

James Glenn and Stefan from Drug and Alcohol Services asked the Anmatyerr Rangers for help with a trip to Anna's Reservoir for a group of 14-to-16-year-olds.

The young people needed to learn the history of the site and the emu egg, *alkerrenge* (rain), sugarbag and *larnkerte* (perentie) dreamings from the senior traditional owners. Anna's Reservoir is important because a lot of dreaming stories travel through it.

The rangers did a lot of recording of stories from traditional owners on the

trip. Stefan Glenn taught the young people to play drums and the group found artefacts in the rocky areas, such as old paintings, grinding stones and tools.

The traditional owners explained family connections to the site and story lines, and why it is important for future leaders to maintain connection to the country. The young people will become *kurdungurlu* (managers) for that country or *mirlikardi* (owners) when they get older, so they need to start learning.

The rangers helped with transport, recording stories from

traditional owners shooting videos, taking photographs and teaching the young people about ranger work. The youngsters learnt how to use the tablets of the rangers, particularly the navigation app and how to record information about country. They also learned how to clean up waterholes and around old gravesites.

Everyone felt good about getting out bush, away from their phones, sharing culture. The rangers would like to do more to support the old people in passing on knowledge and helping the young people to learn.



Anmatyerr Ranger Nathaniel Dixon (first from right) and elders Samuel Charles, Richard Long and Alfred Morton with young people near Aileron.

ARLTARPILTA INELYE RANGERS



Based at Atitjere (Harts Range), the Arltarpilta Inelye Rangers conduct biodiversity surveys and manage weeds, feral animals and fires. The rangers also help traditional owners and pastoralists to maintain fences that protect water places and sites of cultural significance.

Fencing, fencing and more fencing

Much of the Aboriginal land in the Plenty region is near cattle stations, and cattle often end up damaging significant sites and waterholes. The Arltarpilta Inelye Rangers regularly maintain and fix damaged fences around those places. This year they undertook several fencing projects to protect sites. At some of the waterholes they attached floatation buoys onto fences crossing the creeks, so that when water flowed the buoys lifted the fences up, preventing debris from destroying them. Once the water came down, the rangers simply stood the fences back up. This meant they had fewer fences to repair and still kept cattle, horses and donkeys out of waterholes.

They also installed a small fence to protect a water site near Painted Canyon. In the past traditional owners cleaned out and maintained this water hole. In the 1970s and 80s it was a popular swimming spot for locals. Large herbivores had been damaging the site for a long time. Now that it has been fenced the waterhole is looking clean and people should be able to swim without getting sick.

The rangers visited some special



Arltarpilta Inelye Rangers protect a significant men's site.

sites on the Alkwerte Aboriginal Land Trust and north to the Sandover with senior traditional owners, an area important to Anmatyerr and Eastern Arrernte speakers. Rangers and traditional owners completed assessments so that plans could be developed for work to protect scared sites. They fenced the first men's

site and started fencing the large second site. They also fenced two bush gravesites and maintained fences at other sites. The rangers welded their own barbed-wire spinners and cut and welded corner posts. They also learnt how to carry out stocktakes, and cost and order materials.



Arltarpilta Inelye Ranger Robin Bloomfield welding materials for a fence.

KALTUKATJARA RANGERS



The Kaltukatjara Rangers deliver cultural and natural resource management activities on the western portion of Kaṯiṯi Petermann IPA near the Western Australia and South Australia borders. The area is a refuge for the threatened great desert skink, brush-tailed mulgara and the black-footed rock-wallaby. The group is based in Kaltukatjara (Docker River) and maintains tourist facilities and helps with cool weather burning in the cross-border region that reduces the impact and frequency of summer wildfires. It also supports feral animal management and protects important waterholes from camels and weeds.

Sharing knowledge across the deserts



Kaltukatjara ranger Bernard Bell planned fire management with the Walungurru Rangers.

In November 2019 the Indigenous Desert Alliance conference was held in Yulara. The town is surrounded by the Kaṯiṯi Peterman IPA, an area jointly managed by the Kaltukatjara Rangers and Tjakura Rangers. The event brought together ranger teams from desert regions of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia.

