



Arnhem Land Fire Abatement

ALFA (NT) Limited
Annual Report 2020



Arnhem Land Fire Abatement

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Front cover: An aerial view highlights the effectiveness of natural landscape features in controlling fire. During aerial burning operations, and when fighting wildfires, rangers push fire fronts towards rocks and rivers that will pull up the flames. Photo by Rowand Taylor.

Inside cover: Wildfires are sometimes best fought at night, when the temperatures drop and the winds die down. Photo courtesy of Warddeken.

1 — Jon Altman, Jennifer Ansell and Dean Yibarbuk (2020) No ordinary company: Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (Northern Territory) Limited, *Postcolonial Studies*, 23:4, 552-574



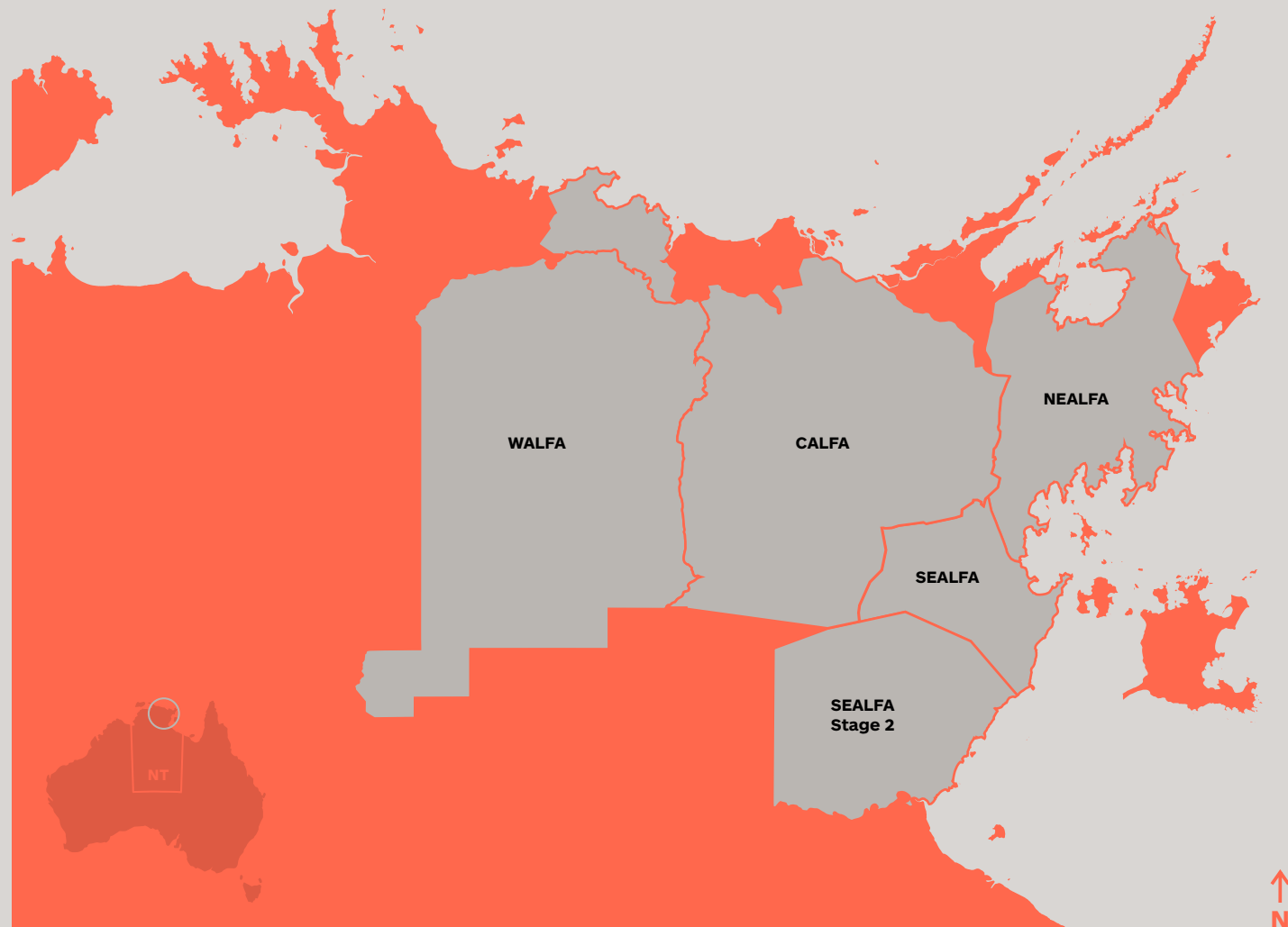
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ALFA (NT) Limited, Arnhem Land Fire Abatement, is an entirely Aboriginal-owned, not-for-profit carbon farming business created by Aboriginal Traditional Owners in Arnhem Land to support their engagement with the carbon industry. ALFA currently supports Traditional Owners to manage five fire projects across an area of over 80,000 km².

Map of project areas



Warddeken ranger Zacharia Namarnyilk surveys an early dry season cool burn on his mother's country at Makkalarl. Photo by Rowand Taylor.

Each dry season across the remote tropical savannas of Arnhem Land, Aboriginal Traditional Owners and rangers utilise customary fire knowledge and skills to accomplish highly sophisticated landscape scale fire management. They have done this since time immemorial.

Today, contemporary technology is harnessed and used in tandem with customary knowledge to achieve environmental, cultural and social outcomes.



This critical work is resourced through engagement with the carbon market and the savanna burning methodology.

ALFA is the entirely Aboriginal-owned and not-for-profit carbon farming business created by Aboriginal Traditional Owners in Arnhem Land to support their engagement with the carbon industry.

Opposite page left to right: Traditional Owners use fire for many reasons, including to encourage the growth and regeneration of bush foods. Photo by Renee Saxby; A Bawinanga ranger uses a backpack leaf blower to install a mineral earth break and control a fire front. Photo courtesy of Bawinanga. This page left to right: Mimal ranger Anthea surveys a wildfire. Photo by Renee Saxby; An aerial shot of a wildfire burning on the Arafura Swamp. Photo courtesy of ASRAC.



Rangers use drip torches to ignite cured grass as they walk through country, creating fires akin to those customarily lit across Arnhem Land. Photo by Renee Saxby.

Values

The following values represent the objects for which ALFA was established, and all income generated through the sale of carbon is spent in line with these objects.

To protect, preserve and care for the environment through abatement of the level of global greenhouse gas emissions by means of bushfire management activities.



To preserve and conserve native Australian fauna and flora through bushfire management activities that accord with Aboriginal traditional rights and obligations and Australian law.



To collaboratively pursue the investigation, development and implementation of other activities which will protect, preserve and care for the environment and which are consistent with Aboriginal traditional rights and obligations and Australian law.



In relation to Aboriginal persons who have a traditional Aboriginal connection with any part of the project area, to provide for the relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, destitution, helplessness or the aged.



To provide for advancement of education of Aboriginal persons who have a traditional Aboriginal connection with any part of the project area.

ALFA (NT) Limited has eight membership classes representing the operational areas of the Aboriginal organisations whose ranger groups operate the fire projects.

“The specific Indigenous form of participatory governance that guides ALFA’s operations, always cognisant of Landowner authority, is fundamental to its ability to support forms of Aboriginal-led development focused on conservation.”¹



The ALFA board of directors meet in Maningrida.

Membership of the company is open to Aboriginal people who have customary responsibilities for those parts of Arnhem Land under active bushfire management.

ALFA is governed by 16 Aboriginal Directors. Two Directors are elected from each of the eight membership classes. The company also employs a Chief Executive Officer, a Chief Financial Officer, a Bushfire Project Officer and a Seasonal Bushfire Officer.

