NORTHERN TERRITORY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2024 Awards 20 November

Territory Natural Resource Management

www.territorynrm.org.au

Award winner

Collaborative Research for Natural Resource Management Award

Arid Zone Monitoring Project

The Arid Zone Monitoring (AZM) Project integrates Indigenous ecological knowledge with scientific analysis to monitor biodiversity across Australia's deserts, which have experienced significant biodiversity loss due to invasive species and altered fire regimes.

By collating and analysing previously archived data, this project for the first time, has provided insights into species ranges and habitat preferences of >30 species, along with trends and guidance to assist in future monitoring. The AZM database includes approximately 49,000 animal detections from 15,000 surveys at more than 5,300 unique sites, leading to the development of a new integrated data collection template that has now been adopted as the national standard. Overall, the AZM Project collated data from 44 Indigenous groups, NGOs, government agencies and researchers, from NT, SA and WA deserts.

The Project was collaboratively developed over two years through consultations with partners to identify available data and priorities, with formalised collaborations via two-way research agreements. Integrating Indigenous languages, ecological knowledge, sign-based monitoring, and evidence-based data collection has enabled this project to assess how elusive desert species are responding to a rapidly changing world.

Yukultji Napangati sharing tracking knowledge with ecologist Rachel Paltridge

Collaborative Research for Natural Resource Management Award

Award finalist

Anindilyakwa Land Council Land & Sea Rangers

The research represents the first comprehensive assessment of Groote Eylandt's coral reefs, initiated through collaboration between the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and rangers focusing on coral bleaching and climate change impacts. It has involved the collection of various coral and water samples for analysis, along with the use of a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) for multiple reef surveys. The project aims to address knowledge gaps related to the ecological and cultural value of the sea country in the Groote Archipelago and to support the development of a Makarda (Sea) Country Management Plan (SCMP) led by the Anindilyakwa people.

Covering over 6000 m² of coral reef, the study revealed significant variability in coral cover and through this work the first formally documented coral bleaching was reported, attracting international interest.

The study has led to the discovery of potential new species being found, prompting a partnership with the Queensland Museum. This marks the first Western scientific documentation of coral reefs in the Gulf of Carpentaria, of over 6000 Australian reefs studies since 1980.

Coral reefs provide the essential services of supporting fish stocks and provide buffering capacity from waves. The knowledge from this project is fundamental to support the SCMP. Understanding where coral reefs are is necessary to support their management, particularly with intensifying impacts of climate change.

Ranger Mel filtering water samples ready for analysis

Award winner

Resilient & Sustainable Enterprise Award

Big Rivers Conservation & Land Management

Big Rivers Conservation & Land Management (BRCLM) is a small, privately-run rural land management contracting business based in Katherine, led by local entrepreneur Joey Buckerfield. Since its inception in 2019, BRCLM, formerly known as Big Rivers Weed Management, has focused on delivering best practice weed management and strategic weed control activities, leveraging Joey's experience in Top End habitat and wildlife management. BRCLM works closely with land managers to understand their priorities, specific weed challenges, providing tailored services that align with their priorities for sustainable landscape management.

BRCLM has effectively filled an empty niche in the weed management sector by integrating knowledge of land management, fire, weed, herbivore, and human behaviour with practical application. As a key collaborator in the recently completed five-year weed spread prevention project in the Kakadu and West Arnhem region, BRCLM has made significant contributions to preventing gamba grass spread along road networks near Kakadu National Park, including the Arnhem and Kakadu Highways.

BRCLM have understood the need for implementation of strategic planning, data collection and timely service delivery while being mindful of seasonal constraints and budget limitations. Committed to delivering sustainable practices of weed management, BRCLM also aims to reduce herbicide output where possible.

The enterprise actively participates in knowledge sharing initiatives, furthering awareness and best practices across the region. Through these efforts, BRCLM is recognised and valued by stakeholders including the Northern Territory Government for its contributions to effective weed management.

Joey's weed spraying signage

Resilient & Sustainable Enterprise Award

Award finalist

Curtin Springs

Curtin Springs is a successful and long term diversified pastoral and tourism business, located 360 km southwest of Alice Springs managed by the Severin family. The business which employs up to 20 staff, combines the region's pioneering heritage with its natural landscape while champions sustainable agricultural practices.