Ranger groups and organisations presented about the important work they have been doing on their own country. The Kaltukatjara Rangers enjoyed

meeting other ranger teams and catching up with relatives from other communities who also work as rangers.

They attended several sessions which were connected to their work and country. The Ngaanyatjara Camel Company gave a presentation about the mustering of camels in the region. The rangers were curious about how the company works and its plans for the land they protect.

One of the local researchers did a session on *tjakura* (great desert skink) and showed a live one they had captured. This was really good for the younger rangers, because while rangers spend a lot of time looking for and monitoring *tjakura*, young people often haven't seen them up close.

The rangers also visited some of the *tjakura* sites in Yulara and on the Kaṯiṯi Peterman IPA with the scientists. The new knowledge they gained will help the rangers learn how they can better

protect this threatened species.

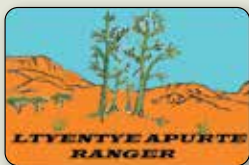
Kanyirninpa Jukurpa, presented about their successful leadership program. One of our rangers was very interested in this and as a result we are working on an arrangement with Kanyirninpa Jukurpa so he can participate in their program.

The rangers also took part in ranger-only sessions so they could talk about how things are going and what changes they want to see. Thelma Meneri and Roxanne Connelly participated in a women-only session that showed them that female rangers are supported and that there are other female rangers out there. As the IDA conference was held in Yulara the rangers were able to go out for dinner and socialise with all the other ranger teams before heading home.



Bernard Bell was COVID-safe in the helicopter.

LTYENTYE APURTE RANGERS



The Ltyentye Apurte Rangers work on the Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Trust that surrounds their base at the Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) community, about 80 kilometres southeast of Alice Springs.

Rediscovering important waterholes

The Ltyentye Apurte Rangers worked closely with traditional owners, including senior knowledge holder Alan Drover, to locate significant water holes in their work region. Senior traditional owners shared altyerre (dreamtime) stories with rangers and other young people while visiting sites as well as shared knowledge of other important sites on and around the land trust.

Rangers travelled to waterholes on Allambi and Ringwood stations and Arletherre (Loves Creek) and Pmere Nyente (Todd River Downs) Aboriginal land trusts. They worked with traditional owners to find places that had not been visited for a long time. The going was slow as the traditional owners recalled the way to get to places. The rangers GPS'd the track to record the route and the final location

of sites on their tablets. This was exciting as it was a chance for traditional owners and Rangers to rediscover and hear stories about important places that had not been visited for many years in some cases.

Apere Spring was one such site that was rediscovered by traditional owners and the rangers. It is in the southeast part of the land trust, near the

Todd River Station boundary.

The rangers also organised a week-long camping trip with the Atyenhenge Atherre and Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporations and the Ltyentye Apurte primary school to take families out to the springs for cultural knowledge exchange. About 50 people spent time exploring the country around the springs and hearing stories.



Ltyentye Apurte Rangers Jackson Kopp, Joe Palmer and Anton McMillan completed their Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management.



Ltyentye Apurte Rangers on the Apere Springs family trip.

MURNKURRUMURNKURRU RANGERS



The Murnkurrumurnkurru Rangers are based in the community of Daguragu and operate across the Daguragu Aboriginal Land Trust and the northern portion of the Hooker Creek Aboriginal Land Trust. The group occasionally participates in projects in the southern section of the Judbarra National Park.

Teaching the Kunpulu Junior Rangers



Murnkurrumurnkurru Rangers Ursula Chubb and Helma Bernard taught the Kunpulu Rangers about birds and fish.

In late 2018 the traditional owner ranger advisory committee saw the need for more children to become involved in caring for country. The committee asked the rangers to address this need and the rangers developed a program for the Kunpulu Junior Rangers with the Kalkaringi school in the following year. *Kunpulu* (Gurindji for sawfish) was chosen as the emblem for the junior rangers after a series of school visits to a nearby rock art site depicting a giant sawfish.

