

# Arnhem Land Fire Abatement

ALFA (NT) Limited  
Annual Report 2023





# Arnhem Land Fire Abatement

ALFA (NT) Limited  
ABN 81 166 922 569  
PO Box 40222  
Casuarina NT 0810

0437 272 043  
ceo@alfant.com.au  
alfant.com.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this report may contain images and names in print of deceased people.

Front cover: Rangers from the three groups managing the newest registered ALFA fire project – Northwest Arnhem Land Fire Abatement – work together to undertake controlled asset protection burns. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Right: Senior ranger Terrah Guymala and Dr Cara Penton of Warddeken Land Management discuss late wet season burns being used to protect areas of long-unburnt Country, identified through Warddeken's Mayh (native animals) Program as habitat for threatened fauna. Photo © Kane Chenoweth and Warddeken.

Back cover: An aerial photograph demonstrates an ideal early dry season fire, which has burnt low and cool through savanna woodland. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

1 — Jon Altman, Jennifer Ansell and Dean Yibarbuk (2020) No ordinary company: Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (Northern Territory) Limited, Postcolonial Studies, 23:4, 552-574

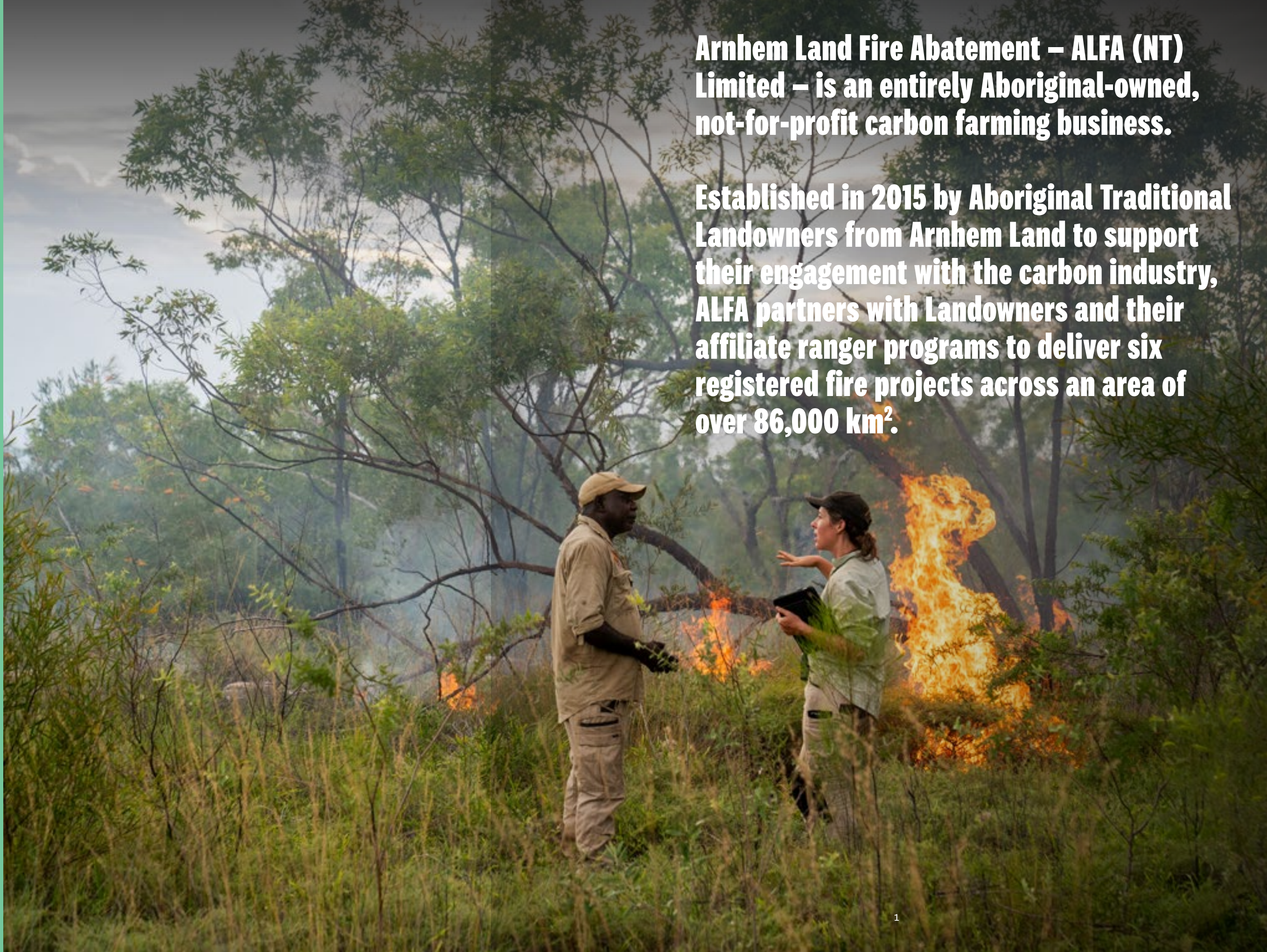


This report is printed on Impact 100% post consumer waste recycled paper. Made with a carbon neutral manufacturing process FSC COC certified. Mill use 86% renewable energy and unavoidable CO2 emissions are compensated for by promoting controlled emission reduction projects, audited and certified by ClimatePartner.

Design — rodeo.com.co  
Copywriting — Georgia Vallance  
and Francesca Noakes.

**Arnhem Land Fire Abatement – ALFA (NT) Limited – is an entirely Aboriginal-owned, not-for-profit carbon farming business.**

**Established in 2015 by Aboriginal Traditional Landowners from Arnhem Land to support their engagement with the carbon industry, ALFA partners with Landowners and their affiliate ranger programs to deliver six registered fire projects across an area of over 86,000 km<sup>2</sup>.**





**With the arrival of the cool winds and clear skies of the dry season, Traditional Owners and rangers from across the remote tropical savannas of Arnhem Land begin lighting fires on their custodial estates, using sophisticated burning practices that have been passed down across generations.**

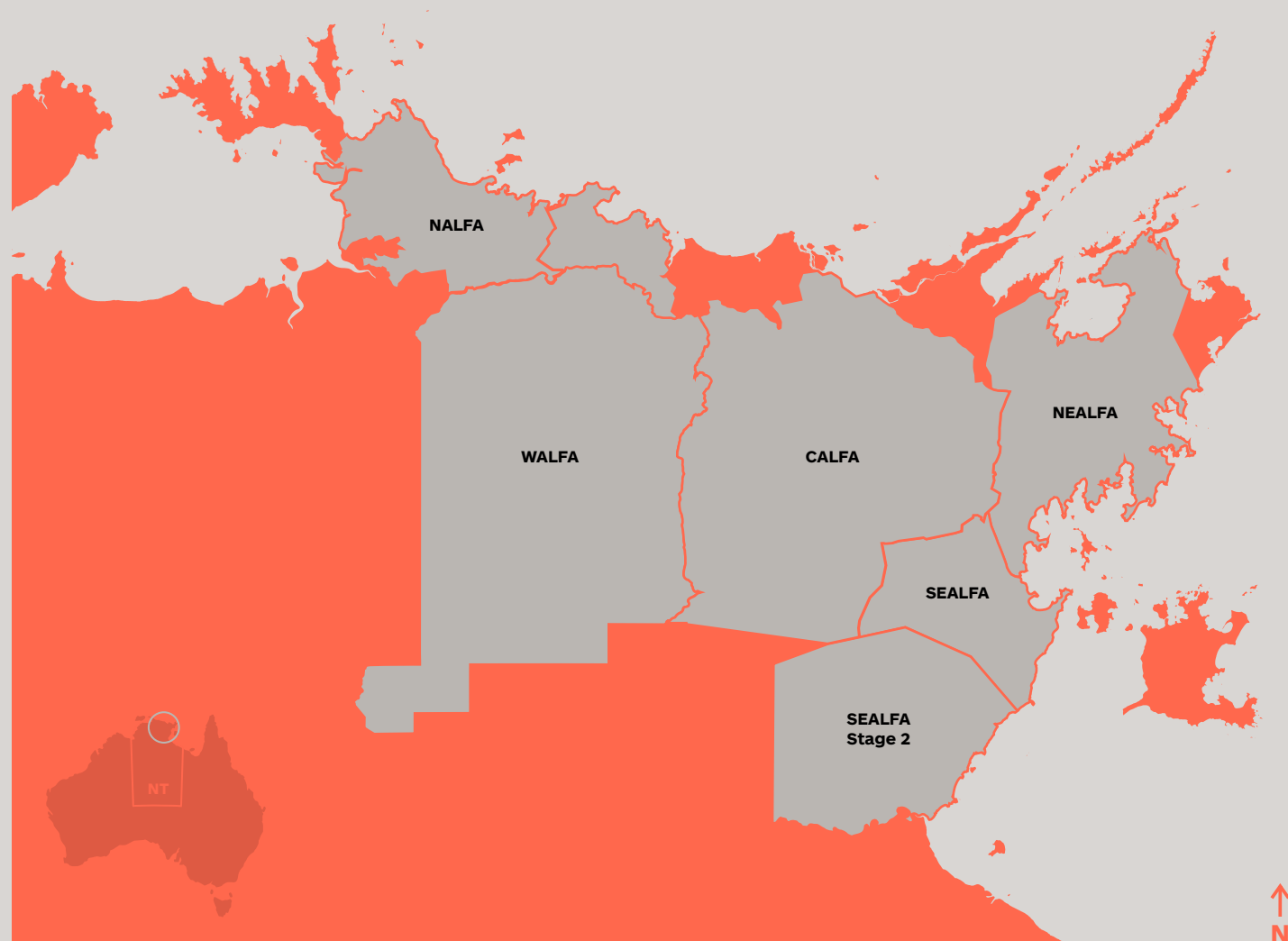


**In a landscape defined by careful and deliberate seasonal burning, the work performed by ALFA's partners is vital to the continued ecological and cultural health of Country. By combining ancient knowledge with modern technology, their fire management programs address critical environmental solutions at the local, national and global scale.**

**ALFA facilitates engagement with the carbon industry on behalf of its partners, supporting Arnhem Land's Traditional Owners and rangers to access the funding they require to deliver global best-practice fire management projects.**

**ALFA represents 11 Indigenous ranger groups consisting of Traditional Owners and their families. Collectively, these groups manage an area of over 86,000 km<sup>2</sup> across Arnhem Land, encompassing vast expanses of savanna woodland, rugged sandstone escarpments, floodplains, monsoon rainforest, intact riparian ecosystems and remote coastal regions.**

**Map of project areas**



**ALFA's partners operate a total of six registered fire projects, all of which generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) through the federal government's Savanna Burning Methodology.**

- West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project**
- Central Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (CALFA) project**
- South East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (SEALFA) project**
- South East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement 2 (SEALFA2) project**
- North East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (NEALFA) project**
- Northwest Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (NALFA) project**



## Values

The following values represent the objectives for which ALFA was established. All income generated through the sale of carbon is spent in line with these objectives.

**To protect, preserve and care for the environment through abatement of the level of global greenhouse gas emissions by utilising bushfire management activities.**



**To preserve and conserve native Australian fauna and flora through bushfire management activities that accord with Aboriginal traditional rights and obligations and Australian law.**



**To collaboratively pursue the investigation, development and implementation of other activities which will protect, preserve and care for the environment and which are consistent with Aboriginal traditional rights and obligations and Australian law.**



**In relation to Aboriginal persons who have a traditional Aboriginal connection with any part of the project area, to provide for the relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, destitution, helplessness or the aged.**



**To provide for the advancement of education of Aboriginal persons who have a traditional Aboriginal connection with any part of the project area.**



Each year, more women rangers – particularly young women – are becoming engaged in aerial burning operations. This trend has been supported by ALFA's custom training program, which has provided accredited, on Country training in aerial burning and helicopter operations for all of the eleven partners. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.