At Curtin Springs Station, beef production goes hand in hand with conservative efforts and is operating as a million-acre wildlife corridor that protects ecological value.

The Curtin Springs Wayside Inn adds another dimension to the business, and long-term diversification into tourism, reduces dependence on pastoral production, balancing financial pressures and enhancing resilience to environmental, financial, and economic challenges. Additionally, Curtin Springs Paper is a distinctive initiative where native grasses are crafted into handmade paper, showcasing the station's commitment to creativity and sustainability.

Curtin Springs adopts practices such as long-term low stocking rates, longitudinal herd management, strategic feral animal and fire management, and solar-powered bore systems, all contributing to sustainable land use and natural resource management.

Curtin Springs has made significant strides in improving sustainability across its operations, products, and services.

Curtin Springs Wayside Inn

Award winner

Next Generation Natural Resource Management Award

Dripstone Middle School

The Dripstone Middle School's Science Fair, themed "Sustainability for Survival," took place on 15 August 2024, engaging approximately 500 students in a comprehensive, hands-on learning experience focused on innovative solutions to environmental challenges. Each team developed a research question aligned with the theme using the STEM approach, resulting in around 170 projects that encouraged critical thinking and sustainable solutions.

Some notable projects presented during the fair included; natural perfumes made from plant-based ingredients, 3D-printed toys from recycled plastic, natural sunscreen lotions, sustainable fishing louvers and research on vertical farming, along with sustainable agricultural techniques.

The Dripstone Science Fair provided an excellent platform for students to showcase their scientific skills to the wider community, attracting approximately 350 attendees. Collaborations with Radicle NT, Casuarina Senior College, and Power and Water also contributed to the fair with their own experiments, further enriching the event.

These projects have promoted environmental awareness and provided practical, real-world solutions to mitigate global warming and environmental degradation while instilling a strong commitment to conservation and sustainable living in both students and the broader community.

Students showcasing their scientific skills

Next Generation Natural Resource Management Award

Award finalist

The Essington School

Essington School has successfully implemented an extensive revegetation project across their school grounds in recent years, planting a diverse range of native plants. This project enhanced local greening, cooling, habitat and biodiversity corridors while also supporting the development of an edible garden, an outdoor classroom, and shade for playgrounds and walkways.

The project was led by the Parents and Friends of Essington and based on a culture of community engagement and the spirit of volunteering. Students actively participated in hands-on activities and were awarded house points to encourage their involvement and ownership.

The school has conducted multiple native planting days which were promoted through Landcare NT. The project also engaged with the City of Darwin's Gardens for Wildlife program, which donated plants, featured their efforts in the program newsletter and visited the gardens. Additionally, the project engaged with local nursery, Territory Native Plants, which provided valuable advice, plants and ongoing support.

Overall, this initiative not only promotes environmental education and nature play but also strengthens community bonds and enhances the ecological value of the school grounds.

Community planting session at the Essington School

Award winner

Ranger of the Year Award

Shaun Evans, li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers

Shaun Evans, a Marra Yanyuwa man and Cultural Advisor for the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit, has made significant contributions over the last 12 months to various key initiatives aimed at preserving and managing cultural and natural resources. He has played a critical role in several key projects such as the Marra Sea Country Mapping and Governance, the Yanyuwa Sea Country Planning, and the Marranbala Land and Sea Country Plan, while also assisting in the development of the Namultja Aboriginal Corporation.

Shaun's support in documenting sacred sites in Marra and Yanyuwa Sea Country are enhancing legal protections to the sites and facilitating the repatriation of vital cultural materials. His collaborations with Parks and Wildlife (NT), Parks Australia (Commonwealth), and Charles Darwin University have resulted in innovative integrated management approaches, including new Traditional Owners-led governance and monitoring programs. Additionally, he is an active member of various committees for the Borroloola region.

As a passionate leader, Shaun is committed to strengthening the connection between culture, Country, and law, ensuring these values are preserved for future generations. Further with his remarkable ability to integrate Western scientific archaeology with cultural knowledge, Shaun ensures a holistic understanding of heritage that safeguard it for future generations.

