



ABORIGINAL
CARBON FOUNDATION

The Karlantjpa North Savanna Burning Project



PROJECT SUMMARY:

In 2015, the Central Land Council supported the traditional owners of Karlantijpa North Aboriginal Land Trust to develop a carbon abatement project under the low-rainfall savannah burning methodology. This led to a process of consultation and education on how carbon abatement works and the potential environmental, cultural, economic and social benefits to the community. Consequently, the Karlantijpa North Savanna Burning Project was registered in 2016, with the formation of Jinkaji Corporation. The corporation comprises members and directors, all of whom are traditional owners from the Eastern and Western Mudbarra language groups of the central NT.

THE PROJECT AREA:

The land on which the project operates covers 3000 square kilometres in the far north of Karlantijpa North Aboriginal Land Trust – a remote grassy woodland with no road access and a history of hot, late dry season fires which have historically impacted the environment and neighbouring pastoral leases. The project area is home to the vulnerable greater bilby, the uncommon spectacled hare wallaby and is scattered with soaks and other sacred sites of great importance to the traditional owners. It is weed-free and not degraded by feral herbivores (camels, cattle and horses).

OPERATIONS:

Every year, the corporation members are joined by the Tennant Creek and Daguragu CLC rangers to conduct burning operations at the same time as a country visit. For at least one week, the group conducts on-ground and aerial burning, as well as bilby surveys and visits to remote sacred sites. During the year, the corporation members are engaged in fire planning, training and project governance. To date, the project has abated 54,191 tonnes of carbon.



Pictured are Todman Dixon (left) and Kevin Bishop (right) - Traditional owners.

CORE BENEFITS:

Access to country – This country is very remote with no road access. Every year, the traditional owners can use a helicopter to visit remote sacred sites with family members as part of the burning operations.

Economic – Income from carbon credits funds burning operations, including payments for traditional owners to do the work, and remote infrastructure development including track improvements and established camp sites. The corporation is also investigating options for using its income for community development projects.

Cultural – Senior traditional owners now have an opportunity to teach younger generations about the country and dreamings, strengthening their connection.

Language – Mudbarra language is spoken by an estimated 96 people. Projects such as this that strengthen connection to country ensure that language is maintained amongst the traditional owners, and is more widely recognised by other stakeholders.

Environment – The historical regime of hot fires late in the year has degraded the lancewood and other woodland species in the area. The introduction of earlier, cooler fires will lessen the impacts on these woodlands and their inhabitants.

Training – As part of project activities, project participants have the opportunity to work alongside the Tennant Creek and Daguragu CLC ranger groups and gain skills in aerial incendiary operation and on-ground burning. People also continue to gain knowledge of corporate and financial governance and the carbon economy.

Project ownership – prior to this project, the only options for traditional owners to generate income from their country was to lease it for grazing or allow mining exploration, both of which degrade the country and disempower TOs. Now, TOs are empowered to manage their own business, operations and income to their own benefit at all stages of the process.



Todman Dixon quotes:

What country mean... the country means everything to me. Country's there all the time. When I'm gone it's still there. We don't own the place, the place owns us. We want to look after the place. The country gives us bush tucker, it gives us everything out here. We survive in the country. One thing we want to stop from damaging country is mining companies, that's why we want to keep the country clean, work on country, look after the place, stop the place getting damaged from mining. It's there all the time, for our next generation, future generation mob, who are growing up. Young ones, they'll take over looking after the place. Country's there forever.

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