



HEALTHY COUNTRY PLAN 2017–2027



The Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation Healthy Country Plan 2017–2027 was created from community workshops at Bulman and Weemol in 2016 and 2017.

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We also acknowledge the support of other partner organisations and look forward to working closely with them throughout the life of this plan.



Above: Mimal Ranger Base 13 September 2017.

Cover: Passing cultural knowledge, a scene from the Dow ceremony held at Bluewater in June 2016. The Dow is a public ceremony that teaches about looking after country with fire. The ceremony had not been performed for about 30 years until Mimal Land Management provided the support for elders to bring it back.

Back: Looking downstream from the crossing on Kalidjariny River at Bonanza Crossing.

Right: Reuben Takumba, painted door, Mimal Ranger base.



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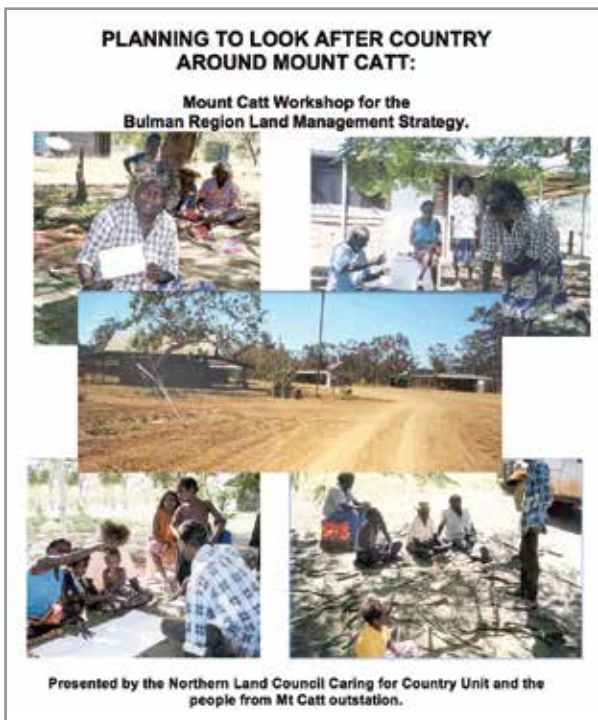
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LOOKING FORWARD FROM A LONG HISTORY OF CARING FOR COUNTRY



Above: Leaders of land management planning back in 2001.



This is not the first time Rembarrnga and Dalabon landowners from Bulman and Weemol have undertaken a process of land management planning.

In 1998 Terry Mahney brought the techniques of participatory planning from Central Australia and between 1998 and 2001 a series of planning workshops using these methods produced clear directions for future land management in south central Arnhem Land.

Booklets were produced from workshops at Weemol, Bawurrbarnda and Mt Catt and these were to be built into a Bulman Region Land Management Strategy.

Things were different around Bulman and Weemol back then. Local government was truly local, through the Bulman and Weemol Community Council. Today local government decisions are made at a great distance.

By 2001 the Bulman and Weemol Community Council had made caring for country activities a core part of work for Council's CDEP participants. This support enabled the establishment of the Mimal Rangers with their own identity and workplans. That kind of local government support through today's CDP no longer exists and Regional Council support today is strictly fee -for-service for other than basic municipal services within town boundaries.

In year 2000 there were seven occupied outstations serviced by the Gulin Gulin Resource Centre. Today the only permanently occupied outstation is Mt Catt (Bamirdakkorlo) and governments no longer see people living on their country in a positive way.

Three years ago the last people were forced to leave Bawurrbarnda outstation when ants destroyed the power system. Attempts to get the power system repaired have been rejected, preventing plans to reoccupy the site as a ranger base and "working outstation".

While many things have changed, the planning booklets produced between 1998 and 2001 show that landowners concerns are very much still the same. But sadly in nearly 20 years the Mimal Rangers and landowners have been unable to get the support they needed to achieve their objectives.

Today Mimal Rangers are making a new start under local indigenous management and the Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation. This 10 year plan has been produced using the same important principles that underpinned the participatory planning 20 years ago.

Healthy Country Planning is about empowering local people to come together and express a vision for the future, decide on the things (assets) that are important to them, what are the threats to these assets, how to deal with threats and seize opportunities.

To this we add a commitment to monitoring and measuring our achievements so that in 10 years time we can count many successes in achieving the goals that our elders first stated nearly 20 years ago.



Above: In 2015 we came together at Weemol to form our own company for land management. More than 30 people attended to become foundation members. The picture shows some of the foundation members who identified which clans would be invited to be part of Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation. From left: Vanessa Murray, Lydia Lawrence, Maggie Tukumba, Norrie Martin, Robert Redford, Dudley Lawrence, Kenneth Bununjoa, John Dalywater and Mario Redford.

OUR CONCERNS FROM 1998–2001

Here are some of the issues that were highlighted by landowners in the 1998–2001 consultations:

WATER PLACES: looking after rivers, springs, billabongs and fishing places. We need training to check water quality and do monitoring. We need water testing equipment. We need to check for water weeds and problems with fish.

ROCK ART: fencing to stop buffalo and pigs rubbing against paintings; rangers and traditional owners working together and receiving training in recording and looking after rock art.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE: training for rangers from elders about traditional knowledge of bush animals and plants.

SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE: training in science way of surveying and identifying animals, including rare animals.

FIRE MANAGEMENT: early burning to look after country.

ILLEGAL ACCESS: we need to be able to deal with illegal poaching and smuggling of plants and wildlife; we need training in law enforcement and surveillance so rangers can check that balanda have permits.

TOURISM: support landowner plans for small-scale tourism at Bawurrbarnda.

EROSION: look after roads and tracks for erosion.

BUFFALO AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL: rangers to work with buffalo company to manage buffalo impact, fencing areas to manage cattle and buffalo; control feral animals such as pigs, donkeys and buffalo where they are messing up country; okay to shoot donkeys, buffalo and pigs for pet meat but not horses. Don't kill and waste animals.

PIGS: identifying priority areas of pig impact, rangers having guns and licences to shoot pigs, fencing some pig damage areas, trap pigs.

COUNTRY ACCESS: helping people visit country that is remote and difficult to visit is an important part of land management.

Our Healthy Country Planning in 2016 and 2017 found that our people are still focused on these things.

Some of our goals have been achieved but many others have not progressed as fast as landowners want. Some, like having powers to control illegal access, have not progressed at all.

What is different about our planning in 2017 is that now we have local control of our own company and the resources to get the work done.

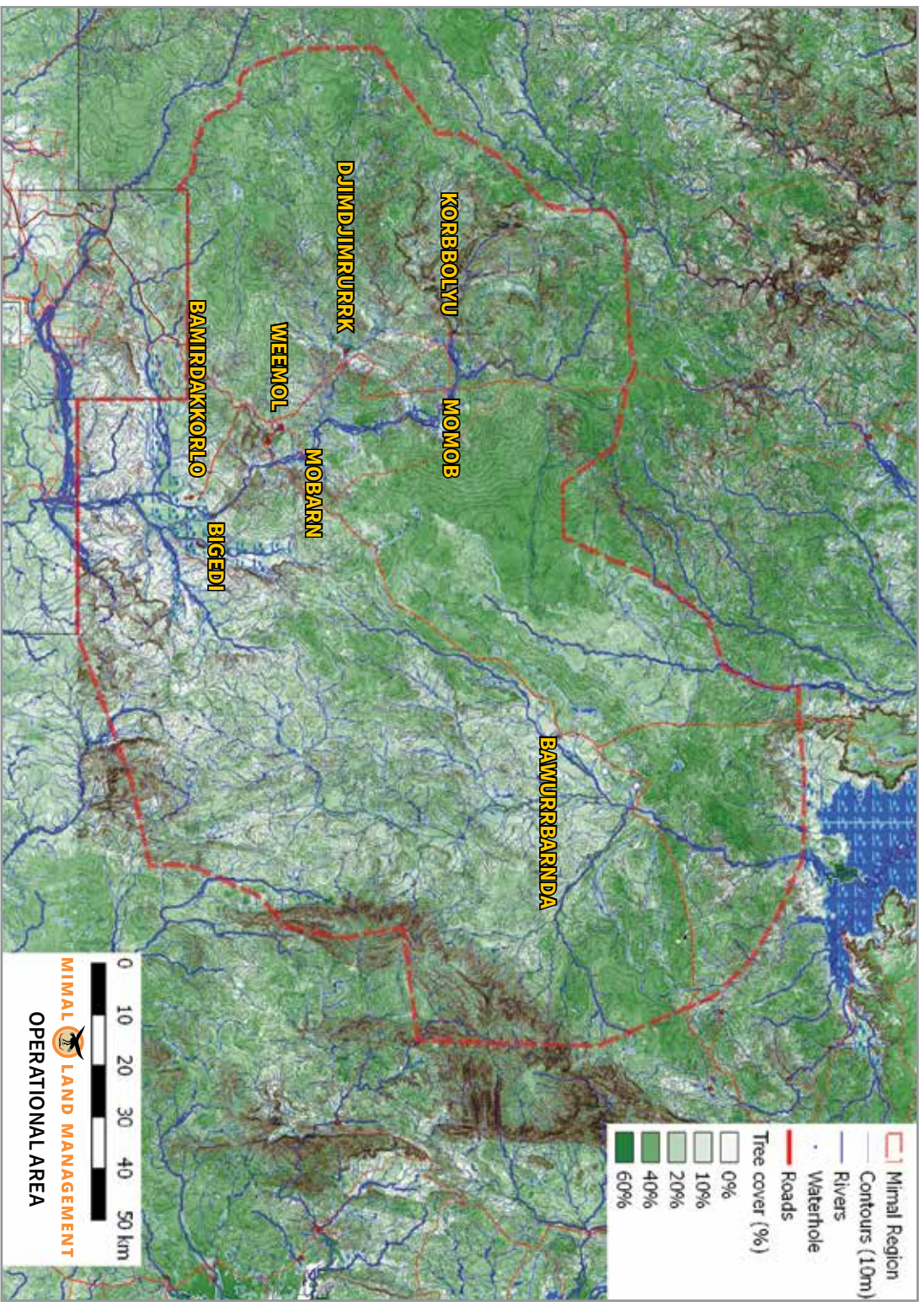


FIGURE 1: Mimal Land Management Operational Area. The boundary of the operational area is based on a combination of clan mapping and the Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Ltd sub-contract area for which Mimal is responsible. Early in 2015 the founding members of Mimal Land Management began by listing clans and their estates for which Mimal would offer land management support and which also would define eligibility to become a corporation member. The list of clans and estates can be found on page 68. This operational boundary also defines the corporation area for its ORC registration and is found on Page 19 of the Rule Book. Mimal and neighbouring ranger groups deliberately share overlapping boundaries, reflecting both customary connections and the need for integrated land management at the landscape scale. (Map by Ben Lewis)

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MIMAL, LANDOWNERS AND THE COMMUNITY IS THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR FUTURE

The members of Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation control the management of the corporation, through election of the corporation's nine directors.

Mimal is there for more than just our members. Mimal is working for all traditional owners, for all clans and for all the people who live at Bulman, Weemol and outstations.

That is why listening to and talking with all these people is at the centre of how we will operate as we go forward.

In building our Healthy Country Plan we have held community meetings and talked to individuals and families. After a year of consultations we printed a 12 page booklet to outline what people had been telling us. We shared more than 200 copies of our story at Bulman, Weemol, Beswick, Barunga and Katherine.

We believe this completed Mimal Healthy Country Plan 2017–2027 reflects what our people want Mimal to do for them in the next 10 years. We also are committed to listening to community feedback as we implement the plan and making changes when they are needed.

As rangers and as the board of directors we don't control country or make decisions about what happens on it — those decisions belong to landowners and custodians.

We are there to provide advice from the balanda and bininj toolboxes and help deliver strategies for actions that keep country and culture healthy.

As we turn our strategies into actions through the rangers work plans we have to always remember to make sure that we are doing what the people who talk for country want.

And to keep the company strong we have to remember that Mimal has a rule book that says what it can and cannot do as an Aboriginal Corporation under Australian law.



Above: We started making our Healthy Country Plan at Bulman in May 2016.

The rule book that we made when we set up the corporation says it has been set up to:

- create jobs in land management for our people;
- help our people get the right skills for these jobs through training and education;
- operate a ranger program to assist our people manage the land;
- give advice to landowners wanting to set up businesses;
- help landowners manage fire and weeds and feral animals; and
- raise funds to carry out these jobs.

Mimal Land Management is a charity and not-for-profit organisation. It is not allowed to pay money to individuals except for wages and services. Mimal is not a royalty-paying organisation — landowners benefit from Mimal helping keep their country and culture healthy.

At the start of our 2017–2027 Healthy Country Plan 110 landowners from our clans are members of Mimal Land Management Corporation.

WHY WE NEED A HEALTHY COUNTRY PLAN

Our healthy country plan is a story to share so that:

- the directors and CEO of Mimal Land Management know what landowners would like the company to do;
- landowners know what the company will be doing and what it is not doing;
- Governments and other sources of funding will feel confident to give us funding and help us in other ways too because they can see we have clear and strong directions for land management;
- we can find partners to work with us (Shire, buffalo company, schools) in making country healthy; and
- we have a clear idea of how to build our capacity to deliver on what we call goals, objectives and strategies for protecting our assets.

KEY WORDS IN OUR PLAN

Mimal Land Management draws on both balanda and bininj knowledge and that includes using some words from balanda language that are important in understanding how to read our plan.

Our healthy country plan will keep us focused on the things that are really important for country and culture. In our plan we call these things our **ASSETS**.

Our healthy country planning process has identified eight assets that the corporation will target over the next 10 years. Using **INDICATORS** identified by landowners we have summarised the health of these assets as well as the principal **THREATS** and the present **TRENDS** in asset health.

How we will improve the health of assets will be described by reference to **GOALS, OBJECTIVES** and **STRATEGIES** embedded in **PROJECTS**.

A **GOAL** is how we want our assets to be, and is a statement of changes that will indicate a positive change in the health ranking of assets.

An **OBJECTIVE** is what we want to do about our threats, as part of reaching our goal and is a statement of the things needed to be done in order to see a change in the threat ranking and asset health ranking.

A **STRATEGY** is a group of actions we will do to help us reach our objectives and then goals.

PROJECTS, which are based around strategies, are how we work towards goals, objectives and strategies. It is at the project level that Mimal develops budgets and at which the effectiveness of our strategies in achieving objectives and goals is measured, predicted and reviewed.

We are committed to developing a comprehensive **MONITORING & EVALUATION (M&E)** plan — a strategy to be completed in 2019. This plan will be based on two-way knowledge — indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge and scientific knowledge.

IMPLEMENTATION and **EFFECTIVENESS** M&E of projects will inform adaptive management adjustments which must be accommodated within budgetary constraints.

We will measure project outcomes against our goals for each asset. We want to know what difference our work has made to the health status for each of our assets over the 10 year life of this plan. This is called **STATUS MONITORING**. In year six of our plan we will **REVIEW** the progress of our plan towards improved asset health.

In the project section of this plan, we have proposed M&E indicators, methods and metrics of implementation and effectiveness for each strategy. We will collect data to report on these annually and biennially and for incorporation into our comprehensive M&E plan.

Our **VISION** is what we want our plan to have achieved by 2027. Our vision (next page) came from the people who joined in our first planning meetings at Bulman in May 2016.





OUR VISION FOR 2027

People are on their country with families, living on the outstations and working to take care of country.

Rangers are supporting and working with outstation people and other landowners.

Strong community relationships make sure we have good access to country, to jobs and to the right services and facilities.

Country is clean and safe. Springs and creeks flow strong and clean and there is plenty of bush tucker. In the right season we find the plants and animals that have always been there.

