



4. Results



Photo credits **Top:** Forresters Beach, NSW.

Middle: Dry river bed, Great Sandy Desert, WA.

Bottom: Fire management, Walalkara, SA.



4. Results The Indigenous Protected Areas Programme

4. Results

The evaluation of the IPA Programme has examined the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme in meeting Programme and overall NHT objectives and makes recommendations for improvements in the delivery of the IPA Programme. The evaluation has been focused on seeking responses to questions associated with six core issues as identified in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation. The outcomes of the evaluation process are presented as they relate to these issues and questions.

The IPA Programme provides funding to establish Indigenous Protected Areas on Indigenous owned and/or controlled lands and for promoting Indigenous involvement in State and Territory government managed protected areas. Those interviewed as part of this review provided a variety of perspectives on the Programme that include developing IPAs (Ngarrabullgan, Lajamanu, Anindilyakwa (subsequently declared in June 2006); declared IPAs (Dhimurru, Nantawarrina, Ngaanyatjarra, Preminghana, Risdon Cove, Putalina, Mount Chappell and Mount Badger Islands; and communities involved in joint management negotiations (Gumma IPA and Warrell Creek). Individuals interviewed include John Clark (Indigenous Protected Areas Advisory Committee member), Murradoo Yanner (Chairperson of the Carpentaria Land Council) and Rosemary Hill (Australian Conservation Foundation).

Formal submissions received are listed and summarised in **Attachment 2**. Most submissions explicitly addressed the six core issues identified in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

4.1 The IPA Programme's contribution to the National Reserve System including a consideration of issues of comprehensiveness, adequateness and representativeness

There is wide acceptance that the IPA Programme makes a very significant contribution to the National Reserve System both in terms of the area of land contributed and the high biodiversity values of the land. A total of 14.8 million hectares has been added to the NRS in the 20 IPAs declared over the life of the Programme to date and a further area in excess of 5 million hectares is to be added in the near future through the developing IPAs. This represents nearly 70% of the total area added to the NRS since its inception.

Few, if any, alternative mechanisms exist to secure the management of Aboriginal owned or controlled lands for biodiversity conservation. Most of the areas protected are in IBRA (Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia) regions with levels of reserve representation less than 5%. The **Ngaanyatjarra IPA**, for example, covers 100% of the Central Ranges Bioregion in Western Australia.

The proposed **Lajamanu IPA** area has high biodiversity and cultural values in a bioregion with less than 1% representation in reserves. Options for establishment of other forms of reserves don't exist in the Tanami where the land is either in degraded pastoral leases or relatively pristine Aboriginal freehold land. As highlighted in the NT Government submission to the NRS evaluation, some of the most biodiverse lands in the Territory are Indigenous owned and managed.

While approximately 20% of the NSW North Coast IBRA region is protected in reservations, at the sub-regional and ecosystem level there are significant systems under threat, and none more so that the coastal dune forest and riparian vegetation communities which dominate the **Forrester's Beach** Peninsula, Gumma Lands and Warrell Creek margins. The linear, north-south alignment of the proposed IPA also means that it protects a significant length of coastal landscape and provides valuable habitat connectivity values to support nearby reserves. Marine, estuarine and freshwater systems are poorly protected and highly significant to Aboriginal people.



Case study: Consultation project—Forrester's Beach (Gumma) IPA

Forrester's Beach is a developing IPA in the NSW North Coast proposing use of an IPA management framework to achieve integrated landscape management of several component areas including:

- (i) *the South Beach section of the Forrester's Beach Peninsula which was previously an area of Crown land which has been transferred to the Nambucca Heads and Unkya Land Councils to be leased back to the NSW Minister for the Environment under the provisions of Part 4A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act (NSW).*
- (ii) *the Warrell Creek Aquatic Reserve established under the NSW Fisheries legislation to be managed as part of the joint management arrangement under Part 4 A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.*
- (iii) *the Gumma Indigenous Protected Area covering the top section of the peninsula and several islands in the adjacent section of the Nambucca River estuary.*

The IPA is a voluntary offer by the Indigenous landowners to assist the protection of Australia's unique biodiversity in the national interest. Subject to confirmation that ongoing management will secure biodiversity values in the long-term, it is hard for the Indigenous owners to imagine how any conservation mechanism could be more cost-effective. Other NHT Programmes are less attractive to Aboriginal people because the Programmes are generally lacking in Aboriginal leadership and autonomy.

Indigenous landowners and managers are keen for more assistance to build capacity and confidence in Aboriginal land managers and enhance the flexibility and autonomy of governance arrangements.

The Flinders/Lofty Block Bioregion where the **Nantawarrina IPA** was established in 1998 has been severely degraded by overgrazing and the impact of feral animals on populations of significant species such as the Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby. Protection and rehabilitation of biodiversity values will be a long-term project covering large tracts of land across the landscape to provide for linkages, refuges and movement corridors between ecosystems and communities.

The leaders of the Nepabunna community see the IPA as the beginning of a clean-up and rehabilitation of their land after 200 years of exploitative management which introduced goats, donkeys, sheep, cats and foxes as well as many species of plants that have become problems.

The Western Australia Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) considers that IPAs are complementary to, rather than substituting for, the formal public system of conservation reserves as they are not necessarily subject to public accountability, nor do they often have long-term security of tenure as reserves. The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) (Australia-New Zealand) submission also acknowledges that the issue of long-term security of the commitment by Indigenous landowners to manage for conservation is the subject of debate amongst protected area management professionals within the WCPA.

The outstanding issue of the status of IPAs as components of the NRS is closely linked to the question of long-term funding for ongoing management and will not be resolved in isolation from this and other issues related to governance and Indigenous community aspirations.

The submission from The Wilderness Society (TWS), which is associated with the Wild Country Research and Policy Hub at the Australian National University calls for a close examination of IUCN reserve categories and statutory definitions of reserves with a view to developing a comprehensive graduated system of Indigenous land management facilitated by appropriate legislative and administrative support as well as a sliding scale of investment. This proposition seems to have merit if it can be linked to varying levels of intensity of management activities targeting achievement of particular biodiversity outcomes.



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4.2 Funding levels for the IPA Programme

At current funding levels, only very basic management of the lands is possible. The intention of the Programme has been to provide a planning framework and seed funding for ongoing land management rather than fully funding management at a level equivalent to State and Territory public reserves. Current Programme funds are fully committed to supporting existing and proposed IPAs. Funds provided to developing IPAs are usually less than those to support implementation of Plans of Management in established IPAs. As a result, the simple progression of those currently in development will lead to a significant increase in funds needed to simply maintain momentum, without any expansion of the Programme in terms of scope for each IPA.

However, because of the prominence of IPAs in the National Reserve System, the limited financial capacity of many remote Indigenous communities, project management demands on communities for managing a complex array of possible government grants and an increasing focus on management effectiveness generally in protected areas, there is a clear need to review funding levels and the scope of the support provided.

Some submissions raised the question of whether the IPA Programme might be trying too hard to demonstrate that it is 'cost effective'. Cost effectiveness is discussed in the following section and specifically deals with the outcomes that are achieved in relation to the funds or other resources expended. What the submissions really seem to be saying is that the conservation outcomes that can be achieved with the current level of IPA Programme funding are less than what would be considered adequate. In other words, there are ample opportunities for enhancing the management of IPAs and/or the inclusion of new lands in the Programme that would make good use of increased funding.

Submissions generally argue for increased funding for ongoing management of IPAs rather than relying on either the goodwill of the relevant Indigenous community or their capacity to access and manage funds from other sources for specific tasks on a piecemeal basis. While highlighted needs vary from case to case, the consistent message seems to be that the greatest threat to the effectiveness of the Programme is the limited funding for ongoing management and the lack of certainty to permit proper planning and seasonal work programmes.

What is an appropriate level of increase in funding? Various submissions put forward for consideration funding enhancements of three, five, or even ten fold increases. However, the primary policy consideration should be on specifying the Programme outcomes, in terms of conservation security or level of rehabilitation where necessary. Once agreement is reached on the outcomes, it will be possible to address the required funding levels, notwithstanding the substantial uncertainties in this process. Nevertheless, the current funding levels impose important constraints on certain actions and relationships and these are discussed further later in the report.

4.3 The cost-effectiveness of the IPA Programme's contribution to the National Reserve System

Most submissions to the evaluation highlighted the cost effectiveness of the IPA Programme. In the IPA Programme no purchase is required to bring the land into protective management for biodiversity as the IPA is a voluntary offer by the Indigenous landowners to assist the protection of Australia's unique biodiversity in the national interest. The achievements in terms of area of land brought under protection for the funds spent are extremely impressive.



An important aspect of the question of cost effectiveness is how well the IPA Programme makes use of the skills and knowledge of Indigenous people to manage the lands. For example, the WWF submission on page 4 states:

If we were to consider this issue in purely economic terms, the cost of dedicating long-term funding to an Indigenous people's cultural and natural resource management employment program on country would be substantially cheaper than having to buy in external expertise and fly them in to (often) remote areas to undertake the necessary fire, feral and weed management activities needed to reduce the ongoing threats to biodiversity across the Indigenous estate.

This review has been unable to find any evidence to test this claim, but the position put forward in the above extract seems sound. Further experience with the IPA Programme may throw light on the relationships between costs of alternate methods of delivering the land management services under various conditions.

Given that Indigenous people are to be responsible for conservation related activities, the next question is whether the IPA Programme constitutes an appropriate management framework for ensuring commitment from the local communities.

The question of the optimum approach to managing Indigenous conservation Programmes was addressed in Lane (2002), who put forward three broad management frameworks that had been used in practice:

- **the institutional model** which 'revolves around expert state institutions planning for and managing the use of land and natural resources in the public interest'
- **the reticulist (or facilitated process model)** which arose from a loss of confidence in more traditional approaches and where the planner became a reticulist whose 'work was to promote community concerns, aid in the resolution of disputes, and ensure the consideration of all relevant issues'
- **community based land management** where the essence is '(1) government decentralization of authority and resources, (2) devolution to local communities of responsibility for natural resources, and (3) community participation.'

Lane examines the advantages and drawbacks of each of these models and concludes that improved outcomes are likely with a hybrid approach, referred to as mediated *community-based natural resource management*. He argues for a move towards 'combining a strong institutional capability with an effective operational approach to community based planning and continued reticulist efforts, in which Indigenous access to mainstream organizations and policy processes is enhanced.'

Other NHT programmes are reported by some Indigenous land managers to be generally less attractive to Aboriginal people because the programmes are generally lacking in Aboriginal leadership and autonomy. Indigenous landowners and managers are keen for more assistance to build capacity and confidence in Aboriginal land managers and enhance the flexibility and autonomy of governance arrangements. The simplicity and flexibility of the IPA Programme is seen as a major feature which maximises Indigenous input and autonomy. The more complex the programme requirements, the more Indigenous people feel disenfranchised. Indigenous and other Australian Government Land Management Facilitators seem to have made only very limited progress in addressing this issue.

Flexibility exists within the IPA Programme for Indigenous people to receive staged funding to develop their own Management Plan within the commitment they have given to implement the requirements for IUCN Category they have selected.



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Many other programmes, including other NHT programmes are seen as segmented and much more rigidly focused on specific, externally identified priorities such as weeds or feral animal control. However, IPA Management Plans provide a context for specific funding proposals to support on-ground works and may give funding providers confidence that outcomes will be delivered.