Board of Directors and Staff as at 30th November 2020

Adjumarllarl — Shaun Namarnyilk, Anderson Nalorlman
 ASRAC — Gladys Malibirr, Otto Campion
 Bawinanga — Victor Rostron, Felicia Campion
 Jawoyn — Tony Walla, Steven Andrews
 Mimal — Alfred Rickson, Leon Lawrence

SEAL — Clarry Rogers, Clive Nunggarrgalu
 Warddeken — Conrad Maralngurra, Terrah Guymala
 Yirralka — Lirrpiya Mununggurr, Shane Wuthara Wunungmurra

CEO — Jennifer Ansell
 CFO — John O’Brien
 Bushfire Project Officer — Mark Desailly
 Governance Facilitator — Paul Josif
 Seasonal Bushfire Project Officer — Carl Melkonian

Outgoing Directors

ASRAC — Neville Gulaygulay
 Bawinanga — Matthew Ryan, Darryl Redford
 Jawoyn — Mike Allengale
 Mimal — Norrie Martin, Robert Redford
 SEAL — Henry Nunggumajbarr
 Warddeken — Dean Yibarbuk, Stuart Guymala

Adjumarllarl



Shaun Namarnyilk



Anderson Nalorlman

ASRAC



Gladys Malibirr



Otto Campion

Bawinanga



Victor Rostron



Felicia Campion

Jawoyn



Tony Walla



Steven Andrews

Mimal



Alfred Rickson



Leon Lawrence

SEAL



Clarry Rogers



Clive Nunggarrgalu

Warddeken



Conrad Maralngurra



Terrah Guymala

Yirralka



Lirrpiya Mununggurr



Shane Wuthara Wunungmurra

CEO



Jennifer Ansell

CFO



John O'Brien

Bushfire Project Officer



Mark Desailly

Governance Facilitator



Paul Josif

Seasonal Bushfire Project Officer



Carl Melkonian

It is a great privilege to work with ALFA's Board of Directors and ALFA's project partners, the Aboriginal ranger groups and their host organisations in Arnhem Land. Together these exceptional people coordinate, undertake and support world class fire management operations with Traditional Landowners. I am proud to present ALFA's 2020 Annual Report on their behalf.



Jennifer Ansell
CEO

2020 will be remembered as a challenging year for communities around the world as people grappled with the threat, the spread and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Arnhem Land was no exception. Early in March 2020, the ALFA Board gathered in Darwin, just as COVID-19 cases were starting to appear in southern Australia. Looking back at that time, we were unprepared for the swift escalation of the virus and the magnitude of its threat. Shortly after, the Governor-General declared a biosecurity emergency and the Northern Territory Government, together with the Australian Government and the Land Councils, put in place significant measures to stop and slow the spread of COVID-19 – closing remote communities in the Northern Territory to all non-essential travel.

In effect, entry to Arnhem Land was restricted and travel within reduced. This posed significant challenges for our project partners who became isolated and unable to readily access the services upon which they rely.

Fortunately, with the support of the Northern Land Council and other key partners the ranger groups did what they do best, swiftly adapting to ensure fire management could proceed in a manner that complied with both Traditional Owner and biosecurity requirements. During this response ranger groups quarantined, locked in, socially distanced, zoomed and more to ensure that this incredible work could continue with no risk to our most important partners, the Traditional Owners and communities of Arnhem Land.

Given that a global pandemic wasn't enough, the 2020 fire season saw a continuation of severe fire weather conditions in Arnhem Land. The 2019-2020 wet season was the third consecutive year to record below average rainfall. This combined with warmer than average dry season temperatures, including heatwave conditions during November, to produce incredibly challenging conditions. On the ground, rangers adapted to suit, applying their knowledge and skill with extraordinary

dedication to implement a mosaic of low intensity fires during the short window of cool weather in the early dry season and then actively fought and extinguished a significant number of high intensity wildfires during the late dry season in extreme conditions.

2020 threw the combined challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic and increasingly severe fire weather conditions at our partners placing immense pressure on Traditional Owners, communities, and their organisations. In spite of all of this, 2020 produced one of the strongest abatement results to date with groups proving yet again that supporting Aboriginal ranger groups to address these challenges, with their own knowledge and in their own way, is a powerful solution.

The carbon abatement achieved in 2020 will enable ALFA to bring a significant number of premium carbon credits to the carbon market in the next financial year. Fortunately, COVID-19 has not affected ALFA's carbon

credit sales with strong growth in demand and price, particularly in the voluntary carbon market. We look forward to a continuation of this trend over the next 12 months and the ability to deliver increased funding to support ALFA's project partners undertake savanna burning and deliver on broader land management and community development aspirations.

Finally, once again, I wish to acknowledge and thank ALFA's small team of dedicated staff members as well as ALFA's project partners. Many hundreds of people work tirelessly every year in support of ALFA and the Arnhem Land fire projects. It is such a privilege to be able to witness the partnerships and collaborations that operate to support these projects and to be able to celebrate their achievements within this Annual Report.

Core strategic actions of ALFA customary fire management

Left to right: ASRAC's Otto Campion leads burning consultations with rangers and Traditional Owners. Photo courtesy of ASRAC; Matches and drip torches are the key tools used for on-ground burning. Photo by Renee Saxby; Bawinanga rangers take to the skies. Photo courtesy of Bawinanga; Once widespread, quolls are now threatened across Arnhem Land and rely on good fire management to persist. Photo courtesy of Warddeken.

1.



Engage 'the right people for country' in planning and delivery.

2.



Burn early in the dry season and at times of heavy dew and little wind so that fires go out overnight.

3.



Burn strategically, adding to natural breaks such as moist ground along creeks, cliff lines and tracks to create unburned 'compartments' surrounded by burned breaks.

4.



Protect jungles, heaths and fire sensitive communities with early-burned breaks.

Nine Aboriginal ranger groups consisting of Traditional Owners and their families operate a total of five ALFA fire projects, which generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) through the savanna burning methodology.

- West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project**
- Central Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (CALFA) project**
- South East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (SEALFA) project**
- South East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement 2 (SEALFA2) project**
- North East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (NEALFA) project**

Collectively, these groups manage an area of over 80,000 km² encompassing rugged sandstone escarpments, monsoon rainforest, intact riparian ecosystems, floodplains, remote coastal regions and vast expanses of savanna.

Backpack leaf blowers have become essential equipment for managing kilometres of fire front. Photo courtesy of Warddeken.



This page: Cool burns trickle through savanna woodland. Photo by David Hancock. Opposite page: Attendees at one of the first meetings to bring together Landowners from across west and central Arnhem Land to discuss fire management, held at Weemol in 2005. Many of the leaders in this image are now deceased, though their legacy lives on. Image courtesy of Peter Cooke.

History of fire projects in west Arnhem Land



The story of ALFA begins with the ground-breaking West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project, the first savanna burning abatement project anywhere in the world.

In the mid 1990s, Aboriginal Landowners from Arnhem Land and a small group of non-Aboriginal scientists began a dialogue about the importance of fire in the landscape. Aboriginal elders and leaders spoke of “orphaned country”, Aboriginal estates whose Landowners had been drawn to missions and settlements. They were concerned that without customary management, especially of fire, the physical and spiritual Aboriginal estate was sick.

Satellite fire histories corroborated Traditional Owner’s concerns, showing fire regimes across the region dominated by late dry season wildfire, often burning intensely over thousands of square kilometres and only extinguished with the coming of the annual wet season. These discussions led to the development of a vision of people again living on healthy country, and of fire management as a key contributor to this vision.

Over the next decade, Aboriginal ranger groups in Arnhem Land refined their ability to manage fire at a landscape scale, developing ways of emulating customary fire management using modern tools. Meanwhile scientists

developed methods to measure the extent of fires, and calculate the seasonal differences in greenhouse gas emissions between early and late dry season fires for a range of vegetation communities.

However, managing fire at the scale required was beyond the financial capability of Landowners. After years of negotiation, a solution was reached when ConocoPhillips entered into the West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement (WAFMA) with the Northern Territory Government. This trailblazing agreement saw ConocoPhillips support Landowners to restore fire management over more than 28,000 km² of west Arnhem Land – the WALFA project area – to offset greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from their newly established Darwin Liquefied Natural Gas (DLNG) plant.

The WALFA project was an innovative solution to securing long term funding to support fire management, and immediately allowed Traditional Landowners and Aboriginal rangers to get back out on country, lighting fires in the early dry season.

The WALFA project became the landscape scale model upon which the government-approved Savanna Burning Methodology was based, and provided a template for every future savanna burning fire management project across northern Australia.

The ALFA story

“ALFA operates at the intersection of Western and customary domains. It catalyses and supports the carbon emission avoidance activities of Aboriginal ranger groups and Traditional Landowners, who deploy customary and Western fire management approaches at a large regional scale.”¹

Following the introduction of carbon legislation in Australia in 2011, the five WALFA ranger groups decided they wanted to transition the then voluntary WALFA project to an eligible offsets project to earn and sell ACCUs. Extensive Landowner consultations ensued, focusing on how to create a company that could represent them collectively in their engagement with the carbon market.

In 2013 WALFA Limited was established for this purpose, and in 2015 the name of the company was changed to ALFA (NT) Limited, to reflect its growth throughout the Arnhem Land region. ALFA registered the WALFA project as an eligible offsets project in late 2014, and since then has expanded to register and support projects in central, south-east and north-east Arnhem Land. Together, these projects cover a significant and contiguous area of almost 80,000 km² of Arnhem Land.