Shaun Evans presenting at the Australian Marine Sciences Association on collaborative research in Marra & Yanyuwa Sea Country with James Cook and Charles Darwin Universities

Ranger of the Year Award

Award finalist

Tristin Maroney Lami Lami, Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation

Tristin Maroney Lami Lami has been with Jawoyn Rangers for the past 5 years. In the past 12 months, he worked as a senior ranger and has recently been promoted to the Ranger Coordinator position, where he is excelling as a leader and a mentor. He has worked in the jointly managed Nitmiluk National Park and the Jawoyn estate managing and leading teams, running culture camps and assisting in numerous land management activites.

Tristin exemplifies a positive leadership by prioritising his culture in his work, which helps the ranger team and casual workers to stay connected to their culture and the land. Tristin shows many skills encouraging best land management practices, as well as communicating in language and sharing his knowledge with others.

Tristin has successfully completed the Northern Territory Government's First Circles Leadership program for Aboriginal Territorians. He has a great rapport with his colleagues and he is exemplifying both his role as a ranger and his commitment to inspiring the local Jawoyn community. His leadership goes away from work and is also a leader in his community serving as the Coach for the Garrak Bombers football team.

Tristin effectively manages various ranger responsibilities, and is a representative for his Ranger group and being selected as a representative on boards, such as Arnhem Land Fire Abatement director and more recently, chair. Tristin is a young leader and will continue to excel in his ranger/land and water management career.

Tristin meeting the Administrator of the Northern Territory & the Roper Gulf Shire Mayor at Barunga Festival 2024

Award winner

Indigenous Natural Resource Management Award

Reading the Country Project Team; North & South Tanami IPAs & Central Land Council

Yitaki Maninjaku Ngurungka (YMN), or "Reading the Country," is a culturally based animal tracking training framework developed by Warlpiri expert trackers, educators and rangers from the North and South Tanami IPAs, supported by a small project team. It comprises of activities to empower Yapa (Aboriginal people) to teach and learn the knowledge and skills to track animals expertly. By blending traditional knowledge with modern teaching methods, YMN helps to ensure cultural tracking skills are transferred to future generations and utilised in land management practices.

During the pilot project, the Reading the Country (RTC) team trialled various tracking methods and resources with expert trackers, Rangers, and high school students, refining them through focused discussions, experimentation and observations to develop the framework now utilised for land management in schools and by Rangers from across the IPAs.

The YMN framework prioritises Warlpiri ways of knowing while recognising new contexts and learning methods which empower Yapa to lead the teaching and development of new trackers. Further, it demonstrates the value of Yapa knowledge in natural resource management, and its contribution to both ecological and cultural conservation.

The RTC project and team have conducted workshops at various conferences and gained national attention whilst being featured in numerous publications.

The majority of the Reading the Country Team at a train & the trainer workshop led by Kuyu Pungu (expert trackers)

Indigenous Natural Resource Management Award

Award finalist

Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation

The Mimal Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) spans 18,300 km2 in south-central Arnhem Land. Their Nature Capital Project aims for environmental improvements that align with ecological, cultural, and economic objectives, benefiting Country whilst also enhancing the livelihoods and cultural heritage of the land owners involved.

The project is divided into three key initiatives:

1. Healthy Waters Project, which protects wetlands and educates the community on native species restoration;
2. Space Cows Project, which involves tagging and tracking buffalo to improve land management; and
3. Pig Project, utilising camera traps to monitor feral pig behaviour and appropriately assess populations.

The project focuses on increasing landowners' understanding of ecosystems, as successful decision-making relies on active community engagement and support.

The aim of the project is to have long term ecological, environmental and economic impacts, as well as facilitating community empowerment and leadership. Moving forward, Mimal further aim to increase carbon sequestration, sustainable land use, enhance climate resilience, and provide long-term stability for local communities.

Mimal Buffalo Herds

Award finalist

Indigenous Natural Resource Management Award

Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation

The Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation (ASRAC) is dedicated to managing land and sea in central Arnhem Land. More than 60 rangers are involved in the ranger program, which includes weed and fire management, monitoring and evaluation and supporting learning on Country. ASRAC prioritises the enhancement of ranger skills in safeguarding the country by integrating traditional knowledge with Western scientific methods. Since 2014, ASRAC has partnered with Bush Heritage to foster capacity building in planning, governance, conservation, and monitoring.

