

NAILSMA



**NORTH AUSTRALIAN
INDIGENOUS
LAND AND SEA
MANAGEMENT
ALLIANCE**

Waanyi and Garawa Land Use and Economic Diversification Plan



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Acronyms

AbCF	Aboriginal Carbon Foundation
ALRA	Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act
ALT	Aboriginal Land Trust
BoC	Business on Country
CDP	Community Development Programme
CFI	Carbon Farming Initiative
CRCNA	Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia
DCBR	Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research
GALT	Garawa ALT
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLaSS	Gulf Land and Sea Services Ltd
ICIN	Indigenous Carbon Industry Network
ILM	Indigenous land management
ILSC	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
ILSC-SFMP	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation managed Savanna Fire Management Program
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
KLC	Kimberley Land Council
LRF	Land Restoration Fund
LUA	Land Use Agreement
LUP	Land Use and Economic Diversification Plan
NAFI	North Australia Fire Information
NAILSMA	North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
PM+C	Prime Minister and Cabinet
RJCP	Remote Jobs and Communities Programme
SFMP	Savanna Fire Management Program
TCF	The Christensen Fund
WG	Waanyi and Garawa
WGALT	Waanyi-Garawa ALT
WoC	Working on Country

1. Introduction

This Plan has been put together for the Waanyi and Garawa (WG) Traditional Owners (TO). The Plan has been developed through the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) project, building on the ongoing working relationship North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) has with the Waanyi and Garawa people through the Knowledge Brokering, Savanna Fire Management and other land-based activities. The Business on Country (BoC) approach supported by the CRCNA has enabled these and other activities to be framed into one story.

This Land Use and Economic Diversification Plan focuses on business areas identified by WG as the savanna fire and carbon management enterprise; biodiversity management and the broader Payment for Environmental Services (PES), including grader contracting for fire breaks and land access. These activities are to be run by a Traditional Owner established company called Gulf Land and Sea Services Ltd (GLaSS). GLaSS is still in the start-up phase, pending board and management appointments to develop capability (Land Use Business Opportunities Section) and the maturation of the Savanna Fire Management Program project that will provide its core commercial income.

The Plan includes a Land Rights and Native Title status review to establish a clear picture of the Traditional Owners options to use and access their ancestral lands under Australian law. In areas where land rights or Native Title determinations don't exist, but interest and opportunity may, further exploration of the land tenure and relevant legislation and agreement potential is needed to ascertain options for access and use. [These other areas need not be limited to the proponent group's ancestral *country*. For example, partnerships with current land leaseholders, such as pastoralists may be possible, or opportunities for Traditional Owners to access and establish business enterprises on land under non-Indigenous management may be negotiated.]

An historical timeline provides an overview of key events, initiatives and processes since colonisation in the region, providing insight into external impact, Traditional Owner access and use, related customary values in the land and waters and background for Business on Country opportunities.

The cultural and conservation values of the country have further been explored to provide more detailed background as to Payment for Environmental Services opportunities that may align with Traditional Owner aspirations.

2. Our Story

2.1 Land Tenure - Aboriginal Land Trusts

The ancestral country of the Garawa people stretches from near the Wearyan River in the Northern Territory (NT), east to the Settlement Creek area. It includes the Robinson and Calvert River catchments. Although Garawa people also have traditional owner rights and interests in the Narwinbi Aboriginal Land Trust (ALT), in which the town of Borroloola sits, this ALT is not included in this Land Use and Economic Diversification Plan (LUP) since the focus was initially around Garawa ALT (old Robinson River Station). Yanyuwa peoples are the dominant land interest group in Narwinbi ALT with Mara, Gurdanji and Garawa also represented there. Though no plans are in place, it may be of interest for these groups to participate in an expanded BoC process in the future.

The ancestral country of the Waanyi people lies to the south and east of Garawa country, between the Nicholson and Gregory Rivers. Both Waanyi and Garawa people share the Waanyi-Garawa ALT (Nicholson Block). Major features of the Waanyi-Garawa ALT (WGALT) lands are the long, snaking escarpments, such as 'China Wall' and the broad basin of the Nicholson River (Ganalanga) tipping northeast towards the Gulf of Carpentaria. Both Waanyi and Garawa Country are cut by the Northern Territory/Queensland border. Exclusive Land Rights exist over only part of Waanyi and Garawa ancestral estates. Non-exclusive Native Title has been determined or is under claim in other areas (see map below). Both the Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Aboriginal Land Trusts lie in the Northern Territory. They were granted as Aboriginal Freehold under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act (ALRA) 1976ⁱ.

2.2 Population centres

Robinson River is a long-standing Aboriginal township on the Garawa ALT (GALT) with a population of around 300 people. The ALT also has several small outstations or homelands settlements, most only seasonally occupied. The town is serviced by Roper Gulf Shire, with a Remote Jobs for Community Programme (RJCP) and Night Patrol. The local Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation has responsibility for a range of other municipal services and importantly, manages the Robinson River pastoral enterprise. The long land claim (~12 years) was won in 1992, converting the old pastoral lease to ALT. Interests in cattle production continued, albeit with limited success on the very marginal lands. Today Mungoorbada is growing the pastoral enterprise again, starting with a modest sub-lease (Land Use Agreement) on more suitable country on the ALT.

There are relatively few people living permanently on the Waanyi-Garawa ALT (also an ex-pastoral station). The majority of traditional owners for this land trust now live in Borroloola, Doomadgee, Tennant Creek and Mt Isa. Traditional owners slowly moved off the land trust about 10 years ago due to a lack of service provision and livelihood opportunity after the initial heyday of 'moving back' and modest service provision from Julalikari Homelands Resource Centre in Tennant Creek.

There are several outstations on the WGALT, some of which are occupied seasonally. They are Jilundarina, Burrumburru, Bajaminyi, Nudjabarra, Gumuluji, Ganduwarra,

Wangalinji and Murrin Murula. There are few vehicular tracks on the land trust, making access to many areas very difficult. Access and use issues include the need for reliable track, road and fire break maintenance – an expensive annual commitment. Furthermore, with few people living permanently on country, there is limited human and other resources to support cultural and natural resource management work. The main base for such work is at Borroloola, at least an arduous day's drive away.

2.3 Strategies to return to country

With the assistance and administration of the Northern Land Council, the Garawa and Waanyi-Garawa ranger groups were formed and funded under the Federal Government's Working on Country (WoC) Program. WoC has enabled the employment of eight or so full-time local indigenous rangers, modest plant and machinery and several management activities on the ALTs, including early-season fire work around assets (cultural and infrastructure), weed and feral animal management, and biodiversity surveys. The WoC program has also enabled activities on country with numbers of senior traditional owners and younger people, thus going some way towards maintaining cultural strengths and social bonds.

The WGALT has negotiated for an Indigenous Protected Area – declared as the Ganalanga-Mindibirrina Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) in 2015. The IPA brought with it some resources that increased WG Ranger capacity to manage fire, undertake biodiversity surveys and look after homelands infrastructure along the way. This has been a cornerstone in maintaining even a modest management regime over this large area of land and complements Working on Country program support for the Waanyi-Garawa Ranger group.

The wildfire regime that re-entered the landscape as the Traditional Owners were forced from their lands generations ago has been highly destructive. The Federal Government-funded IPA and WoC programs have done much to help mitigate ongoing destruction of environmental, cultural and infrastructure values. The prevalence and challenge of wildfire also offer the opportunity for Green House Gas abatement and carbon sequestration enterprise income.

Although Garawa and Waanyi country is the general focus of land use planning and BoC more broadly, local circumstances and Traditional Owner judgements on the timeliness of engagement in relation to the WGALT have meant that the GALT became the initial project area – for Savanna Burning particularly. Planning for the inclusion of the WGALT is a future activity anticipated as part of the process.

The map of the NT Gulf region (Figure 1) shows the Narwinbi, Garawa and Waanyi-Garawa Aboriginal Land Trusts amongst predominantly pastoral leaseholds. The Native Title applications and determinations map (Figure 2) shows the extent of non-exclusive Native Title determinations on surrounding pastoral leases.

