

# Multiple benefits & knowledge systems of Indigenous Land & Sea Management programs—economic perspectives

## Project update

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## What's new?

*Our activities and achievements so far in 2018 include:*

1. We published a journal article that uses a novel wellbeing-based method for impact evaluation (W-IE) to evaluate impacts of Indigenous Land and Sea Management Programs (ILSMPs) on individual wellbeing of Indigenous people. The paper reports successful trialling of the W-IE approach with 67 Ewamian people in North Queensland. The article was published in the journal *AMBIO* and is available at <https://rdcu.be/NyyO>. Policy note is available at <http://www.nespnorthern.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Project-5.3-policy-note-June-2018.pdf>
2. W-IE was also used to evaluate impacts of ILSMPs on wellbeing of 111 respondents in the Kimberley. We are currently analysing the results and will describe them in the next reporting period.
3. We have submitted a paper entitled 'Are Indigenous Land and Sea Management Programs a pathway to Indigenous economic independence?' for journal publication. In this paper, we investigate whether ILSMPs help stimulate growth in Indigenous businesses, and report supporting evidence. Policy note is available at [www.nespnorthern.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Project-5.3-policy-note-May-2018.pdf](http://www.nespnorthern.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Project-5.3-policy-note-May-2018.pdf)
4. We have finished collecting data in both Queensland and the Kimberley (see Figure 1 for exact locations):
  - a. Working with our Indigenous partner in Queensland—Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation—we have now completed 91 individual interviews with the Ewamian people, and the focus group discussions. We reported the results back to the Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation at a Board meeting on November 21. Sharon Prior, the corporation's coordinator, is a co-author on the *AMBIO* paper.
  - b. Working with our four partners in the Fitzroy River catchment, Western Australia—Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation, Walalakoo Aboriginal Corporation, Yanunijarra, and the Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation—we completed 111 interviews.
- c. During our visit to the Kimberley in April 2018 we:
  - i. reported back on findings from the wellbeing data collected in that region—speaking with key people from each Prescribed Body Corporate (some individually, some in groups), about our results (Figure 2). Emile and Celia Boxer, Walmajarri Traditional Owners (represented by Yanunijarra) and assistants during the data collection phase of the research, travelled with us. Emile presented the results. All confirmed that they were happy for us to share results more broadly (including outside the region).
  - ii. held workshops with Bunuba, Gooniyandi and Yanunijarra groups, as well as Bedunburra community (within Nyikina Mangala country, represented by Walalakoo Aboriginal Corporation). The purpose of these workshops was to understand the contribution of ILSMPs to community-level aspirations.
5. Dr David Hudson and Sharon Prior (Traditional Owners of Ewamian Country), Emile and Celia Boxer (Walmajarri Traditional Owners) and Natalie Stoeckl, Diane Jarvis and Jane Addison (James Cook University), travelled to Canberra during Reconciliation Week. They gave a joint presentation about the project to people in the Department of the Environment and Energy, and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. They also met with key people from each department who are associated with ILSMPs to further discuss results, methods of reporting back and implications for program design. The visit received excellent feedback and several follow-up activities are underway.
6. We were invited to present key findings from the project at the Thinking Beyond Borders, IPA & economic development conference on 19-20 June, Cairns. More than 150 people, from numerous different Indigenous, government and non-government organisations attended this presentation, with very positive feedback across sectors.