In developing ALFA, Traditional Owners were clear in their directive that the company should be not-for-profit, and that all revenue from the sale of ACCUs must be reinvested back into the Aboriginal ranger groups to provide local employment while preserving culture and the environment. Thus, ALFA operates with minimal overheads, with 95 per cent of all income generated paid to the ranger groups for the purpose of supporting and improving fire management activities across the project areas.

Nine Aboriginal ranger groups, consisting of Traditional Owners and their families, undertake all operational aspects of the landscape scale fire management that occurs in five ALFA project areas. Membership of ALFA is open to any Traditional Owner of land where an ALFA project operates. As such, ALFA is at once an alliance and a collaboration between Traditional Owners and their affiliated Aboriginal ranger groups.



A Warddeken firefighting team during the 2020 late dry season wildfire season. Photo by Rowand Taylor.

Savanna Burning Methodology

“95 per cent of all income generated is paid to the ranger groups for the purpose of supporting and improving fire management activities across the project areas.”¹



Cool fires burning through savanna woodland marked with termite mounds. Photo courtesy of Warddeken.



Drip torches are used by rangers to create mosaic burns across each project area. Photo courtesy of Yirralka.

All savanna fires emit greenhouse gases, in particular methane and nitrous oxide. The savanna burning methodology uses strategic fire management to reduce the emission of methane and nitrous oxide from the burning of savannas, compared to the emissions from a baseline period.

Each carbon credit unit represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent net abatement (through either emissions reductions or carbon sequestration) achieved by eligible activities undertaken as eligible offsets projects.

Net abatement is determined by measuring the difference between methane and nitrous oxide emissions from a project's baseline period against each subsequent project year. The difference between baseline and annual project emissions reflects the change resulting from a change in fire management practices, and in Arnhem Land, the reintroduction of customary burning. Importantly, projects only generate carbon credits if they are successful in avoiding emissions of methane and nitrous oxide compared to their baseline period.

Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) Generation

How does it work?



A Mimal ranger refills a drip torch with burning fuel. Rangers record the amount of fuel used throughout the burning season to ensure the work itself is carbon neutral, before overall ACCUs are calculated. Photo by Renee Saxby.

The Clean Energy Regulator issues ACCUs for greenhouse gas abatement activities undertaken as part of the Emissions Reduction Fund, a federal scheme that provides financial incentives to organisations and individuals to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and improve their energy efficiency.

ALFA's five offsets projects generate carbon credits through Federal Government legislation focused on carbon farming. The issuance of ACCUs is governed by the Carbon Farming Initiative Act (CFI) 2011, the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Regulations 2011 (CFI Regulations 2011) and the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Rule 2015 (CFI Rule 2015).

The Carbon Market

How does ALFA sell ACCUs?

Every year ALFA generates ACCUs from the five registered savanna burning project areas. A public record of these ACCUs is available online in the Emissions Reduction Fund Project Register <http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au>. A number of carbon markets operate in Australia for producers of carbon to sell their ACCUs. These include selling ACCUs to the Australian Government through the Emissions Reduction Fund, selling ACCUs to companies with carbon compliance obligations under the safeguard mechanism and the voluntary market, where companies and organisations choose to voluntarily purchase ACCUs to offset their carbon footprint.

ALFA ACCUs are highly sought after on the voluntary market, which comprises a significant proportion of ALFA's ACCUs sales annually. Voluntary buyers are aware of the cultural, social and environmental benefits that are achieved through the operation of the fire projects, as well as the reinvestment of carbon income to other projects that support local communities. For example, Warddeken Land Management has used carbon generated income as the seed funding to:

- Establish the Nawarddeken Academy – a registered Independent, bi-cultural school which provides education to children at homeland communities without access to government schooling.
- Launch the Mayh Species Management Project – an Indigenous Protected Area-wide long-term fauna monitoring program.
- Build a house for professor Mary Kolkiwarra Nadjamerrek, one of the last remaining elders who provided the customary ecological knowledge upon which the WALFA project is based.

Organisations and companies can contact ALFA directly if they are interested in purchasing ACCUs of Aboriginal provenance from projects that are owned and operated by Traditional Landowners.

Production

How is success measured?

ACCU issuance for all ALFA projects to date

4,189,429

The production of Australian Carbon Credit Units is highly regulated to ensure that emissions reductions are genuine, additional to business-as-usual and can be counted towards Australia's emissions reduction targets. There are a number of requirements that must be satisfied before a project can be declared an 'eligible offsets project', and there are ongoing requirements in undertaking an eligible offsets project.

These requirements include:

- There must be an approved methodology for the type of project.
- The project must deliver abatement that is additional to what would occur in the absence of the project.
- The project must be undertaken in accordance with the methodology and comply with other scheme eligibility requirements.
- The project proponent must report to the Regulator about the conduct of the project and the abatement achieved. Certain reports must be accompanied by a report prepared by a registered greenhouse and energy auditor.

Summary of ALFA project areas – overall key statistics

“From a Western ecological perspective, fire management in Arnhem Land resourced through ALFA’s engagement with the carbon industry, has successfully addressed the prevalence of hot, widespread and destructive wildfires in the landscape – a threat to the environmental assets of northern Australia recognised in both Aboriginal and Western science knowledge systems.”¹

1 tonne carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂-e) = 1 Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU)

WALFA

Ranger groups involved

- Bawinanga Rangers
- Mimal Rangers
- Jawoyn Rangers
- Warddeken Rangers
- Adjumarllarl Rangers

Project area
28,000 km²

Registered: 24/12/2014
Running for:
76 months

ACCU issuance to date
1,835,387

CALFA

Ranger groups involved

- Bawinanga Rangers
- Mimal Rangers
- ASRAC Rangers

Project area
26,000 km²

Registered: 23/12/2014
Running for:
76 months

ACCU issuance to date
1,761,688

SEALFA

(>1000mm)

Ranger groups involved

- Yugul Mangi Rangers
- Numbulwar Rangers

Project area
5,000 km²

Registered: 24/12/2014
Running for:
70 months

ACCU issuance to date
235,525

SEALFA2

(600–1000mm)

