

# CLC RANGER PROGRAM REPORT



CENTRAL  
LAND  
COUNCIL



Supplement to the  
CLC Annual Report

2020-21



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

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Graduates at the 2021 Ranger Camp at Hamilton Downs.

# FOREWORD



During my time as CLC Chair I have been impressed by the work that CLC rangers do. Each Council meeting that I go to I see rangers presenting to delegates about the work they do and I am proud to see the development of rangers who might, one day, become the next CLC Chair or delegate for their community. I also hear from other delegates at Council meetings that there is still more work to be done. I hear that there are areas still without rangers even though CLC has been asking over and over again. I was happy to hear the commitment of the Australian Government to support current rangers through to 2028 however the CLC has had to chase other funding to support new ranger teams.

This report shows, despite the impact of the pandemic, rangers are still out there looking after the country and supporting traditional owners to maintain their culture through learning from elders. I am really excited to see the rangers getting involved in the 'reading the country' project as it provides an opportunity for elders to pass on their knowledge of plants and animals and balances this with the other training that rangers do.

Nguritja tjutangku kuliikatinyi ngura atunymankuntjikitjangku, tjukurpa kumpangku kanyilkatintjaku, uwankara kurunypa palya nyinantjaku. Ngura tjukurpa tjara kulira, nintiringkula ipilyaripai. Ranger tjutaku waaka pulka mulapa ngaranya alatjitu (If traditional owners are consistently thinking about protecting country, then culture will be strong as well. The heart of the country and the hearts of the people will both be strong. Understanding the story of country is crucial to our health and wellbeing. Ranger work is a hugely important part of this).

**Sammy Wilson**  
Chair  
Central Land Council



As an Arrernte man born and raised in Alice Springs, it is a privilege to return to Central Australia, after 37 years away from home, in the role of CLC interim chief executive officer.

I commenced with the CLC in April 2021, in the final quarter of this reporting period, attending the council meeting in Tennant Creek. Since arriving at the CLC I have been impressed with the work of the CLC rangers, as outlined in this report. I want to see more Aboriginal rangers employed across the CLC region and moving through the ranks to become co-ordinators or go onto other employment in their communities and beyond. I am also interested in increasing the number of women rangers.

I was pleased to hear that the annual ranger camp went ahead at Hamilton Downs, following the cancellation of the previous year's camp due to the pandemic. The camp is a significant investment for the CLC and allows rangers from across the region to share experiences and undertake professional development.

Following the announcement by the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, and the Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley, to fund the ranger program until 2028 the CLC submitted an application in March. If the application is successful this will provide security of funding for existing ranger positions. While this would be great news it would not address the need for expansion of this successful work.

I look forward to hearing more about the achievements of the rangers across the CLC region and securing long-term funding agreements to continue supporting the ranger program.

**Les Turner**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Central Land Council

# RANGER PROGRAM OVERVIEW 2020-21

## OUR RANGER PROGRAM LEADS THE WAY

The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation’s real jobs program and a decade of funding from the Australian Government’s indigenous advancement strategy allowed the CLC’s 12 ranger groups to manage cultural and natural resources on Aboriginal land and indigenous protected areas contributing more than 195,000 square kilometres to the national reserve system.

Both funding agreements ended this year and the National Indigenous Australians Agency’s funding agreement runs out at the end of 2021. The Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, agreed to fund the rangers until 2028 and invited the CLC to apply for existing ranger positions. The CLC is awaiting a response from the agency to its application from March 2021. The application outlined a vision for the future of the program and a plan to ensure that rangers receive the resources they need in order to look after country and employment outcomes improve. Additional funding from the NT Government’s Aboriginal ranger grants program, the Aboriginals Benefit Account and the 10 Deserts Project supported important projects, such as developing healthy country plans for groups without strategic management plans, clearing vegetation for firebreaks, grading access tracks and establishing emerging ranger groups.

Community demand for ranger employment and additional ranger groups remains high, and the CLC continues to advocate for the expansion of the program. It progressed the development of the emerging Walungurru ranger group in Kintore with financial support from the agency, the 10 Deserts Project and the Aboriginals Benefit

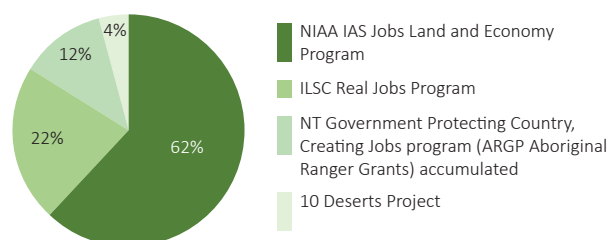
Account. While the latter two funded the establishment of CLC ranger groups in the Utopia region and at Aputula (Finke), the CLC is seeking long-term funding to ensure sustainability. Prospective rangers from both groups have started planning and completed certificate I courses in conservation and ecosystem management.

The CLC’s ranger employment model emphasises training and mentoring, and provides career paths 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 employed 130 individuals during 2020–21. Of the 105 rangers employed by CLC on the 30 June, 12 worked fulltime, 52 worked parttime and 41 were casuals. Twelve ranger group coordinators, one ranger group development officer and nine program staff supported 12 established and three emerging groups.

FIGURE 1. RANGER PROGRAM FUNDING, 2020-21



## SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

### SIGNIFICANT AND THREATENED SPECIES

The CLC relies heavily on external scientific and technical expertise as it helps traditional owners to manage significant and threatened species. One such partnership, with Territory Natural Resource Management, has focused on two joint projects. Rangers participated in intensive surveys of the central rock rat, Australia’s most threatened mammal, at Ulumbarru (Mount Edwards) on the Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust. They also took part in aerial and ground surveys of the greater bilby across large swathes of the Tanami Desert, a stronghold of this threatened species. The surveys aimed to refine management regimes and better protect the bilbies.

Under the direction of traditional owners rangers routinely survey important plant and animal species in the course of their protection work, regardless of whether the species are formally listed or not. They protected quandong trees from fire and feral animals by clearing vegetation and buffel grass on the Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust and the Angas Downs Indigenous Protected Area. They also cleared buffel grass and other weeds with staff of Territory Natural Resource Management and the Parks and Wildlife Division of the Northern Territory (PWD NT) in the Finke Gorge National Park to protect endangered cabbage palms.