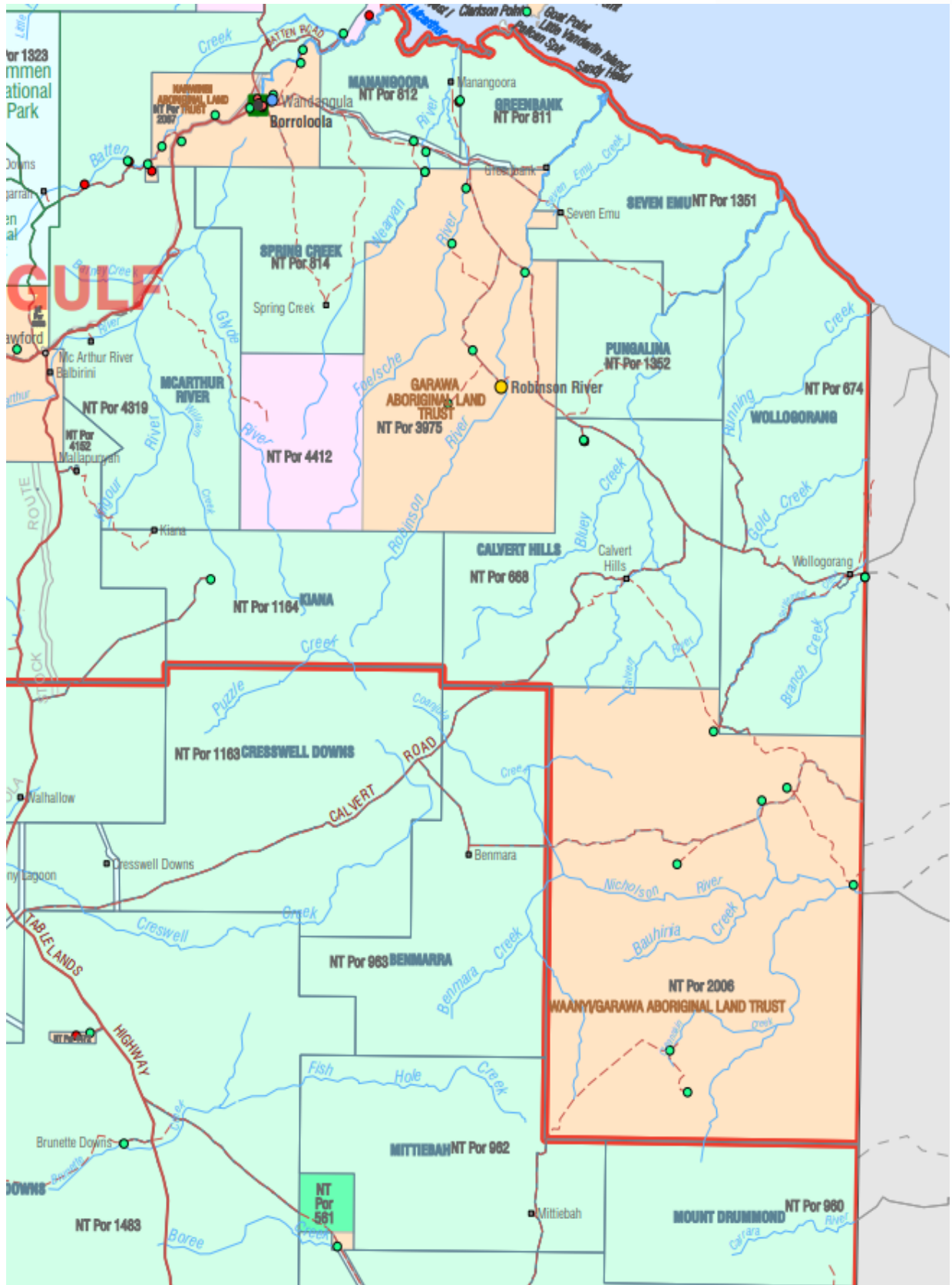


Figure 1 Land tenure in the NT Gulf region. Section from the Northern Territory Pastoral Districts map (Source: NT Department of Lands Planning and the Environment 2015)

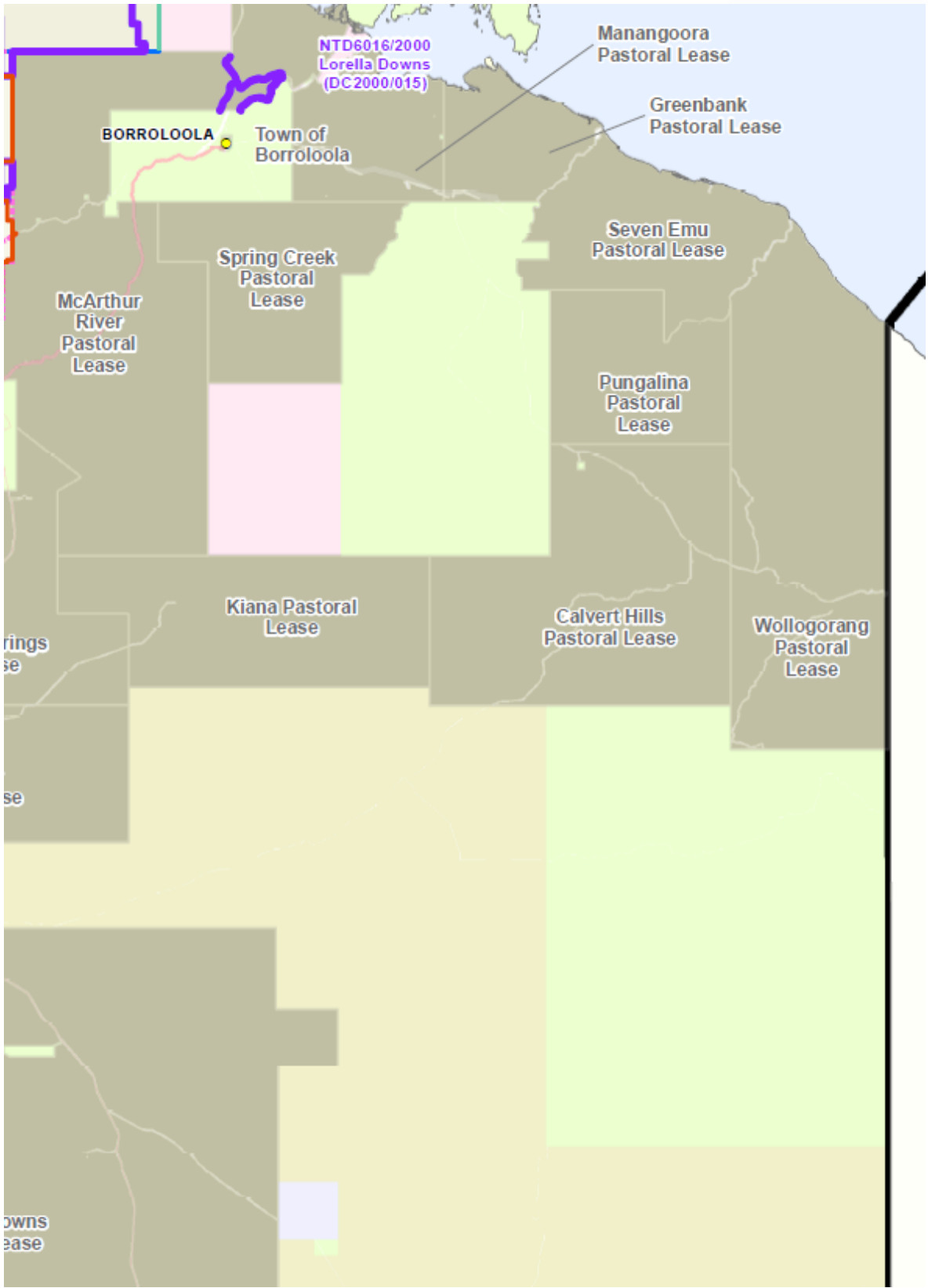


Figure 2 Native Title in the region. Section from Native Title Claimant Applications and Determinations Areas map (Source: NNTT 2019)

3. Waanyi and Garawa Country – Historical Timeline

Table 1 Events that influences Waanyi and Garawa land access and use

Date	Event
1845	The explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt, passed through the area during his 1845 overland expedition from Moreton Bay in Queensland to Port Essington in the Northern Territory. Leichhardt named the river for Dr William Alleyne Nicholson of Bristol in England.
1870	Rise of Pastoral Industry in the southwest Gulf ⁱⁱ .
1950	The Australian Government granted Mt Isa Mines Ltd (MIM) mining leases for zinc-lead-silver deposits ⁱⁱⁱ .
1976	Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 passed.
1977	The Yanyuwa people lodged the Borroloola Land Claim (see map below), the first under the ALRA 1976. The claim included large areas of the McArthur catchment around Borroloola (the Town Common), as well as the Sir Edward Pellew Group of Islands. MIM opposed the land claim even though the mine site was not situated within the boundaries of the land claim. The land claim resulted in only partial success for the Yanyuwa people in respect of the islands and the granting of the Narwinbi ALT around Borroloola.
1978	The Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Justice Toohey, recommended the grant of the Borroloola Town Common and only two of the five major islands of the Sir Edward Pellew Group (West and Vanderlin Island). Toohey withheld recommending the grant of the middle group of islands (North, Centre and Southwest), citing a lack of ‘traditional attachment’.
1978	Northern Territory Self-Government
	Gurdanji and Yanyuwa people sought to acquire three pastoral leases—Bing Bong, McArthur River and Tawallah; they were outbid by MIM – who amalgamated the leases into one big lease known as McArthur River Station (Figure 3).
1979	On 10 October 1979, the Northern Land Council lodged an application on behalf of Aboriginals claiming to have a traditional land claim in the Nicholson River area ^{iv} .
1985	Waanyi-Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust declared
1990s	Services for outstations and outstation schools removed, forcing many to leave homelands for regional towns like Doomadgee and Borroloola
1994 - 96	Redbank copper mine shut down due to decades of leaking toxic substances into the waterways
1992	Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust declared
2005	Waanyi-Garawa Rangers began
2015	Ganalanga-Mindibirina IPA Declared
2019	Garawa Savanna Burning (carbon farming) project registered with Clean Energy Regulator

4. Pastoralism

Pastoralism spread quickly in the Gulf country from the 1870s. By the early 1900s, Aboriginal customary lands in the NT Gulf region were virtually all taken up by leaseholds, (Figure 2). Opportunities to reclaim some cultural estates in this cruellest of colonial eras didn't come about until the 1970s, with the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act in 1976. By this time, cattle work ran generations deep with Waanyi and Garawa and the successful claim of Robinson and Nicholson Rivers pastoral leases naturally suggested opportunities for traditional owners to build livelihoods for themselves in cattle.