The Dhimurru people are very proud of their “Both Ways” approach to land management which sees all decisions taken by the traditional knowledge holders and most work undertaken by Indigenous people, but acknowledges that other workers can be brought in to complete tasks to meet critical project milestones provided the decision-making role of the Traditional Owners is acknowledged and there is an appropriate balance between local Indigenous workers and outside employees or contractors. It is asserted that greater certainty of ongoing funding would enhance Programme effectiveness by permitting more systematic planning and building confidence.

The strongest positive element of the Programme for the Kuku Djungan Aboriginal Corporation (**Ngarrabullgan IPA project**) is its voluntary nature and its recognition of the importance and legitimacy of Aboriginal management of the land. The local people see it as an exciting partnership with government which gives positive direction in their lives. This enthusiasm translates into a willingness to engage and a level of commitment significantly greater than is likely to be engendered in other Programmes. The IPA promises action in terms of on-ground works caring for country. They believe Programme effectiveness could be most readily enhanced by more training and support for IPA Managers in areas such as project management, finance, human resource management and enhancement of people skills.

The **Lajamanu IPA** Programme provides approximately \$100,000 a year for land management activities on the 60,000 square kilometres of the proposed IPA area. This represents approximately 30% of the total expenditure on land management activities. It is useful in leveraging the contribution of other funds: \$30,000 to \$40,000 from CEDP each year, some project specific funds under the NHT Regional Investment Stream, up to \$70,000 per year from the Aboriginal Benefits Account, and recently two of seven fire management projects funded under the National Disaster Mitigation Program and the Integrated NRM Plan for the Northern Territory. Unfortunately all the leveraged funds are made available on a year to year or project by project basis.

The Central Land Council (CLC) has recognised that the focus of such funding could be more consistently and strategically directed by systematic bioregional planning. The CLC has drafted *Resource Condition Analysis of Aboriginal Land in the Central Council Region* documents for each IBRA Sub-region. These documents have been prepared to link readily with the NT Master Plan which covers both reserve and off-reserve conservation sites and also with the Integrated NRM Plan for the Northern Territory. The documents seem to provide a useful bioregional planning framework for land management decisions and they appropriately cover cultural values and issues. The CLC believes that effectiveness could be most readily enhanced by improving linkages with other NHT programmes, but also social, health and educational programmes.

There seems to be little argument that the only people who can effectively manage these lands are Aboriginal people. Communities consistently claim that if there are no people left living at outstations, management won't happen. In addition the only employment opportunities ever likely to occur in these remote locations are associated with managing land, or in some sites, limited tourism. There is a strong view amongst Aboriginal land managers that if 'proper jobs' were established with people paid for looking after country, not only would the land be effectively managed, but welfare dependency would drop, engagement would be increased and the motivation of individuals would flow through to the wider benefit of families and the community. In some areas, mining activities can provide partnership opportunities for an IPA but generally mines provide relative few suitable jobs.



Case study: Lajamanu IPA consultation project

Possible declaration of an IPA is being considered by the Lajamanu community. The site is in the Tanami Bioregion which covers more than 280,000 square kilometres, 64% of which is in Aboriginal freehold ownership and less than 1% is reserved for conservation purposes.

Traditional Owners have identified the IPA Programme as a vehicle that suits communal landownership and their aspirations. The flexibility of the Programme allows development of a workable structure and even though the IPA may not itself fund many of the activities, it provides a framework for them.

Initially the IPA Programme has supported the Aboriginal ranger programme arising from a Strategic Land Management Plan developed by the Lajamanu community and the Central Land Council. The ranger programme employs four young Warlpiri men who work with Traditional Owners and others to undertake natural and cultural resource management on their homelands.

The area has high biodiversity and cultural values and represents a potentially significant addition to the National Reserve System (NRS). Options for establishment of other forms of reserves don't exist in the Tanami where the land is either in degraded pastoral leases or relatively pristine Aboriginal freehold land.

The nature of the bioregion dictates that a broad landscape scale approach needs to be taken with large tracts of managed for conservation. Traditional land management practices are seen as an appropriate management regime in the first instance with training programmes and continuing research used to build capacity and inform development of a refined management regime over time.

The Ngaanyatjarra Land Council argues that recent changes in the Community Development Employment Programme (CDEP) relating to the duration of work opportunities make it difficult to apply CDEP positions to effectively assist land management activities in remote areas.

Some regional NHT funds and Envirofund resources have been obtained in the past for specific projects at the **Risdon** and **Putalina IPAs** (Tasmania), but local managers believe these would have been too small and specific on their own. The land would have suffered without the IPA Programme commitment to overall land management.

4.4 Achievement of whole-of-government social, educational and economic outcomes

There is a strong and widely held view that IPAs either deliver, or have the potential to deliver, substantial social, educational and economic outcomes for Indigenous communities. This gives rise to calls in many submissions for wider recognition of the value of the IPA Programme, increased funding from various sources and improved integration with other government programmes through Shared Responsibility Agreements or other mechanisms.

However, as pointed out in the Syneca Consulting report on economic aspects of this evaluation (**Attachment 1**), the IPA Programme is not expressly designed to promote the well-being of Indigenous communities and it is highly unlikely that the best outcomes from the Programme will be achieved by clouding its objectives. It is desirable that there is transparency about the policy purpose of government Programmes so that synergies and linkages can be clearly identified without confusing objectives.



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All funds allocated to an individual IPA can be considered to support the economic well being of that community, regardless of how the funds may be spent, but such a perspective gives the IPA Programme funds the status of little more than social welfare handouts. Clearly, IPA Programme related expenditures contribute economically to Indigenous communities in considerably more profound and longer term ways. In addition, the very status of land as a reserve for protecting biodiversity changes the economics of the types of activities it can support.

Bringing land into the IPA Programme introduces new opportunities for income to be generated from visitors. It is important in planning to take advantage of these opportunities to characterise likely visitors. The visitors that might be attracted to an IPA are likely to be interested in ecotourism and willing to do without certain comforts. However, ecotourism is still in its infancy and, as well, visitors may also have fairly limited travel budgets. It is important to have realistic expectations for the aggregate incomes from visitors.

The prospects for increased numbers of visitors are raised in a number of IPA plans of management. Whatever the ultimate potential, it seems fair to say that progress to date has been slow and this is an area that needs further effort if significant gains are to occur. The best outcomes are likely to come through some coordination between IPA communities, perhaps through the Programme or tourism organisations. In 2005/06, a relatively modest \$235,000 (13%) of IPA Programme funds was spend on visitor management, though total expenditures came to \$855,000, suggesting that some communities may have been able to attract some interest from other bodies (including perhaps commercial firms, though this cannot be confirmed).

There is also the more direct source of income associated with managing IPA lands in compliance with the EPBC Act. This raises the issue of training for Indigenous people to undertake this work. In 2005/2006 a total of \$120,000 of IPA Programme funds was allocated specifically to capacity building in local community and this represent 7% of the total Programme budget. In addition, a similar amount of funds from the local community and other sources can be identified expressly as contributing to capacity building. These amounts when spread over the 19 existing IPAs provide at most minimal support for promoting training to take advantage of employment and economic opportunities. But of course, many other activities related to IPA status also contribute to capacity building.

Beyond the direct economic or financial benefits that might follow on from declaration of lands as IPAs, there are considerable social and cultural outcomes from promoting conservation activities for Indigenous communities. Indigenous people have a deep cultural relationship to the land through the concept commonly referred to as *country*. The opportunity to be active in conservation of their lands, or in some cases of rehabilitation, provides mechanisms whereby this relationship is strengthened. In particular, as raised in submissions and the consultation element of this evaluation, there are widespread concerns that traditional knowledge may be lost. The IPA Programme is a suitable vehicle that can facilitate the passing on this knowledge to new generations.

Gainful employment through the IPA Programme also contributes to social cohesion within communities by providing for an increased sense of worth and the framework for members of the community to work together.

The following statistics generated from internal reporting support the argument that IPAs delivering improved social outcomes:

- 95% of IPA communities report economic participation and development benefits from involvement with the Programme;
- 60% of IPA communities report positive outcomes for early childhood development from their IPA activities;
- 85% of IPA communities report that IPA activities improve early school engagement;
- 74% of IPA communities report that their IPA management activities make a positive contribution to the reduction of substance abuse; and
- 74% of IPA communities report that their participation in IPA work contributes to more functional families by restoring relationships and reinforcing family and community structures.



The **Forresters Beach** project at Warrell Creek on the NSW North Coast is a co-management project which envisages the declaration of an IPA over lands of different tenures: some Indigenous owned land and some statutory reserves identified for joint management negotiations. Helping Indigenous communities prepare for such negotiations is part of the IPA Programme role. IPA employment and training have strong flow-on benefits to the wider local community. To date at Warrell Creek, the major direct benefits have been enhanced negotiation skills and confidence to operate in the business world devised by non-Aboriginal people. Expectations are high that the IPA will deliver employment and capacity building benefits to Aboriginal families and enable them to contribute to the wider local community. Greater acknowledgement of the flow-on benefits should give rise to better linkages and funding support from relevant government programmes in social, education, training and employment areas and those targeting assistance to regional economies.

Sixteen local people, 11 women and five men are employed in land management work in the proposed **Ngarrabullgan IPA** area in North Queensland. All IPA activities are seen by the Corporation as providing training and employment for the community and no training or employment has higher value than that related to empowering and engaging people to be involved in caring for country.

Des Grainer, the **Ngarrabullgan IPA** Manager, tells his own story to make the point. After working in the pastoral industry away from his country, in 1991, he was nominated as a community ranger to work on land management. He embraced this with enthusiasm because it gave him an opportunity to take his family back to his mother's county and take up her commitment to country and the associated stories. Des believes that because this work gave him motivation and direction, it made him a much more positive role model for his children. He explains that children with such positive role models are much more focused; they attend school and perform better at their studies. His children have completed training and are now in satisfying paid employment. In this way he says, paid employment of one person can have magnified benefits extending through family and the wider community.

Case study: Ngarrabullgan IPA consultation project

The Ngarrabullgan IPA proposal covers an area of 11,000 hectares of the 148,000 hectare Kondaparinga pastoral lease purchased by the Kuku Djungan Aboriginal Corporation in 1991.

The natural and cultural heritage values of the area have been widely studied with at least one assessment suggesting that they warrant World Heritage inscription. The land is part of the Einasleigh Uplands, between the Mitchell Grass Downs and Gulf Plains to the west and the Wet Tropics rainforests to the east. To the south are the Brigalow Belt and Desert Uplands and to the north, the bioregions of the Cape York Peninsula. The area's eucalypt forests and woodlands constitute 13 distinct land units supporting 10 plant species which are either rare or threatened and eight species found nowhere else. The diverse fauna—eight frogs, 55 reptiles, 99 birds and 28 mammals—include 22 species of special conservation significance under either the *Queensland Nature Conservation Act, 1992*, or the *EPBC Act, 1999*.

The adjoining "Brooklyn" property is owned by an NGO and managed to protect biodiversity linkages between rainforest and dry savannah along the Mitchell River. Encouraging discussions have occurred on addressing access-related management issues and the property manager has fenced a key roadside to limit access but has offered to provide keys to gates to preserve traditional access rights for Indigenous people.

IPA planning tasks have provided a focus for dialogue and collaboration with government agencies. The Plan of Management Mission Statement makes it clear that the Djungan people have resolved to manage the lands in a sustainable way, without compromising their cultural and social responsibilities to care for country, and at the same time, have the opportunity to share the 'hidden treasures and assets' with the wider community.



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Des believes that the performance of the IPA Programme in this regard could be enhanced through better engagement with other government agencies. There is a need to sit down and affirm a whole of government approach to addressing community aspirations, underscoring the synergies between programmes which make them mutually supportive. The IPA Plan of Management provides a useful framework for achieving integration of government support.

