



TOO PRECIOUS TO LOSE CARING FOR REMOTE AUSTRALIA

The Greens' plan to double the number of Indigenous rangers in a decade

Indigenous Ranger programs help care for Australia's natural resources, while also improving the economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Greens' plan will double the number of indigenous rangers in Australia within a decade.

693 Indigenous Rangers currently care for 1.5 million square kilometres of land and sea country. But it's not enough. Much of Australia's fragile remote area land is effectively unmanaged or under-managed.

> DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF RANGERS WITHIN A DECADE

In May 2013 Australia had 693 Indigenous Rangers - 44 in NSW, 144 in Queensland, 282 in the NT, 121 in WA, 70 in SA, 17 in Victoria and 14 in Tasmania. The Government promised 730 Indigenous Ranger numbers by 2015. This is good, but no match for the scale of work needed to care for our fragile remote areas. The Greens will provide an additional \$100 million over 4 years from 1 July 2013 to:

- **Double the number of Indigenous Rangers within a decade.** Our investment will be in addition to the current Government commitment.
- **Provide administrative and operational support for the increase in Rangers.** The increase in Indigenous Ranger numbers will be accompanied by administrative and operational support to ensure the new Indigenous Rangers are able to do the work they've been hired to do.
- **Lengthen Indigenous Ranger contracts to 10 years, provided outcomes continue to be met.**
- **Support more women Indigenous Rangers** with programs that specifically develop the skills and confidence of women to participate in ranger programs.

> HOW INDIGENOUS RANGERS CARE FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

Indigenous Rangers do conservation work, achieving results through a combination of western science and Indigenous traditional knowledge. They work on matters defined under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as "matters of national environmental significance", for example threatened species, world and national heritage places, and internationally important wetlands.

There are Indigenous Rangers fighting weeds and invasive grasses, dealing with threats to our wildlife like feral animals and marine debris, managing threatened species like the Flatback Turtle, Greater Bilby, Black-footed Rock-wallaby, and Gouldian Finch, doing fire management and reducing carbon emissions from wildfires, and managing cultural sites.

> HOW THE INDIGENOUS RANGER PROGRAM CARES FOR PEOPLE

Because Indigenous Rangers work in remote areas, people from remote communities where there is high unemployment and poverty are now getting jobs and training. Many Indigenous Rangers are studying conservation and land management at Certificate level.

In addition, the work involved in being an Indigenous Ranger is increasing exercise levels, reducing obesity, diabetes, renal disease, cardio-vascular disease and stress, and increasing levels of confidence, self-esteem and hope. The socio-economic impacts that flow on from conservation and cultural activities



benefit Indigenous Rangers, their families and communities, as well as reducing government expenditure on welfare payments.

> A LONG TERM INVESTMENT

Fixing threats like weeds and feral animals needs consistent effort by trained people over a long period.

A 10 year contract period will enable long term planning for conservation outcomes.

In turn, growth in new Ranger programs will be able to be properly managed. More partnership projects will be able to be developed. For example, Indigenous Rangers who worked on the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project made a deal with gas company, Conoco Philips which paid the Traditional Owners money to reduce their carbon emissions each year by fire management.

> MORE WOMEN RANGERS

Currently, most Indigenous Rangers are men. Encourage participation from women will support their employment.

Cultural reasons can prevent men from entering women's sacred areas and vice versa. Great participation by women can also ensure that conservation work is undertaken at women's sacred sites where men are not permitted to enter.

Central Australia recently got its first Women's Indigenous Rangers group. The Tjuwanpa Women Rangers are spraying for weeds and will soon be dealing with feral cats on the land for which they are responsible and hold traditional knowledge.

The Australian Greens would support programs that specifically develop the skills and confidence of women to participate in ranger programs.