Ranger groups involved

- Yugul Mangi Rangers
- Numbulwar Rangers

Project area
10,000 km²

Registered: 28/01/2016
Running for:
65 months

ACCU issuance to date
100,708

NEALFA

Ranger groups involved

- Yirralka Rangers

Project area
11,000 km²

Registered: 11/09/2016
Running for:
57 months

ACCU issuance to date
256,120

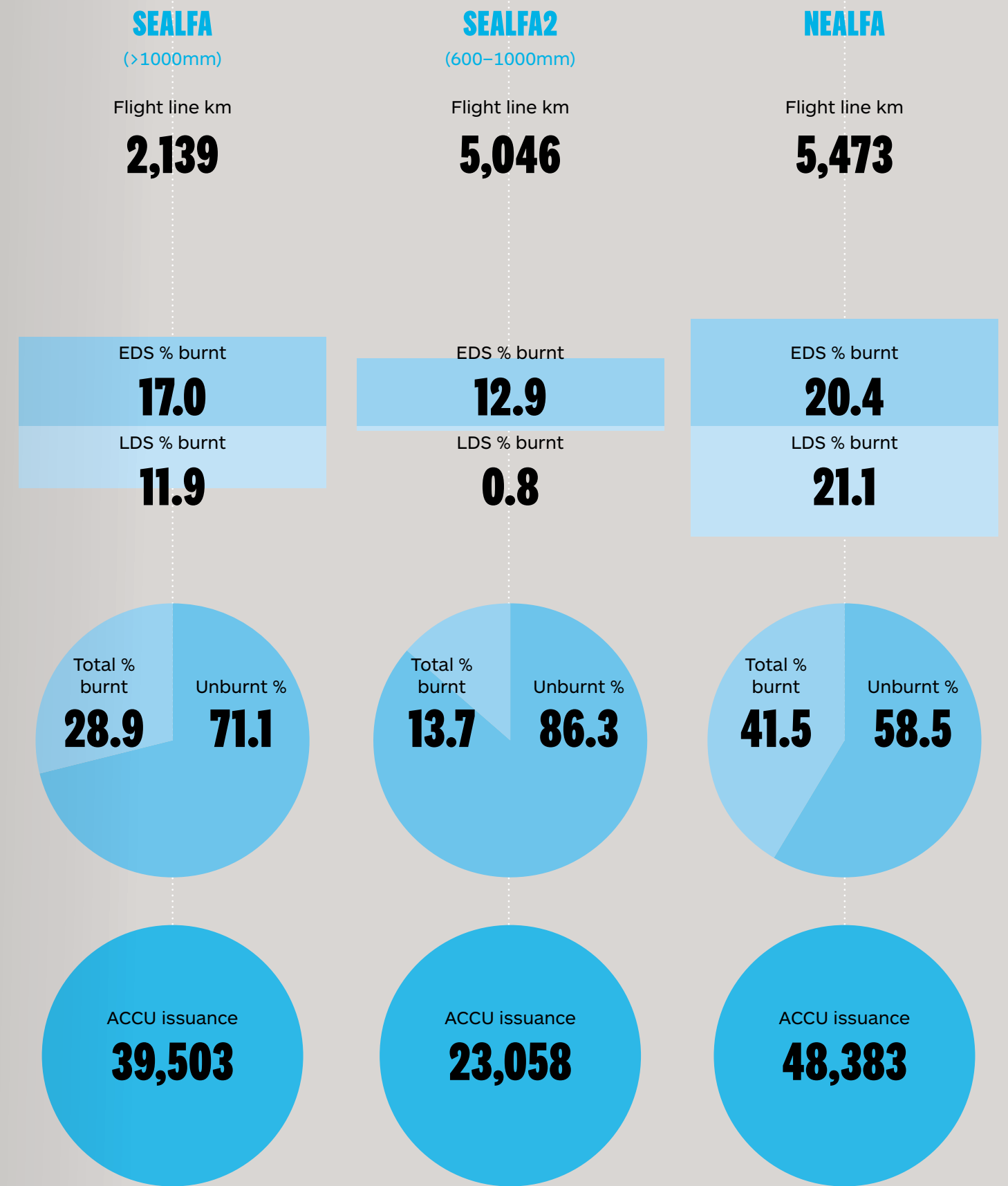
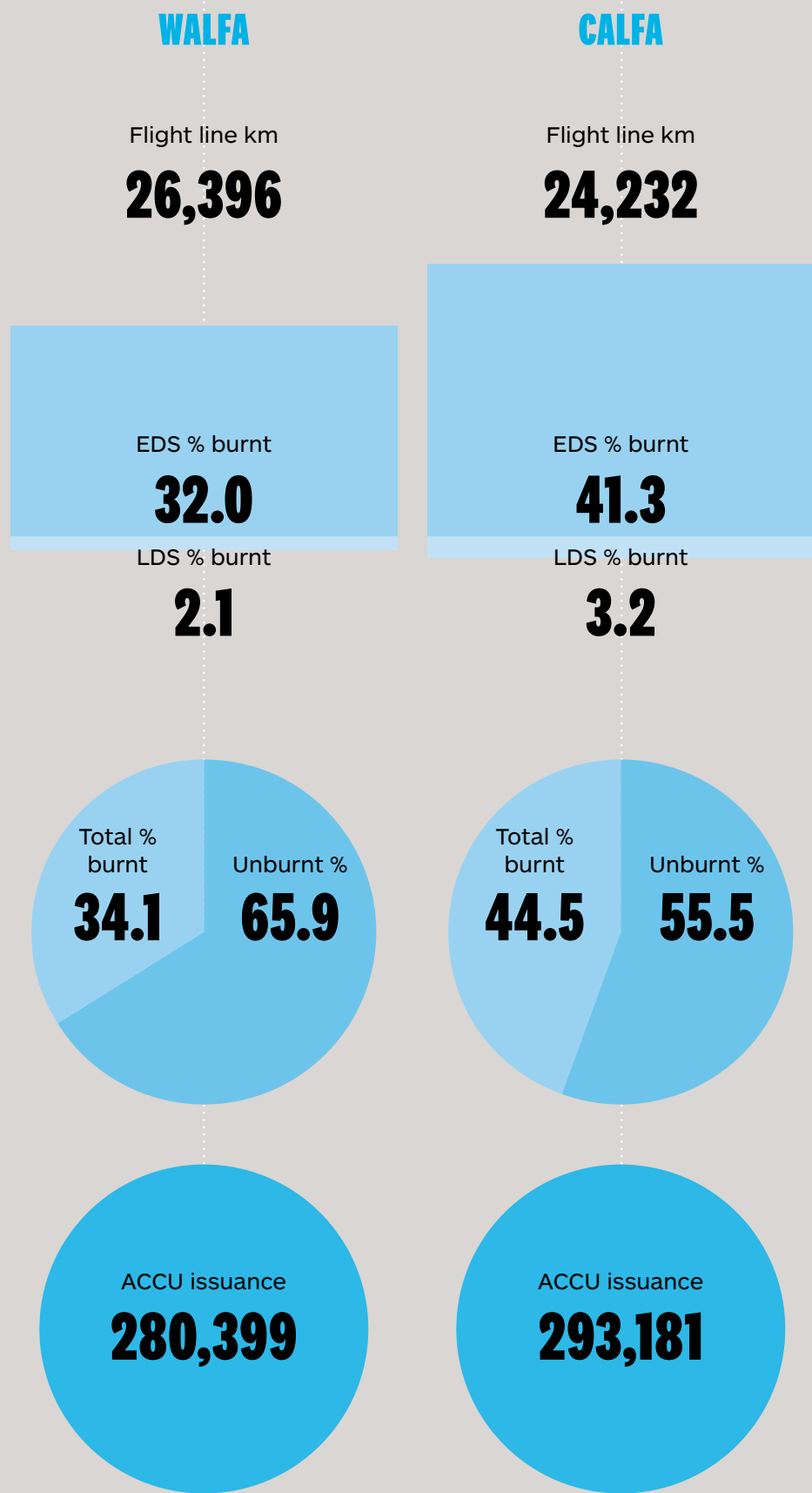
Summary of ALFA project areas – 2020 management statistics

Flight line kilometres represents the total distance flown by each project during aerial prescribed burning operations.

EDS % is the per cent of the project area burnt in the early dry season (January to July). LDS % is the per cent burnt in the late dry season (August to December).

By undertaking planned burning early in the dry season and active wildfire prevention, the total area of fire is reduced and a significant proportion of each project area remains unburnt. In 2020, between 55.5 and 86.3 per cent of the project areas were left unburnt, a fantastic outcome.

1 tonne carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂-e) = 1 Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU)



Dealing with impacts of climate change

Our partners are facing changes in weather conditions that will require ongoing innovation and adaptation.

"All these impacts of climate change will have considerable effects on fire behaviour in the landscapes in which savanna burning projects operate, and will likely make landscape scale fire management more challenging and resource intensive. However, it will be more critical than ever for fire management to persist and adapt to these changing conditions to support the resilience of natural systems in response to climate change."¹

With each new year bringing hotter and drier conditions, Traditional Owners and elders across Arnhem Land are growing increasingly alarmed about the climactic changes that they are witnessing. Knowledge of country passed down through untold generations no longer aligns with Traditional Owners' first-hand observations of country. Seasonality, and weather conditions such as temperature, rainfall, wind, flowering and fruiting of indicator flora species, and the behaviour of animal and insect species, is changing. This change in environmental and weather conditions also impacts the fire management operations of ALFA partners.

The dry season of 2020 saw near-catastrophic fire conditions faced by ranger groups, with warmer than average days and nights for every month during the dry season, apart from May. Territory-wide, rainfall was 49 per cent below the long-term average and data from the Bureau of Meteorology shows that across ALFA project areas, rainfall was very much below average and that maximum temperatures were the highest on record.

Additionally, high pressure systems have been bigger, stronger and have lasted longer than in the past, which has brought fiercer and drier winds for sustained

periods. These winds interfere with mosaic burning by carrying early burns further than they should travel, and make wildfires near impossible to fight on gusty days.

Combined, these weather conditions are resulting in drier and increased fuel loads – conditions that greatly exacerbate the risk of wildfire. Extreme weather conditions also restrict the timeframe for rangers and Traditional Owners to safely perform prescribed burning operations. Unfortunately, these impacts of a warming climate are predicted to continue.

Dealing with more severe weather conditions will require attention and adaptation for ALFA and our partners as we move into the future. We anticipate that as the impacts of global warming intensify, ALFA will need to support ranger groups to prepare for delivering fire management programs in longer, drier and hotter dry seasons. In particular, rangers will require support to deal with an increase in the frequency and severity of wildfires. With greater demands placed on the personnel and resources in each partner group, ALFA is committed to exploring the most effective ways to counter these challenges, and providing support and resourcing that rangers require to continue to deliver their essential work.

**Near-catastrophic
fire conditions**

**Warmer than average
days and nights***

*apart from May.