The recently declared **Anindilyakwa IPA** is expected to provide the land management component of a three part Regional Partnership Agreement with the Northern Territory Government. The other two components are social and economic programmes. The Anindilyakwa Land Council members believe the three programme strands overlap and there are very strong links, especially for health and education activities with the IPA and its management.

The **Dhimurru IPA** Management Plan makes it clear that everything pertaining to the well-being of the local people is tied back to the land. Funding the employment of people to work on looking after Country is seen as the best investment that can be made in preventative health and education programmes. Funding employment in land management services is seen as much preferable to welfare programmes and should be recognised for the wider benefits delivered.

The IPA management framework is seen as providing the infrastructure, governance and capacity building platform to serve as a springboard for other community initiatives such as tourism.

The **Lajamanu Ranger Programme** has included some people referred by Justice and Corrective Services agencies as part of diversionary programmes. Stories are relayed of people with significant mental health issues, completing their obligations under Community Service Orders on land management work and demonstrating very positive behavioural and mental health outcomes which Indigenous people attribute to the unique motivation and satisfaction arising from work caring for country.

Making CDEP a transition programme to full-time work with the host agency, rather than permitting a longer term host agreement, makes the programme much less useful for land management activities. There is a strong view that there should be reasonable payment for Indigenous land management work. Provision of 'real jobs', rather than CDEP is appropriate in remote situations where there is no labour market and there is no other work in prospect other than land management. The strong Indigenous aspiration and enthusiasm to work on country means that social cohesion, education and health benefits often flow from even modest levels of land management employment.

The **Nantawarrina IPA** (South Australia) has provided a focus for the whole Nepabunna community. Community leaders feel that the land is crucial—'it's all the people have going for them to help them get ahead in life.' Local employment opportunities are very limited. There are some opportunities for local people to get jobs with the local mine, but only in small numbers, and the leaders are concerned that once people go to the mine they are largely lost to the community. There are very few jobs in the pastoral industry locally and as the viability of pastoral enterprises drops, people feel that most of northern South Australia will be managed in conservation reserves of one form or other. A more detailed discussion of IPA Programme contributions to employment is presented in **Attachment 1**.

Nepabunna community leaders use working on country as a mechanism for disciplining and motivating young people with behaviour problems. Seed collection work is enjoyed by children and the time spent on-country is also used by the elders to teach the young people bush tucker skills. Women are involved in weeding and seed collecting. More training is considered to be of little use without jobs at the end of the process. A small number of land management jobs make a big difference for the community.



The IPA Programme is very well regarded, according to the **Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council** (TALSC), easier to work with than most others and very supportive. However, there is clearly a lack of integration and synergy between programmes. TALSC cite three submissions made to various programmes seeking support for the training of heritage officers. None were successful, with assessors either commenting that the proposals were not seen as being effective in the broader community or assuming that there was, or should be, separate specialist funding for heritage officers.

The IPA land management focus has provided a baseline of facilities and activities on which to build. Caretaker facilities have been established to which additions will be needed if education, visitation, cultural activities and 'Youth off the Streets' programmes are to be properly accommodated. Progress is slow, but capacity building is occurring.

The TALSC is looking to Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) to help with the provision of water and electricity utilities but the SRA arrangements are currently viewed with suspicion and seen as threatening. Clearly more work is needed to build confidence in these processes.

4.5 Contribution of the IPA Programme to partnerships

The core concept of the IPA Programme in providing seed funding and a planning framework for managing land for conservation means that much of the success of the Programme is going to depend on the partnerships established, either by the IPA Programme overall, or by individual IPAs.

There is considerable evidence from interviews and submissions that at the peak level, partnerships between the IPA Programme and State/Territory jurisdictions are at best variable, and often tenuous.

The submission from Dr Dermott Smyth has a positive tone, suggesting that the initial suspicion of the IPA concept on the part of State agencies has gradually given way to acceptance and 'some positive partnerships which hopefully will continue to grow'.

However, the submission from the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) makes it clear that the State has had limited involvement in the establishment of the two WA IPAs to date; a situation it considers to be at odds with its position as the lead agency in WA for the National Reserve System Programme. It is suggested that future IPAs should be developed under a tripartite agreement between the Traditional Owners, the State or Territory Government and the Australian Government. The fact that it is suggested that such agreements should be linked to long-term statutory protection and resourcing highlights that this issue will not be readily resolved in isolation from the issues of tenure security and funding for ongoing management.

However, there are many more positive stories about what has been achieved either directly or indirectly by partnerships within the IPA framework, usually either addressing specific issues or aspects of day-to-day operations.

The IPA Programme has greatly assisted joint management negotiations with the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation related to the **Forresters Beach IPA**, according to those directly involved in the management of the IPA. Integrated landscape management has been a community priority and the IPA framework has been a very useful tool in this regard. Indigenous people are gaining more insights as the Programme proceeds and are keen for the governance arrangements to be allowed to evolve. They believe this will enhance the Programme's flexibility to deal with the range of situations faced in the development of IPAs. Indigenous people believe the IPA Programme should be promoted as a flexible framework within which the goals and aspirations of various parties can be addressed.



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The **Kuku Djungan Aboriginal Corporation** (Ngarrabullgan IPA project) is keen to develop a working relationship with the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service who are supportive of the IPA and have offered to assist on management issues.

Collaboration with researchers is also expected to be enhanced with the focus provided by the IPA.

The submission from the **Anangu Pintjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Management Unit** (Watarru and Walalkara IPAs) makes it clear that by building capacity and helping to define management work tasks, the IPA Programme has helped facilitate clear communications and effective engagement with organisations and individuals who can help with the work.

Other important partnerships include some internal to the Programme, especially networking with other IPA Managers to share experience and practical ways of dealing with issues of mutual concern.

The Anindilyakwa Land Council's Land Management Co-ordinator performs an important role in liaising with the Gemco mining company which operates a manganese mine on a mining lease covering part of Groote Eylandt. IPA Programme staff have offered to facilitate a meeting with key people from relevant sections of the Northern Territory Government and other possible partners.

IPA planning tasks have generally provided a useful focus for dialogue and collaboration with government agencies.

The **Ngaanyatjarra IPA** is seen as having provided a useful trigger for interactions with other land management agencies at a Commonwealth and State level as well as with managers of adjoining land management units.

IPA Managers meetings are also seen as important networking and mutual support opportunities. While there are some encouraging links with the Desert Knowledge CRC, links with one or more universities identified previously as a desirable goal to support local research have not been achieved.

The Ngaanyatjarra Council (NC) has negotiated a Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA) focused on engagement and relationship management, development of a Strategic Investment Program and the development of Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs). The NC sees itself as empowered by the Government under the terms of the RPA to act as an agent for government in the negotiation of the SRAs. The NC has also been authorised by the 12 Indigenous communities at Ngaanyatjarra to act on their behalf in these negotiations. The primary focus initially has been on an Education, Training and Life-long Learning SRA which includes 15 projects. A land management SRA is possible, but there is no specific schedule relating to land management in the RPA.

The Tasmanian Education Department has assisted the Indigenous Land Management Facilitator in trying to find work in land management for young people. Often people trained on the IPA then move on to other mainstream jobs. This is at once satisfying, seeing the individual progress, but frustrating that the IPA cannot retain good staff, mainly because of insecurity of employment and the uncertainty of funding, with jobs tied to annual grants and other short-term funding arrangements.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre feels that it, through the IPA has been a training ground for young Indigenous staff who have then been recruited by Tasmanian Parks or Forestry agencies. The problems of continuity of funding and level of funding are serious issues which influence capacity to retain staff and plan work programmes.



The General Manager of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service expresses a strong commitment to working with Indigenous people on land management and has instituted a two year training program for five Indigenous field officers in the Parks Service. His intention is to help build community capacity with a view to stronger associations between the Parks Service and IPAs as trust gradually builds. He acknowledges that, in the short-term, his training programme may have attracted some of the most able and motivated young Indigenous people but he hopes that as capacity and trust build there will be a stronger and mutually beneficial collaboration. He is receptive to the possibility of short-term exchanges of staff and hopes that in time, people who have been trainees in the Parks Service will be working back with their communities, but with strong networks into the Parks Service and elsewhere which continue to build capacity.

4.6 Manner and degree to which the Programme meets the needs and aspirations of Indigenous participants

The message received from Indigenous participants throughout the evaluation is that the IPA Programme supports Aboriginal people reconnecting with the land which is their traditional inheritance. Roles and responsibilities for management of the land are an important birthright which engenders pride and satisfaction.

At **Forresters Beach** in NSW, State processes have been seen as legislatively constrained and lacking the flexibility to deliver on the aspirations of Aboriginal people. The flexibility of the IPA Programme is seen as one of its greatest strengths, enabling Aboriginal people to develop and implement governance arrangements which work for them. People are keen to see the provisions relating to capacity building, governance and institutional development should be enhanced wherever possible.

The **Ngarrabullgan IPA** Plan of Management Mission Statement makes it clear that the Djungan people have resolved to enjoy managing the lands in a sustainable way, without compromising their cultural and social responsibilities to care for country, and at the same time, have the opportunity to share the hidden treasures and assets with the wider community. The IPA is seen as an important opportunity for empowerment of the community.

The IPA provides for decision-making about land management to rest with the Djungan people. Elders are involved with activities on country and there is strong interest in having other Djungan people involved in the same sort of activities in the interests of keeping culture alive by maintaining and practising cultural ceremonies. For some people who were forcibly removed from their country, this provides an opportunity for them to re-establish links with Djungan country.

Employment, training and succession planning are seen as critical for the continuance of looking after country, enabling people to live on country, monitor the use of Djungan country and protect its special assets. The Kuku Djungan Aboriginal Corporation believes that the best way to enhance the IPA Programme's capacity to further the aspirations of the Indigenous community is to establish it as an ongoing Programme with secure funding to enable long-term planning.

The motivation of the local people to be involved in the **Anindilyakwa (Groote Eylandt) IPA** project from the outset has been the desire to do the very best job they can in managing their land. They are happy to receive advice but want the decisions to be made by Aboriginal people. The **Anindilyakwa IPA** Plan of Management is seen as providing an opportunity for them to review the permit system controlling access to sensitive parts of the islands. It is envisaged that controlled tourism will be based on access beyond the mining lease being



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permissible only for people who are part of an organised cultural tour or fishing tour, accompanied by an Aboriginal guide. The Land Council is strongly committed to a traditional language project which has strong links to the flora and fauna of the islands.

Local people are already very proud of the work of their land management rangers; the work that they do includes working with education groups and youth programmes. There is a strong interest in training for young people with 12 of 15 recent CDEP trainees in recent times moving to permanent jobs. There are currently 21 trainees in the community with plans for the trainee programme to move into the area of hospitality to take advantage of plans for the community to develop a resort to accommodate 100–150 people.

Indigenous aspirations are very strongly stated in the Vision Statement at the front of the Dhimurru IPA Management Plan:

The Dhimurru vision statement

“Dhimurru’s vision is guided by the wisdom of our elders who founded Dhimurru. They have inspired us in our work. They exhorted us to look after the land for those who will follow, to protect and maintain it. In 1990 on behalf of the elders Roy Dadaynga Marika said, “Be firm and strong for the land, and the strength of your solidarity will sustain you in your cause.”

“The land will exist forever. It must be protected so that it will remain the same, so that it can be seen in the same way that the elders saw it in the past. Our vision and hope is that Yolngu will continue to use the land for all the generations to come.”