Table 1: Significant and threatened species surveys, 2020-21

Survey Species	Location	Ranger Group
Tjakura (Great desert skink- <i>Egernia kintorei</i> )	Central Desert Aboriginal Land Trust	Warlpiri Rangers and Southern Tanami IPA
	Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust	Kaltukatjara Rangers
	Katiti Aboriginal Land Trust	Tjakura Rangers
Ninu (Greater bilby – <i>Macrotis lagotis</i> )	Central Desert Aboriginal Land Trust	Warlpiri Rangers and Southern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area
	Alyawarr Aboriginal Land Trust	North Tanami Rangers and North Tanami Indigenous Protected Area
	Karlintjipa North Aboriginal Land Trust	Anmatyerr Rangers
		Muru-warinyi Ankkul Rangers

Quandong ( <i>Santalum acuminatum</i> )	Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust	Tjuwanpa Rangers
	Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust	Anangu Luritjiku Rangers
Black-footed rock wallaby ( <i>Petrogale lateralis</i> )	Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust	Ltyentye Apurte Rangers
	Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust	Kaltukatjara Rangers
	Yunkanjini Aboriginal Land Trust	Warlpiri Rangers
Night parrot ( <i>Pezoporus occidentalis</i> )	Lake Mackay Aboriginal Land Trust	Warlpiri Rangers
Marsupial mole ( <i>Notoryctes typhlops</i> )	Ntaria Aboriginal Land Trust	Tjuwanpa Rangers
Spectacled hare wallaby ( <i>Lagorchestes conspicillatus</i> )	Ahakeye Aboriginal Land Trust	Anmatyerr Rangers
Slaters skink ( <i>Egernia slateri</i> )	Rodna Aboriginal Land Trust	Tjuwanpa Rangers
	Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust	Ltyentye Apurte Rangers
	Ntaria Aboriginal Land Trust	Tjuwanpa Rangers
Central rock rat ( <i>Zyomys pedunculatus</i> )	Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust	Anangu Luritjiku Rangers

## STRONG WOMEN FOR HEALTHY COUNTRY FORUM

The CLC supported 31 women to attend the Strong Women for Healthy Country Forum at Banatjarl on King Valley Station, 60 kilometres southeast of Katherine in May. Sixteen Aboriginal rangers, 14 traditional owners and a ranger co-ordinator joined 240 other women at the forum, hosted by Banatjarl traditional owners and delivered by Mimal Land Management and Mimal rangers. Women participated in workshops about networks, governance, health, healing and well-being over three days. The forum is the second of three workshops aimed at developing an ongoing NT-wide network of women who work on and for country. Zoom meetings every two months will develop the communication processes that ensure women across the NT can contribute to discussions about the challenges, roles and goals of women working on country.

## WHERE WE WORK

The rangers are the eyes and ears of the bush. They respond to natural and cultural resource management issues across most of the CLC region — half of the Northern Territory. Traditional owners prioritise where to use the CLC's limited resources and help to

## WEEDS

Weeds threaten sacred sites, native plants and animals. They displace bush foods and other important plants, and cause hotter and more destructive fires from which native vegetation cannot recover. This also causes declines in native plant and animal diversity.

CLC rangers conduct most of the weed management on Aboriginal land. As their resources can cover only a fraction of infestations they prioritise areas of high cultural and ecological value.

**Table 2: Weed species and areas of control work**

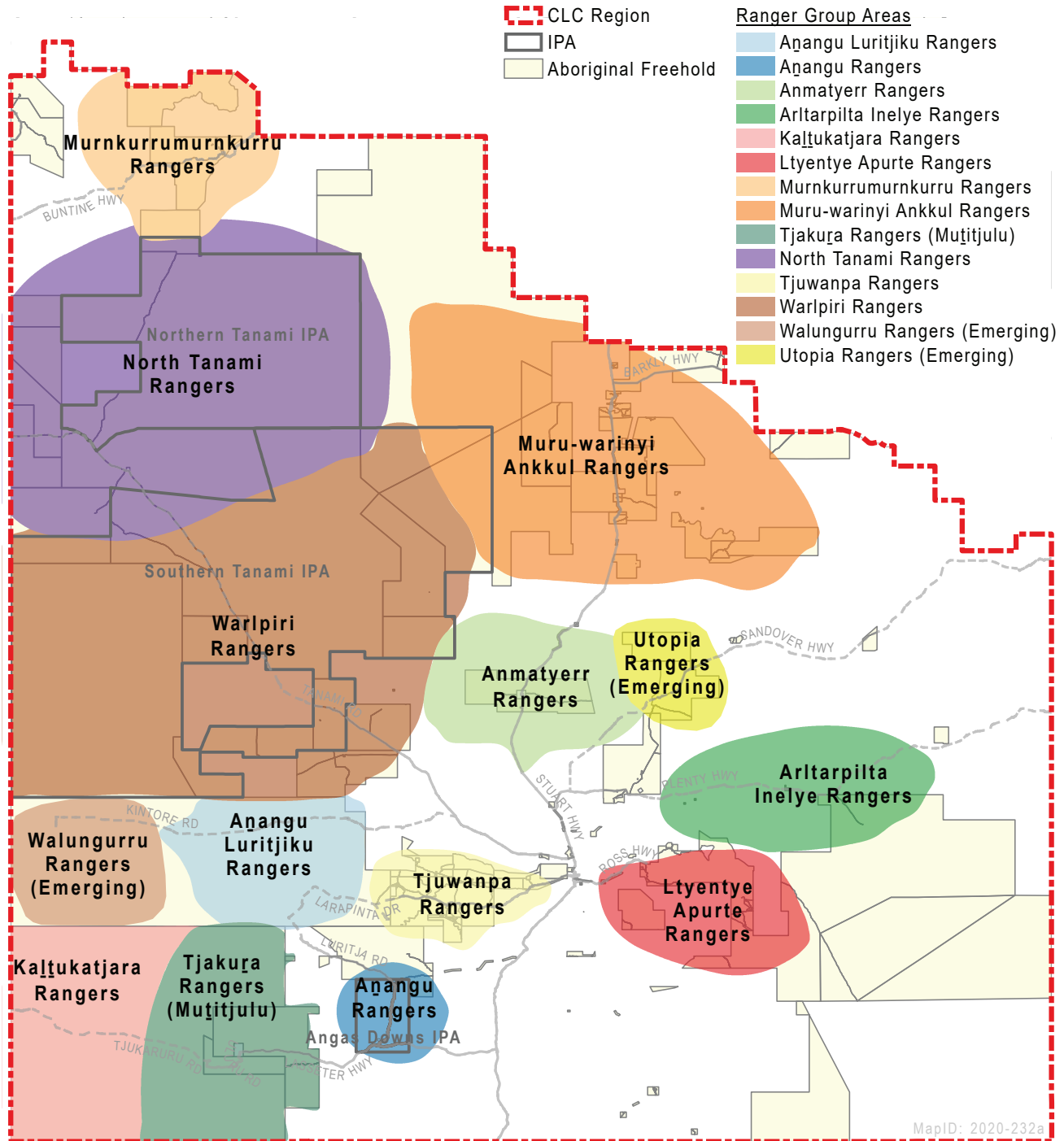
Name	Status	Work areas
Rubber Bush ( <i>Calotropis procera</i> )	B	Angarapa Aboriginal Land Trust Waramungu Aboriginal Land Trust Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust Dagaragu Aboriginal Land Trust Yuendumu Aboriginal Land Trust Lake Mackay Aboriginal Land Trust
Athel Pine ( <i>Tamarix aphylla</i> )	WONS A/B	Alkwert Aboriginal Land Trust Ntaria Aboriginal Land Trust Uruna Aboriginal Land Trust Lhere Pirnte Aboriginal Land Trust Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust Rodna Aboriginal Land Trust
Prickly pear ( <i>Opuntia spp.</i> )	WONS A	Uruna Aboriginal Land Trust Ntaria Aboriginal Land Trust
Buffel grass ( <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> )	Not declared	Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Trust Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust Angas Downs Station Katiti Aboriginal Land Trust Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust
Thornapple ( <i>Datura ferox</i> )	A	Huckitta Station Atitjere Community Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust Yuendumu Aboriginal Land Trust
Rope cactus ( <i>Cylindropuntia spp.</i> )	WONS A	Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust Atentye Aboriginal Land Trust
Parkinsonia	WONS B	Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Trust Yuendumu Aboriginal Land Trust Warumungu Aboriginal Land Trust
Mexican Poppy	B	Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Trust Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust
Kapok bush ( <i>Aerva javanica</i> )	Not declared	Atitjere Community
Neem tree	B	Dagaragu Aboriginal Land Trust

A/B = Necessary to eradicate and prevent introduction in the NT.  
B/C = Necessary to prevent the growing, spreading and introduction of the declared weed in the NT.

