



# ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15



Territory  
Natural Resource  
Management



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Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) is the regional organisation responsible for planning, coordinating and facilitating natural resource management (NRM) activities across the Northern Territory.

We support and implement projects and activities that improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural assets of the Territory.

We aim to build community capacity to engage in natural resource management through knowledge sharing, skills development and supporting our partners in caring for our natural assets.

# ABOUT US

*Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) is an independent not-for-profit organisation working with land managers, Traditional Owners, community groups, industry and government to support the responsible management of our water, land, soils, plants and animals. We work to ensure the community has the best available knowledge including traditional knowledge, the tools to manage threats and resources and that our communities can benefit economically and socially from NRM activities.*

We have been operating since 2005 and our members include industry bodies, Landcare and community groups, local government, indigenous organisations, pastoral companies and local businesses. With offices in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs, our dedicated and professional team of staff work with people across the Territory to identify NRM issues and opportunities, and to plan and implement NRM solutions at a local and regional scale.

## WHAT WE DO

We support the NT community in planning for a sustainable future for natural resources in a way that provides a balance between conservation, opportunity and economic development. TNRM's activities, and the activities we support, are based on priorities outlined by the community in the Northern Territory Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan.

## HOW WE DO IT

### THE NT INTEGRATED NRM PLAN

The INRM Plan is a community document that identifies and prioritises key NRM issues across the NT as well as the necessary actions to address them.

### LEADERSHIP, PLANNING AND DELIVERY

We help project partners in planning their NRM activities, including catchment and property-wide management plans, setting and reporting on project targets and providing advice and guidance on undertaking their projects.

### PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

We build and maintain partnerships, increase participation and support the capacity of Territorians to carry out NRM activities.

### INVESTING IN INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

An important part of our role is to collect, manage, develop and share NRM information and knowledge, including indigenous ecological knowledge. We do this through online resources such as information databases, web tools and social media, and contribute to research and on-ground action with field days, training sessions and workshops. We also host or support regular information sessions that focus on specific NRM issues.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND INVESTMENT

We identify and develop opportunities to support investment in NRM in the Northern Territory including financial and human resources.

## WHAT IS NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT?

Natural Resource Management (NRM) refers to how we take care of the resources that sustain us, including our soils, native plants and animals, marine environments and terrestrial aquatic systems.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2014/15 was a year of change for Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM), it was also a year of achievement and looking to the future.

This year we welcomed Clare Martin as Chair of the TNRM Board while saying a fond farewell to outgoing Chair Kate Andrews. Two new Directors, Ray Hall and Kate Peake, also joined the Board, adding to the wealth of experience and knowledge that will guide our organisation in the coming years.

We looked to the future as we worked with the community on the development of the 2015-2020 Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plan for the Northern Territory. We learnt from the past as we reviewed the 2010-2015 INRM Plan and published a report on the outcomes of the last 5 years. Our learnings, and the NRM aspirations and priorities of the community will be incorporated into new INRM plan as work continues on its development in 2015/16.

This year the Caring for our Country (CFOC) funding program drew to a close and the Australian Government continued its commitment to regional NRM delivery and the community through the new National Landcare Programme (NLP). The TNRM team worked hard to wrap up our CFOC activities while adjusting our programs to the NLP and maintaining our commitment to address the regional NRM priorities of Territorians.

Through our programs we delivered \$2.2 million of funding to the community through grants and support for engagement and capacity building activities. \$1.6 million of this funding supported 39 community groups and organisations undertaking 58 NRM projects. Partner groups and organisation contributed an additional \$1 million in cash and in-kind contributions towards these projects.

This year we also continued to build on successful NRM programs including collaborative catchment scale weed and pest management in the Finnis Reynolds

Catchment; and the Territory Conservation Agreement program supporting land managers improve production and conservation outcomes on their land.

We also build on our commitment to Indigenous employment and capacity development by welcoming a second Indigenous NRM Trainee to the staff of TNRM.

In progress toward diversifying our funding base, we were registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and applied to the Department of Environment for Deductible Gift Recipient status through the Register of Environmental Organisations. In 2015-2016 TNRM will continue to work to attract and connect directly with alternative revenue streams to complement existing funding.

As the regional NRM organisation for the NT, we have the privilege of working in partnership with a diverse and dedicated range of groups, organisations and individuals across the Territory. None of the achievements captured in this annual report would be possible without the efforts and commitment of our project partners. Thank you all for your hard work and contribution to managing the natural resources of the NT.

Thank you also to the hard working and dedicated staff of Territory Natural Resource Management for their amazing efforts thought out the year. As well as providing support to a variety of stakeholders from across the Territory, continuing to organise and deliver a series of events across a range of topics and playing a valuable role in facilitating the flow of information around NRM issues, they also put all hands on deck in getting our Darwin and Alice Springs offices moved to new locations over the course of the year.

Here's to looking back on all the achievements we've accomplished in recent years, and looking forward to new opportunities and developments.



# HIGHLIGHTS 2014-15

TNRM delivered **\$2.2 MILLION** of funding to the community through grants and support for community engagement and capacity building activities.

**39** community groups and organisations were supported to undertake 58 NRM projects.

**THE FIFTH ANNUAL** Darwin Harbour Clean Up is starting to show a positive downward trend in the amount of rubbish being collected with 140 dedicated volunteers collecting an estimated 2.8 TONNES from Darwin's Harbour region.

Around **170,000 HECTARES** of land was treated for a range of weeds including parkinsonia, belly ache bush and mimosa.

**THREE NEW** sites covering a total of 7,150 hectares were added to TNRM's Territory Conservation Agreements (TCAs), bringing the current land area to 27 TCA sites across 28,978 hectares.

There were a record **353** registrations for the 2 field trips and 7 workshops on offer during the 2014 TNRM Conference.

A **CAT CONTROL PROJECT** on West island has seen the resurgence of 3 NATIVE MAMMALS that were believed to have disappeared from the island.

**87** Indigenous people received on-ground training to build capacity and skills in NRM.

Over **60 PEOPLE** received direct training and education about responsible cat ownership and feral cat management in the Alice Springs region thanks to a TNRM funded Land for Wildlife project.

Over **1 MILLION** hectares was managed for the control of feral animals across the Victoria River District and Roper River regions.

Translation of the **FIRST EVER** field guide of 'Pests, Beneficials, Diseases and Disorders of Vegetables' into Vietnamese was completed and will help NT's Vietnamese growers' community better identify, manage and treat common pests and diseases.

**230 PEOPLE** attended the NT NRM awards event that celebrated the fantastic work, dedication and the achievements of Territorians that are looking after our natural environment.

**1,020,000 HECTARES** of land was strategically managed for fire, with a total of 99,825 HECTARES burnt for improved landscape management.



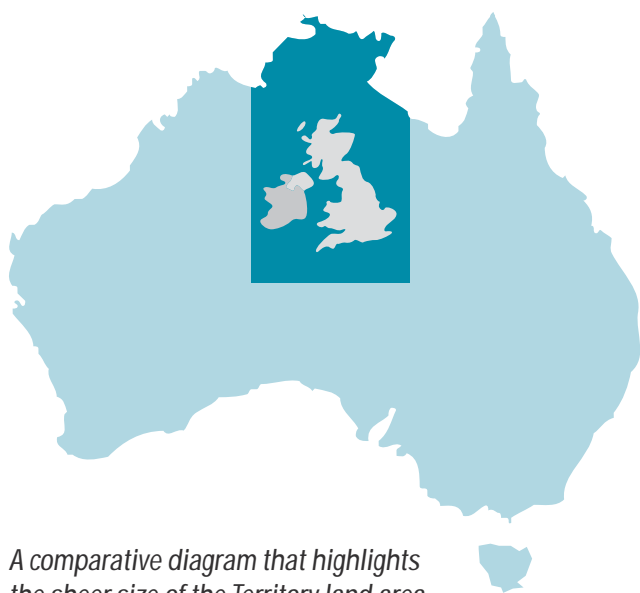
# OVERVIEW OF THE TERRITORY



*Covering 1,352,176 square kilometres, the Northern Territory is Australia's second largest jurisdiction and natural resource management region. While our region's north is characterised by extensive and pristine coastal habitats and vast wetlands, the landscape changes remarkably on the journey to the red deserts of our central Arid Lands, passing through woodlands, grasslands, escarpment country and isolated billabongs.*

Our small population of around 240,000 means we have the lowest population density of any state or territory. The NT is home to people from many walks of life, including pastoralists, indigenous groups and urban dwellers, who live in a range of vastly different, and often very remote, environments.

The Territory economy relies heavily on its natural resources and reconciling multiple land use issues is one of the main challenges for our region. From mining to recreational fishing, indigenous wild harvesting to tourism, there are many voices that contribute to how our land and sea resources are managed. TNRM supports and implements projects across the NT, tackling NRM issues from a local to catchment-wide scale. Although our native landscapes are still largely intact and have not been subjected to the same pressures of urban expansion or intensive agricultural development as in other parts of our country, NRM within the NT context is not without its challenges...



*A comparative diagram that highlights the sheer size of the Territory land area.*

While the Territory covers one sixth of the Australian landmass, we only represent 1% of the country's population and have a population density of 0.2 people per square kilometre. Consequently there is a strong reliance on a small number of landholders and their associated organisations to manage the majority of the landscape. There are over 130 indigenous language groups across the NT, and the traditional knowledge and practices of these groups are closely aligned with land management activities that have spanned tens of thousands of years.

Issues and priorities in NRM, along with our capacity to manage them, varies across the NT. To address these challenges and guide our activities at a local level, our Regional Coordinators work within four identified regions to support project partners and the community on a range of natural resource management projects and initiatives.





### DISTANCE AND CONDITIONS

Travel within the NT can be expensive and time consuming. Seasonal conditions can hamper access to sites. During the monsoon months in the Top End and Gulf Savanna, extensive flooding can cut off roads and floodplains while hot summer conditions in the Arid Lands can pose a risk to people working in the field. TNRM works hard to incorporate these challenges into our project plans to achieve the best possible outcomes.



### SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Around 90% of land ownership is divided almost equally between Aboriginal freehold and pastoral lease and both of these sectors have challenges unique to their situation.

Our Indigenous project partners often face difficulties around access to appropriate housing, education and employment prospects in the areas where they live. Many Territorians need to travel extensively to restock supplies, access services or reach decision makers and with industry sites that are far from markets and suppliers, it difficult to achieve economies of scale.



### COMMUNICATION

The Territory has a diverse multi-cultural population. This can sometimes prove challenging when implementing best practice management based on information in existing documents.

Most NRM documents or best practice guides are written with a highly literate English speaking audience in mind, which can be a disadvantage for people working in NRM from indigenous or non-English speaking backgrounds. We work to support the development of appropriate communication tools and materials.



### THREATS

Though retaining much of their ecological integrity and productivity, Territory landscapes are coming under increasing pressure from disruption to long-standing fire regimes, while exotic weeds pests and diseases have devastating effects on our soil, native vegetation, wildlife, crops and livestock. Some regions have seen significant declines in biodiversity and while some of the mechanisms behind this decline are understood, we do not yet have a full picture of why this is happening. Large tracts of land in Central Arnhem Land, the Sturt Plateau, the Burt Plain and the Finkel have been identified as some of Australia's least conserved bioregions. Prevention and detection of emerging and existing threats is essential in preventing further degradation of Territory environments. In addition to environmental threats, loss of culture and tradition in the Territory's indigenous population is an ongoing concern.



## OUR REGIONS



### TOP END

Characterised by extensive mangrove-lined coasts, wetlands and floodplains, the Top End landscape has been shaped by fire and water and is dominated by woodland and open forest with small pockets of grassland and monsoon forest. Most of the region is Aboriginal or pastoral land, with the horticulture industry concentrated in the Douglas Daly area. Sites of international conservation significance include the Western Arnhem Plateau (including RAMSAR listed Kakadu National Park), the Howard Sand Plains in rural Darwin and Groote Eylandt.

Around 70% of Territorians reside here, and Darwin is the main commercial and administrative centre of the NT with a population (including the city of Palmerston) of about 132,000. Located just 12 degrees south of the equator it has been described as Australia's gateway to South-East Asia. With one eye on the land and another on the sea, Darwin has become the business hub for a range of resource-based industries that are rapidly expanding across the region.



### GULF SAVANNA

With vast open woodlands and sheer escarpments, the Gulf Savanna region covers 23% of the NT. The coastal region includes the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf and the Gulf of Carpentaria with the Sir Edward Pellew Group containing the most significant islands. There are 30 nationally listed and 50 Territory-listed threatened species in this region—including the Critically Endangered Northern Quoll, Carpentarian Rock-Rat and Fitzroy Land Snail.

Around 66% of the region is pastoral land and 20% Aboriginal land while horticulture is a small but important industry. Vegetation type is mostly woodland/open woodland with smaller areas of grassland and open forest. Home to 9% of the Territory's population its largest town is Katherine with around 11,000 people, situated 320km south-east of Darwin on the Katherine River.





# TABLELANDS

The rolling grass plains of the Barkly Tablelands cover 15% of the Territory. Primarily cattle country, nearly 75% of the region is under pastoral lease, while 17% is Aboriginal freehold. Less than 1% is covered by conservation reserves. The dominant habitat is a semi-arid savanna of Mitchell Grass, while vegetation is mostly open woodland and grassland with smaller areas of spinifex grassland and woodland. The combined Barkly Lakes of Eva Downs Swamp, Lake Sylvester and Tarabool Lake system are

classified as nationally significant and provide important bird refugia particularly for migratory species.

With a mere 3% of the NT's population, its largest towns are Tennant Creek and Elliott. Home to a population of approximately 3,600, Tennant Creek is located on the Stuart Highway about 1000km south of Darwin and 500km north of Alice Springs at the junction of two great arterial roads, the Barkly Highway and the Stuart Highway.



# ARID LANDS

Once covered in rainforests and inland seas, time has transformed the expansive Arid Lands region into the vast tracts of red sand and eroded ranges that we see today. Largest of all the regions, the Arid Lands cover almost half of the Territory of which about 55% is Aboriginal freehold and 36% pastoral lease. Horticulture is a small, but important industry. The region is dominated by spinifex grassland, open shrubland, and open woodland and there are eight internationally significant conservation sites across the

Arid Lands, including the Greater MacDonnell Ranges and the South West Tanami Desert.

Home to 18% of the Territory's population, its largest town is Alice Springs located 1,500km south of Darwin. With about 28,600 people, this is the NT's largest regional centre and is the central base for tourism activities around the Arid Lands region. Popular areas for tourists include Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Watarrka National Park, the Western and Eastern MacDonnell Ranges and Rainbow Valley.

# REGIONAL UPDATE

## TOP END

*Anthony Kerr is the Regional Coordinator for the Top End and is based in Darwin.*

*With one round of funded projects wrapping up and another round starting, 2014-2015 has seen a mix of well-established and new initiatives across a range of activities from marine debris clean ups to urban landcare, feral animal management on indigenous lands and fire management on island sites.*

In Arnhem Land, the Dhimurru and Anindilyakwa Rangers are continuing their efforts to keep their coastal lands healthy through regular marine debris clean ups. These remote locations see a lot of debris being washed up from points of origin outside Australia, including deadly ghost nets which threaten our marine life. TNRM provided funding for Dhimurru Rangers to restore and protect coastal environments on Dhambaliya (Bremer Island) through the removal of invasive coffee bush, a project that has been running since 2011. Not only has this project helped in the restoration of native habitat but it has also opened up traditional hunting lands for local communities.

In mid 2014, a feral animal management meeting in Ramingining was attended by nine ranger groups and several feral animal management experts. This meeting provided a regional perspective of feral animal management and migration patterns in Arnhem Land which will help in broad scale planning. In the Blue Mud Bay and Arnhem Bay region, Laynhapuy Rangers have been managing feral pigs across 30,000 hectares. Further west the Wanga Djaakamirr, Gurrwurling and SE Arafura Catchment Rangers continue to manage invasive weeds, feral pigs and buffalo in the Arafura Swamp while the Djelk Rangers have been managing buffalo on their traditional lands. Ranger groups received on-the-job training as part of their contracts.