**Rainfall 49% below
long term average**

**Max temperatures
were the highest
on record**

ALFA's custom training program

After working closely with our partner groups over many years, ALFA identified the need to devote more time and resources to developing the capacity and recognising the skills of Aboriginal rangers undertaking fire management within Arnhem Land. As a result, we are pleased to report that during 2020 development of a new custom training program commenced.



This page: Mark Desailly facilitates training for Yirralka rangers. Opposite page: Chainsaw training and Raindance machine training. All photos courtesy of ALFA.



During 2020, funding was secured for a three-year project to develop a model of training delivery that adapts Nationally Accredited Units of Competency to an Arnhem Land context. The aim is to increase the capacity of rangers to deliver best practice fire management across Arnhem Land. Funding was obtained from the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT).

ALFA's training project will run from 2021-2023 and be managed by Mark Desailly, who brings to the role three years' experience as ALFA's Bushfire Project Officer as well as extensive experience delivering informal training to ALFA's partner ranger groups.

The customised program of fire management training and mentoring will be focused on job activities directly related to fire management in the Arnhem Land region,

both in terms of environmental context and the practical application of skills. Over the next three years, ALFA's training program will comprise six Nationally Accredited Units of Competency:

- PUAFIR210 - Prevent injury
- AHCFIR202 - Assist with planned burning
- PUAFIR017 - Work safely around aircraft
- PUAFIR008 - Operate aerial ignition equipment in an aircraft
- PUAFIR204 - Respond to wildfire
- PUAFIR303 - Suppress wildfire

Trial training events for Aircraft Safety and Bombardier Operation will be held in early 2021, with fire suppression-focused training scheduled for later in the year. Subsequent phases of development will be evaluation and revision of the training model and expansion of delivery in terms of scope and volume.

Fire Management Activities Summary 2020



Learning on Country students have been working alongside rangers from a number of ALFA's partner groups, ensuring younger generations learn the skills necessary to take over fire management in the future. Photo courtesy of ASRAC.

Before the fire season begins, rangers talk to Traditional Owners about where and how they want burning to happen on their country. These consultations form the basis of each group's annual burning plan.



Project partners undertake fire planning and operational updates via Zoom.

In normal circumstances, two major meetings are facilitated each year by ALFA. Prior to the onset of the dry season, a planning meeting is conducted in order to both review the previous season and to plan the upcoming prescribed burning program. An end-of-year meeting is conducted where groups can debrief and discuss lessons learnt and successes of the year's operations and begin preparations for the upcoming season.

Unfortunately, due to social distancing requirements and temporary travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, annual project meetings could not be conducted in person in 2020, with online conferences occurring instead. While no substitute for meeting together on country, rangers who were able to participate showed remarkable adaptability

to the online format. For the first time, ranger groups continued to conduct monthly meetings online as the fire season progressed.

Each ranger group also undertakes internal Landowner consultations, ensuring that the right people for each clan estate within their respective operational areas gives consent for burning work to occur, is able to nominate who they would like to undertake Aerial Prescribed Burning (APB), and advises whether they would like to be involved in any of the upcoming fire season activities. COVID-19 restrictions also hindered Landowner consultations for most groups, however in all cases ranger groups used innovative and creative approaches to ensure sufficient approval and permission was obtained prior to prescribed burning commencing.

PLANNING AND CONSULTATION

80

PARTICIPANTS PRESEASON AND POSTSEASON MEETINGS (HELD VIA ZOOM)

333

TRADITIONAL OWNERS CONSULTED



Above: Bawinanga rangers review fire scar maps to plan aerial flight lines. Photo courtesy of Bawinanga. Below: The first opportunity for project partners to come together in person in 2020 at the ALFA AGM in Maningrida.





**EARLY DRY SEASON
BURNING — ON-GROUND**

10,690

KILOMETRES DRIVEN

62

CULTURAL SITES PROTECTED

287

ASSETS PROTECTED



On-ground burning most closely aligns with customary burning practices, and ranger groups work throughout the early dry season to establish fine-scale and targeted firebreaks throughout country accessible by vehicle and on foot. On-ground burning is often conducted for the purpose of protecting cultural, environmental and infrastructure assets.

Opposite page: Yugul Mangi rangers burn on foot (above); Mimal rangers perform on-ground burning with a vehicle (below). Photo by Renee Saxby. This page: Flames burning in pandanas. Photo by David Hancock.

Rangers and Traditional Owners use on-ground burning throughout project areas, particularly along roadsides and hunting tracks, around important cultural and environmental sites and to protect infrastructure. Rangers undertake ground burning from a vehicle (4WD or quad bike) or by foot, and use either matches or a drip torch as the ignition source.

Before commencing aerial burning operations, rangers must first secure assets across their respective management areas. This involves installing firebreaks and implementing protective burns at cultural sites including rock art galleries and sacred sites, as well as securing infrastructure including houses, buildings and water and energy assets at homeland communities.

Many ranger groups run events such as cultural camps and bushwalks, involving young people and elders, which allow groups of Landowners to conduct significant fine-scale burning across large tracts of country. For many ALFA partners, these activities are of great importance, as they allow a new generation of Traditional Owners to burn country as the old people did.

Ranger groups record their ground burning activities using either CyberTracker or a combination of GPS and work diaries.



Each year, rangers take to the skies to deliver incendiary burning across vast tracts of remote country - a synthesis of customary and contemporary ecological management practices.

Aerial prescribed burning, delivered from Robinson 44 helicopters and utilising incendiary delivery machines, allows rangers to access remote regions of their project areas and cover vast tracts of otherwise inaccessible country. APB creates a mosaic of burnt country throughout project areas, and also secures the boundaries between neighbouring groups.

APB flight routes are determined by many factors, including: topography, previous years' fire scars, sacred sites, local knowledge and experience, real-time observation of grass and conditions, and type of soil and vegetation. Rangers utilise the existing features of the landscape, such as rivers and roads, to create landscape scale firebreaks comprised of burned and natural breaks.

APB by its very nature is a thoroughly modern fire management tool, however, rangers and Traditional Owners are readily able to translate knowledge of country and fire behaviour to an aerial approach. Importantly, through adjustments to the delivery rate of incendiaries, APB can be tailored to deliver very specific burning results taking into account weather and fuel conditions for different environments in the landscape. Rangers from all partner groups are now highly experienced in APB operations. As a result of this, APB operations across ALFA project areas are increasingly being undertaken solely by senior rangers and Traditional Owners. ALFA's custom training will further support this trend.

Ranger groups record aerial burning activities using either a combination of GPS and work diaries, or CyberTracker to document flight lines.

A Yirralka ranger guides aerial burning operations. Photo courtesy of Yirralka.



**EARLY DRY
SEASON BURNING
— AERIAL**

49,614

KILOMETRES FLOWN

137

TRADITIONAL
OWNERS INVOLVED

In the stone country of the Warddeken IPA, aerial burning is used to protect 'at risk' remnant monsoonal rainforest. Photo courtesy of Warddeken.

In the late dry season, rangers' focus shifts to the prevention of wildfires, which burn hot and uncontrolled as weather conditions become warmer and drier. This involves promoting awareness of dangerous fire conditions amongst community members, as well as intensive wildfire suppression campaigns to protect priority areas of country.

*"We may come from different parts of the country and different tribes [but] when there is a wildfire, we must be one tribe and help each other always."
— Stuart Guymala*



This page: ALFA seasonal fire officer Carl Melkonian alongside Warddeken rangers Torsten Unnasch, Zacharia Namarnyilk and Arijay Nabarlambarl during a wildfire suppression campaign in the Warddeken IPA. Photo courtesy of Warddeken. Opposite page: Backpack leaf blowers and chopper fuel – firefighting gear lined up and ready. Photo by David Hancock.

WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION

89
WILDFIRES FOUGHT

7,230
PERSONNEL HOURS

167
PERSONNEL



Increasingly, wildfire suppression has become a major component of annual fire management programs. Most firefighting is undertaken 'dry', meaning rangers use techniques of controlling fires that do not involve water, such as installing mineral earth breaks that act as a barrier to pull up fires through removing combustible fuel.

Helicopters are often required to ferry teams of firefighters in to access remote fire lines. Rangers

often fight fires that threaten important cultural or environmental sites, and on many occasions have preserved significant cultural and environmental assets through extinguishing wildfire.

One of the most unique aspects of firefighting in Arnhem Land is rangers' use of backpack leaf blowers in containing wildfires – by blowing out flames and blowing embers and combustible fuels such as grass and leaf litter back into the active fire.