We have strong ceremony, language, dance and song connecting families, country and culture. Our families are happy again and people are sharing knowledge with younger generations who have two-way education about culture and country.

Our rock art and cultural places are protected and we are looking after the resting places of our ancestors.

Businesses on country are successful, sustainable, and providing jobs for our people. Visitors and business partners respect traditional owners and our rules protecting culture and country.

OUR HEALTHY COUNTRY ASSETS

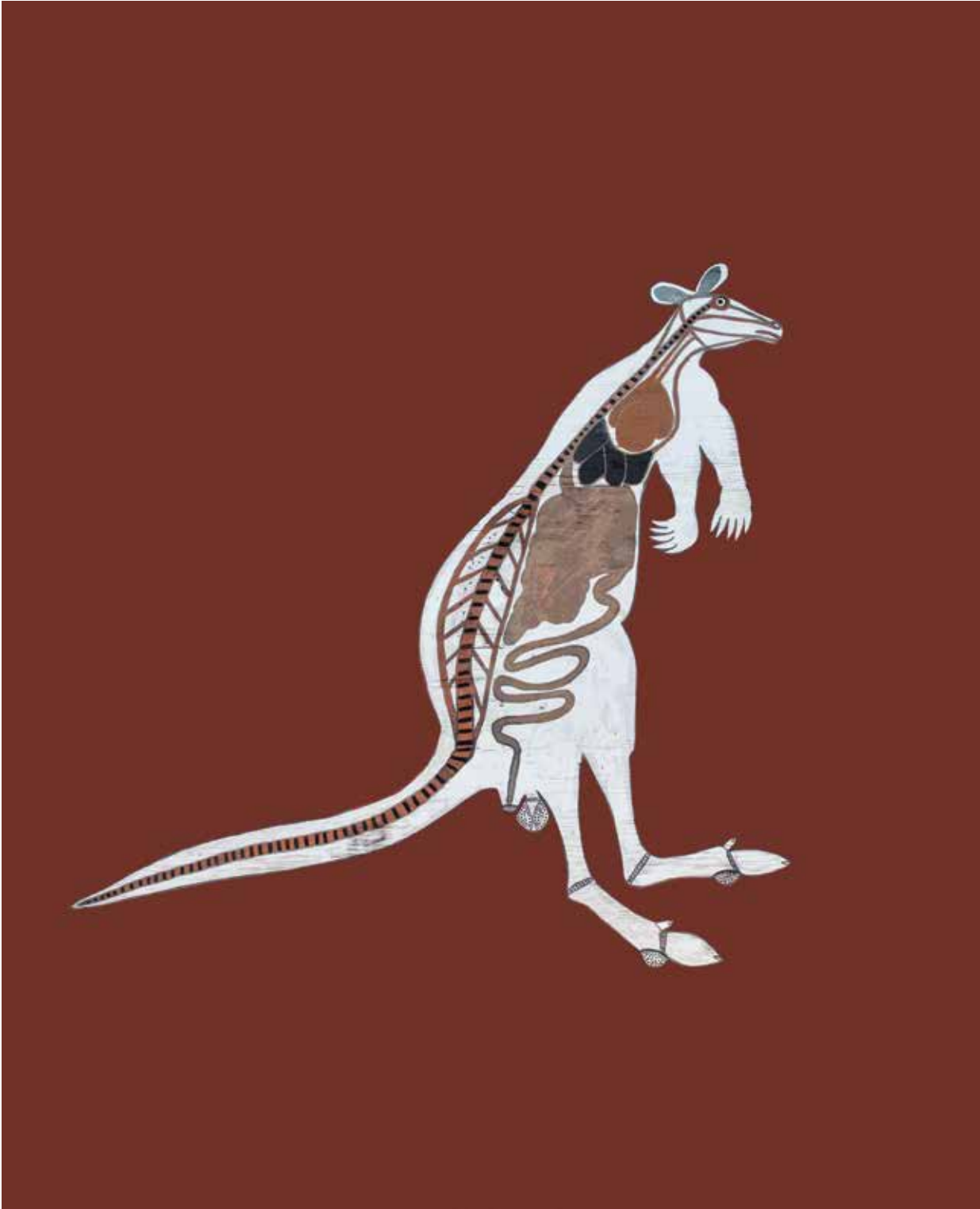


A SUMMARY OF ASSET HEALTH, TRENDS, THREATS AND PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

ASSET	HEALTH	TREND	PRIORITY	MAIN THREATS NOW, OR IN THE FUTURE
1. Our capacity to deliver good management	Good	Up	Less urgent priority	Leadership failures, training goals not being achieved, communication breakdown, falling landowner support, failing to achieve our goals and adapt to changing circumstances
2. Our people and our culture	Fair	Down	Highest priority	Loss of respect and knowledge (gambling and drugs, lack of jobs/boredom, balanda cultural invasion, lack of two-way education at school)
3. Our culture of good fire management	Good	Up	Less urgent priority	Poor communications and consultations, training goals not being achieved, difficulty in accessing country, lack of control over illegal entry
4. Our special places	Fair	Down	Highest priority	Buffalo and pigs make country sick and unsafe, access is difficult, loss of respect and knowledge, weeds and illegal entry
5. DJULA & WAH freshwater country	Fair	Down	Highest priority	Buffalo and pigs, weed invasion, erosion/siltation, nutrient overload, access problems for landowners
6. BERRHNO & MININYBURR woodland and forest	Good	Steady	High priority	Buffalo and pigs, weed invasion, erosion/siltation, nutrient overload, access problems for landowners
7. RUWURRNO & RORROBO plains country	Fair	Down	Highest priority	Weeds, feral animals (esp cats and pigs) erosion, wrong fire, illegal access
8. BADNO & NGALWAD rock country	Fair	Steady	High priority	Wildfire, cats, erosion, access difficulties for rangers and landowners

HOW TO READ THIS TABLE

HEALTH	ACTION REQUIRED	TREND	PRIORITY
Good	Some support needed to maintain it	Up	Less urgent priority
Fair	Needs very strong management action to deal with threats	Steady	Higher priority
		Down	Highest priority



Above: Kangaroo image by balang George Jangawanga, from a mural on ply salvaged from abandoned Bodeidei safari camp. Most of the old mural panels have been saved and are being stored at Weemol Ranger Base for a future visitor centre display.

Asset 1

OUR CAPACITY TO DELIVER GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT

GOAL 1

In 10 years MLMAC will have become the largest employer in Bulman and Weemol. Strong leadership and good governance will ensure all benchmarks for corporate performance are met. With increased engagement and support of landowners, we will have forged strong and productive partnerships. An effective and comprehensive training program will see our rangers fully equipped for their careers in land management.

INDICATORS OF HEALTHY CAPACITY TO DELIVER GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT

- Governance goals are being met and leadership is strong
- Landowner support is strong
- New jobs are being created
- Training goals are achieved
- Partnerships are being made and maintained
- Our story is being told
- We have a good plan and we follow it
- We adapt our plans to respond to change
- Performance monitoring is strong

BIGGEST THREATS

- Leadership failures
- Training goals not being achieved
- Communication breakdown
- Falling landowner support
- Failing to achieve our goals and adapt to changing circumstances



HEALTH GOOD

TREND UP

To be successful in making this plan work we need to be a strong corporation as we build our capacity to deliver good land management.

Mimal Land Management Corporation was incorporated in May 2015 and since then it has been very successful in getting Mimal ready to take on full control of all the programs that used to be run through the Northern Land Council.

When the NLC co-ordinator left Weemol early in 2016 and NLC rangers were sent home on stand-down, the Mimal directors decided it was time to step in to help get the ranger program going again and to start running our own ranger program under Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation. We helped NLC get their rangers back to work alongside our rangers and MLMAC has been successfully running the ranger programs ever since.

The health of Mimal Land Management is good and the directors aim to make Mimal a leader in indigenous land management.

Mimal has strong leadership in its nine directors and has employed experienced staff who share the vision of Mimal and landowners.

Mimal Land Management is opening up new areas of funding. We aim to balance funding from Government with funding from conservation and philanthropic non-government organisations and funding from fee-for-service contracts. Mimal values partnerships that can bring benefits to country and culture for the Dalabon and Rembarrnga landowners and community.

Mimal is committed to effective communication with landowners and community so it can keep that landowner support strong and growing stronger.

Mimal will measure its achievements against the goals that are set in this plan and be ready to adjust project management where changes are needed to stay on track.

At the top of Mimal's list of goals is creating more skilled and meaningful jobs on country and this will be a key measure of how healthy and strong our company capacity has become.

Sadly, some Aboriginal corporations lose direction and fail. Reasons for this include lack of strong leadership and not having a good plan and a process for monitoring if it is being put into action.

Developing and maintaining the right relationships and effective communications between directors and their Chief Executive Officers and Chief Financial Officers is critically important to the success of corporations.

To provide good governance, directors need to make sure they are regularly receiving all the right information about the business of their corporation.

Strong processes of communication amongst directors, senior staff and rangers will make Mimal stay on track.



Above and above right: in 2016 Mimal Land Management provided the support needed to bring back to life the Dow ceremony, a public ceremony for Dalabon and Rembarrnga people. The Dow, which had not been performed for 30 years, teaches young people about caring for country.



Above: Since 2016 Mimal has been supporting language conservation and the work of linguists like Nicholas Evans and elders Maggie Tukumba and Dudley Lawrence.



Children from the Gulin Gulin School contributed their ideas (below) to the Healthy Country Planning process at community meetings.

Below: In 2017 women led interview processes that have seen a big increase in numbers of women rangers.



Asset 2

OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE

GOAL 2:

In 2027 our people will be able to spend more time on country, outstations will have been reoccupied, we will hear more of our languages being spoken, more ceremonies will be happening each year and two-way knowledge education will be strong in the school and the community.

INDICATORS OF HEALTHY PEOPLE AND CULTURE

- More Dalabon and Rembarrnga languages being spoken
- Ceremonies are being held
- Jobs are increasing
- More people are visiting country
- More outstations occupied
- Family violence is going down
- Children are learning their cultural Identity and gaining cultural knowledge of places, plants and animals

BIGGEST THREATS

- Loss of respect and knowledge
- Gambling and drugs
- Lack of jobs/boredom
- Balanda cultural invasion
- Lack of two-way education at school

There are many things that are pushing down the health of our people and our culture.

At our meetings in Bulman and Weemol people said gambling and using drugs were hurting culture. Some said bullying is a problem at school.

Our use of our own languages is going down. Family violence is another problem.

But these are the problems — not really the threats that cause these problems.

To fix the problems we have to look at these threats.

- Lack of jobs
- Boredom
- Too much TV, facebook
- Ceremonies not happening like they should
- Problems getting to country
- No support for people to live on outstations
- No proper two-way system at the school that supports our knowledge system as well as mainstream education

In our section discussing threats and what to do about them we have grouped all these threats together and called the big threat **Loss of Respect and Knowledge**.

If we create more jobs, help people visit or live on country, support ceremonies and old people teaching language and get a good partnership with the school we can turn the trend for culture from going down to going up.

We still have people who can teach us the languages of this land — Dalabon and Rembarrnga. We must look after our “professors” and learn from them.

Mimal can support language and culture work. In 2017 Mimal paid for the Dalabon dictionary to be reprinted. We are distributing copies for our people who want to know more of the language of their land.



HEALTH FAIR

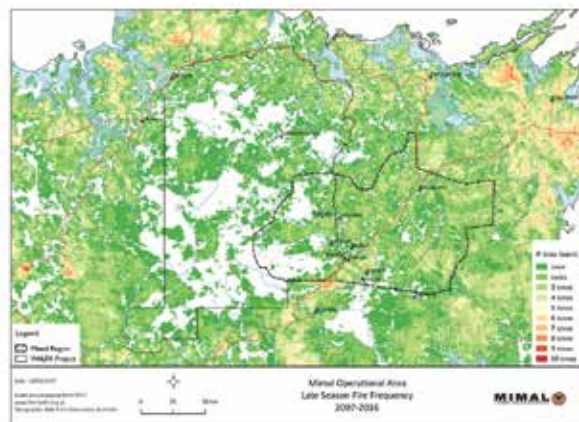
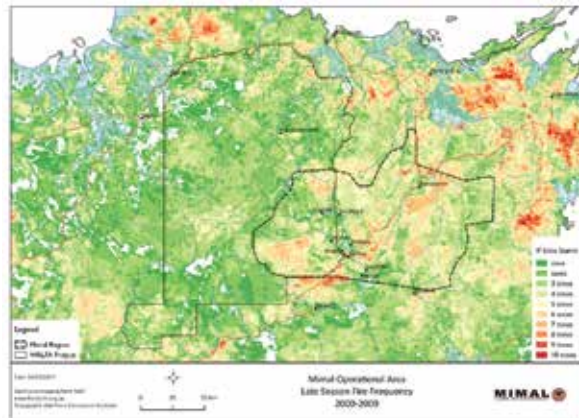
TREND DOWN



Above: Rangers stop a major wildfire in 2016. (photo Jonas Klein)

Right: The top map shows too much late wildfire happening in the 10 years to 2009. The bottom map shows a 10 year average to 2016 that demonstrates the success of Mimal’s fire management program in reducing late wildfire dramatically.

Below: Sitting with neighbours to plan dry season fire work creates successful fire management.



Asset 3

OUR CULTURE OF GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT

GOAL 3

Over the coming 10 years Mimal Rangers will continue to improve performance in fire management.

Our rangers, empowered through comprehensive training in two-toolbox fire management, will self-manage all aspects of fire management from remote sensing, fire planning and fire mapping to strategic early burning and wildfire suppression.

Across all habitat-type assets, monitoring will demonstrate that ecological health continues to be improved by our culture and practice of fire management.

INDICATORS OF A HEALTHY CULTURE OF GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT

- Rangers and landowners know the country
- Rangers achieve high two-way training levels
- All clans are consulted and support fire program
- Detailed fire plans are prepared and delivered
- Bad wildfire is suppressed
- Outcomes meet annual ALFA targets
- Young people are learning fire management
- Landowners are involved in the formal delivery of fire plan

BIGGEST THREATS

- Poor communications and consultations
- Training goals not being achieved
- Difficulty in accessing country
- Lack of control over illegal entry



HEALTH GOOD TREND UP



Photo: Jonas Klein

Fire is our strongest tool for land management.

Our old people have always used fire to keep country healthy — since the beginning.

But when our people moved off country onto stations and into missions, settlements and towns, fire began to go wrong.

Balanda came along and told us our traditional way of burning was wrong and we shouldn't be lighting fires at all.

Without people managing fire in the right way there was less early dry season cool burning and much more late dry season wildfire, destroying food and homes for animals and damaging plants that don't like too much fire.

But in the late 1990s we got together with our neighbours and we created a new way to go back to the old ways of burning to stop late wildfires.

Now we talk to landowners and then do a lot of early burning that uses up old fuel and sets up burned firebreaks on country. We use trucks and helicopters but we are following the old ways.

Our area once had the worst record of late hot fires but now we have changed it completely and country is becoming healthier from doing fire the right way. It is our strength but we can make it better and get more skills for our rangers in planning early burning.



Above: Feral animals and weeds had blocked the sacred Gulin Gulin Spring at Bulman where old people used to gather to plan ceremony. In 2016 djungkayi Kenneth Murray and rangers installed a cattle panel fence to keep out feral animals. They cleaned the spring and removed gmelina trees. Following the next wet season the spring started running more strongly.



When we make country healthy again, our ancestors are happy. —Kenneth Murray

Asset 4

OUR SPECIAL PLACES

GOAL 4

In 2027 sacred places will be actively protected, illegal access controlled and families will have improved access to their special places, which will be safe and clean.