The elders said, “We the old people hope that Dhuwa and Yirritja land will continue to be looked after through the connection of yothu yindi.

“All the land is Yirritja and Dhuwa. Our songs, our law, our sacred art, our stories are embedded in the land, which is the foundation of our knowledge. That’s how we see the land; that is what our Land Rights Act says.

“The decision-makers are the landowners, the clans that are connected through Yothu Yindi and Mâri-Gutharra kinship. They have placed certain areas in the hands of the Dhimurru Committee, which authorises the Dhimurru Rangers to manage and preserve, maintain and protect the areas designated for recreation use.

“The landowners put the recreation areas in Dhimurru’s hands to manage. They envisage one committee, one voice, and one body under one umbrella, Dhimurru Land Management. Only Yolngu will make decisions for this land, not government officials or any other person who is not a landowner.

“We envisage working together with the Parks and Wildlife Commission; we need their help in making our vision a reality. But the only people who make decisions about the land are those who own the law, the people who own the creation stories, the people whose lives are governed by Yolngu law and belief.”

(Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan, Dhimurru Land Management Corporation, October 2000)

The **Lajamanu IPA** project is seen by the Central Land Council (CLC) as a vehicle that suits communal land ownership and the aspirations of traditional owners. The flexibility of the IPA Programme allows development of a workable structure. Even though the IPA may not itself fund all of the activities, it provides a framework for them.



A review of the **Ngaanyatjarra IPA** Plan of Management is scheduled to occur and will involve clarification of objectives and delivery overseen by community elders. Opportunities to undertake activities on country are observed by Ngaanyatjarra Council staff to give Indigenous people renewed vigour and motivation. Old men and women in Warburton who struggle to walk down the street are suddenly invigorated on country and much more mobile, able to move quite quickly across sand ridges in pursuit of traditional foods. In town they may be accustomed to having firewood delivered to them, but on country, even quite elderly people are seen dragging firewood to campsites without apparent difficulty.

Old men and young men going on country together is considered to have significant value for the transmission of traditional skills and language. These experiences can have a strong effect on the attitudes and behaviour of young people.

The return and rehabilitation of their land has been the primary goal of the Adnyamathanha people at Nepabunna. The Nepabunna community is considered to be a happier place because the land is being looked after. "The Nantawarrina IPA is the biggest thing for us. It turned everything around." The IPA is seen as particularly valuable in helping the community elders deal with young people between school and work.

If someone is angry or frustrated they are given time to cool down and then one of the elders approaches them and suggests that they help with some work on country. Mentoring and work experiences on the land takes the anger away. The elders believe their calm and steady interventions, linked to work on country, help manage these problems and minimise their impact on the community.

The Nepabunna community has some 70 people. Of these, four Indigenous people and one non-Indigenous person are full-time employees (three receive some salary top-up from CDEP) and 16 others have part-time, CDEP-funded work. A total of eight people are on aged pensions or some other form of welfare (one Newstart trainee, two disability pensioners, and five aged pensioners). This means that there are a total of 29 people in the community receiving some form of income.

Various grants and funding programmes such as IPA are juggled by the Community Council so that most people have things to do and are not just sitting around. CDEP funds provide some contribution to wages for 19 people involved in constructive activities such as the community language project, and youth programme. Getting out on country is important for all members of the community but because of the distance involved, the limited number of vehicles and the cost of fuel, it is not easily arranged.

The **Preminghana IPA** is valued for providing an opportunity for the Indigenous people to re-establish connections with their lost heritage. It is very important for them to protect the land as there is little else left for them to hold on to. The Preminghana camp provides a very positive opportunity for transferring and sharing cultural knowledge.

In this case at least, the IPA tag seems to have a special meaning for the people, up to several thousand of them, who from time to time visit the site and take part in cultural activities. The TALSC value the IPA Programme for the specific support it provides for some young people. An example was given of a young man, in his early twenties with a young family, who was convicted of armed robbery and it was assumed he would face a custodial sentence. In the period between his arrest, trial and conviction, he submitted an expression of interest in doing land management work. He was hired to work on the IPA and proved reliable and industrious; so much so that the TALSC was confident enough to write to the court and seek some special consideration for his changed approach to life. The net result was that he was given a suspended sentence. He continues to work well on the IPA, 14 days on and five days off. He is kept busy and is very proud of the work he is doing. He spends his time off with his young family.



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The land at **Risdon** and **Putalina** near Hobart has only been handed back to the community for 10 years. Community aspirations fitted neatly with IPA objectives otherwise the community say they would not have agreed to the IPA. The community were certainly not prepared to agree to anything, just to access funding. Individual workers are nervous about the lack of certainty for ongoing funding.

There are positive stories of individuals benefiting from involvement in the IPA and Michael Beeton, the Youth Diversion worker in Launceston could, no doubt, provide details. Chris Mansell at TAC tells of one 15 year old boy who didn't like school and went to **Badger and Chappell Islands** with the work crews as a volunteer. He has been doing this on and off for 12 months or so now and has recently expressed an interest in going to training. He seems proud and motivated by the experience of working on Aboriginal land.

4.7 The relationship between IPAs and ranger programmes

The preceding sections of this review make reference to employment opportunities created within IPAs and the associated benefits to communities (also see **Attachment 1**). The IPA Programme has developed alongside and in some instances, been a significant driver in the development of a substantial Indigenous ranger force (Cochrane: 2005). This section identifies and briefly examines the relationship between IPAs and Indigenous ranger programmes.

The definition of 'ranger' is necessarily broad and their work may encompass natural resource management as well as operational, administrative and statutory activities related to the environment. On IPAs, as is generally the case elsewhere, base level income earned by Indigenous rangers is generally supported by the Australian Government's Community Development Employment Programme (CDEP). Under this arrangement, rangers are effectively subsidized to manage their lands and protect natural and cultural values, with IPA funds providing the capital for targeted environmental activities.

Table 2 below presents a summary of IPA areas and CDEP supported positions. Consolidated IPA employment figures are not currently available.

Table 2: IPA area and CDEP positions

IPA Programme consultation project	IPA area	CDEP positions
Warlu Julajaa Jumu (GSD)	Not available	16
Angas Downs	300 000 <i>est</i>	0
Lajamanu	422600 <i>est</i>	9
Maningrida	Not available	5
Ninghan	48 000 <i>est</i>	0
Nambucca Heads (Gumma) Cooperative Agreement project	Not available	0
Mt Serle	32,990 <i>est</i>	3
Kaanju Homelands	104,150 <i>est</i>	5
Ngarrabullgan	147,873 <i>est</i>	6
Pulu Island	Not available	Not available
TOTAL		44



Indigenous Protected Area	IPA area in ha	CDEP positions
Nantawarrina	58000	7
Oyster & Risdon Coves	79	2
Preminghana	524	5
Deen Maar	453	5
Yalata	448000	2
Watarru & Walalkara	2550000	10
Dhimurru	100993	5
Mt Chappell & Badger Islands	1595	6
Warul Kawa Island IPA	3500	Not available
Guanaba	99	1
Paruku	434600	5
Wattleridge	480	5
Ngaanyatjarra	9800000	7
Mount Willoughby	386500	5
Tyrendarra	248	4
Toogimbie	5500	1
Anindilyakwa	300000	6
Laynhapuy	550000 <i>est</i>	18
TOTAL	14640571 <i>est</i>	138

Ideally, each declared IPA would employ a full-time manager responsible for environment and heritage outcomes. Most IPAs, however, employ a part-time manager whose position is subsidised to some extent by CDEP funds.

Most ranger programmes, whether within or outside the IPA Programme, receive small pockets of funding from a wide variety of sources. The programmes are therefore extremely vulnerable to funding crises and coordinators spend an overwhelming amount of time acquiring and acquitting funds. This situation leads to variable outcomes and an ad hoc approach to managing the environment.

In addition to land ranger programmes, sea ranger and junior ranger programmes (Schwab, 2006) are having a positive impact on the environment and Indigenous communities.

The Indigenous sea rangers are the eyes and ears along Australia's most remote northern coastline. They are the guardians of local knowledge, providing invaluable backup for Police, Fisheries, Conservation, Customs and Quarantine.

Indigenous sea rangers routinely tackle a diverse caseload involving surveillance and monitoring, marine debris clean-up, animal rescue and cultural educational activities.

Sea rangers need to be properly trained and resourced to keep illegal fishing vessels, feral animals and diseases from reaching Australian shores. To date, most Indigenous sea ranger positions have been funded through CDEP and appropriate resources to effectively support the programme have not been available.



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Junior ranger programmes operate across Australia and are generally run with the assistance of park rangers. The programmes aim to provide young people with opportunities to:

- discover their natural and cultural environment;
- develop scientific skills;
- contribute to the conservation of their environment through hands-on activities conducted primarily within national parks and reserves; and
- stimulate a thirst for knowledge and keep children passionate about schooling.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that junior ranger programmes are having a positive affect on school attendance, especially among Aboriginal children. As with other ranger programmes, junior rangers are funded by a variety of government sources.

Indigenous land and sea management can provide considerable environmental and cultural heritage benefits for all Australians. It can also contribute to the social and economic future of remote communities by providing culturally appropriate employment, training opportunities and career pathways.

A properly funded and integrated ranger programme would engage Indigenous land and water managers, enabling:

- more efficient use of the available on-ground resources and expertise;
- better coordination and prioritisation of activities within the 'caring for country' framework across conservation areas; and
- a more educationally engaged and experienced pool of young people.

4.8 Programme management effectiveness

The IPA Programme is generally assessed to have a clear vision, systematic planning processes, rational procedures for allocation of available resources, credible monitoring of inputs and outputs and transparent reporting of results. Reporting formats and requirements are considered user friendly but robust.

Improvements proposed at managers meetings every two years and Advisory Group meetings are considered very important by the participants. Programme staff are considered to be receptive and responsive to suggestions from these groups and this is appreciated.

Indigenous landowners and managers press for permanent support for the Programme. It is argued that the IPA Programme staffing in Canberra should be strengthened to full 'Section' status so that they can have a higher profile and provide more support for IPAs. Some believe there should be a permanently funded Indigenous Conservation Agency.

Major decisions that need to be made within the IPA Programme relate to new lands included in the Programme and the disbursement of the budget each year.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the process for incorporation of new lands into the IPA Programme is staged. There are clear benefits to both parties in such a staged approach. For the NHT, it provides an opportunity to make an assessment of commitment, confirmation of project management capacity and confirmation of the biodiversity values that the candidate land will bring to the IPA Programme (and thereby to the NRS). For the local community, there is time to ensure that there is agreement for the proposed declaration as an IPA and that the management for conservation will be consistent with community values. This is all the more important given that inclusion in the IPA Programme is voluntary. The decisions that have been made to



date regarding inclusion of land in the IPA Programme appear to have met with general approval, though the points raised by the CLC in their submission should be noted also (**Attachment 2**).