Although Garawa and Waanyi traditional lands now host to many pastoral leases in both the NT and Queensland (Qld), the Pastoral activities relevant to this land-use plan are:

Table 2 Pastoral leases relevant to the project

#	Pastoral Lease	Family/Owner Name
1	Robinson River pastoral project – a LUA on the GALT	Garawa TO

There are interests in semi-commercial cattle rearing on the WGALT. As noted in the Land Use Business Opportunitites Section, this ALT is not the focus of this first phase of planning. Traditional owners of the WGALT are committed to engaging with this process once other issues (unrelated to the BoC work) have been sorted out. The framework remains flexible, subject to financial support in the future.

A Garawa family runs a pastoral operation (Seven Emu Pastoral Lease) on the NT Gulf coast north of Garawa ALT. This is not considered a priority area for land use planning (Savanna Burning or PES) to the broader Garawa community as it is primarily the concern of the lease holding family. There is some potential for inclusion of Seven Emu later on, particularly around carbon farming project area expansion and possible expansion of Garawa land management activity along with their sea country estates.

Cattle operations on Garawa and Waanyi country in Qld are potentially also of interest in the future. However, no substantial engagement or planning work has been done with Qld groups, to date, in relation to cross border country – this requires much wider scope to introduce the project, provide resources for and collaborate with the likes of Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Waanyi Aboriginal Corporation. Subject to resource availability and scaleable success with the current scope, collaboration in these areas may be tenable down the track.

Opportunities to engage with neighbouring pastoralists in the NT, such as Benmarra, Calvert Hills and Woollogorang is also possible in future, and indeed Garawa and Waanyi-Garawa Rangers have established working relationships with pastoral neighbours – particularly around fire management – that may serve well as PES plans evolve later on.



Figure 3

Figure 3 Pastoral leases in the region. Narwinbi Robinson River Station and the three Mt Isa Mines Ltd stations (Source: https://www.mapsbookstravelguides.com.au/northrn_territory_pastoral_map)

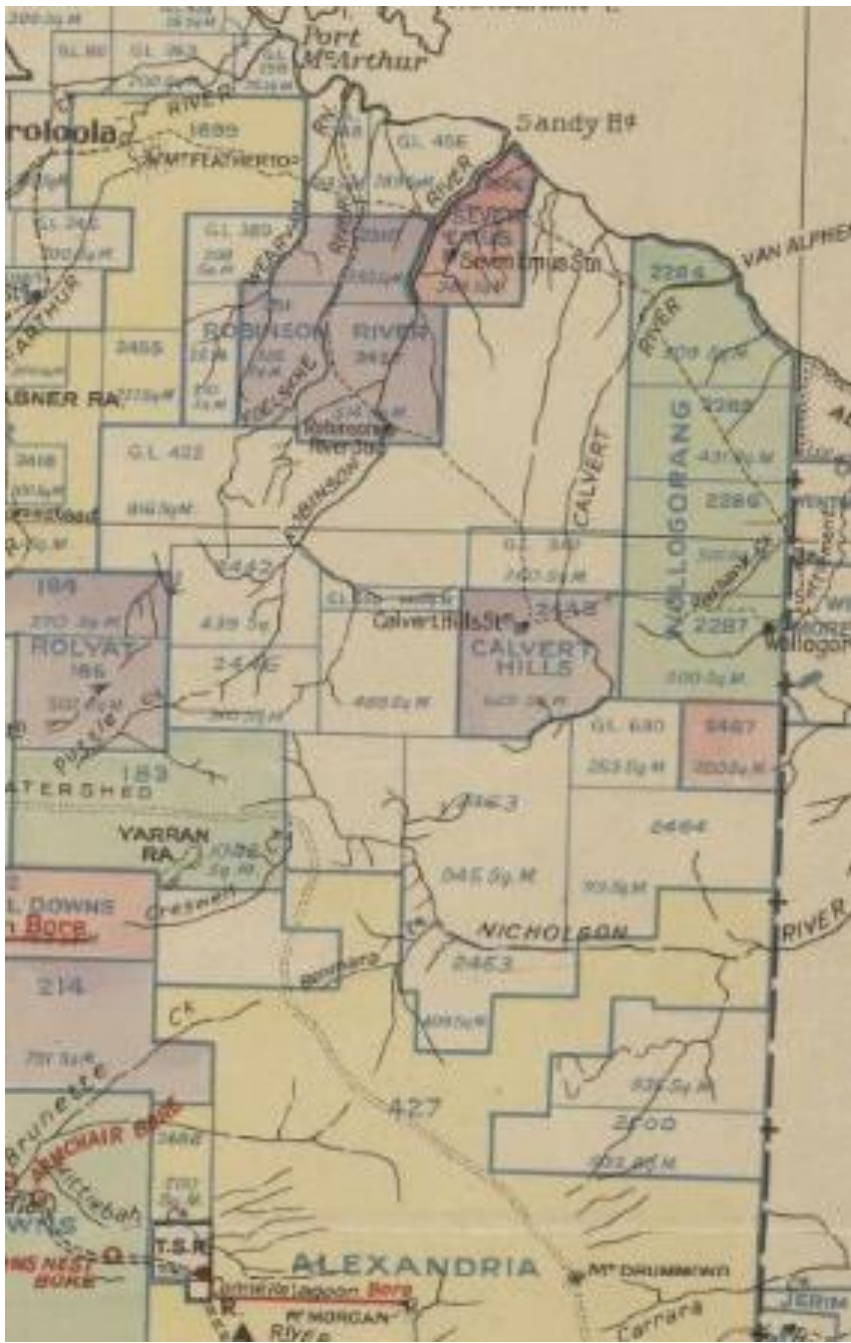


Figure 4 Early division of lands into pastoral leaseholds. 1945 Gulf pastoral stations (H.E.C Robinson)

4.1 The status of pastoral leases in the Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory, pastoral leases are administered by the **Northern Territory Pastoral Land Act 1992** and **Crown Lands Act 1992**. Pastoral leases can be issued for 'pastoral purposes' including some supplementary or ancillary uses. Under recent changes to the Pastoral Land Act, lessees can now apply for diversification permits, allowing multiple income streams to be generated. This now extends to agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, tourism, and forestry activities.

They may have been issued either for a fixed term (with an initial period of up to 25 years with options for further renewal) or as perpetual pastoral leases. The majority of

the 223 pastoral leases in the Territory are held in perpetuity. The granting of a lease, or changes to lease conditions, must be approved by the relevant Minister.

Key features of pastoral leases in the NT:

- There are some restrictions on the concentration of pastoral holdings of greater size than 13,000 square kilometres by the one person or company.
- While the Minister for Land Resource Management has broad discretionary power to vary lease conditions, non-pastoral uses are facilitated under the Pastoral Land Act's non-pastoral use permit system, administered by the Pastoral Land Board.
- There is a legislative mechanism in place under the Crown Lands Act that will, in certain circumstances, enable the lessee to apply to excise a part or all the lease for which the tenure may be changed. Any such change would be subject to native title where claims are pending.
- Where native title applies, any land uses that do not fall under the umbrella definition of 'primary production' must satisfy native title as provided for under the Native Title Act 1993^v.

The Native Title Act also provides for a general duty of the lessee in relation to sound management practices. This is reflected in the obligation of the Territory government to ensure sustainable land management, including:

- recognising rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to follow traditional pursuits on pastoral land
- conducting resource appraisals
- monitoring condition of rangelands
- promoting property management plans
- regulation of stocking levels
- protocols on public access.

Any change in the use of a pastoral lease has the potential to affect the underlying native title. The Pastoral Land Board has produced guidelines to outline the process to ensure compliance with the Native Title Act before approving a permit for a non-pastoral use^{vi}.

5. Indigenous Protected Area

Indigenous Protected Areas are voluntarily agreed by Indigenous groups on Indigenous-owned or managed land or sea country and are recognised by the Australian Government as an important part of the National Reserve System, protecting the 'nation's biodiversity for the benefit of all Australians. It is only through the participation of Aboriginal landholders that Australia has met its obligations to increase the area of protected lands.

The Ganalanga-Mindibirrina Indigenous Protected Area covers the entire Waanyi and Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust, an area of ~11,000 square kilometres in the southern Gulf of the Northern Territory, Australia.

The Ganalanga-Mindibirrina Indigenous Protected Area is declared as a Category VI Managed Resource Protected Area, consistent with the International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definition of an:

‘area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long-term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs’^{vii}.

Guidelines on the nature of development on IPA lands that do not conflict with retaining protected lands status are in Dudley (2008)^{viii}.