INDICATORS OF HEALTHY SPECIAL PLACES

- Sacred places are protected and looked after by right people
- Special hunting and camping places are clean and safe
- Families spend more time in their special places, this makes ancestors happy and we have good weather.
- Illegal access is being controlled

BIGGEST THREATS

- Buffalo and pigs make country sick and unsafe
- Access is difficult
- Loss of respect and knowledge
- Weeds
- Illegal entry

We have many kinds of special places.

Some are places where we feel close to our old people who lived in these places for thousands of years. Families have places that have strong meaning for them and where they want to take their children to get that special feeling for country. We have our hunting and camping places.

These are our places and people who are not connected to that country should always ask and show respect for the landowners and their djungkayi.

We have sacred places. Some are places only men who have gone through ceremony can visit. Some are places special for women and many other sacred places are places where men, women and children can go — with proper respect — and feel the presence of the spirit ancestors where they put themselves in the landscape.

We have places with rock art that is sacred and restricted as well as rock art that everyone can look at. We have the places where our old people are buried — in our communities and also in the rock country.

Knowledge of these places is going down. Old people used to have places where they would go to talk to the country and make more animals breed up and fill up the country. This cultural practice has been lost.

Landowners and djungkayi can work with rangers and Mimal to help protect our special places and the knowledge that goes with them. Mimal will also try to help the right people visit and look after these places.

In 2017 we have started checking up on sacred sites with the right people — seeing if signs are there or need replacing. We are checking if there are places that need signs or need to be registered with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

Rangers can watch out for wrong people going onto special places — balanda pig shooters, tourists and even balanda who work in our communities who don't understand the importance of always asking and showing respect.





Above: Lake at Korbbolyu, one of our biggest labbalno.
Below: mid reaches of the Wilton River near Bigedi.



Above: Water is always changing, off the road to Mobarn, appeared during a big wet season only four years ago, drowning the dry country eucalypts. In 2016 the labbalno at Bokanaridj (below) dried up altogether, for the first time in memory.



Asset 5

DJULA & WAH

Freshwater country

GOAL 5

A changed herd management strategy agreed by stakeholders will have been implemented from 2021 and by 2027 a program of two-way monitoring of freshwater country health will demonstrate improved habitat for native species, better access for landowners and community members, who will again feel safe spending family time hunting and fishing in freshwater country.

INDICATORS OF HEALTHY DJULA & WAH

- Buffalo and pig damage is being reduced
- Burning is right
- Landowners are visiting more and feel safe on country
- Water is clean and clear
- Labbalno and other billabongs not being silted up
- Right water animals present, plentiful and fat at the right time of the year
- All the right bird species are present

BIGGEST THREATS

- Buffalo and pigs
- Weed invasion
- Erosion/siltation, nutrient overload
- Access problems for landowners



Photo Emma Ignjic

Our freshwater country is for families.

This is where we go with our families to get fish and turtle, lily roots, mussels and yabbies. It’s where we find ducks and geese and sometimes catch sawfish that come all the way up from the saltwater.

In healthy djula and wah country the water is clean and clear, it smells and tastes good. But in our meetings at Bulman and Weemol people decided the health of our freshwater country was only “fair” — not really healthy at all.

In many places the water is dirty and stinking and not right to drink. The chemicals from dead animals are turning the water green. Cane toads are everywhere.

And some people say they are not feeling safe in many freshwater places because of too many cheeky buffalo and pigs. Some people are frightened to camp on country because of this.

In some places, like Weemol Spring weeds, are a big problem. Mimal has started a project with support from Bush Heritage to begin looking after djula and wah country.

That project, over the next three years, will develop ways to manage freshwater country across the Mimal area.





Above: Bluewater Crossing.

Below: Barnkul labbalno.



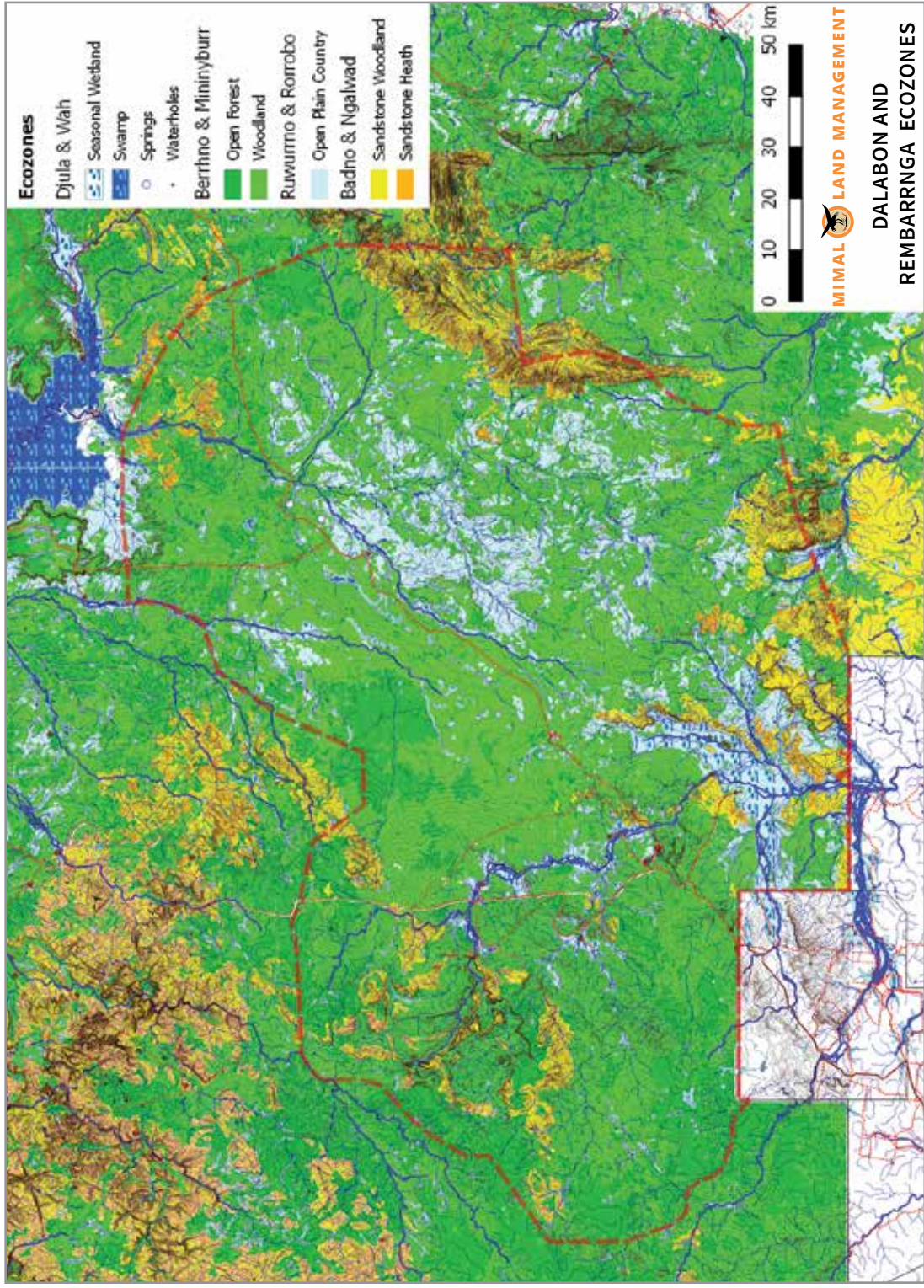


Figure 2: Dalabon and Rembarrnga Ecozones. This map has been created by aggregating non-indigenous vegetation and land mapping units to conform with local indigenous ecozone terminology used in this healthy country plan. (Map by Ben Lewis)





Asset 6

BERRHNO & MININYBURR

Woodland and forest

GOAL 6

By 2027 continued good fire management, effective weed control and implementation of changed herd management focused on buffalo, horses, donkeys and cattle will see asset health maintained at “good” or moving to “very good”.

INDICATORS OF HEALTHY BERRHNO & MININYBURR

- Burning is right
- More emus, kangaroo and sugarbag
- People know and are able to visit their country
- Sites are protected
- Weeds are controlled
- No Gamba Grass present
- Fruit trees and cypress pines are healthy

BIGGEST THREATS

- Gamba grass invasion
- Other grassy weeds not being controlled
- Late wildfire
- Feral animals
- Erosion



HEALTH GOOD

TREND STEADY

Our strongest tool to manage our forest and woodland country is fire. If we burn country in the right way, with plenty of early burning to stop late season wildfire, we will have done the most important thing to keep this country healthy.

We have different kinds of woodland — the tall forests and the dry low woodland we have grouped together here as berrhno (Dalabon) and mininyburr (Rembarrnga).

They each have their own special plants and animals that need us to keep this country healthy if they are to survive and to breed.

Water runs through our woodland country but it isn't flooded every year like the country along our rivers and creeks. In some places there is very little water in the dry season over very large areas.

When the right trees are flowering, sugarbag are filling up their nests. When the right grasses are there, kangaroos are getting fat. Emus and people are finding the right fruits.

In other parts of the Top End the grassy weed called Gamba Grass is killing the forest country. Our country is free of Gamba Grass but if we let it come in it will cause a lot of damage. We already have problems with Mission Grasses and Grader Grass, making fire worse in some places and we need to stop those grasses and other weeds spreading.



Above: Leon Lawrence operates the Raindance machine during the early burning season June 2017.

When we burn our ruwurno and rorrobo the right way and control pigs, this is rich country for turkey, wulala and emu.



Asset 7

RUWURRNO & RORROBO

Grassy plains

GOAL 7

By 2027 the downward trend of health for the grassy plains will have been reversed by specific strategies to address overgrazing, reduce damage by pigs and the impact of feral cats, prevent grassy weed invasion, and ensure continued healthy country fire management.

INDICATORS OF HEALTHY BERRHNO & MININYBURR

- Burning is right
- Plenty of right animals (wulala, brolga, emu, turkey, dingoes, seed eating birds)
- Right grasses for seed eating birds
- Right shrub fruits for birds and for people
- Plenty of root plants
- More goannas and bluetongues

BIGGEST THREATS

- Weeds
- Feral animals (especially cats and pigs)
- Erosion
- Wrong fire
- Illegal access

The Mimal land management area is very big – nearly as big as Kakadu National Park. Ruwurrno (Dalabon) and rorrobo (Rembarrnga) country makes up only a fairly small part of this big area but it is very important and needs looking after to keep it healthy.

Here we should find plenty of fat turkey and emu if the grasses and shrubs are in good health.

If the little plants like all the different bush potatoes are doing well and not being wiped out by pigs, there will be plenty of wulala (the left hand kangaroo) and brolgas. We should also find plenty of bluetongue lizards.

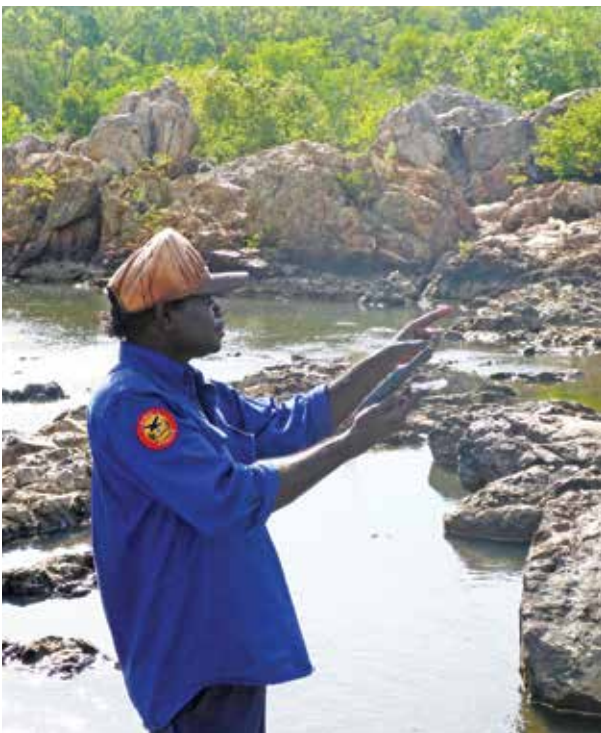
Ruwurrno/rorrobo should be the place to find fat plains goannas, but cane toads have just about wiped them out. In some places we find a few goanna, but they are gone from most areas. It makes us sad about losing tucker but also upset because this is an important animal for ceremony.

We have to burn the country in the right way and make sure weeds like Gamba Grass and Prickly Acacia don't get established. Plains country is grass country and we need to focus on having healthy native grasses. Balanda grasses can destroy our plains country.

Feral cats are doing well on the ruwurrno and are killing lots of our small mammals and reptiles. We should find plenty of the grassland bush rats and pythons. Bluetongue should be there and we should see lots of brolgas.

Overgrazing on grassy plains on some red soil hills is causing loss of important grass cover and scalding that leads to erosion. Plains country is good for cattle but we don't think cattle are doing too much damage.





Walking is the best way to get back into our rock country and survey the plants, animals and the many sites where ancestors left their stories as rock paintings.

Asset 8

BADNO & NGALWAD

The rock country

GOAL 8

By 2027 landowners and rangers will have greater access to rock country and there will be a successful and ongoing program of documenting and conserving rock art. The specific fire regime that the rock country ecological communities require will be delivered at finer spatial scales and weed incursion will be better controlled.

INDICATORS OF HEALTHY BADNO AND NGALWAD

- Burning is right
- Plenty of right animals in good condition & breeding (echidna, freshwater crocodiles, fish, turtles, rock kangaroos, small mammals, ngalwad birds)
- Landowners and rangers are on ground, visiting and managing it in the right way
- Rock art and burials mapped and conserved by the right landowners and djungkayi with rangers
- Fire sensitive plant communities are healthy

BIGGEST THREATS

- Wildfire
- Cats
- Erosion
- Access difficulties for rangers and landowners

Visiting and managing rock country is difficult for landowners and for rangers. The Wet season blocks road access and in the Dry much of the rock country is too rough for vehicles.

But helicopters allow our rangers to deliver early burning to protect the plants and animals of the badno (Dalabon) and ngalwad (Rembarrnga). Early burning for rock country plants that will not survive repeated late hot fires is really important.

Old people lived in the rock country and knew everything about it. But access problems for landowners and for rangers mean we know very little about the health of rock country now. Are there still nabarlek in the rocks? Rock country grass wrens? Rock pigeons? Black wallaroos and kalkberd? Rock possums? If we find the country has plenty of the right animals we will know it is healthy.

Camera trapping and other survey work will give us much of the information we need to better manage the animals and plants in the rock country.

We also need to rediscover and look after our rock art and make sure the burials of old people are cared for and respected. Rangers, landowners and djungkayi can work together. The rangers need to be able to manage the information about country and rock art on Mimal's information management system.



Above: Camera trap recording of White Throated Grass Wren in Warddeken IPA.

