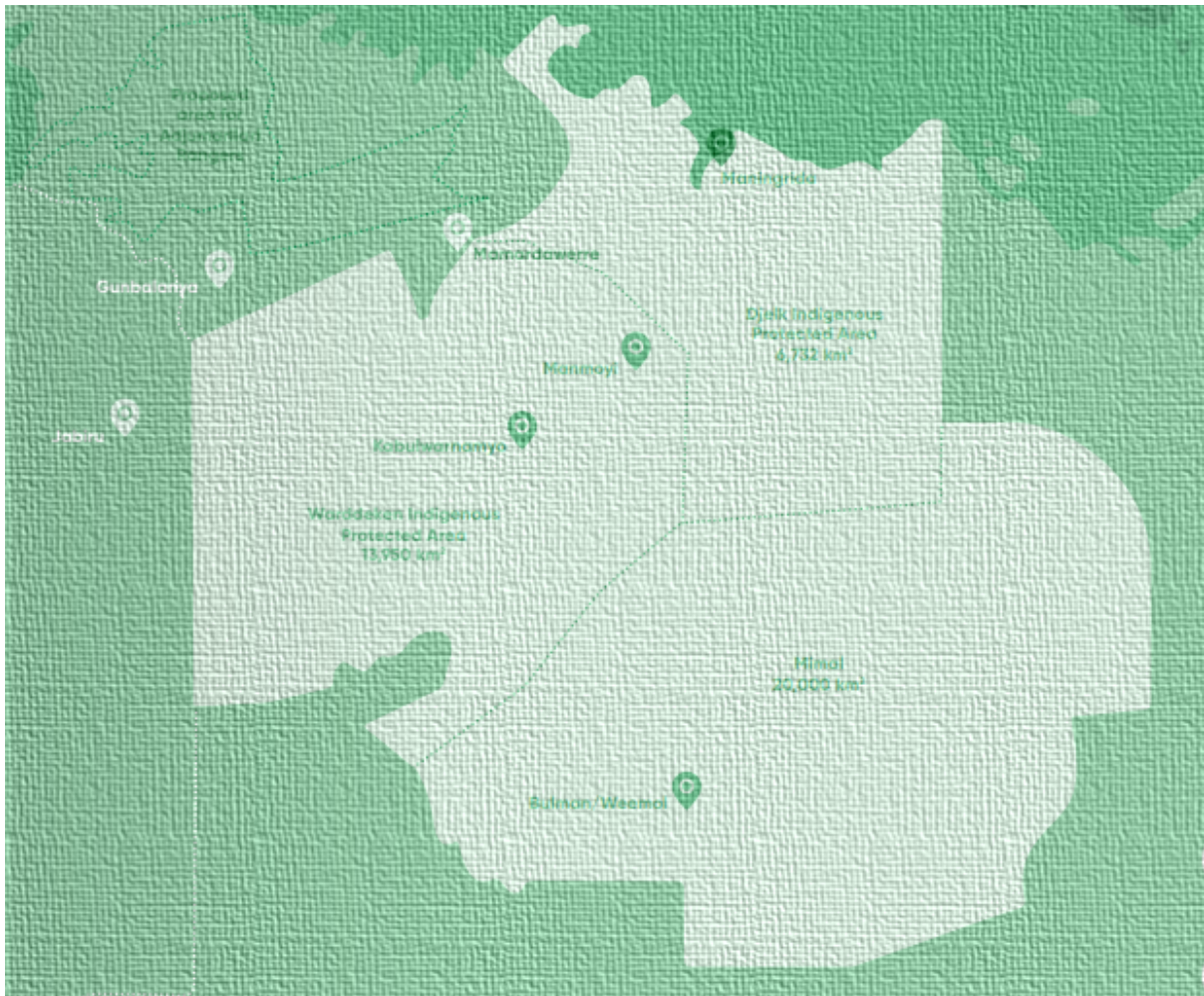


A TRUST FOR COUNTRY

REVIEW OF KARRKAD KANJDJI TRUST



FINAL REPORT

by Dermot Smyth

Smyth and Bahrdr Consultants
PO Box 1202 Atherton Qld 4883

dermot.smyth48@gmail.com

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Foreword

It has been a privilege to review the journey of Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, and especially to listen to the experiences of KKT's partners, donors, directors, staff and others as they reflected on that journey since its foundation a decade ago. The generosity of their contributions to the Review is a measure of appreciation of KKT's achievements and challenges to date, and the shared hope that the Trust will continue to deliver significant outcomes for Aboriginal management of Country in West and Central Arnhem Land well into the future.

I wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank all the individuals who contributed to this Review through interviews, groups discussions and sharing information, and to those who also provided valuable feedback on a draft version of this report.

I am particularly grateful to KKT Directors and staff who met with me on 12 March in Melbourne to discuss preliminary outcomes of the Review. Those discussions helped to clarify many of the issues and suggestions that had arisen during preceding interviews and built momentum for implementing suggestions emerging from the Review.

Finally, I would like to thank KKT's CEO, Stacey Irving, who assisted in many ways to facilitate all stages of the Review and for her commitment to ensuring that the Review was as thorough and transparent as possible.

Dermot Smyth
May 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report describes the processes undertaken during the Review of the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT), and summarises the comments and suggestions received during interviews and group discussions for consideration by the KKT Board and others with an interest in the Trust. The Report also contains analysis and suggestions from the reviewer based on consideration of information obtained from the interviews and other sources.

The purpose of the Review is to assess the approach taken by KKT since it was established in 2010 to raise funds to support the management of Country by founding partners Warddeken Land Management and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and other Indigenous land managers in West and Central Arnhem Land.

The overall assessment of KKT's fundraising achievements and impacts is very positive with respect to support provided to Warddeken Land Management and two new Indigenous partners. However, a prolonged lapse in engagement with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation has resulted in little support for the Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers who are administered by Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation; efforts to re-invigorate collaboration with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation are currently underway.