Fire management activities have continued throughout the Top End. In the Daly Region, a collaborative fire management project took place on the Upper Daly Land Trust involving the Northern Land Council, Wagiman Rangers and Fish River Station, albeit smaller in scale compared to previous years' regional burning activities. Since developing their fire management plan for island sites in 2012, the Crocodile Island Rangers have continued with their fire management activities on islands in Castlereagh Bay and the Arafura Sea and over 2014 have extended their work into new areas, including monitoring fires lit by Traditional

Owners on Rapuma Island, assisting Djelk Rangers with their work and joining in on a mainland burn on Cape Stewart using a helicopter-mounted 'Raindance' machine.

In and around Darwin, groups have been active across a range of projects. Notably, the Larrakia Rangers have been doing great work out on Tree Point in removing invasive parkinsonia and replanting natives. In an exciting development, the rare Atlas moth was discovered at this site and appears to be establishing a local population. Rangers have received training in all relevant areas for these activities with funding support from TNRM and in collaboration with NT Parks and DLRM Weeds Branch. The inclusion of photo-monitoring points has been another important development for this project over the last year and, as with most contracted projects, is an integral part of the monitoring and reporting process.

Continuing with the coastal health theme, in July 2014 the annual Darwin Harbour Clean Up again proved to be a successful event, attracting 140 dedicated volunteers and the support of 40 different agencies, including TNRM who provided the main funding support. Less trash was collected - an estimated 2.8 tonnes - than in previous years which we hope is the beginning of a positive trend.

In early 2015, TNRM launched a Community Grants Program, which has allowed for continuation of important and well-established projects, as well as some exciting new initiatives such as sustainable harvesting of Kakadu plum in the Thamarrur region and mapping weed species across the conservationally significant Howard Sand Plains near Darwin. Established projects that will continue through this funding round include Friends of Fogg Dam Landcare group, who are managing olive hymenachne on Fogg Dam utilising a variety of management techniques and marine debris management in the Dhimurru IPA.

Work is progressing with established TCAs in the Darwin rural region - at Adelaide River Station, Darwin River, Ruby Downs, Tipperary Station and Maneroo Station. Ongoing monitoring is showing an improvement in the species composition for native flora as the pressures of invasive weeds continue to be addressed.

Regional focuses continue to be developed for key areas in the Top End and collaborative planning on this scale is key to effective on-ground efforts. The INRM plan will act as a useful guide for this work.



## GULF SAVANNA

*Daniel Chapman is the Regional Coordinator for the Gulf Savanna and is based in Katherine.*

*The 2014-2015 period was another busy year for the Gulf Savanna, with great strides being made by land managers and organisations in the areas of feral animal and weed management, as well as improved sustainable practice in a region characterised by its high number of pastoral leases.*

Thanks to the hard work and efforts of some dedicated individuals, the Gulf Rivers Landcare group is beginning to gain momentum. In March 2015, a 'Business of Grazing' course was held at the McArthur River Mine, which saw 19 participants attend from a variety of land tenures. These types of courses are important for improving broad scale management practices and attendees represented a total of ten properties that cover approximately 30,000 square kilometres of pastoral land in the region. The course addressed a range of topics from improving the viability of a grazing business through to sustainable management practices. It also provided an opportunity for attendees to discuss other regionally specific issues and hold a meeting for Gulf Rivers Landcare. This course was made possible due to TNRM funding and the generosity of Glencore. The group is currently working on a funding application that if successful will see a full time coordinator in the district.

The Victoria River District Conservation Association has seen some changes over the last year with long-standing coordinator Rhys Arnott moving on from this role. Luckily his knowledge and expertise will stay within the Territory as he has moved on to join the Heytesbury Cattle Company, replacing Russ Cornall who has now moved back to Victoria. Thanks to the commitment of the committee, Russ, DLRM staff and some assistance from the TNRM regional coordinator the group was able to achieve nearly all their milestones and exceed expectations in many of them. The new VRDCA coordinator will certainly have big shoes to fill.

The Roper River Landcare Group has continued to increase its level of engagement with a growing number of pastoral properties undertaking best practice NRM activities. In addition to coordinating the group, Ian Rowbottom has continued to oversee the 'Working on Country' project on the Mangarrayi Land Trust. Being fairly high up in the catchment, this should continue to be beneficial to the Roper catchment overall.

The Wangamaty Land Management Group has had another productive twelve months. Coordinators Nigel and Jane Fraser have established some great working relationships

within the community. They have shown a great level of dedication and enthusiasm and having successfully gained funding through the 2015 TNRM Community grants program for a two-stage project to control invasive weeds in the Lower Daly region, they look set to have a big year ahead of them!

The feral cat control project that takes place on West Island, part of the Pellew Islands group off Borroloola, is continuing to prove highly successful. Funded by TNRM, assisted by Desert Wildlife Services, and in collaboration with the Ii-Anthawirriyarr Sea Rangers, a comprehensive baiting and trapping campaign has been operating since 2011 in an attempt to bring the cat population under control. In this time, feral cat numbers have decreased to extremely low levels thanks to ongoing efforts. The direct result of this project has been the increase in small mammal species trapped in surveys on the island. In 2012 the Delicate Mouse was captured on West Island for the first time since cats arrived and the trap success rate for this species has now increased from 5% to 17%. Water Rats have also been recorded on cameras on West Island in both 2013 and 2014 and in October 2014 the first Grassland Melomys was captured there since 1988.

While the rate of uptake of our Territory Conservation Agreement (TCA) program has slowed over the last year, the Gulf Savanna still maintains the highest number of sites. Three new TCA's have been established - Victoria River Downs, Montejinni and Stapleton Station. Our regional coordinator is working hard with land managers towards signing off several more in the coming months. The recent expressions of interest have included some areas of exceptionally high conservation significance. Over the 2015 dry season, yearly monitoring of established sites was carried out and with some sites already three years into the program we are beginning to see pleasing results. Coming off the back of several consecutive poor wet seasons for some areas of the Gulf district, it is amazing to see that land condition has remained stable or is improving despite adverse climatic conditions. Of particular note at a monitoring point within a site it was noted that that has been a 90% increase in the cover of the desirable perennial and decreaser species Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*).

At the end of another year of great work being undertaken by land managers within this region, the Gulf Savanna has once again proved that it is home to some of the most proactive and environmentally conscious landholders in the Territory.



## TABLELANDS

*Jon Hodgetts is the Regional Coordinator for the Tablelands and is based in Alice Springs.*

*This past year has seen a degree of upheaval on the Barkly with many pastoral properties undergoing a change in management as well as a change of co-ordinator for the Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association towards the end of the financial year. Despite these changes, the Barkly continues to adopt and implement NRM strategies across huge swathes of land.*

MTP Contracting of Corella Creek have continued weed spray activities across several properties for the prickly bushes - parkinsonia, mesquite and prickly acacia - especially across the Georgina, Tarabool and Lake Sylvester catchments. In addition, MTP have assisted Triple P contracting in their first weed spraying endeavour at Anthony Lagoon Station. Established by Gordon and Susie Jackson, Triple P has been in operation for a few years based in their hometown of Elliott. However only recently have they begun fee-for-service activities for NRM operations. Through TNRM funding and with the guidance of Maxie Priest of MTP Contracting, Triple P successfully completed parkinsonia spraying at an area of Anthony Lagoon and we look forward to their continued involvement on the Barkly for many years to come. Alongside MTP Contracting, this demonstrates that there exists the potential for remote businesses not only to survive on the Barkly but to thrive.

Pastoral properties continue to take the lead in managing NRM threats with Helen Springs being instrumental in ongoing trials for the control of rubber bush, an emerging

weed threat in the Barkly region, and Newcastle Waters working closely with NT Weeds Branch in establishing monitoring sites for the release of UU Moth, a biological control agent used to assist in curbing the spread of parkinsonia. Beetaloo is continuing its rotational grazing project with the assistance of the Department of Primary Industries, BLCA and Desert Wildlife Services and hosted an open day in late 2014 to a large and engaged audience of regional stakeholders. Alexandria's Territory Conservation Area (TCA) site remains in excellent condition under the management of Stephen Bryce and we are hopeful that two more properties will have TCAs established by the end of the year.

The Australian Rangelands Society held their annual conference in Alice Springs in April 2015 and in addition to the Tennant Creek Weeds Branch having a poster submission accepted, MTP Contracting were invited to talk. Unfortunately MTP were unable to make it on the day; however TNRM Regional Co-ordinator Jon Hodgetts was able to present on their behalf, showcasing their achievements in the region.

Lastly, we wish to thank outgoing BLCA Co-ordinator Kate Christianson for all her hard work this past year and welcome Angela Carpenter to the role. We look forward to maintaining the strong working relationship between TNRM, BLCA and its members.



## ARID LANDS

*Heidi Groffen was on maternity leave for the 2014-15 year with Jon Hodgetts overseeing this role for the period.*

*With both the Ecological Society of Australia (ESA) and the Australian Rangelands Society (ARS) choosing to host their annual conferences in Alice Springs over this past year, the Arid Lands region has certainly been the hotbed for a range of discussions. These have included topics as diverse as arid ecology, the ecology of northern development, Indigenous ecological knowledge and innovation in the Rangelands.*

TNRM were present at both of these events and were able to add our own discussions regarding current programs and issues into the mix. At the Rangelands Conference, Regional Co-ordinator Jon Hodgetts presented a poster on our Territory Conservation Agreement (TCA) program with the aim to broaden the uptake of this program within Central Australia. At the ESA Conference, TNRM Program Manager Diane Pearson chaired a symposium on linking science with practice in NRM, during which she gave a presentation entitled 'Scientists are from Mars! NRM practitioners are from Earth!' NRM Planner Paul Donohoe presented on the challenges of utilising research in NRM plans and Jon Hodgetts on the TCA program. While many regional stakeholders had active involvement in both conferences with dozens more in attendance, a special mention to Steve Eldridge from Desert Wildlife Services for his excellent presentation on the dynamics of wild dog predation and Marg Friedel from CSIRO for her insightful interview with Steve and Rebecca Cadzow from Mount Riddock Station.

The Arid Lands region also continues to deliver strong NRM performances in other arenas. Land for Wildlife (Lfw) have made great strides in obtaining information on feral cats and spotted turtle doves including successful trapping of both in the Alice Springs region. Lfw are a highly visible presence at many regional events and continue to educate and challenge the public about many key NRM issues with TNRM having helped with funding for many of the practical workshops and feral cat monitoring and subsequent captures. Desert Wildlife Services have

taken their ongoing research into feral cat predation and management further afield and are now producing valuable information on both cats and foxes at Newhaven Sanctuary, a 260 000 ha protected area managed by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy in the Great Sandy Desert. The result of this predator control work will hopefully lead to the reintroduction of endangered mammal species such as the Burrowing Bettong and the Mala.

Notable successes from the Centralian Land Management Association over the last year were the continued growth of the Desert Poppies group - a formal network for women in Central Australia - and work on soil erosion mitigation and cactus control. Alice Springs Landcare are also involved with invasive cactus control - coral cactus, devil's rope and jumping cholla - and are continuing to eradicate these species from along sections of the Todd River.

The Central Land Council conducted fire management for culture and conservation on the Hanson River improving access along those fire corridors and allowing for successful bilby surveys to be carried out. Lastly, we have seen the Ten Deserts program which looks to build collaborative partnerships across state and territory borders to support the protection of the natural and cultural values of Australia's outback, move from theory into practice through the efforts of Arid Lands Environment Centre's Jimmy Cocking and the Pew Charitable Trust, with TNRM as a supporting partner.

The region has seen two Green Army projects get underway with both Olive Pink Botanical Gardens and Desert Park having their submissions accepted. Olive Pink are implementing garden bed rejuvenation and weed control while Desert Park are building breeding spaces for the Central Australian subspecies of Mala (*Lagorchestes hirsutus*). We look forward to following their progress over the coming months.

This next year is shaping up with funding through the National Landcare Program to continue delivering NRM outcomes across our largest region through the activities and passion of regional stakeholders.



# THE NT INRM PLAN

*The Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plan provides Territorians with a guide to land, water, biodiversity and coastal resource management in the NT while improving peoples' opportunities and quality of life. It has been put together by TNRM with the help of people involved with natural resource management around the Territory.*

The purpose of the INRM Plan is to guide NRM funding, planning and decision-making, support and activities, and to encourage more involvement in and funding for NRM in the Territory, identify opportunities for new partnerships and investors, inform government policies and priorities. TNRM funds and supports activities based on the INRM Plan and other organisations also help to meet INRM Plan targets through their activities.

The Plan contains fourteen program areas that are divided into four themes.

## ADDRESSING THREATS

How to tackle the problems of fire, weeds and ferals across the NT.

## SUPPORTING ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As we grow and develop we face many new challenges in managing our resources. The plan helps to guide future developments so they are as sustainable as possible.

## MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

We collect information about Territory landscapes, and provide advice, which stakeholders can collect and use. TNRM promotes knowledge sharing between groups working with NRM issues.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

We help natural resource managers and volunteers put plans into action through business support, identifying funding opportunities, information networks and training.

Dhimurru and Yirralka Rangers in North-East Arnhem Land teamed up with local schools to deliver the Learning on Country program module on understanding climate change and its effects on seasons and the abundance of natural resources. Elders took the students to some key areas around Nhulunbuy and shared cultural stories about important sites, sea levels, tides, seasons and changes to the landscape through song and dance, while students interpreted and reflected on the stories. Students have been learning about climate change in the classroom and this was an opportunity to reflect on how cultural knowledge and scientific perspectives interrelated. The Learning on Country program is an innovative approach to education in Arnhem Land that involves elders, rangers and schools and links natural and cultural resource management with the secondary school curriculum. Around 100 people participated in the workshop enjoying the exchange and diversity of song, dance and other information shared over the two days in March 2015.

This climate change module was supported by TNRM with some funding from the Australian Government's NRM Planning for Climate Change Fund. The information gathered will further develop a climate change and indigenous knowledge module that will not only be delivered again in Arnhem Land but also in other Aboriginal communities throughout Australia. It will also contribute to a broader project on climate change adaptation that will inform NRM planning across Northern Australia





# UPDATING THE PLAN 2015-2020

*We review and update our plan every five years and are working on the 2015-2020 Plan.*

Over 2014-2015, TNRM reviewed the progress made against the targets in the 2010-2015 INRM Plan. The review process gathered together updates from a series of small workshops as well as interviews with experts and organisational representatives and assessed whether management actions in NRM are effectively prioritised according to their ability to achieve short-term strategies and ultimately the desired long-term outcomes.

The review publication (see inset) was designed using tools to communicate concepts and report visually to appeal to a wide audience. This approach is consistent with other initiatives in NRM from around the world where a lot of information can be conveyed without producing a bulky document. The review was published and distributed through the NRM stakeholder network.

With funding received from the Australian Government's 'NRM Planning for Climate Change Fund', TNRM has been integrating climate change information into the updated plan in order to inform and prioritise future NRM actions and targets. The latest scientific knowledge, emerging issues and a changed institutional and policy context is also being incorporated. To facilitate this process, TNRM used the "Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation" participatory planning method. This approach helps teams to plan more efficiently and effectively as it is based on a continuous cycle of adaptive management. By planning, implementing and monitoring NRM initiatives so the community can learn what works, what does not work, and why, groups are able improve their efforts and apply a more systematic approach to planning. This continuous cycle of adaptive management is something that TNRM aims to implement with stakeholder groups in the NT where we continually strive to improve our approaches to NRM.

Work to update the INRM plan has so far focussed at the regional level through community engagement workshops in Katherine, Alice Springs, Batchelor, Tennant Creek and throughout the Barkly, and a meeting for Arnhem Land groups was held in Darwin. These workshops were attended by over 100 people and provided a lot of information on the strategies, objectives and goals for the next 5 years in NRM. NRM planning can often be

challenging when stakeholders have differing views on what are the most important strategies we should be focusing on. The workshops used a process that allowed stakeholder groups to link direct threats to assets and to rank and prioritise which threats were most important to work on. Groups were then challenged to develop strategies that were directly linked to addressing these threats and ultimately improving or maintaining asset health.