**ALFA (NT) Limited has nine membership classes, representing the operational areas of the partner ranger groups and organisations that manage each of the six registered fire projects. Each membership class has two representatives on the ALFA board of directors.**

*“The specific Indigenous form of participatory governance that guides ALFA’s operations, always cognisant of Landowner authority, is fundamental to ALFA’s ability to support forms of Aboriginal-led development focused on conservation.”<sup>1</sup>*



ALFA board members (and proxies), with two representatives from each of the company’s nine membership classes. Photo © Renae Saxby.

Membership of ALFA is open to Aboriginal people with customary responsibilities for regions of Arnhem Land under active fire management through one of the six registered projects.

ALFA is governed by 18 Aboriginal Directors. Two Directors are elected from each of the nine membership classes.

The Company also employs a Chief Executive Officer, a Chief Financial Officer, a Capacity Development and Training Manager, Bushfire Project Officers, and Seasonal Fire Officers (as required).

**Board of Directors and Staff as at 30th November 2023**

- Adjumarllarl — Shaun Namarnyilk, Anderson Nalorlman
- ASRAC — Gladys Malibirr, Otto Campion
- Bawinanga — Victor Rostron, Felina Campion
- Jawoyn — Tony Walla, Steven Andrews
- Mimal — Alfred Rickson, Leon Lawrence
- SEAL — Clarry Rogers, Clive Nunggarrgalu
- Warddeken — Conrad Maralngurra, Terrah Guymala
- Yirralka — Yalapuru Gumana, Shane Wuthurra
- Wunungmurra
- NALFA — Charmaine Minkirrkirr, Eslyn Wauchope



Dickson of the Bawinanga Djelk rangers watches on as fuel loads around a homeland community are reduced with asset protection burning. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.



# ALFA Board of Directors 2023

*This Board of Directors was active until the AGM on December 5th 2023, when a new board was elected.*

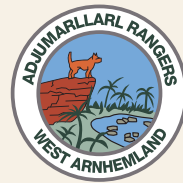
## Membership class



**Bawinanga Djelk**



**Warddeken**



**Adjumarllarl**



**Mimal**



**Jawoyn**



**ASRAC**



**SEAL**



**Yirralka**



**NALFA**

## Directors



Victor Rostron



Conrad Maralngurra



Shaun Namarnyilk



Alfred Rickson



Tony Walla



Gladys Malibirr



Clarry Rogers



Yalapuru Gumana



Charmaine Minkirkirr



Felina Campion



Terrah Guymala



Anderson Nalorlman



Leon Lawrence



Steven Andrews



Otto Campion



Clive Nunggarrgalu



Shane Wuthurra Wunungmurra



Eslyn Wauchope





Helicopters are a necessary component of fire management programs in Arnhem Land – in the early dry season they are used to facilitate landscape-scale aerial burns; in the late dry season they ferry in firefighting crews to far-flung locations to prevent devastating wildfires. Photo © Kane Chenoweth and Warddeken.

## ALFA staff



*Top left to right: Jennifer Ansell (CEO), John O'Brien (CFO), Mark Desailly (Capacity Development and Training Manager), Stephanie Rouse (Bushfire Project Officer), Travis Enright (Seasonal Fire Officer), Sally Clifford (Governance Facilitator), Rob Bakes (Bushfire Project Officer).*



# 2023 marked an important new milestone for ALFA and project partners in Arnhem Land, with the annual income from carbon credit sales the highest ever achieved - more than double any previous annual sales result.

The income from the sale of ALFA carbon credits is required annually to directly fund ALFA's Aboriginal partner organisations to undertake culturally appropriate fire management – maximising the engagement and employment of Traditional Owners and supporting their fire management rights and obligations. However, in years where additional funds are available, the carbon income is also able to support our partner groups to deliver on broader land management and community development goals through the ALFA grants program.

Excitingly, the increase of carbon revenue in 2023 has seen a corresponding increase in the availability of grant funding for ALFA's partner groups, unlocking even greater cultural, social, environmental, and economic impact. The case studies on pages 32 to 39 of this Annual Report are a wonderful illustration of this impact. In anticipation of further growth, over the next year ALFA will focus on

building its capacity to further support the incredible outcomes that are achieved by our project partners through the reinvestment of the carbon income in Arnhem Land.

Throughout 2023, ALFA focused on strengthening its core business: supporting the operational capacity and resilience of ALFA and our Aboriginal ranger group partners across Arnhem Land, maintaining and growing strong governance and stakeholder relationships as well as protecting and developing ALFA's unique carbon market position. Key highlights were the continued provision of culturally appropriate on-the-job mentoring and support for fire management work; the delivery of bespoke accredited training, the finalisation of a new strategic business plan for ALFA and engagement with the Government on the new Savanna Fire Management Methods.



Discussing the inspiring work of Indigenous led carbon projects on Gadigal country – representatives from ALFA and the Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN) travelled to Sydney to meet with the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen. Left to right: Teddy Bernard, Dean Yibarbuk, Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Jennifer Ansell and Anna Boustead.

It has always been recognised that savanna fire management creates both a greenhouse gas abatement and sequesters carbon in the landscape. However, the science to account for and include all the sequestration carbon pools in previous iterations of the method was not complete. In 2021, this research was completed, published and the data included in Australia's national carbon accounts, paving the way for incorporation into the Savanna Fire Management Methods. We continue to strongly advocate for the prioritisation of this new SFM method and the additional carbon opportunities it will unlock for existing fire projects in Arnhem Land.

Finally, as always it is a great privilege to work with ALFA's Board of Directors, ALFA's small team of dedicated staff members, and ALFA's project partners – the Aboriginal ranger groups and their host organisations in Arnhem Land. These exceptional people and organisations

coordinate, undertake and support world class fire management operations with Traditional Landowners. They produce carbon offsets of the very highest integrity whilst delivering land management and community development aspirations for the people of Arnhem Land. I am very proud to present ALFA's 2023 Annual Report on their behalf.

Handwritten signature of Jennifer Ansell.

Jennifer Ansell  
CEO



# Core strategic actions of customary fire management

Left to right: 1. ASRAC rangers and Landowners use fire scar maps to plan annual burning activities. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA; 2. Rangers use drip torches and wind proof matches to conduct on ground burning. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA; 3. Rangers use choppers to conduct strategic aerial burning, which breaks up Country into a mosaic of burnt and unburnt areas. Photo © Northern Land Council; 4. Alyurr (Leichhardt's grasshopper) is an eye catching, endemic stone country species that only eats the leaves of one plant, and is reliant on good fire management. Alyurr are believed to be the children of Namarrkon, the Lightning Man Spirit. Photo © Kane Chenoweth and Warddeken; 5. Rangers perform fuel reduction burns at a rock art gallery and occupation site. Photo © Warddeken; 6. Fire projects operate over the long term, and so ensuring a new generation of Landowners have the skills and knowledge to manage them into the future is imperative. Photo © ASRAC.

1.



**Engage the right people for Country in the planning and delivery of all fire management activities.**

2.



**Burn early in the dry season at times of heavy dew and little wind, so that fires burn slow and cool, and go out overnight.**

3.



**Burn strategically, using natural breaks such as moist ground along creeks, cliff lines and tracks to leave patches of unburned Country surrounded by burned breaks.**

4.



**Protect fire sensitive ecological communities, flora and fauna by utilising cool burning and creating early-burned breaks.**

5.



**Protect sacred sites, rock art galleries, burial sites and other sites of cultural significance by creating early-burned breaks.**

6.



**Teach the next generation of Traditional Owners to master customary fire management skills and knowledge, preparing them to take over the project in the future.**





Attendees at one of the first meetings to bring together Landowners from across west and central Arnhem Land to discuss fire management, held at Weemol in 2005. Many of the leaders in this image are now deceased, though their legacy lives on. Image courtesy of Peter Cooke.

A homegrown success story

# The history of fire projects in Arnhem Land

*“It is difficult to overstate the impact of the WALFA Project on today’s carbon market. As the landscape scale model upon which the government-approved Savanna Burning Methodology was based, WALFA has provided a template for every current and future savanna burning fire management project across northern Australia.”*

ALFA’s origin story dates back to the ground-breaking West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project – the first savanna burning abatement project in the world.

Now widely recognised as the global prototype for savanna burning projects, the WALFA project was initially a response to the concerns of Indigenous Traditional Owners about the impacts of unmanaged fire on their Custodial Estates.

In the mid-1990s, Elders and cultural leaders from across Arnhem Land began a conversation with a small group of non-Aboriginal scientists about the importance of fire in the landscape. They explained that before the depopulation of the Arnhem plateau and surrounding areas, fire had been the key tool they had used to care for their Custodial Estates.

Elders spoke impassionedly of ‘orphaned Country’, empty estates whose Landowners had been drawn to missions and settlements; and of their grave concern that, without customary management – especially of fire – that the physical and spiritual Indigenous estate was sick.

These concerns were substantiated by satellite fire histories, which proved unequivocally that fire regimes across the region were now dominated by late dry season wildfire. Data showed that these wildfires often burned intensely for months on end, across thousands of square kilometres, only extinguished with the arrival of the annual wet season rains.

Early discussions led to a vision of Traditional Owners returning to live on Country in west Arnhem Land, to reinvigorate the customary fire management practices essential to the ongoing health of Country. Over the next decade, ranger groups in Arnhem Land used the limited resources available to them to refine their ability to manage fire at a landscape scale, in the process innovating practices that allowed them to emulate customary fire management using modern tools and technology.

At the same time, scientists were developing methods to demonstrate the efficacy of the work of rangers, by measuring the extent of fires, calculating the seasonal differences in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between early and late dry season fires, and understanding GHG emissions for a range of vegetation communities.

A core group of Indigenous fire experts and non-Indigenous scientists continued to work together to explore and define the relationship between customary burning and emission reductions – this pioneering early research went on to become the foundation of the current Savanna Burning Methodology.

Despite these exciting developments, for the Traditional Owners and rangers of west Arnhem Land, managing fire at the necessary scale remained beyond their financial capability. In 2006, after years of negotiation, a trailblazing solution was reached when ConocoPhillips entered into the West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement with the Northern Territory Government. This first-of-a-kind agreement saw ConocoPhillips support Landowners to restore fire management over more than 28,000 km<sup>2</sup> of west Arnhem Land (the WALFA project area) to offset GHG emissions from their newly established Darwin Liquefied Natural Gas plant.

The WALFA project proved to be an innovative and effective solution to securing long-term funding to support fire management and immediately allowed Traditional Landowners and Aboriginal rangers to get back out on Country, initiating fire management programs that reconnected people to Country and bringing back strategic, cool early dry season burning at a landscape scale.

It is difficult to overstate the impact of the WALFA Project on today’s carbon market. As the landscape scale model upon which the government-approved Savanna Burning Methodology was based, WALFA has provided a template for every current and future savanna burning fire management project across northern Australia.



# The origin of ALFA

*“From a Western ecological perspective, fire management in Arnhem Land resourced through ALFA’s engagement with the carbon industry, has successfully addressed the prevalence of hot, widespread and destructive wildfires in the landscape – a threat to the environmental assets of northern Australia recognised in both Aboriginal and Western science knowledge systems.”<sup>1</sup>*

Following the introduction of carbon legislation in Australia in 2011, the five ranger groups partnered in the WALFA project decided they wanted to transition the then-voluntary WALFA project to an eligible offsets project, which would allow them to earn and sell ACCUs.

Extensive Landowner consultations ensued, focusing on how best to create an Aboriginal-owned company to represent them collectively in their engagement with the carbon market. In 2013, WALFA Limited was established for this purpose, and in 2015 the name of the company was changed to ALFA (NT) Limited, to reflect its growth throughout Arnhem Land.

When developing ALFA, Traditional Owners were clear in their directive that the company must be not-for-profit, and that all revenue from the sale of ACCUs must be reinvested back into its partner Aboriginal ranger groups, to provide local employment while preserving culture and the environment. ALFA continues to operate under this directive, operating with minimal overheads such that 95

per cent of all income generated is paid to the ranger groups to support and improve fire management activities across the project areas.