Donors expressed a high level of satisfaction with their engagement with KKT, and with the Indigenous partner organisations which their donations supported. This satisfaction included formal and informal communication with KKT, project outcomes and experiences during visits to Ranger bases in Arnhem Land.

Indigenous partners who have so far benefitted from KKT's fundraising efforts expressed a high level of satisfaction with the outcomes they have been able to achieve as a result of funds raised by KKT. They also reported positive interactions with KKT during the development and implementation of project proposals. While they acknowledged that hosting donor visits requires a significant commitment of time and personnel, these visits are regarded as highly beneficial, leading to ongoing organisational and personal relationships with donors, and sometimes also with donors' families.

Notable achievements made possible through KKT fundraising to date include the establishment of Nawarddeken Academy, native species surveys, rock art surveys, significant increase in the employment of women Rangers and support for the establishment of new Ranger bases, enabling Traditional Owners to return to living on Country.

Donors and Indigenous partners expressed admiration for the commitment and effectiveness of KKT's Directors and staff in achieving significant growth in fundraising in recent years. All contributors to the Review acknowledged the difficulties in achieving the original goal of establishing a large endowment fund, and supported the successful transition to project-based fundraising since 2014. While there was general agreement that project-based fundraising should continue, there was widespread support for also maintaining the endowment fund goal, potentially as a mechanism for achieving sustainable funding for core operations of Indigenous partner organisations.

The transition of KKT from its initial goal of establishing a large endowment fund to its current successful project-based fundraising approach, occurred through building support for establishing the Nawarddeken Academy at Kabulwarnamyo. In this respect, KKT's journey mirrors the experience of many Indigenous Rangers groups which began in response to

particular land management needs and subsequently matured into fully fledged Indigenous environmental management agencies. Like many small non-government organisations, KKT has experienced its own governance, management and resourcing challenges to reach its current period of consolidation and growth, with every prospect of continuing to fulfil its goal of supporting Indigenous management of Country into the foreseeable future.