TNRM have also been working closely with neighbouring NRM groups and research institutions across the Monsoonal North and Rangelands 'cluster' groups. These clusters include the latest regional climate change projections from CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology. Research projects funded through this program are providing specific information on climate change relevant for these regions that NRM groups can incorporate into their NRM plans. This research includes a diverse range of relevant topics that includes the impacts of climate change on fire and drought in the rangelands, impacts on climate change on weeds and feral distributions, social resilience of pastoralists to climate change and indigenous climate adaptation knowledge.

TNRM are compiling all this information and continue to engage the community on drafting the four regional NRM plans for the Arid Lands, Tablelands, Gulf Savanna and Top End. These regional plans will form the building blocks of the NT-wide INRM Plan that will be published during 2015-16.



# PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

TNRM supports projects across a number of key NRM priority areas. As well as supporting and funding many smaller-scale projects across the Territory, we also coordinate a range of large scale programs that operate at catchment and regional levels.







**SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE  
PRODUCTION**



**PROTECTING HABITAT  
AND SPECIES**



**BUILDING KNOWLEDGE  
AND CAPACITY**





## SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

*Primary production is one of the main contributors to the NT economy. However, the Territory climate presents many challenges to producers. Not only is the climate harsh and marked by extremes in rainfall, temperature and arid conditions but the natural resource base upon which this industry is founded—namely soil, water and vegetation—is subject to degradation from a range of pressures. Invasive weeds, feral species and soil deterioration all threaten the sustainability of our primary industries. TNRM supports management practices through project funding that improve the condition of our land and water.*

Developing the North and increasing the scope of production are both trends that are rapidly gaining momentum in the NT. However, on the flip side we must consider the best strategies for keeping on top of the prevailing threats of weeds, fire and feral animals and the potential ramifications that our changing climate will bring - tackling the increasing emergence of pathogens and disease and ensuring the continued health of our precious soil and water resources. Taking into account these diverse and complex factors as the NT continues to expand and develop is a key component of ensuring a sustainable and productive industry.

In supporting sustainable production, TNRM funding goes towards on-ground projects aimed at addressing the NRM threats, as well as building the capacity of land managers to undertake natural resource management activities, disseminate information and adopt new practices. The 2014-2015 period saw a continuation of many of the successful and well-established projects that aim to improve land productivity—particularly with regards to weed and feral animal control, fire management and erosion control. On-ground projects and activities such as field days and workshops resulted in 38 people gaining improved knowledge and skills in soil management over the 2014-15 period, while 22 pastoral properties received technical information on weed management strategies.



TNRM works with pastoral Landcare and primary industry groups to support sustainable practices and knowledge sharing. Nearly 50% of the NT comprises pastoral lease and the work being done by TNRM can only be effective with a collaborative NT-wide network of information sharing and support. The relationship between TNRM and the NT's four pastoral Landcare groups - Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association, Centralian Land Management Association, Roper River Landcare Group and Victoria River District Conservation Association - is one example of collaborative NRM. The groups receive funding and support from TNRM while the pastoral groups facilitate on-ground activities, deliver capacity building initiative and can serve as an intermediary between individual stakeholders and TNRM.

Over the past year, the funding and support provided to pastoral Landcare groups by TNRM has resulted in 595,000 ha managed for feral animals and 74,000 ha managed for weeds in the Roper River region, 500,000 ha managed for feral animals and 43,000 ha managed for weeds in the VRD, as well as 20,000 ha of weed management work in the Barkly. In the Arid Lands region, the Centralian Land Management Association (CLMA) has been working on erosion control at selected sites.

Out in the Roper region work is being done via multiple projects to tackle weeds, fire, ferals, and erosion and to improve biodiversity across the Roper Catchment and Sturt Plateau. Some of the main highlights from the last year's work include the survey and control of bellyache bush and lantana as well as clearing infestations of neem, parkinsonia and rubber bush from across five stations and carrying out fire planning meetings at 18 properties. Feral animal management activities addressed feral pigs, buffalo, donkeys, wild dogs and horses.

Similar land management activities were carried out in the Victoria River District. Feral horses and donkeys were removed from across nine landholdings, while a concurrent project focusing on purple fairy wren habitat protection resulted in WoNS treatment across 10 land tenures. There was follow up support on soil erosion and ground cover management activities on two properties across 5000ha and control of feral vertebrates on two properties. The Delamere Field Day was held with over 30 participants, 11 stations undertook staff training on weeds and ferals and 10 monitoring points were established. In early 2015, work continued on a four year eradication campaign to control prickly acacia on four stations covering 45,000 ha, 17 staff were trained in weed ID and treatment, 23,000 ha of WoNS were treated across seven

stations and an aerial survey of belly bush infestation was undertaken covering 5,000 ha.

The main project focus in the Barkly was work with pastoral land managers to conserve and protect significant nesting and resting habitat for migratory birds through the management of prickly bushes - parkinsonia, prickly acacia and mesquite - while in the Arid Lands, the CLMA worked with pastoral land managers to increase skills, knowledge and engagement in sustainable land management practises on pastoral lands. Some early progress was made towards re-monitoring the 'Cunningham sites' originally set up in the 1960s to monitor soil erosion issues.

As in previous years, the Lower Daly has remained the subject of a coordinated effort to tackle numerous grassy weed species. The Wangamaty Land Management Group has been a driving force in the control of gamba grass, para grass, mission grass and olive hymenachne. These grassy weeds can all cause ecosystem degradation, habitat loss and species decline by outcompeting native grasses and increasing fuel loads which can promote more intensive late dry season fires. TNRM funded projects have resulted in the treatment of 2,000ha of invasive grass species and the work done on the Malak Malak Land Trust involved eight land managers and one indigenous coordinator. Ten land holders were also supported with follow-up weed management.

As part of our ongoing efforts to support sustainable industry practices, TNRM was involved in a sustainable agriculture partnership project with NT Farmers and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries for the 'Field Guide to Pests, Beneficials, Diseases and Disorders of Vegetables' - which was officially launched early in 2015. TNRM funded the translation of this guide into Vietnamese, supporting a community which comprises a significant proportion of the crop farmers operating within the Darwin region. TNRM's Territory Conservation Agreement program also added another three sites to its register, bringing the total amount of land under conservation protection to 28,978 ha.

In addition to once again funding the annual Darwin Harbour Clean Up, the NT Seafood Council also received funding from TNRM to produce 5 protected species fact sheets about marine turtles, dugongs, crocodiles, freshwater sharks and sawfish, as well as 3 fishing fact sheets. The Darwin Aquaculture Centre also received funding support for a trial on tropical rock oyster production at selected Top End island sites.



Before and after shots from a property in the Lower Daly showing a reduction in grassy weed infestations



Treating prickly acacia on the VRD



An example of the problems caused by the invasive weed rubber bush, which outcompetes native pasture and is toxic to stock



## TERRITORY CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS

TNRM's Territory Conservation Agreements (TCAs) support land managers in protecting areas of conservation importance on their properties. TCAs are a 10-year voluntary agreement between TNRM and the land manager. Through the implementation of a tailored management plan for nominated high conservation value sites they encourage innovative multiple-use strategies, which can demonstrate production benefits as well as delivering conservation outcomes. The TCA program also helps to protect special sites that do not fall within the system of nationally protected areas. This is important in helping to create a network of habitat sites that is linked throughout the broader landscape, creating 'stepping stones' for plants and animals.

The first agreement was signed in September 2011 and since then a total of 27 TCAs have been established. Collectively, these sites encompass 28,978 hectares of ecologically significant habitat, including wetlands and rivers, escarpment country and woodland. Over the

2014–15 period a total of three TCAs were contracted, adding an extra 7,150 ha of land to the program.

As part of the jointly agreed obligations that make up the TCA between TNRM and the land manager, management actions may include fencing, weed removal, establishing alternative watering points for cattle, removal of feral animals or changes in burning practices.

Follow up activities over the duration of the 10 year contract include monitoring as well as maintaining established infrastructure. The TCA program has been successful largely because TNRM make the process as uncomplicated as possible for landholders and aim to provide the best technical advice for each site. A number of TCAs are now entering their third year and many are beginning to report slow improvements to the condition of their nominated sites.

Several site biodiversity surveys were completed over the 2014-2015 period, using the expertise of NT ecological consultants Team Savanna and Desert Wildlife Services.



### TCA SNAPSHOT—FLORINA STATION IN THE DALY BASIN

Florina Station, located approximately 20 km west of Katherine, was one of the TCAs to join the program in the last year. Nominating a 350-hectare site, known as 'Monday Hole', Florina was the 27th TCA to join to our regional network in early 2015.

Monday Hole was identified as a significant site as it is an ecologically healthy permanent swamp which attracts a wide range of birds throughout the year. Landholders at Florina Station received a grant to set up an alternative watering point for cattle. This means that cattle can be fenced off from the swamp, but will still have access to the water provided; a win-win situation for both the landholder and the environment. By preventing cattle from approaching the swamp edge, this prevents soils around the water's edge being disturbed and eroded, ensures better water quality, eliminates the risk of animals getting bogged in muddy soils, and protects native vegetation.

TNRM's TCA program has been running since 2011 as a way of helping landholders protect areas of conservation value on their properties. Many of our threatened species and habitats well represented in the reserve system, but may occur on private land or Crown land managed for other purposes. The TCA program help protect areas of conservation significance that do not fall helps to protect the system of nationally protected areas.

## FINNISS REYNOLDS CATCHMENT PROJECT

The Finnis Reynolds Catchment Group (FRCG) project was one of 317 projects to receive funding from the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund and has been under TNRM management since 2013. This grants scheme aims to revegetate and restore over 18 million hectares of the Australian landscape.

The Finnis Reynolds Catchment Group (FRCG) is a team of land managers including Traditional Owners, National Parks and pastoralists collaborating at landscape scale to manage invasive species across the high biodiversity value sites of the Finnis River and Anson Bay catchments—particularly feral pigs and the invasive prickly shrub and Weed of National Significance (WoNS) *Mimosa pigra*. The project will identify and map the scale of the infestation; produce a catchment management plan; physically remove large scale infestations; control feral animals; and employ a Weeds Officer to manage and coordinate activities. The

outcome will be an increase in native vegetation, capacity building of land managers, employment and improved land productivity.



Three years of the project are now completed, with two years left to go, and the efforts of this project are starting to demonstrate some tangible results as shown as shown in this aerial shot of treated mimosa.

Project duration: August 2012 – June 2017  
Australian Government Funding: \$1,880,200  
Estimated In-Kind support: \$2,130,00

Each year the project provides funding to landholders to offset the cost of aerielly treating *Mimosa pigra*. The ideal approach is to coordinate spray treatments so that they occur all together, at the same time of year, and at the start of wet season. The timing and coordination is important as this means plants can be treated before the floodplains fill up with water and before plants respond to the wet and start flowering and seeding. The December - February period saw 15,850 hectares of *Mimosa pigra* infestation treated by fixed wing (representing approximately 113 hours of work) and 1,719 ha treated by helicopter (143 hours), over six out of the main seven properties in the catchment. Most areas were follow up areas from 2013-14 and earlier, and had been approved by the Technical Advisory Group prior to the start of spray season.

Following completion of the spray season, the floodplain area and creek lines of the Reynolds and Finnis Rivers were surveyed aerielly in the upper catchment. Gamba grass, parkinsonia, olive hymenachne and salvinia were also included in the survey of the floodplain areas. Results showed that although mimosa is less dominant on the lower floodplains than when the previous survey was conducted by DLRM's Weed Management Branch in 2012, the spread of olive hymenachne is on the increase. In the upper catchment, mimosa is generally limited to scattered

pockets along creek lines, the exception being two flat areas near Batchelor where several hectares are infested.

Stakeholder engagement has remained a focus of the project with many avenues explored to get people interested and on board. The project has been visible on a regular basis at the monthly market in Batchelor where the project officer runs a stall promoting weed management. Approximately 170 people have visited the stall on various occasions during the year with many making use of the giveaway Weed ID decks and Weed Management handbooks supplied by the Weed Management Branch. The markets are well attended by locals and the stall is prominent with weed banners, potted weed specimens, stacks of brochures about property planning for weed management and weed species, and information and maps detailing what is happening in the FRCG project.

Six residents took part in the free herbicide distribution program which operates out of the Coomalie Community Council office in Batchelor. The program offers ready-decanted 1L containers of Starane and Uptake to encourage on-ground mimosa treatment in the Batchelor area where people may only have a few plants on their property but might find the price of small quantities of herbicide a deterrent to managing mimosa.





*Mimosa pigra* causes many land management problems in the Finnis and Reynolds River catchments, including reducing the grazing value of pastoral land, blocking access to cultural sites, and reducing the biodiversity value of floodplain habitat. Its water-borne seeds mean isolated plants and small infestations in upper catchment areas can quickly produce huge banks of long-lived seed which spread downstream, infesting lower areas. Feral pig activity also exacerbates weed establishment and spread. Here, Tom Price from Weeds Branch and Brendan from the Bulgul Rangers are releasing a species of flea beetle (*Nessa crepida*) into a dense mimosa infestation within a paperbark forest site on the Horseshoe plains. A colony of about 1,000 is required to form a sustainable population, so numerous releases will be necessary.

During aerial surveys, video footage of the catchment was also collected from the helicopter using a Garmin Virb tool, which captured high definition georeferenced data. Back in the office the footage was used to assess aerial spray efficacy in different areas and help plan further treatment, as well as providing a stockpile of footage useful in promotion of the FRCG project.

Feral pig management is another focus of this project and in July 2014 an aerial survey was undertaken by ABS Scrofa to estimate baseline pig numbers in the catchments. This baseline measure is important as it is required to calculate the number of animals that will need to be removed to achieve a 70% reduction in pig densities, which is the level of reduction needed within the first year of a feral pig management program in order for the program to have an impact. Results of the survey suggested that in excess of 15,000 pigs inhabit the 5,500 km<sup>2</sup> catchment with

densities ranging from 0.5 pigs per square kilometre in woodland areas to 25 pigs per square kilometre on some floodplains. Following the survey, parts of the Reynolds and Finnis floodplains were prioritized for aerial culling with a total of 2, 227 pigs removed during the year in four separate culls. Four rangers also took part in feral animal trapping training provided by ABS Scrofa.

So, what is happening next? As well as providing support for stakeholders to manage mimosa, the next phase of the project looks at using biodiversity monitoring to examine how mimosa invasion and weed management might impact on biodiversity and examines options for increasing impacts of biocontrol agents in core infestations where aerial spray is not practical. The catchment management plan is targeted for completion, and mimosa habitat suitability modelling will be explored using vegetation and soil property data.



#### HOW MANY FERAL PIGS DO YOU THINK MIGHT BE IN THE FINNISS CATCHMENT?

This was the question that the Finnis Reynolds Catchment Group project was looking to answer when they undertook an aerial pig survey in 2014. Aerial survey results showed that the highest densities of pigs were recorded on the open floodplain areas, where densities varied between 0.4 pigs/km<sup>2</sup> and 25.6 pigs/km<sup>2</sup>. Across the Finnis and Reynolds river catchment area as a whole (5500 km<sup>2</sup>) the estimated pig density is about 2.63 pigs/km<sup>2</sup>, which means that there are between 10,000 and 15,000 pigs out there!



## THE NT REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR PROGRAM

This program is an Australian Government initiative that provides a Regional Landcare Facilitator within each of Australia's 56 NRM regions as part of its Regional Delivery model. In the NT, this role is filled by Naomi Wilson and, over the last year, she has been getting to know our Landcare community and providing support for them to engage more effectively in Australian Government investment programs such as the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants and the 20 Million Trees Program. Workshops in invigorating community Landcare and change management were key highlights for the RLF's work with our urban Landcare community this year.

This year has also seen the NT RLF working closely with individual growers and Landcare groups across the Territory to build stronger relationships that are leading to the development of new and innovative sustainable agriculture programs for the NT. A strong focus of these programs is building healthy soils, the foundation of our production systems. Two developing programs are the Biochar and Biogas programs. In addition, the NT RLF is exploring a range of emerging innovative practices from other regions and internationally which may be of benefit to the NT primary production industry. These programs will be further developed in the year ahead and will complement the Biochar and Biogas programs.