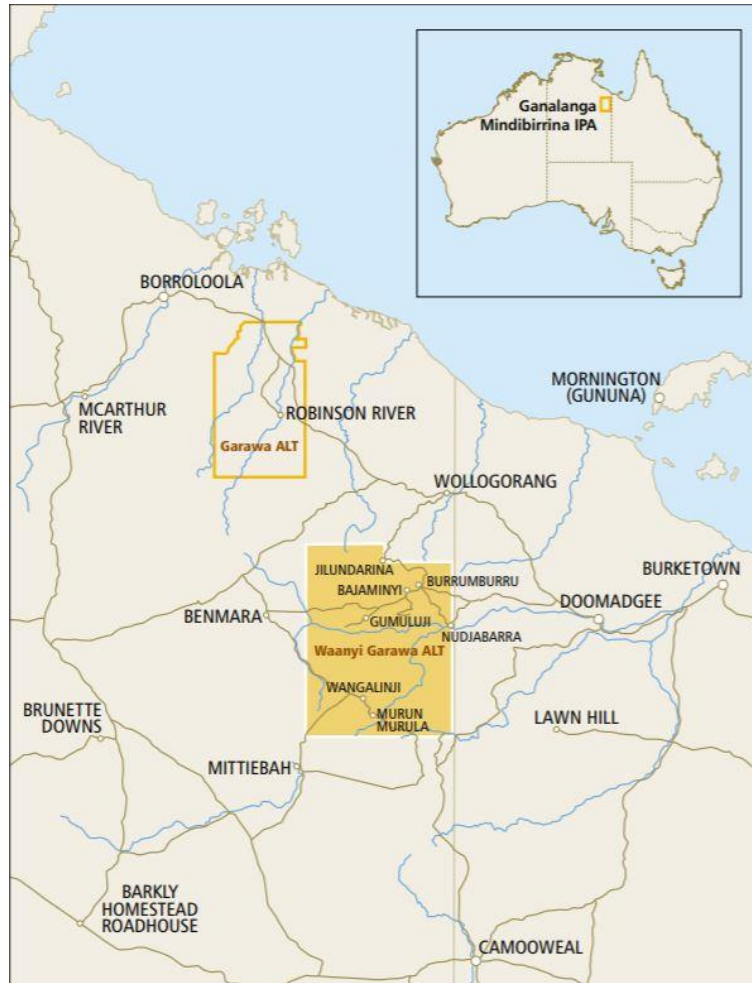


Figure 5 IPA Map, Ganalanga-Mindibirrina Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management 2015-2020

6. Land Use Agreements (Section 19 of ALRA)

- 2019. Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust Savanna Fire Management Carbon Project. This is now a Savanna Burning Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) project registered with the Clean Energy Regulator.
- 2019. Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust Pastoral Project. This Land Use Agreement is held by Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation based at Robinson River (GALT). Mungoorbada seeks to re-invigorate the cattle enterprise on the

Land Trust and provide employment and other opportunities for Garawa people. Although there are patches of good grazing land on the GALT, overall, it has

proven to be marginal country. Opportunities for diversification are needed for reasonable employment and livelihood outcomes.

7. Relevant legislation for understanding tenure, rights, compliance/regulation

This is a summary of the legislation that is relevant for understanding our tenure and legal rights on Waanyi Garawa country.

Table 3: Legislation influencing Waanyi and Garawa land access, use and programs.

Legislation Name	Which Government?	What does this law do?
<i>Aboriginal Land Rights Act for the NT (1976)</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Land Rights can only be sought in the Northern Territory, and the land must be 'empty'. It does not apply to pastoral leases or town lands.</i>
<i>Native Title Act (1993)</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Native Title can be sought anywhere in Australia, and on pastoral or town lands. But native title gives recognition of traditional rights, it does not give absolute control of the land.</i>
<i>Aboriginal Torres Strait Island Heritage Protection Act (1984)</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>This law is about preserving and protecting areas and objects that are sacred to Aboriginal people.</i>
<i>Aboriginal Areas Protection Act</i>	<i>Darwin</i>	<i>This law is about preserving and protecting areas and objects that are sacred to Aboriginal people.</i>
<i>Pastoral Land Act</i>	<i>Darwin</i>	<i>This law allows Traditional Owners to access, use water, and take or kill food for ceremonial purposes on pastoral land.</i>
<i>Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Regulations for registered carbon farming projects</i>
<i>Bushfires Management Act 2016</i>	<i>Northern Territory</i>	<i>Regulations and permits for fire management</i>
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Informs opportunities for biodiversity management</i>
<i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Act</i>	<i>Northern Territory</i>	<i>Protect rights to take wildlife for customary purposes. Sets conditions for commercial use of wildlife.</i>
<i>Water Act</i>	<i>Northern Territory</i>	<i>Provides for the allocation, management and trade in water for beneficial uses. Protects cultural and environmental availability. Provides for Indigenous strategic reserve.</i>

8. The Natural Environment on Waanyi Garawa country

Waanyi and Garawa country values are richer and more exceptional because they are a legacy of WG culture. Within the Ganalanga-Mindiberrina IPA, there are many different types of country, or habitats. These range from humid monsoon forests to dry spinifex grasslands. The Ganalanga-Mindiberrina IPA takes in most of the Nicholson Basin. The Nicholson River runs year-round, fed by numerous springs and soaks from the surrounding uplands. In the southwest there are wide open grasslands. These are

the most northerly parts of the Barkly Tablelands, and virtually the only areas of black soil not being used for intensified grazing. A long and rugged escapement known as China Wall divides our Land Trust north and south. China Wall is one of the highest areas in the Northern Territory, and it is also one of the oldest landscapes in Australia. This area is not only spectacular to look at, but, like the other large rocky ranges of northern Australia, it is home to a wide variety of wildlife including species that occur nowhere else. Eleven threatened species have been found on or next to the Land Trust (next Section).

8.1 Conservation on Waanyi Garawa country



Figure 6 Walking on Country WGALT (Photo: P Yates 2019)

As referred to in the Ganalanga-Mindibirrina Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management 2015-2020, Ironstone (laterite) plains or pediments are another common feature of Waanyi Garawa country. In these places' soils are deeper but still sandy loams, supporting only spinifex. Bloodwood and stringybark grow in these areas, and where the pediments break away lancewood forms dense fringing thickets. Below the ranges, low rolling rises skirt the Nicholson Basin. Soils here are deeper and less uniform. Accordingly, they support a greater diversity of woodland habitats. On well-drained soils a typical plant community here is a Darwin box and ironwood open woodland. On heavier soils, low open woodlands of snappy-gum or silver-leaved box predominate.

Lower in the catchment, grasslands on cracking-clay plains cover large areas, as well as mixed low woodlands, including those dominated by paperbarks and wattles. Flood outs and seasonal wetlands support low, open woodlands of coolabah and bauhinia. Minor habitats include monsoon vine-thickets in the folds and gorges of the ranges and riparian woodlands of red gum, paperbark, northern swamp box and pandanus along the creek lines and course of the Nicholson River.

'Eleven (11) threatened species have been found on or next to our Land Trust. These are the Carpentaria grass-wren, Gouldian finch, red goshawk, yellow spotted monitor, 'Merten's water monitor, Gulf snapping turtle, Australian Bustard, Emu, Carpentaria Rock-rat, Northern Quoll and Carpentaria Antechinus.'^{ix}

The majority of the WGALT falls within the Gulf Fall and Uplands Bioregion while a very small portion, in the south-east of the land trust, falls within the Mount Isa In-lier bioregion.

The Gulf Fall and Uplands bioregion is the second largest in the Northern Territory stretching from the Arnhem Land Plateau into western Queensland. It covers some

111,783 km² of land, with some 36% of the bioregion owned by Aboriginal people under the ALRA (NRETA 2005:88).

The most extensive vegetation in the Gulf Fall and Uplands bioregion is woodland dominated by Darwin Stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*) and Variable-barked Bloodwood (*Corymbia dichromophloia*) with Spinifex understorey and woodland dominated by Northern Box (*Eucalyptus tectifica*) with tussock grass understorey (NRETA 2005:88). There are substantial stands of the fire-sensitive Cypress Pine (*Callitris intratropica*) especially on the Garawa ALT (NRETA 2005:88).

The Mount Isa Inlier bioregion occupies only a very small area of the Northern Territory east of the Barkley Tableland, on the border with Queensland. It falls within the semi-arid zone, with rainfall averaging 500 mm pa. The bioregion generally comprises stony hills and ranges, with skeletal soils supporting low open Eucalypt woodlands with a tussock grass (*Triodia*) understorey (NRETA 2005:113). The major topographical feature of the Waanyi/Garawa ALT is the linear escarpment called China Wall in the northern section of the land trust. China Wall is an area that has been identified as a site of conservation significance (NRETA 2005a:137). Several threatened species have been recorded in this area including Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*), Bustard (*Ardeotis australis*), and Carpentaria Grasswren (*Amytornis dorotheae*).

The major rivers and creeks in the Nicholson Basin include the Gregory, Carrara, South Nicholson, Fish and the Nicholson. These flow from the escarpment country (China Wall) to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Riverine water quality is considered to be generally good on the land trust, with the greatest threat coming from feral animals. The water quality in some wetlands is very poor in the late Dry Season due to feral cattle. Riparian margins are also damaged from horses, cattle, buffaloes and pigs. Feral populations of horses are reported as having a severe impact on watering points.

At Settlement Creek, to the north of the land trust, there have been reports of algae bloom type occurrences, where the water turns blue, possibly related to mining activity nearby. This is a major concern to traditional owners.

Permanent billabongs contain an important source of bush food for Waanyi and Garawa people, such as barramundi, black bream, cherubim, turtle, mussels, seeds, bulbs and rhizomes. Feral animals threaten this important food resource. Traditional owners are seeking to control these animals but require technical, financial and logistical support to do so.

The Waanyi/Garawa ALT is relatively weed-free with only minor infestations of weeds, in particular Candle Bush (*Senna* spp.), in the northern portion of the WGALT. The occurrence of Rubber Vine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*), a weed of national significance, which inhabits vast areas of the gulf country in Queensland is of major concern.

Tourists (particularly anglers) have the potential to move weeds to or from Queensland. Dirt roads with the low-level creek crossings of the Savanna Highway increase this hazard. The WGALT is in a strategic position regarding cross-border weed management.