There were differing opinions on the merits and risks of expanding KKT's role to potentially include additional partners and areas within and beyond West and Central Arnhem Land. There was a consensus, however, that any expansion should be subject to important caveats such as maintaining adequate support for the founding Indigenous partners, developing appropriate governance arrangements to reflect the addition of new Indigenous partners, and ensuring that any expansion is driven by Traditional Owners of Country. Meanwhile, there is a strong case for consolidating support for KKT's existing partners before contemplating any expansion; in particular, there is an urgent need to follow through with renewed efforts to collaborate with foundation partner Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation.

Most interviewees recognised that KKT's approach to securing philanthropic support for Indigenous management of Country could potentially be replicated elsewhere in the Northern Territory, as well as elsewhere in Australia, while acknowledging that this is a complex undertaking. Among other things, it requires significant start-up funding, a common understanding of what philanthropic project-based fundraising entails, employment of staff with professional fund-raising experience, appropriate governance structures and appointments, and a commitment from all parties to sustain the effort over time.

Participants in this Review made many suggestions for improving the already successful operations of KKT. These suggestions are presented and discussed throughout the report and are also summarised in the **Conclusions** Section. Some of these suggestions are already being taken up or are under consideration by KKT, and the extent to which they can be implemented will depend on competing priorities and available resources.

The **Conclusions** Section also includes a summary of **Lessons Learned** and reviewer's **Concluding Remarks**, which could be helpful to other Indigenous groups seeking to establish a philanthropic organisation with similar aims to KKT.

Finally, the Report notes that most of the interviews, discussions and collation of information occurred prior to the impact of COVID-19 in Australia. While some donors have already indicated their continued support for KKT, including offers to provide greater flexibility for the use of their committed funds in response to the pandemic, the longer-term availability of philanthropic funding in a more constrained national and global economy is difficult to predict. The conclusions and suggestions arising from this Review should, therefore, be considered in the light of these COVID-induced uncertainties.

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Report

This Report describes the processes undertaken during the Review of the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT), and summarises the comments and suggestions received during interviews and group discussions for consideration by the KKT Board and others with an interest in the Trust. The report also contains some analysis and comments by the reviewer, based on consideration of information from the interviews and other sources.

The report also takes into account feedback on an earlier Draft Report which was sent to all individuals and organisations that contributed to the Review at that time. Following that feedback, some additional interviews took place which also contributed to this Report.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the KKT Review are contained within the current funding agreement between Warddeken Land Management Ltd and the Northern Territory Government, which includes the following required outcome:

By 2021 an independent Review of the success of growing the connection between Indigenous land and sea managers and philanthropists will be completed, documenting and critically analysing what has been learned to support other organisations wishing to undertake similar engagement work.

The funding agreement also stated that:

A Contractor will be engaged to provide an independent Review of the approach taken by Warddeken and Djelk IPAs in initiating and developing KKT as a model for the engagement of philanthropy in the support of their work.

And that:

Warddeken and KKT are at the forefront of bringing the Northern Territory and Indigenous Land Management to the attention of the philanthropic sector and the gains made by this project could enable and inspire other ranger groups in the NT to harness these opportunities.

The KKT Board subsequently engaged the author of this report to undertake the KKT Review.¹

Scope of the Review

In order to meet the Terms of Reference described above, the Review sought to:

- Evaluate KKT's approaches and achievements in raising funds to support its Indigenous partner organisations to achieve their goals in managing Country in West and Central Arnhem Land;
- Provide opportunities for KKT's partners, donors, Directors, staff and others to reflect on KKT's journey and future direction;

¹ Dr Dermot Smyth has many years' experience supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and sea management across Australia through planning, training and research projects. He has been involved in the development and implementation of Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) policy as a consultant to government and Indigenous organisations since the inception of the IPA Program in the mid-1990s.