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals are a global call to action protect the planet, end poverty and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.

sdgs.un.org/goals



ALFA's partners are proactively addressing a number of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through the delivery of their land and cultural heritage management programs. With income created from the sale of ACCUs, ranger groups are able to deliver their respective fire management programs, as well as other community led projects leading to positive environmental outcomes through reduced carbon

emissions and improved ecological health of country. However, equally importantly, ranger programs also generate a host of cultural, economic and social co-benefits to Traditional Owners and their families.

ALFA's partners are addressing the following Sustainable Development Goals through the annual delivery of their fire management programs.



A team of ASRAC rangers using drone technology to gain an aerial view of a wildfire. Photo courtesy of ASRAC.



Goal 1. No Poverty

Millions of dollars annually reinvested in communities through wages.

Ranger programs provide employment opportunities in remote communities.



Goal 2. Zero Hunger

Ranger groups operate food security programs such as tucker runs.

Regular income allows families to buy food.

Support people living on country and accessing bush foods.



Goal 3. Good Health and Wellbeing

Ranger work is active and promotes physical activity.

People are able to harvest and access bush tucker through ranger programs.

Supported to live and work on their country.

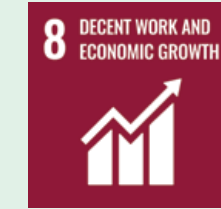
Connection to cultural identity.



Goal 5. Gender Equality

All of ALFA's partners have women's ranger programs.

More women rangers are getting involved in fire operations every year.



Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth

Ranger programs offer meaningful, highly sought-after roles in economically disadvantaged regions.

Ranger programs support staff to access training and education.



Goal 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities

Ranger groups provide essential services in remote communities.

Ranger groups offer the only employment at many homeland communities.



Goal 13. Climate Action

The work of ALFA's partners leads to significant GHG emission reductions every year.

ALFA has led others to replicate our model of business, leading to more GHG avoidance.



Goal 15. Life on Land

Ranger work respects the choice of Traditional Owners to remain on country.

Ranger groups are providing a future for people on country.

ALFA is partnered with nine community and homeland-based Aboriginal ranger groups, supporting them to collectively deliver five fire management projects across 80,000 km² of Arnhem Land.

The fire project areas include ranger groups who manage four declared Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) - the Djelk, Warddeken, south-east Arnhem Land and Laynhapuy IPAs, as well as two IPAs currently under consultation - the Mimal and ASRAC IPAs.

In the following section of the report, each one of ALFA's partners share highlights from 2020, showcasing the ways in which their fire projects are contributing to the realisation of UN Sustainable Development Goals through improving environmental, cultural, social and economic outcomes for Traditional Owners across Arnhem Land.



Photo by Renee Saxby.

Adjumarllarl Rangers

– Protecting communities and sacred sites



Adjumarllarl rangers were one of the Northern Territory's first Indigenous ranger programs, and have been working out of Gunbalanya in west Arnhem Land for over 30 years. Adjumarllarl rangers manage an area of approximately 10,000 km² including floodplains, savanna woodland and sandstone escarpment.

Operating at the gateway to Arnhem Land, Adjumarllarl are on the frontline of managing invasive weed species and have worked determinedly over the years to ensure that highly flammable gamba grass – which burns three times as hot as native grasses and can render savanna burning projects ineligible – does not take hold in Arnhem Land.

This year proved to be challenging from the outset for a number of reasons; from heatwaves and reduced rainfall to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, 2020 offered both regular and additional challenges to overcome. Thanks to the ongoing commitment and dedication of our team, Demed Adjumarllarl rangers were able to adapt to the circumstances and rise to the challenge, managing to implement preseason on-ground, aerial and asset protection burns as planned.

Throughout 2020, the Adjumarllarl ranger team consisted of five members. The team dedicated over 2,000 hours to execute our fire management plan including the following highlights:

Sacred sites

During the consultation process, Traditional Owners identify sacred sites with restricted access. Adjumarllarl acknowledges and respects the direction received and works with Traditional Owners to share knowledge of fire management to preserve and protect these sacred areas. Traditional Owners are provided with matches and training on how to burn safely in areas where access is prohibited due to cultural protocols. This collaboration enables the ongoing protection of sacred sites and allows Traditional Owners to continue caring for their land.

Protecting communities

With more than a dozen homelands within the Adjumarllarl project area, an important part of preseason burning includes fire breaking around homeland infrastructure to protect their assets including: solar power stations and bores, health clinics, schools, residential dwellings and other building structures and air strips.



Rangers chopper in to fight a wildfire.

Arafura Swamp Rangers — Supporting customary knowledge transfer



The Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation (ASRAC) comprises seven ranger groups that work with Traditional Owners to keep Indigenous knowledge strong and to make sure it is being used to look after country. Together these ranger groups look after the Arafura Swamp, its catchment and adjacent sea country. The ranger groups are: Donydji rangers, Mirrngandja rangers, Wurrungguyana rangers, Balmawirrey Dhipirri rangers, Gurruwiling rangers, Wanga Djakamirr rangers and Dhupuwamirri rangers. The Arafura Swamp rangers are currently consulting on a proposed new IPA covering 14,000 km² which includes the Arafura Swamp – a vast wetland surrounded by a catchment extending from Castlereagh Bay to the upper reaches of the Goyder and Glyde Rivers.

An important component of ASRAC's annual fire management program is to assist in opportunities for the transfer of customary knowledge around fire and fire practices. In 2020, ASRAC rangers collaborated with the Ramingining School to deliver a range of cultural activities that supported intergenerational learning. Ramingining School students were involved in practical on-ground burning through the Learning on Country (LOC) program, under the guidance of experienced

rangers. ASRAC rangers talked to students about the importance of practicing right way fire, with students able to partake in burning around the Dhabla area, putting what they learnt into practice.

ASRAC supported camps at Malyangarnak and Djilpin, where Traditional Owners and family gathered to share knowledge on fire and undertake early dry season burning. Students at Ramingining School were also able to learn about traditional fire practice, with a demonstration on how to make fire with fire sticks by senior ranger and fire ecologist Otto Campion.

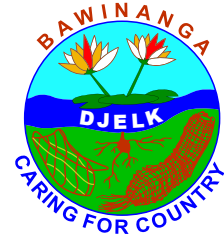
In October, ASRAC also held its Monitoring and Evaluation Mala (meeting). Landowners, elders, and the community got together on country to discuss how ASRAC was performing in addressing the priorities for country including right way fire. Conversations focused on whether people felt fire management was improving or not as a result of ASRAC's work. Although areas for improvement were identified, overall Traditional Owners felt that ASRAC is doing good work with fire, and is positively contributing to meeting objectives of plentiful bush tucker, habitat for animals, knowledge sharing, cultural obligation, and carbon abatement.



Children are taught how to light fires using 'bush drip torches' during Learning on Country activities.

Bawinanga Rangers

—Investing in Maningrida youth



Fires burning along the coast in the Djelk IPA. Photo courtesy of Bawinanga.



Graduates of the internship program Grestina Wilson and Cedric Ankin, and Learning on Country students learning to use backpack leaf blowers.

Bawinanga rangers are pioneers of Australia's Indigenous land management movement. Formed by Traditional Owners in the early 1990s in response to growing environmental concerns such as feral animals, invasive weeds and wildfire, for nearly 30 years Bawinanga rangers have worked to keep their land and sea country in west Arnhem Land healthy. Rangers are based in the community of Maningrida and service an area of over 10,000 km², which includes more than 30 family-based outstation communities.

Bawinanga were early leaders in developing pathways to employment for young people wishing to work with the ranger program, through offering work-based internships and initiating Australia's very first Learning on Country program, in partnership with Maningrida School.

Over the years, more than two dozen youth from the Maningrida community have graduated as rangers through Bawinanga's internship program, with many of them going on to have successful careers in land and cultural heritage management. Bawinanga remains steadfastly committed to investing in young people in our community.

In 2020, Bawinanga was proud to support Grestina Wilson and Cedric Ankin, previously interns in the Bawinanga Ranger Internship Program, to graduate

as fully certified rangers. Grestina became a ranger because she wanted to follow in her Dad's footsteps. *"The best part of the job is going out on Country, doing pre burns, going out with LOC, camping and looking for animals. I love going out bush with the ranger ladies and I enjoy working alongside the ranger men. I also enjoy doing our biosecurity checks and animal health reports."*

Completing a ranger traineeship takes a year. Over that time, the intern is taught the skills required as a ranger through a program of informal on-the-job and accredited training. Interns are supported and mentored by the ranger manager, coordinators, senior rangers and the LOC coordinator, who discuss each intern's progress and make decisions about when they are ready to learn new skills and take on more responsibility in their roles. Grestina and Cedric are now permanent members of the Bawinanga ranger team and, thanks to the experience gained throughout their internships, they are ready and able to commence early dry season burning activities come the 2021 fire season.