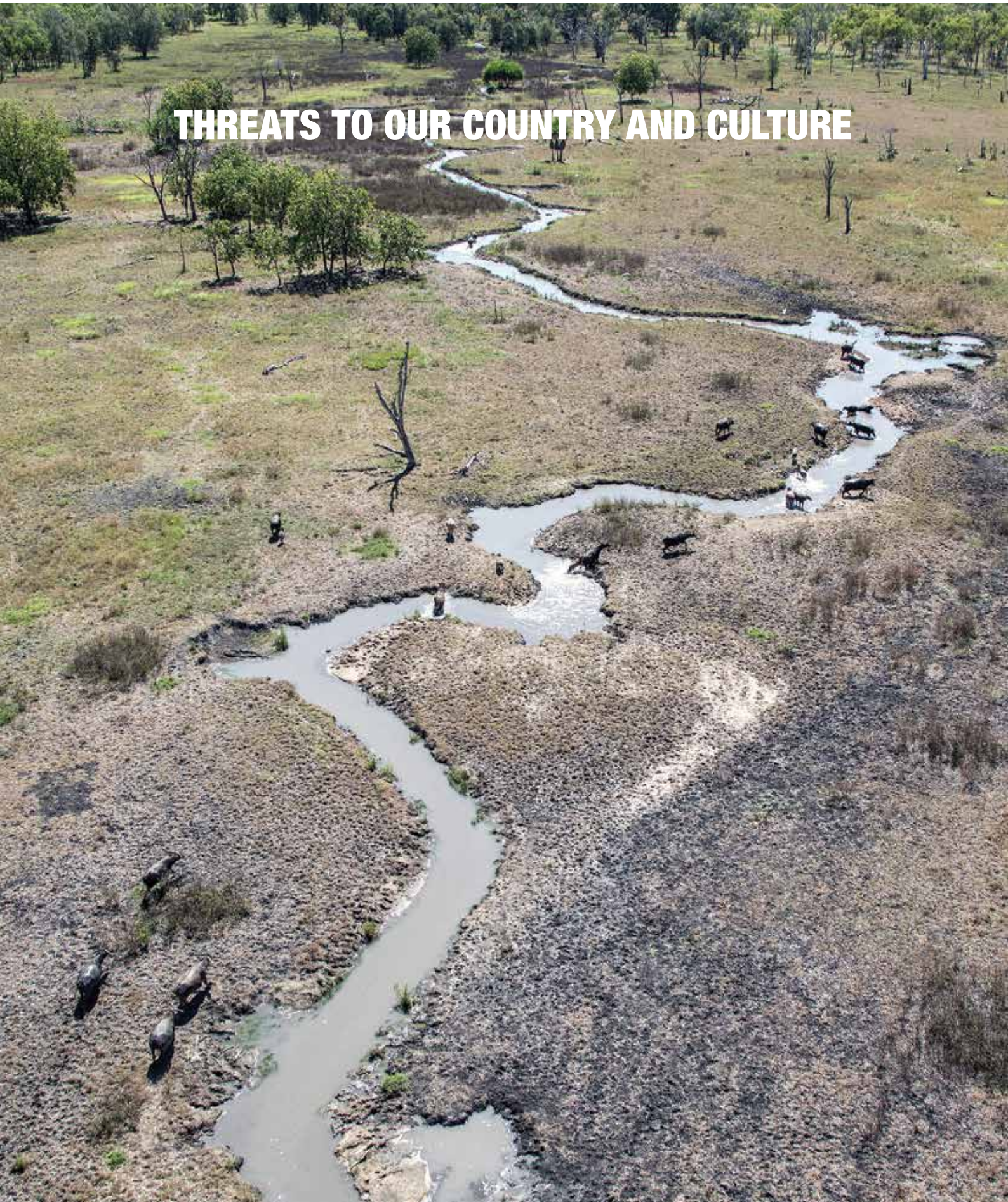


HEALTH FAIR

TREND STEADY



THREATS TO OUR COUNTRY AND CULTURE



MEASURING AND UNDERSTANDING THREATS

Late last year and again in April this year, a working group of directors and rangers met to talk about threats and what would happen if we did not effectively deal with the threats to our assets over the next 10 years.

We listed all the threats we could think of and then ranked them from the very highest threats to the lowest threats.

We gave number scores based on three things: how much country is threatened, how much damage might a threat cause and how difficult would it be to fix the problem?

For each asset, threats were ranked from very high to low and then those scores were grouped to make the left hand columns in the table at right.

At the top are the very high, strong threats to country and culture, as our working group saw them, and then down lower are threats of lesser priority.

Some things we can't really do anything about — like cane toads. Other very dangerous threats aren't on our country yet — like Gamba Grass — but we know that if they become established they will kill our country and be impossible to get rid of.

Some things don't need us to do much more than we are at present — like the way in which fire is now being managed over Dalabon and Rembarrnga country. It's good and getting better.

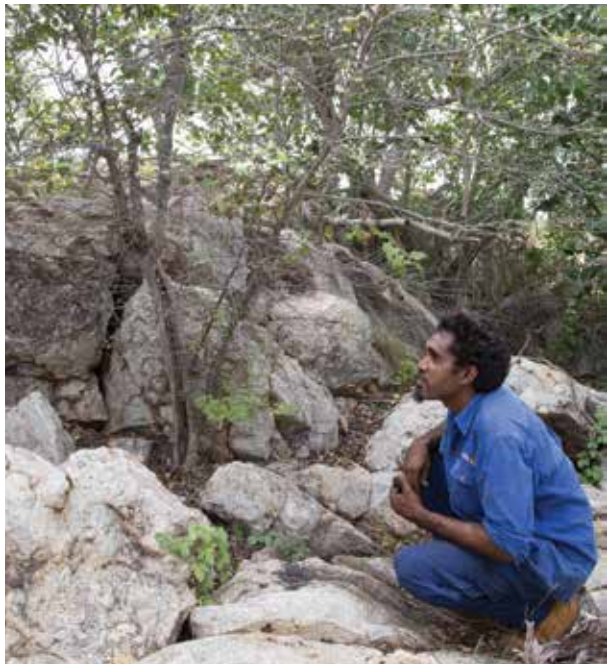
Knowing what has to happen to fix some threats is fairly straight forward — like for cats and pigs. We know we need to get rid of as many of the pigs and feral cats as we can.

But how we do that is not easy. Land managers all over Australia are struggling with that problem.

We have to be open to scientific research and field testing of new ideas to tackle these things. But we are all agreed we must bring down the numbers of cats and pigs.

Some threats are very complicated and hard to deal with.

The most difficult threat we face is too many buffalo on some kinds of country. Horses and donkeys are difficult too, but for different reasons.



Above: When our rangers visited Katherine in 2016 they saw how the small tree Chinee Apple can take over country when it has the right soil. Birds spread the seed. Now we know what to look for and why it is important to control it early.

Our list of threats includes many things that are affecting people as well as country. In the end, if people and culture aren't healthy we can't work properly to have healthy country. These two things go together — healthy country and healthy people.

And to make a success of our plan, we need to build Mimal Land Management into a healthy corporation with strong leadership and good management.

We need good communication to maintain and grow support. We need to make sure that we have ways for all landowners and affected people to be able to be heard by Mimal directors and for Mimal to share its good story with black and white.

THREAT RANKING TABLE

INDIVIDUAL THREATS IDENTIFIED IN OUR WORKSHOPS AT BULMAN AND WEEMOL	THREAT RANKING FROM OUR WORKSHOPS	GROUPING OF THREATS INTO EIGHT CATEGORIES DISCUSSED IN THIS SECTION OF OUR PLAN	PAGES
Buffalo	Very high	Buffalo, cattle, horses and donkeys	36, 37
Pigs	Very high	Feral cats, pigs and exotic diseases	42, 43
Gamba Grass	Very high	Gamba grass and other weeds	40, 41
Loss of respect & knowledge	Very high	Loss of respect and knowledge	46, 47
Lack of support & funding	Very high	Breakdown of our good fire management Things that make corporations fail	48, 49 50, 51
Poor access to country	Very high	Loss of respect and knowledge	46, 47
Loss of landowner support	Very high	Breakdown of our good fire management Things that make corporations fail	48, 49 50, 51
Gambling & drugs	High	Loss of respect and knowledge	46, 47
Erosion	High	Erosion, siltation, nutrient overload and water weeds	52, 53
Permit system broken	High	Lack of power to control illegal access	44, 45
Wrong visitors / poachers & hunters	High	Lack of power to control illegal access	44, 45
Cane toad	High	Measuring and understanding threats	34
School does not support two-way knowledge	High	Loss of respect and knowledge	46, 47
Cats	High	Cats, pigs and exotic diseases	42, 43
Silting up of billabongs	High	Erosion, siltation, nutrient overload and water weeds	52, 53
Nutrient overload	Medium	Erosion, siltation, nutrient overload and water weeds	52, 53
Mobiles, TV & facebook	Medium	Loss of respect and knowledge	46, 47
Bad water weed	Medium	Erosion, siltation, nutrient overload and water weeds	52, 53
Wrong fire / late burning	Medium	Breakdown of our good fire management	48, 49
Communication breakdown	Medium	Breakdown of our good fire management Things that make corporations fail	48, 49 50, 51
Chinee apple	Medium	Gamba Grass and other weeds	40, 41
Prickly acacia	Medium	Gamba Grass and other weeds	40, 41
Donkeys	Medium	Buffalo, cattle, horses and donkeys	36, 37
Cattle & horses	Low	Buffalo, cattle, horses and donkeys	36, 37
Rubbishing country	Low	Loss of respect and knowledge	46, 47



THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE 1

TRO 1: By 2027 changed herd management will have reduced the damaging impact of buffalo, horses, donkeys and cattle without causing job losses or reduced income for landowners. The threat ranking for buffalo will have been reduced to a low high, or high moderate score. The health of djula and wah places and other special places will be improving and their health status raised from fair to good.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 4 **CHANGING HERD MANAGEMENT** will implement six strategies to reduce the damaging impact of buffalo, horses, donkeys and cattle on country. (p. 63)

The six strategies will focus on these priority areas: growing local partnerships, supporting a local economy and creating jobs, maintaining and rehabilitating wetland habitat health and water quality, making special places safer for people to visit and camp, controlling erosion and siltation and controlling weeds.

CHANGING HERD MANAGEMENT targets a number of assets and their goals:

ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES (p. 20, 21)

ASSET 6: BERRHNO & MININYBURR woodland & forest (p. 26, 27)

ASSET 6: RUWURRNO & MININYBURR grassy plains (p. 28, 29)

Above left: our marshy springs can be destroyed quickly by too many hard hooved animals. Grass cover is lost and the diffused spring flow becomes contained in eroded, dirty channels.

Middle left: on yellow clay soils feral animals destroy vegetation along edges of creeks and waterholes and foul the water.

Left: the important waterhole beside the ceremony ground at Bayamirri is sometimes too foul for people to drink from safely.



BUFFALO, CATTLE, HORSES AND DONKEYS

Buffalo, horses, donkeys and cattle have been on our lands for a long time and we have grown up seeing them as part of the country.

But when there are too many of these big Balanda grass-eating animals with hard hooves on some kinds of country they can damage that country very badly.

For more than 20 years catching and selling buffalo has been creating some dry season jobs for our people and every year there has been buffalo royalty money for some clans. That's good for growing our local economy.

Buffalo make a big mess in and around labbalno and other fishing and hunting places. Many people have told us buffalo stop them from using special places for hunting because they are frightened of cheeky buffalo (and pigs). One of our rangers doing early burning had a lucky escape when chased by a cheeky buffalo in 2016.

Buffalo are causing less serious damage on some kinds of country than on others. Black soil plains country is not being as badly damaged as country with red soil, yellow clay soil and sandy soil around creeks, billabongs and the big, tussock-grass weeping springs.

In many places those big grassy springs where water should just flow slowly through the grass have been turned into gullies flowing through bare earth that washes away more each year. The spring places become no good for waterbirds.

When this happens it may be impossible to make the springs healthy again. Damage that can't be fixed is the worst damage. But it is possible to stop it getting worse by focusing

on getting rid of buffalo on the places where they are doing the worst damage and making least money. Our Warddeken neighbours have reduced buffalo damage by just targeting wetland areas badly damaged by buffalo.

Many national parks and our conservation neighbours at Wongalara try to get rid of all the big balanda grass eating animals altogether.

But most of our landowners want to go on making money and creating jobs through managing these animals.

The big question is: how can landowners go on getting the same (or more) money as we get from buffalo now, and at the same time reduce the amount of damage being caused to country by buffalo and the other big balanda animals?

Mimal wants to get everyone talking about this question.

We need to understand more about the problem. The worst impacts of buffalo are in our wetland areas, (and in these areas pigs add to the damage). Away from the wetlands overgrazing by buffalo, cattle, horses and donkeys add to problems of loss of native vegetation and erosion.

We want to get together with landowners, the Buffalo Company (and others with commercial interests) to talk about how we can work together to have healthier country as well as healthy income and jobs. How can we work together to better manage buffalo, cattle, horses and donkeys?

In the end, the decisions are for landowners, but Mimal wants to help them look for the best way to get the right balance between caring for country, making money and creating more jobs on country.

Better herd management will also reduce the threats of erosion, silting up of billabongs, nutrient overload (water quality) and the spread of weeds like Gamba Grass.

