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Northern Australia
Environmental
Resources
Hub

National Environmental Science Programme

Multiple benefits and knowledge systems of ILMPs

Start-up factsheet

The challenge

Indigenous people are integral to the conservation of Australia's biodiversity and maintenance of cultural resources. Their ecological knowledge, passed on from one generation to another, has seen them successfully manage their land for tens of thousands of years. The importance of this knowledge is recognised throughout the world and is financially supported by investments in a variety of **Indigenous Land Management Programs (ILMPs)** which are mostly, but not exclusively, funded by government. Aside from generating ecological benefits, these programs generate many co-benefits – ie. social, cultural and economic benefits which accrue to Indigenous people, the government and the wider Australian community.

Our previous research highlighted that we have some understanding of the monetary value of some of these co-benefits, such as incomes earned by rangers, but have an incomplete understanding of other less tangible co-benefits such as those relating to culture. As a result, we do not have a holistic appreciation of the net benefit or economic 'value' of ILMPs, to support investment funding decisions. Moreover, we have an incomplete understanding of the way in which co-benefits vary across different types of land management programs. Knowing whether some programs generate more co-benefits than other programs can help guide investment decisions.

How will this research help?

Funding agencies such as governments, businesses and NGOs would like to know if their investments represent 'value for money'. **This project will provide quantified, comparable data about the co-benefits of different types of ILMPs.** In doing so, it will generate information that will:

- Support continued and improved funding to support Indigenous people working on country.
- Better guide investments towards ILMPs that effectively deliver most benefit in different contexts.



Bush tucker, photo © Glenn Campbell.

Project activities

Prior Northern Hub research focusing on Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) – one of several ILMPs – concluded that many information gaps remain, particularly those relating to the ‘value’ of culture, to knowledge exchange, and to the way in which various stakeholders benefit from IPAs and by extension, other ILMPs. This project will use several different approaches to consider some of those diverse and complex benefits.

The current research will focus on:

- How much has been invested in ILMPs and how that investment generates financial benefits for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. For example, researchers will look at salaries and other expenditures on ILMPs and at the way that money flows through to other parts of the economy. This will help us better understand the financial benefits of ILMPs and the distribution of those benefits within the broader community.
- The way in which Indigenous people are able to set up businesses that leverage off, or are associated with ILMPs (particularly IPAs), thus promoting economic independence. For example, researchers will document the number and types of Indigenous businesses that are associated with the land, noting how long they have been in operation, and how far they are from various markets.



Preparation for Aboriginal body painting, photo © iStock.com/itpow.

- Different techniques for ‘valuing’ intangible and inter-related benefits in an Indigenous context. This will help to better understand the relative importance of the benefits associated with different ILMPs and of related Indigenous businesses.
- The way in which the social connections associated with ILMPs facilitate knowledge exchange – for example, looking at what information is transferred through ILMPs, to who, how, and the way in which various people benefit from this knowledge sharing.

Where is the research happening?

The study will be undertaken with the support of five Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) in two regions: Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation in Qld, and Walalakoo Body Corporate, Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation, Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation and Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation in WA. The research will follow ethical standards and work on the basis of mutual benefits, mutual trust and mutual respect.

Who is involved?

The project is led by Professor Natalie Stoeckl from **James Cook University** (JCU). Professor Stoeckl will be supported by JCU’s Michelle Esparon, Jane Addison, Diane Jarvis, Daniel Grainger, Diane Jarvis, Marina Farr and Silva Larson.

Representatives from the five communities where the research will be undertaken – Sharon Prior, Brendan Fox, Peter Murray, Steve Heggie, Melinda Sheppard, Damian Parriman, Vaughan Duncan, Lynette Shaw and Chantelle Murray – will provide assistance such as sourcing data and cultural brokering.

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For further details, see full technical report, *Economic values and Indigenous Protected Areas across northern Australia*, which can be found by visiting www.nespnorthern.edu.au



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