WONS = Weed of national significance.

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

The CLC's ranger program is not only benefitting individual rangers but also builds the capacity of traditional owners to develop and oversee ranger work plans. Working through traditional owner ranger advisory committees and IPA management committees, traditional owners inject their land management aspirations in the ranger program. Each ranger group holds at least two traditional owner ranger advisory committee meetings per year to review works and plan for the coming year. The CLC continued to consult about

healthy country plans with rangers and traditional owners in Tennant Creek, Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) and Ti Tree. Drafts of the Anmatyerr and Ltyentye Apurte plans are due to be completed in 2021, and the Muru-Warinyi Ankkul and Tjuwanpa plans next year. The Arlartpilta Inelye Rangers in Atitjere started consultation workshops for a plan they hope to complete in early 2022. The plans receive funding from the NT Government.



Farren Major checked the aerial incendiary device before conducting a helicopter burn.

# Rangers reach the 10 year milestone



## Christopher Ungwanaka

"I am a Western Aranda man, now 56 years old. I was born at Maryvale Station near Titjikala but grew up at Hermannsburg. My grandfather's country is Running Waters and my mother's father's country is Titjikala.

I used to work at the Red Sandhill outstation school for five years as a groundsman. When my contract finished I joined the Tjuwanpa Rangers in 2008 as a casual, with co-ordinator Will Dobbie. I became a ranger because I wanted to look after country.

As a ranger I care for our country. We do animal and plant surveys including for the slater's skink, marsupial moles, fish and quandongs. We also control weeds like prickly pear and Athel Pine in Ellery Creek and the Finke River. In the past we have controlled these weeds, but are still doing it with new rangers now.

We also do burning around Hermannsburg and outstations and have worked with NT Parks and Wildlife rangers at Finke Gorge and Tjoritja National Parks and Owen Springs Reserve to do controlled burning.

I have learnt a lot of skills as a ranger. I like working as a team and am a role model for young men. What I like most about working as a CLC ranger is working outside, moving around my country, burning and fencing. It has been a good opportunity working as a CLC ranger."



## Nelson Tex

Nelson Tex has been the backbone of the Warlpiri ranger group since 2009. Mr Tex was promoted to lead ranger in 2019. He is reliable and responsible and inspires younger members of the ranger team. An important custodian of cultural knowledge, he is immensely proud of his culture and his people.

"I have been a Warlpiri ranger for 13 years. I started working at Nyirripi, then I went to Yuendumu to get a permanent job.

My long service leave is coming up, three months holidays, and the plan is to go to Broome in Western Australia. Time to go fishing, relax, no more work and come back in the New Year. I could try to pull out and retire, but I don't think they'll let me!

Burning is the best part of the job! It's good to burn country and get new grass and seeds for animals and bush food for us. I knew how to burn before I was a ranger, especially in the hot weather.

One highlight of my ranger career was seeing a night parrot that lives in the spinifex. I was driving back from Alice Springs in 2011, I got to Nyirripi at midnight. I could see something was sitting on the side of the road, a little green bird, sort of like a budgie but bigger, sitting on the sand. I thought maybe it was sleeping, but as I got closer it flew away.

We take the traditional owners to the country where they were born and learn what the dreaming is, the Jukurrpa. From my point of view, the best part of my job is being able to work with the old people, especially the old ladies. It makes me really happy."





## Preston Kelly

"I live in Papunya, but I started my journey to being a ranger when I was 16 and living with my family at Watarrka (Kings Canyon). I was working as a tour guide, and my uncles, aunty and grandfathers were working as park rangers in the park. This sparked my interest in becoming a ranger one day. Seeing my family in their uniforms working out on country, I was very proud of them.

As time went by I worked in lots of different jobs: at the hospital in Alice Springs, council work at Yuendumu and in the nurseries in Alice Springs and Yuendumu, where I gained Certificate III in Horticulture.

Around 2006-2007, when the Warlpiri rangers were getting up and running, I got the opportunity to work with the CLC while also working with CDEP to do bilby surveys at Lungatajarra (Sangster's Bore) near the Granites gold mine, as well as vegetation surveys at the mine site itself. From then on I wanted to continue on with a career as a ranger.

In 2009 I joined the Warlpiri rangers. During my time with the Warlpiri rangers I completed my Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management and helped with the Southern Tanami IPA development. I was there when it was declared, which was a great achievement. I took on the role as the IPA support officer for some time as well. My favourite projects were large country visits and fire management work which I still enjoy today. I was always happy when we went out to Yinapaka (Lake Surprise) every year for a big two week trip doing animal surveys and fire work using a helicopter. This is my favourite place, it's very beautiful country! I had so many great experiences, support and encouragement and learned a lot from the many people that I worked with, including old people, other rangers and CLC staff.

In 2017 I moved to Papunya with my family and joined the Anangu Luritjiku rangers who I'm still with today. I enjoy working with this team in this region, and now I'm helping to develop another IPA [on the Haasts Bluff Aboriginal Land Trust]. I now help lead, mentor and train the young rangers in my team. I'm on my way to completing my Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management and hope to have another 10 years of fun and hard work doing the job I love."



## Alice Henwood Michaels

Alice Henwood Michaels likes to introduce herself as "one of the last bush ladies", meaning that she belongs to the last generation of people to experience a nomadic life in the desert. Born on her mother's country at the remote Labbi Labbi rockhole northwest of Wilkinkarra (Lake MacKay), Ms Henwood Michaels learnt to track as soon as she could walk and follow her parents as they hunted. She and her siblings would run and hide whenever they saw white men coming in their vehicles.

When she was a teenager, her family walked to Mt Doreen Station where she lived before moving to the settlement of Yuendumu and later to Nyirripi. Ms Henwood Michaels took every opportunity to spend time on country, continuing to hunt and track. Later she taught her children her finely-honed bush skills.

Her intimate knowledge of nature has been an invaluable asset in her work as a Warlpiri ranger since 2010. This expertise in yidakimani (reading the country) has also been central to the efforts of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to eradicate feral cats and reintroduce locally extinct animal species such as the mala to the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary near Nyirripi.

The highlights of Ms Henwood Michaels' career have been the occasional visits to Labbi Labbi with her family and fellow rangers. Her lifelong passion for passing on her tracking knowledge and skills to her family members extends to teaching other rangers.

"We won't be here forever," she says. "If we don't pass on what we know, we lose everything and there will be nothing here for our children and grandchildren."