Grestina says her goal is to be a ranger for as long as she can. *"I have learnt a heap of new skills from LOC and rangers. I have done different training that allows me to know how to work in the bush with rangers. I am very happy to get the chance to...now transition into a full-time ranger."*



Jawoyn Rangers – Hotter weather but a strong year



An aerial shot shows Jawoyn rangers during a wildfire suppression campaign.

Jawoyn rangers have been caring for country, by incorporating customary values and culture with the latest in scientific practice, since the late 1990s. Operating out of Jawoyn Association headquarters in Katherine, Jawoyn rangers manage 16,000 km² of country including part of the west Arnhem Land plateau – stone and gorge country that contains one of the world's largest and most significant bodies of rock art.

In early March 2020, Jawoyn rangers ran a series of fire planning meetings at Barunga, Wugular, Manyallaluk, Kybrook and Katherine. A total of 42 Jawoyn Traditional Owners participated in these meetings.

Soon after, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a range of restrictions on travel between Katherine and Arnhem Land, which required a re-examination of the year's planned activities. Working closely with ALFA, Jawoyn developed the necessary management plans to enable us to implement our 2020 Fire Strategy. There was a lot of paperwork involved and creativity needed to be able to respond to the situation.

During the period where Aboriginal Land Trusts were 'locked down' it was extremely challenging to achieve fire management objectives. The focus shifted primarily to aerial burning, relying on staff who were outside of the quarantine zones. Once the quarantine was lifted, rangers were able to swing into action – getting people out on the ground (and in the air) to conduct burning operations.

In communities with limited employment opportunities, the WALFA project is providing highly valued training and employment for people. That employment brings money directly into the communities and further associated benefits. People are proud to be involved in the project. Elders are proud and happy to see their young people looking after country.

While the co-benefits of the WALFA project continue to deliver strong cultural, economic and social outcomes, it is still possible to achieve greater involvement from Traditional Owners. In 2021, Jawoyn will be aiming to improve community consultations – involving more people and finding out more about their needs and expectations from the project.

Mimal Rangers

—A new tool to manage wildfire



The Mimal Land Management area sits at the geographic centre of Arnhem Land. Mimal country is made up of many different ecosystems – from grassy plains, rock country, woodlands and forest to freshwater country. The main communities and homelands in the area include Bulman, Weemol and Barrapunta (Emu Springs). Mimal are currently being supported by the Federal Government to establish a new IPA that will cover over 18,000 km² in south-central Arnhem Land.

Mimal was administered by the Northern Land Council (NLC) for many years, however Traditional Owners expressed a desire to create their own company, operated under local Indigenous management. Mimal's journey to independence is inherently linked to their involvement in the WALFA project, as it allowed Traditional Owners to use income generated through the fire project to fund a separate incorporation and autonomy. In October 2017, Mimal Land Management celebrated a new chapter as a group with control over its own land, working toward a clear vision for Mimal people, country and culture.

In response to growing demands on personnel and resources due to increased wildfires, Mimal decided to develop a risk assessment tool to assist in making strategic and operational decisions related to wildfire management. The tool recognises that wildfire risk will

vary across the landscape of Mimal's project area, and one way for Mimal to better understand this is to map patches of unburnt land and assess the wildfire risk of each patch.

Using the principle that the risk of wildfire to the landscape is a product of the likelihood (probability) of a wildfire starting, and the expected impact (consequence) if that wildfire starts, the assessment method can then be applied to each 'island' or patch of unburnt country.

Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), staff and rangers are also able to look at some of the other useful information that can be added to local Indigenous knowledge to assess risk, such as:

- What has already burnt this year? (fire scar mapping, NAFI, fine-scale mapping or other satellite imagery)
- What are the fuel loads? (time since last burnt)
- What normally happens? (fire history)
- Road access and assets (topographic maps)
- Vegetation/fuel type (vegetation maps, satellite imagery)

The wildfire risk assessment matrix proved to be a useful decision-making tool for Mimal, and in coming years will be made available to other ranger groups.

Mimal rangers work a fire line, blowing embers back into burned ground and removing fallen branches and logs that may reignite the fire.



Yugul Mangi Rangers and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers (SEALFA) — A solid year across all activities



Above: Rangers participate in training to learn to use and clean a Raindance aerial incendiary machine.
Left: Cool burning with a drip torch.



The South East Arnhem Land IPA is jointly managed by the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi rangers with the Northern Land Council (NLC), based at Ngukurr and Numbulwar respectively and administered by the NLC. The rangers work on behalf of Traditional Owners of the Ritharrngu, Rembarrnga, Ngandi, Ngalakgan, Warndarrang, Yugul and Nunggubuyu peoples whose country is situated in south-east Arnhem Land.

The SEAL IPA covers an area of 18,199 km² on the western edge of the Gulf of Carpentaria in the Northern Territory. With a history of strong local leadership within both groups, the rangers have thrived, remaining focused on the vision of their elders and founders. Fire management is a major focus of the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi rangers' work.

Rangers implemented an extensive early dry season burning program from April to July. This included on-

ground burning by foot and roadside, track burning by vehicle and aerial prescribed burning. Rangers and staff noted that some areas were difficult to burn, due to some large areas being burnt in 2019 and a below average wet season limiting grass growth.

A huge effort was put towards securing assets prior to the commencement of aerial burning. Rangers ensured firebreaks were installed and protective burning was undertaken around 22 outstation communities to protect infrastructure.

Aerial prescribed burning was undertaken over 16 days from April to July 2020 by both ranger groups. Due to some operational limitations with COVID-19 travel restrictions, rangers were able to liaise with neighbours at the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to assist with undertaking an aerial burn of the boundary area with Wongalara Station.

Warddeken Rangers — A new generation of fire managers



Warddeken Land Management assist Nawarddeken Traditional Owners in the protection and management of their country, combining customary ecological knowledge with contemporary science. The Warddeken IPA covers approximately 14,000 km² and includes seven outstation communities and a range of important habitats supporting numerous species of flora and fauna, many of which are rare and endemic to the Arnhem Land escarpment region.

Rangers work from bases at Mamardawerre, Manmoyi and Kabulwarnamyo homelands, offering the only ongoing employment in these extremely remote communities.

Numerous rangers working with Warddeken studied customary fire management under the tutelage of Nawarddeken professors such as the late Bardayal Nadjamerrek, Jimmy Kalariya and Ruby Bilidja. Through the development of the WALFA project in the late 90s and early 2000s, Warddeken was central to an extensive process of documenting linguistic and customary ecological knowledge related to fire. Through this, many of our rangers were exposed to the specialised knowledge systems around how to manage country with fire; not just at a landscape scale,

but the nuanced knowledge and techniques of using fire for the management of for example, mankung (native bees), ngurrurdu (emu) and kunj (kangaroos).

Today, these rangers are themselves leaders within Warddeken's workforce, and are committed to teaching a younger generation of Nawarddeken Traditional Owners the knowledge and skills handed down to them by our venerable professors.

Unfortunately, plans to engage young Traditional Owners from right across the IPA were impacted by COVID-19 and associated restrictions on movement and travel. However, despite this, Warddeken supported numerous young rangers to participate in early dry season burning activities for the first time. This included a record number of young daluk (women) undertaking prescribed aerial burning and partaking in wildfire suppression campaigns.

2020 again presented Warddeken with an intense period of late dry season wildfire activity. The Warddeken team rose to the challenge, with 45 wildfires suppressed through active campaigns, amounting to a total of 4802 personnel hours.



Clockwise from top left: A group shot during wildfire suppression training at Mamardawerre ranger base; Tahna Girrabul directs burning operations across her mother country for the very first time; Stacey Nayidwana during rock art protection burning.

Yirralka Rangers

— More experienced and better resourced



Maintaining equipment is key to being fire ready. Yirralka rangers sharpen and service chainsaws and leaf blowers in preparation for the year's fire season.



Left: New equipment including quad bikes have greatly improved Yirralka's capacity to fight wildfires. Right: Rangers during asset protection burns at a homeland community inside the Laynhapuy IPA.

The Yirralka rangers represent the Yolngu Traditional Owners of north-east Arnhem Land, and were established in 2003. Yirralka rangers manage the land and sea in the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area, which extends from Gove Peninsula to Blue Mud Bay and covers over 11,000 km² of land and 480 km of coastline.

For residents of the 14 homeland communities within the Laynhapuy IPA, Yirralka rangers provide sustained opportunities for meaningful employment, and ranger positions are highly sought after. The Yirralka rangers currently employ 50 permanent Yolngu staff who are based across all 14 homelands.