- Summarise suggestions made during the Review for consideration by the KKT Board and partner organisations;
- Draw lessons from KKT's experience to provide potential guidance for similar organisations that may be established to support Indigenous land and sea management elsewhere in the Northern Territory and beyond.

While the Review focused on the *approach* taken by KKT to raise funds to support Aboriginal land management, information obtained during the Review also included feedback on the *impact* of that support. By combining an assessment of the fundraising approach with some knowledge of the funding impact on the ground, it has been possible to provide an appraisal of the KKT's *effectiveness* in meeting its goals.

The KKT Story

The concept of a philanthropic fund dedicated to supporting Aboriginal land management was initiated over 10 years ago by the then CEO of Warddeken Land Management Ltd (Peter Cooke), as a mechanism to support the work of Warddeken Rangers in managing Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) on the Stone Country of the West Arnhem Land escarpment. The concept was progressed in discussions with Traditional Owners of Warddeken IPA and the adjacent Djelk IPA.

KKT was created in 2010 through a Deed of Trust between the Founders (Peter and Janis Cooke) and the Trustee (Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd) in order to establish a fund for "certain charitable and environmental purposes". The Deed defines the Trust's eligible charities as:

Warddeken Land Management Ltd and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation Ltd² and any other incorporated charitable organisation whose objects include the protection and preservation of the land of West and Central Arnhem Land, including through implementation of Indigenous Protected Area management plans.

The Deed defines Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) as:

Land that Indigenous landowners have agreed to include within Australia's National Reserve System and to manage for the protection of natural and cultural features in accordance with internationally recognised standards and guidelines, in particular protected area standards established by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature³.

Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd, KKT's Trustee, is governed by a Board of Directors comprising members nominated by KKT's Indigenous partner organisations, an anthropologist with many years' collaborative research experience in Arnhem Land, as well as several donors with expertise in fundraising and philanthropy. The Constitution of Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd provides for a maximum of nine and a minimum of three Directors, two of which must be nominated by KKT's two founding Indigenous partner organisations. The Constitution also provides for the Board to increase the maximum and minimum number of Directors if required. Directors can also nominate Alternative Directors to represent them at Board

² Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation employs and provides administrative services to the Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers who manage the Djelk IPA.

³ The IPA concept throughout Australia has subsequently expanded to include marine areas, as well as multiple terrestrial tenures (including national parks and other conservation reserves) comprising the traditional Country of an Indigenous group, though not necessarily legally owned by Indigenous people.

meetings if the Director are unable to attend. At present, membership of the company comprises only the current Directors, who are listed on the KKT website (www.kkt.org.au).

For ease of communication, the two organisations – Karrkad Kanjdji Trust and Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd – are referred to as a single entity (KKT), though legally and administratively are separate.

KKT's Mission was set out in the Financial Report for the year ending 30 June 2012:

Create a sustainable finance mechanism that will assist to fund Indigenous Ranger groups and landowners to protect and manage the natural and cultural environment of West Arnhem Land.⁴

The 2012 Financial Report provides the following objectives to guide KKT's work over the subsequent 15 years:

Build the Trust

- *KKT manages at least \$30m (in 2012 equivalent) in 15 years' time.*
- *KKT has a supporter base of at least 350 individuals and organisations in 15 years' time.*
- *Continuous support for and participation in the Trust at a Board level by Bininj⁵ will be maintained.*

Manage the Trust

- *KKT governance will meet national best practice standards.*
- *KKT earns above benchmark investment returns with an annual cash flow from investments of more than \$1m within 10 years (depending on market conditions).*
- *KKT is effectively staffed to support ongoing fundraising and the IPAs' success.*

KKT's staff initially comprised a full time Development Director and a part-time Business Manager, funded through donations from KKT's Founders, the Pew Foundation and The Nature Conservancy. KKT's current staff comprises a CEO, Philanthropy Manager, Grants Coordinator and Communications, and Operations Coordinator.