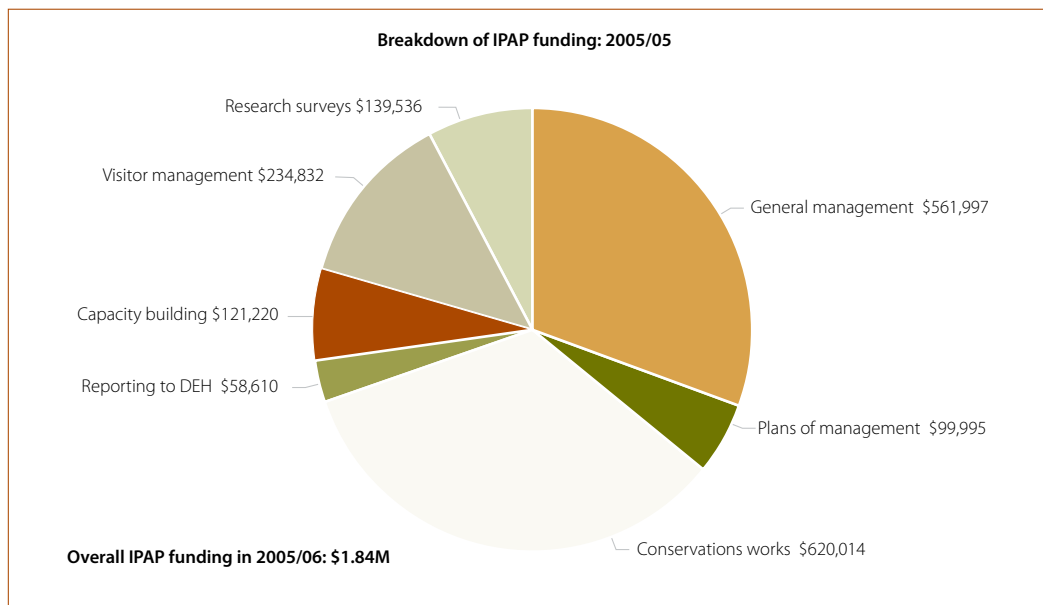
The budget for the IPA Programme is split up between the existing IPAs as well as some other activities of a more general Programme nature. For each IPA, budget allocations are made for specific activities. The status of these activities is reported in the Part A Performance Report for each IPA, as well as any variance between expected and actual outputs. For many IPAs, there is also a more general budget item of complying with the plan of management and the provisions in the EPBC Act. Presumably it is not possible to audit for outcomes on this item, but it is necessary to provide flexibility for the community in managing the IPA.

We have commented elsewhere (**Attachment 1**) on some apparent inconsistencies in the division of funding across IPAs. In terms of expenditures for individual projects and activities within the allocation for each IPA funding decisions are made on the basis of past performance, demonstrated capacity, perceived need and optimum outcome, on a case by case basis. Some Programme level improvement could be made in relation to this process by the development of explicit and consistently applied criteria. It is noted, however, that responsiveness to identified community land management priorities and flexibility which accounts for shifting staff and capacity levels are key elements to existing Programme successes.

Each IPA is required to report on their performance bi-annually and the Part A Report specifically provides the status of the items for which funding is provided under the IPA Programme. While this reporting is essentially a self-reporting exercise, Programme staff conduct annual site visits and regular contract reviews to ensure accuracy. In addition, a Part B Performance Report is also submitted by the IPA community. This deals with cultural, social and economic impacts, in aggregate terms for the IPA.

A summary of the funding in 2005–06 (in aggregate for all IPAs) is provided in Figure 4.1. Changes to reporting structures prevented comparisons between 2005–06 and 2004–05 funding levels; this is, however, being addressed by the creation of the IPA database, and integration of financial reporting arrangements.

Figure 4.1: IPA Programme expenditures



Source: Unpublished IPA Programme accounts



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The Anindilyakwa Land Council has appreciated the support of the IPA Programme staff and found them clear and helpful in their advice. The monitoring and reporting requirements of the program are not seen as a problem and may in fact be useful in assisting reporting for other purposes.

The IPA Programme seems to trigger a very positive and enthusiastic response from people because of its inherent respect for the decision making role of the Indigenous elders and the empowerment and autonomy provided in the formulation and implementation of the Management Plan.

Some Central Land Council staff members feel that some early IPAs were possibly not as well focused on biodiversity conservation as they might have been. Perhaps they were only looking at tourism, or were narrowly governed and designed by limited consultation within family and clan groups. The Programme is now considered to be more clearly focused and managed.

While the support provided through annual site visits and contract reviews is acknowledged, some people working on remote IPAs have urged that more visits from Canberra Programme staff would help with positive reinforcement for work being done.

Some protest that the reporting format doesn't allow stories to be told and positive stories are a major source of motivation that should be shared amongst IPA Managers.

All Nepabunna community projects and programmes, 29 in total, relate directly or indirectly to the Nantawarrina IPA. Some consolidation and streamlining of these programmes would help to make them more manageable. However, there is a concern that consolidation/integration of CDEP and IPA funding could result in a loss of local control and flexibility.

The Nepabunna Council has a total budget of approximately \$750,000. Community leaders feel that provision of 6%–7% is needed in the budget for each project to cover the costs of an accountant (\$50,000–\$60,000 per year). Other project administration costs are additional to this, taking the total administration and project 'transaction costs' to well over 10% of the annual budget. Specifically with regard to IPA funding, the elders believe that there should be a simplified funding cycle for declared IPA with three year forward projections, subject to annual monitoring and refinement.

The elders assert that they have the capacity to effectively acquit additional funds to a level that would permit employment of an additional three or four staff to work on land management activities within the framework provided by the current Plan of Management. This would more than double the current employment level (2.5–3 EFT, shared to involve up to 10 people, mostly CDEP part-time workers) for these activities.

If business ventures, such as guided tours increased significantly, or other land management initiatives could proceed, additional workers could be usefully employed bringing total staffing levels to a maximum of perhaps 10 people. It is argued that some provision in the IPA funding agreement for modest capital works, such as purchase of a tractor or other vehicle and/or construction of a shed or a shadehouse or nursery for growing bush tucker plants would enhance the potential dividends from the Programme.

If additional land is added to the IPA, these levels would be fully engaged, but the elders envisage that in those circumstances, pastoral and other enterprises would contribute income to help fund land management activities.

There appears to be a critical mass issue with regard to the level of funding provided from the IPA Programme. There have at times been issues with the Nepabunna Council being unable to fully acquit the funds provided in the relevant financial year. It seems that in part this is due to the amount being not quite sufficient to complete the work and so it is held over into the next year. If the quantum of funds was less, they would be fully acquitted on smaller scale works, if greater, additional workers could be employed to complete the work.



It is evident that a critical success factor for the Nepabunna community enterprises is the scale of the activities and the matching of governance arrangements with the local family and clan structure. The Council of elders have engaged a non-Aboriginal person in whom they have confidence to manage the administration of project budgets in a robust and auditable manner. It is clear that the community is driven by the vision of the elders and they make the decisions on behalf of the community. The elders have wisely delegated some of the day-to-day decisions to the non-Aboriginal employee to ensure that all the formal reporting requirements are met but also, to keep themselves one step removed from some of the day-to-day decisions which might otherwise create tensions between individuals and families within the community.

The Nepabunna community leaders are very protective of the IPA and are concerned that other IPAs should not be encouraged if they are unlikely to be able to succeed and likely to devalue the brand name.

Reporting requirements for the Plan of Management for **Preminghana IPA** are considered manageable but the work needs to be completed in Hobart. The people who are prepared to work in a remote IPA are generally not 'report writers'. Assumptions seem to be made of IT support being available, which are not valid. The land management people working on the IPA are generally not computer literate and the IPA does not have computer internet access and reliable electricity supply.

Whilst not comfortable to comment on whether or not the Programme is well run, the TALSC feel that it seems to be well organised. The TALSC gets lots of attention, including suggestions on grant programmes that might be useful etc. The TALSC seems to be appropriately focused on risk management and OH&S considerations.

Attributes for good Indigenous engagement in NRM

Smyth, Szabo and George (2004) have enunciated a very clear set of attributes for good Indigenous engagement in Natural Resource Management that remain a valuable guide for management of the IPA Programme. Those particularly relevant to the IPA Programme can be summarised as follows:

Time and Timing: *"Effective processes are those which enable Indigenous people to set their own time frames that are compatible with their own cultural protocols. In some cases this may mean that short-term outcomes desired by NRM agencies cannot be met by their preferred deadline, but longer term outcomes for Indigenous people and the NRM agencies will be better if Indigenous protocols and time requirements are respected."* (pp 17–18)

Dedicated resources: *"Dedicated resources (funds and specialist staff) and a strategic approach are essential to effective Indigenous engagement. The engagement process must be deliberate and adaptive, facilitated by personnel committed to Indigenous empowerment, priority setting and decision-making."* (p18)

Support for Indigenous processes: *"Engagement and consultation will be more effective when there has been support for Indigenous processes, rather than simply inviting Indigenous people to join pre-determined NRM agency processes."* (p18)

Effective leadership: *"...successful Indigenous engagement has emerged when Indigenous leaders effectively promote NRM planning as an opportunity for their people to regain a voice in decision-making, and when NRM agency leaders respond by offering the necessary resources to support Indigenous processes."* (p19)

Recognition: *"Good regional NRM process features explicit recognition, acknowledgement and respect for the special relationship of Indigenous people with their traditional country and their unique status as custodians. NRM Plans should also respect Indigenous knowledge and values as it relates to managing country, and seek to incorporate this knowledge and utilising this capacity in regional NRM programs. Respectful and effective Indigenous engagement in NRM is based on negotiation, not consultation."* (pp19–20)



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Capacity Building: “Good Indigenous engagement processes inherently build capacity of the Indigenous groups themselves, of the NRM agency and of any other stakeholders involved.” (p20)

Indigenous diversity: “Indigenous engagement processes need to accommodate diversity between and within Indigenous groups associated with particular NRM regions, rather than assume a uniformity of interests and opinions that would not be expected of other groups.” (p20)

Scale: “... Indigenous groups have inherited responsibilities to use and manage discrete areas of “country”, usually based on clan estates or language areas ... the best Indigenous planning processes occur at a country-based scale and are inclusive of all the Indigenous people associated with that area ... it is therefore important to support the development of new and often challenging collaborative and governance arrangements between and among the Indigenous groups associated with each (NRM) region.” (pp20–21)

Complementing social and economic objectives: “NRM activities involving Indigenous people should be integrated with matters such as employment, education and training, intergenerational knowledge transfer and cultural continuity. “Indigenous people generally cannot afford to be voluntary NRM workers given their economic disadvantage and level of social stress. Many Indigenous people are fully stretched to meet the basic needs of their immediate and extended families. There is an understandable attitude among some Indigenous people that the poor state of the environment is not their fault, they have not profited from its exploitation so why should they volunteer to fix it. However, ... a great many Indigenous people have contributed and continue to contribute, countless hours and days in travelling and attending meetings and workshops around the country aimed at restoring damaged country and strengthening culture.” (p21)

Effective and ongoing communication: “... Meet when and where Indigenous people want to meet;
Accept criticism, it usually isn't personal;
Be prepared to adapt your approach as you go;
Sometimes the process of consultation and negotiation is as important as the outcomes;
Be available and responsive; ...
Delivering a message does not mean that it has been received you may have to deliver it several times and in different ways.” (p22)

In his submission to the current evaluation Dr Dermott Smyth describes the IPA Programme as “Australia’s most successful innovation in protected area management and in Indigenous engagement in environmental management.” He attributes its success to a long list of contributing factors including the high levels of commitment, hard work and sensitivity of Programme staff. Certainly, the current staff members seem to be working very hard to ensure that the attributes of good Indigenous engagement enunciated above, are inherent in the IPA Programme.



5. Summary of Major Issues and Findings



Photo credits **Top:** Groote Eylandt coastline, Anindilyakwa IPA, NT- Steve Strike. **Middle:** Coolibah tree, Ninghan IPA, WA. **Bottom:** Weed work with Dhimurru rangers, NT.