The program consists of classroom-based activities with two camping trips to country per year for students in grades 7 to 10. It offers a wide range of curriculum-based activities, such as cultural knowledge demonstrations.

It was created to develop educational opportunities and pathways to land management jobs for the students. As ranger Harlen Scobie said: "It's good to take the junior rangers out of

town, away from social media and phones, and teach them about our country".

Due to COVID-19 restrictions classes were held in the bush to overcome physical distancing concerns.

The program started with a trip to a cave in the upper side creeks off the Victoria River with a very old rock painting showing a sawfish. The junior rangers were taught both English, Latin and Gurindji names for animals and trees, as well as bush medicines and bush tucker. Students learned about feral animals and plants that cause damage to the natural environment and ecosystems and how to manage these threats. They used a mix of European and Gurindji processes to track and trap animals and looked for scats, tracks and other traces of native or introduced wildlife.

"I like taking the kids out bush and looking for animal tracks and teaching how to follow

them and teaching how old the tracks are and what animal left the tracks," ranger George Sambo said.

The junior rangers also learned about the famous Gurindji walk off from Wave Hill Station and led the way as they re-traced the route the striking families took with other students from the Kalkaringi and Lajamanu schools.

The program is well received by the wider community and school staff, with elders and rangers passing on important cultural, historical and educational knowledge in a fun learning environment.

"I like teaching the junior rangers our cultural way – taking them out on country and telling them stories because they are our next generation and they need to know the stories and how to protect country," ranger Phillip Jimmy said.



Murnkurrumurnkurru Ranger Phillip Jimmy and Kunpulu Junior Ranger Tom Barry surveyed birds on Wattie Creek.

MURU-WARINYI ANKKUL RANGERS



The Muru-warinyi Ankkul Rangers work on large areas of Aboriginal land around Tennant Creek, as well as on jointly managed national parks, pastoral and government land.

Burning at mission block

Every year the Muru-warinyi Ankkul Rangers carry out back burning at Mission Block, 30 kilometres north of Tennant Creek, to prevent the wildfire from getting into the land trust and damaging sacred sites. Back burning achieves this by creating a firebreak across which flames cannot leap.

The back burning at Mission Block was the rangers' first burn of 2020, and it was the first activity with their new ranger group coordinator. A traditional owner for Mission Block, Norman Frank Junior, led the burn and helped the rangers. The group burned near the cemetery and the distance burned within two days was approximately two kilometres.

The rangers plan to visit Mission Block in the summer of 2020/21



Muru-warinyi Ankkul Rangers monitored the burn at Mission Block.

to complete flora and fauna and water surveys with the help of traditional owners of all ages. Mission Block is a special place for many traditional owners

where a lot of ceremonies take place – a reason for the rangers to constantly visit the area and look after the country.



Traditional owner Norman Frank with the water trailer at Mission Block.

NORTH TANAMI RANGERS



The North Tanami Rangers are based in the community of Lajamanu. The traditional owners of the Northern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area have entrusted the group to manage the four-million hectare IPA that stretches from just north of Lajamanu to the Tanami Mine in the south and adjoins the Southern Tanami IPA.

Rangers protect important spring

The North Tanami Rangers have made good on their promise to two late elders to protect an important spring in the Northern Tanami IPA.

The rangers had promised to fence Kamira, a famous *ngapa* (water) site that feeds a creek and had been trashed by feral animals.

Working in small teams with one traditional owner and sticking to physical distancing rules because of coronavirus restrictions, the rangers fenced the site in the southwestern corner of the IPA where fresh water emerges from a rocky hillside.

Reliable water made Kamira a significant gathering place when Yapa lived off the land. They still visit it regularly to hunt, camp and share stories.

In recent times Kamira hasn't been a great place to gather.



North Tanami Rangers Lionel Mick, Norbert Patrick and Elijah Kelly tested the water at Tanami mine for water quality, bore depth and chemicals and effect of mining on the water table.

Following years of low rainfall, cattle, horses, camels and donkeys had turned the spring into a muddy wasteland.

and native plants to regenerate and once again provide shade and shelter. The new fence delivers on that promise.