ASRAC's ranger program engage in a variety of land management practices, including crocodile farm operations, managing invasive weeds, fire management planning, and understanding the impacts of feral herbivores. At the heart of these activities, ASRAC emphasise training and skills development to build ranger confidence and promote sustainable careers.

Benefits of ASRAC's ranger program reach beyond the local team and extend into the community. Supported by Bush Heritage principles, ASRAC has emerged as a leader in monitoring and evaluation and provides a framework that guides operations and fosters a common language among stakeholders in Central Arnhem Land, facilitating important discussions on land management issues and solutions.

ASRAC rangers actively engage in conversations about Country, representing their organization at various workshops, forums and conferences, locally, regionally and internationally. They have supported their long-term goals of governance and caring for Country by making important contributions to improve regional outcomes for fire, weed, and feral herbivore conversations and programs.

ARSAC Stop Gamba Grass Initiative

Environment & Conservation Award

Award winner

Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group – Gamba Grass Adopt-a-Spot

Casuarina Coastal Reserve (CCR) is the most visited protected area in the Northern Territory, with 1.4 million visitors annually. However, the infestation of gamba grass within the Reserve poses significant risks to public safety and the environment by causing habitat disturbance and increasing fire risk. The Casuarina Coastal Reserve Gamba Grass Adopt a Spot Project (CCRGGAaS) is led by volunteers, and uses best practice weed management guidelines to control gamba grass.

The project's leadership team has established valuable partnerships with NT Parks and Wildlife and the Weed Management Branch, strengthening governance and operational relationships with Rangers and park managers to ensure effective project management. The project has become a key component of a broader, multifaceted strategy for tackling Gamba Grass in the CCR.

Monitoring surveys indicated a significant decrease in Gamba Grass abundance in areas where volunteers were active, and the success of CCRGGAaS has inspired a similar volunteer-led initiative in Litchfield National Park, demonstrating the project's impact and influence. The project's leaders have also developed educational materials, and outreach efforts continue to disseminate valuable insights, ensuring the project's success informs and inspires future initiatives.

The project's learnings and outcomes were showcased at the 10th World Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration, highlighting the effective collaboration between government agencies and community volunteers. The project has also received recognition in Parliament and endorsements from other land managers, reinforcing its status as a model for best-practice volunteer-led weed management.

Gamba grass mapping exercise – Casuarina Coastal Reserve

Environment & Conservation Award

Award winner

Land For Wildlife – Central Australia

Established in 2022 by the Alice Springs Town Council, the Land for Wildlife (LFW) and Garden for Wildlife (GFW) programs in Central Australia focus on protecting and restoring wildlife habitat through community engagement and collaboration. These volunteer-driven initiatives connect urban and rural landholders, promoting biodiversity conservation by encouraging to revegetate native plants, manage invasive species, and create wildlife corridors throughout the MacDonnell Ranges Bioregion.

LFW and GFW play a crucial role in uniting diverse landholders and volunteers across Central Australia, equipping them with practical knowledge on effective land management techniques. The ability to connect like-minded individuals is key to the success of LFW and GFW.

In 2024, LFW and GFW registered and advised nine new properties, expanding the network of wildlife-friendly areas. Moreover, they conducted pollination and propagation workshops, Buffel-busting events and wildflower property tours which have raised awareness and promoted hands-on environmental action contributing to long-term habitat restoration.

In addition to direct interactions through events and workshops, the programs effectively share their successes and educational resources through media engagement and social media outreach, enhancing public awareness and community involvement in biodiversity conservation.

Volunteers learn how to undertake a plant transect to monitor floral change over time

Award finalist

Environment & Conservation Award

Landcare NT

Throughout 2024, the 'Native Flora, Fauna and Biodiversity Science Education Program' has successfully engaged primary schools in the greater Darwin Region through interactive sessions focussed on local, unique flora and fauna.

14 schools have participated in the program so far, reaching over 385 students resulting in 770 hours engagement, with another 11 schools scheduled before year-end. The program aims to ignite curiosity about the unique biodiversity of the Top End and emphasise the importance of conservation. Sessions are led by local experts and include hands-on activities that enhance learning through real-world context.