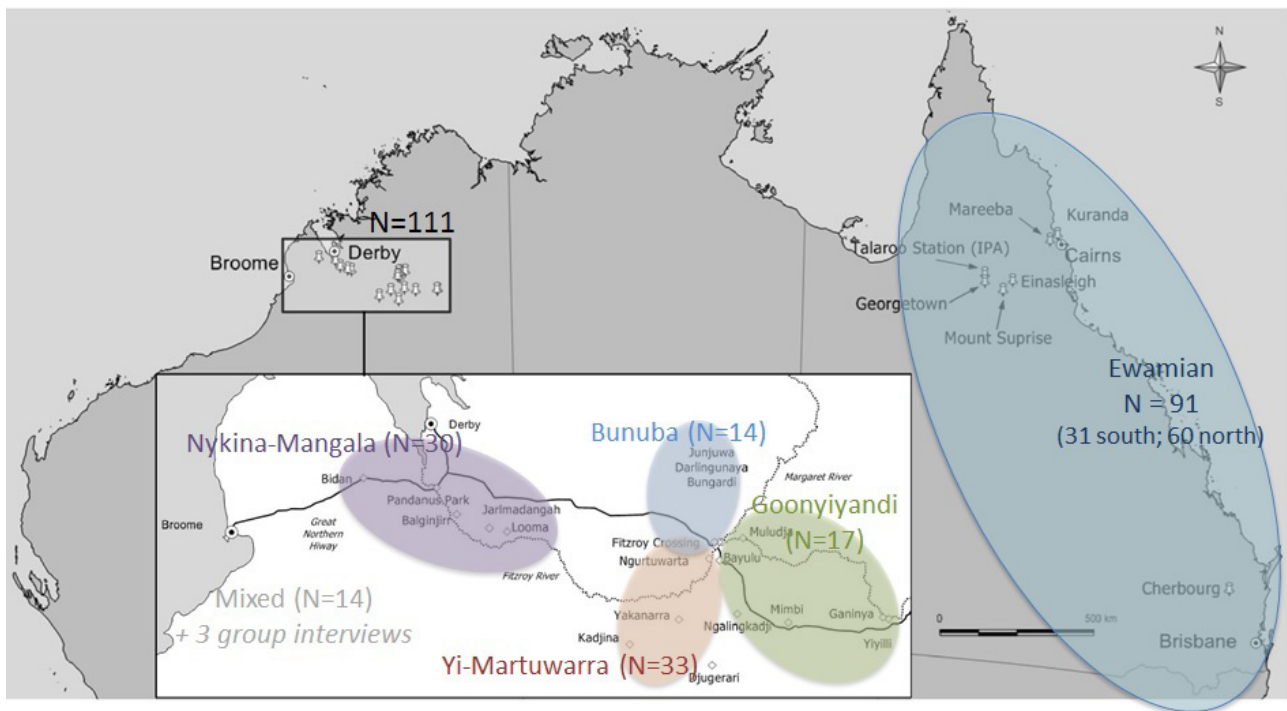


Figure 1. Map of our data collection locations and the communities engaged, with numbers of participants in brackets.

## Some emerging findings

From data collected in the Kimberley, our preliminary analyses suggest that:

1. Factors that directly relate to ILSMPs—such as language, bush tucker, strong in culture, knowing that country is being looked after, and community spirit—are very important to the wellbeing of people.
2. Many of the ‘most important things’ have seen relatively little change in recent years (e.g. housing, clinics, safety). Some of the factors linked to the country (such as bush tucker and language) experienced negative changes but these changes were relatively small and satisfaction with those factors still remains relatively high.
3. The lowest levels of satisfaction and most significant declines in satisfaction during recent years were associated ‘social ills’ (use of grog and gunja), law enforcement and lack of money and savings.
4. The most significant, positive, changes reported during recent years had direct links to ILSMPs—specifically, having role models for young in the community, knowing that country is being looked after, and having improved access to country. Improvements in schooling were also reported, with some people reporting indirect links to ILSMPs (as when, for example, rangers came into the school, or schools went on field trips on-country with rangers and others in the community).
5. Respondents provided ideas for future improvements of ILSMP programs, including suggestions to increase engagement of

- children and young people, and the community overall; arrange for more programs, in particular related to quality of waterways; and improve access to the country and arrange for more visits to the country (Figure 3).
6. General awareness of the ranger program and ranger activities was high, and learnings reported as related to ILSMPs included new outdoor skills, understanding of weather and tides, knowledge of animal and plant species and of environmental rules.
7. Sharing of knowledge was important to respondents, in particular, knowledge about country, how to protect plants and animals, cultural information, sacred locations, working together, love and respect for country, and language.
8. Further analysis of data is needed but preliminary insights suggest that ILSMPs and Indigenous rangers play a crucial role in knowledge exchange. The programs provide opportunities for rangers and others in the community to learn and share knowledge, from Elders and from Western science.