## Christine Michaels

Although Christine Ellis Michaels grew up in Nyirrpi, it was her time spent camping with family members at nearby outstations that would shape her life. As a young girl, she followed her elders as they tracked and hunted or foraged for bush tucker. With her mother Alice Henwood Michaels as one of her main teachers, it is little wonder that at the age of 16 she was already a kuyu pungu (expert tracker).

For a young woman with exceptional tracking skills, a sophisticated knowledge of the plants and animals of the region, a wealth of burning experience and a love of country, becoming a ranger was the perfect fit. Along with her mother and uncle, Ms Ellis Michaels joined the Warlpiri ranger team in 2010 and applied her unique knowledge and skills to look after her country. In recent years, she divided her time between the ranger group and the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary, where she has spearheaded a feral cat eradication program.

She spends a lot of time passing on her knowledge of country to the younger family members. “When I was out bush with my mum and dad they taught me how to track. Now I’ve been teaching my children and my nephew and nieces so that they can take over from me,” she says.

Ms Ellis Michaels’ expertise has been highly sought after, and she has taught cat control techniques and tracking to Aboriginal rangers from Punmu and Wiluna in Western Australia, Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory and the Gulf of Carpentaria in Queensland. She says “it makes me proud going out to other places and teaching other rangers now. It makes my family proud too, mum and my sisters and brother”.

Training young women is of particular interest to her. “Now there are girls asking me about this work, so they can learn and then teach others. They need to stay out bush working so they can look after their country,” she says.

Ms Ellis Michaels’ has a swag of awards that recognise her dedication and skills, such as the Indigenous Land Management Champion Award, Regional Ranger of the Year, and Outstanding Frontline Achievement Award.



## Benedict Mosquito

Benedict Mosquito is a Kukatja man from Western Australia. Born in Balgo, he spent many years in Halls Creek before moving to Nyirrpi.

He first worked with the CLC in 2007, when he helped to develop the proposal for the Southern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). At more than 10 million hectares, it is Australia’s largest terrestrial conservation reserve and incorporates vast expanses of the Tanami Desert around Yuendumu, Nyirrpi and Willowra.

“He participated in all of the IPA meetings and trips and always gave 100 per cent. His consistent and steady approach, combined with his sense of humour and gentle nature, meant that his involvement was always greatly appreciated,” recalls former CLC land management worker James Young.

Since joining the Warlpiri ranger group in 2010, two years before the IPA was declared, and Mr Mosquito’s persistence and hard work have become widely recognised. Like his fellow rangers from Nyirrpi, he never misses a bush trip, is always willing to shoulder the hard physical work that such trips demand and splits his time between working for the CLC and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy at the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary. Both jobs involve burning, animal surveys, feral predator control and weed management.

Mr Mosquito loves all of it. “Keeping country healthy makes me happy,” he says.



Christopher Ungwanaka working on new car park.



Christine Ellis-Michaels and daughter Barbara Ellis-Michaels.

# RANGER GROUP ACTIVITIES 2020–21

## ANANGU RANGERS



The Anangu Rangers deliver cultural and natural resource management for the Angas Downs IPA in the southwest of the CLC region by conducting 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

Anangu Rangers have recommenced their management of the Angas Downs IPA after a difficult year of sorry business following the death of a colleague in late 2019 and COVID-19 restrictions. In early 2021 senior traditional owners asked to hold a smoking ceremony to re-open the ranger base at Wilpiya on Angas Downs to enable rangers to use the space again.

The base had not been visited for months and buffel grass and prickles were getting out of hand. In April a big crew of rangers gave it a good clean-up in preparation for the ceremony. Most of the Imanpa community attended the ceremony in May.



Simon Mumu and Christopher Cam installing a fence at Wilbia Ranger Camp.

Following the ceremony they completed the fence around the outside of the base with the help of the IPA support officer and a fencer from Imanpa. The



Anangu Rangers cleaning the camping area at Wilpiya Ranger Base.

**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.

**Ulumbarru rock rat survey**

Previous surveys conducted by the Anangu Luritjiku rangers in 2013 and 2017 found that the critically endangered central rock rat (*Zyomys pedunculatus*) survives on Ulumbarru (Mt Edward). Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM), an independent not for profit, membership based organisation, asked CLC to organise a larger camera trap survey across the Ulumbarru area to work out the range of this species. A planning meeting with CLC rangers and other staff, TNRM and the NT Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security in Papunya in March chose 20 camera trap sites. Participants agreed to undertake vegetation surveys at each site to identify food, habitat and wildfire risks.

The traditional owners, rangers, TNRM staff, a consultant botanist and a staff member from the department took part in the survey in May. Traditional owners were taken for a helicopter flight around

the range to conduct a cultural clearance. Ranger Terrence Abbott and TNRM staff then identified accessible and safe camera locations.

Over three days, the team deployed 80 cameras on 20 sites along the length of Ulumbarru. Four cameras were set per site, 100 metres apart using star pickets to fix the cameras 700mm from the ground, with a container at the base of the picket containing bait that was made with peanut butter, peanut oil, oats, water and polyester pillow fill (used to hold the ingredients together). Three teams of two people were maintained throughout the trip, two teams were responsible for setting up cameras in the field, and the third team was responsible for carrying out vegetation assessments. The third team, carried out vegetation assessments for each site, making note of dominant flora species, percentage of vegetation burnt across the site,

and the connectivity of flora and rocky outcrops (which will help determine fire susceptibility of the site).

Rangers rotated in and out of teams around lunch time each day, to take turns in setting up cameras, and to take a break from the rugged terrain on the range and help coordinate equipment and supplies from camp. The helicopter was used to ferry teams and equipment to and from Mt Edward and between sites.

The cameras were successfully collected the week of 28th June by Rangers and the botanist. The cameras are now having their data processed and reviewed by TNRM. CLC and Rangers are waiting on the results.



Group photo of the central rock rat camera deployment team.

## 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 surrounding the community. They are in high demand and like to help out across their region.

In 2020 they have recorded knowledge about songlines and sacred sites in the west of the Ahakeye Aboriginal Land Trust and the neighbouring stations to the south and west from a very senior man who passed away in 2021. The rangers helped his family to visit the sites and learn from him, allowing the elder to fulfil his cultural responsibilities.

### Yuelamu school trip

Yuelamu (Mt Allan) is an Anmatyerr-speaking community on the Yalpirakinu Aboriginal Land Trust, around two hours northwest of Alice Springs.

The residents are very keen to see ranger work on their land - so keen that they want to use their own land use income to pay for a back-to-country camp where old people can teach school kids about their country and history and where the Anmatyerr Rangers can interest them in a ranger career. They hope this will inspire students to finish school, join the CLC's ranger program and manage their own country.

The principal and teachers agreed to provide a bus and staff for the excursion. Residents then planned a project with the CLC's community development unit that used the community's leasing income to buy camping

The rangers continued to monitor the presence of black-footed rock wallaby and the giant bush pumpkin. They have also responded to information from traditional owners that there may be bilbies and mala on the eastern side of Ahakeye Aboriginal Land Trust by investigating tracks and diggings and using sensor cameras. With

equipment and pay residents to organise the camp and teach the students. They also invited the Anmatyerr Rangers to help with the camp, show the kids their bush skills and tablet computers, and the work the rangers have done on the land trust.