The greatest threat to the biodiversity on the land trust is the lack of a resident population. For example, because of this lack of a human presence, living permanently,

on the land trust, the biodiversity of country, particularly the northern portion, is beginning to suffer from annual late hot fires. These late hot fires are altering

vegetation and habitats, particularly in the area of highest conservation significance, the China Wall region^x.

9. Cultural Connection and Wellbeing

Being connected to country is about holding the knowledge particular to a place and living according to that knowledge. It is about feeling country, but also a way of life. It is a way of living in ways that meet obligations to lands and their living and non-living resources that too few enjoy anymore.

Two or more generations of the settlement have robbed most people of their physical fitness, their finer skills and the detailed reserves of knowledge that made life possible 'in the bush'. Meanwhile, the wind-back of government services such as education and health for outstations and smaller communities means that people have often been forced to live, and raise their children, in large communities a long way from home. Many older people have not visited their land in decades. Many young people have never visited their land at all.

Waanyi Garawa people are reconnecting through 'walks in country'. 'Walking in Country' was once 'just' life. But it has become an essentially political act because, through walking, Aboriginal people express the continuity between past and present, and assert the properness of a way of relating to land and each other and a set of actions that flow from these proper relationships^{xi}.

People's relative motivations for walking in country are expressed in Figure 7.



Figure 7 Motivation for walking in Country (Yates 2018)

Most activities Indigenous people engage in on their and lands and seas are inspired, informed and given authority from the familial, spiritual and economic connections they have with their country. Familiarity with ancestral lands is an important factor in considering enterprise, for example. Many Indigenous cultural custodians and Ranger groups hold on-country activities to reinvest in the kind of confidence, authority and knowledge that being back on country affords. Walking events are planned when possible.

The National Environmental Science Program supported a ‘walking on country’ project with Garawa and Waanyi people that occurred in parallel with and inspired discussions about Payment for Environmental Services options, capability-building and wellbeing qualities needed to (re)establish and sustain livelihoods on country.



Figure 8 Waanyi and Garawa family members walking on Country (WGALT 2019)

Walking in Country also helps to identify the things we are concerned about such as:

- Heritage sites getting damaged by tourists and cattle because they are not protected with fences and signs
- Traditional Owners are not able to care for heritage and cultural sites properly

We want to see:

- Heritage and cultural sites protected with signs and fences so that other people (locals and tourists) know where sacred sites are and respect them
- Certain areas closed off during cultural time
- Traditional Owners taking care of sacred sites
- Elders teaching younger generations about culture, song lines and cultural sites
- Our water and sacred sites respected by visitors and tourists

Our strategies to achieve this include:

- Registering our sacred sites so that we can put up fencing and signs, and make sure that they are legally protected
- Building partnerships and working with the pastoralist and other local stakeholders to ensure that our sites are protected and respected
- Creating livelihoods and income that provide the means to be active on Country

Figure 9 Walking on Country - familiarity and planning^{xii}

10. Land Use Business Opportunities

An area of high priority for WG is identifying and developing business opportunities on our country that are in-line with our community's aspirations and vision for the looking after our country.^{xiii}

WG have identified three key areas of Land Use Business Opportunity: fire management and carbon abatement, grader business (road, track and fire break creation and maintenance) and environmental management.

The CRCNA supported process was open to any land use opportunities. Agricultural practice exists and is being explored further by Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation (see Pastoralism section). The key areas under planning are considered complementary to the cattle operation and significant for strengthening and diversifying TO owned and run economic opportunities.

10.1 Enterprise governance, ownership and diversity of opportunity

An important feature of the BoC process is recognising the need for local ownership and control of enterprise and the need in most circumstances, to grow the responsibilities and skills over time. Waanyi and Garawa people were particularly keen to own and run developing enterprises themselves and sought for NAILSMA to help them develop a business entity capable of doing so. This was to be the main vehicle for WG business.

Gulf Land and Sea Services Ltd is currently being developed to manage Waanyi Garawa future Payment for Environmental Services. Its development is supported by NAILSMA, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation managed Savanna Fire Management Program (ILSC-SFMP) and a philanthropic enterprise.

As is often the case in Indigenous business support, single interest sources of support like the ILSC-SFMP can create vulnerabilities in their narrow program focus (i.e. Carbon Farming). By attracting complementary interest in assisting company development and growing internal capability from other sources, a diversity of enterprise and wellbeing opportunities can be exploited. Narrow business support can exacerbate vulnerability to income stress and external factors. Diversifying without overcapitalising is an important consideration but requires coordinating existing options rather than duplication.

While recognising the intent and limitations of the ILSC-SFMP support for GLaSS, the BoC vision sought to bolster it with commercial grading services – mainly for fire project road and track access but also for other contracting opportunities in the region – to underwrite it's management for the first 12 months with 'donor' support and to partner with the local Indigenous cattle company Mungoorbada to provide mechanical and training services to the immediate region. Longer term developments for GLaSS included coastal management, contracting of Savanna Fire projects on neighbouring pastoral leases, regional pastoral sector contracting services (fencing, mustering, etc). The proposed objects of the Company are:

- To provide a pathway to market for the environmental services created by land and sea management projects managed, owned and/or controlled by Waanyi Garawa and Garawa members.
- To offer services designed to facilitate Waanyi Garawa and Garawa people's access to, and rewarding participation in, environmental services markets.
- To create employment on country and related economic and social benefits for Waanyi Garawa and Garawa people through the provision of environmental services.
- To support the sound management of Waanyi Garawa and Garawa Land and Sea interests and related natural resources; and
- To do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects and the exercise of the powers of the Company.

Traditional owners, and more directly, the board members, will take time to develop the confidence to pursue commercial land use. In this cross-cultural and economically impoverished environment capability to understand and manage fundamental obligations (to the company, regulators, partners, community, etc.).

10.2 Payment for Environmental Services - Fire

Savanna Burning for carbon abatement and Indigenous Protected Areas are two examples of 'PES' already in place on the Garawa and Waanyi Garawa ALTs. PES arrangements involve a range of proponents and activities. Nationally and globally the sector is maturing into a major economic mechanism for conservation and rural development, with estimates of its potential worth globally between US\$33 trillion and US\$125 trillion^{xiv}.

The Australian Government has an agreed [emissions reduction] target of 26%–28% below 2005 levels by 2030^{xv}. To achieve this target, it has bolstered the 2014 Emissions Reduction Fund amount of \$2.55 billion with a further \$2 billion.

Other environmental fee-for-service activities have potential on Waanyi and Garawa lands, such as biodiversity and threatened species protection, native pasture management, native seed harvesting and nursery for mine site and other rehabilitation. At present, the main proponent of environmental fee-for-service activities in Australia is the Australian Government. Increasingly corporate procurers of carbon credits are becoming substantial players in the voluntary environmental fee-for-service market. These corporate procurers want to include 'co-benefits' in their procurement, such as Indigenous jobs, biodiversity protection and feral animal and erosion management. Organisations such as Bush Heritage, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Pew Environment Trust, The Christensen Fund (TCF) and the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation (AbCF) are currently or soon to be active in this space.

- Carbon Sequestration, which involves a deepening of savannah fire management commitments by landowners, over a 25 year period, to ensure that trees and forests are protected over longer periods.
The methodology for sequestration of carbon in dead plant material was released in 2018. However, up-take of the methodology across the savannas has been very slow due to uncertainty in financial viability, apprehension about the permanence period requiring 25 year minimum legal and management commitment. A second sequestration methodology, due to be released in 2021, will account for the carbon stored in living tree biomass, significantly increasing the potential earnings from savanna fire management. This will be

accompanied by a review of the 2018 methodology addressing current issues raised by potential user groups.

- ‘Carbon Co-benefits’ is a phrase most often used by Governments and non-Indigenous groups to refer to the collection of environmental, social, economic and other beneficial spinoffs from savanna burning carbon projects. Measures for co-benefits are an important step towards the recognition of a broader Ecosystem Services role that Aboriginal land managers play. Co-benefits may yield a premium (some suggest) of up to 30% on at least a proportion of Carbon Credits sold, or they may represent environmental outcomes monetizable in their own right, such as ‘biodiversity credits’. AbCF, Ten Deserts, Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN), the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, amongst other are now looking to develop credible metrics for co-benefits as the Indigenous Land Management (ILM) PES sector develops. Far from being ‘spinoffs’ however, these non-carbon benefits, or ‘core’ benefits as referred to by AbCF, NAILSMA, the Kimberley Land Council (KLC), ICIN and others, are considered by Indigenous land managers as some of the main values in ‘caring for country’. Such things as healthy and abundant resources, opportunities for Indigenous Knowledge transmission, familiarity with cultural estates, respecting important sites, physical and spiritual health, strengthening kin networks, are the main reasons driving their on-ground activity. Carbon abatement and Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) production is predominantly a means to those ends. To this end, capturing and enhancing activities that deliver core benefits is a key part of land use planning and the BoC framework alike.

Given existing and desired future cattle operations on the GALT and WGALT, exploring Savanna Burning project potential and feasibility necessarily involves project planning and management integration between these two major land uses. This is new ground but important in the creation of diverse economies in local footprints and as pilots for addressing pastoral sector challenges in north Australia as a whole. The CRCNA, Land Restoration Fund, related industries and others are keen to get some further clarity on the working relationship between cattle and carbon farming. This pilot will be of interest and may encourage further support.