This community-led, collaborative initiative provides a structured STEAM education program for primary schools, offering a timely and organised solution to meet their requests.

Students reported gaining new knowledge about native flora and fauna, while teachers highlighted the value of expert resources and support that enhanced their teaching of biological sciences.

Program partners include Landcare NT, Territory Native Plants, and Darwin Wildlife Sanctuary, with support from NT Herbarium and PowerWater, as well as funding from the City of Darwin, City of Palmerston, Inspired NT, and Litchfield Council.

This program has fostered a strong peer-support network among partners, enhancing mutual understanding, and cultivating a shared passion for nurturing the next generation of local environmental stewards.

Botanist Donna Lewis delivering a flora education to Nightcliff Primary

Farmers & Fishers Sustainability Award

Award winner

Fiona McBean, Old Cameron Downs

Old Cameron Downs has successfully implemented a range of effective management practices aimed at the sustainable use and protection of natural resources, particularly water and soil. Key among these practices are the installation of contour banks and leaky weirs which slow runoff during rainfall, promote water infiltration and significantly reduce erosion. These strategies not only recharge aquifers and maintain a consistent water supply during dry seasons but also enhance soil health and biodiversity by improving habitats for native flora and fauna, ultimately contributing to improved carbon sequestration.

Productivity within the enterprise has significantly benefited from enhanced management and regenerative agriculture practices and have doubled its carrying capacity over the past eight years.

In collaboration with the Mulloon Institute and Territory Natural Resource Management, Old Cameron Downs hosted a landscape rehydration bootcamp, facilitating hands-on learning for participants and connect them with industry experts. Further, a Northern Territory mentee program was established to support ongoing implementation of landscape rehydration techniques. By fostering a collaborative learning environment, the program enhances knowledge sharing and promotes best practices in landscape management throughout the region.

Mulloon Institute landscape planner pointing out water flows on property

Award finalist

Farmers & Fishers Sustainability Award

Thuan Nguyen, Hieu Thao Produce

Thuan Nguyen at Hieu Thao Produce has implemented several sustainable agricultural practices that significantly enhance the protection of natural resources. By regularly conducting soil and sap tests, he optimises fertiliser inputs to improve nutrient efficiency and minimise environmental impacts, while using naturally derived bio stimulants to support soil health and plant resilience.

His strategic use of water through moisture monitoring optimises water use efficiency, which is crucial in the challenging climate of Marrakai. Furthermore, integration of beneficial insects for pest control reduces the need for excessive pesticide applications creating a more resilient growing environment. These practices not only boost productivity but also contribute to higher profitability through more efficient resource use.

In addition to his farming innovations, Thuan actively promotes knowledge exchange within the local agricultural community through workshops and discussions where he emphasises the importance of sustainability in agriculture, inspiring others to adopt similar sustainable methods. This collective effort not only improves the environmental footprint of the industry but also strengthens community ties through shared learning and cooperation.

Cucumbers growing at Hieu Thao Produce

Farmers & Fishers Sustainability Award

Award finalist

Dionne Walsh, Range IQ

Dionne Walsh has been a vital supporter of grazing businesses in the Northern Territory for nearly two decades, emphasising the importance of realistic assessments of carrying capacity of land and effective management practices.

Dionne has been committed to training a new generation of cattle graziers in sustainable resource management, focusing on grass, soil, and water conservation. Her efforts include trials on woody vegetation burning, cell grazing, and wet season pasture rest, as well as soil sampling to assess carbon levels. She has also been ground truthing satellite imagery to enhance its applicability for grazing management.

Based on her experience, she further highlights the necessity of understanding stocking rates to avoid financial strain, culling underperforming cattle, and creating a feed budget.

In 2014, Dionne Walsh pioneered the calculation of carbon production by extensive beef herds at Alexandria, leading efforts to measure and reduce carbon emissions in beef production.

Dionne's dedication has been essential in promoting sustainable practices within the pastoral industry, and her hands-on experience and expertise at RangeIQ have significantly influenced sustainable grazing methods, equipping future managers with the knowledge and skills to foster a more sustainable pastoral industry.