## BIOCHAR

In 2013-14 TNRM began investigating Biochar technology and its potential to contribute to the sustainability of NT agriculture and horticulture industries. As a part of this investigation we provided a number of growers in key horticultural regions with a sample of Biochar to establish small scale demonstration sites and to try Biochar for themselves under their own growing conditions.

These trials continued into the second half of 2014 and despite being impacted considerably by the outbreak of Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus which resulted in biosecurity controls across many of our sites, producers recognised potential value in Biochar and were keen to continue to explore the most effective means of incorporating it into their growing systems.

In December 2014, the RLF participated in an international Biochar seminar in Sydney that brought together leading Biochar researchers from across the world to present on the latest research findings. It has provided us with opportunities to connect with experts in the field including within CSIRO.

Following on from the positive feedback from growers, the RLF facilitated an industry workshop that brought

together representatives from the horticulture industry, NT Government, CSIRO and TNRM to discuss the current research findings and identify an effective pathway forward for the adoption of Biochar as a sustainable practice in the NT.

## BIOGAS

Our focus on Biogas developed late in 2014 on the heels of the initial Biochar work. Biogas is an emerging technology that harnesses the biological breakdown of organic wastes to produce gases that can be used as fuel. The breakdown process also produces a rich organic fertilizer that can be applied to a range of crops. There is a natural alignment between Biochar and Biogas technologies that could present some significant opportunities for improving sustainable practices in the NT.

Towards the end of 2014, TNRM hosted a Biogas seminar presented by Dr Jayant Keskar from the Cooperative Research Centre for Contamination Assessment and Remediation of the Environment (CRC CARE). The seminar was an opportunity for resource managers to learn more about the technology and to discuss its potential application in the NT. Coming out of this seminar was a commitment from key stakeholders including the CDU Centre for Renewable Energy to work in partnership with TNRM and CRC CARE to advance this technology in the NT.

As a first step, the NT RLF has been working with CRC CARE and CDU in 2015 to engage more broadly with key stakeholders in Biogas and carry out an initial scoping of the potential for Biogas in the NT. This work will form a foundation to attract investment in the further development, in particular from Commonwealth renewable energy agencies, and provide direction on a pathway forward.

We see significant and exciting potential for this technology to contribute not only to the development of renewable energy in the NT but also provide our animal production industries with some alternative waste management options, reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and produce a more sustainable nutrient input for our horticulture industry.







## PROTECTING HABITAT AND SPECIES

The Territory boasts a stunning array of habitat types. The tropical monsoonal north is subject to seasonal downpours and has extensive freshwater systems and a long and rugged coastline. Moving further south, the habitat gradually changes from open savanna woodlands and escarpment country, then to grasslands and finally to the arid red deserts of central Australia. Although the NT has not been subject to the same level of development as many of Australia's more populated regions, we are now beginning to see more marked growth and expansion within our region – including urban expansion in our major population centres. TNRM supports projects across the Territory that help to keep our habitat in good health and that can also help to boost productivity - from research projects that help manage threatened species to activities that tackle land management activities such as weed infestation and feral species control.





Overall, nearly **120,000 HECTARES** of land was treated for WoNS with around 47,000 hectares treated for grassy weeds.

## WEED MANAGEMENT

*Weeds can have a serious negative effect on both the environment and production values by adding fuel loads to fire, competing with native species, blocking access to waterways and degrading agricultural land and, in some cases, are also toxic to stock.*

Exotic plants are now a major component of some of our Territory environments. There are 61 identified weeds across the NT of which 17 are classified as Weeds of National Significance (WoNS). A plant is classified as a WoNS when it has the potential to be highly invasive, the capacity to spread over a wide area and is likely to have negative economic, social and environmental impacts.

The TNRM programs that have been tackling a range of weed species across the NT over the last year have been mainly focused in the Gulf Savanna's Roper region, Victoria River District (VRD) and Lower Daly as well as the Barkly region in the Tablelands.

Many of these projects are a continuation of work that has been done in previous years. With seeds that can remain viable for decades in some species and resilient weed species that can send up hardy seedlings in the months following treatment, it's vital to stay on top of weed management work in order to avoid losing the gains of previous years' efforts.

In the Roper Region, 44,000 ha of land has been managed for grassy weeds as well as an additional 30,000 ha of WoNS species - parkinsonia, lantana and bellyache bush.

Out on the VRD, approximately 45,000ha of prickly acacia (a WoNS) has been managed across four stations through the efforts of the Victoria River District Conservation Association while 5,000ha of land was aerially surveyed and treated for bellyache bush on Malabar Creek and 23,000ha of other priority WoNS were treated across seven station properties.

In the Tablelands region, 20,000ha of WoNS prickly bush species have been managed in the upper reaches of the Creswell Creek catchment while planning to support Athel pine management was undertaken by the CLMA in communication with a number of landholders

The combined effort of the Wangamaty Land Management Group and Malak Malak Rangers on the Lower Daly have resulted in 2,000 ha of grassy weeds managed, focused on gamba grass and olive hymenachne. This latter species has also been the long-standing focus at the important bird and tourism site of Fogg Dam just out of Darwin where 900ha of grassy weeds were controlled by the urban Landcare group, Friends of Fogg Dam.





Fodder species such as mission grass and gamba grass can cause serious problems for the Territory landscape as they displace important native plants and can cause hotter, more extensive fires.



Invasive woody weed species such as parkinsonia, neem and mimosa can spread extensively through catchments, crowding out other species and blocking access to land. The seed banks of many of these weeds can remain viable for decades.



Stopping the spread of weeds is a key strategy for effective weed management. Seeds can travel by wind, water or via the movement of animals.





Image taken on Willeroo Srtation, a Bellyache bush infestation can be seen spreading out from the lef of the image

*“The potentially huge impact of this weed on biodiversity and production across Northern Australia cannot be underestimated”*

This has been the key message from Victoria River District Conservation Association’s coordinator Rhys Arnott in working to control the spread of Bellyache bush across the VRD. Bellyache bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*) is classified as a Weed of National Significance and is regarded as a serious threat to both biodiversity and production values in the NT as it can form dense monocultures that crowd out native species and greatly increase mustering costs for pastoralists. Also, as its name suggests, this isn’t a plant that’s fit for consumption and all parts of the plant are toxic to native animals, stock and humans.

While preventing establishment is always the easiest method to stop a weed’s spread, in areas where it is already well established the next approach is controlling infestations and keeping on top of any regrowth. On Willeroo Station, 130km southwest of Katherine, the VRDCA has been working hard to control and reduce the spread of this weed. Willeroo has been identified as a strategic ‘top of catchment’ location and therefore managing Bellyache bush in this area is regarded as an extremely high priority.

Daniel Chapman, TNRM’s Regional Coordinator for the Gulf Savanna, visited Willeroo in February 2015 to get a firsthand view of the scope of the infestation of Bellyache bush, as well learning more about how it is currently being managed and to provide some on ground support. As he was travelling across the property, Daniel was able to get an idea of the immense workload that has been faced by Rhys Arnott in successfully overseeing the control of this weed over thousands of hectares, in many instances in high value grazing areas of black soil flood out country. The dense monocultures that are formed by this plant along waterways can spread out for over a kilometre from the banks which for the people involved means slowly and methodically targeting creek and drain lines across hundreds of kilometres from RTVs equipped with 300 litre spray units.

This project has been made possible through funding from the Federal Government’s Caring for our Country programme, assistance from the Weeds Management Branch and a large amount of in kind support from Willeroo Station. It is hoped the VRDCA will continue to see the same success as in previous years for this project.



## FERAL ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

*There are 28 feral species listed as occurring in the NT of which 15 are mammal species. Feral animals can damage the environment by competing with native species for food and water, spreading weeds, contaminating waterways and degrading the production values of agricultural land. TNRM supports activities that strategically and humanely manage feral species at the landscape scale to protect our environmental assets such as our water resources, soil and native wildlife.*

As in previous years, the majority of feral animal control work was undertaken in the Roper River, Victoria River District (VRD), Arnhem Land and the arid centre.

Out in the VRD, a six-month project to control feral horses and donkeys wrapped up in December 2014 and resulted in the removal of 2,885 animals from across nine landholdings covering over 500,000 ha. A similar area of land was strategically managed for feral animals in the Roper River area, which saw the removal of around 250 feral pigs and 250 buffalo, as well as approximately 300 donkeys and a small number of wild dogs and horses from across 595,000 ha.

Funding for a project to control feral pig and buffalo numbers in East Arnhem Land and restore and maintain the coast environment of the region enabled Djelk Rangers to assist in feral animal management activities from Cuthbert Point to Cape Stuart on the Djelk IPA. Rangers received valuable training that will help them to better manage the impact of water buffalo and feral pigs on the coastal region and therefore reduce the damage these animals can cause to the wetland environment. A concurrent project in the Laynhapuy IPA, including Arnhem Bay wetland areas as well as Blue Mud Bay, saw Yirralka Rangers undertake aerial feral pig control over 205,000 ha and establish photo-monitoring points.

Foxes and cats remain the focus of the other main feral animal control project. On West Island, the removal of feral cats from over 13,000 ha (see P36) has led to an amazing resurgence of native small mammals while work to control feral cats and foxes at Newhaven Sanctuary in the Tanami Desert has yielded valuable information in improving the efficacy of managing feral predators which will be implemented and tested through a newly funded TNRM Community Grant project.

Finally, Land for Wildlife (LfW) have been engaging with the Alice Springs community in order to undertake management and monitoring of feral cats. Over 60 people received direct training and education from the project which focused on responsible cat ownership and feral cat management. LfW will also be developing this work to the next stage through funding from a TNRM Community Grant.

In 2014, a survey carried out across the Daguragu Aboriginal Land Trust highlighted the pressing issue of environmental degradation to the site due to the approximately 2,000 feral horses and donkeys found to be living in the area. Central Australia is home to the largest wild horse population in the world and their presence can result in significant environmental degradation through erosion, decreased water quality, destroying native vegetation and damaging grazing infrastructure.

As part of the management plan for this site located approximately 450km south-west of Katherine and used for grazing and traditional purposes, the Central Land Council's Mungkurru-Mungkurru rangers worked with TNRM and contractors to remove 809 feral horses and donkeys. An important step in this process was a full education and consultation process with traditional owners from the communities of Kalkarindgi and Daguragu, in the upper catchment of the Victoria River.

Through two planning meetings, they worked to produce an exclusion zone map which buffered transit routes, communities, watercourses outstations and cultural sites from the work being undertaken. Once the process had been developed, the Ranger group assisted Helimuster and Delaross Contracting with logistics, carting fuel and supplies and reviewing daily operations. Unfortunately, a portion of the ALT was burned just prior to the operation, forcing animals on to adjacent properties and Judburra National Park. Follow-up work will be required in monitoring numbers as the country recovers as well as finding ways to manage the many feral cattle that also have similar impacts on the ALT's ecosystems. This small project has started to raise community awareness of the impacts of feral herbivores and the options available to control them. The results of this operation were presented to the Ranger Groups' Traditional Owner Ranger Advisory Committee in November 2014.





## COASTAL ENGAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION

### DARWIN HARBOUR CLEAN UP

*Now in its fifth year, the annual Darwin Harbour Clean Up (DHCU) aims to raise awareness about the threat of marine debris to ocean health, wildlife and our seafood industry. The 2014 DHCU took place on the 9th July and saw 140 dedicated volunteers pitch in to remove around 3 tonnes of rubbish from in and around Darwin Harbour. This event, organised by the NT Seafood Council through funding from the Australian Government and TNRM, gathers together individuals from a range of organisations and businesses to tackle the problem of litter in our marine environment.*

Volunteers spent the morning pulling trash out from several sites out on the water as well as along the coast while the afternoon was spent sorting through a sample of the haul to get information on the type and amount of litter being found. The usual suspects were once again on show including aluminium cans, plastic bottles, plastic packaging -particularly bait and ice packets, cigarette

butts and bottle tops. However the amount of rubbish collected was down from previous years with reports from participants that there appeared to be less rubbish at the designated clean-up sites.

Although Territory beaches are relatively litter free compared with many parts of the world, our low population density and extensive coastline does not exempt us from the global problem of marine debris and while some of this rubbish comes to us from regions outside of Australia, 60-80% of the trash in our waters comes from our own back yard. Overall, an estimated 15 tonnes of rubbish has been removed from Darwin's Harbour over the last five years. The DHCU is consistently supported by seafood suppliers, private businesses, community groups, government agencies, non-government organisations and the general community and provides a great opportunity to raise awareness about the sources and effects of rubbish ending up in the sea and to encourage everyone to 'bin it or take it with you.'



Congratulations to the DHCU team who took home the award for 'Best Collaboration' at the 2014 NT NRM awards.

Australia uses **6.9 BILLION** plastic bags a year, of which 3.6 billion are plastic shopping bags.

Around **7 BILLION** tonnes of plastic litter enter the ocean every year.

Plastics make up about **60%** of marine debris with an estimated 100,000 marine mammals and turtles killed by plastic litter every year around the world.





## TACKLING MARINE DEBRIS

*The Territory coastline is close to 11,000 km in length but aside from the main population centre of Darwin and a small number of remote communities across the Top End and Gulf Savanna, it remains largely undisturbed and inaccessible. However, our small coastal population and remote beaches does not make the NT immune to one of our planet's growing problems, the issue of marine debris.*

As in previous years, TNRM continues to fund number of beach clean up projects, both in Darwin city as well as in more remote regions. On Vanderlin Island, 60km north-east of Borroloola, the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit have completed extensive aerial surveys and follow up on-ground work. Outcomes from this project have been manifold. The cost effectiveness of using aerial survey to pinpoint hot spots has been clearly demonstrated and these methods will be employed across the island group in the future. The island is now considered "low risk" in terms of accumulated marine debris.

As part of their routine visits to Bremer Island (Dhambaliya) to control coffee bush infestations, the Dhimurru rangers have also been engaging with the local community in beach clean ups. Project activities over the last 6 months of 2014 resulted in the removal of 4m<sup>3</sup> of marine debris from 15 ha of coastline.

FROM TOP: Helicopter landing near a ghost net on Vanderlin Island

In the last few years, Dhimurru Rangers have removed tonnes of rubbish from Nhulunbuy's beaches.

Removing marine debris from Bremer Island's beaches





## COASTAL REHABILITATION WORK AT TREE POINT

Tree Point, located north of Darwin, is a coastal habitat restoration project being run by the Larrakia Rangers. This TNRM-funded project aims to restore a section of coastal monsoon forest as part of a broader management strategy for the coastal habitat of the greater Darwin region. Over the last three years, this low-key project has far exceeded its initial modest targets of clearing a small 0.5ha section of the invasive weed poinciana. Since 2013, it had been extensively removed from across approximately five hectares, including dozens of large, mature trees that were felled with the help of a qualified arborist.

To effectively eradicate this prolific and fast growing species, individual plants need to be cut down and the stumps poisoned to prevent them re-shooting. In order to be able to carry out this work, six Larrakia rangers have so far received a certification in chemical handling and 17 have been trained in chainsaw use over the course of the project. The site has also been used for a range of other training purposes, including plant identification and tree planting (part of a Conservation and Land Management Certificate) as well as GPS use and basic mapping. As new areas are cleared and opened up, dormant seeds spring into action which means an abundance of small seedlings that also need to be regularly removed by hand.

The final part of the rehabilitation process involves planting in native seedlings which will eventually help suppress further poinciana regrowth once the natives have properly established.

Although the Tree Point poincianas are mostly restricted to the sides of the road that runs through this coastal thicket, rangers do still find individual plants a fair distance back from the roadside which means having to fight their way through creepers, cobwebs and prickly shrubs to get at them. However, this hot and tiring work is not without its rewards. As well as learning new skills and restoring an important piece of coastal habitat, the Larrakia rangers also created quite the local buzz when they found a pair of rare Atlas moths during one of their routine visits. This species is uncommon in the NT and is only found at a handful of coastal monsoon forest sites. Although it was once local to the Darwin region, it hasn't been seen near the city in decades and this site is the closest it's been found to Darwin since the early 1970s when it was last seen in the city. Since this discovery, rangers have made some changes to the selection of natives being planted to include host plants for Atlas moths - *Litsea glustinosa*, *Croton argyratus* and *Pittsporum moluccanum* - that will encourage them to stay, breed, and hopefully continue their migration across the NT coastal fringe.