The rangers, traditional owners and the school planned the two-day camp at Yurrkuru (Brooks Soak) on Mount Denison Station, one of the sites of the 1928 Coniston Massacre. They also invited the local Aboriginal Media organisation, Pintupi Anmatyerr Warlpiri Media, to video the trip.

In September the rangers packed all the camping and work equipment, collected four senior Anmatyerr men at Ti Tree, and went to Yuelamu. Everyone went to Yurrkuru and the elders shared stories about the place. The students had a great time

the support of the traditional owners, the group also took families from Barrow Creek and Wilora on camps on their country. The traditional owners contributed very enthusiastically to the development of a healthy country plan that will guide the rangers over the next 10 years.

and wanted to learn more about their country.

The next day the rangers took everyone to a cave on the side of a hill where an old man used to hide.

The students and rangers had a good time learning about the land and its stories from the elders. The elders were happy that everyone wanted to learn and they got to visit those places.

Yuelamu GMAAC committee is setting more of its money aside to develop the capacity of local men and women to become CLC rangers. They aim to run four bush excursions for people of all ages with the Anmatyerr Rangers and other CLC staff and to pay for aspiring rangers to attend ranger training and the annual CLC ranger camp .



Anmatyerr Rangers constructing a fence around a significant site to protect it from feral animal impacts.

## 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.

### Land condition and infrastructure assessment and weed control on Huckitta Station

When the Arltarpilta Inelye Ranger team was formed in 2012, it was understood they would undertake ranger work to support the successful management of Huckitta Station, along with other ranger work across the Plenty region. Grazing licences on Aboriginal owned land can generate income for traditional owners however they also want to manage their land sustainably and ranger work can help them achieve that. The rangers had assisted Huckitta by controlling athel pine, prickly pear, coral and rope cactus and fencing off waterholes on the station in previous years.

This year the rangers worked with the traditional owners of Huckitta Station, the Huckitta board of directors and the station manager to identify tasks they could do to help manage the station better. Their first job of the year was to control thorn apple (*Datura stramonium*), an

invasive weed from southern and central America that is poisonous to livestock and humans. The rangers found thorn apple growing around the station's bores and in disturbed soils. They sprayed it with glyphosate (Roundup), dug it up and pulled it out by hand and piled the plants up in the local dump to be burned when they dry off. Then they mapped the controlled outbreaks to show the station manager and traditional owners.

Over the past five years a neighbouring station held the grazing licence over Atula and the Arltarpilta Inelye Rangers helped the CLC assess the infrastructure, land condition and cattle carrying capacity of Atula Station on the Atnetye Aboriginal Land Trust. The rangers did this by checking whether the licensee was looking after the bores, troughs, tanks and fences and did not

overstock the station, so that it can continue as a grazing property after the licence ends in 2021. They gathered the information and mapped the infrastructure with tablet computers and electronic maps and took photos of major erosion on Atula. They used a drone for aerial shots for the first time and can now confidently use the drone for other jobs. Although satellite images showed broad-scale damage to country, the rangers' drone images confirmed that decades of overgrazing has caused significant soil erosion. The CLC used this information to help the traditional owners make an informed decision about the future of the licence area. The traditional owners decided to exclude a large portion of the grazing area from a new grazing licence until the land recovers.



James Drover and Robin Bloomfield controlling weed regrowth at Ten mile on Huckitta station.

## KALTUKATJARA RANGERS



The Kaltukatjara Rangers manage sites, plants and animals on the western half of Kaṯiṯi Petermann IPA in the southwest corner of the Northern Territory. 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 undertakes cool weather burning in the cross-border region that reduces the impact and frequency of summer wildfires. It also protects important waterholes from weeds and camels and supports feral animal management.

### Sharing skills to protect sacred sites



Bernard Bell teaching Tjakura rangers about rock art protection.

In May the Kaltukatjara Rangers were joined by the Muṯiṯjulu-based Tjakura Rangers, the Ltyentye Apurte Rangers and traditional owners from the Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Trust. The visitors wanted to learn how to remove swallow nests from rock art.

In previous years Kaltukatjara ranger Bernard Bell had completed rock art preservation training with the CLC and Parks Australia to protect paintings of the tjala (honey ant) tjukurpa (story) on the walls of Walka, a large cave on the Kaṯiṯi Petermann IPA.

Mr Bell spent two days teaching rangers and traditional owners how to remove swallow nests from the fragile rock art

without causing any damage. He used a hammer and a stick to knock the nests off the roof of Walka, before softening up the remaining mud with a spray of methylated spirits. Then he carefully removed the last traces of mud with a soft brush.

The rangers also spent some time cutting and removing the buffel grass growing around the sacred tjilpi (old man) tree at Walka and created a long fire break that doubled as a road. They hope to finish the work by removing any regrowth of buffel grass around the tree, while keeping the tjanmaṯa (bush onion) that also grows there healthy. Peter Norman, from the Tjakura Rangers and a traditional owner of Walka, said he was

really happy with the work around Walka.

A few weeks later the Kaltukatjara Rangers went to Ltyentye Apurte and helped to remove mud nests from the roof of Utytye, a cave filled with rock art on the Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Tust. “We removed mud nests from that cave where tjukurpa of giants eating Anangu (people) were at,” Mr Bell said.

Sharing skills between ranger teams allowed the Kaltukatjara rangers to see another ngura (country) and to take fresh ideas, such as building tables and benches, from their friends at Ltyentye Apurte that they want to try at home.



Rangers conducting controlled burning operations on the Kaṯiṯi Petermann IPA



## LYENTYE 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.

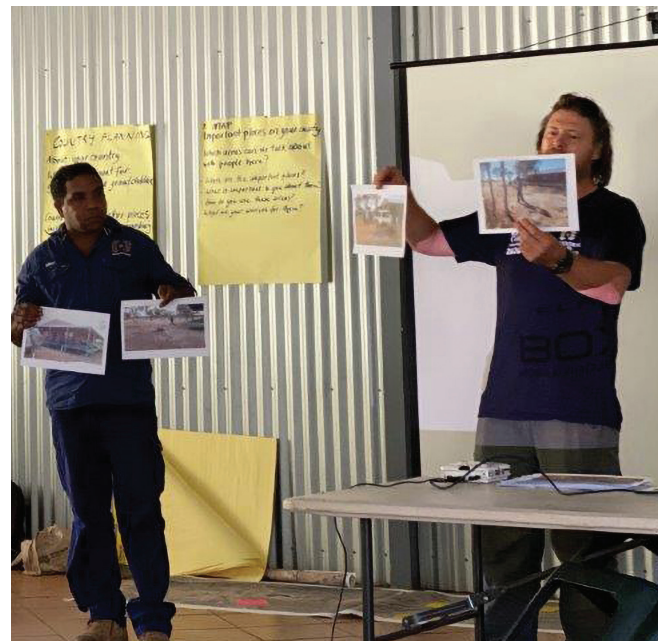
### Healthy country planning with traditional owners

In 2020 the Ltyentye Apurte Rangers hosted four workshops with other CLC staff, consultants, traditional owners and Ltyentye Apurte residents to plan their work on the Aboriginal land trusts in their region for the next five to 10 years.