10.3 Payment for Environmental Services – Environmental Management

Biodiversity Management is of direct or indirect interest to organisations such as Bush Heritage, The Nature Conservancy, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and others. Partnering with such organisations and maintaining or growing collaborations with them are in a large part about developing relationships on mutual interests. The broader story of Waanyi and Garawa land and sea interests that emerges through a BoC process helps Non-Government Organisations and others understand local aspirations, capacity and specific needs and hence better to define their roles and their relationship over time. Continuity is often a challenging area for remote ILM used to fleeting and disconnected policy and support packages. It is perhaps now more important than ever as the commitments needed and liabilities faced in running commercial PES activities get realised.

Future PES activities could include ‘ghost net’ removal on Garawa coastal country, water quality monitoring and management, feral animal control and local research, erosion control, biodiversity surveying and management, environmental rehabilitation, road and track access maintenance.

10.4 Grader Business: road, track and fire break maintenance

Applying the BoC framework to enterprise development with Waanyi Garawa people encourages adaptability in recognising and entertaining opportunities that may arise – an attribute distinctly lacking in most Indigenous business development programs. An opportunity to consider grader services to the ALTs and the region was presented with discussion around challenges in developing the Savanna Burning project on the GALT. The fire management project area boundary requires year-round access, as do internal tracks and breaks to make the CFI registered fire project effective. Grading boundaries, tracks and other breaks had never occurred systematically, involved expensive contracting and added risk to the project.

A decent grader became available locally, and the WG group seized the opportunity with the assistance of philanthropic funds to build it into the fire project and as a business activity. Existing budget lines for WGALT and GALT fire break maintenance could be directed to the TO owned grader business, and further contracts could be sought for similar work in the region.

The opportunity to develop a formal carbon farming activity with the ILSC-SFMP was taken up before a legal entity to run the business side of such a project was established. WG Traditional Owners, therefore, requested that NAILSMA become the interim host for the CFI registered fire project, for the ILUA with the Northern Land Council (NLC) and the ILSC-SFMP grant.

Growing a capable business from scratch is a long-term proposition and cannot be developed abstractly – there must be substance and purpose that engages the new Board and staff. The major funders of the Savanna Fire Management project (ILSC) are averse to the risk of project failure if a new Garawa Company were to take on full responsibility for it too early. Similarly, the Northern Land Council, that administers the Land Trust and the project's Land Use Agreement, would not allow a fledgling Garawa company to take on a substantial project whose potential failure would affect the wider Land Trust community.

Several factors coalesced through the BoC process to allow plans for the company to inaugurate with an active Board of Management and to 'practice' managing a modest income stream from grading contract work. As mentioned, grading fire breaks and access tracks is an annual and strategically critical component of fire management on the two vast Land Trusts, previously subject to inconsistent availability of a contractor and short term planning windows; funds were able to be secured to purchase the machine; several local Waanyi and Garawa men held licences and were experienced drivers; start-up contracts were secured for the Savanna Fire project and other small jobs in the region.

While running a grading business at such scale would not sustain GLaSS, it is a useful facility for developing the management structures, decision making and function of the company. It is also used to train locals in machinery operation, maintenance and management. So, although it does not feature in the focussed Savanna Fire project support from other partners, the Waanyi Garawa grader is an asset around which skills and experience are honed, and practical thinking about diversity in land use enterprise is stimulated. This cannot be prescribed from afar, but realising such opportunities are a function of adaptable planning and good engagement.

11. Education and Training

Education and training are key to achieving WG vision. Training, skills and qualifications are needed to run a successful and sustainable environmental services company and take care of our country.

We want to:

- Get our younger adults, and all adults, into relevant training
- See family working on the land and protecting sacred sites
- Work with other rangers and Indigenous land managers to get ideas, share knowledge, and do training on country.
- Complete training and courses to build our capacity and skills in land management, governance and business management

Figure 10 Education and training aspiration^{xvi}

Several types of skills are needed to help Waanyi and Garawa achieve the broad collective goal of building livelihood opportunities for their community on and in relation to their customary lands and seas, independent from government welfare programs.

Building on their long-standing ranger program (administered by the NLC) and gearing up for their own business in the PES sector requires skills and knowledge uptake in three broad areas:

1. Indigenous and local knowledge and skill
 - Familiarity with cultural lands
 - Acquiring and passing on traditional and local knowledge
 - Familial and ceremonial protocols
 - Authority and leadership
 - Specific skills associated with looking after country
2. Land management operational skill
 - plant and machinery use and maintenance
 - logistics and operating systems
 - planning and organising
 - understanding and preparation for fire abatement and fighting
 - map reading, recording and reporting
 - workforce management
 - OH&S, first aid
3. Business enterprise governance and management
 - Operating a board
 - Understanding and managing money and finance
 - Staff management
 - Community relations – understanding obligations
 - Business communications – local, regional and 'global'
 - Managing partnerships and building business

Many of the above (and other) skills are present or in infancy, and some can only be acquired as the practical need arises – there many examples of training for training sake without meaningful application. Such training tends to be abstract and ineffective.

Training and skills development have and will occur in a variety of ways and from different ‘providers’:

- Senior traditional owners and knowledge brokers
- Contracted providers, such as for operating areal incendiary machines for fire management
- Other Indigenous groups sharing experience and knowledge of similar activities
- Business training providers such as Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Studies and management mentors, Carbon Farming course providers like AbCF
- Planning and logistics mentors
- Other providers, familial, local, regional and other as identified over time

12. Building Partnerships with other Stakeholders

Potential partnerships, which the WG could broker, come from a broad range of stakeholders from land councils, state government, universities, private businesses and not-for-profit organisation. Outlined in this section are opportunities for partnerships with the following stakeholders:

- Northern Land Council
- Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
- Remote Jobs and Communities Programme /Community Development Programme (CDP)
- Carpentaria Land Council
- NT government
- Charles Darwin University
- Bushfires NT
- Pastoralists
- Aboriginal Carbon Fund
- NAILSMA
- ILSC

Northern Land Council

The Waanyi Garawa Rangers are formed under and employed by the Northern Land Council. The NLC, through its Caring for Country unit, administers NT and Commonwealth government grants, and in turn employ Rangers, provide equipment and assist with all aspects of project management. Waanyi Garawa are interested in operating independently through, for example, GLaSS, but recognise the need for experience and capability building over the next few years in the land management enterprise space to enable such autonomy – attractive precedents for self-management exist with several other NT Ranger groups, such as Djelk/Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, Arafura Swamp Ranger Aboriginal Corporation (ASRAC), Dhimurru Corporation and Warddeken Land Management Inc.

The main funding for the WG Rangers comes from two Commonwealth programs ‘Working on Country’, administered under the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM+C), and ‘Indigenous Protected Areas’, which is administered under the Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy. Both WoC and IPA programs are managed by the NLC. Fire management has been considered part of the broader WoC and IPA land management briefs, but at a limited level which has not (for example) involved late dry season fire suppression. Fire management for Carbon Farming requires a significant step up in planning and activity levels from WoC or IPA funded management and is, therefore ‘additional’ and an eligible activity under the CFI.

A fee-for-service arrangement, initially between NAILSMA (as the interim holder of the Savanna Burning project LUA and the registered CFI project) and the NLC (employer of the Garawa Rangers) enables the intensification of fire management activities, using NLC staff and WoC/IPA funded assets, supplemented with ILC SFM funded equipment and other support. NLC receives a ‘Prescribed Fire Management Plan’ developed by Traditional Owners, NAILSMA and WG and Garawa Rangers, and is contracted to implement that plan – work undertaken by the Garawa Rangers and significant numbers of part-time and casual Garawa people.

NLC is the statutory manager of ALRA lands in the top half of the NT and is formally responsible for:

- Ensure that the appropriate traditional owners are consulted for matters relating to Waanyi and Garawa Land Trust – including leases and licences, etc
- Prepare and negotiate LUAs with proponents – including in relation to mining
- Managing rents and royalties from LUAs
- Represent TO interests through the elected council and provide advice on native title and other advice.
- Administration and operation of WoC and IPA programs
- Administration and operation of the Ranger groups
- Administration of the Learning on Country Program

Permits to enter and use Aboriginal land and sea

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) was established under the NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act and is responsible for administering the protection of sacred sites on land and water across the NT. Waanyi Garawa have met with AAPA in Darwin, who explained the process for site registration and the important difference between recorded and registered sites. They are now in the process of registering some Waanyi and Garawa sacred sites.

How AAPA can help:

1. Assist us to properly record important information about sacred sites and song-lines on our country.
2. Assist us to register our sacred sites to ensure that they are legally protected,
3. Provide us with signs and materials to protect our sacred sites,

4. Assist us to work with the pastoralist to ensure that our sacred sites are protected, and
5. Provide support if our sacred sites are threatened or damaged in future.

Remote Jobs and Communities Programme / Community Development Programme

In Borroloola, many people work at the Remote Jobs and Communities Programme / Community Development Programme (RJCP/CDP) programme. We would like to see more traditional owners taking care of country and hope to work with RJCP/CDP to build our capacity and create opportunities.

RJCP/CDP can help:

1. Continue to support and encourage people to undertake training and study matched to WG goals and priorities,
2. Support people to access training and study by assisting with enrolment processes, and
3. Work with training providers and the Northern Territory Government Department of Business to identify potential training opportunities and funding for training.