## PROTECTING THREATENED SPECIES

*Across the NT there are 90 nationally-listed and 157 Territory-listed threatened species. The last couple of decades has seen an alarming decline in certain Territory species, particularly small to medium sized mammals as well as many reptile species.*

Increasing the area of well-managed native habitat and vegetation is an important step in conserving our native species and many TNRM-supported projects include some component of threatened species management, often as an outcome of managing threatening processes such as weed or feral animal control.

For example, ongoing weed and feral control projects across the VRD and Roper River catchments were in part targeted towards preserving habitat for purple-crowned fairy wrens; the feral cat and fox control project in Newhaven was aimed at protecting Great Desert Skinks; and the Tree Point coastal rehabilitation project detailed on the opposite page resulted in a surprising and rare new resident species.

One of the most dramatic project outcomes during the past year has been observed on the Pellew Islands where work being done by the li-Anthawirriyarr Sea Rangers, with the assistance of Rachel Paltridge from Desert Wildlife Services, has seen the return of three native mammals after extensive work to control feral cats.

Out of 58 NRM projects funded over the last financial year, the majority will have positive knock-on effects for all native species across the NT. The biodiversity surveys being completed as components of a number of these projects such as the TCA biodiversity surveys are also yielding useful additional information about the state of many pastoral habitats across the Territory.







Rangers Clem Goodman, Sean Fitzpatrick and Anthony Johnston inspect a small mammal caught on West Island



li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Clem Goodman with a Grassland Melomys caught on West Island, one of 3 species of native mammal that has recovered thanks to the cat control programme.



Image of a Water Rat recorded on a camera trap on West Island in 2015. The first record of a Water Rat on West Island was in 2013, two years after the cat control programme was instigated.

## FERAL CAT CONTROL RESTORES NATIVE MAMMAL POPULATIONS ON WEST ISLAND

*In 1994, the introduction of four pet kittens to West Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria brought about a catastrophic collapse in the island's small mammal populations...*

Six years earlier, in 1988, fauna surveys on the island showed healthy populations of five native mammal species. However, between 2003 and 2011, surveys failed to capture a single native mammal and it was feared that the booming feral cat population had wiped out the island's local species.

However, an ongoing cat control programme that has been run by an Indigenous Ranger Group since 2011 has produced a significant knockdown in the cat population and native populations are bouncing back. Three native mammal species are now regularly detected via tracking, trapping and camera trapping surveys. In contrast to the ongoing decline of small mammals across the Top End over the last decade, West Island is bucking the trend and showing a spectacular recovery of native mammals. Now, grassland melomys can be found in every creek, the beachfront dunes are teeming with delicate mice, and water rats are also regularly detected. Concurrent monitoring on a neighbouring island where no predator manipulation has occurred, has shown no increase in native mammal populations during the study period.

Wildlife Ecologist Dr Rachel Paltridge who assists the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers with the project, is thrilled with the results and commented;

*"Although there are many examples of natural resource management being attempted across the Territory, it is a rare achievement to be able to measure significant outcomes in both the reduction of the threatening process and an improvement in the asset being protected"*

*"This is a good news story that demonstrates the benefits of having highly skilled Indigenous Rangers working in collaboration with scientists to restore land and sea country. The Sea Rangers have persisted with this project for five years now, and have become experts in cat control."*

Although the West Island cat population appeared to show some sign of recovery over the 2014/15 wet season, aerial and ground baiting conducted throughout the island in June 2015 has again reduced the cat population to the point where signs of only a single cat was found during the August survey. West Island is the first site in the NT licensed to use the Eradicat bait which is specifically designed for feral cats and has already achieved good conservation outcomes in Western Australia. Baiting has been the main control method but the rangers are now also proficient at using leghold traps.

The West Island cat control project has been conducted by the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers based in Borrooloola, in collaboration with Dr Rachel Paltridge from Desert Wildlife Services, with assistance from Traditional Owners of West Island and NT Parks and Wildlife Rangers based in Borrooloola. The project is supported by TNRM through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.



## FIRE MANAGEMENT

*Large scale, unmanaged fires can have a damaging impact on native plants, animals, significant sites and pastoral production. TNRM supports coordinated fire management to strengthen culture, protect biodiversity, maximise production and abate greenhouse gas emissions.*

Over the 2014-2015 period 1,020,000 ha of land was strategically managed for fire with a total of 99,825 ha burnt as a component of using fire as a tool for improved landscape management.

Crocodile Island Rangers (CIR) are continuing to apply the information gained from a recent project aimed developing a fire management plan for the islands that incorporates traditional knowledge (IEK) and modern techniques to preserve biodiversity. In order to reduce the area on the islands that are affected by high intensity late season fires, early season burning activities took place on Millingimbi Island by Traditional Owners, aided by Rangers with reference to the CIR Fire Management Plan. Burning was also undertaken on Murrungga Island and Rapuma Islands though no fires were lit on Gurriba Island as it was considered inappropriate timing by the TO's.

Rangers also conducted burning on the mainland in the region of Millingimbi, in collaboration with the Djelk Rangers. Aerial operations took place using a "raindance" machine and associated incendiaries and back burned around the Gumurru Guru outstation.

The Western Top End Fire project heralded a positive step forward for WTE fire management. Through consultations involving Wagiman Indigenous traditional owners, neighbouring landholders and regional coordinators from The NLC and Fish River Station, a fire management plan was able to be developed for the Wagiman Land Trust. Aerial and on-ground fire management was undertaken across 55,190 ha and involved strong input from men and women from Wagiman rangers, Fish River rangers, neighbouring landholders and support staff. This has resulted in a strong collaborative relationship in terms of planning and activities which bodes well for future fire seasons.

In Central Australia, the Central Land Council will engaged with Traditional Owners, indigenous rangers and Bushfires NT to identify and carry out fire management actions within the Hanson River corridor.

### THE FLAMES OF CONSERVATION AND CULTURE

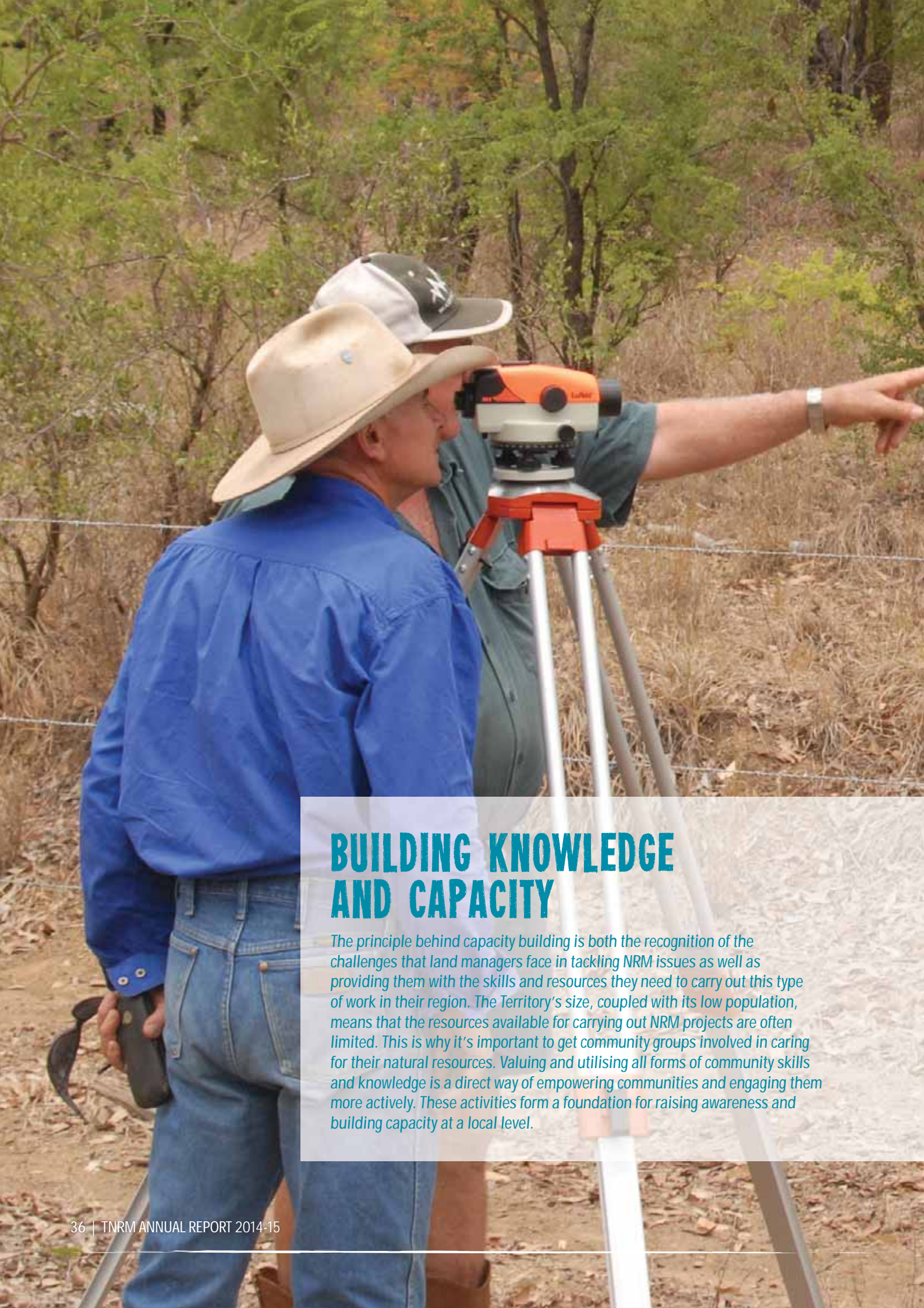
The Hanson River in Central Australia abuts pastoral stations to the south and east and is of high conservation and cultural value. Due to two seasons of above-average rainfall, the current risk of large fires in the Tanami is high, posing the threat of damaging impacts to native flora and fauna, in particular the endangered bilby.

The Central Land Council (CLC) devised a two-phase project involving a bilby survey and fire management through patch burning and firebreaks. A TNRM grant provided the CLC with the opportunity to combine these values for a well-rounded and effective project. Traditional Owners and Tennant Creek Rangers put in firebreaks through on-ground and aerial burning. The on-ground burning created an effective north-south firebreak that will stop fires from entering pastoral land to the east of the Karlantijpa South Aboriginal Land Trust.

This project resulted in the collection of bilby and other tracking data along the Hanson River, the mapping of 553 fire scars, with a mean fire size of 67 ha, and a total of 37,322 ha being burned over an approximate project area of 900,000 hectares. The CLC will continue to engage with Traditional Owners, indigenous rangers and Bushfires NT to identify and carry out fire management actions within the Hanson River corridor. This region constitutes a strategic firebreak between pastoral properties in the area and the Aboriginal Land Trusts to the west.







## BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY

*The principle behind capacity building is both the recognition of the challenges that land managers face in tackling NRM issues as well as providing them with the skills and resources they need to carry out this type of work in their region. The Territory's size, coupled with its low population, means that the resources available for carrying out NRM projects are often limited. This is why it's important to get community groups involved in caring for their natural resources. Valuing and utilising all forms of community skills and knowledge is a direct way of empowering communities and engaging them more actively. These activities form a foundation for raising awareness and building capacity at a local level.*



## FORUMS, WORKSHOPS AND FIELD DAYS

Every year, TNRM hosts and supports regular events such as forums, field days, regional meetings, training courses, demonstration activities and our annual NRM conference. These events cover a range of subjects and give natural resource managers opportunities to learn from experts, share their knowledge and network with others in their field of activity which can lead to collaborative plans that go beyond individual fence lines. Over 2014-15, TNRM enabled 38 people to improve their knowledge and skills in soil management through attending workshops and demonstrations as well as supporting 22 pastoral properties in receiving technical information on weed management.

Throughout the year, TNRM host or provide support and assistance for a range of events such as;

### TOP END FORUM - 26 JUNE 2015

This forum took place in Darwin with the theme of Strategic Planning in NRM. The main objective of the forum was to open up the newly updated NT Integrated NRM Plan for comment as well as discussion around broad scale planning issues. Attended by around 30 people, presenters from a variety of NRM backgrounds gave updated on a range of NRM planning issues going on around the Top End.

### CONFERENCE PRESENCE

- Ecological Society of Australia Conference, Alice Springs Oct 2014: TNRM had a booth at this event. Staff organised a symposium on NRM planning and gave 3 presentations; on TCAs, NRM planning and linking science and practice.

- Australian Rangeland Society Conference, Alice Springs April 2015: The TNRM Program Manager sat on the program organising committee and judged student presentations. TNRM gave a poster presentation on TCAs and the Tablelands Regional Coordinator gave a presentation on behalf of a partner organisation (MTP Contracting).

### WORKSHOPS

Over June 2015, TNRM hosted two engaging community change workshops presented by specialist Les Robinson. The first workshop of 12 participants focused on giving a small gathering of Landcare groups from Darwin and Alice Springs new tools to energise their activities and attract new members by better understanding what most effectively motivates individuals to participate. The second workshop attracted 19 attendees and aimed at providing people working in any area of human change an alternative approach to designing more effective projects that tackle challenging behaviour changes.

Quarterly Mapping Focus group meetings ran throughout the year and were attended by 10-15 people per session on average.

Throughout the year, TNRM also provided support to a number of capacity building events run by partner organisations;

- Land for Wildlife (Alice Springs) community engagement activities included a cat awareness workshop at Ntaria community that engaged with 36 indigenous rangers.
- Planning workshops including a fire planning workshop for the Roper River Landcare Group in April 2015 (21 attendees) and fire management and Athel pine management meetings (Centralian Land Management Association).



Supported by TNRM, the translation of the 'Field Guide to Pests, Beneficials, Diseases and Disorders of Vegetables' into Vietnamese was completed early in 2015. This resource has been developed using 20 years of research and will be a huge benefit to industry. It is the first ever comprehensive field guide to pests and diseases of vegetables in NT that is aimed to help growers. Resources to help the Vietnamese growers community to better identify, manage and treat common pests and diseases has not been readily available in the past so it is hoped this resource will help this community in managing pests and diseases.



## INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Supporting and developing the capacity of Indigenous people and organisations to achieve natural resource management outcomes is a key area of activity for TNRM and over the past year we have been playing an important role in engaging with Indigenous organisations and training providers.

The most important areas are in developing skill sets and sharing knowledge in the management of the environment's natural and cultural resource assets – sharing stories via social media; gaining experience through learning by doing, and sharing resources.

Working in partnership with Indigenous organisations across the NT on a range of NRM projects provides opportunities for training and capacity development activities such as weed identification, the transmission of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and full time employment and enrolment in formal qualifications through our Indigenous Traineeship Program.

Over the course of 2014-2015, a total of 87 Indigenous people received on-ground training to build capacity and skills in NRM. Some of the highlights from the past year include;

TNRM funding for assistance with the development of tropical rock oyster farming on Aboriginal communities has resulted in the formation of a tropical rock oyster advisory committee at Warruwi on South Goulburn Island and Pirlangimpi on Melville Island as well as improvements to current oyster long-line design and management practices. Tropical rock oyster farming has the potential to open up opportunities for primary production on country which would bring a range of benefits to the communities including jobs and training.

In the Millingimbi region, Crocodile Island Rangers (CIR) launched a new project in early 2015 following the aftermath of two destructive cyclones over the 2014-15-monsoon season. Following community interest in replanting to replace lost vegetation, the rangers started on a propagation and replanting project supported by a TNRM grant. This project will involve the planting of

around 200 trees, and involves rangers and community in tasks such as propagation, groundwork preparation, planting and seedling care and maintenance.

Through funding support from TNRM, the Dhimurru rangers have been working to control coffee bush at 11 sites on Bremer Island over the last two years and ongoing funding over the last year has allowed for additional control of 10 sites with active growth. With continued control of regrowth it is hoped that the weed will eventually be eradicated on the island so that hunting grounds, springs of cultural significance and sacred ceremony sites on Bremer Island are reclaimed.