Participants talked about how they feel about their country, what they like and value, what they are worried about (threats) and how they want to look after it.

At the first two-day workshop, at Snow Bore in July, traditional owners and rangers made a ground map of places they value such as creeks, waterholes and sacred sites around the Santa Teresa Aboriginal Land Trust.

The activity promoted discussion about how to manage threats to these sites, such as erosion, feral animals, weeds, fire and loss of cultural knowledge. They said



Kelvin Kopp and Martin Campbell presenting at Ross River.



Ranger Anton McMillan and consultant Michael Cawthorn working on the healthy country plan.

passing on cultural knowledge to younger generations is very important, as is improving tracks to access and protect the sites.

The second workshop at the Ltyentye Apurte ranger shed in October explored ideas from the first workshop in more detail. It allowed participants to develop strategies and actions for the healthy country plan.

One month later, the third workshop was held at the Ross River Resort, where a different group of traditional owners repeated the planning process for the broader Ltyentye Apurte work region. On the way to the workshop, the rangers and other staff visited the Williams Well outstation, where the traditional owners asked them to burn

through the hills along the old road through Pwanye Aboriginal Land Trust.

During the workshop traditional owners talked about important places on the Arletherre, Atnetye and Pmere Nyentye Aboriginal land trusts. They undertook three field trips to some of these sites to plan how to protect them. The men visited Garden Station and the Atnarpa area of the Arletherre Aboriginal Land Trust to talk about important dreaming and water sites that need protection, while the women visited sites on the land trust that are part of the Seven-Sisters songline.

The participants reviewed the draft healthy country plan at a final workshop in June 2021.

## MURNKURRUMURNKURRU RANGERS



The Murnkurrumurnkuru 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.

### Carbon burning in Judbarra National Park



Rangers burning paperbark yard in Judbarra/Gregory National Park.

This period marked the start of the jointly-managed savannah carbon fire program in Judbarra/Gregory National Park. The program helps traditional owners and rangers to create a mosaic of burnt and unburnt areas during the cool season

that reduces fuel loads and the risk of late season wildfires. They aim to restore the land to a healthy condition where all native animals can thrive.

Traditional owners and Aboriginal rangers from Daguragu, Timber Creek and

the Wardaman IPA are working alongside national park staff and took delivery of a large amount of firefighting equipment, such as backpack blowers, fire rakes, matches, equipment carry bags and new GPS devices for recording fire work.

They used it to create firebreaks along the southern edges of the national park and undertake aerial incendiary burning.

The program allows traditional owners and rangers, all of whom have cultural connections to the area, to contribute to the management of their country.



Preparing for aerial burning Judbarra.

## 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.

The rangers continued to maintain firebreaks around Tennant Creek, working with Bushfires NT and other agencies to protect the town from wildfire. They supported traditional owners to earn money by burning for carbon credits in the North Karantjipa Aboriginal Land Trust.

They also used fixed-wing aircraft instead of helicopters to survey the

land, record information and make decisions about fire management with staff from the 10 Deserts project. The larger fixed-wing planes can carry more passengers, are more comfortable and less likely to make people airsick. The rangers told other fire-managers about this successful experiment at their annual warlu (fire) committee meeting and it's expected that interest in fixed-wing planes for fire

management may grow as a result.

The rangers are closer to completing a healthy country plan that will guide their work for the next 10 years, following four large camps and two workshops across the Tennant Creek region this year. More than 130 traditional owners from seven language groups attended the meetings.

### Strong women for healthy country

In May 2021, Muru-Warinyi Ankkul Rangers Gladys Brown, Tamika Newcastle and Tanisha Foster and Dianne Stokes, a CLC delegate and traditional owner from Mangalawarru, attended Strong Women for Healthy Country, a forum for female land managers on King Valley Station (see also p.3) near Katherine.

The forum educates new and young rangers such as Ms Foster and Ms Newcastle about the roles women rangers can play in land management and the potential of their work.

"We learned a lot from other women rangers about how they look after their country and shared our experience with others as well," Ms Brown said.

"The traditional owners from Banatjarl country taught us how to weave, make bush medicine and jewelry, like necklaces, and a story about a big rock and a waterhole which is a sacred site.

"The traditional owners also mentioned that no-one is allowed to enter the area because it is a special place and been kept hidden for a long

time," said Ms Brown.

Ms Brown said the forum encourages female land managers to collaborate and overcome their isolation.

"We worked as a team and talked about ideas on how to connect and reach out with other women who live a long way from each other," she said.

Ms Brown plans to continue to meet with the other women via Zoom.



Muru-Warinyi Ankkul Rangers Gladys Brown and Tanisha Foster giving their presentation.

## NORTH TANAMI RANGERS



The North Tanami Rangers are based in 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.

### Learning how to track animals

The Northern Tanami and Warlpiri rangers took part in a reading the country workshop in April at the Desert Park in Alice Springs. At the workshop elders from Yuendumu, Willowra, Nyirripi and Lajamanu taught them about animal tracks.

“The Desert Park rangers took them on a night tour to look at some nocturnal animals, such as mala, bilbies and echidnas,” lead ranger Helen Wilson, from Lajamanu, said.

“There were five echidnas

walking around searching for food and the animal came close to us.”

The rangers learnt from the elders how the sun, rain, wind and shadows can change the appearance of tracks over time.

“We made some tracks in different soils and looked at how the wind and soil types changed the look of the tracks,” she said.

“We also talked about how to describe tracks so that everyone uses the same language when

talking about tracks. This was put into a diagram which told us what to look for and what questions to ask ourselves when looking at a track.

“On the last night we had a quiz with different pictures showing tracks to see what we had learnt during the week and to see if we could work out what animal made the tracks,” Ms Wilson said.

“It was fun and everyone had a good night with lots of laughing.”



The team learning how wind, sun, rain effect different tracks on different soil types.



Having a look around Desert Park to see how animals move around at night.

TJUWANPA RANGERS



The Tjuwanpa Rangers in Ntaria (Hermannsburg) manage the natural and cultural resources of five Aboriginal land trusts in their region, and work with staff from the Parks and Wildlife Service NT in 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 populations of the endangered mulpare (slater's skink). They also maintain tourism infrastructure, monitor and protect water places, help to pass on knowledge and manage feral animals.

Cleaning springs

Traditional owners asked the Tjuwanpa Rangers to remove around 35 dead horses and cattle from Alkwertneme (No.4 Spring), a culturally significant waterhole on the Roulpmaulpma Aboriginal Land Trust. The stench of the rotting carcasses could be smelt more than a kilometre away.

The water in this popular camping and swimming spot was poisonous after all these animals had died in the waterhole during the 2019 drought, and traditional owners wanted it cleaned up so their families could visit and native animals could drink fresh water.

Before they started the clean-up with the help of a few traditional owners, the rangers asked a scientist from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to test if the water was safe for them to work in.

During their 10 visits of the spring to remove the carcasses the workers wore personal protective equipment. They flushed out and dragged the rotting animal carcasses- bones, hair and all- away from the waterhole and left them to dry out before burning them over a few days. They also welded a steel rake and a steel hook



Tjuwanpa Ranger Emron Campbell flushing out Alkwertneme (No 4 Spring) of feral animal remains.

extension to drag the remaining muck and sludge out of the spring so it could fill with clean water.