The first eligible offsets project registered by ALFA was the WALFA project in late 2014. Since then, ALFA has grown to support Traditional Owners register and operationalise five additional projects in central, south-east and north-east Arnhem Land. Together, these projects cover a contiguous, ecologically and culturally significant area of 86,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Arnhem Land.

Currently, eleven Aboriginal ranger groups consisting of Traditional Owners and their families undertake all operational aspects of the landscape scale fire management that occurs across the six ALFA project areas. Membership of ALFA is open to any Traditional Owner of land where an ALFA project operates – as such, ALFA is at once an alliance and a collaboration between Traditional Owners and their affiliated ranger groups.



Elders, adults and kids perform kunborrk (traditional song and dance) by the fire on a Warddeken bushwalk. Photo by Cody Johnson © Warddeken and Nawarddeken Academy.



# ALFA's core actions

**Manage the generation and sale of ACCUs on behalf of partner groups**

**Contract and fund partner ranger groups to deliver fire management activities**

**Support pre- and post-season meetings for partner groups and stakeholders**

**Fund bushfire project officers to support ranger groups throughout the year**

**Fund a seasonal fire officer to support ranger groups fight wildfires**

**Coordinate data collection and reporting**

**Deliver accredited, custom developed training**

**Facilitate Producers Group meetings**

**Manage a grants program to fund partner ranger groups develop and undertake community led projects consistent with ALFAs charitable objects**

**Provide policy and industry advice and support the ongoing development of the Indigenous carbon industry**



# Savanna Burning Methodology



Left: Smoke from cool burning in savanna woodlands – the dominant habitat of ALFA project areas. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.  
Above: A Bawinanga Djelk ranger uses his phone to take photos from the helicopter. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

All fires emit greenhouse gases, with savanna fires emitting methane and nitrous oxide in particular. The Savanna Burning Methodology is based on the strategic use of early dry season fire to reduce the emission of methane and nitrous oxide from the burning of savannas, compared to the emissions from a baseline period.

Each carbon credit unit generated under the Savanna Burning Methodology represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent net abatement achieved by undertaking planned fire management within the project area.

Net abatement is determined by measuring the difference between methane and nitrous oxide emissions from a project's baseline period against each subsequent project year. The difference between baseline and annual project emissions reflects the change resulting from a change in fire management practices and in Arnhem Land, the reintroduction of customary burning. Importantly, projects only generate carbon credits if they are successful in avoiding emissions of methane and nitrous oxide compared to their baseline period.



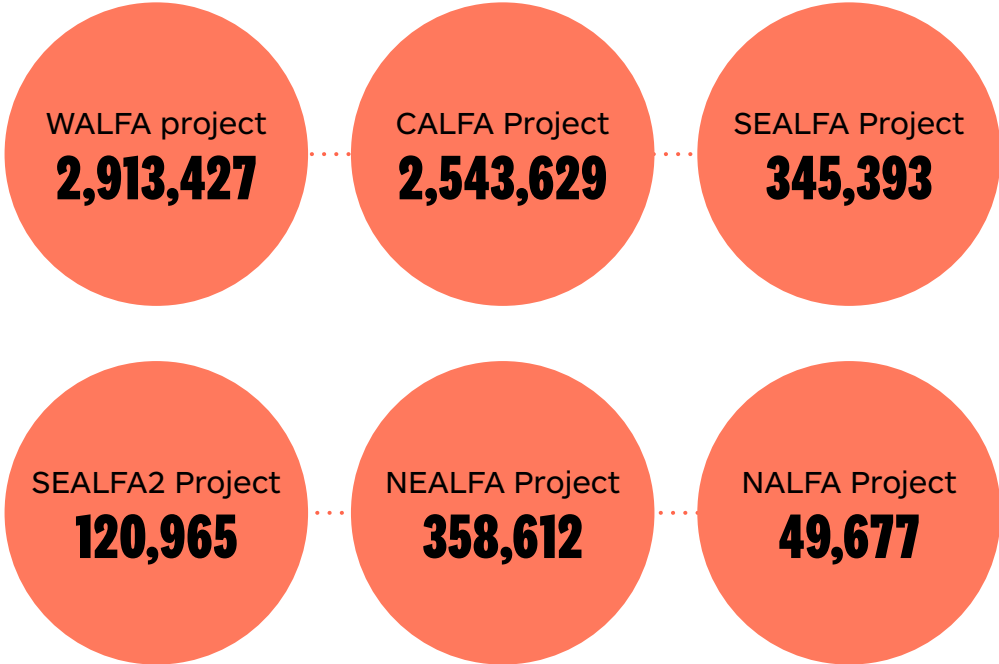
# Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) Generation

How does it work?

The Clean Energy Regulator issues Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) for greenhouse gas abatement activities undertaken as part of the Emissions Reduction Fund, a federal scheme that provides financial incentives to organisations and individuals to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and improve their energy efficiency.

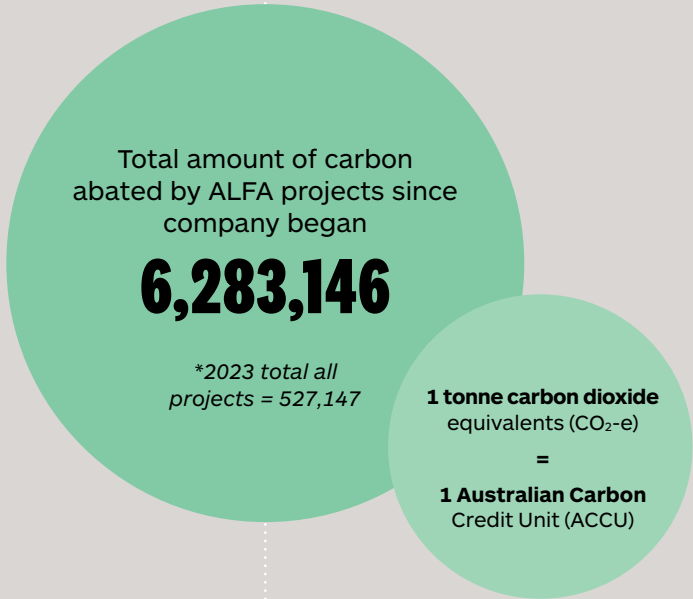
ALFA's six projects generate carbon credits through Federal Government legislation focused on carbon farming, with the issuance of ACCUs being governed by the *Carbon Farming Initiative Act (CFI) 2011*, the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Regulations 2011 (CFI Regulations 2011)* and the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Rule 2015 (CFI Rule 2015)*.

## ACCU issuance to date



# Producing ACCUs

How is success measured?



The production of ACCUs is highly regulated to ensure that emissions reductions are genuine, additional to business-as-usual, can be counted towards Australia's emissions reduction targets, are measurable and verifiable, evidence-based, account for project emissions and are conservative – these are the principles of the Offsets Integrity Standard.

Several requirements must be satisfied before a project can be formally declared an 'eligible offsets project', and there are ongoing, annual requirements in undertaking an eligible offsets project. These requirements include:

- There must be an approved methodology for the type of project.
- The project must deliver abatement that is additional to what would occur in the absence of the project.

- The project must be undertaken in accordance with the methodology and comply with other scheme eligibility requirements.

- The project proponent must report to the Regulator about the conduct of the project and the abatement achieved. Certain reports must be accompanied by a report prepared by a registered greenhouse gas and energy auditor.

With all partner groups recording strong abatement outcomes in 2023, the total amount of ACCUs generated by ALFA projects grew to over 6.2 million (over the lifetime of the projects). This represents a major contribution to global emissions reduction, as well as highlighting ALFA's position as the largest Indigenous carbon credit producer in Australia.



For ALFA and our partners, integrity has always been at the heart of why the company was created, what we achieve and how we operate. Since its establishment, ALFA has played a leading role in the carbon market as a significant producer of high integrity ACCUs.

For ALFA, there are three key factors enabling the production of high integrity ACCUs in Arnhem Land:

1. All ALFA projects operate under the rigorous Savanna Fire Management (SFM) method.
2. ALFA's operations and performance outcomes produce ACCUs that maximise environmental, social, cultural, and economic co-benefits.
3. The charitable reinvestment of ACCU income supports culturally appropriate fire management and community-led priority projects.

# High integrity ACCUs

*ALFA seeks to maximise returns to partner organisations, and in the eight-year period from June 2014 – June 2022, ALFA has generated \$56.9 million dollars from the sale of ACCUs, of which 93% has been directly reinvested to ALFA's Aboriginal project partners.*

In addition to playing an integral role in fire management programs, aerial burning also presents an opportunity for rangers to access vast expanses of Arnhem Land that are otherwise inaccessible. In this way, aerial burning plays a vital role in reconnecting people and Country. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.



# Our impact

Creating positive change is central to the vision of ALFA.



As part of Mimal's Learning on Country program, students from Bulman School practice the customary skill of making fire under tutelage from senior cultural leaders. Photo © Mimal.

**The impact of the ALFA program goes well beyond fire management and carbon abatement; it supports important cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes across Arnhem Land.**

A key way this is achieved is through the ALFA grants program, where carbon income or 'fire money' is distributed back to partnering Aboriginal ranger groups and host organisations. This funding, spent in line with the five ALFA objectives, supports ALFA's partner organisations to initiate and deliver a range of community led programs and activities.

In the nine-year period from June 2014 – June 2023, ALFA has funded grants to partner organisations in Arnhem Land totalling over \$43 million dollars. Activities that have been supported through the ALFA grants program include the monitoring of ecological outcomes from land management, the establishment of remote ranger bases, the development of independent community-managed schools and the creation of new training programs.

Over the last nine years of ALFA grant funding:

- 32 per cent has been used to cover day-to-day operational costs of the ranger programs including additional employment of Indigenous rangers and purchase of key equipment.
- 18 per cent has supported the building of key infrastructure within Arnhem Land like ranger bases, homeland outstations and access roads.
- 13 per cent has been directed towards a variety of community projects.
- 37 per cent has been set aside by our partner organisations for strategic investment in future community-led projects and as operational contingencies. This is critical to leverage emerging opportunities, maintaining capacity and ensuring the ongoing efficacy of the fire programs and other land management activities.

The impact of this funding for Arnhem Land is however much more than dollar amounts or statistics – it's the stories from local communities where fire money is making a real difference. On the following pages are two case studies from our partners – success stories of community impact supported by fire money.



Warddeken Landowners decided to address the lack of educational opportunities in the Warddeken IPA through creating Nawarddeken Academy, which now runs three registered schools aligned with Warddeken's ranger bases. Here, ranger Conrad Maralngurra works with student Bundy to learn the difference between weeds and native flora. Photo © Nawarddeken Academy.



# Warddeken Land Management – Nawarddeken Academy

## Case Study



**ALFA Objective: to provide for advancement of education of Aboriginal persons who have a traditional Aboriginal connection with any part of the ALFA (NT) Project Area.**

It had long been a dream of Nawarddeken Landowners to be able to live, work and educate their children on Country within the Kuwarddewardde (Stone Country of the west Arnhem plateau).

Guided by visionary Elder, Bardayal Nadjamerrek, the small outstation of Kabulwarnamyo was settled and established as a ranger base in 2002 for Nawarddeken Landowners to care for and manage their Country. As Kabulwarnamyo was too small to qualify for a school through the NT education department, Warddeken used carbon income from fire management, and pursued philanthropic funding through the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, to launch the Nawarddeken Academy.

Established to support young people in the Warddeken IPA to remain on Country and culturally engaged for their schooling, the Nawarddeken Academy brings together local traditional knowledge and western knowledge systems to best equip the next generation.

The Nawarddeken Academy successfully registered as an independent school in December 2018 and began operations using recurrent Government funding in 2019. Following the success of this education model at Kabulwarnamyo, in 2021, two additional independent schools

were established and registered in the communities of Manmoyi and Mamardawerre.

Today, the Nawarddeken Academy runs three community schools in the Warddeken IPA delivering two-way learning to children across Kuwarddewardde. Around 60 students were educated through Nawarddeken Academy schools in 2023, supported by 16 teachers, a principal and over 100 casual community support staff.