The rangers promised the elders to protect the head of the spring with a fence that would allow animals to drink from the creek



Silas James helped to fence Kamira.

TJUWANPA RANGERS



The Tjuwanpa Rangers in Ntaria (Hermannsburg) manage the natural and cultural resources of five Aboriginal land trusts in the region, as well as the Finke Gorge and Tjoritja/ West MacDonnell national parks. The rangers are responsible for removing athel pine and other weeds in the Finke River catchment and managing the largest known population of the endangered Slater's skink. They also maintain tourism infrastructure, monitor and protect water places, support intergenerational knowledge transfer, and manage feral animals.

Fish surveys and waterhole monitoring

The Finke River is home to unique species of fish, and for several years the Tjuwanpa Rangers have undertaken fish surveys with NT Parks and Wildlife staff to monitor population abundance and diversity.

During December 2019 three Tjuwanpa rangers assisted Parks staff and scientists from Lake Eyre with the fish survey at Two Mile, north of the Glen Helen Resort. The rangers helped prepare three large and four smaller nets. Once the group caught fish, they measured and analysed the catch. This attracted the attention of a bus load of tourists who came to watch how they were doing the fish survey.

The main goal of this exercise was to determine what fish species are present. Three different species of fish were caught in 2019: bony bream (*Nematalosa erebi*), spangled



Tjuwanpa Rangers Emron Campbell and Fabian Raggett cleared out Liltjera Spring.

perch (*Leiopotherapon unicolor*) and desert rainbowfish (*Melanotaenia splendida tatei*). The rangers will continue to help conduct these surveys annually along the permanent pools of the Finke River.

They also visited waterholes on each of the five land trusts and used the tablets to report on each waterhole's condition. Many were in good condition but some were damaged considerably by feral cattle, horses and camels.

The rangers planned how to repair some of these damaged waterholes. They removed dead animals from Liltjera Spring on the Ntaria Aboriginal Land Trust and cleared out rocks that were blocking the water. They directed the water further down to another small pool where the animals would be able to drink without destroying the spring.

Once the area was cleaned and had time to settle the

rangers installed panels to create a temporary barrier for feral animals. Liltjera Spring has improved considerably since then and the panels are still holding together well. The rangers continue to monitor all of the waterholes on their country in order to better protect them.



Tjuwanpa Rangers Colin Joseph and Emron Campbell set a fish net at Two Mile, near Glen Helen.

WARLPIRI RANGERS



The Warlpiri Rangers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the Southern Tanami IPA. Covering some 10 million hectares, the IPA is the largest terrestrial protected area in Australia. The operational centre for the ranger group is the community of Yuendumu, with teams of casuals sourced from the neighboring communities of Willowra and Nyirripi.

Improving access to Southern Tanami sites



Warlpiri Rangers Bradon Williams, Shane White, Duncan Gallagher cleaned out an important rock hole under the supervision of traditional owner Eddie Robertson.

At the Southern Tanami IPA committee meeting for the Nyirripi region, the traditional owners requested grading of access tracks as their number-one priority for the work plan of the Warlpiri Rangers. They highlighted tracks to significant sites, such as rock holes, rock art, ceremonial and hunting grounds.

The seven-week long road-grading project started in September 2019. Extending from Yumurpa on the Mala Aboriginal Land Trust to the Ethel Creek region of the Lake Mackay Aboriginal Land Trust, it encompassed more than 180 kilometres of tracks. Shane McMasters and Duncan Gallagher were the principal grader drivers for the project. They were ably assisted by members of the Yuendumu and Nyirripi-based members of the Warlpiri Rangers. The rangers also conducted extensive ground burning, wildlife surveys and maintenance work at 16



Warlpiri Rangers remove rubber bush near Yuendumu.

rock holes and other culturally significant sites across the region.

These upgrades have significantly improved access for community members to many culturally important sites and hunting grounds. They have also made it easier for the rangers to reach places where they manage fire, control erosion and feral cats and foxes, monitor bilby and mulgara, investigate potential

night parrots habitats, maintain rock holes and protect sites.