They finished the tough job by erecting a temporary fence to keep horses and cattle out of the spring. They used mustering panels because they didn't want to drill into the rock and damage the site. The panels worked well because they could be placed amongst the rocks. Once set the rangers welded them together to make them stronger.

They felt so inspired by how well this solution worked that they tried it out at another spring

they wanted to protect from feral horses. They welded up 10 more panels during a welding course and set them up at Waimena Spring on the Ntaria Aboriginal Land Trust.

They presented about this work to around 140 rangers at the CLC's annual ranger camp. Traditional owners were very happy and grateful for the work.



Alkwertneme (No. 4 spring) after being cleaned and fenced to exclude feral animals.

## 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 Yuendumu, with teams of casuals sourced from the neighboring communities of Willowra and Nyirripi.

### Chilla Well country visit



Chilla Well School Country Visit.

In May the Warlpiri Rangers cleaned up the Chilla Well outstation to prepare it for a Yuendumu school excursion.

Each year, Yuendumu students spend a week on country to soak up bush knowledge from elders and learn songs, stories and ceremonies. Yuendumu elders use Chilla Well, 120 kilometres north of the community, as a base for visiting other important

sites and rock holes.

Rangers Nelson Tex, Shane White and Annanius Woods used a bobcat to clear away rubbish and buffel grass which had overrun the campsite. Their work ensured the campsite was a safe and comfortable place for the sharing of songs, stories and ceremonies.

For Shane White, a highlight was hearing the stories for that area,

and seeing the dances passed on to the students. "It was really special, because one of the dances that was shared hadn't been performed since the 80s," he said.

The Warlpiri Rangers who undertook the clean-up felt privileged to be able to give back to their community and were thrilled to help keep bush knowledge and culture strong.



Traditional owners and rangers at Labi Labi Country visit.

**TJAKURA RANGERS**



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

**Sharing knowledge with young people**

The Tjakura Rangers have helped Mutitjulu students to camp out bush and learn from traditional owners of the Kaṯiṯi-Peterman Indigenous Protected Area and the Uluru – Kata Tjuṯa National Park how they lived on country.

Senior women from Mutitjulu decide the theme for each trip. Three trips this year focussed on puṅu (wood, wooden tools), tjina munu kuna (tracking animals) and mai (bush foods).

Working with the rangers from the national park they identified locations for the trip that offered lots of learning opportunities

and activities for the students.

The students made kuḷaṯa (spears) from urtjanpa (spearwood) harvested at Kata Tjuṯa, and learned to spot animal tjina (tracks) and kuna (faecal scats). They were also shown how to prepare damper from tjanpi (native grass) seeds with coolamons for winnowing and grinding stones.

The excursions are part of a Tangentyere Council project the traditional owners fund with the gate income they earn from the national park and the support of the CLC's community

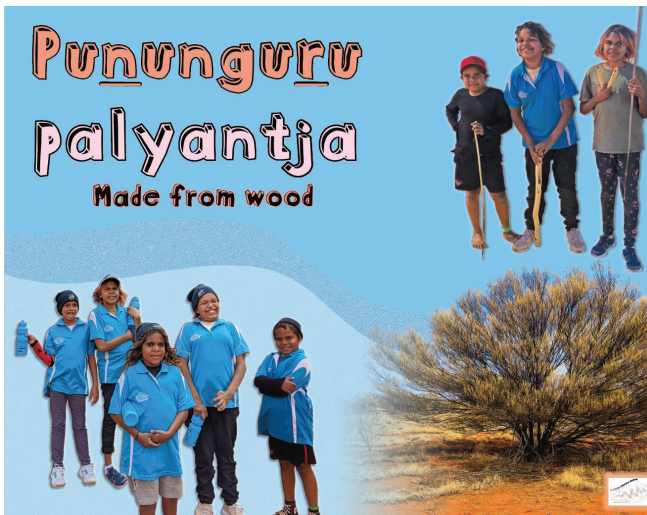
development program.

Following the trips, the rangers helped the senior women and Tangentyere staff to develop a bilingual story book about the trips for the local school. The school used *Puṅunguru palyantja – made from wood* - a book about making kuḷaṯa and wana (digging sticks) from puṅu in the classroom.

The rangers are proud to share their knowledge of working on country with the students and are discussing suitable themes for future trips with senior women and men.



Elsie Taylor and UKTNP Ranger teaching Mutitjulu School children how to make wana (digging sticks).



Pununguru palyantja book.



Tjakura Ranger Ashley Paddy teaching kids how to make kulata (spears).

## 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.

### Ranger training

Since starting in early 2019 the Walungurru Rangers has grown to six male and four female rangers. This core team includes the original six members

In 2021 all of them undertook a Certificate I in conservation and ecosystem management. They didn't only learn in the classroom but also deployed camera traps for animal surveys at local sites and cleaned and maintained rockholes. The three consecutive weeks of accredited training was the most intensive training block to date, but not the only certificate course the rangers undertook.

Rangers Gerrard Giles took part in a 4WD course and is now allowed to drive CLC vehicles. Farren Major and Tanita Gallagher completed the First Aid course at the annual CLC ranger camp in March. Moses Rowe, Marita Maxwell and Sacariha Michaels also learned the art of snake catching at the camp.

All this effort and commitment, as well as the leadership of senior traditional owners such



Representatives of Walungurru rangers at the 2021 CLC Ranger Camp.

as Joe Young and Monica Robinson, has paid off. The ranger team received \$2.9 million of stimulus funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account late in the financial

year. The CLC will spend the money on ranger infrastructure, employ a dedicated co-ordinator for the team and promote several rangers from casual to permanent employment.



The Walungurru Rangers receiving their certificates for completing their training.



# RANGER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2020–21

The CLC ranger program’s entry-level positions build capacity and interest among young Aboriginal people with little or no work experience. The program also employs casuals on larger surveys, fire management, weed control and fencing projects. This often results in permanent jobs.

Between them, the Commonwealth and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation funded 105 CLC rangers (the equivalent of 71.2 fulltime positions) across 12 established and two emerging ranger groups. The Walungurru Rangers, based at Kintore, are one of the emerging groups starting to gain momentum the other, Utopia Rangers are in the very early stages of development. The corporation funded a quarter of the positions

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND RANGER RETENTION

The CLC offers a variety of employment options to accommodate the responsibilities of, and demands on, remote community residents. Twelve rangers and ranger support officers were in fulltime positions on 30 June 2021, 52 were parttime and 41 were casuals. Many casual rangers work for emerging ranger groups such as the Walungurru and Utopia groups which are not yet able to offer permanent positions.

Over the past decade there have been 976 CLC rangers. They have been aged between 16 and 67 and have had a wide range of knowledge and skills. The reporting period saw the CLC’s first ranger take long service leave.

Figure 3 shows that only 28 per cent of rangers are female. This is far below the CLC target of 50 per cent female employment. The CLC is exploring options for improving the engagement of women in the ranger program and supporting women to move into more senior roles. For example, it is seeking funding for extra vehicles to facilitate specific women’s natural and cultural resource management projects.