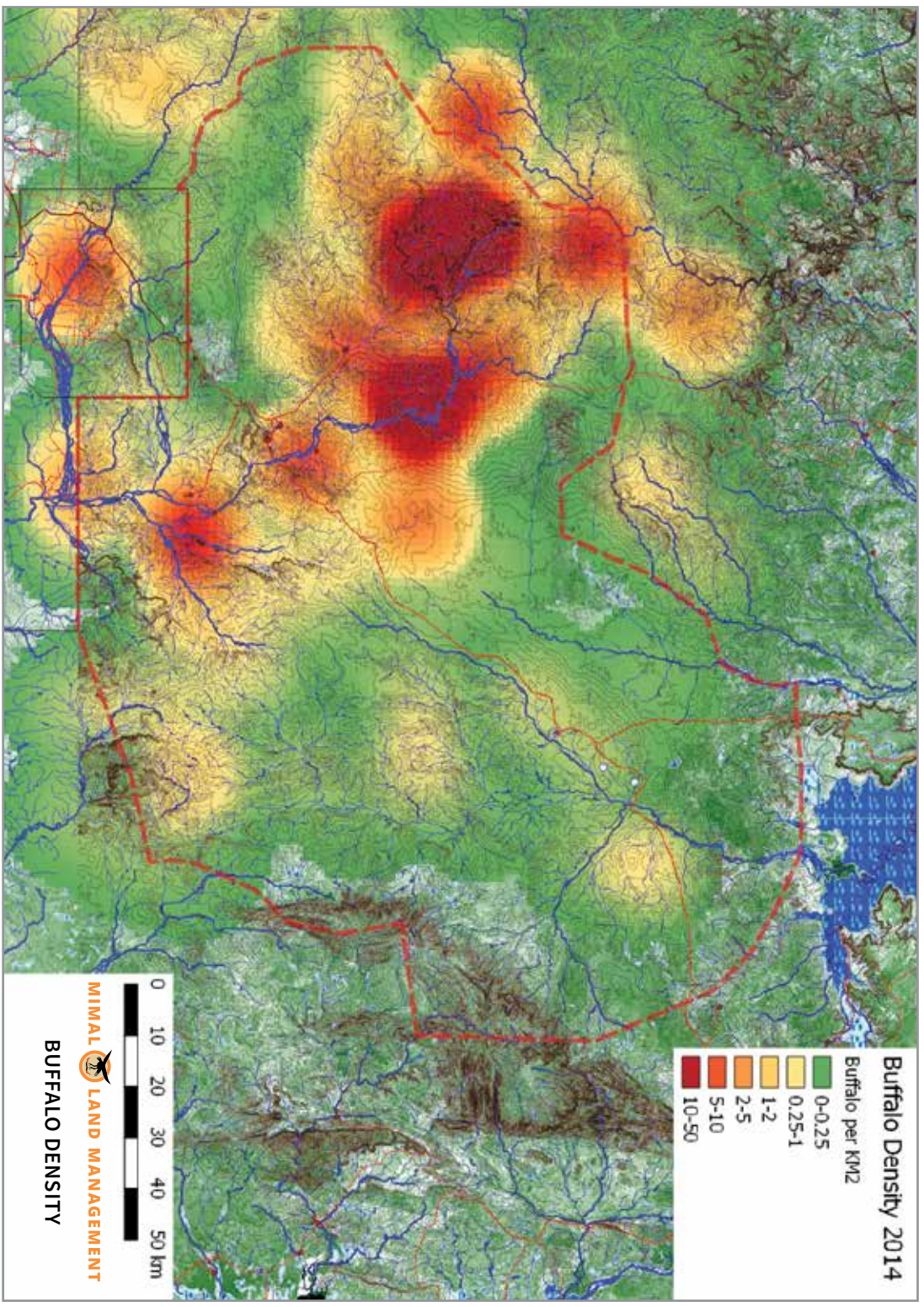
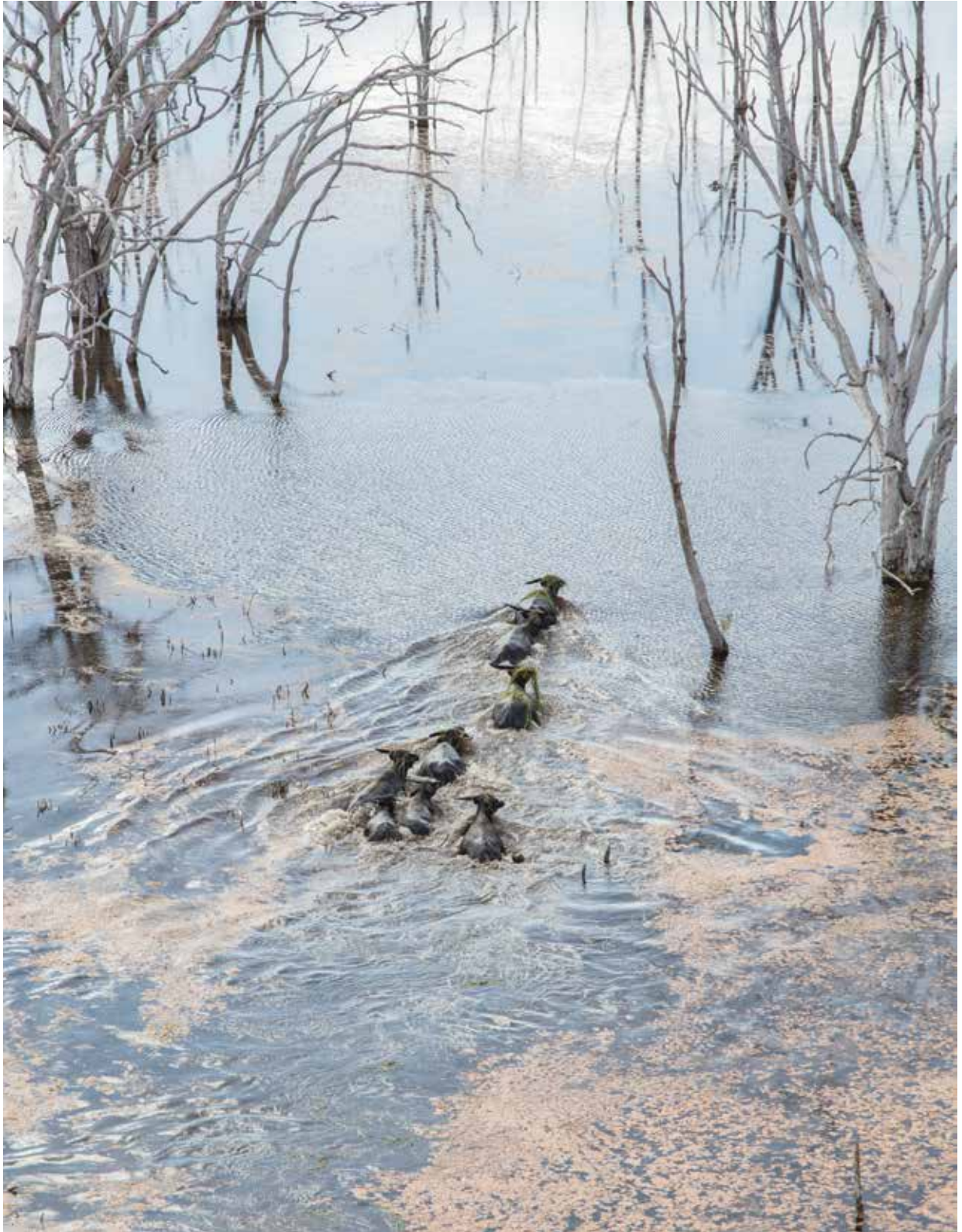


Figure 3: Buffalo density in the Mimal operational area. This map is based on data from the Department of Land Resource Management survey report "Feral buffalo (Bubalis bubalis): distribution and abundance in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory" published by the Northern Territory Government in June 2014. (Map by Ben Lewis)





THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE 2

TRO 2: In 2027 our country will still be free of Gamba Grass and the rangers and community will continue to be focused on early detection and eradication of this, and other new weed species. Our management of other well established balanda grasses and woody weeds will be effectively containing these infestations and the community and rangers will have a high level of weed awareness and access to weed control skills, tools and information.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 6 **WEED CONTROL** will implement seven strategies to reduce the threat to country from Gamba Grass and other weeds. (p. 65)

The seven strategies focus on these priority areas: special places, communication and community engagement, herd management issues around hay, networking regionally, early detection, rapid response, ranger training (especially safe use of chemicals), mapping and information management, weed hygiene and vehicles, illegal access and pig hunters.

The project **WEED CONTROL** targets a number of assets and their goals:

- ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES (p. 20, 21)
- ASSET 5: DJULA & WAH
freshwater country (p. 22, 23)
- ASSET 6: BERRHNO & MININYBURR
woodland & forest (p. 26, 27)
- ASSET 7: RUWURRNO & RORROBO
grassy plains p. 28, 29)
- ASSET 8: BADNO & NGALWAD
rock country (p. 30, 31)

Above and middle: On many of our tracks and off-road areas vehicles pick up Grader Grass (and other) seeds in their radiators and under vehicles. In some places Grader Grass has completely taken over and native grasses are lost.

Left: To control the spread of Grader Grass and other weeds we need to clean out grass seed regularly.



GAMB GRASS AND OTHER WEEDS THAT KILL COUNTRY

Gamba Grass is out of control south of Darwin. It is too late for Government and landowners to get rid of it there.

It is killing country with fires much hotter than our native grasses. These fires are so hot they can kill big trees in just one fire.

If it becomes established in our area it will change the country forever. We will no longer be able to manage fire in a good way like we do now and we will no longer be able to earn money and make jobs from early burning.

Our rangers have found and destroyed Gamba Grass four times in the past and we believe we are free of gamba in 2017. But it can arrive anytime on vehicles, in hay and even on swags.

Mimal Rangers must lead the fight against Gamba, finding it when it arrives and killing it. We need everyone to be aware of the danger and help us find and kill this bad grass.

We have many other weeds already established. Grader Grass has spread out along roads and tracks and in some places it now covers big areas along rivers and plains where it has replaced many kinds of native grasses that are important to birds and animals.

We must involve our community and visitors to our country in the never-ending fight against weeds. Weed management is forever!

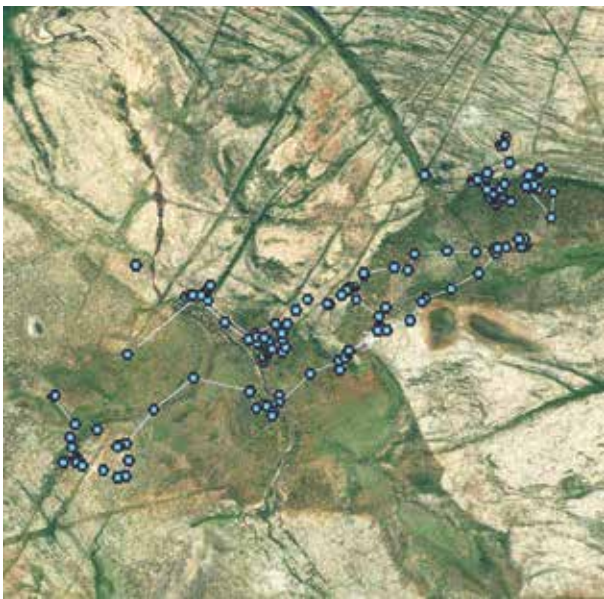
Grader Grass and many other grassy weeds are spread by vehicles. We need a weed washdown place where community people can clean their vehicles and where we can encourage travellers to have their vehicles cleaned.

In 2016 Mimal Land Management produced the first weed management strategy for our area. It draws on Weeds Branch data and our local knowledge but we need to keep building the capacity of our rangers to identify weeds, to record their locations and have this information available to rangers as they plan on-ground weed control.

We will have to make smart and tough decisions about which areas and which weeds we will target as a priority because the job of weed control is huge.

As well as grassy weeds we have other larger weeds. We have areas with Prickly Acacia and this weed can be very destructive. Chinee Apple is another invasive tree and we have seen how it has taken over areas in Katherine.

Around Bulman and Weemol, Gmelina trees, planted by Government as shade trees, are out of control. We have been working to eradicate them from around the Gulin Gulin and Weemol Springs.



Above: Our neighbours at Warddeken and Wanggalara have been studying how wildcats live and hunt on country. Warddeken often finds cats, like this family, in camera trap photos. A few years ago Warddeken, working with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (which owns Wanggalara) caught three wildcats and put radio tracking collars on them to see how far they travelled while hunting. The Google Earth Image below shows the travels over a few weeks of a wildcat they called "Blackie".

Right: Rangers trained to check for animal diseases and pests are at the front line of Australian Biosecurity.

THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE

TRO 3: In 2027 we will be fully informed on the latest methods for cat and pig control and be implementing those that can be applied in our area. In high priority areas identified for pig control, population management will have reduced overall levels of pig damage by more than 50 per cent by 2027.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 5 **PIGS, OTHER PESTS AND DISEASES** will implement five strategies to reduce the impact of these threats. (p. 64)

The five strategies focus on these priority areas: : ranger training and equipment, threat mapping and monitoring, rangers' powers to control access by pig hunters, invertebrate pest surveillance and control, bio-security partnerships, emerging pest control techniques.

The project **PIGS, OTHER PESTS AND DISEASES** targets a number of assets and their goals:

- ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES (p. 20, 21)
- ASSET 5: DJULA & WAH freshwater country (p. 22, 23)
- ASSET 6: BERRHNO & MININYBURR woodland & forest (p. 26, 27)
- ASSET 7: RUWURRNO & RORROBO grassy plains (p. 28, 29)
- ASSET 8: BADNO & NGALWAD rock country (p. 30, 31)



FERAL CATS

All over Australia feral cats are a very big threat to our native birds and small animals. In many places small animals like bush mice and rats have disappeared altogether from the landscape.

Cats also kill bluetongues, other lizards and birds. They love to hunt on plains country. They will travel long distances following fire as they hunt.

Our neighbours at Wonggalara have built a big fenced cat-free area to protect small animals inside the fence and see what difference that makes to populations of small animals. Wonggalara uses camera traps to monitor cat numbers.

And Wonggalara and Warddeken IPA have put satellite tracking collars on cats to see how far they travel when hunting. We are learning a lot about feral cat behaviour but we still do not have any reliable way to make a big reduction in their population.

Scientists are still researching whether having more dingoes reduces cat populations or whether cats avoid areas where there are a lot of dingoes.

Until we know more about how to control cats more efficiently we should aim for training our rangers to be skilled and qualified marksmen so we can remove whatever cats we can by shooting.

FERAL PIGS

Pigs wallow and root around the edges of watercourses and swamps, destroying the vegetation that prevents erosion and provides food and nesting sites for native wildlife.

They compete with native animals for food, pose a threat to ground-nesting birds, and can spread weeds. They affect water quality of creeks, billabongs and springs.

In our area we know that pigs are having a big impact on the root plants like bush potato food for wulala (left hand kangaroo) out on plains. They are also causing decline of many shrubs with fruit and seeds. Pigs also make people feel unsafe on country and unable to drink water from our creeks and billabongs..

We need to build our skills for controlling pigs in areas that landowners are particularly concerned about. We need to be better at building and managing pig traps, using safe baiting techniques and invest in training our rangers to be skilled marksmen. We need to map key pig damage areas.



Above: Nigel Gellar and a big rock country wildcat.

EXOTIC DISEASES

Mimal landowners share the concerns of all landowners for the early detection of diseases that may threaten animal and human populations.

Mimal Rangers, like many remote ranger groups, are in a strategic position to provide cost-effective ongoing monitoring for such diseases, particularly in wild populations of pigs and large grass-eating animals.

Partnerships, special training and fee-for-service contracts with Biosecurity Australia will benefit local people and the nation.

Older Mimal Rangers have quite a lot of experience in undertaking the biosecurity work. Younger rangers will need training and mentoring.



THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE

TRO 4: By August 2020 suitably trained Indigenous rangers in the Top End will have effective powers of enforcement over illegal entry onto Aboriginal lands, enabling them to stop, search and seize to gather evidence for prosecutions, and to issue fines in certain cases of illegal access.

A range of strategies will have established positive engagement with other balanda travellers, leading to more respectful behaviour, increased safety and better protection of special places.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 7 **VISITOR MANAGEMENT** will implement eight strategies to prevent trespass on clan lands while engaging with tourists to encourage respectful visitor behaviour and provide improved safety for travellers. (p. 66)

The eight strategies focus on these priority areas: advocacy for effective ranger powers, illegal access, pig hunters, protection of sacred sites and other special places, weed hygiene and vehicles, visitor safety, visitor centre infrastructure, signage and communications, family-based tourism, collaboration with Shire.

The project **VISITOR MANAGEMENT** will target the assets and their goals:

ASSET 2: OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE	(p. 16, 17)
ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES	(p. 20, 21)
ASSET 5: DJULA & WAH freshwater country	(p. 22, 23)
ASSET 6: BERRHNO & MININYBURR woodland & forest	(p. 26, 27)
ASSET 7: RUWURRNO & RORROBO grassy plains	(p. 28, 29)
ASSET 8: BADNO & NGALWAD rock country	(p. 30, 31)



Above: Unlicensed safari camp in the Mimal management area, at the end of the 2016 Wet Season.

LACK OF POWER TO CONTROL ILLEGAL ACCESS

Balanda laws recognise our ownership of our country but they do not give landowners or rangers the powers to control illegal access and poaching.

The way it is at the moment even the police find it impossible in most cases to prosecute people who are illegally on our country.

This has to change, because we are seeing more and more wrong people coming illegally into our areas.

Some trespassers are recreational pig shooters or fishermen who are likely to bring in bad weeds like Gamba Grass.

Some are illegal safari hunting people who bring in paying clients to kill buffalo for trophy horns. Some even get away with having semi-permanent camps on our lands without licences or permits.

People involved in the illegal wildlife trade may come to take rare animals from our rivers and forests.

Our small number of rangers are trying to look after an area almost as big as Kakadu National Park and that makes detecting illegal entry very difficult.

Our plan is to get more of our old outstations operating again as ranger bases and that will help us to detect trespassers effectively and quickly. We need to push for more power for

rangers to collect evidence of trespass and have the right to ask people to show what authority they have to be on our land.

And to apply those powers safely and effectively we need the proper training in enforcement. The NT Government has already changed the law to give compliance training and enforcement powers to sea rangers.

Before the last NT election the Labor Party promised both land and sea rangers new powers to “stop, search and seize” — to gather evidence for possible prosecutions — and in some situations to issue fines.

It’s time we got those powers and the training so we can stop people who are trespassing.

But we also have to engage with other people passing legally through our lands on the Central Arnhem Road. Each dry season many tourists make the 1600km trip from Katherine to Nhulunbuy and back.