Dionne Walsh in the field

Award winner

Best Collaboration in Natural Resource Management Award

Digital Women Ranger Program & Network in collaboration with Digital Women Ranger Research Team

The Digital Women Ranger (DIWR) program formed in 2022, after Indigenous women rangers called for a culturally safe way to collect, use and share data so they could make decisions to care for Country. DIWR is a collaborative initiative lead by the Digital Boss Lady Governance Committee, made from representatives from participating ranger groups. Warddeken, Jawoyn, Larrakia, Mimal, ASRAC, Kakadu Indigenous women rangers and supporting organisations including the Strong Women for Healthy Country network, Telstra Foundation, Territory NRM, NAILSMA, National Environmental Science Program's Resilient Landscapes Hub, Charles Darwin University and CSIRO, are working together to empower Indigenous women rangers by enhancing their digital skills and confidence to monitor significant species and places on Country.

Indigenous women rangers and researchers have co-designed the DIWR program, which includes contextualised training modules on digital technologies and applied workshops to build these skills. Participants earn digital badges after successful completion of modules, these badges are co-verified by senior cultural and technical authorities. 103 digital badges have been awarded to women rangers across the region to date.

Women rangers are now applying their skills in NRM to determine the occurrence of culturally significant species, monitor changes in significant places on Country, and support management strategies in the region.

The DIWR program will continue for the next three years, employing researches, on-Country digital mentors and Local Elders to enhance program growth.

Warddeken rangers using digital tools to assess the health of significant waterholes

Best Collaboration in Natural Resource Management Award

Award finalist

Malak Malak Traditional Owners & Rangers in collaboration with Charles Darwin University

The Large Toothed Sawfish project represents a 12-year collaboration between Charles Darwin University (CDU) and the Malak Malak Rangers/Traditional Owners. In 2012, the Traditional Owners made a significant discovery of sawfish in a billabong, prompting this unique initiative. The project aims to record, and rescue stranded Large Toothed Sawfish from billabongs and relocate them back to the Daly River, thereby ensuring their survival and enhancing their gene pool. Notably, this is the only known research and relocation effort for this critically endangered species being conducted worldwide. Since 2012, the project has successfully rescued and relocated 115 Large Toothed Sawfish.

Both CDU and the Malak Malak Rangers benefit from this collaboration in several meaningful ways. CDU collects DNA samples and biological data on the Large Toothed Sawfish, contributing to a significant database focused on this critically endangered species' gene pool.

The Malak Malak Rangers and Traditional Owners gain valuable involvement in this scientific study, enhancing their understanding of environmental changes through long-term research. Additionally, Ranger exchanges during the project provide neighbouring Rangers with experience and skills to share within their communities, fostering a broader dissemination of knowledge and awareness.

Driven by Traditional Owners, the project has garnered substantial support and promotion from the Daly River community, reflecting its importance and positive impact. CDU and the Malak Malak Rangers are committed to collaborating closely to ensure the continued success and sustainability of this project moving forward.

CDU, Malak Malak, Bulgul & Kenbi Rangers during the 2024 relocation effort

Award finalist

Best Collaboration in Natural Resource Management Award

Landcare NT in collaboration with Territory Native Plants

Resulting from requests from local schools and educators to cater for in class native flora, fauna, biodiversity and sustainability sessions, the 'Native Flora, Fauna and Biodiversity Science Education Program' has been created for the Greater Darwin Region. Project partners Landcare NT, Territory Native Plants, and Darwin Wildlife Sanctuary, with support from NT Herbarium and PowerWater have designed a collaborative approach to delivering a 'templated' STEAM education programs. This approach has streamlined communication and coordination with schools, ensuring consistent content delivery while valuing the expertise of community organisations.

Semester 1, 2024 saw 14 schools participate in the program, reaching over 385 students resulting in 770 hours of engagement, with further 11 schools scheduled before year-end. The program aims to ignite curiosity about the unique biodiversity of the Top End and emphasize the importance of conservation. Sessions are led by local experts and include hands-on activities that enhance learning through real-world context.

This program has offered a strong peer-support network among partners, enhancing the understanding of each other's expertise, and cultivating a shared passion for nurturing the next generation of local environmental stewards. Through their shared efforts, funding to continue project delivery has been secured for 2025.