The project showed what a coordinated and persistent effort can achieve. It was hot and hard work, but the end result left everyone with a well-earned sense of pride.

TJAKURA RANGERS



Mutitjulu's Tjakura Rangers manage cultural and natural resources on the eastern half of the Kaṭiṭi Petermann IPA, which surrounds the Uluru – Kata Tjuṭa National Park.

Fire work done the old way

In August 2019, the Tjakura Rangers undertook their planned 'Kaṭiṭi walk and burn'. The idea for the project came from their traditional owner ranger advisory committee which said *waru* (fire) work needs to be done on foot so rangers can read the country and teach young people the right way to burn.

The rangers and senior traditional owners took many youngfellas from Mutitjulu and ranger colleagues from Kaṭukajara and Ltyentye Apurte to camp on the IPA for three days to undertake *waru* work on foot. Representatives from the BHP Billiton Foundation and the 10 Deserts Project joined them to observe fire management in practice and offer their support for the ranger program.

They camped one night at *Panṭu* (Lake Amadeus), a salt lake, then travelled to a limestone well called Kaṭiṭi. There they held a safety and planning meeting to ensure everyone wore correct safety equipment, knew the burn plan and there was suitable communication between groups of walkers.

On the first day of the walk, everyone covered 15 kilometres on foot, with the elders, rangers and youngfellas burning *tjanpi*



Mutitjulu Tjakura Rangers Ashley Paddy and Peter Norman with youngfellas from Docker River and Finke cleaned Umutju rock hole.

(spinifex) along the way, before making camp amongst *wanaṛi* (mulga trees) for the night. The next morning the large group reassembled and continued the walk and burn for a further 15 kilometres until they reached the Lasseter Highway. Senior traditional owners were driven in all-terrain vehicles so they could keep up with the group.

"We been take all youngfellas from Mutitjulu and they were walking and making *waru*. There were rangers *tjuṭa* (many rangers) from Santa Teresa, Docker River and Mutitjulu. We been make a big *waru* from Kaṭiṭi and started walking from there, and made camp halfway. The next day, we started walking early and making *waru* all the way to the bitumen," Ashley

Paddy, a ranger from Mutitjulu, said.

"It was a good long walk and I liked using the radios for communicating while burning. It makes it easy to know where all the groups are and what everyone is doing," his colleague Daniel Breadon added.

Burning on foot allowed them and the rangers to assess the country as it burned and to put in good fire breaks amongst old-growth *tjanpi* in order to prevent wildfires from travelling too far. Following some light rain in January 2020, the *nyaru* (burn scar) showed signs of regeneration. The months since have been dry and more rain is needed to encourage good growth.



Traditional owner Cassidy Uluru near Kaṭiṭi waterhole on the Kaṭiṭi-Petermann IPA.



Tjakuṛa Rangers Glen Woods (left) and Daniel Breadon near Kaṭiṭi waterhole on the Kaṭiṭi-Petermann IPA.

WALUNGURRU RANGERS



Kintore's Walungurru Rangers are the CLC's newest ranger group and have recently started looking after the western half of the Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust.

The Walungurru Rangers emerge

The Walungurru Rangers have taken a great step forward. Their local traditional owner ranger advisory committee decided on a name and logo for the group and, in June 2020, the rangers were presented with their uniforms bearing the *tjapu-tjapu* (black-faced wood swallow) logo.

The bird features in an important dreaming story related to the Kintore rock near the community. The design is based on an original drawing by resident James Brown.

Although the 2020 field season was severely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, the Walungurru Rangers managed to grow in number, knowledge and skill. Seven rangers were employed at various times throughout 2019, with two more signing on in February 2020 and one after the biosecurity determination was lifted.

The rangers undertook two large trips during the latter half of 2019. The first trip, with the Warlpiri Rangers and rangers from Kiwirrkurra, a community in Western Australia, was to burn in the Southern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area. Two young Walungurru rangers



Gerrard Giles, Michael Wheeler, Joe Young, Tanita Gallagher, Camilla Young and Moses Rowe cleaned Woman's Rockhole.

experienced ground burning and used the helicopter to burn inaccessible areas further afield under the guidance of a senior Warlpiri ranger.