If we provide them with the right information about our country and our culture we can expect them to behave more respectfully.

At present there are no legal camping places along the road to Nhulunbuy which leads to travellers camping illegally or driving dangerously long distances. Way back in 2000, families from Bawurrbarnda (which is halfway between Katherine and Nhulunbuy) tried to set up a camping ground and family tourist business. They didn’t get the support they needed but are keen to try again.

We want to see people travelling through our country being safe. The planned ranger base and camping area at Bawurrbarnda is an important step towards this.



Above: Right people need to visit, record and protect our sacred sites.
 Below: We need to prepare new generations of custodians.



THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE

TRO 5: In 2027 our people will be able to spend more time on country and at least three more outstations will have been reoccupied. We will hear more of our languages being spoken, ceremonies will be happening more often and two-way knowledge education will be strong in the school and the community. Mimal will remain the largest local employer. Having cultural knowledge and respect will be a key part of what it means to be a ranger.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 2 **STRONG CULTURE** will implement 9 strategies that address the broad range of social issues which threaten the health of Dalabon and Rembarnga culture and family life. (p. 60)

The strategies focus on these priority areas: increased employment connected to culture, protection of sacred places and ceremony, language maintenance, indigenous knowledge of culture and ecology, rock art recording and conservation, family histories and connections to country, oral history, culture camps and walking on country, Junior Rangers and other cultural programs for children and young people.

The project **STRONG CULTURE** will benefit all our assets and their goals:

- Asset 1: OUR CAPACITY TO DELIVER GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT (p. 14, 15)
- ASSET 2: OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE (p. 16, 17)
- ASSET 3: OUR CULTURE OF GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT (p. 18, 19)
- ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES (p. 20, 21)
- ASSET 5: DJULA & WAH freshwater country (p. 22, 23)
- ASSET 6: BERRHNO & MININYBURR woodland & forest (p. 26, 27)
- ASSET 7: RUWURRNO & RORROBO grassy plains (p. 28, 29)
- ASSET 8: BADNO & NGALWAD rock country (p. 30, 31)

LOSS OF RESPECT AND KNOWLEDGE

A growing loss of respect and knowledge was given a very high ranking when we discussed the threats to the asset we called “our people and our culture”.

Under this big threat a number of underlying threats were identified.

A lack of jobs creates boredom. For some people boredom leads to drug taking or gambling. These things also link to family violence.

Problems with transport to get to country or to spend time hunting is also adding to boredom.

People are losing connections to culture because ceremonies are not happening like they used to and like they should. The closing of outstations is also blocking connection to culture through being on country.

Too much TV and Facebook is contributing to loss of our Dalabon and Rembarrnga languages.

Many people also said that they were particularly worried that mobile phones were coming to Bulman soon and this would mean all the young people would be using Facebook.

The problem with Facebook, they said, is that it becomes a place for fighting and bullying, particularly amongst young people. That affects the mental health of this vulnerable part of our community.

The education system is not helping to keep culture, respect and knowledge strong. There is no two-way system at the school that supports our knowledge system as well as mainstream education and we see both way education as very important to prepare our children for the future.



The 2016 Dow ceremony reminded us that public song and dance was once at the centre of the cultural lives of our old people and brought families together

There are a number of ways Mimal can help deal with these broad community problems:

- we can create more jobs, both for men and for women, that involve caring for country and for culture;
- we can make using the language of our lands an important part of what it means to be a ranger and rangers working in a cultural way can be role models for young people;
- we can support our elders working with linguists and others to record knowledge in books, and where appropriate, in videos and on the internet so that it is accessible in the community in the future;
- Mimal can continue its programs of dry season family camps and walking on country events and we can support local community cultural events, like the Dow;
- we can get young people involved in recording and learning about rock art;
- by developing our Junior Rangers program we can tap into young people’s enthusiasm and skills with computers and digital media so that managing cultural knowledge data systems can be in the hands of the coming generation of our people; and
- we can find ways to bring our outstations back to life through remote ranger stations and jobs on country based at outstations.



Above: With remote sensing technology we are able to detect fires in real time and put rangers on the fire line within a few hours.

THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE

TRO 6: By 2027 our annual processes for communication and consultation with landowners about fire will be more transparent, stronger and more measurable, assuring us of the support we need. By 2027 senior rangers will have all the skills to be able to fully plan and implement strategic burning and to undertake the associated planning and administration work.

PROJECTS AND STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 3 **HEALTHY COUNTRY BURNING** will implement 5 strategies to build on our extraordinary success with bringing back healthy fire regimes on Dalabon and Rembarrnga country. (p. 62)

The 5 strategies will focus on these priority areas: special places, protecting fire-sensitive habitats for plants and animals, job creation, access to country, communication and consultation, monitoring, ranger training, greenhouse gas abatement.

The project **HEALTHY COUNTRY BURNING** will benefit all our assets and their goals:

- Asset 1: OUR CAPACITY TO DELIVER GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT (p. 14, 15)
- ASSET 2: OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE (p. 18, 19)
- ASSET 3: OUR CULTURE OF GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT (p. 13)
- ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES (p. 20, 21)
- ASSET 5: DJULA & WAH, freshwater country (p. 22, 23)
- ASSET 6: BERRHNO & MININYBURR woodland & forest (p. 26, 27)
- ASSET 7: RUWURRNO & RORROBO grassy plains (p. 28, 29)
- ASSET8: BADNO & NGALWAD rock country (p. 30, 31)

BREAKDOWN OF GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT

Bringing back good fire management through applying cultural knowledge of fire has been one of the great successes of the Mimal Rangers.

But if we want to maintain that achievement over the next 10 years and beyond we need to think about what might go wrong with that good fire management.

Our management of fire needs the strong support of all our landowners and djungkayi.

If we lose that support we won't be receiving permission for the early burning that keeps country healthy.

To keep that support strong we must always remember to talk to the right people every year as we work on our annual fire plans. We are not the bosses of country. We can't make decisions by ourselves.

Senior rangers need to ensure we know who are the right people and that we discuss our fire plans with them in time for the start of the fire season.

We are accountable to landowners and we are also accountable to the sources of the fire funding that we receive each year under contract to do the work.

If we don't do the job properly and control late dry season wildfire, money will go down and we will have problems paying rangers and paying for operating costs.

We have had a lot of help from outside people in the past as we developed the techniques for planning and implementing early burning, and also for reporting on fire activities.

To make sure we keep our strong fire management into the long term we need to increase the skills of our rangers through training so they can advance into higher levels of managing the fire project.

We need rangers trained in understanding satellite information — using old fire scars to understand where to place flight lines each year to find the right fuels at the right time for making our early-burned firebreaks.

At least some senior rangers need the computer skills to take our fire planning from computers and load it into the helicopter navigation systems.



Above: Gamba Grass invasion is the biggest threat to the future of our Healthy Country Burning project.

Our rangers need to be able to record our aerial burning tracks and also where we have done ground-based burning.

And rangers need to be able to bring together all our information into reports on our contract work.

Managing fire project money is another critically important part of the job. Project management means working out what operations and wages will cost and monitoring that we are sticking to budgets.

With the right training and a strong personal commitment, senior rangers will achieve effective self management of the higher levels of our fire project over the coming 10 years. .

We need to set strong training goals to achieve self management of the fire project before the end of this plan.

And lastly, if we allow Gamba Grass to be established on our country we will no longer be able to control fire as our old people did.



Above: Developing partnerships and strong working relationships with outside organisations that share our concerns for country and for people helps to make us strong. Emma Ignjic from Bush Heritage helped us develop this plan. From left: Jill Curtiss, Everlyn Mardi, Norrie Martin-Redford, Emma Ignjic and Tanya Manyita at Weemol.

THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE

TRO 7: In 2027 we will have very effective financial controls and will have a history of clean audits. Our directors will have the confidence and knowledge to assert their responsibilities for the corporation. We will have succeeded in employing the right people with the right skills to manage the company under an empowered and skilled board of directors. We will have done our best to achieve the goals set out in this plan.



Above: Together we are strong.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 1 **BUILDING MIMAL CAPACITY** will implement 11 strategies to reduce the risks of corporate failure and seize opportunities for building a strong and resilient corporation and community able to deliver this plan. (p. 62)

These 11 strategies focus on key priority areas: governance, human resources and employment, training and indigenous career development, administration and finance controls, policy development and review, infrastructure and equipment, data management and communications, risk management, protecting and expanding our funding base, partnerships, adaptive management processes.

The project **BUILDING MIMAL CAPACITY** will benefit all our assets and their goals:

- Asset 1: OUR CAPACITY TO DELIVER GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT (p. 14, 15)
- ASSET 2: OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE (p. 16, 17)
- ASSET 3: OUR CULTURE OF GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT (p. 18, 19)
- ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES (p. 20, 21)
- ASSET 5: DJULA & WAH freshwater country (p. 22, 23)
- ASSET 6: BERRHNO & MININYBURR woodland & forest (p. 26, 27)
- ASSET 7: RUWURRNO & RORROBO grassy plains (p. 28, 29)
- ASSET 8 BADNO & NGALWAD rock country (p. 30, 31)

THINGS THAT MAKE CORPORATIONS FAIL

Mimal land management is a new corporation. Although we have had Mimal Rangers for more than 16 years it is only since mid 2015 that we have had the chance to take control of managing our own affairs.

In two years we have demonstrated that we have put in place a strong foundation for us to undertake all the actions that are needed to achieve our goals and our vision.

But we know that some corporations fail — some lose money and disappear, others lose direction and fail to deliver what their communities want, others end up hiring the wrong people who don't have the skills and attitude to provide high quality management.

In some cases poor processes for electing directors means that power falls into the hands of a few people who just look out for themselves or who aren't really interested in learning all the skills of good governance. Some corporations don't have strong policies or don't stick to those policies.

Our rule book sets out processes for electing directors in a way that spreads representation across many clans.

We have a commitment to continued training in governance for our directors and keeping a balanced power relationship between directors and our CEO and CFO who we will expect to keep us informed about what's happening with corporation business.

We want to see local indigenous people stepping up into leadership and management positions through a strong emphasis on the right training, delivered by skilled trainers. We want to monitor the growing skills of our people as they step through training plans.

We look to build strong partnerships — with other ranger groups, with governments, with non-government organisations and industry.



Strong communication between directors and rangers will build our strength and make sure that important issues are understood right through the corporation

We are committed to openness and discussing with others how we are managing the business of moving towards our goals and vision.

The role of our directors goes beyond meetings of the board. We need our directors to be the eyes and ears of the corporation, listening to what feedback we are getting from community, rangers and landowners and sharing information about directions we are taking, successes we are having, and problems we may be facing.

Our directors can keep our managers informed about issues that need addressing in work plans and workplace relations by sharing what our members and other landowners, rangers and community members tell us.



Above: Hosting big regional events like the annual pre-season fire planning meetings builds strength through networking.



THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVE

TRO 8: BY 2027 changed herd management will have reduced erosion, siltation and nutrient overloads. By 2020 we will be implementing systems for monitoring water health across the Mimal area that will guide our future management actions. Our weed management project will have enabled early detection of new water weed invasion and effective control methods. The community will be engaged and committed to raising water quality across the Mimal area.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE THREAT

Project 8 **HEALTHY WATERS** will implement seven strategies to reduce threats and repair damage at a number of demonstration sites from 2017-2020. The capacity developed in the first three years will be used to extend protection and rehabilitation to other sites. (p. 67)

The seven strategies will focus on these priority areas: special places, demonstration sites, feral animal exclusion fencing, ranger training and capacity building, weed hygiene and vehicles, buffalo and pigs, sacred site protection, water quality, erosion, siltation and nutrient overload, community awareness, external collaboration and partnerships, junior rangers and indigenous ecological knowledge.

The project **HEALTHY WATERS** will particularly benefit these assets and goals:

- Asset 1: OUR CAPACITY TO DELIVER GOOD LAND MANAGEMENT (p. 14, 15)
- ASSET 2: OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE (p. 16, 17)
- ASSET 4: OUR SPECIAL PLACES (p. 20, 21)
- ASSET 5: DJULA & WAH freshwater country (p. 22, 23)

The photographs at left show the effects of erosion and siltation on country. From the top: erosion caused by feral animal tracks on clay soils and sandy soils, the loss of water quality from erosion run-off and nutrient overload. Trampling and pugging around springs is a major problem for our djula and wah country.



EROSION, SILTATION, NUTRIENT OVERLOAD AND WATER WEEDS

Back when our only big animals were kangaroos with soft feet, our native grasses kept soils in place when the big rains came each year.

But when there are too many buffalo, donkeys, horses, donkeys and pigs we can lose grass cover. When the rains come soil washes away into rivers, creeks and labbalno.

Water follows buffalo and donkey “roads” and cuts down to make erosion gullies.

When rain follows late dry season fire we get more erosion, especially when animals have loosened up the soil.

The soil that is washed away may settle in our rivers, creeks and labbalno and make them shallow, destroying the habitat for our water animals.

I remember when this place used to have deep water. But now it’s shallow and filled with sand. Everything is changing — Robert Redford

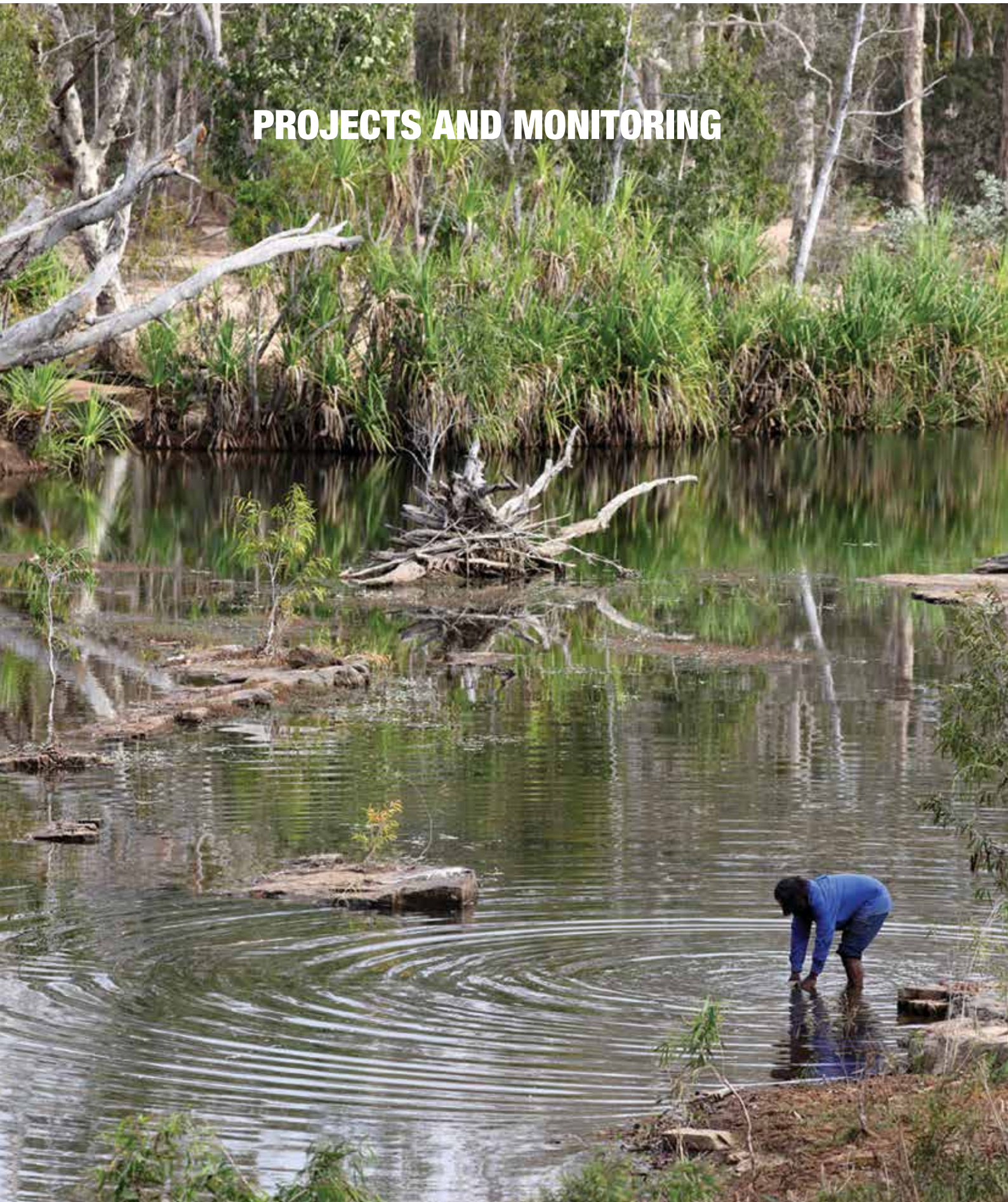
Some kinds of soil erosion make our water places muddy. Dung from big animals mixed in with erosion cause what’s called “nutrient overload.” Nutrient overload makes green slime and other wetland problems. The bones of dead animals around labbalno also cause nutrient overload.