Using a curriculum that combines bininj (Indigenous) and balanda (non-Indigenous) learnings, students' lessons are based around the Kuwarddewardde Malkno (Stone Country Seasonal Calendar) with teaching occurring in both local Bininj Kunwok languages and English.

Developed with Elders, rangers, and community leaders, the curriculum blends cultural learning with Federal and Territory teaching frameworks to ensure that students are taught to be strong in both bininj and balanda knowledge systems. Based around the six local seasons, students learn maths, literacy, science and information technology integrated alongside lessons on bush foods, sacred sites and traditional fire management.

Regular bush trips and cultural camps throughout the year allow students to learn on Country with Elders and ensure that learning remains practical and relevant to their daily lives. Trips further afield to Darwin and Melbourne for those with high attendance further encourage students to turn up to school each day.



Above: Rangers and students from Mamardawerre School on a stone country bushwalk – a major annual cultural event, collaboratively run by Warddeken and Nawarddeken. Photo © Kane Chenoweth and Warddeken.  
Below: Manmoyi student Rossanna holds a rock found on a bush trip to a cultural site. Photo © Nawarddeken Academy.





Top left to right: Young Nicholas practices his pre-writing skills at Kabulwarnamyo School. Photo © Nawarddeken Academy.  
 Delsanto with ngalmangeyi (long neck turtle) caught fishing on a bush trip.  
 Students Richard and Mitchell learn to light fires the customary way on bush trips with Warddeken rangers. Photo © Nawarddeken Academy.  
 Djarik (banksia cones) were once used to carry fire long distances. On the 2024 joint Nawarddeken Academy and Warddeken bushwalk, student Zachrukus practiced carrying smouldering djarik between campsites. Photo © Nawarddeken Academy.  
 Bottom left to right: Elder Margaret Nalorlman and educator Lorna Nabalwad lead a conversation with students about seasonal indicators. Photo © Nawarddeken Academy.  
 Miles, Richard and other students encircle the trunk of an Anbinik tree on a bush trip with rangers. Anbinik are the biggest trees in the Kuwarddewardde, an ancient ancestor of today's eucalypts, and are protected by rangers through active fire management.



There is a strong emphasis on community involvement at the Nawarddeken Academy, with many community members teaching or volunteering at the school. Significant school events like school assemblies, music workshops and bush walks are open to community members and allow students to learn alongside their families.

The success of the Nawarddeken Academy is evident in the high attendance rates, with all three schools achieving attendance for students while in community of between 82-99 per cent across the 2023 school year.

Since the first school opened at Kabulwarnamyo in 2015, Warddeken Land Management has continued to contribute funding from their carbon income to support the Nawarddeken Academy schools. By creating and supporting local educational opportunities for their young people, Nawarddeken landowners are using the carbon income from their own savanna fire management activities to create a long-lasting legacy for the next generation.

With a secondary school and a Bush University just around the corner, Nawarddeken Academy is looking to continue to advance educational horizons for children learning on Country.



At each SWFHC Forum, women lead important conversations contributing to the co-design of the network's strategic vision. These meetings form the foundational plan for where the network is headed, the goals it wishes to achieve and the priorities for the upcoming year. Photos © Melinda Hooper.



# Mimal Land Management – Strong Women for Healthy Country Network

## Case Study



**ALFA Objective: to collaboratively pursue the investigation, development and implementation of other activities which will protect, preserve and care for the environment (including the preservation and conservation of native Australian flora and fauna) and which are consistent with Aboriginal traditional rights and obligations and Australian law.**

The Strong Women for Healthy Country Network brings together Indigenous women caring for Country across the Northern Territory to advocate collectively as one voice.

In 2019, Rembarrnga, Dalabon, and Mayali Elders invited women working in land management across the territory to meet at Bawurrbarnda in central Arnhem Land to discuss their shared challenges. Recognising the power of a united voice, the women developed a vision for an ongoing forum to connect and share ideas for improving the health of Country.

Having hosted the initial gathering of 32 women's ranger groups at Bawurrbarnda, Mimal Land Management used carbon income from their fire management activities to support the creation and ongoing development of the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network. In building this network, women across the Territory committed to leveraging their collective strength to build healthy Country outcomes.

*'We are strong Indigenous women of the Northern Territory. We stand united as one strong voice. We commit to a network that gives equal power to the rights of all our women. Strong Women means Healthy Country.'*  
— SWHC Vision

The initial gathering in Arnhem Land was followed by forums at Banatjarl on Jawoyn Country in 2021, eastern Arrernte Country in the central desert in 2022, and at Pudukul on Limilngan-Wulna Country in 2023, establishing the event as an annual tradition.

While the yearly gatherings remain a focal point in the calendar, the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network continues to work year-round to advocate for dedicated spaces for women in communities and offer mentoring and training for women.

At the core of the Network is the Message Stick group, a self-elected body that meets regularly to make decisions on behalf of the entire Network. This group ensures that the voices and needs of these strong women are both heard and addressed.

From the very first meeting of the network, the enthusiasm from women across the Territory for a space to share the experiences and challenges of caring for Country has



continued to grow. Initially hosted and supported by Mimal Land Management, the Network's growing membership and voice across the NT have driven efforts to become an independent Aboriginal corporation under ORIC.

The success of the Network demonstrates how communities in Arnhem Land are using ALFA carbon income to achieve community-led change and support far-reaching environmental and community impact. From a local desire from women in Arnhem Land to be better represented in land management spaces and a little seed funding, a powerful movement was born creating positive healthy Country outcomes in communities across the Territory.

Looking forward, the Network is seeking to build more opportunities to advocate for their members and ensure that women's voices remain loud and proud in caring for Country.

For more information about the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network visit: [mimal.org.au/strong-women-for-healthy-country](http://mimal.org.au/strong-women-for-healthy-country)



The annual SWFHC forum, a highlight of the year for many ranger groups, blends larger events with intimate gatherings and activities that celebrate the unique role of women, and their experiences, in caring for Country. Photo © Melinda Hooper.



# ALFA Section 19 Land Use Agreement renewal project

The *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976* provides the legal framework for progressing social, commercial and economic development activities on Aboriginal land on behalf of Traditional Owners. The Northern Land Council (NLC) carries out consultations and negotiations on behalf of Traditional Aboriginal Owners with those interested in carrying out social, commercial and economic development activities on Aboriginal land and waters. This process is called the Section 19 agreement process, and it gives Traditional Landowners an opportunity to consider and develop terms and conditions and the right to consent to or reject proposals on their land and seas.

ALFA holds Section 19 Land Use Agreements for all ALFA project areas, which grants ALFA the legal right to undertake fire management in the project area and to earn and sell carbon credits from the management of fire. The current Section 19 Land Use Agreements were granted in December 2014 for the 14-year period from 1st January 2011 until the 31st December 2024. At the time, the crediting period under the Savanna Burning Method was for a period of 'seven plus seven' years – hence the application for a total period of 14 years. However, the crediting period under the Savanna Burning Method has since been revised to a total of 25 years, meaning ALFA must secure new Section 19 Agreements for the remainder of the current 25-year crediting period (until 31st December 2035).

To achieve this, ALFA began an ambitious project in 2022 with work continuing in 2023 in preparation for the NLC statutory consultations.

## Phase One – Pre-consultations

Before the commencement of NLC's formal Section 19 consultations, a team of expert ALFA consultants travelled across Arnhem Land to sit down with Traditional Owners for pre-consultations, aiming to

have conversations with as many Traditional Owners as possible, including younger generations, who in time will become responsible for the projects.

During the pre-consultation phase, ALFA's consultant team spoke with almost 2000 Traditional Owners from within the ALFA fire project areas, travelling to more than 40 communities across west, central and south Arnhem Land. Consultants worked alongside local Indigenous rangers and key informants to hold individual and small family group consultations. Using a highly visual consultation book, consultants shared the story of the fire projects, outlining a history of fire projects in Arnhem Land, the origin of ALFA, the success of the projects to date, and an overview of the proposed Section 19 renewal.

The response from Landowners from all communities was resounding support for the continuation of the WALFA and CALFA projects, with near unanimous support expressed for the:

- continued delivery of fire management programs by relevant ranger groups;
- continued participation in the carbon economy through the WALFA/CALFA projects;
- continued work of ALFA in negotiating bureaucratic and business requirements on behalf of Landowners and their respective ranger groups.

These information sharing consultations also highlighted that, for many Landowners, the work of rangers in delivering fire projects is a source of great pride. Many Landowners also advised that they view ranger work as one of the most important forms of employment throughout the region, particularly on homeland (also known as outstation) communities.



Above: Roadside burning is a core activity in on ground fire management programs. Tracks and roads and the primary ignition point of most deliberately lit late season fires, and so establishing good fire breaks early in the season is essential. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Bottom left and right: Mimal and Bawinanga Djelk women rangers came together for a fire camp, focusing on peer-to-peer learning about fire, and spending time with senior women to discuss customary knowledge and skills. Photo © Mimal.





Above: Rangers from the NALFA project prepare to take to the skies and perform aerial burning. Photo © NLC.

Below: ALFA consultant Georgia Vallance shares information about the Section 19 renewal with Traditional Owners at Weemol.

### Phase Two – NLC Consultations

Excitingly, the second half of 2023 saw the S19 project begin the process of undertaking the NLC statutory consultations under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976 (ALRA)*.

#### Key Milestones

- NLC completed the WALFA Land Interest Register – the list of Traditional Owners on NLC databases that need to be consulted in relation to the agreement.
- NLC staff and ALFA coordinated logistics for upcoming extensive fieldwork trips.
- ALFA printed consultation material that can be kept by Traditional Owners after the consultation meeting.
- ALFA consultants and NLC Anthropologists began official S19 LUA consultations in August 2023. The focus of these consultations was on the completion of the WALFA S19 consultations before the end of 2023.
- NLC consultations followed the method established during ALFAs pre-consultation work, with a focus on personalised small group consultations at each Traditional Owner’s place of residence. This approach is considered best practise and facilitates questioning and the provision of feedback.
- Using this method, the NLC successfully completed consultations with an estimated 220 senior decision-makers, as well as about 50 other younger group members. This involved conducting approximately 190 small group consultations, numbering between two and six people, at 20 major communities and townships, and at 15 outstations.

### Completed NLC fieldwork

- WALFA Field Consults Round 1: September 2023 at Gunbalanya and surrounding outstations, and Jabiru.
- WALFA Field Consults Round 2: October 2023 at Bulman, Weemol, Mt Catt, Beswick, Barunga, Manyallaluk, Katherine and surrounds, Kybrook Farm, Pine Creek, Maningrida and surrounding outstations, Gunbalanya and Jabiru.
- WALFA Field Consults Round 3: November 2023 at Gunbalanya and surrounds, Jabiru and Darwin.
- SEALFA North Consults Round 1: October 2023 at Bulman and November 2023 at Numbulwar.



Above: ALFA consultant Jake Weigl with Elder and senior Landowner Ivan Namirriki at Kumurrulu outstation. Left: Most Section 19 consultations, such as this one in Kalano, were undertaken in small groups, ensuring Landowners were able to ask questions and have candid discussions with consultants about the renewal.



# ALFA's custom training program

In response to feedback from ALFA's partner ranger groups, a custom model of fire management training was developed, adapting Nationally Accredited Units of Competency to an Arnhem Land context. Under ALFA's custom training program, large numbers of Aboriginal rangers in Arnhem Land have now attained nationally recognised qualifications in units related specifically to the savanna burning projects. Importantly, all training is undertaken on Country and on-the-job, in the course of the ranger's scheduled work activities.

In 2023, ALFA had four Units of Competency available for enrolment, delivery and assessment, with a high demand from all partner groups to access the training. To meet the growing demand for ALFA's custom training units, additional ALFA staff attained their Cert IV in Training & Assessment, and are now actively engaged in delivering training across Arnhem Land. This has enabled ALFA to expand the scope and timeliness of delivery.