In September two male rangers provided support for a men's trip to *Karkururintja* (Lake

MacDonald) a salt lake on the Western Australia border. An important rock hole was visited where the senior men shared knowledge with the younger men.

Senior Ranger Farren Major and senior Ranger advisor Joe Young attended the week-long Indigenous Desert Alliance conference in Yulara and reported back to their traditional owner ranger advisory committee.

All these activities have helped to cement the ranger group in Kintore. The community, including the Pintupi Homelands Health Clinic and the members of the CLC's Kintore community lease money working group, strongly supports the ranger program.



Jon Hodgetts, Maxie Pollard, Farren Major, Lindsay Corby, Tanita Gallagher and Nick Ashburner at the Advisory Committee meeting.

RANGER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2019–20

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND RANGER RETENTION

Eleven rangers and ranger support officers were in fulltime positions on 30 June 2020, 54 worked parttime and eight were casuals (Figure 4). A variety of employment options are needed to accommodate the responsibilities of and demands on remote community residents. Many prefer parttime and casual employment as this allows time to attend to family and community needs.

Over the past decade there have been 925 CLC rangers, aged between 16 and 67 and possessing a wide range of knowledge and skills. In 2019–20 the number of ranger support officer positions, a stepping stone to the ranger group coordinator role, increased from three to four.

Figure 5 shows an all-time low in female employment, with most female rangers continuing to work in groups led by women. The CLC is investigating the reasons for this decline so it can improve female participation.

QUALITY TARGETED TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training is an important component of the ranger program. It develops basic work skills and competencies, supports experienced rangers to complete studies in conservation and land management, and promotes rangers to ranger support and coordinator roles.

CLC rangers participated in 14 events, delivering 9,140 hours of accredited training. They spent 43 per cent of those hours studying for Certificate III in conservation and land management (more than ever before), 47 per cent for Certificate II, and 10 per cent for Certificate I (Figure 6). There were 74 new enrolments in accredited courses: 42 in Certificate II, 22 in Certificate III and 10 in Certificate IV (Figure 7). Fifteen rangers graduated with a Certificate II, and four with a Certificate III. Training stopped following the COVID-19 restrictions.

Training resources continue to be distributed unequally among ranger groups. Groups with a relatively stable workforce and experienced coordinators completed more training hours, while those without these strengths missed out.

The Ltyentye Apurte ranger group, with its stable workforce and experienced senior rangers, undertook the most training. Groups in very remote communities, such as the Kaltukatjara, Murnkurumurnkurru and Tjakura rangers, undertook the least. Rangers in these groups were disadvantaged because of the training's high cost and other delivery challenges. The significant reduction in training for the Muru-warinyi Ankkul group reflects changes and upheaval during its 10 months without a coordinator.

The rangers undertook 3,610 hours of compulsory workplace health and safety training. Twelve rangers took part in accredited training in the preparation, storage and safe handling of chemicals, 33 rangers completed first aid training and 14 rangers improved their plant and machinery skills. The Centre for Appropriate Technology delivered plant operator training for erosion control and track maintenance.

The annual ranger camp planned for March 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic, and with it many short workshops and accredited training elements.