## INDIGENOUS TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

*TNRM's Indigenous Traineeship Program was created in 2014 and combines work and structured training to gain nationally recognised qualifications that will equip indigenous trainees with the necessary skills to work in the natural resource management industry.*

The traineeship includes a full time 1 year contract with TNRM and placement of the trainee with an indigenous host employer organisation. Trainees are registered with Australian Apprenticeships NT (AACNT), and enrolled in a Certificate II Conservation Land Management at CDU. Our traineeship program has given two young indigenous people, Maxine Keighran and Thomas Ah-Fat, an opportunity to gain formal qualifications and hands-on experience with their hosts. Mentoring is an important investment and this has paid off with the trainees growing more in confidence and independence.

Maxine Keighran is a Garrawa woman from Borroloola and is based with the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers, hosted by Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association Inc. Working out on the Pellew Islands, Maxine has been kept busy over the last year with the routine daily tasks of sea patrols, marine animal surveys -dolphins, dugong and sea turtles, beach clean ups and helping out on a project to control feral cats on West Island. After completing one year of the traineeship course, she is keen to continue in this line of work, and the hands-on skills she has already gained in research techniques, patrolling and feral animal management strategies will certainly help her along the way.

Thomas Ah Fat is from the Daly River area and is hosted by the Indigenous Land Corporation on Fish River Station. In the past year he has completed 10 training modules. His workload often entails fire, weeds and feral animal management. As well as being involved with flora and fauna surveys. He also works around the homestead where they are building a basic accommodation for visitors and is responsible for aspects of vehicle and mechanical maintenance. Tom plans to remain at Fish River for the time being and has signed on for a second year in the traineeship program.





## 2014 TNRM CONFERENCE AND NT NRM AWARDS: 18-20 NOVEMBER

The 6th TNRM Conference was held at the Darwin Convention Centre from the 18th to the 20th of November. This three-day event included 7 workshops, 2 field trips, 21 presentations and 16 poster presentations, and attracted a diverse audience including pastoralists, farmers, Indigenous rangers, Landcare groups, community, environmental organisations, researchers and all levels of government.

TNRM's annual conference provides an opportunity for people from across the Territory who work in NRM to meet, share experiences and learn new skills, which is vital in strengthening the NRM network over our region. Since its inception, our conference has attracted an increasing number of attendees every year and 2014 was no exception. From around 180 people in 2013, this year's event attracted over 220 delegates on the conference presentation day. Presentation session themes followed the same format as in previous years - sustainable industries, addressing threats, managing assets and sharing stories - with time for Q+A allocated at the end of each session. ABC Rural Country Hour broadcasted live from the event, interacting with and interviewing a number of presenters and delegates.

## WORKSHOPS AND FIELD DAY—18TH AND 20TH OF NOVEMBER

Building on the popularity and success of our one day workshops of previous years, in 2014 the workshops were offered over two days either side of the main conference day.

**353** enrollments were registered for the 2 field trips and 7 workshops on offer. Participants had the opportunity to gain or further develop useful skills relevant to their area of activity such as grant writing, media and communications, terrestrial monitoring techniques and climate change planning.

## FORUM AND AWARDS—19TH NOVEMBER

**220** people gathered to hear about NRM projects from all over the NT covering themes such as sustainability, feral animal management, large scale weed management, cross border fire management and business development in the field of NRM.

**230** attendees were at the annual NT NRM awards event that showcased the fantastic work, dedication and the achievements of Territorians who are looking after our natural environment for future generations. Category winners are featured overleaf.







*Congratulations to all the TNRM team for putting together an excellent interesting and well organised event – I thoroughly enjoyed the three days, learnt a lot and it was great to catch up with so many people – not to mention breathe the Territory air again!’ – Simon Goodhand, Department of Agriculture.*



*‘Myself and three of the rangers really enjoyed the TNRM Conference and Awards. We got a lot out of it. I’m really proud of the rangers for their effort with the award and they are super proud of themselves too – it will certainly boost their confidence for their future work.’ – Elise Cox, Ranger Coordinator, Munguru Munguru Gurindji Rangers.*









## 2014 NT NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AWARDS—WINNERS AND HIGHLY COMMENDED

### **BEST COLLABORATION IN NRM: DARWIN HARBOUR CLEAN UP (DHCU)**

DHCU partners have come together over the last 5 years for an annual harbour clean up and awareness campaign to promote the health of Darwin Harbour. It is a huge collaboration involving a range of participants that has grown from 93 to 140 people and 27 to 39 supporting organisations from 2010 to 2014.

Highly Commended: Breezes Muirhead  
Aboriginal Landcare

### **OUTSTANDING TERRITORY RANGER GROUP: MUNGURU MUNGURU RANGERS**

The Munguru Munguru ranger group consists of 6 rangers who have been undertaking a range of natural and cultural resource management tasks in the Daguragu/Kalkaringi region. The group inspire and create positive effects on the younger generation and have strong cross generational involvement and their connection to community goes beyond natural resource management.

Highly Commended: Kenbi Rangers

### **PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL NRM CHAMPION: IAN ROWBOTTOM ('ROWIE')**

Rowie has assisted landholders throughout the Roper River District in achieving improved sustainability from both environmental and productivity perspectives. Working with Roper River Landcare he acknowledges the importance of collaborating with Indigenous groups and corporations and has shown great foresight around sustaining capital equipment and assets for future work. Rowie is a longstanding community member working on an impressive range of natural resource management activities that have demonstrated countless tangible benefits.

Highly Commended: Tuan Dang (Vietnamese grower)

### **INDIVIDUAL NRM CHAMPION: ANDREW VINTER**

Andy is the founding member and active volunteer of the Alice Springs Landcare Group, which he has maintained for over 10 years. He works with Bachelor College as a lecturer and has two publications to his name; 'Native Plants for Central Australia' and 'Alice Springs Bush Regenerators Handbook'.

Highly Commended: Graeme Sawyer

### **BEST URBAN NRM GROUP: FROGWATCH NT**

FrogWatch engages the community to protect urban wildlife. They use capture and microchipping research to develop greater knowledge of our reptiles and amphibians and their open communication approach enables this information to be accessed by the wider population, sharing learnings of threats and impacts on wildlife and encourage people to actively support community and activities.

Highly Commended: Friends of Mitchell Creek  
Catchment Landcare Group

### **SMALL BUSINESS INITIATIVE IN NRM: DESERT WILDLIFE SERVICES (DWS)**

DWS provides NRM advice on threatened species management, feral animal control, fire management and sustainable grazing to a range of clients. Their strength is their ability to engage with local landowners to support with research. DWS recognise that it is not a one size fits all solution and each project is location specific rather than species specific. They promote educational opportunities for learning and transfer of knowledge wherever possible. They have a clear respect for traditional knowledge which is embedded in their management approach.

Highly Commended: Trainsafe NT

### **BEST RESEARCH IN NRM: CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY (CDU)/NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH PROGRAM (NERP)**

The CDU/NERP Invasive Plant Research Group has focused on the ecology, distribution and impact of weeds in the NT. Their research, which spans over 20 years, has led to changes to BOM calculations and has influenced programs widely, with new strategies being taken up by land managers. They share their learnings through widespread media and networks. Many research findings are used in planning and frameworks in the NT Government.

Highly Commended: Hmalan Hunter-Xenie

### **JUNIOR NRM CHAMPIONS/ PEOPLE'S CHOICE NRM AWARD: BERRY SPRINGS SCHOOL**

Berry Springs School program 'Growing Green Kids' has enabled students to work closely with the Territory Wildlife Park and develop an understanding of the environment, sustainability, research and regeneration of plants and animals. The program has integrated a whole of community approach, and developed lifelong sustainable practices. Through the program, Berry Springs School has developed an online curriculum resource tool. The program engenders a good environmental ethic and understanding about where food comes from.



## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

*Building on the previous two years of TNRM GIS development and consolidation, 2015 heralded a new TNRM GIS era in two domains, GIS expertise and commercial activities.*

For a not for profit organisation whose staff numbers less than 20 employees, GIS expertise within the organisation is unusually high. In 2014, two staff members with no previous GIS expertise started training with QGIS, and are now independent QGIS users who process their field data, produce their own maps and add fully documented data to TNRM core datasets. TNRM now has five staff with a total 50 + years of combined professional GIS expertise in a wide range of domains all directly linked to NRM - ecology, fisheries, weed control, mining, landcare.

Commercial development of activities around QGIS training have started. We are currently working on our first contract with one high school in the Top End and are also launching QGIS training courses. We will maintain freely available GIS support to our stakeholders. Commercial activities will provide funds to compensate for decreased Commonwealth funding.

TNRM staff have been working on the development of a spatial model for *Mimosa pigra* infestations across the Finnis Reynolds Weeds Management Area (FRWMA). This model is based on NT weed records, land units, elevations and an Australia-wide digital map of more than 60 soil properties that has recently been released by the CSIRO.

The model has already defined areas where, owing to unsuitable elevations and environmental conditions, *mimosa* will not occur in the FRWMA. The search is now focusing on soil properties correlated with high, medium and low *mimosa* infestations to maximise the return on investments in *mimosa* eradication across the FRWMA. A typical application will consist in targeting areas where additional infestation will be particularly hard and therefore expensive to control.

### INFONET

TNRM funds Web-tool Use for Fire & NRM in Northern Australia, a project building spatial and web-based skills and knowledge amongst the fire management community in the NT. The project centres on the NAFI website and the linked NRM reporting tool Infonet, together with the newly developed information-sharing site Fire Manager.

2014-15 has seen the end of a substantial development phase for the project and a shift to consultation and promotion. A regular e-newsletter is now distributed bimonthly, promoting the work of the project.

Presentations were given at a number of fire management forums across the TNRM regions including the Bushfires Regional Committee meetings and the Western Arnhem Land Fire abatement planning meet.

A key driver of increasing demand for the reporting and capacity-building this project provides has been the rise of payment for environmental services through improved fire management. Tools produced by this project enabled easier, standardised reporting on fire management activities throughout the TNRM regions.

Some of the 2014-2015 highlights include:

- The development of training materials and delivery of workshops across the TNRM regions. Held in collaboration with the Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research, these workshops have introduced some no-cost tools to help with fire monitoring, strategic burning and response planning, using techniques to improve the spatial and temporal resolution of burnt area and active fire data beyond that provided by NAFI.
- Increasing the capability of fire managers such as the Djelk Rangers in Arnhem Land to work with available web tools and use fire data in conjunction with their own spatial data. Using technical instructions made available via the Fire Manager website, the group are now able to overlay their burning tracks with NAFI data without the need for file conversion by a third party with GIS capability.
- Validation of NAFI burnt area mapping in the Douglas Daly, Victoria River district, and over Western Arnhem Land. Results of this work feed into an annual accuracy assessment of the mapping, ensuring the robustness of this valuable resource.
- This project aims to continue to provide training and resources to build capacity amongst the fire and NRM community. An additional driver noted in this project has been the increasing need for improved accountability in NRM for a wider range of managers. A key requirement in the future will be to allow for a range of different reports to suit the emerging needs and to build capacity so more people can easily undertake their own reporting.

# ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

## MEMBERSHIP

It is important to TNRM that we provide an opportunity for the natural resource management community to communicate the needs of Territorians to our Board, and have a membership process to facilitate this engagement.

Membership is open to groups, associations and organisations that have an interest in natural resource management, are incorporated in the NT, or who represent people in the NT. A membership structure encourages networking across our region, communication of events and the opportunity to spread news of the Members' organisation.

Each Member nominates a delegate, who holds a voting right at the AGM. The Delegate also has the opportunity to input on items provided to the Members for comment, and can nominate to participate in the Board Director recruitment process. At the end of June 2014, we had a total of 40 members, up from 33 members at the same time last year.

## TNRM MEDIA PRESENCE

We continue to work on our social media sites. In June 2014 we launched a new website which has been consistently updated and maintained by our Project Support Officer and in May 2015 we launched a website specifically for the TNRM Conference. At the end of June 2015, TNRM had 450 Facebook subscribers, up from 320 as at June 2014, and 676 Twitter followers, up from 430 in June 2014. Network Notes subscriber numbers have remained consistent at around 650.

Continuing work on rebranding of the TNRM logo and collateral over the last year has helped to create a consistent and up-to-date look and feel for the organisation.

## STAFF CHANGES

There have been very few changes to the TNRM team line-up over 2014-15. Libby Larsen started in June 2015 on a short term contract in a support role for the NRM Planning Program Manager.

Susanne Casanova, Grassy Weeds Project Officer/ Finniss Reynolds Catchment Group Project Officer was on maternity leave from November 2014 to June 2015, and her position was filled by Top End Regional Coordinator Anthony Kerr during her absence.

Anna Gilfillan left her role as Indigenous Capacity Development Coordinator in May 2015.

## STAFF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TNRM encourages training and development of staff to support our team to grow and develop to maximise performance and achieve positive results.

Training and development undertaken by staff this year includes:

- Four Wheel Drive Training
- First Aid Training
- Emergency warden training
- ChemCert Accreditation
- CPA Congress Accounting for Not for Profits
- Managing soils of Northern Australia workshop
- Business of grazing course
- Certificate 4 work health and safety

## PUBLICATIONS

- NRM LINKS, an online case studies magazine for TNRM funded projects

## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Both the Alice Springs and Darwin offices moved to new locations over the last year. The Alice Springs office is now located in the Desert Knowledge Precinct while the Darwin office has moved from Harbour View Plaza to its new location in Global House, on Bennett Street.



# TNRM COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

TNRM's Community Grants program was launched in early 2015 and aims to support and build the capacity of land managers, community groups, Indigenous land and sea management groups and primary producers to get involved in on-ground NRM activities, adopt sustainable practices and care for the environment.

This program offered \$600,000 in funding for one year projects up to \$25,000 and sought applications from interested groups over April-June 2015. After a careful review process, a total of 25 projects were successful in receiving funding on a diverse array of projects—from

threatened species management, to sustainable harvest of native species, weed control and habitat protection in urban landscapes.

TNRM Community Grants were offered by TNRM through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program (NLP). All funded projects contribute to the Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plan as well as meeting the outcomes and objectives of the NLP. The full list of successful projects is available on the following page, and an example of one of the funded projects is detailed below.



Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve is an important, albeit artificially constructed, wetland site that provides both valuable habitat refuge for a range of native species, as well as a popular tourism site. Fogg Dam is located on the Adelaide River floodplain between Darwin and Kakadu and covers 1,569 hectares and contains a diversity of habitats such as monsoon and eucalypt forest, open scrubland, melaleuca woodland, floodplain and open water. In the past, the site was heavily infested by weeds such as olive hymenachne that had smothered large sections of the open water area. With funding support from TNRM, Friends of Fogg Dam (FOFD) have been working hard with Parks & Wildlife Commission on a five-year project to eradicate this invasive weed.

FOFD has previously done work on three projects in the reserve with the Parks to control this weed - spraying from quads/4x4's and by helicopter. Results from previous work show that spraying, particularly by helicopter, significantly reduced the amount (by approximately 90%) of olive hymenachne growing on the floodplain and around the edges of Fogg Dam. Spraying from quad bike and 4x4 is also effective, particularly where the weed is growing under tree canopy.

In mid 2015, FOFD was allocated funding under the TNRM Community Grants program to continue work on controlling olive hymenachne from the Reserve as well managing other significant weeds such as snake weed, gamba grass, mission grass, *mimosa pigra* and devils claw.