Consultations with partner ranger groups indicated that a clear priority was accredited training in helicopter-based operations. In response, various modes of delivery and methods of assessment were trialled with six different ranger groups, allowing an optimal model to be developed for the units 'Work safely around aircraft' and 'Operate aerial ignition equipment in an aircraft'.

ALFA's hands-on approach to these two units involves instruction in the use, maintenance and safety features of the Raindance incendiary machine; theory of the principles of operation; and an operational flight under instruction, which includes an in-flight emergency fire drill. Students must also complete a further two operational flights of at least one hour to gain competency.

Operating the incendiary machine and working safely around aircraft remain the mainstays of ALFA training. However, ALFA is slowly building training numbers in Fireground safety and Wildfire Response – the other priority area of our partners. A major challenge has been delivering meaningful, on-the-job wildfire training for rangers.

The plan of approach in 2024 will be to:

- Provide as much fire training and exposure before combating an actual wildfire by delivering fire safety and asset protection training, and conducting early dry season fire scar "gap filling".
- Record evidence on the fireground with people on the job using a simple and thorough recording system of activity, based on the unit "Observation Checklists", capturing demonstration of performance evidence of skills required under the unit of competency.

This year ALFA finished production of three training videos – the main one being an operation and maintenance guide for the R2 incendiary machine. The videos were narrated in English and three regional languages: East Side Kriol, Kunwinjku and Yolngu Matha.

The total number of certifications attained through ALFA is not high compared to other training providers; however, student numbers are deliberately kept low for a range of reasons:

- It can be difficult for people with limited English, and large groups compound that problem.
- Some people can be shy.
- Instruction and assessment in a small group can take the time it needs and can ensure each student is focused and engaged.
- The focus is on providing extremely high quality training.

ALFA would like to thank the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation for their generous support, without which the pilot training program would not have been possible. Their contributions have provided the time and resources for ALFA to develop and deliver meaningful training in Arnhem Land.

Above: Bawinanga Djelk rangers train in the safe use of aerial incendiary machines. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Below: Adjumarllarl and Warddeken rangers during wildfire training. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

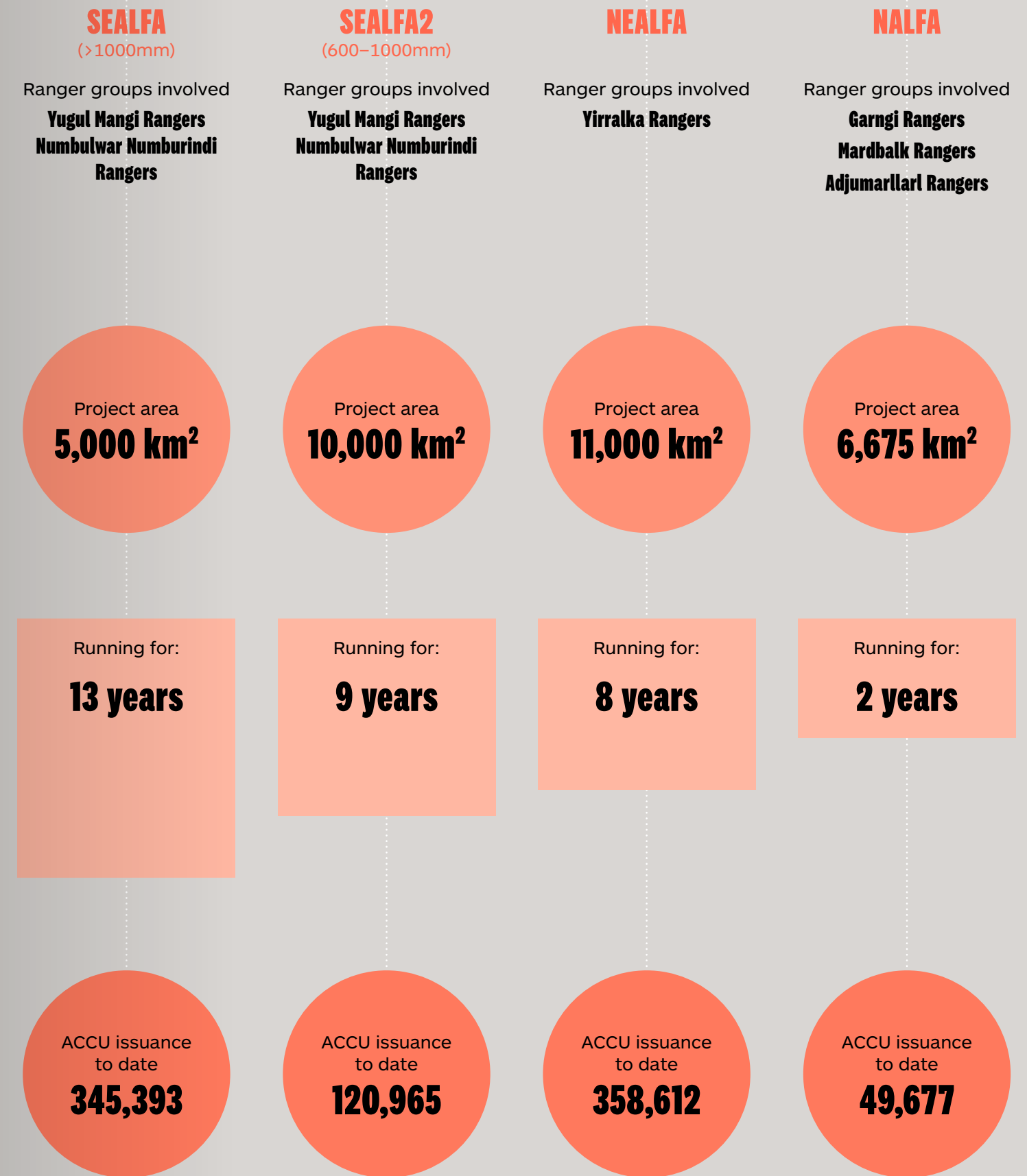




# Summary of ALFA project areas – overall key statistics

“From a Western ecological perspective, fire management in Arnhem Land, resourced through ALFA’s engagement with the carbon industry, has successfully addressed the prevalence of hot, widespread and destructive wildfires in the landscape – a threat to the environmental assets of northern Australia recognised in both Aboriginal and Western science knowledge systems.”<sup>1</sup>

1 tonne carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>-e) = 1 Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU)





# Summary of ALFA project areas – 2023 management statistics

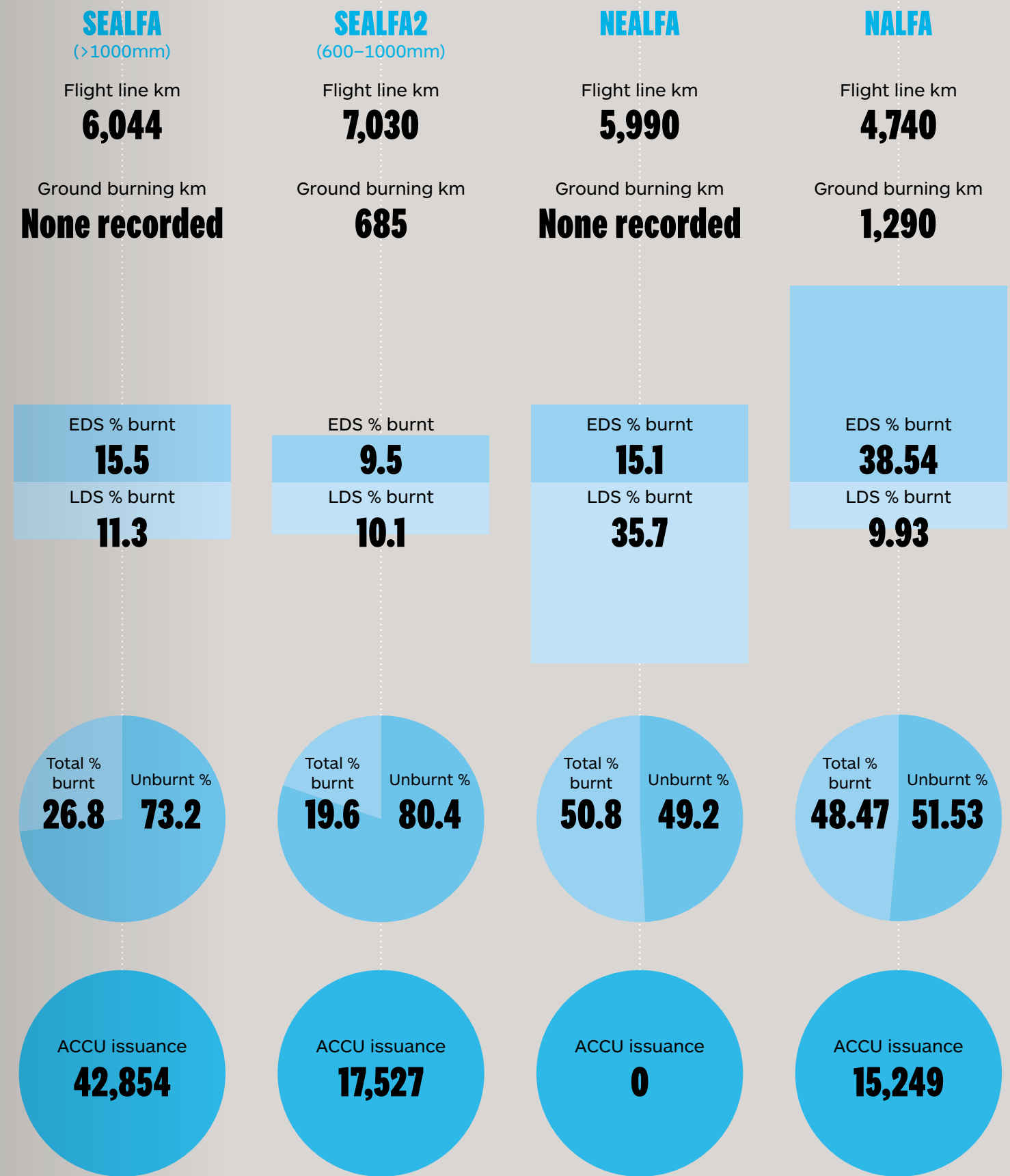
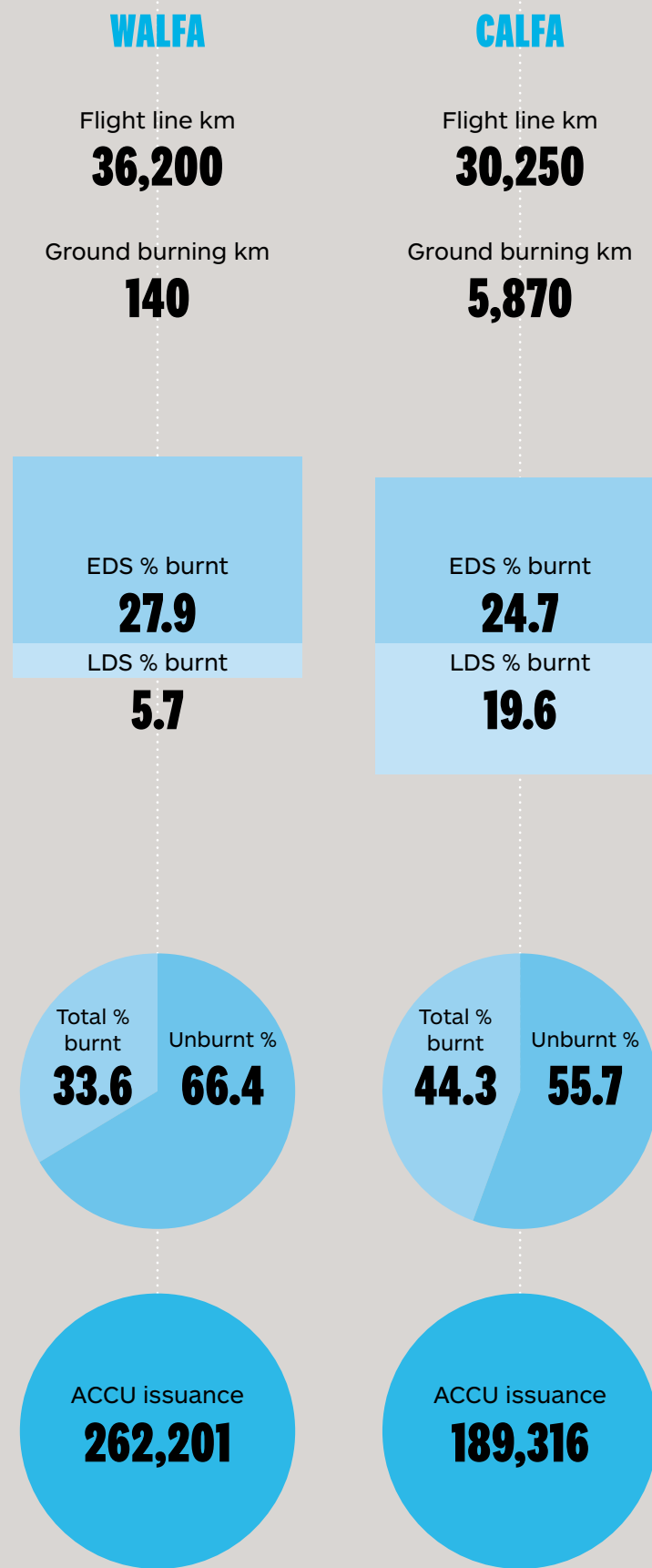
\*Combined totals of ALFA partners.