There are also special weeds that can ruin our water country. Water Hyacinth is one and Cambomba is another. Like Gamba Grass we must find these weeds soon after they arrive in our country if we hope to be able to control them.

Some water weeds (like Cambomba) look like native plants. Our rangers and community need to know how to clearly recognise the water weeds and the native plants.

We need to understand more about the kind of damage from these threats and have maps and monitoring processes to guide our work reducing damage.

PROJECTS AND MONITORING



HOW WE WORK TO REDUCE THREATS & IMPROVE ASSETS

We have identified the eight assets that we want our plan to protect and improve, listed the indicators that tell us how healthy they are and have ranked the health of those assets in 2017.

We have set goals for how we want the health of our assets to be in 2027 and we have also identified threats to the health of assets. We have set objectives for reducing the impact of each of these threats.

We will achieve our goals and objectives through eight projects that we describe in this section of the plan. Each project is based around strategies linked to threat reduction objectives and to asset goals.

Projects are a way of managing our work as we make work plans (yearly work plans, dry season/wet season work plans and weekly work plans).

Projects are also important in how we report back to funders, to our members and the community, how we set our budgets and how we deliver on contracts.

Over the coming 10 years we may start new projects, or change our strategies for existing projects as we learn from monitoring the level of success we are having.

HOW WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS

To know how well our Healthy Country Plan is working and whether our projects are giving us the results we want, we need to track progress in a number of ways.

IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING

Implementation monitoring reviews our projects regularly to check that the actions which make our strategies work are going into work plans and we are carrying through properly with those actions. It measures our inputs and effort as we go about our work, week to week.

Most of our reports to funders and to our community draw on Implementation monitoring that we do at least yearly, but which, ideally, are part of more regular work planning cycles.

EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

Effectiveness monitoring builds on implementation monitoring by checking to see if the work we are doing is getting the right results, and whether our strategies are effective in reducing our threats.

In addition to simply recording activity, it also includes assessment of progress towards achieving our threat reduction objectives.

Our plan proposes that we undertake formal effectiveness monitoring every two years, around the time of our elections. If the work we are doing is not getting the right results then we need to adapt our strategies.

STATUS MONITORING

Status monitoring focuses on our assets and tells us whether the actions in our strategies are actually achieving our goals for healthier assets.

We know it takes a long time and a lot of work to see real results and improvements in the overall condition of our assets and our country.

Status monitoring is the most difficult of the three kinds of monitoring and requires specialist skills for establishing baseline conditions and choosing just what to measure to most efficiently collect the information we need.

This is why one of our most important strategies is to develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan which includes status monitoring by 2019

This plan will use much of the information we are recording through ongoing implementation and effectiveness monitoring but will also incorporate looking at the indicators of changing asset health that our community planning meetings identified in 2016 (see the summary tables on each of the asset pages).

We propose that in year six of our plan we will undertake a major review of our plan which includes checking what positive changes we have made to our assets. Where we need to, we can further adapt our strategies.

In 2027 we will conduct a review to check our final achievements before making a new plan.

THREAT REDUCTION OBJECTIVES

BUFFALO, CATTLE, HORSES AND DONKEYS

TRO1: By 2027 changed herd management will have reduced the damaging impact of buffalo, horses, donkeys and cattle without causing job losses or reduced income for landowners. The threat ranking for buffalo will have been reduced to a low high, or high moderate score. The health of djula and wah places and other special places will be improving and their health status raised from fair to good.

GAMBA GRASS & OTHER WEEDS

TRO 2: In 2027 our country will still be free of Gamba Grass and the rangers and community will continue to be focused on early detection and eradication of this, and other new weed species. Our management of other well established balanda grasses and woody weeds will be effectively containing these infestations and the community and rangers will have a high level of weed awareness and access to weed control skills, tools and information.

PIGS, OTHER PESTS & DISEASES

TRO 3: In 2027 we will be fully informed on the latest methods for cat and pig control and be implementing those that can be applied in our area. In high priority areas identified for pig control, population management will have reduced ongoing overall levels of pig damage by more than 50 per cent.



ILLEGAL ACCESS

TRO 4: By August 2020 suitably trained Indigenous rangers in the Top End will have effective powers of enforcement over illegal entry onto Aboriginal lands, enabling them to stop, search and seize to gather evidence for prosecutions, and to issue fines in certain cases of illegal access. A range of strategies will have established positive engagement with other balanda travellers, leading to more respectful behaviour, increased safety and better protection of special places.

LOSS OF RESPECT AND KNOWLEDGE

TRO 5: In 2027 our people will be able to spend more time on country and at least three more outstations will have been reoccupied. We will hear more of our languages being spoken, ceremonies will be happening more often and two-way knowledge education will be strong in the school and the community. Mimal will remain the largest local employer. Having cultural knowledge and respect will be a key part of what it means to be a ranger.

BREAKDOWN OF OUR GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT

TRO 6: By 2027 our annual processes for communication and consultation with landowners about fire will be more transparent, stronger and more measurable, assuring us of the support we need. By 2027 senior rangers will have all the skills to be able to fully plan and implement strategic burning and to undertake the associated planning and administration work.

THINGS THAT MAKE CORPORATIONS FAIL

TRO 7: In 2027 we will have very effective financial controls and will have a history of clean audits. Our directors will have the confidence and knowledge to assert their responsibilities for the corporation. We will have succeeded in employing the right people with the right skills to manage the company under an empowered and skilled board of directors. We will have done our best to achieve the goals set out in this plan.

EROSION, SILTATION, NUTRIENT OVERLOAD AND WATER WEEDS

TRO 8: BY 2027 changed herd management will have reduced erosion, siltation and nutrient overloads. By 2020 we will be implementing systems for monitoring water health across the Mimal area that will guide our future management actions. Our weed management project will have enabled early detection of new water weed invasion and effective control methods. The community will be engaged and committed to raising water quality across the Mimal area.

GOALS FOR HEALTHIER ASSETS

OUR LAND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Goal 1: In 10 years MLMAC will have become the largest employer in Bulman and Weemol. Strong leadership and good governance will ensure all benchmarks for corporate performance are met. With increased engagement and support of landowners, we will have forged strong and productive partnerships. An effective and comprehensive training program will see our rangers fully equipped for their careers in land management.

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CULTURE

Goal 2: In 2027 our people will be able to spend more time on country, outstations will have been reoccupied, we will hear more of our languages being spoken, more ceremonies will be happening each year and two-way knowledge education will be strong in the school and the community.

OUR CULTURE OF GOOD FIRE MANAGEMENT

Goal 3: Over the coming 10 years Mimal Rangers will continue to improve performance in fire management. Rangers, empowered through comprehensive training in two-toolbox fire management, will self-manage all aspects of fire management from remote sensing, fire planning and fire mapping to strategic early burning and wildfire suppression. Across all habitat-type assets, monitoring will demonstrate that ecological health continues to be improved by our culture and practice of fire management.

OUR SPECIAL PLACES

Goal 4: In 2027 sacred places will be actively protected, illegal access controlled and families will have improved access to their special places, which will be safe and clean.



DJULA & WAH, freshwater country

Goal 5: A changed herd management strategy agreed by stakeholders will have been implemented from 2021 and by 2027 a program of two-way monitoring of freshwater country health will demonstrate improved habitat for native species, better access for landowners and community members, who will again feel safe spending family time hunting and fishing in freshwater country.

BERRHNO & MININYBURR, woodland & forest

Goal 6: In 2027 continued good fire management, effective weed control and implementation of changed herd management of buffalo, horses, donkeys and cattle will see asset health maintained at “good” or moving to “very good”.

RUWURRNO & RORROBO, grassy plains

GOAL 7: By 2027 the downward trend of health for the grassy plains will have been reversed by specific strategies to address over-grazing, reduce damage by pigs and the impact of feral cats, prevent grassy weed invasion, and ensure continued healthy country fire management.

BADNO & NGALWAD, rock country

Goal 8: By 2027 landowners and rangers will have greater access to rock country and there will be a successful and ongoing program of documenting and conserving rock art. The specific fire regime that the rock country ecological communities require will be delivered at finer spatial scales and weed incursion will be better controlled.

Project 1 **BUILDING MIMAL CAPACITY**

OVERVIEW

Achieving the Healthy Country Plan goals depends on Mimal Land Management Corporation having a strong and growing corporate capacity. Good governance under a strong, confident and informed board is critical to success. Equipping rangers with the necessary skills and tools through training and career development is a high priority. This project focuses on the asset **Our Capacity to Deliver Good Management** and the threats discussed as **Things That Make Corporations Fail**.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
1. Ongoing training and support for directors will strengthen leadership, governance, financial management and compliance	Directors are confident and effective in their roles, understanding and applying policies and procedures consistently	Independently conducted biennial questionnaire/survey with directors + exit interviews for directors resigning
2. Compliance requirements and community expectations will be met	Positive audit results; rule book and contract compliance achieved; positive community feedback	Compliance checklist annual; biennial community feedback surveys
3. Transparent and merit-based recruitment practices will ensure executive staff and consultants are appropriately skilled and motivated	Senior staff are effective, motivated and feeling supported	Performance checklist; board undertakes biennial staff appraisals, including employee feedback (with independent support)
4. Ranger training will be a high priority and outcomes of a training plan will be regularly reviewed; special training will be provided for senior rangers who want to move into higher management.	Outcomes of training program	Annual training reports; #s rangers training, skill-sets included in training. Biennial comparisons of annual training achievements aggregated
5. The corporation will invest in the appropriate infrastructure and plant and will provide efficient R&M for these assets	Infrastructure and plant are adequate to needs and maintained efficiently	Asset list checked annually and infrastructure and plant needs reviewed biennially or more often.
6. The company will mitigate funding risks and achieve a balanced portfolio of funding sources by continuing to broaden its funding base beyond government programs; MLMAC management will pursue funding for new strategies and projects	Funding base broadened and new partnerships started/expanded	Annual report on number and nature of new or expanded partnerships, funding streams
7. A comprehensive information management system (IMS) will be developed to manage digital data and help MLMAC share its stories of challenge and success	IMS operating & meeting corporation needs	Feedback from staff; range of data types managed and able to be accessed in suitable forms for reporting and adaptive management needs



STRATEGIES

Reducing threats & increasing asset health

INDICATORS

Tell us if our strategies are working

METHOD & METRIC

How we measure effort & effectiveness

8. By 2019 a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan will be operating

M&E plan completed, being used and meeting needs

Ongoing internal evaluation of implementation issues + external expert appraisals

9. MLMAC will actively seek partnerships and alliances with other indigenous land management groups, government and non-government entities, research institutions/individuals and private enterprise

Expanded partnership achievements

Number and nature of new or expanded partnerships and links to goals, objectives and strategies

10. Every two years (aligned with election process timelines), senior staff will produce a corporation capacity assessment document for the incoming board

Biennial report to board on changes in capacity, project achievements against objectives & strategies; year six review undertaken

Annual project data analysed and summarised, the biennial report to board includes ongoing comparisons with previous two-year periods and includes both quantitative and qualitative data

11. At year six of the plan a more extensive HCP review will assess adaptive management needs

Mid plan review completed in year six

To be determined as part of the development of comprehensive M&E plan

Project 2 **STRONG CULTURE**

OVERVIEW

The next 10 years are critically important in the struggle to reverse the loss of our cultural heritage. Our people are spending less time on country and more time in towns, more time with TV and Facebook and less time speaking language and acquiring indigenous knowledge. Mimal is committed to a range of actions to rebuild connections to country and to culture. This project links directly to the assets **Our Culture and Our People** and **Our Special Places** and the threats **Breakdown of Respect and Knowledge**.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
12. The corporation will actively focus on increasing ranger positions for Dalabon and Rembarrnga people throughout the 2017–2027 plan within recruitment policies that support gender equality of opportunity	Creation of employment	Annual count and comparison with previous fte numbers, full time, part time, casual rates, gender balance, (included in annual report)
13. By 2020 rangers will be using a fully functional Information Management System to record cultural sites, custodian contacts, site condition and management actions	Cultural site information and management actions are being effectively recorded within the IMS	# and types of cultural site reports generated by the IMS, reported annually
14. Elders will be supported as teachers of cultural knowledge, both for rangers and junior rangers	Elders supported as teachers of cultural knowledge	# indigenous experts # teaching events, event reports (included in annual report)
15. By 2019 a partnership with the school will see the teaching of two-way knowledge of culture, language, plants, animals and country embedded in a Junior Ranger Program	Two way knowledge being taught in school	Annual counts of children, parents, teachers, rangers involved, count time and subject material covered. Comparison previous year. Annual report + biennial interviews with children, teachers, community
16. Annual bush camps and on-country walks will be supported by Mimal	Bush camps and on country walks	Activity reports and maps, #s adults & young people, duration, mapping (included in annual report)
17. School children will be encouraged and supported to pursue higher learning in skills relevant to the Strong Culture Project (such as linguistics, oral history recording, media and communications) and other projects	Higher academic learning for students/rangers	People days on rock art surveys, mapping of areas surveyed, sites visit, # new site or updated site records, photographs /audio/ video records(summary included in annual report)



STRATEGIES

Reducing threats & increasing asset health

18. School children will be encouraged and supported to pursue higher learning in skills relevant to the Strong Culture Project (such as linguistics, oral history recording, media and communications) and other projects

19. Mimal will support public community cultural events such as public performances of the Dow ritual and traditional dancing in the context of an annual cultural festival

20. Mimal will seek funding and other resources for the re-establishment of outstations as ranger bases (or development of other locations as remote ranger bases) creating proper jobs for our people working and living on country

INDICATORS

Tell us if our strategies are working

Rock art and country knowledge recorded, sites protected

Public cultural events supported

People living and working on outstations

METHOD & METRIC

How we measure effort & effectiveness

students/rangers assisted and nature of study (annual reports)

Count and comparison with previous years, photographs and stories. (included in annual report)

reoccupied outstations and estimated people days on country, outstation-based employment rate



Project 3 **HEALTHY COUNTRY BURNING**

OVERVIEW

Burning country in the right way is our most powerful management tool. Emissions abatement income from the right balance of early burning and late dry season burning is our biggest source of funding for ranger jobs and the work that keeps country and people healthy. Importantly, this is not Government funding and we are proud of being involved in such a globally important not-for-profit private enterprise right from the start in the 1990s. Healthy Burning links to all our assets, and the range of threats we have identified as the factors leading to **Breakdown of Good Fire Management**.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
21. Mimal will strengthen participation in the ALFA (NT) coalition of community-based emissions abatement producers	ALFA partnership participation is healthy and strong	Annual completion of formal pre-season consultation checklist; feedback from traditional owners
22. From 2018 processes of communication and consultations with landowners and land users (tourism/buffalo) about fire will be more transparent and more formally monitored	Effectiveness of consultations	Annual completion of formal pre-season consultation checklist; feedback from traditional owners
23. Mimal will strongly support traditional owners undertaking early burning on their own country each year	Increased landowner participation in early burning	Annual report and comparison previous years, landowner feedback
24. By 2018 we will be implementing a training plan for rangers who want to specialise in the skills of developing early burning flight lines, on-ground burning, budgeting and logistics	Increased # rangers specialising in fire management	# rangers trained and higher level skills attained



Above: Fire team ready for late dry season wildfire control, September 2017.