5. Summary of major issues and findings

The previous section of the evaluation canvassed the breadth of issues raised in meetings, discussions, submissions, documents reviews and site visits. Some of these issues are relatively minor matters of detail, some stand alone, but many recur throughout and overlap to an extent that they can be usefully grouped for analysis and attention under seven 'major issues' headings. These are:

- Status and funding
- Linkages with other programmes
- Management effectiveness
- Scale and ongoing Support
- Governance
- Land and Sea Country
- Programme management

5.1 Status and funding

The precursor to the IPA Programme was the Contract Employment Programme for Aboriginals in Natural and Cultural Resource Management (CEPANCRM). Subsequently the importance of Indigenous owned and managed lands to any truly representative National Reserve System (NRS) was recognized and the IPA Programme was funded by the NHT.

Lands protected by the IPA Programme are included in the National Reserve System Programme for reporting purposes. The IPA Programme has been spectacularly successful in its aim of protecting ecosystems and the biodiversity they contain. In terms of the direct measure of land area protected, over the ten years life of the Programme in excess of 14 million hectares of land has been reserved under the IPA Programme. The IPA Programme lands account for 66% of the land area added to the NRS since its inception.

It is not just in terms of the gross area of land where the IPA Programme has resulted in outstanding conservation performance. Some of the lands offered by Indigenous communities to the NRS are among the most biodiverse and significant of all the additions to the NRS. Indeed, in the case of some arid zone bioregions 100% of the area is Indigenous land. There is no doubt that the performance of the NRS against CAR criteria would be much more modest without the IPA lands.

However, the National Reserve System Programme has a major objective of promoting best practice management of the reserves that are part of the NRS. Several submissions to both this evaluation and the NRS evaluation, while expressing strong support for IPAs, have flagged concerns about capacity and resourcing for ongoing management. The modest funding provided by the IPA Programme is sufficient for little more than covering some very basic establishment costs. Funding for the more than 14 million hectares of IPA land accepted into the NRS has amounted to just over \$12 million over the life of the Programme, equivalent to IPA Programme funding of much less than \$1.00 per hectare. At the current budget of \$2.5 million, the ongoing funding provides less than 18 cents per hectare each year.

While the flexibility of the IPA framework and the level of autonomy able to be exercised by Indigenous landowners are recognized as significant strengths of the IPA Programme, the long-term security of the commitment to manage IPA land for conservation, the non-statutory nature of the reservation and questions of governance, reporting and public accountability have been raised as issues relevant to the status and credibility of IPAs.



These issues will be relevant in any change to levels of funding and ongoing resources for land management. The development of a graduated system of Indigenous land management (TWS submission) could represent a way forward, especially if it is coupled with a dedicated program for delivery of natural and cultural resource management services that is independent of welfare based programs (WWF submission).

IPA Programme resourcing for IPAs as currently structured could be considered a 'base case' for the development and initial establishment. Already, options theoretically exist for individual IPAs to evolve:

- as a Conservation Agreement under Part 14 of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)* (EPBC Act). (Szabo, 2002);
- as an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) under the Native Title Act; or
- as a reserve leased to the relevant State or Territory subject to a negotiated joint management agreement.

These options could provide a starting point for categorizing a graduated system of Indigenous land management delivering a sliding scale of investment and employment for Indigenous communities that are related in a transparent way to well-defined expectations in regard to conservation outcomes and security.

Early work on the development of the IPA Programme engaged strongly with State and Territory nature conservation agencies on issues of common concern. In more recent times the level of engagement has reduced significantly and it seems fair to say that it is almost non-existent in some jurisdictions. Based on the input received in this evaluation, it is surmised that this reduced level of engagement is partly due to a desire on the part of Indigenous people to keep arrangements simple and minimise the risk of outside interference to their decision making and control in the management of their lands. The State statutory provisions are seen by some Indigenous people as being rigid and inflexible, offering little but additional complications in the negotiations.

For the States and Territories, on the other hand, the lack of an identified commitment to funding for ongoing management creates uncertainties about likely biodiversity outcomes and possible funding liabilities for agencies fully committed to managing statutorily defined reserves for which they are publicly accountable.

Without secure, ongoing funding for management, the apparent willingness of State and Territory conservation agencies to engage in tripartite negotiations regarding IPAs will be constrained.

Findings:

- 5.1.1 The IPA Programme contributes significantly to the National Reserve System by bringing under protective management significant lands that would not otherwise be available as reserves.**
- 5.1.2 The IPA Programme is very cost effective, because the land does not have to be purchased for reservation and there is a well founded culturally entrenched commitment to its long-term management.**
- 5.1.3 The lack of commitment to funding for ongoing management fundamentally constrains effective management of IPAs and leaves the legitimacy of their inclusion in the National Reserve System open to question.**
- 5.1.4 Security of commitment to manage for conservation, local governance, reporting and public accountability on the part of the IPA communities are relevant considerations if funds are to be provided for ongoing management.**
- 5.1.5 States and territories have used issues surrounding ongoing funding and management capacity as a reason for not fully engaging with IPAs.**



5.2 Linkages with other programmes

It is clear from the case studies examined in this evaluation that many of the communities involved in the management of IPAs are juggling a complex array of individual projects, funded under a range of government programmes in order to maximise the overall benefits they obtain. Other sources of project funding for conservation and related works include CDEP, Envirofund and regional NRM project funds. However, the individual project funds are tightly conditioned and expenditure has to be separately accounted for. In addition, there is a range of other programmes that may interact with funding for explicitly conservation related activities.

For example, in the Nepabunna community associated with the Nantawarrina IPA in South Australia, the community of 70 people are managing 29 projects, many of which are directly or indirectly associated with land management activities linked to the IPA. Administrative costs and transaction costs are considerable and provide a powerful disincentive for further engagement with separate funding providers.

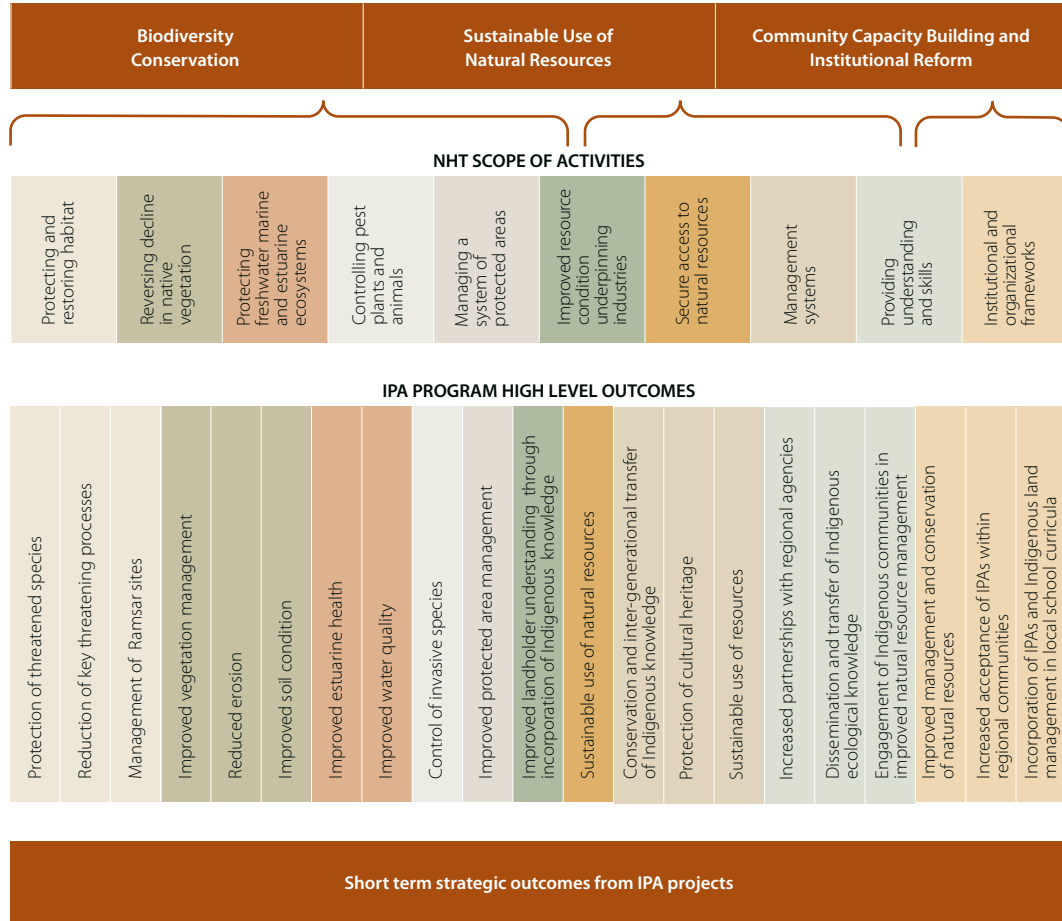
Comprehensive documentation is not readily available, but anecdotal information from the case studies indicates that there is very limited engagement of IPA managers with Regional NRM bodies and little prospect of communities taking advantage of funding opportunities which are technically available to them.

There has been only limited involvement of Australian Government Land Management Facilitators (AGLMFs) in IPAs. Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) negotiating consolidated SRAs offer some prospect of improvement in this situation. Few of the communities consulted in the case studies for this evaluation have had positive experiences in their limited dealings with ICCs to date and most communities are not optimistic that the situation will change in the foreseeable future.

The almost universal message from the case study communities was that they see connection with the land and involvement in land management activities as central to individual and community well being. They do not separate land management from culture or, indeed, any other community aspirations. They believe very strongly that the best investment in preventative health, education performance, and behaviour remediation, is to fund land management work in which all the target groups and individuals can be involved. Some of the significant linkages are illustrated in Figure 5.1, outlining the IPA Programme logic.