Flight line kilometres represent the total distance flown by each project during planned aerial burning operations.

EDS % is the per cent of the project area burnt in the early dry season (January to July). LDS % is the per cent burnt in the late dry season (August to December).

Unburnt % represents the total area of each project unburnt by early or late fire. Research suggests maintaining long unburnt areas of Country is a key requirement to protect threatened fauna, and so undertaking planned burning early in the EDS and active wildfire prevention in the LDS to maintain large tracts of unburnt Country is critically important.

1 tonne carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>-e) = 1 Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU)





# Fire Management Activities Summary 2023

- Planning and consultation
- Asset protection
- On ground burning
- Aerial burning
- Cultural programs
- Wildfire suppression

**This section of the report provides an overview of the success of our partners against each core strategic action. Figures represent the combined totals of all ranger groups.**





**Prior to commencing annual early dry season fire management, rangers from ALFA's partner groups travel across Arnhem Land to consult the Traditional Landowners of clan estates within their respective project areas. These conversations allow Landowners to inform rangers about where, when and how they want burning to occur on their Country, and to advise rangers if they would like to be involved in fire management work. Pre-season Landowner consultations guide and inform each ranger group's annual burning plan.**

ALFA again held the pre-fire season meeting at Barrapunta homeland in the Mimal operational area on 4-5th April 2023. Over 110 participants came together for the meeting, consisting of representatives from all ranger groups involved in ALFA fire projects, as well as other stakeholders. The meeting always has a celebratory feel, with rangers excited to spend time with extended family from across Arnhem Land, and to sit down with neighbouring ranger groups to discuss their management plans, present proposed burning activities for the year, and identify strategic ways to work together to maximise outcomes.

In addition to ALFA's preseason meeting, partner ranger groups also undertake internal Landowner consultations, ensuring both Landowners (patrilineal

ownership) and Djungkay (matrilineal ownership) for Custodial Estates within their respective operational areas give their informed consent for burning work to occur. Consultations also allow Landowners to provide important feedback to rangers about how they should deliver the year's fire management program. This includes identifying who will undertake aerial controlled burning, expressing interest in joining planned fire management activities, cultural camps and bushwalks, as well as requesting resources and support to independently deliver cultural burning activities. Across Arnhem Land, there is a strong connection between Landowners and the rangers who work to protect their Country, with hundreds of Landowners working across the fire projects each year.

## **PLANNING AND CONSULTATION**

# 519

**TRADITIONAL  
LANDOWNERS CONSULTED**



Above: Rangers from different groups came together to perform a smoking ceremony to open the 2023 pre-season meeting. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.  
Below: Mimal and ASRAC rangers share a boundary and management area, and there are strong cultural and familial connections between the groups. The pre-season meeting is an opportunity for them to collaboratively plan burning activities for the year. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.





**160**

ATTENDEES PRE-SEASON

**70**

ATTENDEES END OF SEASON





**A key feature of on ground burning is the widespread asset protection work performed by all ranger groups across their respective management areas. Often, asset protection burns are the first step in an early dry season burning program, to ensure that the most important environmental, cultural and infrastructure assets are secured before widespread burning is undertaken.**



**ASSET  
PROTECTION**

**130**

**INFRASTRUCTURE, CULTURAL  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS**



Far left: Asset protection burning at Wauk Outstation in the NALFA project area. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Above: Via a dedicated Rock Art Program, Warddeken rangers conserve and protect art galleries and occupation sites through careful, strategic burning. Photo © Warddeken.

Left: ALFA officer Steph Rouse works alongside Mardbalk rangers to protect telecommunications infrastructure. Photo © NLC.

Asset protection burning involves the creation of firebreaks (often mineral earth breaks), and subsequent controlled backburning from those breaks, to surround the asset requiring protection.

The most common form of asset protection burning involves securing the communities and associated infrastructure within the operational area of the projects. Rangers secure infrastructure including houses, buildings and water and energy assets.

Environmental assets protected by our partners include identified long-unburnt habitat refuges for endangered fauna such as the white-throated grass wren and northern quoll, and fire sensitive ecological communities such as Allosyncarpia forests of the west Arnhem Plateau.

Some cultural sites also benefit from protection against late season fire, including rock art galleries, occupation sites, burial sites and sacred sites, and many of our partners deliver strong cultural asset protection programs.



Above left: Aerial burning along the NALFA project area coastline provided some spectacular scenery. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Below left: On ground burning generally commences before aerial burning, with rangers first targeting smaller areas of cured grass and vegetation. Photo © NLC.

Below right: Learning on Country students from Bulman School worked with Mimal rangers to learn the tricks of the trade. Photo © Mimal.



## EARLY DRY SEASON BURNING — ON GROUND

# 7,985

KILOMETRES ON GROUND BURNING



**For millennia, landscape scale burning occurred as people moved across Country in the dry season, burning as they walked and camped. On ground burning remains a core component of the fire management work undertaken by rangers, who work throughout the early dry season to establish fine scale and targeted firebreaks, often to protect cultural, environmental and infrastructure assets.**

Traditional Owners and rangers from across the project areas begin to light early season fires as soon as vegetation cures. Rangers perform strategic burning along roadsides and hunting tracks (often ignition points for late dry season fire) as well as around infrastructure and important cultural and environmental sites.

On ground burning is widely undertaken from vehicles (4WD, quad bike or side-by-side), using a drip torch or wind-proof matches as the ignition source. Many ranger groups enhance vehicle burning by running small and large scale bushwalks, allowing fine scale burning to be performed in areas inaccessible by vehicles, and which may not otherwise be visited.

Partner ranger groups also run events such as cultural camps to involve young people and Elders, activities of great importance, as they allow a new generation of Traditional Owners to learn how to carefully burn Country, as the old people did.

Rangers record data on ground burning activities, using GPS, CyberTracker and work diaries.





**Arnhem Land is extremely remote and undeveloped – to overcome this inaccessibility, rangers utilise helicopters to deliver aerial incendiary burning across vast tracts of Country – a synthesis of customary and contemporary ecological management practices.**

Aerial planned burning (APB) accounts for the majority of early dry season burning activity across Arnhem Land. Delivered from helicopters and utilising incendiary delivery machines, APB allows rangers to access remote regions of their project areas, creating a mosaic of burnt and unburnt Country, and securing the boundaries between neighbouring groups.

Many factors contribute to APB flight routes, including topography and sacred sites, previous years' fire scars, local knowledge and experience, and real-time observation of fuel and conditions. Landowners are also able to request that specific areas of Country remain unburnt during a particular fire season for cultural reasons. Existing landscape features such as rivers, roads and rock Country are incorporated into APB routes to create landscape scale firebreaks encompassing burned and natural breaks.

Although a thoroughly contemporary management tool, Landowners and rangers are able to effectively translate customary fire practice to an APB context. Importantly, through adjustments to the delivery rate of incendiaries, APB can be tailored to deliver very specific burning results taking into account weather and fuel conditions for different environments in the landscape.

Thanks in part to ALFA's custom training program, rangers from all partner groups are now highly experienced in APB operations. Ranger groups record aerial burning activities using either a combination of GPS and work diaries or CyberTracker to document flight lines.

Above right: After successfully completing ALFA training, Jawoyn rangers conducted aerial burning in the WALFA project area. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Below right: Warddeken ranger Tahnee participated in her third year overseeing aerial burning on her mother's Country, for which she has responsibility as a Djungkay. Photo © Warddeken.



**EARLY DRY  
SEASON BURNING  
— AERIAL**

**90,254**

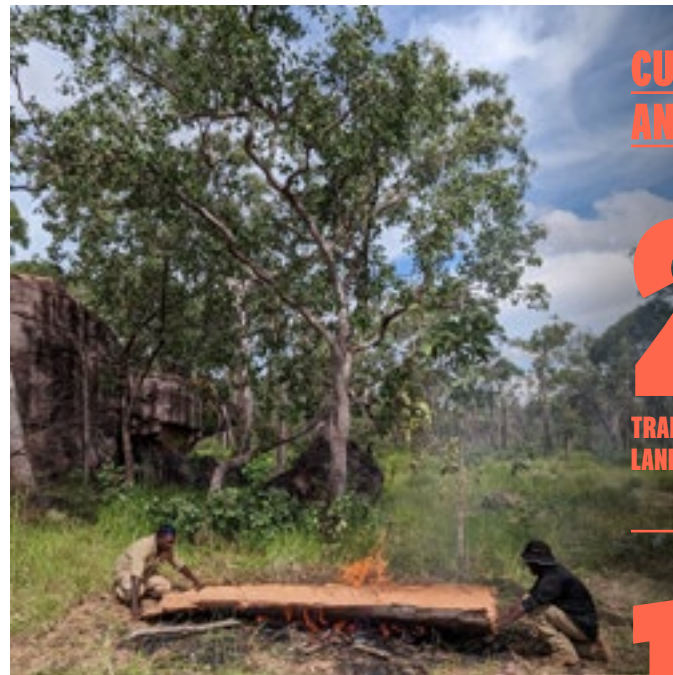
**KILOMETRES FLOWN**



**131**

**TRADITIONAL  
LANDOWNERS INVOLVED**





**CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

**280+**

TRADITIONAL LANDOWNERS INVOLVED

**125+**

STUDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**85+**

ELDERS AND CULTURAL LEADERS

**Across Arnhem Land, fire has always held great importance for Aboriginal people. Fire is a totem. It has sacred ceremonial associations. Making fire is an important cultural skill. Fire is still used as a hunting tool. Depending on its application, fire can destroy or renew bush foods and medicinal plants. Fire is the preferred method of cooking, with some animals prepared according to strict cultural protocols. All of this is in addition to the use of fire to manage Country.**



Above left: Warddeken rangers cure bark over a fire in preparation to build a customary shade shelter. Photo © Warddeken.

Below left: Rangers and school students from Warddeken and Nawarddeken Academy undertook a 12-day bushwalk across Country. Photo © Warddeken.

Right: Students light 'bush drip torches' as part of the Learning on Country program at Bulman. Photo © Mimal.

Central to the vision of ALFA's founders and partners is the principle of providing young people with ongoing opportunities to learn from Elders, leaders and experienced cultural fire practitioners about the many and various ways in which fire dominates life in Arnhem Land.

This year, ALFA partners delivered a range of cultural revival and renewal events, all of which created valuable space for intergenerational learning. These included large scale bushwalks, Learning on Country camps, cultural camps and collaborative fire knowledge camps.





**The late dry season begins in August, when rangers shift their focus to the minimisation of wildfires, which burn hot and fast as weather conditions become warmer and drier. Ranger groups raise community awareness of dangerous fire conditions and, when necessary, launch intensive wildfire suppression campaigns to protect priority areas of Country.**

Left: Djelk rangers take a well-deserved break during a wildfire suppression campaign. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Right: Leaf blowers – a ranger's best friend in the late dry season! Photo © Mimal.