Native flora education session in action, plant ID practical, Wagaman Primary School

Lifetime Achievement Award

Award winner

Jerry Jangala Patrick, Northern Tanami IPA, Central Land Council

Jerry Jangala is a prolific teacher and a key elder who has significantly contributed to the development and management of the Northern Tanami Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) for over 20 years. As the last surviving male master tracker in Central Australia, Jerry has dedicated much of his recent years to the Reading the Country Project, and implementing Yapa (Aboriginal) teachers in fostering two-way learning. His knowledge and life experience has driven him to innovative and adaptive teaching methods inspiring younger generations to continue to engage in traditional knowledge.

Jerry's leadership in developing the Reading the Country Animal Tracking Training Framework has created a far-reaching legacy for him. Featuring several main themes, it supports the sharing and documentation of deep traditional and ecological knowledge of animals. He introduced the concept of fast-tracked learning, leading the team to develop teaching activities based on traditional methods.

Jerry's work has inspired inter-cultural natural resource management by highlighting the depth of Indigenous ecological knowledge and practices and the importance of transferring this wisdom across generations. He is a vital leader, consistently ensuring that traditional knowledge remains accessible for future generations. Jerry is considered a role model and inspirational figure for Rangers through his actions and commitment.

Portrait of Jerry Jangala Patrick

Award finalist

Lifetime Achievement Award

Julie Roy, Northern Land Council

Julie Roy was born in Ngukurr and spent much of her childhood on an outstation where she learned from her elders. In 2001, Julie joined the Yugul Mangi Rangers where she has worked her way up to Assistant Ranger Coordinator. Julie has achieved much during her years as a Ranger, including being one of the few Indigenous Class I Fisheries Inspectors, considered a valued member of the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network, a director at Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project and an integral member of the Ngukurr Language Centre.

Julie inspires young people in Ngukurr through her extensive work in the Learning on Country Program, on-country camps, rock art surveys and language projects. Julie was instrumental during a collaboration with Macquarie University, Ngukurr Language Centre documenting flora and fauna located in the South East Arnhem Land IPA, and interpreting them into Indigenous languages. Julie's detailed knowledge of country has been instrumental in addressing environmental threats and progressing the implementation of IPA and work plans.

Julie's career and her strong leadership skills demonstrate that women play a vital role in caring for Country and contributing significantly to both on-ground conservation efforts and decision-making processes. Julie is an inspirational, strong woman who has practiced daily commitment to caring for country for the past 23 years!

Julie Roy at the PULiiMA Conference

Lifetime Achievement Award

Award finalist

Graeme Sawyer, Biodiversity Watch

During his 44 years in Darwin, Graeme Sawyer has become a prominent advocate for Top End biodiversity. Originally a teacher, he actively promotes wildlife awareness and engages with the local community in conservation efforts. Graeme co-founded the Australian Association for Environmental Education (NT Branch), producing educational materials and involving students in research activities and, the FrogWatch raising awareness of frog species and their threats while also discovering new species. With the arrival of cane toads in 2004, he mobilised community efforts to combat their spread through ToadBusts and has developed traps and strategies, for controlling toads in ecologically sensitive areas.

Further afield his research focuses on Darwin's larger reptiles such as monitors and Frilled-necked lizards, many of which are now listed as threatened. Graeme's research essential in guiding recovery efforts.

He regularly conducts volunteer-based 'Reptile Musters' surveys and raising public awareness. His recent projects involve collaboration with Wagaman primary school and Larrakia Rangers to monitor and provide education on reptile populations. Graeme's initiatives were successful in enhancing awareness and engaging the community in biodiversity protection in and around Darwin.

Graeme undertaking reptile research

Award winner

People's Choice Award

Anindilyakwa Land Council Land & Sea Rangers

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The study has led to the discovery of potential new species being found, prompting a partnership with the Queensland Museum. This marks the first Western scientific documentation of coral reefs in the Gulf of Carpentaria, of over 6000 Australian reefs studies since 1980.

Coral reefs provide the essential services of supporting fish stocks and provide buffering capacity from waves. The knowledge from this project is fundamental to support the SCMP. Understanding where coral reefs are is necessary to support their management, particularly with intensifying impacts of climate change.

Ranger Mel filtering water samples ready for analysis

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