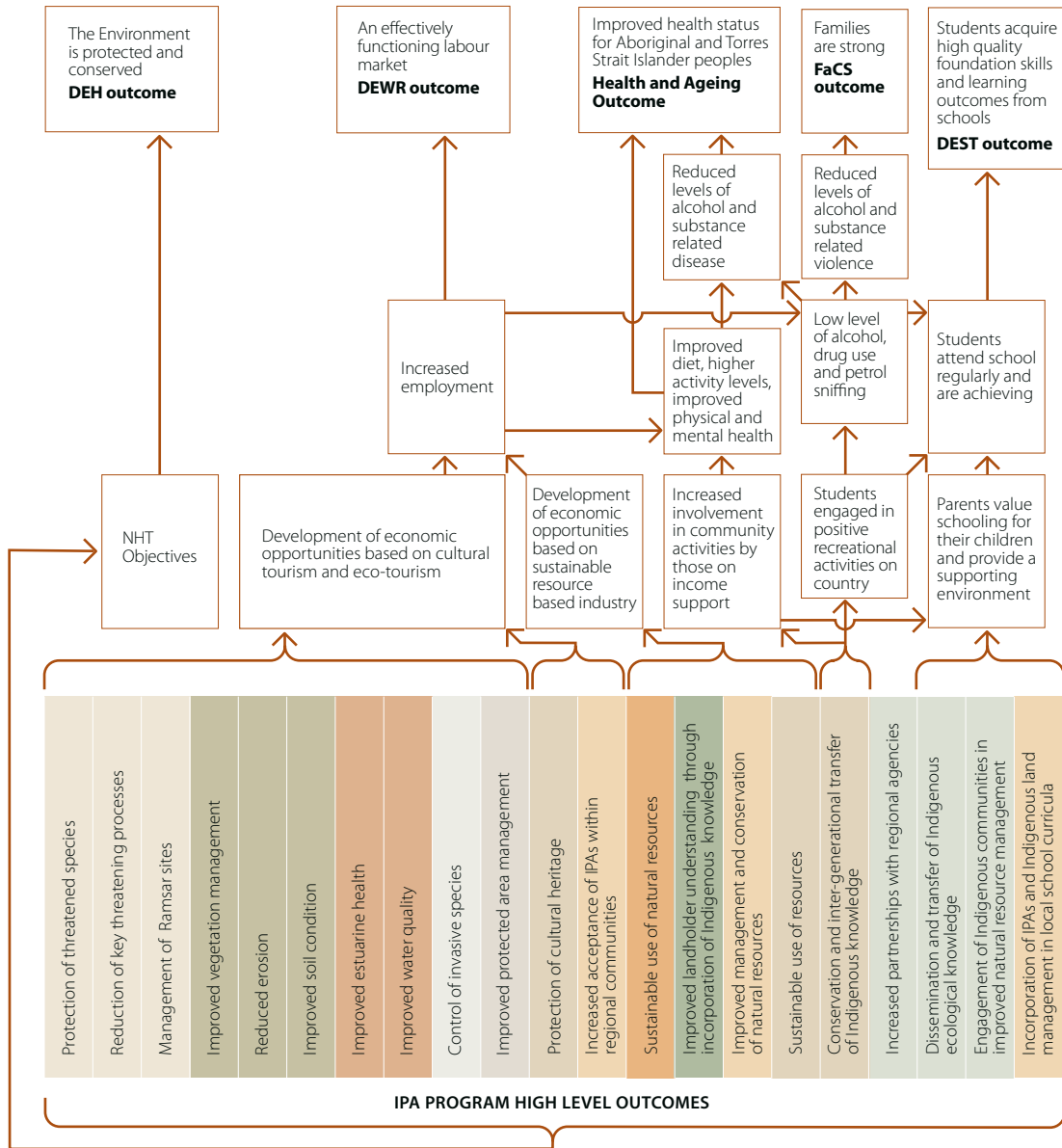
Natural Heritage Trust objectives





5. Summary of Major Issues and Findings The Indigenous Protected Areas Programme

Short-term strategic outcomes from IPA Projects





The strong connection between individual and community wellbeing and involvement in meaningful land management activities is well documented (Burgess et al (2005); Greiner et al (2005)).

In communities involved in IPAs, capacity building to enhance land management and biodiversity conservation is inextricably linked to all of the other individual and community welfare programmes and initiatives on offer. Streamlining the administration of these programmes to optimize integration and minimise transaction costs is a major challenge.

A modest beginning might be possible by formalizing commitments between the IPA Programme, Australian Government Land Management Facilitators, DEWR and the ILC to deliberately integrate their programme delivery in communities linked to IPAs. In its submission to this evaluation the ILC has expressed a willingness to assist in the development of strategic partnerships.

Another key initiative, obviously linked to increased funding, could be to more comprehensively legitimize working on land management in an IPA as paid work or using a fee for service arrangement, rather than welfare or a notionally transitional employment programme. With declining employment in pastoral industries and very limited opportunities for unskilled or semi-skilled workers in the mining industry, prospects for alternative employment in remote areas are low.

Finally there are opportunities for employment generation and income from increased numbers of visitors to IPAs, subject to managing the consequent cultural and ecological impacts. The best results are unlikely to be achieved unless there is coordination across IPAs with possible central involvement from IPA Programme staff as well as inputs from government organisations in the tourism industry.

Findings:

- 5.2.1 The administrative complexity of individual project and grants programmes is a significant impediment to Indigenous community engagement.**
- 5.2.2 The holistic Indigenous approach to land management and community well-being means that greater integration of programme delivery is essential.**
- 5.2.3 Employment in land management roles is one of the few meaningful work prospects available for Indigenous people in remote communities.**
- 5.2.4 IPAs are in some respects precursors to Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRA) with strong integration of land management outcomes and social, education and health benefits at the local community level.**
- 5.2.5 Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) can provide a useful vehicle for integrating service delivery in Indigenous communities and acknowledging the strong cultural linkages between land management and all other aspects of life for Indigenous people.**
- 5.2.6 Further negotiation of SRAs should ensure flexibility to take advantage of the governance framework provided by the IPA, where the IPA represents the community's preferred integration tool.**
- 5.2.7 SRAs provide the opportunity to genuinely encompass the aspirations of Indigenous communities and empower Indigenous people in decision-making roles**
- 5.2.8 Meaningful articulation of community aspirations will require engagement beyond simply inviting a community to select from a limited and set menu of government services on offer.**
- 5.2.9 Given the experience of many that Indigenous empowerment is inversely proportional to the complexity of programme delivery mechanisms, it is important that SRAs add value to existing initiatives, such as IPAs with a net reduction in bureaucratic process.**
- 5.2.10 The IPA Programme delivers social, health, education and economic benefits to participating communities.**



5.3 Management effectiveness

Protected Area managers are increasingly being held accountable for delivering tangible outcomes from the investment in their activities. The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) in 2000 published *Evaluating Effectiveness: A Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas* by Marc Hockings, Sue Stolton and Nigel Dudley. This publication and the embodied framework has been increasingly recognized as the definitive guide to management effectiveness evaluation. In 2003 the World Parks Congress placed a major focus on management effectiveness for the work of protected area managers over the next decade. In 2004 the COP7 meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a work plan which requires parties to undertake a rolling schedule of evaluations of management effectiveness.

Against this backdrop, reserve management agencies in most Australian jurisdictions are embarked upon one form or other of monitoring, evaluation and reporting within a management effectiveness framework.

In order to be able to demonstrate legitimacy as part of the NRS, to facilitate practical adaptive management and to demonstrate the biodiversity conservation and other achievements of the IPA Programme, the effectiveness of management of individual IPAs needs to be monitored, evaluated and reported within a framework which is consistently applied across NRS properties and, ideally, is also applied to other NHT programmes.

The WCPA Management Effectiveness Framework is a robust tool for building capacity in adaptive management and is sufficiently flexible to be applied in the range of reserve management circumstance applying across Australia.

The National Reserve System Programme has a specified objective of fostering the development and consistent application of best practice protected area management and might reasonably be expected to take the lead in this regard.

The current monitoring, evaluation and reporting procedures applied to the IPA Programme appear robust and should readily be able to be refined and accredited as part of a consistent national approach. They also lend themselves to incorporation into any graduated hierarchy of Indigenous land management categories which might be developed over time.

Current reporting requirements for the IPA Programme appear to focus on completion of activities and impacts on the Indigenous community. While important in themselves, these matters relate to outputs rather than the real Programme outcomes. What seems most critical is the answer to the question: is the IPA Programme delivering conservation outcomes at an acceptable cost? For this it is necessary for the IPAs to report on how their activities have improved the security of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Findings:

- 5.3.1 Management effectiveness will be an increasing focus for protected area managers in the next few years.**
- 5.3.2 The WCPA Management Effectiveness Framework provides a useful mechanism for facilitating adaptive management regimes and building capacity, as well as demonstrating achievements.**
- 5.3.3 The current monitoring, evaluation and reporting procedures used in the IPA Programme should position the IPAs well to implement a nationally consistent approach to management effectiveness as it develops.**



5.4 Scale and ongoing support

There is a dramatic variation in the scale and geography of IPA operations across Australia. They range from 30 hectares in the Putalina IPA in Tasmania through the 9.8 million hectares in the Ngaanyatjarra IPA in Western Australia, on the border with the Northern Territory, to the several million hectares of more or less contiguous land and sea country on the Arnhem Coast and Gulf of Carpentaria that will ultimately be covered by the Dhimurru and Anindilyakwa IPAs, coupled with the developing Laynhapuy IPA.

The flexibility of the IPA concept is widely recognised by the people consulted in the Case Studies for this evaluation as one of the Programme's great strengths. However, some issues arise with regard to the equity of funding allocated and also the relative prospects for effective management (WA CALM submission).

For example, the 30 ha Putalina IPA and the nearby Risdon IPA (79 ha) in Tasmania, have together received approximately \$727,000 in IPA Programme funding since 1997–98; Nantawarrina IPA (58,000 ha) in South Australia has received \$649,000; and Ngaanyatjarra IPA (9.8 million ha) in Western Australia has received only a total of \$845,000 over the same period.

There are explanations for the divergent levels of funding, ranging from the varying levels of development of the IPA, the scale of activities undertaken, variations in capacity of the IPA Manager and community workers, to the different levels of alternative funding available from other sources. However, the scale of the differences in funding between IPAs and the sentiment expressed in the case study consultations, that care needed to be exercised in negotiating IPAs with some other parties, suggests that this is potentially a source of tension within the Programme over time, especially as numbers of IPAs increase.

There is also a community capacity and support dimension which needs to be overlain on this issue. The Putalina and Risdon IPAs are very close to Hobart and have a strong, well educated and relatively affluent community support base close at hand.

The Nantawarrina IPA on the other hand is managed by the Nepabunna community which is isolated, 600kms north of Adelaide and consists of some 70 people. Only a total of 29 people draw any income into the community, all of it from government, in some form. Five people have effectively full-time jobs, including one non-Indigenous person who works on administration of community funds, although sometimes relying on income from two or more sources. Sixteen people have some part-time work under CDEP programs; there are five aged pensioners, one person on a disability pension and one young person on a Newstart Allowance.

Despite the circumstances, there appears to be a very positive atmosphere in Nepabunna and a great deal of pride in the community and the Nantawarrina IPA. The scale of the community and the cohesion around the identity with the IPA seem to be significant elements strengthening community and individual capacity.

By way of contrast, the challenges are much greater for the Ngaanyatjarra Land Council which manages the affairs of some 1800 people spread through four large communities and eight smaller ones as well as scattered outstations across the 9.8 million hectares of the IPA. The isolation of these communities, the scale of the landscape and the logistics of moving to and from work locations mean that a significant support structure will have to be established if there is to be an escalation of management activity.

Development of a graduated system of Indigenous land management linked to a sliding scale of investment and a specific funding programme targeting delivery of natural and cultural resource management services could assist in addressing these issues.



5. Summary of Major Issues and Findings The Indigenous Protected Areas Programme

Findings:

- 5.4.1 Differences in the scale, location and level of funding of IPAs are likely to give rise to significant equity issues and possible tensions between IPAs and communities.**
- 5.4.2 Differences in scale, location and levels of funding influence the effectiveness of IPA management.**
- 5.4.3 Any escalation of management activity in the larger IPAs will need to be accompanied by the establishment of a support structure customized to the local circumstance.**
- 5.4.4 Development of a graduated system of Indigenous land management linked to a sliding scale of investment and a specific funding programme targeting delivery of natural and cultural resource management services could assist in addressing issues of scale and ongoing support.**

5.5 Governance

The complexity of the administration task involved in juggling a complex array of projects and grants at the community level is compounded by the overlay of non-Indigenous governance expectations on traditional Indigenous governance with a basis in primary obligations to care for family and clan groups.

This is reflected in the time and cost involved in consultation prior to critical decisions on possible declaration of an IPA as well as sorting out the detail of a Plan of Management. It is also a critical factor in the recruitment of staff, the allocation of training opportunities and therefore the wider fields of capacity building and management effectiveness.

The inherent complications of what are effectively dual governance regimes have implications for the future of the IPA Programme at several levels:

- They will slow the rate of any escalation of the Programme because they are pivotal and take time to resolve;
- They will possibly determine the optimal scale of IPAs that can be effectively managed;
- They could determine the size and composition of management teams capable of delivering effective land management;
- They may indicate the scale at which funds are best injected to achieve maximum results.