**WILDFIRE  
SUPPRESSION**

**63**

**WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION  
CAMPAIGNS**

**140**

**RANGER PERSONNEL**



Increasingly, wildfire suppression has become a core component of annual fire management programs. Most firefighting is undertaken dry, meaning rangers use fire suppression techniques of controlling fires that don't involve water, such as installing mineral earth breaks that act as a barrier to pull up fires by removing combustible fuel.

One of the most unique aspects of fire suppression in Arnhem Land is the use of backpack leaf blowers in

containing wildfires – by blowing out flames and blowing embers and combustible fuels such as grass and leaf litter back into the active fire.

Helicopters are often required to ferry teams of rangers in to access remote fire lines. Rangers often work to suppress fires that threaten important cultural or environmental sites, and on many occasions have preserved significant cultural and environmental assets by extinguishing wildfires.



**The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals are a global call to action to protect the planet, end poverty and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.**

[sdgs.un.org/goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals)



ALFA's partners actively support several UN Sustainable Development Goals through land and cultural heritage management programs. Income from ACCU sales enables ranger groups to run fire management and other community-led initiatives, achieving positive environmental outcomes like reduced carbon emissions and improved ecological health of Country.

Equally importantly, ranger programs generate diverse cultural, economic, and social co-benefits for Traditional Owners and their families. Through annual fire management programs, ALFA's partners actively address several Sustainable Development Goals, fostering positive impacts across cultural heritage, community resilience, and local economies.



Fire management work has a multitude of benefits for rangers, their families and the communities in which they live. Photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.





Goal 1. No Poverty

Millions of dollars annually are reinvested in communities through wages.

Ranger programs provide employment opportunities in remote communities.



Goal 3. Good Health and Wellbeing

People are able to harvest and access bush tucker through ranger programs.

Landowners are supported to live and work on their Country.

Connection to cultural identity is enhanced.



Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth

Ranger programs offer meaningful, highly sought-after roles in economically disadvantaged regions.

Ranger programs support staff to access training and education.



Goal 13. Climate Action

The work of ALFA partners leads to significant GHG emission reduction every year.

ALFA has led others to replicate our model of business, leading to more GHG avoidance.



Goal 2. Zero Hunger

Ranger groups operate food security programs such as tucker runs.

Regular income allows families to buy food.

Ranger programs support people to live on Country and access bush foods.



Goal 5. Gender Equality

Many of ALFA's partners have dedicated women's ranger programs.

More women rangers are involved in fire operations every year.



Goal 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities

Ranger groups provide essential services in remote communities.

Ranger groups offer the only employment in many homeland communities.



Goal 15. Life on Land

Ranger work respects the choice of Traditional Owners to remain on Country.

Ranger groups are providing a future for people on Country.



**ALFA partners with eleven community and homeland-based Aboriginal ranger groups, supporting them to collectively deliver six fire management projects across 86,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Arnhem Land.**

**The fire project areas include four declared Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA), managed by their corresponding ranger group:**

- Djelk IPA**
- Warddeken IPA**
- South East Arnhem Land IPA**
- Laynhapuy IPA**

**Additionally, there are two IPAs currently under consideration by the federal government – the Mimal and ASRAC IPAs.**

**The following section of the report profiles each of our extraordinary partners, demonstrating the exceptionally high quality to which they deliver fire management programs across Arnhem Land.**

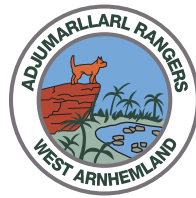


ASRAC rangers undertook a total of 944 personnel hours of on ground burning in 2023, a remarkable effort. Photo © ASRAC.



# Adjumarllarl, Garngi and Mardbalk Rangers

## NALFA project



For the second year running, the Adjumarllarl, Garngi, and Mardbalk ranger groups worked together to carry out a successful fire season across their shared management area under the NALFA project.

The Adjumarllarl Rangers, one of the Northern Territory's first Aboriginal ranger programs, have been based out of Gunbalanya in west Arnhem for over 30 years, managing approximately 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Country. The Garngi Rangers, established in 1998 and operating out of Minjilang, have responsibility for around 1,100 km<sup>2</sup> of land and sea Country on Croker Island and the adjacent mainland. The Mardbalk Rangers, based in Warruwi on Goulburn Island, oversee more than 4,400 km<sup>2</sup> of land and sea Country, including the culturally significant Goulburn Islands and surrounding mainland areas. Both the Garngi and Mardbalk Rangers are hosted by the NLC.

The collaboration between the three groups is underpinned by strong cultural ties, which were evident during an early dry season camp in June 2023, attended by rangers from Adjumarllarl, Garngi, and Mardbalk. Held over four days at Wauk Outstation, 17 participants carried out ground burning activities including extensive roadside and asset

protection burning. Their efforts helped protect key assets including Wauk Outstation, infrastructure at Sandy Creek, and Telstra towers along Murgellenella and Walunga Road.

In addition to ground-burning activities, all three ranger groups undertook extensive aerial burning. Two Adjumarllarl Rangers completed accredited aircraft safety and aerial ignition training through ALFA's training program, further supporting the success of the aerial burning program across the NALFA project area.

Consultation with Landowners remained an important aspect of the fire season for all ranger groups, with engagement occurring prior, during and after the conclusion of prescribed burning activities. Meeting with Landowners at the end of the season to explain the burning outcome and display maps of areas burnt was particularly important in ensuring the ongoing support of local communities for future fire seasons.

Looking forward to 2024, the ranger groups seek to undertake further accredited training, come together for early dry season burning camps, and develop a project to monitor the environmental impact of burning on culturally significant plant and animal species within the landscape.



Rangers from Adjumarllarl, Garngi and Mardbalk deliver their 2023 fire management program in the NALFA project area. Photos © David Hancock and NLC.



# Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation

CALFA project



The Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation (ASRAC) was established in 2013 to support and manage a network of eight ranger groups around the Arafura Swamp, its catchment, and Castlereagh Bay. The swamp known locally as Gurruwiling is the largest paperbark swamp in Australia and a critical habitat for numerous species. Spanning over 14,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Gurruwiling is home to more than a thousand plant species and hundreds of fish, bird, mammal, reptile, and other animal species. The ASRAC Rangers – consisting of the Gurruwiling, Wanga Djakamirr, Balmawirry Dhipirr, Malnyangarnak Bukgurl-Na Rangers and the four South East Arafura Catchment rangers, Dhupuwamirri, Donydji, Mirrngatja and Ngilipitji Rangers – manage the area on behalf of the regions 46 clans. Each year, the rangers collaborate with local landowners to plan and map out the fire season.

This year's fire season began in late May with around key community assets including cultural sites, outstations, power and water infrastructure, and the Ramingining school. Additional ground burns were conducted along main roads, popular hunting tracks, and around remote homeland communities. This was followed with several aerial burning runs between June and August across the region.

Traditional burning is a focus. Camps were held in Malnyangarnak and Djilpin areas, where Traditional Owners and rangers worked alongside younger community members to conduct burns, gather bush tucker, and share knowledge across generations.

In 2023, ASRAC prioritised expanding its capacity for fire work with many hands-on training opportunities for rangers. New southeast rangers participated in fire suppression work for the first time, with rangers from the Donydji and Dhupuwamirri groups joining the Gurruwiling rangers to learn safe and effective firefighting techniques. This not only provided important learning opportunities for newer rangers but also significantly enhanced ASRAC's wildfire response capabilities.

An important development that bolstered ASRAC's fire season effectiveness was the recruitment of a new ranger coordinator position. This role has provided essential on-the-ground capacity, allowing increased skill development opportunities for the ranger teams and increased ability to respond to fires. With the coordinator visiting southeast bases monthly, rangers now receive direct support on country.

Rangers from ASRAC deliver their 2023 fire management program. Photos © ASRAC.





# Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation

CALFA & WALFA projects



Bawinanga Djelk rangers deliver their 2023 fire management program. Photos by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Established in the 1990s, the Bawinanga Djelk Rangers were formed in response to growing concerns from Traditional Owners in west Arnhem Land about environmental degradation, including biodiversity loss, invasive species, and the increasing threat of wildfires. Based in Maningrida, the rangers now manage 6,732 km<sup>2</sup> of Aboriginal freehold land within the Djelk IPA, encompassing 36 homelands, 13 language groups and the custodial estates of 102 clan groups. Employing upwards of 25 local Indigenous rangers, Djelk works closely with Landowners around Maningrida township and across the homeland communities to implement an annual fire program and achieve healthy country outcomes.

The Bawinanga Djelk 2023 fire season began with extensive community consultations from March to early May, engaging landholders across the IPA. This engagement continued throughout the burning season with Landowners working alongside rangers to conduct aerial and ground-burning activities.

Between May and July, 26 Landowners were employed on a casual basis to assist rangers in conducting aerial burns. This engagement was supported by key personnel and a knowledge of clan estates within the ranger team.

Despite the considerable investment in early season burning, 2023 proved to be a challenging year for the Bawinanga Djelk Rangers, with several large wildfires spreading across Country. Although access difficulties hampered containment efforts, the rangers, with support from ALFA, Mimal, Warddeken, and Arafura Swamp ranger groups, eventually managed to halt the fires' spread through targeted, gap-filling burning.

Despite the challenges posed by wildfires, collaborative fire-fighting efforts reinforced partnerships with neighbouring ranger groups, further enhancing existing fire management cooperation and knowledge-sharing across Arnhem Land. Additionally, the high levels of community involvement in burning activities demonstrates the strong commitment of Landowners to fire management on Country.





Jawoyn rangers deliver their 2023 fire management program. Photos by Steph Rouse © ALFA.



# Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation

## WALFA project



Jawoyn Aboriginal Corporation has responsibility for Country covering ~14,055 km<sup>2</sup>, from Pine Creek in the north-west, Mataranka in the south-east, and encompassing parts of Kakadu National Park and southern Arnhem Land. Jawoyn represents over 2500 community members living across communities in Beswick, Barunga, Pine Creek Werenbun, Jodedluk, Manyallaluk, Rockhole, Binjari, Kalano and Katherine.

As one of the original partners under the WALFA agreement, Jawoyn has been a key contributor to the revival of savanna burning management in Arnhem Land, and the Jawoyn fire program now extends into Nitmiluk and Kakadu National Parks under joint management agreements, and also as a fee-for-service activity on vacant crown land.

The 2023 Jawoyn fire season began with Landowner consultations held in March and April in the communities of Barunga, Beswick, Manyallaluk, and Katherine. At these meetings, Jawoyn rangers discussed their fire plan and received advice regarding important assets and cultural sites.

Throughout the early dry season rangers undertook ground burning around key ignition points including along the Stuart Highway, hunting roads and known camping spots. This was supported by a significant aerial burning program, particularly in April and May. Over the 2023 fire season, nearly 3000 kilometres of country was burnt, with the majority occurring in the early dry season in line with the Jawoyn fire plan.

A significant focus of the 2023 season was the expansion of the ranger program, with the addition of several new full-time and casual rangers. A particular success has been the establishment of the Ngalmuka (women's) ranger group, including recruitment of three new female rangers with the support of ALFA fire money. The Ngalmuka rangers will work alongside the men to conduct fire management activities, host women's camps, undertake flora and fauna monitoring and collaborate with community groups like the Banatjarl Strongbala Wimun Group to support healthy Country outcomes. The investment in expanding the ranger program has also allowed for a reinvigoration of the junior ranger program to support younger community members to participate in fire management on Jawoyn Country.



# Mimal Land Management

## CALFA & WALFA projects



Mimal Rangers operate in central Arnhem Land across an area that covers the woodlands, grassy plains and rock country of the Dalabon, Mayali and Rembarrnga Traditional Owners. Originally hosted by the NLC, Mimal was established as an independent land management organisation in 2017, following a desire expressed by Landowners for greater autonomy and the development of financial capacity through the ALFA partnership and carbon income. In November 2022, Mimal submitted a proposal to establish a new IPA covering 18,000 km<sup>2</sup> of country with the support from more than 20 clan groups across the region.