Carpentaria Land Council

In 2012, Waanyi Garawa Rangers received funding from the Commonwealth Department of Environment via the Carpentaria Land Council, to support fire management on the Garawa and Waanyi Garawa ALT's. This funding was around \$50,000 per annum and was intended to cover helicopter time, fuel, incendiaries, personal protection equipment, training, minor equipment (trailer, firebugs, slip-on unit). The last round of funding was in 2017.

The Carpentaria Land Council remains relevant as a partner in fire management since it offers fee-for-service assistance with fire management on some nearby properties in Queensland. These properties (such as Lawn Hill) could be a source of fire for the Garawa and Waanyi Garawa ALT's, or could be burnt by fires originating in, or traversing the land trusts. It will be important for Waanyi and Garawa to maintain good communications and working relationships with Qld counterparts.

Northern Territory Government Aboriginal Ranger Fund

The NTG Aboriginal Ranger Fund (ARF) is a potential source of support, particularly for capital items. In 2018, the WG and Garawa Rangers received funding for Ranger Base infrastructure and a water tanker to support fire suppression work. Further funding rounds are expected.

Charles Darwin University and the Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research

Charles Darwin University and the Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research (DCBR) provide a range of important services to fire managers in northern Australia, including the WG and Garawa Rangers. DCBR (formerly with the Northern Territory Government's Bushfires NT) has been a major player in the science that underlies the methodology for savanna burning methodologies.

Research partnerships involving CDU and DBRC in the southwest gulf region have been important in developing local engagement, understanding and capacity around fire management. The engagement with Waanyi Garawa Rangers began in 2006, and the low-rainfall methodology (1000–600 mm/annum) was developed with the help of the Rangers. A series of fire plots on Garawa and Waanyi Garawa ALT's underpin that methodology, and they were monitored with the assistance of rangers. The engaged and long-term nature of the interaction has meant that the conversation has deepened for years, resulting in an impressive level of understanding and cooperation.

CDU and the DCBR provide support in the form of expertise that can be drawn upon as needed, in the form of Geographical Information System (GIS) data and custom mapping, specialist services such as Vegetation Map Validation and through a diverse research program that is broadly supportive of Aboriginal land managers and their cultural and ecological objectives. Some services are provided on a fee-for-service basis, while others are gratis.

CDU maintains the North Australia Fire Information (NAFI) website, which is a crucial resource for land managers, enabling near real-time tracking of ignitions and fire dynamics, and well as providing a reference for burning patterns in past months and years that can inform fire planning.

Bushfires NT

Bushfires NT is responsible for the enforcement of regulations concerning fire management activities in the Northern Territory. Bushfire NT oversees the placement of regional strategic firebreaks and ensures that property managers have adequate firebreaks around their boundaries before periods of high fire danger. They also issue permits to burn for most land tenure types.

The Garawa ALT falls under the Katherine Fire Management, while the Waanyi Garawa ALT falls under the Tennant Creek region. WG Rangers are represented on the Tennant Creek region's Committee.

Bushfires NT can provide advice and assistance as WG Rangers negotiate with their pastoral neighbours to improve fire management and more equitably share the burden of fire management activities. Bushfire NT also provide on-ground support for the placement of regional firebreaks and consumables such as incendiary capsules, and remote support in the form of weather reports and verbal descriptions of fire activity logged on NAFI available by telephone.

Pastoralists

The Garawa and Waanyi Garawa ALT's share boundaries with several pastoral properties, including a planned enterprise on Robinson River. Relations of the WG Rangers with the various properties vary and are subject to a range of potential conflicts and mutual benefits over time. There is a tendency amongst some pastoralists to see Aboriginal people as thoughtless and random in their use of fire, and indeed this has some reality in recent history. Yet, it is recognised by all that fires can start anywhere, as a result of human activity or lightning, and can cross property boundaries, even with the best firebreaks in place.

In general, pastoral neighbours of the WG and Garawa ALT's are supportive and are gaining confidence in the WG Rangers, with most pastoralists seeing benefits in a well-managed fire regime beyond their boundary. The WG Rangers contributed to fighting bushfires on nearby Benmarra Station in 2017, and on Seven Emus in 2016.

As the WG Rangers become involved in carbon farming, relations with the pastoralist neighbours will become more important. Key issues for consideration will include:

- Ensuring that pastoralist neighbours contribute adequately to the costs of grading firebreaks.
- As WG Rangers build capacity in fire-fighting, a balance may need to be negotiated between the obligations of a good neighbour to help in case wildfire, the degree to which helping a neighbour put out a fire is in WG's own risk management interests, and the costs that may be incurred in working on pastoral land, which would affect WG's carbon bottom line.

Aboriginal Carbon Foundation

Aboriginal Carbon Foundation is a national not-for-profit company building a sustainable carbon industry in northern Australia. Aboriginal Carbon Fund was established in 2010 and specialises in carbon project services for Aboriginal people.

AbCF is engaged in work to define and promote 'co-benefits', the range of cultural, social and ecological benefits that can stem from good fire management by Aboriginal people. Properly defined and verified, these co-benefits can yield premium prices in voluntary carbon markets. It is highly likely that WG will engage, at least to some degree with AbCF and its range of services when the period of ILC SFM support comes to an end.

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd

The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance works with the traditional owner and Indigenous land and sea managers across northern Australia and is committed to supporting Indigenous landowners and managers to care for country and create livelihoods on country. We have worked with NAILSMA this year and are keen to continue working together.

Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation

In 1992, the Mabo case judgement recognised the persistence of traditional rights to land post-British settlement. The judgement determined that rights to some lands had been extinguished through the colonial period. The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation is a Corporate Commonwealth entity formed as the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) in 1995 along with the then Land Fund (now Land Account) from which the ILC and later ILSC was to draw funds to assist in the acquisition of land where extinguishment leaves Aboriginal people dispossessed. The ILSC charter developed to include supporting Indigenous business development and sustainable land and sea use management.

In the last few years, the ILSC has been managing the \$34 million Savanna Fire Management Program on behalf of Inpex which operates the Ichthys LNG plant in Darwin harbour. The Savanna Fire Management Program (SFMP) applies to Carbon Farming Initiative eligible areas of the NT and in 2017 negotiated with Waanyi and Garawa traditional owners and NAILSMA Ltd (their requested project host) to support the development of a CFI compliant Savanna Burning project on the GALT and WGALT. This project reached an operational phase in 2019 and secured further SFMP money to support these operations. Unfortunately, due to circumstances outside the influence or responsibility of the partners, the WGALT was not able to be incorporated into the Savanna Burning or SFM project.

The preferred plan of the Garawa and Waanyi TOs was to grow their own company to manage the Savanna Burning (Carbon Farming) project and broader PES activities as they developed. In underwriting the operations of the Savanna Burning project, the ILSC-SFMP can provide low-risk support for the activity to develop and as such may negotiate with GALT TO (and perhaps later, WGALT TO) to continue support for one or more future (three year) rounds.

The ILSC has a broad charter to support Indigenous land acquisition, land and sea management and enterprise development. There is a range of financial support opportunities available through the ILSC aside from the SFMP. ILSC preferred sectors are: agribusiness; urban investment; niche Indigenous products; tourism; renewables; and water-based enterprise. The regional indigenous Land strategy for northern Australia adds specific reference to the conservation economy.

Waanyi Garawa plans and their interpretation through this BoC project are consistent with the ILSC recognition of the significance of the environmental services industry and its connection to other opportunities.

12.1 Waanyi and Garawa Landowner project engagement and development activities

The Business on Country framework cannot be undertaken merely as a desktop or remote exercise. While there are many sources of useful, though often disconnected information to inform land-use planning, face to face and on-ground activities are cornerstones to the process. Ownership and control are as important as being well-informed and striking partnerships. Tables 4 and 5 show the kinds of on-ground and face to face engagement afforded by this CRC project, and a snapshot of (sub) projects identified through this process as complementary and able to be built on or collaborated with to mutual and ultimately Waanyi and Garawa advantage.

Table 4: Waanyi and Garawa BoC project engagement and development activities.

Activity	Proponent/partnership	Participant numbers	Location	Date	Details	Funding source
Initial BoC consultation with the NLC	NAILSMA	6	Darwin	June 2017	Initial BoC consultation in relation to diversified land use opportunities with Waanyi and Garawa people	NAILSMA
Professional Development	NAILSMA, NLC	6	Darwin	March 13-14 2019	Savanna fire management Forum	ILSC
Purchase of Grading plant	NAILSMA / Donor		Borroloola		The opportunity to purchase locally a CAT grader enabled low-risk business activity for GLaSS ahead of higher risk proposed CFI project ownership	NAILSMA donor
BoC workshop	NAILSMA, OTS management	20	Borroloola	2019	Workshop on the development of a Waanyi-Garawa business entity	CRCNA, ILSC
Project partner engagement	NAILSMA	7	Robinson R	Aug 17-22 2019	Donor visit to BoC project to discuss business diversity and development status	CRCNA, NAILSMA
Training	NAILSMA, BNHCRC	6	Darwin	Aug 19-24 2019	AIDR Leadership training relevant to WG BoC capability building	BNHCRC

Activity	Proponent/partnership	Participant numbers	Location	Date	Details	Funding source
Veg mapping	DCBR/CDU		Robinson River	Early 2019	Veg mapping required for Carbon project registration and eligibility	ILSC
Carbon project	ILSC, NLC, NAILSMA donor, CRCNA	~100	Robinson R and surrounds	From 2017	WG TOs accepted an invitation to develop a carbon farming project under the ILSC/SFMP fund. NAILSMA was asked to host the grant and registered project until novating to a WG corp. NAILSMA and WG focussed on this within a broader BoC concept.	ILLSC/SFMP, CRCNA, NAILSMA donor