Project 4 **CHANGING HERD MANAGEMENT**

OVERVIEW

Buffalo, horses, donkeys and cattle are all animals which could be managed in a way that continues to bring economic benefit to landowners but also in such a way that reduces the serious damage that these balanda animals are causing in those kinds of country less resilient to their impact. We have chosen to call this project Changing Herd Management rather than Feral Animal Control because a solution to the problems must be found in an approach that recognises commercial importance as well as damage to country. We seek to engage with the Gulin Gulin Buffalo Company and other commercial interests to produce increased income and reduced damage. This project links strongly to the assets of **Djula and Wah — Freshwater Country, Our Special Places** and the threat we have called **Buffaloes, Cattle, Horses and Donkeys**.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
25. By 2018 MLMAC will have secured landowner and other stakeholder support for developing and discussing alternative methods of managing buffalo and cattle which maintain or increase income for landowners but reduce damage to country. An active and well regarded steering group will be created to guide the project and will be supported by MLMAC and Gulin Gulin Buffalo Company	Steering group is created	Steering composition reflects appropriate representation & knowledge, # meetings, minutes
26. By mid 2019 MLMAC and the steering group will have secured additional resources to substantially complete baseline mapping and condition evaluation that provides an appropriately fine scaled report of buffalo damage and longer term predictions if status quo prevails	Baseline mapping and condition evaluation is complete	Method & scope to be determined by steering group and science/industry advisors
27. By mid 2019 the steering committee will have completed a comprehensive assessment of current and historic commercial benefits generated for landowners from buffalo, cattle, donkeys and horses	Economic overview is complete	Scope to be determined by steering group and science/industry advisors
28. A strong ecological monitoring program will inform future management and document effectiveness of herd management changes over time.	Herd impact monitoring system is in place	See Project 1, Strategy 8 comprehensive M&E plan.
29. By 2020 the steering committee will have agreed on a planning discussion document detailing options for changed management for buffalo, cattle, donkeys and horses which meet the criteria of “less damage but no less money and jobs”	Options document complete	Scope to be determined by steering group and science/industry advisors
30. By 2021 there will be sufficient agreement amongst landowners to proceed with implementing the most favored plans for change which will have been fully costed and necessary additional implementation funding sources secured	Preferred options funded and being implemented	To be determined

Project 5 PIGS, OTHER PESTS & DISEASES

OVERVIEW

Land managers, black and white, all over Australia are struggling to find ways to reduce populations of pigs and cats. There are no simple and effective solutions. In our area pigs are badly damaging creeks, billabongs and springs. They eat food that is important for animals that we value. Pigs spoil our special places and make us feel unsafe when we want to take families camping and fishing on country. We know that cats are very effective hunters and are contributing to the loss of many small mammals and lizards like the Blue Tongue. We can develop our ranger skills to use those control tools that are available, we can map where most damage is occurring and target controls in places of most concern to landowners. This project links to the assets of Djula and Wah — Freshwater Country, Our Special Places and the threat assessment and objective for Pigs, other pests and diseases.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
31. By 2020 we will hold a corporate gun licence, and have acquired appropriate firearms for culling feral animals; at least a third of our rangers will be qualified as marksmen sufficiently skilled to conduct humane feral animal control and the collecting of post mortem samples for biosecurity disease monitoring	Corporate gun licence secured, rangers trained and qualified	Training and licencing outcomes documented in annual reports
32. By the end of 2019 we will have identified and mapped the areas that are being badly affected by pigs; with landowners we will have chosen four places to concentrate our efforts in pig control	Pig damage mapped and target areas selected	Landowners and rangers field trips, tablet sequence records; HCP methods used with landowners to identify priority target areas
33. As resources permit we will continue to expand the number of areas where we impose intensive pig control measures	Pig control implemented at priority areas and further areas being managed	Cull counts, tablet sequences, mapping, annual reporting
34. We will continue to look to the latest research on methods for controlling pigs and cats and incorporate these, where appropriate, into our control programs	Latest control methods evaluated and adopted if suitable	Continued research, networking and any implementation is noted in annual reports
35. Our rangers will be trained and implementing detection and control of other pests, including Yellow Crazy Ants, Coastal Brown Ants and the Asian Honey Bee	Other pest threats and control methods better understood and implemented as needed	Networking, research results, survey & control reports

Project 6 WEED CONTROL

OVERVIEW

A great many weeds have invaded our country over the past 150 years but we still have many areas which are relatively weed free. Some species are found only in certain areas and some species have more impact than others. We must approach weed control by making smart decisions about our priorities, deciding how to apply our resources for the best outcomes. The biggest weed threat to our country is the Balanda pasture grass Gamba Grass. It can destroy our country and also our Healthy Country Burning Project. When strongly established Gamba Grass cannot be controlled or eradicated. The Weed Control project links to all our assets, and the range of impacts listed in our threat assessment for **Gamba Grass and other weeds**.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
36. Implement the weed management strategy and associated work plans, while gathering information and experience to inform a full revision of the weed management strategy by 2020	Weed plan implemented, review is completed	Weed work checklist of on-ground works updated, review process undertaken, mapping of work conducted, areas and species treated reported to Weed Management Branch
37. Rangers will build community weed awareness	Public awareness actions	Personal interactions, meetings, public events, posters and videos noted in annual report)
38. Early detection and immediate eradication of Gamba Grass will be the highest weed management priority	Surveys and early treatments	Surveys and mapping of high risk areas, treatments and reporting of any gamba found included in annual reports
39. Mimal will advocate for a formal commitment (before 2020) of government and other stakeholders to keeping country along the Central Arnhem Land Highway free of Gamba Grass. Signage and other media will be used to support and promote strategic quarantine actions	Formal commitment of Government and stakeholders to a Gamba free zone	Declaration, meeting outcomes, signage, media, other relevant actions documented in annual reports
40. Regular in-service training in weed management and chemical safety and provision of appropriate equipment will ensure rangers are equipped for safe and effective weed control work	Stronger culture of health and safety and increasing weed management skills	Training numbers, equipment purchased

Project 7 VISITOR MANAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

We have two major types of visitor management issues which each require different approaches. Tourists increasingly pass through our lands, mostly on the Central Arnhem Road. We want to provide them information about our culture and our country and perhaps assist landowners to develop tourist ventures around these travellers. We are keen to engage with them about the issues of accidental weed spread. We are concerned for their safety on the 800km between Katherine and Gove for which there are no designated camping areas. Our other access issues are around people who are deliberately trespassing on our country without permission. These include fishermen, pig shooters, unlicensed safari hunters, and people involved in the illegal wildlife trade. With this second class of visitor we urgently need powers to control and stop illegal access. This project links to all our country and cultural assets and issues like the protection of sacred sites and people feeling safe on country. With visitors comes the threat of invasion by new weeds. The threats posed by illegal access are discussed in the threat section as **Illegal Access**.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
41. Mimal Land Management will work towards the establishment of an advocacy group to assist the NT Government in honouring the 2016 promise of increased enforcement powers to control illegal entry	Success in achieving increased powers	Changes to relevant laws and regulations
42. From 2018, and in anticipation of increased powers, Mimal will provide relevant training in enforcement and surveillance skills for its rangers	Rangers trained for enforcement and surveillance	Ranger training records, qualifications
43. Mimal will strengthen working relationships with police and NLC to increase landowner control over illegal access	Better engagement with police and NLC on access issues	Annual counts of surveillance trips, incidents reported, outcomes, photography and mapping
44. Mimal will continue to seek resources to enable unoccupied outstations to again be permanently occupied, in part as ranger stations. (See also Project 2)	People living and working on outstations	# reoccupied outstations and estimated people days on country, outstation-based employment rate
45. Mimal will use roadside signage and information sheets as well as online media to engage with tourists using the Central Arnhem Road, encouraging respect for country and improved safety for strangers on our lands	Communication strategies are effective	# & placement of communication products, online usage, community and visitor feedback
46. Mimal will provide advice and support to landowners seeking to establish tourism enterprises that target increasing dry season travellers	Family-based tourism is supported	# tourism ventures with advice or other support given, MOUs specifying support
47. Development of a ranger base at Bawurrbarnda by 2018 will allow Mimal Rangers and Arafura Swamp rangers to work much more closely on issues including controlling illegal access and engaging positively with tourists	Bawurrbarnda base operational	Annual days ranger presence, activities reported in annual reports
48. By 2022 Mimal will be strongly involved in the establishment of a visitor centre and, with the Roper Gulf Regional Council, offer weed washdown facilities for visitors and other users	Visitor centre & weed washdown established	Level and nature of Mimal engagement in visitor centre and weed washdown operations

Project 8 HEALTHY WATERS

OVERVIEW

The Healthy Waters Project seeks to improve a number of healthy country indicators for our asset **Djula and Wah: Freshwater Places**, and indicators for **People and Culture** and **Our Special Places** by direct conservation action for a smaller number of specific djula and wah places. These high value sites will demonstrate the power of feral animal exclusion around a number of springs and develop rangers' capacity to monitor and compare water quality and other indicators including species diversity from managed sites and from unmanaged sites. It will include surveillance for the arrival of bad water weeds. The effects and extent of erosion, siltation and nutrient overload on water bodies will be better understood, mapped and communicated to landowners. This project has strong links to our projects **Changing Herd Management** and **Other Pests and Diseases** since reducing numbers of large herbivores and feral pigs around wetland areas will have a significant effect on health of country and amenity for our people.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	METHOD & METRIC
Reducing threats & increasing asset health	Tell us if our strategies are working	How we measure effort & effectiveness
49. By 2020 we will have completed a three-year BHA-funded healthy waters project at a number of demonstration sites where fencing will exclude feral animals and rehabilitation will be undertaken	Project fulfils objectives and scope of works	Measure against SOW, work effort, fencing installed, photo-point records, mapping, attitude change measured
50. By 2020 we will have baselines of ecological and cultural values, threats and current condition of project sites, informing broader management and restoration needs elsewhere; ecological monitoring sites and photo monitoring points will be chosen	Baseline surveys of values, threats and conditions completed	Survey data, monitoring and photopoints selected, integrating with larger M&E plan
51. In 2018–2019 a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan for the BHA-funded project will be incorporated in the Mimal M&E Plan (see Project 1, Strategy 8)	Healthy waters monitoring processes integrated within M&E plan	HCP methods utilisation and outputs, training needs identified, linkages with larger M&E plan
52. Application of two-toolbox knowledge will enable better understanding of processes and impacts of erosion, siltation and nutrient overload, informing larger scale management actions	Two-way understanding of processes informs management planning	HCP/two-toolbox utilisation, survey data and analysis
53. The Healthy Waters project will engage strongly with elders and the Gulin Gulin School nursery project collecting native seeds for use in rehabilitation work, and supporting indigenous knowledge and language conservation in nursery activities	Nursery is producing appropriate stock and indigenous botanical knowledge is being taught	Nursery production records, use of indigenous botanical language
54. Women rangers and other women will be involved in special project activities; a womens ranger coordinator vital to build this capacity and manage project activities will be employed from 2018–19.	Women's engagement with project activities, employment of women's ranger coordinator	# women participating, project activities included in annual reports, transparent recruitment processes followed
55. The BHA-supported healthy waters project will build community awareness of water quality issues leading to greater support for strong action to improve water quality throughout our management area	Community awareness and support increased	Feedback in biennial surveys



MEMBER CLANS AND ESTATES

People affiliated with these clans and estates are eligible for membership of Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation.

As well as connections to father's country, affiliations through mothers, mother's mothers, mother's mother's mothers and father's mothers are recognised. The board of directors may choose to accept other kinds of affiliation.

BININJ KOIYEK CLANS

Kalkalbbi from Kurlbakurlba

Balngarra and Mirradja from Wybalk and Bamdibu

Bunungu from Burumngaddan, Barnkul,

Bunungu and Rirridjilngu from Bayamirri

Kabudubud from Badjaray/Bokoledji

Marananggu, Bunungu and Warrayhngu from Karraram

Kurudjuru from Burrwandji

Lambirri from Willawarra

Marananggu from Bigedi

Karradjarngu and Bunungu from Bokanaridj

Nabulu from Djaddikku (Dubdub)

Mabulu from Bamirdakkorlo

Wundjiba from Gulumburru

Birngandu and Wambukungu from Womana

BININJ BULDJDJAN CLANS

Dakkal from Djimdjimrurrk

Marrku from Dubudarr and Malakadjalkno

Marrku and Dakkal from Barnkay/Kalbberan/Kibun

Burarrwurr/Brarrwurr from Bokkadadja or Madamuli

Wariba from Namarrkoworro

Wakmarranj and Kowarrang from Momob

BININJ KARRI CLANS

Karnbirr from Djohmi

Mandjawalwal from Bobbalinjma

Barabba from Wurrkeyele/Mimbrung

Bularldja from Morhyi /Lorlo

Moenemoene from Belbban

Buluwunwun and Nabadbulu from Barakmino

Ngubu from Madbuy

Murrkana from Kalidjarinj



Above: Billy Yaluwanga.

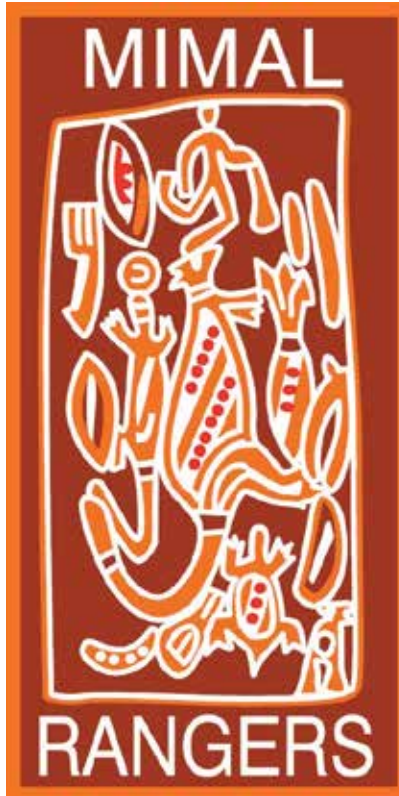
When the Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation was formed in 2015 the founding members and directors decided the new corporation should have a new logo.

The new logo reflects the outstanding and ongoing achievement of Mimal Rangers in bringing back healthy fire management to Dalabon and Rembarrnga lands.

The logo is based on the painting (below left) by Billy Yaluwanga whose mother was a Wakhmarranj clanswoman. His painting shows the fire hawk Karrkkanj dropping a burning stick to start new fires as he hunts for insects and lizards.



Above: Karrkanj the brown falcon (*Falco berigora*).



Above: We still hold deep respect for the original Mimal logo created 20 years ago by the esteemed elder balang George Jungawanga.



MIMAL  **LAND MANAGEMENT**