## SUCCESSFUL ROUND 1 COMMUNITY GRANTS

Friends of Fogg Dam	Weed management at Fogg Dam 2015-2016
Alawa Aboriginal Corporation	Control Parkinsonia on Hodgson River
Indigenous Land Corporation	Remotely managed pig trapping at Gunbalanya – an innovative approach
Australian Wildlife Conservancy	Removing feral herbivores from Wongalara Wildlife Sanctuary
Hestebury Cattle Company	Eradication of neem from Victoria River Downs
Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation	Mitigate the impact of marine debris in the Dhimurru IPA
Land for Wildlife	Monitoring and managing domestic cats in and around Alice Springs
EcOz Environmental	Sustainable Harvest of Kakadu Plum in Thamarrurr
Thamarrurr Rangers	Feral pig management – Thamarrurr Region
Desert Wildlife Services	Managing predation pressure on threatened species at Newhaven
Greening Australia	Condition assessment, weed mapping and control of a key priority area of Howard Sand Sheet
Alice Springs Landcare	Control of invasive cacti in the Alice Springs region
Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation	Coffee bush control on Bremer Island
Northern Land Council (Mimal Rangers)	Arafura swamp olive hymenachne survey and control
Northern Land Council	Upper Daly Land Trust Fire Project
Pancho Beef	Mathison Station erosion control and rehabilitation
Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association	West Island native mammal survey and cat management
Northern Land Council (Mimal Rangers)	Gulin Gulin Spring Rehabilitation & Wildlife Corridor
Wild Harvest NT	Improving cultivation of local tree species Terminalia ferdinandiana
Hu Organics	Improving sustainable farming practices utilizing waste products
Ludmilla Landcare	Improving and maintaining urban landscapes to protect coastal and mangrove habitat
Wangamaty Land Management Group	Managing Invasive Weeds In The Lower Daly Catchment (1)
Wangamaty Land Management Group	Managing Invasive Weeds In The Lower Daly Catchment (2)
Charles Darwin University	Protecting vulnerable land from high wallaby densities
Centralian Land Management Association	Soil conservation project at Temple Bar





# THE BOARD

The Board saw several changes over the 2014/2015 period, with the appointment of a new Chair and the departure of two Directors.

Director recruitment is based on the skills and knowledge required to support best practice governance and business development, capacity building and community development as well the management of the NT's natural resources. Directors are selected from across the Territory with consideration given to gender balance. Board appointments are for two years and no Directorship can be held for longer than three consecutive terms.

## REAPPOINTMENT & RECRUITMENT

In October 2014, Clare Martin began her tenure as Chair, taking over from Kate Andrews who had completed six years in the position. Ray Hall and Kate Peake joined the Board in January 2015. Toby Terlet was also appointed at this time but left shortly afterwards due to an overseas appointment.

## DEPARTURES

Matthew Darcey and Tracy Jones both resigned in July 2014 after serving on the Board not only as Directors, but Officer Holders/Committee Chairs. Their support and dedication to TNRM through an evolving time was greatly appreciated.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The 3rd Membership-based AGM took place on the 18th November 2014, it was attended by 11 Member delegates of the 39 Members. Clare Martin, newly appointed Chair, presided over the meeting.

Accepted amendments to our constitution included amendments to the Objects and Purposes and introduction of a Principal Object; a definition of Natural Resource Management; a clarification of membership; introduction of Public Fund operation and requirements.

The amended Constitution was submitted to the Department of Business.

A copy of the Constitution is available on our website or from any TNRM office.

Other business at the AGM included the election of the Director Selection Panel and Office holders. Kate Andrews was thanked for her contribution as Chair over the past six years.

Director	24 July 2014 Meeting – Appointment Public Officer	28-29 Aug 2014 Meeting #53	AGM #6 17 Nov 2014	23 Mar 2015 Meeting #54	17 Jun 2015 Meeting #55
Kate Andrews	1				
Stephen Morton		1	1	1	1
Brooke Rankmore	1	1	1	1	1
Rowan Foley	1		1	1	1
Mona Liddy		1			1
Sally Sullivan	1	1	1	1	1
Clare Martin			1	1	1
Kate Peake				1	1
Ray Hall				1	1
Karen May (CEO)	1	1	1	1	1
Alisa Westland (Exec support)	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

## CLARE MARTIN, CHAIR

Clare brings many years of political and media experience to the position of Chair of TNRM. For thirteen years she was a member of the Northern Territory Parliament with six of those years as the Chief Minister carrying a range of portfolios –treasurer, police, arts and tourism. Before politics, Clare was an ABC journalist and broadcaster. Now, as well as Chairing TNRM, she is the Chair of the Darwin Festival, Deputy Chair of Menzies School of Health Research and a director of The Climate Institute. Clare is also a correspondent with The Saturday Paper.

## STEVE MORTON, DEPUTY CHAIR

Steve started his scientific career with the Supervising Scientist at Jabiru, before joining CSIRO in Alice Springs. He eventually became a member of CSIRO's Executive Team, serving consecutively as Group Executive for research in three domains – environment, energy, and manufacturing, materials and minerals. Steve currently Chairs the Scientific Advisory Panel to the Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum as well as the Board for Arid Recovery at Roxby Downs, is a Council member for the Australian Institute of Marine Science, and is a trustee for the Olive Pink Botanic Garden. He is an Honorary Fellow with CSIRO in Alice Springs.

## BROOKE RANKMORE, FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIR

Brooke's enthusiasm and drive is reflected in her completion of an Australian Rural Leadership Program and her engagement in multiple areas of NRM, including pastoral and Indigenous issues. Brooke runs her own environmental consultancy business that largely assists pastoralists with environmental issues. She brings with her a practical scientific and conservation background along with a good understanding of the pastoral industry.

## ROWAN FOLEY, DIRECTOR

Rowan is the General Manager of the Aboriginal Carbon Fund a not-for-profit company working with land owners and companies in carbon farming agribusinesses. Rowan is the former Park Manager of Uluru, has performed a leadership role in Aboriginal land and sea management, and more recently climate change and carbon farming. Rowan was appointed to the TNRM Board in March 2011.

## MONA LIDDY, DIRECTOR

Mona is a Wagiman woman from the Daly River region with strong cultural knowledge and land management experience; is well-networked with broad expertise in community development, and experience working in water management, planning and research, including working with western science and Indigenous Knowledge.

Mona sits on the Northern Australian Indigenous Experts Forum on Sustainable Economic Development, Daly River Management Advisory Committee (DRMAC) and the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group (DRARG).

## SALLY SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR

Sally has been in the Territory since 1987, working as a Soil Conservation Officer based in Darwin, Katherine and then at Kidman Springs in the VRD. Along with her husband Rohan and his family, Sally has owned and managed Cave Creek Station (near Mataranka) since 1991. She is committed to sustainability in the cattle industry and brings to the Board a wealth of practical knowledge in natural resource management including weed and feral animal management, soil erosion control and pasture management. Sally has considerable experience in the management, accountability and governance of community organisations, for many years holding executive positions on the Roper River Landcare Group, Mataranka School Council and the NT State Council of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA).

## KATE PEAKE

Kate is a passionate advocate for the Northern Territory. As member of many northern Australian representative bodies, Kate participates in a range of regional networking forums and was formerly the Executive Officer of the NT Horticultural Association. In her current role as CEO of Regional Development Australia NT, she works with a range of organisations to support the sustainable development of the Territory. A born and bred Territorian with experience across government and non-government roles, Kate is keen to secure a prosperous future for Territorians and she believes strongly in the need for locals to drive the development of the NT through innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration

## RAY HALL

Ray has been working in the environmental and NRM field in the NT for over 20 years. He currently owns and operates EcOz Environmental Consulting, the NT's largest locally owned and operated environmental consulting business. Prior to this, Ray was involved with the Maningrida-based Djelk Rangers and the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation where his role focused on sustainable development of natural resources and the creation of employment opportunities. He has also previously been involved with the Landcare Council, the Bushfires regional councils and government.

Ray is very interested in the social and economic aspects of NRM and environmental values and hopes to use his skills and experience to add value to the TNRM Board and its activities



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

A blue heron stands in a wetland area, facing left. The bird has a long, sharp beak and is surrounded by water and dry, brownish vegetation. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the natural habitat.

Territory Natural Resource Management is allocated regional base-level funding through the Australian Government to address national environmental and sustainable agriculture targets and outcomes. Where national targets align with regional priorities identified by Territorians in the INRM Plan, TNRM funds and supports on-ground activities as well as engaging and building the capacity of our NRM community to achieve both national and regional targets.

*The year ending 30 June 2015 saw the completion of activities and acquittal of funds for a number of Commonwealth Government projects including Regional Baseline projects funded through Caring for Our Country. During the year TNRM received confirmation of continued baseline funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. Under the Regional Stream the Northern Territory region will receive \$ 9.91 million to support strategic NRM activities from March 2015 through to June 2018.*

TNRM has two projects funded from the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund. The projects involve invasive species management in the Finnis Reynolds Catchment and establishment of voluntary conservation agreements on high conservation value landscapes (Territory Conservation Agreements). These projects will continue until June 2017 and June 2018, respectively. TNRM also has funding under Stream 1 of the Regional Natural Resource Management Planning for Climate Change Fund to finalise and publish the NT INRM Plan 2015-2020 by June 2016.

In 2014-2015 TNRM delivered \$2.2 million of funding to the community through grants and support for community engagement and capacity building activities. Approximately \$1.6 million was provided as grants directly to 39 community groups and organisations to support 58 NRM projects. Supplementing the grant funding, recipients and other organisations provided just over \$1 million of cash and in-kind contributions towards these projects. It is likely that actual in-kind contributions such as volunteer time, fuel and equipment use, are underrepresented and are considerably greater than reported by proponents.

Funding of \$0.6 million was provided to deliver capacity building workshops and training events, support remote land managers to participate in key events and learn from their peers, and to subsidise coordinated weed control activities undertaken in conjunction with catchment scale projects.

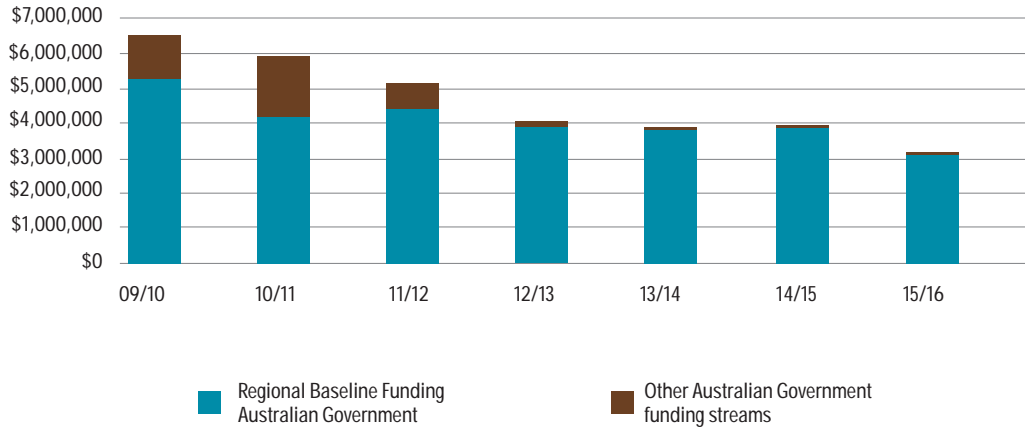
In progress toward diversifying our funding base, TNRM was registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, and the Territory Natural Resource Management Public Fund was established to receive donations. An application has been submitted to the Department of Environment for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status through the Register of Environmental Organisations. In 2015-2016 TNRM will continue to work to attract and connect directly with alternative revenue streams to complement existing funding.

The TNRM Conference held in November 2014, was considerably enhanced through support from corporate and business partners. Cash and in-kind contributions from conference partners was used to cover venue costs for workshops and presentations; provide travel assistance and accommodation for participants travelling from remote regions; and subsidised the cost of the NT NRM Awards to ensure that land managers and volunteers were able to enjoy a networking opportunity and share the excitement and stories of a year of NRM achievements.

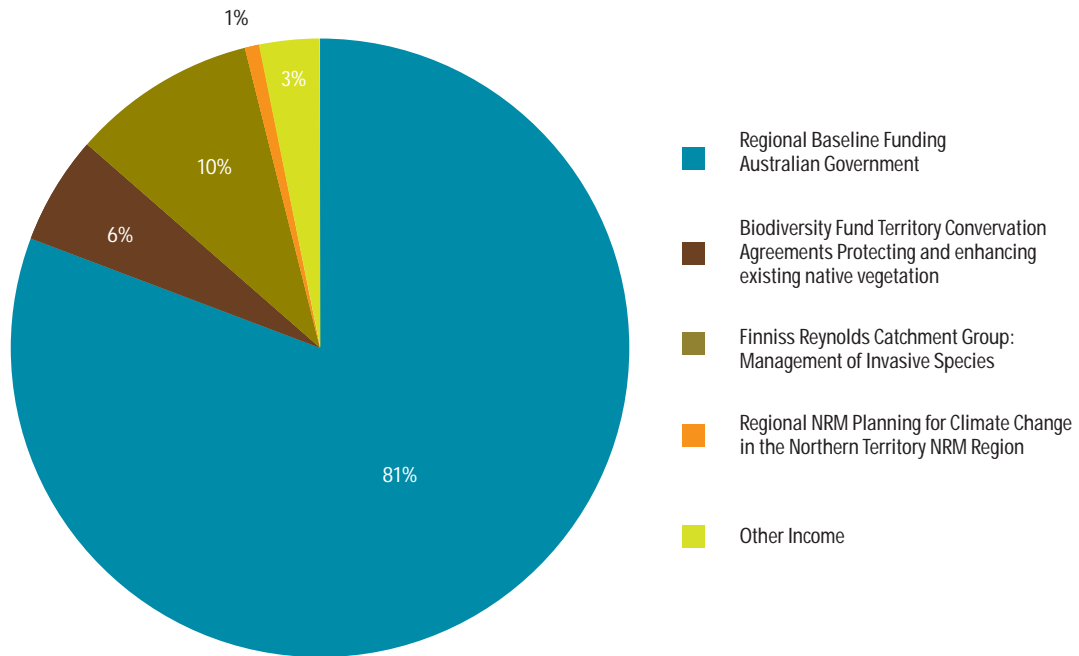
As per requirements of the *NT Associations Act*, TNRM engages independent auditors to review the organisation's financials on annual basis. The audited Special Purpose Financial Report for Territory Natural Resource Management Inc. follows, along with a series of graphs representing financial activities for 2014-2015.