As the newest ranger group to partner with ALFA, Yirralka have focused on developing the capacity of rangers to deliver across all elements of our fire management program. In lead up to the 2020 fire season, Yirralka rangers held a workshop at Buymarr homeland, offering space for reflections on the past year's fire management, to identify responsibilities and expectations in the upcoming season and to provide training and familiarisation with fire management equipment. Mark Desailly from ALFA was present and contributed to the workshop, leading training in blower and drip torch maintenance, as well as incendiary machine use.

This year, Yirralka was better resourced to implement our fire management activities. New vehicles in the fleet led to more rangers being able to travel out on country and access more areas to burn, improving the scope of fine-scale ground burning efforts throughout the Laynhapuy IPA. With helicopter access difficult with the dense vegetation of north-east Arnhem Land, to increase fire suppression capabilities, equipment upgrades to our quad bikes were completed for the 2020 season. Four quads gained purpose built front and back aluminium baskets for carrying equipment into remote locations.

In 2020, despite challenges due to lack of staff experience, limited grass growth from low rainfall during the wet season, and large fires scars from the previous year, rangers managed to overcome the obstacles presented to deliver good results in APB activities.

In mid-September, rangers partnered with the LOC program to participate in Galtha Rom (teaching of law), an important annual cultural event. In preparation for this event, rangers burnt a flood plain that children would traverse as part of the Galtha. This was performed to rid the area of mosquitoes and to open access.

Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue	5,001,834	5,440,690
Other income	35,687	97,441
Grant Funding	(463,563)	(3,170,847)
Subcontracting costs	(4,883,611)	(2,656,849)
Other expenses	(257,190)	(217,346)
Employee benefits expense	(279,927)	(229,310)
Hire fees	(29,811)	(41,256)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(20,770)	(22,009)
(Loss) before income tax	(897,351)	(799,486)
Income tax expense	-	-
(Loss) / profit from continuing operations	(897,351)	(799,486)
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax	-	-
Total comprehensive (loss) for the year	(897,351)	(799,486)

Statement of Financial Position

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Assets		
<i>Current assets</i>		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,395,019	1,460,849
Trade and other receivables	207,831	259,123
Total current assets	1,602,850	1,719,972
<i>Non-current assets</i>		
Plant and equipment	83,082	103,852
Total non-current assets	83,082	103,852
Total assets	1,685,932	1,823,824
Liabilities		
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Trade and other payables	132,063	477,683
Employee benefits	29,769	19,418
Other liabilities	2,206,921	1,112,193
Total current liabilities	2,368,753	1,609,294
Total liabilities	2,368,753	1,609,294
Net (liabilities) / assets	(682,821)	214,530
Equity		
Retained earnings / (accumulated losses)	(682,821)	214,530
Total equity	(682,821)	214,530


Directors' Declaration

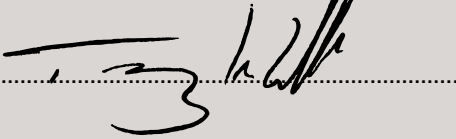
The directors of the registered entity have determined that the Company is not a reporting entity and that these special purpose financial statements should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 2 of the financial statements.

The directors of the registered entity declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 5 to 16, are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and:
 - (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards; and
 - (b) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of is in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 2 to the financial statements.
2. In the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable with the continuing support of creditors.

This declaration is made in accordance with subs 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Director 

Director 

Dated this 30th day of November 2020

Independent Audit Report to the members of ALFA (NT) Limited

Report on the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of ALFA (NT) Limited (the "Company"), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion the financial report of ALFA (NT) Limited has been prepared in accordance with Div 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1, and Div 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those

standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, which has been given to the directors of the Company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors at the same time of the auditor's report.

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

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist ALFA (NT) Limited to comply with the

financial reporting provisions of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our audit opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information obtained at the date of this auditor's report is included in the Directors' Report, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed on the other information obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably

be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis of opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion of the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the director's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease or continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we may identify during our audit.



PERKS AUDIT PTY LTD
84 Smith Street
Darwin, NT 0800

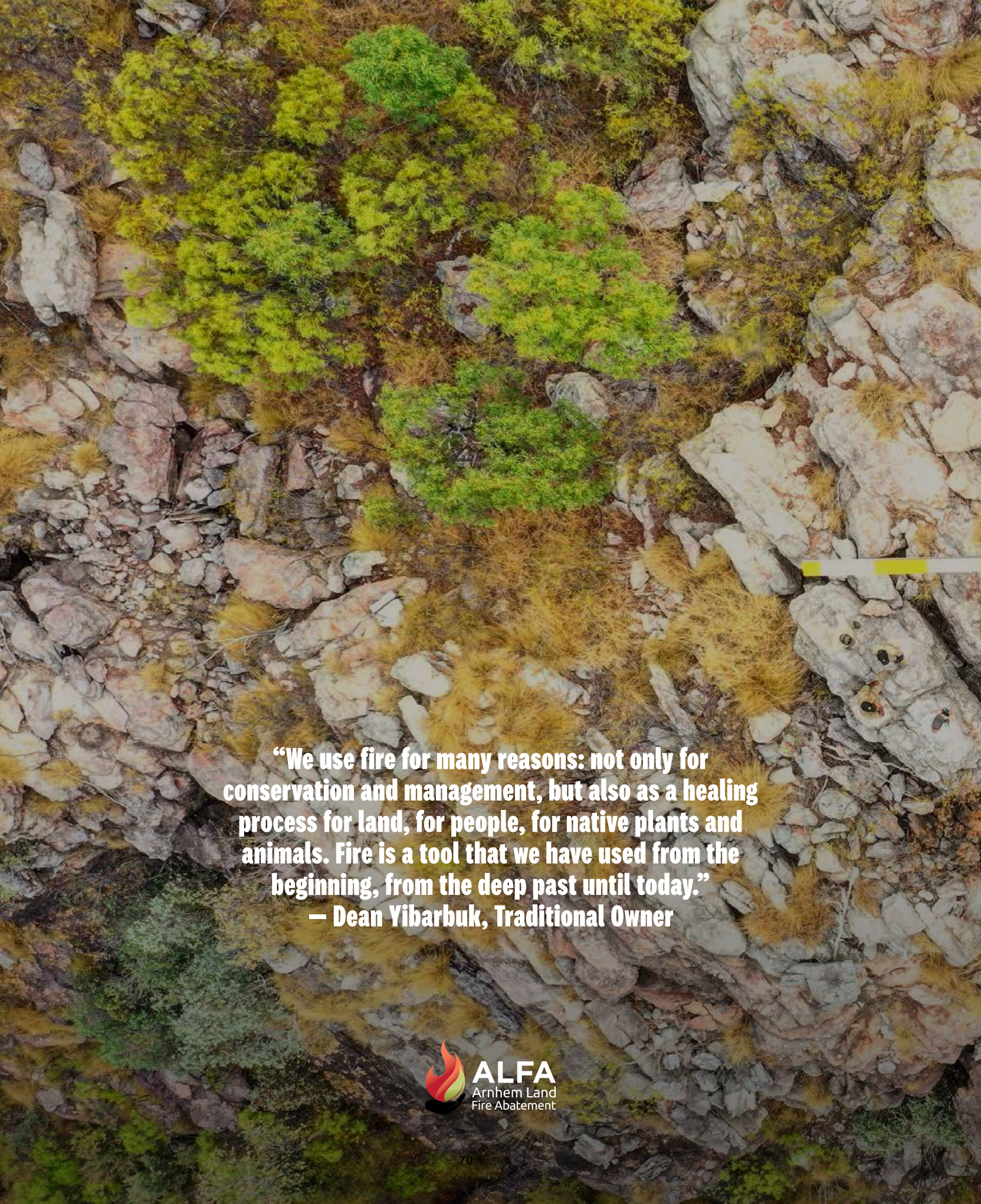


PETER J HILL
Director
Registered Company
Auditor

Dated this 30th day of November 2020



A Warddeken ranger in the midst of the difficult task of installing a mineral earth fire break through thick woodland scrub. Photo courtesy of Warddeken.

An aerial photograph of a rocky, hilly landscape. The terrain is covered with a mix of green shrubs and yellowish-brown grasses. A yellow and black striped surveying pole is visible on the right side of the image. The text is overlaid in the lower-middle section of the image.

“We use fire for many reasons: not only for conservation and management, but also as a healing process for land, for people, for native plants and animals. Fire is a tool that we have used from the beginning, from the deep past until today.”
— Dean Yibarbuk, Traditional Owner