FIGURE 4: RANGER EMPLOYMENT TYPE, 2010–20

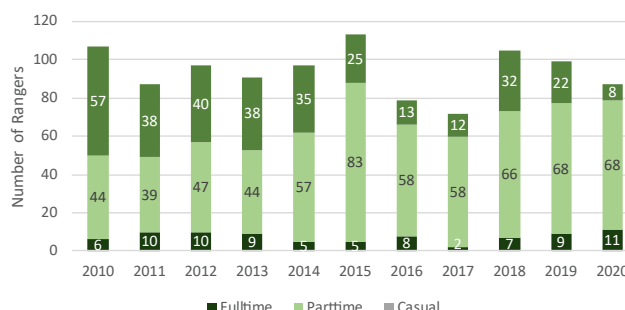


FIGURE 5: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN RANGERS, 2010-20

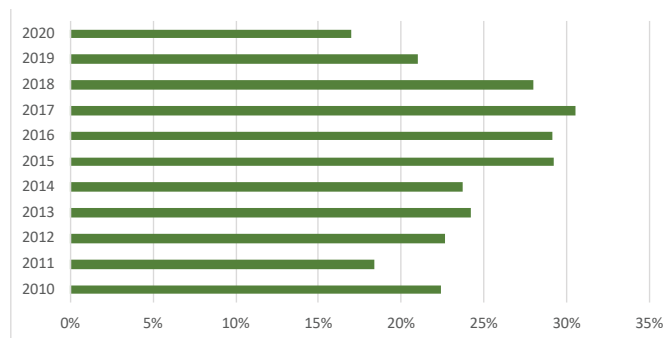


FIGURE 6: TRAINING UNDERTAKEN BY HOURS

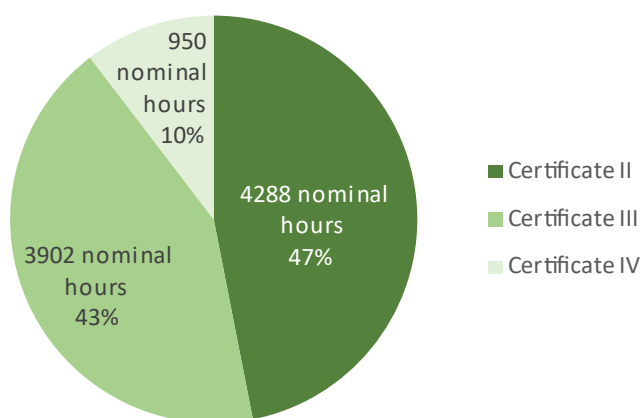
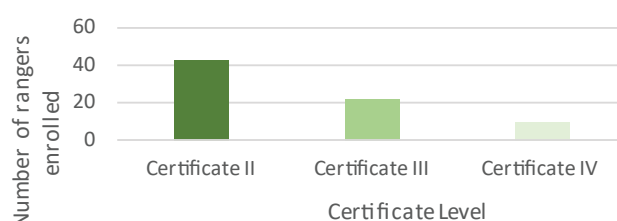
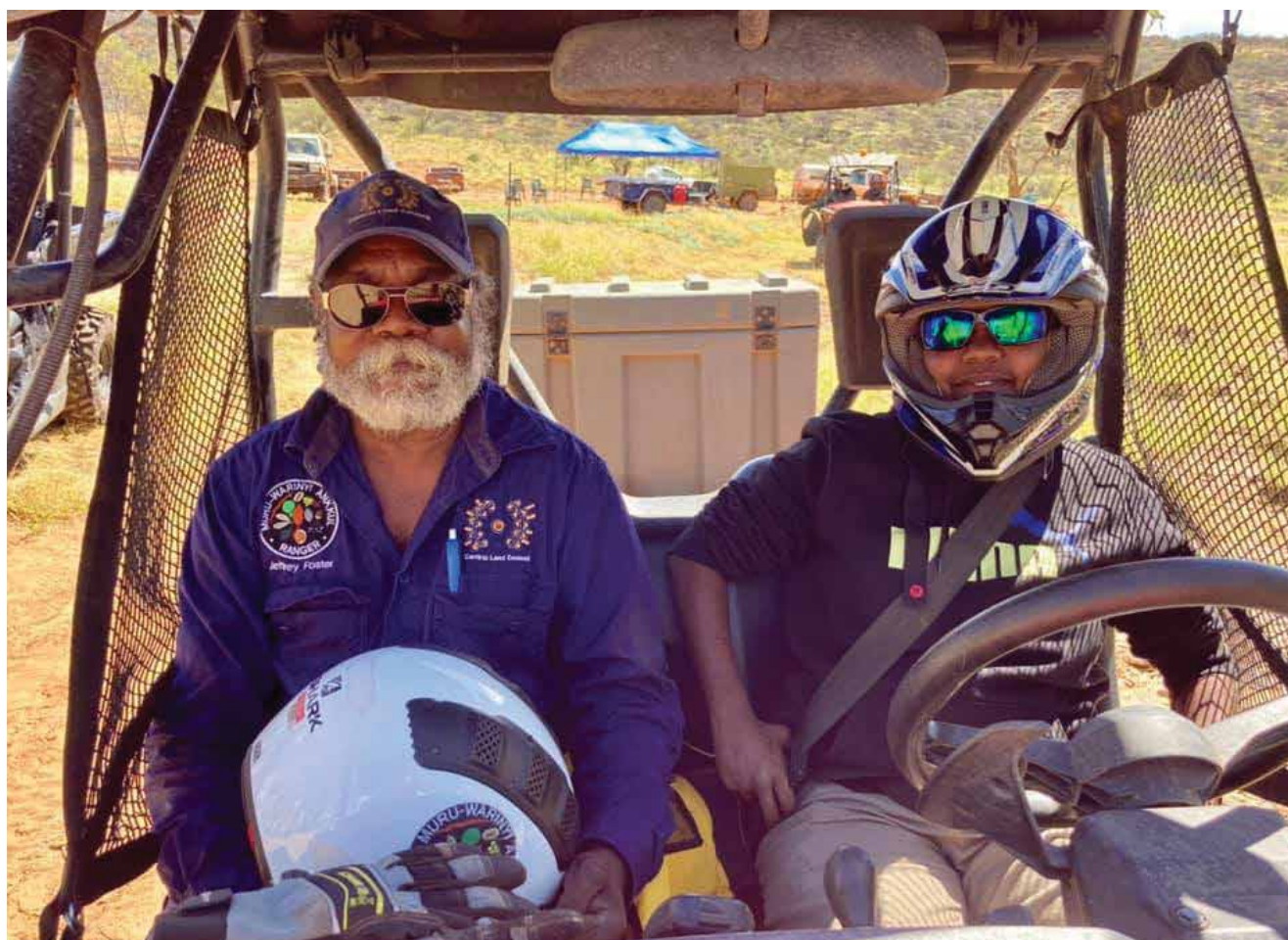


FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF RANGERS UNDERTAKING EACH CERTIFICATE LEVEL, 2019-20





Muru-warinyi Ankkul Ranger Jeffrey Foster and Murnkurrumurnkurru Ranger Reony Jimmy earned their all-terrain vehicle certificate.

RANGER MENTORING SUPPORT

Four ranger mentors implemented ranger development initiatives, thanks to Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation funding for two additional mentor positions. They undertook 43 visits to help rangers to self-manage issues affecting attendance and performance. Work-related coaching accounted for most of the mentoring activities, followed by support with health and wellbeing, alcohol and drug use, and financial and legal issues. When COVID-19 travel restrictions put a stop to face-to-face mentoring, mentors stayed in touch with rangers through phone and video meetings.

SCHOOL-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING

The CLC rangers continued to work with students in remote community classrooms and on country, with junior ranger programs, traditional owners, parents, schools and other interest groups. These interactions demonstrated the value of ranger employment and career paths, contributed to learning outcomes, and motivated students to stay at school.

The Ltyentye Apurte Rangers conducted a country visit to the keringke rock hole to facilitate knowledge transfer and demonstrate ranger work to eleven 5-to-7-year-olds from the Ltyentye Apurte school. The students and rangers hiked for a kilometre up steep, rocky country to the rock hole. The rangers showed the students petroglyphs and bush foods and spoke about the cultural and environmental significance of the site. The teacher read the story of the site in English, as told by a senior traditional owner, while the rangers interpreted it back into Arrernte.



Andre Tucker (left) and Ashley Paddy made *kulata* (spears).

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The CLC acknowledges the major funding bodies of its ranger program: the Australian Government's Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation.



Other funders and supporters of the CLC are:



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First published in 2021 by the Central Land Council

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FRONT COVER IMAGE: Muru-warinyi Ankkul senior ranger Gladys Brown.

BACK COVER IMAGE: Walungurru Rangers Joe Young, Michael Wheeler, Moses Rowe and Gerrard Giles.