## QUALITY TARGETED TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 substantially impacted training and professional development across the ranger program in 2020-21. Local and interstate registered training organisations were unable to deliver training in remote communities during lockdowns, border closures, and the implementation of biosecurity zones. As restrictions were lifted, some service providers experienced backlogs resulting in limited places and extended delays.

The Batchelor Institute recommended the delivery of training blocks to rangers in Alice Springs in 2021. Figure 4 shows that a total of 97 rangers were enrolled in certificates I, II, III and IV studies in conservation and ecosystem management. The CLC also liaised with the provider about aligning the certificate IV with the work plans of the rangers and using specific organisational resources, policies and procedures in their learning material.

Thirty-four rangers and aspiring rangers from the Utopia region, Aputula (Finke) and Walungurru (Kintore) and two regional workplace mentors undertook a customised introduction to ranger skills, with 25 rangers graduating from a certificate I in conservation and ecosystem management.

FIGURE 2: RANGER EMPLOYMENT TYPE, 2010–21

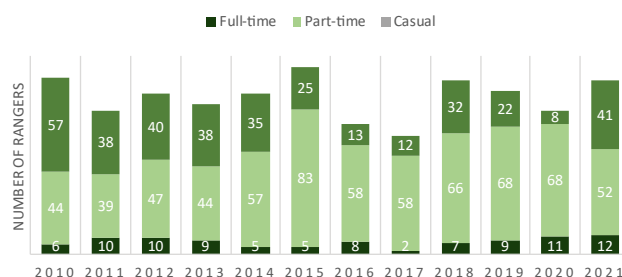


FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN RANGERS, 2010-21

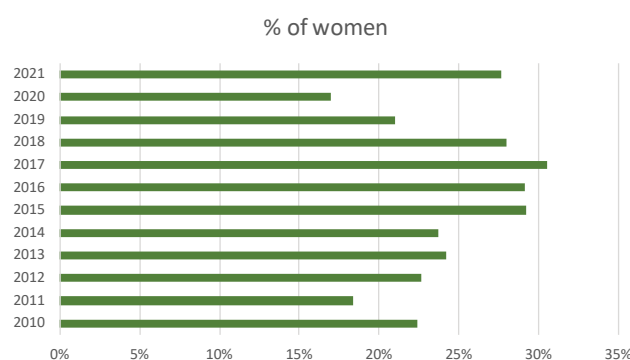


FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF RANGERS ENROLLED IN CERTIFICATE LEVEL TRAINING, 2020-21



Enid Long, Sara Weir and Camilla Young making props for an activity at the Strong Women for Healthy Country forum.

The intensive three-week course aimed to provide the participants with timely and standardised on-boarding and work health and safety training. As work plans for new ranger groups focus strongly on on-the-job training, work readiness mentoring and practical experience, time for accredited training is limited. The certificate I was therefore determined to be the preferred baseline qualification. Contracting an interstate training provider, due to limited local capacity, resulted in significant efforts to comply with organisational and NT COVID-19 risk management protocols.

The CLC's 2020-23 ranger training and development strategy was finalised in March 2021 and will inform the priorities for the next three years. An action plan and monitoring and evaluation framework with 25 major outputs was also finalised and implemented. Eleven of these outputs are in progress.

After the cancellation of the 2020 CLC ranger camp, additional COVID-19 risk management measures enabled the 2021 camp to go ahead in March at Hamilton Downs near Alice Springs. Participants rated the event as highly successful and the following outcomes were achieved:

- 95 Aboriginal rangers from 17 groups attended, including 21 from five groups based outside the CLC region
- CLC staff and service providers delivered a mix of 15 accredited and non-accredited training workshops, facilitated by 19 trainers
- ranger groups presented in English and eight Aboriginal languages about their highlights of the previous two years of work, achievements, challenges and ideas
- three local Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing professionals delivered team building, leadership and wellbeing activities
- an optometrist checked the eyes of 60 rangers, and more than 50 rangers had hearing tests.

Across the ranger program computer literacy levels are generally low. This is in part due to few rangers owning computers, lack of confidence and inadequate training and support. Poor digital literacy makes it difficult for rangers to fulfil certain components of their role, such as creating newsletters and presentations, downloading photos and storing files. Rangers currently need support with a wide range of digital processes and CLC administrative systems, including timesheets, work tracker, vehicle bookings, and access to organisational policies. In order to keep rangers up to date with CLC administrative procedures and processes, they need computer access and training. The CLC and an external training provider have co-designed an accredited training package consisting of foundational literacy, numeracy and digital units, for delivery during four three-day workshops. The federal government funded the package which aims to support staff to confidently use digital devices and organisational systems. Since February, 14 rangers from Atitjere and Ntaria have completed the training, with another 10 groups scheduled until November 2022.

## RANGER MENTORING SUPPORT

The CLC ranger mentoring program offers confidential workplace support to rangers. It aims to develop their personal and professional goals and to resolve issues that may affect work readiness, attendance or on-the-job performance. Mentoring support may include coaching, advocacy and referrals to personal and professional development services.

The rangers, their families and their work were disrupted by the

pandemic during the declaration of biosecurity areas around remote communities, and staff and contractor travel was limited. Existing social and emotional challenges appeared to be amplified by the stress and uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

Family wellbeing was the most frequently reported issue the ranger mentors dealt with. Themes covered community safety and domestic and family violence. The latter continues to be an ongoing and complex mentoring challenge. Mentors complied with mandatory reporting requirements, applied trauma-informed practices and made referrals to appropriate services.

Health was the second-biggest issue for which rangers requested mentoring support. The most significant health issues related to alcohol and other drugs, followed by physical and mental health issues.

Overcrowding and substandard and unstable living conditions can impede the rangers' ability to attend and perform at work and impact the entire ranger program. A large number of mentoring sessions were devoted to housing issues, financial stress and income support. Housing was a consistent problem across much of the region, particularly for the Tjuwanpa, Ltyentye Apurte and Arltarpilta Inelye ranger groups. Mentors assisted and advocated on behalf of rangers with housing issues on a case-by-case basis.

Despite the challenge of dealing with complex issues, mentors have been able to assist rangers across all groups by supporting team development, work readiness and career pathway planning. Mentors have also support new rangers, help with ranger training events and workplan activities.

The flow-on-effects of the pandemic have made mentoring services more critical than ever for the wellbeing and resilience of individual rangers and the ranger program.

## SCHOOL-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING

The rangers demonstrate the value of ranger employment to students in remote community classrooms and on country, and in their interactions with junior rangers, traditional owners and parents. They contribute to learning outcomes and motivate students to continue their schooling.

The Tjuwanpa Rangers, for example, taught Ntaria students about bush tucker and medicine plants, digging for water and identifying soakages, using the data collection app and helped them present about the work they had done with rangers. The Murnkurrumurnkurru Rangers undertook two field trips with the junior Kunpulu Rangers from Kalkaringi. The rangers taught the students about cultural sites and the management of waterways, fire management and wildlife survey techniques.

## PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The CLC acknowledges the major funding bodies of its ranger program: the Australian Government’s National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation.



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FRONT COVER IMAGE: Anangu Luritjiku Ranger Preston Kelly retrieving monitoring cameras.

BACK COVER IMAGE: Representatives of Walungurru Rangers, at the 2021 CLC Ranger Camp.