## Upcoming activities

Planned project activities over the next six months include:

- continue analysis of data collected and prepare further scientific publications, fact sheets, policy briefs and reports
- visit our Queensland and Kimberley partners to report back on final results of the analysis, before further progressing related outputs.



Figure 2. Reporting back to the communities in Western Australia.

## Project summary

Investments in ILSMPs are growing, both internationally and in Australia. Although these programs aim to generate environmental benefits, they also generate many social, cultural and economic co-benefits. While we have some understanding of the monetary value of some of these co-benefits, we lack information about other, less tangible co-benefits, such as those relating to culture. Funding agencies such as governments, businesses and non-government organisations would like to know if their investments represent 'value for money'. This project will provide quantified, comparable data about some of the co-benefits of different types of ILSMPs. It will use some broad-scale 'desktop' data relating to government expenditure on ILSMPs to assess the regional economic impact of this expenditure in northern Australia. It will also look at some of the characteristics of Indigenous corporations that are involved in land management activities across

northern Australia. This project is partnering with communities in the upper Gilbert/Mitchell River catchments (Qld) and the Fitzroy Valley in the Kimberley (WA) to develop case studies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Our Queensland and Western Australian interviewers and research partners: Dr David Hudson, Sharon Prior, Emile Boxer and Celia Boxer.
- Laurel Sutcliffe and Karen Daymen for providing much help and support in the Kimberley.

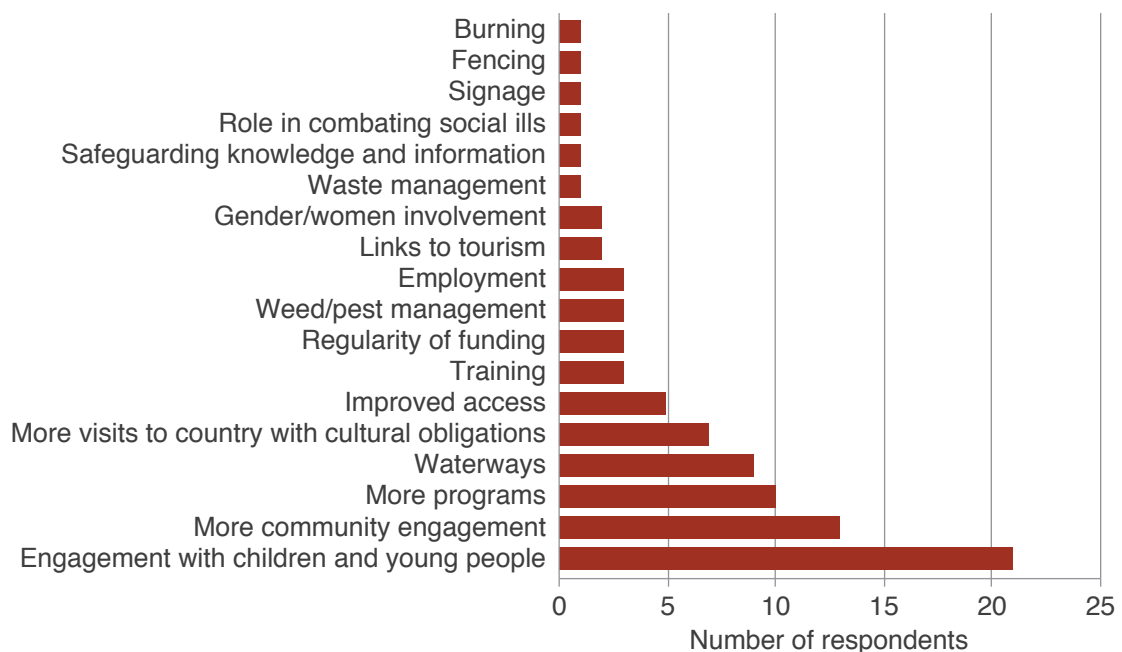


Figure 3. Suggestions for future improvements of ILSMP programs by participants in the Kimberley.





The Fitzroy River in Western Australia, photo Michael Douglas.



Ewamian country near Einasleigh, Queensland. Robert Wyatt/Alamy stock photo.

## Further information

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The [project page](#) can be found on the [Hub website](#), along with the [start-up factsheet](#).

