

Warddeken

Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Declared an Indigenous Protected Area in June 2009



Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area covers an impressive 1,394,951 hectares of spectacular stone and gorge country on the western Arnhem Land plateau.

Adjoining Kakadu National Park, Warddeken is globally significant for its natural and cultural values.

The area is home to dozens of endemic plants, a host of threatened species and possibly a new and unique ecological community — sandstone heathlands.

Threatened species include the bustard, northern quoll, black wallaroo, the Arnhem Land rock-rat and the Oenpelli python.

Thousands of individual occupation and rock art sites are also found here. Stunning rock paintings tell the creation stories. Others record the way Aboriginal people lived tens of thousands of years ago and some the first contact with Europeans. Together Kakadu National Park and the Arnhem Land plateau have the greatest number of rock art sites in the world.

Warddeken's traditional owners have always maintained

their relationship to their country through ongoing occupation and traditional land management, despite depopulation from the 1940s to 1960s.

A number of clans of the Bininj Kunwok language group are the area's traditional owners. Bininj ownership of the area is recognised under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

In August 2007 the traditional owners formed Warddeken Land Management to assist the protection and management of their country, combining traditional ecological knowledge with western science.

Today Warddeken Land Management operates out of Kabulwarnamyo and has about 12 rangers working in its programs, depending on the season.

The Indigenous rangers work on a variety of projects including weed and feral animal control and traditional fire management. Passing on traditional ecological knowledge to younger generations is an important ranger role.

The rangers are important role models in their communities. Their employment is supported by the Australian Government as part of Closing the Gap under the Working on Country program.

Not-for-profit organisation Bush Heritage Australia and WWF also supported Warddeken to produce a five-year land management plan — part of the process for declaring an Indigenous Protected Area.

Warddeken Land Management has successfully developed with industry an innovative carbon abatement partnership and is engaging in collaborative scientific research to position itself for entry into a future biodiversity credit scheme.

Like all of Australia's Indigenous Protected Areas, Warddeken is part of the National Reserve System — our nation's most secure way of protecting native habitat for future generations.

Warddeken is Australia's 32nd Indigenous Protected Area. Declared in September 2009, Warddeken is managed under made under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category VI, as a protected area with sustainable use of natural resources.



For more information about Indigenous Protected Areas, visit www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa

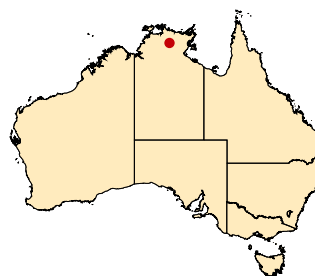


Photo Credits: The photographs used are courtesy of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area. Front – reflections in billabong. Back – (top) macropod rock art. (Left) Oenpelli python. (Right) shooting man rock art. (Bottom) aerial photo over Warddeken.
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