Community consultation continues to be central to Mimal Ranger's land management approach. This year, Mimal prioritised consultations with Landowners both within and beyond the IPA to ensure that all community members were adequately consulted prior to any burning activities. Over two weeks, rangers travelled and met with community members and their families in Beswick, Barunga, Mataranka, Katherine, and Darwin. Further community engagement was undertaken around Bulman and Weemol, with consultations indicating strong support for the fire program and a desire from many

Landowners to participate in early burning activities on their Country.

This year's prescribed burning program faced some challenges – an extended wet season that kept soil moisture levels high later into the year delayed early fire break efforts, and it wasn't until the final weeks of July that solid fire breaks were established. Despite the slow start, Mimal rangers logged over 2,500 hours of work and burnt 27 per cent of their management area in the early dry season.

Throughout the season, several cultural camps and walks were organised to help strengthen connections between community members and Country. A women's fire camp at Barnkey brought together Elders and younger women from surrounding ranger groups to share stories, visit rock art sites and pass on customary fire knowledge. Another significant event was a bushwalk from Bamdibu to Malnyangarnak with ASRAC, which reunited rangers and their families, while contributing to important ground burning efforts. A second walk from Barnkey to Gropulyu was also conducted by rangers in partnership with the Learning on Country program, which focused on preserving culture and passing knowledge to future generations.



Rangers from Mimal deliver their 2023 fire management program. Above photo by Steph Rouse © ALFA.



# Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers

SEALFA & SEALFA2 projects



Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi rangers deliver their 2023 fire management program in the SEALFA and SEALFA 2 project areas. Photos by Steph Rouse © ALFA.

Stretching from Blue Mud Bay to the Mouth of the Roper River, the South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area (SEAL IPA) covers 18,199 km<sup>2</sup> of tidal flats, coastal plains and sandstone uplands on the western edge of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Jointly managed by the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers, with oversight from the NLC, the IPA represents the Traditional Owners of the Ritharrngu, Rembarrnga, Ngandi, Ngalakgan, Warndarrang, Yugul, and Nunggubuyu peoples.

Under the leadership of Elders, the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers successfully managed the 2023 burning season across the SEAL IPA. The season kicked off with the development of their annual fire management plan, which prioritised engaging with landholders to identify key assets for protection and map fire lines.

From April to August 2023, the Rangers carried out an extensive early dry season burning program. They focused on protecting infrastructure around 22 outstations by performing on-ground burning and clearing.

Additional back-burning was conducted prior to conducting aerial burns, and rangers worked both on-foot and from vehicles to reduce fuel loads along roadsides. The extended burning period was a response to heavier than average rains in the late wet season, which delayed initial burning until Country was sufficiently dried. A rigorous aerial burning campaign between June and August resulted in over 13,000 kilometres of burn lines to support the containment of later season wildfires.

A highlight across the season was partnering with neighbouring ranger groups, including Yirralka and Mimal. These collaborations were planned at the ALFA preseason fire meeting at Barrapunta in April 2023, where rangers from Arnhem Land came together to discuss the season, address challenges, and share their burning plans.

Additionally, ALFA staff provided direct support to the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers involved in this year's fire season, assisting with Landowner consultations, burn planning, and aerial burning operations.



# Warddeken Land Management

## WALFA project



Warddeken Land Management was established in 2007 by the Traditional Owners of the Kuwarddewardde (Arnhem Land Plateau). With 390 rangers operating out of three remote homeland communities, Warddeken supports healthy Country outcomes across an IPA covering 14,000 km<sup>2</sup> of diverse landscapes. Undertaking a broad range of projects aimed at improved cultural and ecological outcomes, a strong fire management regime remains central to Warddeken's caring for Country approach.

In 2023, Warddeken rangers trialed a new tool to plan for, evaluate and maintain suitable areas of long unburnt habitat to both mitigate wildfires and support habitat for wildlife. Using this tool in 2023, 47 per cent of the Warddeken IPA was classified as long unburnt with more than 50 per cent of this long unburnt habitat classified as having high connectivity. Moving forward, the ability to look at the at the proportion and connectivity of long unburnt habitat will greatly assist with consultations and fire planning.

The long unburnt habitat evaluation builds on knowledge gained from another existing Warddeken initiative running since 2012 to protect Anbinik (Allosyncarpia ternata) forest habitat through targeted use of fire. Anbinik forests, unique to the Western Arnhem

Plateau and highly sensitive to fire, are crucial ecological habitat for many animals within the stone country. Through strategic ground and aerial burning, the Warddeken Rangers have used firebreaks to safeguard vulnerable Anbinik groves, with 26 Anbinik sites protected in 2023.

Protective burns are also used in the conservation of rock art sites. During surveying camps in the early dry season, rock art sites are subject to fuel reduction ground burns by rangers, supplemented with further aerial burning where required. A rock art preservation project currently being undertaken by Warddeken aims to better integrate protection of rock art sites into the broader burning program to maximise cultural and ecological outcomes across country.

Warddeken is also committed to incorporating local communities into fire management on country. This year, over 140 traditional owners and their families were involved in planning and delivering more than 14000 kilometres burning across the Warddeken operational area within the WALFA project. This included a 12-day bushwalk involving over 65 rangers, community members and school children who undertook ground-burning, shared stories and visited important sites along the way.



Rangers from Warddeken deliver their 2023 fire management program. Photos © Warddeken.





# Yirralka Rangers

## NEALFA project



Yirralka rangers plan and deliver their 2023 fire management program. Photos © Yirralka.



The Yirralka Rangers oversee management of the Laynhapuy IPA under the Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of the Yolngu people of north-east Arnhem Land. The Laynhapuy IPA is a vital habitat for endangered species and is located on key international bird migratory routes, showcasing rich biodiversity in both its terrestrial and marine environments.

In 2023, Yirralka Rangers consulted with Traditional Owners regarding potential amendments to their IPA's boundary. This consultation led to a submission to the NLC, proposing an expansion of the IPA to cover 14,728 km<sup>2</sup>, encompassing 16 remote Homeland communities in north-east Arnhem Land. A draft ten year Laynhapuy IPA Plan of Management was also developed and will be finalised in 2024.

The 2023 fire season was guided by the Yirralka Fire Management Strategy Action Plan, with significant involvement from Traditional Owners across the IPA. In May, the head ranger and the fire program facilitator travelled to 20 homelands within the IPA to engage with Landowners in fire planning. These conversations focused on cultural protocols to follow and the location and timing of burning.

Fire has always been central to land management practices for the Yolngu, traditionally starting in the

Rarranhdharr (mid-dry season) with the flowering of the Guwatiti (white flowers) on the Gadayka tree. Today, the impact of drying climate has shifted the timing, with the burning starting earlier in the Wäduḷ (early dry season). Patchy rainfall in the IPA continues into June adding complexity to fire management in the region.

In 2023, ground burning began in mid-June with roadside burns and asset protection work. There was a strong focus on reducing fuel loads around unoccupied homelands and along Central Arnhem Road to lower the risk for late season wildfires around key ignition areas. The Yirralka Rangers also worked with Dhimurru Rangers from Nhulunbuy to conduct joint asset protection burns in shared management zones at Yanjungbi and Yuduyudu.

Aerial burning was undertaken throughout July and August and included accredited aerial incendiary machine training completed with the support of ALFA. The initial aerial runs faced challenges with poor ignition success due to late rains, however, burning outcomes improved in August as temperatures rose and winds strengthened. Over the two-month period, 21 rangers and Traditional Owners completed over 5,900 kilometres of aerial burning operations.



# Awards



Jamie Yibarbuk and Steph Rouse with the Resilient Australia Photography Award, which Steph took while firefighting alongside Jamie and other rangers. Photo courtesy of Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience.

A key member of the ALFA team, Steph Rouse is not only a highly skilled fire manager, but also a very talented photographer (many of the images in this report were taken by Steph). This year, Steph's image of Bawinanga Djelk ranger Jamie Yibarbuk firefighting with a backpack leaf blower won the Resilient Australia Photography Award. Steph and Jamie travelled to Perth to receive the award, and share the unique story of wildfire suppression in

Arnhem Land. The award winning photograph features on the front cover of the January 2024 edition of the Australian Journal of Emergency Management.

Says Steph, "This photo isn't just about how resilient the rangers are working in extreme conditions, it also demonstrates the development of a resilient landscape that is being shaped through long term fire management practices to prevent large-scale bushfires".



## 'Unconventional Firefighting' Stephanie Rouse

No shiny fire trucks, no aerial water bombers. Armed with only a leaf blower and dropped in the middle of Arnhem Land by helicopter, these Indigenous rangers respond to wildfire like nobody else. Hundreds of hours, thousands of kilometres – the sheer scale of these fires cannot be comprehended until you are physically on the ground in the middle of it all. Days can turn into weeks, weekends and holidays become non-existent, yet they continue to fight. Every single year.

People ask "Why? You aren't protecting lives; you aren't protecting property – so why would you do it?". Their priority is their land – plants, animals, and sacred sites. This is what is important to them, and wildfire can destroy this in an instant. These rangers don't receive recognition through service medals, news stories or awards – seeing their Country healthy is why they are there, and why they continue even when times get tough.

Above: Steph's photograph on the front cover of the Australian Journal of Emergency Management.

Below: Steph's award winning photograph.







Students from Bulman School work closely with Mimal rangers through a strong Learning on Country program. In 2023, rangers taught students about contemporary and customary early burning practises. Here, students use 'bush drip torches' to light fire. Photo © Mimal.



# Financial Statements

## For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

### Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	27,476,739	11,309,055
Other income	244,052	5,527
Grant funding	(14,146,296)	(5,031,307)
Subcontracting costs	(6,903,925)	(3,003,588)
Contract exit fees	(2,760,000)	-
Other expenses	(2,148,752)	(709,114)
Employee benefits expense	(467,235)	(394,512)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(39,280)	(28,167)
Hire fees	(38,788)	(20,550)
Net surplus for the year	1,216,515	2,127,344
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	1,216,515	2,127,344

### Statement of Financial Position

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<i>Current assets</i>		
Cash and cash equivalents	5,489,006	4,204,168
Trade and other receivables	1,932,820	598,609
Total current assets	7,421,826	4,802,777
<i>Non-current assets</i>		
Plant and equipment	269,915	234,075
Total non-current assets	269,915	234,075
Total assets	7,691,741	5,036,852
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Trade and other payables	2,194,060	1,875,546
Employee benefits	94,950	65,659
Other liabilities	1,360,569	270,000
Total current liabilities	3,649,579	2,211,205
Total liabilities	3,649,579	2,211,205
Net assets / (liabilities)	4,042,162	2,825,647
<b>Equity</b>		
Accumulated surplus	4,042,162	2,825,647
Total equity	4,042,162	2,825,647




## Directors' Declaration

The directors of the registered entity declare that:

- The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 5 to 17, are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and:
  - comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures applicable to the entity; and
  - give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Company as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.
- In the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with subs 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*.

Director .....  .....

Director ..... LEON LAWRENCE .....

Dated this 20th day of September 2023

## Independent Audit Report to the members of ALFA (NT) Limited

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of ALFA (NT) Limited (the Company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Company is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012*, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section

of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, which has been given to the directors of the Company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Information Other than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report Thereon

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information obtained at the date of this auditor's report is included in the Directors' Report, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed on the other information obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions,

- misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



PERKS AUDIT PTY LTD  
84 Smith Street  
Darwin, NT 0800



PETER J HILL  
Director  
Registered Company  
Auditor

Dated this 20th day of September 2023





Warddeken rangers undertake fire suppression in the late dry season. Photo © Warddeken.



**“We use fire for many reasons: not only for conservation and management, but also as a healing process for land, for people, for native plants and animals. Fire is a tool that we have used from the beginning, from the deep past until today.”**

**Dean Yibarbuk, Traditional Owner**