The relative harmony, focus and positive approach of the Nepabunna community seems to be at least partly due to the size of the community, the small number of families involved and the availability of simple and accepted mechanisms for easing any tensions which arise.

Flexibility in approach at the operational level is often the key to reducing or avoiding unproductive tensions. In NSW when preliminary discussions began on the possible negotiation of joint management for the Mungo National Park in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, it was quickly evident that its location on the boundary of the territories of three traditional tribal groups was going to make it very difficult to identify the appropriate parties to the negotiation. Instead of pressing on with the process, ready agreement was reached on the establishment of a widely representative Management Committee to function in the interim, in much the same way that a Board will ultimately operate. This was a practical operational response which gave effect to the joint management intent while avoiding tensions which it is hoped might reduce over time with day-to-day experience of people working together and provide a good foundation for formal negotiations in due course.



In IPAs, the clear autonomy of Indigenous people and the capacity to employ Indigenous governance regimes in the management of the land are significant attributes of the IPA Programme.

The IPA Programme has built an impressive level of trust with Indigenous communities across Australia in the course of its activities to date. The momentum inherent in the Programme might reasonably be expected to carry it forward through a significant escalation of activity. Rather than simply escalating with more of the same, assuming that the successes are repeatable on a grander scale, an opportunity exists to evolve a refined model of the IPA Programme which addresses some of the complex governance, long-term security and ongoing funding issues which have been discussed in this evaluation. (See Attachment 1—TWS submission, WWF submission, WA CALM submission and WCPA submission).

Findings:

- 5.5.1 Indigenous decision making and governance regimes need to be respected if the IPA Programme is to continue to have wide support in Indigenous communities.**
- 5.5.2 Any escalation of the IPA Programme will need to take account of the timeframes and resources required for Indigenous decision making and governance.**
- 5.5.3 The development of new IPAs will need to take account of the optimal scale of operations to satisfy both Indigenous and non-Indigenous governance requirements.**
- 5.5.4 The manner and location of funds being made available for land management activities should take account of dual governance requirements.**
- 5.5.5 The structures through which any additional support is provided for large IPAs should reflect Indigenous governance requirements and clan group roles in land management.**
- 5.5.6 The fact that the declaration of an IPA is a voluntary decision on the part of Indigenous landowners and that management decision-making is in the hands of traditional owners and knowledge holders is a major attraction for Indigenous people and a strong motivation for their engagement in the Programme.**
- 5.5.7 The fact that the declaration of an IPA is a staged process with decisions sequenced to reflect growing community capacity is a positive attribute of the Programme.**
- 5.5.8 The election of the Indigenous landowners to manage the land in accordance with the regime defined by one of the IUCN categories of reserves provides an opportunity for networking to learn from others facing similar challenges.**

5.6 Land and sea country

Indigenous people don't necessarily place land tenure significance on the shoreline. The Anindilyakwa developing IPA involves aspirations for the IPA to cover the sea country of the Anindilyakwa people as well as the land. The developing Forrester's Beach IPA also is proposed to include an Aquatic Reserve designated under NSW Fisheries legislation.

Murandoo Yanner of the Carpentaria Land Council has expressed an interest in possibly negotiating an IPA covering parts of the Gulf of Carpentaria with the Indigenous people fulfilling coastwatch, fisheries regulation and environmental monitoring functions on behalf of government.

Findings:

- 5.6.1 Currently IPA declarations apply only to land and to small areas of sea country which are controlled by Indigenous interests under other legislation. Some communities, especially in Northern Australia, have requested that the Australian Government consider the possibility of IPAs extending to sea country.**



5.7 Programme management

The IPA model provides for considerable variety in the scale and detail of its application, as outlined in section 5.3. It follows that individual experience of the Programme will be highly variable.

Indigenous participants in the IPA Programme are overwhelmingly positive about the management of the Programme as well as the sensitivity and respect and responsiveness demonstrated by Programme staff.

IPA Programme staff have not flagged any issues in regard to the management of projects for individual IPAs for matters such as the process for funding requests, selection of projects and performance against agreed mileposts. To date there has not been any strategic review of spending by IPAs against the broader aims of the IPA Programme. However, the results of the 1999 Mid-Term Review (O'May, 1999), the ITS Global (2005) Evaluation of the IPA Programme as part of the National Investment Stream of the NHT and analysis of current budget information, suggests that NHT funds are being directed to activities that contribute both to conservation outcomes and broader Government policy objectives in relation to the well-being of Indigenous communities. Given this, the current largely devolved style of management and resourcing with much of the critical decisions being made 'on the ground' by the land managers for each of the IPAs appears to provide a proper balance for promoting the best outcomes.

It may be surmised that, were the overall funding for the IPA Programme to increase, then there would be a more than proportional rise in the funds allocated to the substantive works since it would appear that the 'overhead' costs (largely administrative) are relatively fixed and not related directly to the scale of on-site works.

Calls for more site visits and contact between IPA owners and managers and Programme staff are not surprising, given the isolated locations in which many people are working and the limited support available locally. Gilfillan (2000) also raises this issue and highlights the potential for it to be at least partially addressed through more collaboration with State or Territory conservation agencies if trust can be built between key individuals regionally located.

Findings:

- 5.7.1 More visits from Canberra to IPAs would be appreciated to recognize achievements and provide moral support.**
- 5.7.2 IPA projects are generally well managed and acquit budgets in a timely and appropriate manner.**
- 5.7.3 The monitoring and evaluation requirements on IPA projects are generally robust and effective by virtue of them being systematic, user friendly and efficiently processed.**
- 5.7.4 Programme funds are appropriately allocated to deliverable projects with no Canberra based DEH staffing costs funded from the IPA Programme budget.**



6. Recommendations



Photo credits Top: Lajamanu IPA NT.

Middle: Grasshopper, Toogimbie IPA, NSW.

Bottom: Mt Willoughby IPA, SA.



6. Recommendations

Overall Assessment

The consideration of major issues arising from the evaluation as outlined in Section 5 give rise to a set of specific findings which are grouped according to issue. These, in turn, can be translated into specific recommendations relevant to the future scope and direction of the IPA Programme.

Taken together, the findings and recommendations from the evaluation present an opportunity to have what is already a highly successful Programme evolve into an even more effective one based on four parallel initiatives:

- Facilitating tripartite agreements between Indigenous landowners, State or Territory Governments and the Australian Government;
- Formulating a graduated system of Indigenous land management supported by a sliding scale of public investment;
- Exploring a differentiated set of governance options which take account of clan estate traditions in cultural resource protection and land management; and
- Funding a dedicated program targeting delivery of natural and cultural resource management services, independent of welfare-based programs.

Growing the model

With the success of the Programme widely acknowledged and the current IPA Programme budget fully committed in support of 22 existing IPAs and nine developing IPAs, there is clearly a need for the budget to be increased purely to fund the progressive declarations of new IPAs and to maintain the existing minimal levels of seed funding.

The current level of support provided should be considered a minimum or base level of seed funding to keep the IPA framework in place, assuming that funding for specific projects will be forthcoming from other sources.

A concerted effort should be made to streamline administration of grants through Shared Responsibility Agreements and a strategic partnership between the Department of the Environment and Heritage, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Indigenous Land Corporation to deliver whole-of-government outcomes.

Depending on the timing of new IPA declarations, maintenance of the current Programme at a basic level of operation could require a doubling of the current budget to around \$6 million in 2008–09 and further increases to about \$10 million by 2010–2011.

To permit essential forward planning, funding should be provided on a three to five year cycle subject to annual monitoring and reporting.

While this base level of operation should be retained as an option for Indigenous landowners, for individual IPAs and the Programme as a whole to be able to reach their full potential, options for further development need to be formulated through the four parallel initiatives listed above.

It is difficult to usefully speculate on the possible levels of funding needed for a fully fledged system of Indigenous managed protected areas, but if even moderate progress can be made in tripartite negotiations for a fully funded graduated system of Indigenous land management supported by a targeted ranger programme,



\$20–30 million per year might be able to be well invested by 2010–2011 rising to \$50 million thereafter. Increases of this magnitude in the scale of the IPA budget should be conditional on the achievement of well defined conservation outcomes by the IPA Programme.

The pace at which any such escalation of the Programme occurs will depend on the progress of tripartite negotiations and Indigenous decision making and land management capability on any changes for individual IPAs.

Specific recommendations

6.1 Status and funding

- 6.1.1 Funding to at least a minimum base level of ongoing management of IPAs should be sought, within the supportive framework of tripartite agreements between owners, State or Territory Governments and the Australian Government, if their full value to the National Reserve System is to be realised.
- 6.1.2 Management funds should be provided on the basis of three-five year forward estimates, with actual spending reviewed annually against achievements.
- 6.1.3 The recurrent funding formula applied should be reviewed over time to reflect different levels of Indigenous land management activity negotiated in tripartite agreements between Indigenous landowners, States and Territories and the Australian Government.
- 6.1.4 The issue of possible recognition of IPAs as Conservation Agreements under Part 14 of the EPBC Act should be considered along with other options for a graduated system of Indigenous land management defined in tripartite negotiations.

6.2 Linkages with other programmes

- 6.2.1 Given the significance of land management activities to community well-being, Indigenous Coordination Centres should be asked to consider the value of using IPAs as a focus for integrating community based programme delivery.
- 6.2.2 The Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) should develop a policy that implements streamlined funding processes for Indigenous communities receiving DEH funding.
- 6.2.3 The Department of the Environment and Heritage should work with the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and other relevant Australian Government agencies to streamline programme delivery associated with land management and employment.
- 6.2.4 The Department of the Environment and Heritage should investigate options for a national Indigenous ranger programme which links to and enhances existing programmes (such as the IPA Programme) under a broad 'Caring for Country' framework. .

6.3 Management effectiveness

- 6.3.1 IPA monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements should be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with emerging management effectiveness regimes.
- 6.3.2 IPA Programme staff should be involved in the wider task of formulating management effectiveness protocols for reserves to ensure that the scale and complexity of the management challenges facing IPA managers can be properly recognised; adaptive management and capacity building can be tracked; and achievements acknowledged.



6. Recommendations The Indigenous Protected Areas Programme

- 6.3.3 The Australian Government should undertake a thorough investigation into the relationship between IPAs and ranger programmes. This research should also consider ranger programmes operating outside the IPA framework and examine the potential to incorporate the successful features of existing ranger activities into a nationally coordinated and funded ranger programme.

6.4 Scale and ongoing support

- 6.4.1 Australian Government Land Management Facilitators should be explicitly tasked to provide support for IPAs to enhance their capacity to engage in integrated landscape management and regional NRM programmes.

6.5 Governance

- 6.5.1 Respect for Indigenous decision making and governance regimes should continue to be a fundamental operating principle for the IPA Programme and some differentiation of governance arrangements should be explored to better reflect traditional Indigenous governance.
- 6.5.2 Any escalation of the IPA Programme in an effort to maximise potential contributions to the NRS should take account of the time frames and resources required for Indigenous decision making and governance.
- 6.5.3 The development of new IPAs should take account of the optimal scale of operations to satisfy both Indigenous and non-Indigenous governance requirements.
- 6.5.4 The manner and location of funds being invested by the Australian Government for IPA land management activities should take account of traditional clan governance and land management accountabilities.

6.6 Land and sea country

- 6.6.1 The Australian Government should further investigate the implications of community requests to declare IPAs over sea country.

6.7 Programme management

- 6.7.1 As the number of IPAs grows, consideration should be given to the need for additional Programme staff, both to continue the engagement between IPAs and Canberra, which is valued by the IPAs, and to enhance productive linkages with other Programmes at national, state and regional levels.