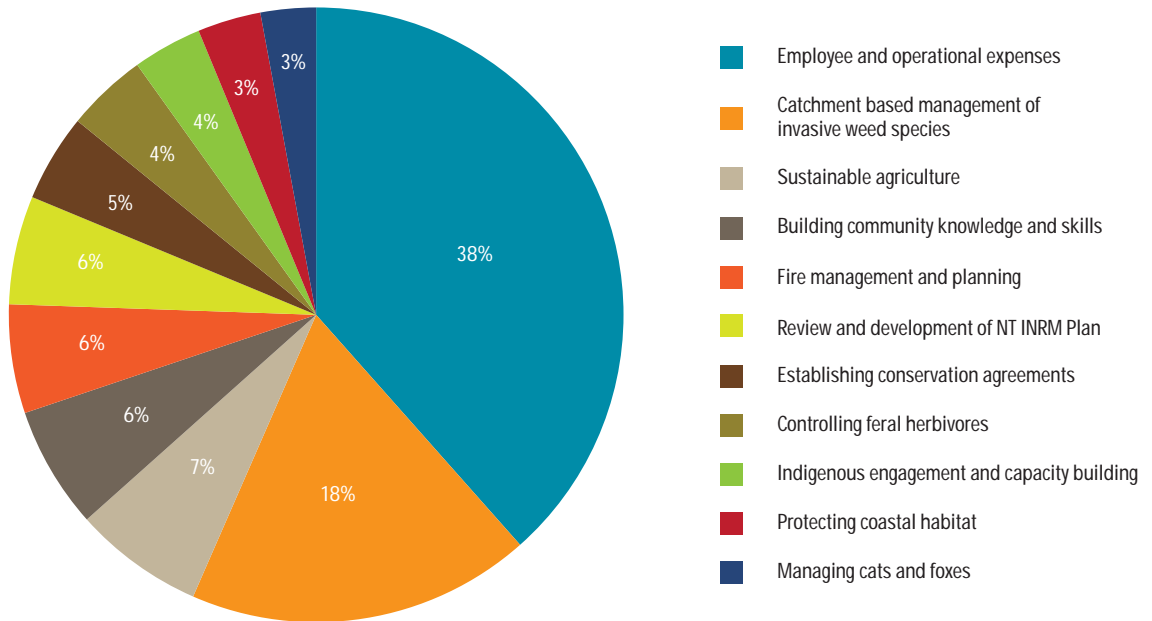
## Grant Income 2009-2016



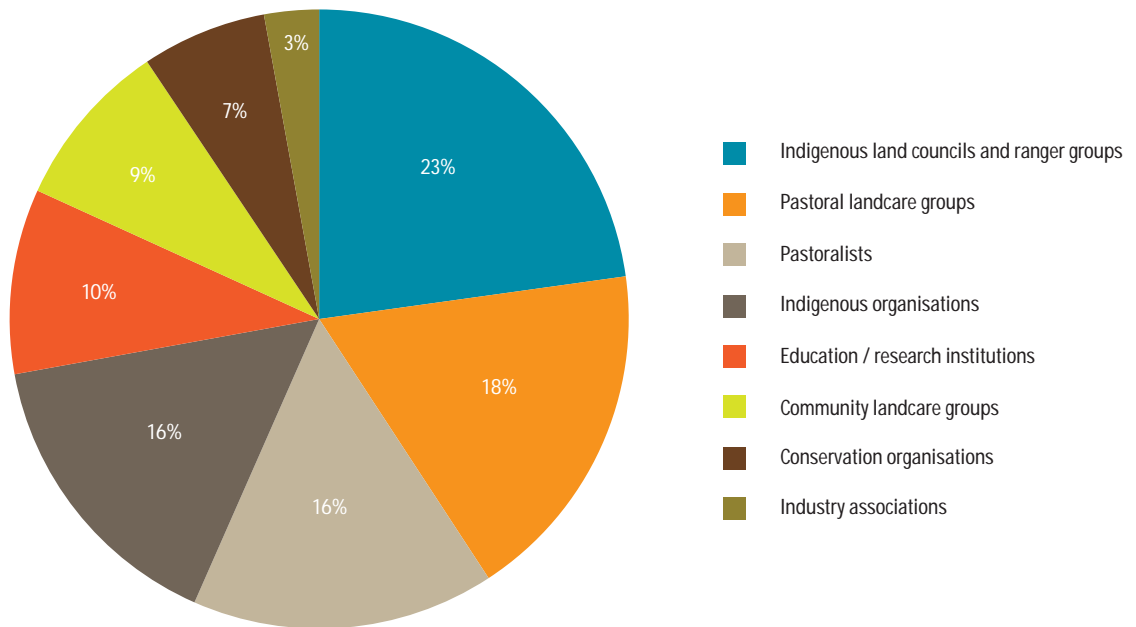
## Income 2014-2015



## Activity Overview 2014-2015



## Grants Entity Type 2014-2015





**Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated**

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**Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated**  
**Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015**

**Statement of financial position**  
**as at 30 June 2015**

	Note	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	2,561,918	2,254,927
Other receivables	5	19,500	-
Prepayments		23,871	4,307
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>2,605,289</b>	<b>2,259,234</b>
Office furniture and equipment	6	15,159	20,850
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>15,159</b>	<b>20,850</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>2,620,448</b>	<b>2,280,084</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	7	337,172	369,725
Provisions for employee benefits - current	8	119,987	106,013
Unexpended grants	9	1,750,692	1,555,181
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>2,207,851</b>	<b>2,030,919</b>
Provisions for employee benefits - non current	8	106,783	97,571
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>106,783</b>	<b>97,571</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>2,314,634</b>	<b>2,128,490</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>305,814</b>	<b>151,594</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Accumulated funds		305,814	151,594
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>305,814</b>	<b>151,594</b>

The notes on pages 5 to 10 are an integral part of these financial statements.

**Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated**  
**Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015**

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**Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income  
for the year ended 30 June 2015**

	Note	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Income</b>			
Interest income		46,802	54,429
Other income		131,053	11,837
Government grants		4,287,316	5,180,486
<b>Total income</b>		<b>4,465,171</b>	<b>5,246,752</b>
Depreciation and amortisation	6	5,691	5,563
Employee benefit expenses		1,548,731	1,609,516
Grants expended		2,045,353	3,279,404
Other operating expenses		513,339	721,085
Disbursement refund		2,326	140,813
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>4,115,440</b>	<b>5,756,381</b>
Transfer (to) / from unexpended funds		(195,511)	516,041
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>154,220</b>	<b>6,412</b>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>154,220</b>	<b>6,412</b>

The notes on pages 5 to 10 are an integral part of these financial statements.



**Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated**  
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**Statement of changes in equity**  
**as at 30 June 2015**

	<b>Accumulated funds \$</b>
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2013</b>	145,182
Surplus for the year	6,412
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2014</b>	<b>151,594</b>
Surplus for the year	154,220
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2015</b>	<b>305,814</b>

The notes on pages 5 to 10 are an integral part of these financial statements.

**Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated**  
**Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015**

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**Statement of cash flows**  
**for the year ended 30 June 2015**

	Note	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Cash receipts from operations		4,379,305	5,054,052
Interest received		46,802	54,429
Cash paid to suppliers and employees		(4,119,116)	(5,386,986)
<b>Net cash generated from / (used in) operating activities</b>		<b>306,991</b>	<b>(278,505)</b>
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		<b>306,991</b>	<b>(278,505)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 July		2,254,927	2,533,432
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 30 June</b>	4	<b>2,561,918</b>	<b>2,254,927</b>

The notes on pages 5 to 10 are an integral part of these financial statements.



# Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated

## Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015

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### Notes to the financial statements

#### 1 Reporting entity

Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated (the Association) is an entity domiciled in Australia. The principal place of business of the Association is Level 1, 16 Bennett Street, Darwin NT 0800. Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated is a not-for profit entity and was established in order to implement a strategic approach to natural resource management through the Northern Territory Integrated Natural Resource Management (NT INRM) Plan.

In the opinion of the Management Committee, the Association is not a reporting entity because in the opinion of the Management Committee there are unlikely to exist users of the financial report who are unable to command the preparation of a report tailored so as to satisfy specifically all of their information needs. Accordingly, this "special purpose financial report" has been prepared to satisfy the Management Committee's reporting requirements under the Northern Territory Associations Act and the Association's Constitution.

#### 2 Basis of preparation

##### (a) Statement of compliance

The special purpose financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Northern Territory Association Act and the Association's Constitution and measurement and classification aspects of all applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASBs) adopted by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB).

The financial report does not include the disclosure requirements of all AASBs except for the following minimum requirements:

- AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements
- AASB 107 Cash Flow Statements
- AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors
- AASB 1048 Interpretation and Application of Standards
- AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures

##### (b) Basis of measurement

The financial report is presented in Australian dollars and has been prepared on an accruals basis.

##### (c) Use of judgments and estimates

The preparation of a financial report in conformity with Australian Accounting Standards requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis of making the judgements about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other source. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The Association has consistently applied these accounting policies.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods. The accounting policies set out below have been applied consistently to all periods presented in the financial report.

# Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated

## Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015

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### Notes to the financial statements

#### 3 Significant accounting policies

The accounting policies set out below have been applied consistently to all periods presented in these financial statements, and have been applied by the Association.

##### (a) Revenue and other income

###### (i) *Grant and donation income*

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds or the right to receive the assets, it is probable that the future economic benefits comprising the asset will flow to the Association, and the amount can be reliably measured.

Government grants are assistance by the government in the form of transfers of resources to the Association in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the operating activities of the entity.

Unexpended funds at year-end are reflected in the statement of financial position as a liability, as these will be returned to the funding body.

###### (ii) *Interest income*

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

##### (b) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

##### (c) Receivables

Receivables are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost, less provision for doubtful debts. Receivables are usually due for settlement no more than 30 days from date of recognition.

##### (d) Property, plant and equipment

Items of property, plant and equipment are depreciated from the date that they are installed and are ready for use.

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of property, plant and equipment less their estimated residual values using the straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives. Depreciation is generally recognised in profit or loss, unless the amount is included in the carrying amount of another asset.

The estimated useful life of office furniture and equipment is between 4 - 10 years. Management reviews the useful lives of its office and furniture equipment annually and aligns them with the current average estimates.



# Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated

## Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015

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### Notes to the financial statements

#### 3 Significant accounting policies (continued)

##### (e) Impairment of assets

At the end of each reporting period, the Association reviews the carrying values of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is recognised in profit or loss.

##### (f) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Association prior to the end of the financial year which remain unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

##### (g) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

##### (h) Tax status

The Association is tax exempt under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, a non-profit association and charitable institution.

##### (i) Leased asset

Leases where substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to the ownership of the asset but not the legal ownership are transferred to the Association, are classified as finance leases. Finance leases are capitalised by recording an asset and a liability at the lower of the amounts equal to the fair value of the leased property or the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual values. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the lease interest expense for that period. Subsequent to initial recognition, the assets are accounted for in accordance with the accounting policy applicable to that asset.

Leased assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of their estimated useful lives or the lease term. Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor are recognised in profit and loss in the periods in which they are incurred.

Operating lease payments are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term, except where another systematic basis is more representative of the time pattern in which economic benefits from the leased asset are consumed. The finance expense is allocated to each period during the lease term so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liability. Contingent rent arising under operating leases are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

# Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated

## Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015

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### Notes to the financial statements

#### 3 Significant accounting policies (continued)

##### (j) New standards and interpretations not yet adopted

A number of new standards, amendments to standards and interpretations are effective for annual periods beginning after 1 July 2014, and have not been applied in preparing these financial statements. Those which may be relevant to the Association are set out below. The Association does not plan to adopt these standards early.

##### *AASB 9 Financial Instruments (2014)*

AASB 9, approved in December 2014, replaces the existing guidance in AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement. AASB 9 includes revised guidance on the classification and measurement of financial instruments, including a new expected credit loss model for calculating impairment on financial assets, and the new general hedge accounting requirements. It also carries forward the guidance on recognition and derecognition of financial instruments from AASB 139.

AASB 9 is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018. The Association is assessing the potential impact on its financial statements resulting from the application of AASB 9.

##### *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*

AASB 15 establishes a comprehensive framework for determining whether, how much and when revenue is recognised. It replaces existing revenue recognition guidance, including AASB 118 Revenue, AASB 111 Construction Contracts and IFRIC 13 Customer Loyalty Programmes.

AASB 15 is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2017. The Association is assessing the potential impact on its financial statements resulting from the application of AASB 15.



**Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated**  
**Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015**

**Notes to the financial statements**

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
<b>4 Cash and cash equivalent</b>		
Cash at bank	2,561,709	2,254,717
Cash on hand	209	210
	<b>2,561,918</b>	<b>2,254,927</b>
<i>Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to profits adjusted for working capital movements:</i>		
Surplus for the year	154,220	6,412
Adjustments for depreciation	5,691	5,563
Change in other receivables	(19,500)	2,541
Change in prepayments	(19,564)	10,996
Change in trade and other payables	(32,553)	(379,834)
Change in provisions	23,186	75,817
Change in unexpended grants	195,511	-
<b>Net cash generated from / (used in) operating activities</b>	<b>306,991</b>	<b>(278,505)</b>
<b>5 Other receivables</b>		
Other receivables	<b>19,500</b>	-
<b>6 Office furniture and equipment</b>		
Cost	51,542	50,138
Accumulated depreciation	(36,383)	(29,288)
	<b>15,159</b>	<b>20,850</b>
Carrying amount at beginning of year	20,850	26,413
Depreciation	(5,691)	(5,563)
<b>Carrying amount at end of year</b>	<b>15,159</b>	<b>20,850</b>
<b>7 Trade and other payables</b>		
Trade payables	227,503	197,165
Accrued expenses	63,482	93,064
GST payable	19,005	18,787
Payable to superannuation fund	-	12,166
Other payables	27,182	48,543
	<b>337,172</b>	<b>369,725</b>

**Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated**  
**Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015**

**Notes to the financial statements**

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
<b>8 Provisions for employee benefits</b>		
<i>Current</i>		
Provision for annual leave	<u>119,987</u>	<u>106,013</u>
<i>Non-current</i>		
Provision for annual leave	28,459	12,694
Provision for long service leave	78,324	84,877
	<u>106,783</u>	<u>97,571</u>
<b>9 Unexpended funds</b>		
Balance as at beginning of year	1,555,181	2,071,222
Funds received during the year	4,465,171	5,246,752
Funds expended	(4,269,660)	(5,762,793)
	<u>1,750,692</u>	<u>1,555,181</u>
<b>10 Operating lease commitments</b>		
Less than one year	178,647	60,955
One to five years	479,682	67,348
	<u>658,329</u>	<u>128,303</u>
<p>Operating leases relate to the lease of motor vehicles and office space. The Association does not have the option to purchase the leased vehicle or the office space at the end of the lease period.</p>		
<b>11 Remuneration of auditors</b>		
KPMG Darwin		
- Audit of the financial report	23,000	21,500
- Assistance with preparation of financial statements	5,400	5,200
- Audit of acquittal statements	26,000	19,500
	<u>54,400</u>	<u>46,200</u>



# Territory Natural Resources Management Incorporated

## Special Purpose Financial Report 30 June 2015

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### Statement by the Management Committee for year ended 30 June 2015

#### In our opinion:

- (a) the accompanying financial report as set out on pages 1 to 10, being a special purpose financial statement, is drawn up so as to present fairly the state of affairs of the Association as at 30 June 2015 and the results of the Association for the year ended on that date;
- (b) the accounts of the Association have been properly prepared and are in accordance with the books of account of the Association; and
- (c) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

#### We confirm the following:

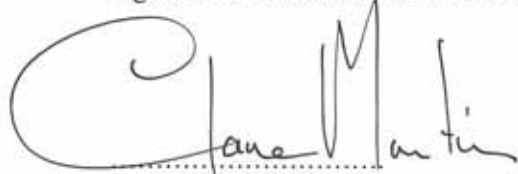
- (a) The names of the committee members of the Association during the relevant financial year were:

Clare Martin	Chair
Stephen Morton	Deputy Chair / Director
Brooke Rankmore	Public Officer and Chair (Finance and Audit Committee)
Rowan Foley	Director
Mona Liddy	Director
Sally Sullivan	Director
Ray Hall	Director
Kate Peake	Director
Matthew Darcey	Public Officer
Kathryn Andrews	Outgoing Chair
Tracy Jones	Director

Matthew Darcey and Tracy Jones resigned from the Committee in July 2014. Kathryn Andrews term was completed 16 October 2014. Toby Terlot resigned in March 2015.

- (b) The principal activities of the Association during the financial year were:
  - Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated (TNRM) is one of 56 regional organisations that play a key role in managing Australia's natural resources;
  - TNRM works in partnership with farmers, landholders, and community groups, non government and indigenous organisations, governments and business to secure our farming resource base; and protect the natural environment.
  - The mission of the TNRM is focused on helping the Northern Territory's Natural Resource Management (NRM) community meet their aspirations. It does this by implanting a strategic approach to NRM through the NT Integrated Resource Management Plan using funding from the Australian Government.
- (c) The net surplus of the Association for the relevant financial year was \$154,220 (2014: net surplus of \$6,412).

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Association:



Clare Martin  
Chairperson  
7 September 2015



Brooke Rankmore  
Public Officer  
7 September 2015



## **Independent audit report to the members of Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated**

### *Report on the financial report*

We have audited the accompanying special purpose financial report of Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated (the "Association"), which comprises the statements of financial position as at 30 June 2015, and the statements of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statements of changes in equity and statements of cash flows for the year ended on that date, Notes 1 to 11 comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

### *Management Committee's responsibility for the financial report*

The Management Committee of the Association are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 2 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Act (NT), the Association's constitution and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members.. The Management Committee' responsibility also includes such internal control as they determine necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### *Auditor's responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view 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 Association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Management Committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the basis of accounting described in Note 2 to the financial report so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Association's financial position, and of its performance and cash flows.

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





**Independent audit report to the members of Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated  
(continued)**

*Independence*

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies.

*Auditor's opinion*

In our opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated as of 30 June 2015 and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Notes 2 and 3 to the financial report.

*Basis of accounting*

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 2 to the financial report, which describes the basis of preparation. The financial report has been prepared to assist Territory Natural Resource Management Incorporated to meet the requirements of the Associations Act (NT) and the Association's constitution. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

KPMG

Clive Garland

Partner

Darwin

7 September 2015