Table 5: Waanyi and Garawa BoC project synergies with other partners/collaborators/projects/

Partner/collaborator / service provider	Related Project	Specific sub-project funding source	Date	Existing complementary Initiative	CRCNA project Initiative
CDU/BNHCRC	AIDR Leadership training	AG - BNHCRC	Aug 19-24 2019	X	
ILSC, NLC	Savanna Fire Management Carbon Abatement Project	ILSC SFMP	From 2017	X	
AbCF	Initial carbon and co-benefits discussion and carbon feasibility assessment and	ILSC SFMP	2018	X	
AbCF	Carbon Farming training course	ILSC	Oct 2019	X	X
OTS Management	Business development workshop	ILSC, CRCNA	2018	X	X

13. Next Steps

This CRCNA supported project was applied to a situation where several agencies were already working with Waanyi and Garawa people on the GALT and WGALT to develop a Savanna Burning CFI project. NAILSMA was asked by the TOs to act as their legal entity for the purposes of registering this CFI project; to apply for and hold the LUA under the Land Rights Act and to negotiate and manage the SFMP grant from the ILSC. NAILSMA was usefully able to apply the BoC framework to this circumstance in the development state it was in and doing so help TOs be more locally responsive and strategic in their decision making.

Governance of this project was highly challenging, in part due to risk averseness associated with this first SFMP project and the conceptual difficulty of transitioning from prescribed environmental management to (necessarily) adaptive management of opportunities in the broader Payment for Environmental Services sector.

The creation and activation of the Waanyi and Garawa land and sea management company (GLaSS) will challenge the status quo and be an important step in Garawa and Waanyi establishing their own enterprise. It will allow the Garawa and Waanyi to get a direct feel for owning and running an enterprise. It will be a difficult step in the face of entrenched behaviours. With a broader outlook, such as a BoC framework engenders, there is plenty of targeted support that can be offered to navigate this phase.

A Board and manager for GLaSS (to be appointed by the current TO steering committee) will need to be set up in the near future and the company actively engaged in consolidating and operating proposed ALT grading and other contracts. It is not desirable to set up and populate a company too far ahead of meaningful economic activity. In this case, the grader can provide a useful commercial activity for GLaSS to 'practice' with and hone business and operational skills in the lead up to putting in a bid to take over the formal CFI registration of the maturing Savanna Burning project and to develop others.

Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation is a long-standing local company with a similar TO driven set of objectives to that of GLaSS. There is a natural synergy with fire management on the Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust and opportunity to share and trade. A partnership is evolving and likely to realise early contracting of GLaSS in mechanical and other services that will help to secure a start-up managers position.

The road **Grader**, purchased with independently sourced funds is being contracted for access road and track maintenance (with Garawa operators) and will serve both as a reliable means to maintain road, track and fire breaks and as a low-risk enterprise for the GLaSS management to hone their skills on. It is also being contracted out to Mungoorbada for Garawa and Waanyi to learn about heavy plant maintenance and to get operators tickets.

The next stages of the **Savanna Burning CFI** project are to consolidate the work in Season 2 (including all reporting, etc), to review the opportunity to work with WGALT (Nicholson Block). It will be important to carefully consider continuing with the ILSC- SFMP support and or extending the Savanna Burning project to include sequestration, with its 25-year permanence provision, et cetera.

There may be an opportunity to assist or include Seven Emu Station in a Savanna Burning project in the next year. Other expansion opportunities could be possible in the pastoral neighbourhood and with other Garawa and Waanyi in Qld.

Biodiversity surveys run by Bush Heritage have occurred over several years on Waanyi and Garawa country. Given the movement to diversify into PES activities, these surveys could be adapted to provide a report card on environmental management outcomes as well as the status of EPBCA and other species. This is a potentially significant step for Waanyi and Garawa PES (for example, for carbon co-benefits) but also to help establish metrics for biodiversity credits from Indigenous land management more broadly.

As GLaSS develops, it will be more important to create a good understanding of the relative roles and purposes of that company in relation to the NLC managed ranger program, to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity. This is particularly the case because of overlapping TOs interests in each and the likelihood of cross-over responsibilities in relation to fire, for example. GLaSS must be cautious not to threaten the existing ranger program.

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Appendix 1

Prospectus for potential partners

A statement of intent regarding commercial activity on Waanyi and Garawa lands and waters in the Northern Territory from the Waanyi and Garawa Traditional Owners of the Garawa and Waanyi-Garawa Aboriginal Land Trusts.

Note: this CRCNA supported Prospectus relates to opportunities complementary to the activities of several other projects on Waanyi and Garawa Aboriginal Land Trusts (WGALT) in the Northern Territory. The long-term scope relevant to this Prospectus is the two ALTs, though the agreed immediate target is the Garawa ALT (GALT). Building on other initiatives underway on the GALT and needing to establish self-ownership and control of the commercial aspect in the medium term, traditional owners required development of a business entity fit for purpose. In the immediate absence of a suitable Garawa entity TOs requested NAILSMA Ltd act in partnership with them and on their behalf to host and help develop the commercial activities and business infrastructure. To that end and acknowledging the partnership arrangement and expectations, NAILSMA is also a suitable

The Opportunities:

We have considered options available to apply our interests in land to create new and improved livelihoods and to enhance the well-being of the Waanyi and Garawa peoples. With the information presently available to us, we consider that commercial developments in:

- land and sea services business – minor earth works and grading;
- Carbon Farming (Savanna Burning);
- PES, associated with Savanna Burning (co-benefits) and stand-alone (environmental management with measurable social and cultural outcomes; and
- activities that complement the existing cattle operation (excision) on the Garawa Land Trust;

should be actively pursued.

Why partner with us:

Garawa and Waanyi peoples are the traditional owners of the lands and waters in which we seek to develop enterprise. We have been inseparable from these lands from time immemorial and are culturally responsible for its health and well-being and for that of all those who belong to it. We have unique and detailed traditional knowledge of our lands and seas and how to manage them. We have also experienced and been involved in every land use activity since Europeans first came into our country. We have many lessons to inform our partnerships going forward. Partnering with us will be secure, environmentally responsible and economically significant to both you and our community.

Appendix 1

Best Practice:

We:

- **have secured recognition of ownership and other rights** in significant parts of our ancestral lands and waters; and
- **have consulted carefully and comprehensively** with our Nation's landholders and community; and
- **have bolstered our foundational capacity to protect values important to us** through development of land management capability, related institutions and governance systems based on traditional obligations and practice; and
- **acknowledge the technical, financial and logistical support of various government and non-government organisations**, including the Cooperative Research Centre for Northern Australia, the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, the Northern Land Council, Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation and Aboriginal Carbon Foundation:

Preparatory work:

Work already completed or underway to advance our understanding of these opportunities includes:

- registered carbon farming project on the Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust (GALT) – NAILSMA Ltd on behalf of Garawa TOs;
- assessment of GHG abatement potential on Waanyi-Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust (WGALT);
- Land Use Agreement (under the Aboriginal Land Right (1976) Act) for a Savanna Burning project;
- savanna fire management ranger operational support contract (to 2023) for with the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation;
- two functioning ranger groups (supported by WoC and managed by the Northern Land Council) with annual training for WoC and IPA operations;
- Indigenous Protected Area on the WGALT;
- community support and business planning for establishing Gulf Land and Sea Services (GLaSS) plus ILSC support to establish entity;
- purchase of CAT grader for fire management road and track access and general regional contract work;
- biodiversity survey work (Bush Heritage/NLC);
- community of Robinson River (appr 350ppl) and several small homelands established on GALT; and
- several homelands on WGALT – a couple occupied all year.

How you can partner with us:

We acknowledge that more work is required to fully appraise and realise these opportunities and invite interested parties to collaborate with us to complete assessments and, where warranted, develop business cases for each of them. We envisage that new collaborative work will include:

Appendix 1

- detailed business planning and support for start-up implementation of GLaSS and its commercial activities (including partnerships, diversified portfolio management etc)
- support for nuanced governance capability in and in relation to GLaSS (for example, KPIs, communications strategy, board and staff performance, mentoring arrangements, outsourcing);
- further development of local understanding around self-owned/managed carbon farming business to position GLaSS to bid for / take-over the current Savanna Burning (abatement only) project and future sequestration;
- skills audit, training plan and strategic implementation specific to GLaSS objectives including career and corporate development trajectories;
- action research to develop local and transferable measures for PES related 'core benefit' outcomes; and
- timely re-engagement with TOs of the WGALT to develop opportunities with that ALT.

Our commitment:

To facilitate this work and optimise prospects of successful completion, we undertake to:

- establish effective methods and forums for productive interaction with interested parties;
- foster engagement of all relevant landholder and community representatives with the authority to make binding decisions;
- facilitate and communicate prompt decision-making when the quality of information and analysis meets the needs of landholders and other key decision-makers; and
- seek, in conjunction with potential partners, access to the financial and other resources needed to access relevant information and undertake the necessary high-quality analysis.

We seek to begin work during the 2020 calendar year. Our contact details are:

Ricky Archer
Chief Executive Officer
North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd

(In partnership with and on behalf of Traditional Owners of the GALT and WGALT)

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