For the first eight years of KKT's operation, its Indigenous partners comprised only Warddeken Land Management and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC). In 2018, Mimal Land Management, responsible for managing 20,000km² of Country adjoining the southern boundaries of Warddeken and Djelk IPAs, became KKT's third Indigenous partner. In 2019, Demed Aboriginal Corporation, the administrative organisation for the Adjumarllarl Rangers who are responsible for managing Country on the coastal plain to the north of Warddeken IPA, also became a KKT partner. One of the goals of the current funding agreement between the Northern Territory Government and Warddeken Land Management is that KKT should add another Indigenous partner by the end of 2021.

⁴ In all other document, the geographical area in which KKT operates is described as "West and Central Arnhem Land".

⁵ Aboriginal people of West and Central Arnhem Land.

While KKT is not on track to achieve the original goal of a \$30m endowment fund within 15 years, the goal of achieving an annual income of more than \$1m within 10 years has been achieved, albeit through project-directed donations rather than through annual financial returns from an endowment fund as originally envisaged. KKT's transition from endowment-focused fundraising to project-based fundraising is described further below.

The above brief summary of the KKT story does not do justice to the singular and collective efforts of many individuals, Bininj and Balanda, who drove, managed and nurtured the KKT concept from its infancy, through its first few years of struggle, to the established organisation it is today. An attempt to capture this larger story was made by way of an attachment to the previous draft of this report. It was clear from the feedback received, however, that further input is required to develop a narrative of KKT's history that adequately captures the contributions of all the key participants. As a step towards that goal, KKT is currently compiling a timeline of key events in KKT's journey that may form the basis of an agreed history of the organisation in the future.

Review Steps

The process for undertaking the Review included the following steps:

Background reading

- KKT Annual Reports from financial years 2011/2012 to 2018/2019;
- Examples of Project Reports provided to donors and other funders;
- KKT website and documents on the website library, including IPA management plans, Healthy Country plans and partners' Annual Reports;
- KKT Newsletters;
- KKT Facebook posts;
- Karrkad Kanjdji Trust's Deed of Trust;
- Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd.'s Constitution.

Interviews

In discussions with KKT's CEO, a list of potential interviewees was developed to provide access to a range of experiences and associations with KKT since its foundation, though focusing primarily on KKT's activities in recent years. Additional suggestions for interviewees arose during the course of the Review. As a result, 32 telephone and face to face interviews were conducted with individuals and representatives of organisations associated with KKT. These include:

- KKT's CEO, Philanthropy Manager and Grants Coordinator;
- All but one of the current KKT Directors, some of whom are also KKT donors⁶;
- Two former CEOs and a former Development Director of KKT;
- A former Chair of KKT's Board;
- Nine KKT donors from commercial corporations, large and small philanthropic foundations, environmental conservation organisations and private individuals;
- Current and former CEOs and other staff of three KKT's Indigenous partners: Warddeken Land Management, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and Mimal Land Management; and

⁶ KKT donors are also referred to as supporters or funders in some KKT publications

- The Manager of the Northern Territory Government's Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program.

Interview topics included:

- Association and experience of interviewees with KKT;
 - KKT goals, history, challenges and achievements;
 - KKT funding priorities;
 - Fundraising strategies, including endowment funding and/or project-based funding;
 - Communication and access to information;
 - Potential increase KKT's partners and/or geographic reach;
 - Other suggestions to guide the future direction of KKT.

The duration of interviews ranged between 30 and 90 minutes, with most lasting at least one hour.

Meeting with KKT Board

The reviewer met with KKT Directors and staff in Melbourne on 12 March 2020 to:

- Brief Directors on preliminary outcomes of KKT Review;
- Seek further input from Directors into the Review;
- Stimulate discussion among Directors about issues that have arisen during the Review;
- Map out steps to finalising the Review.

The meeting with the Board was helpful in clarifying issues that had emerged during the Review, and stimulating additional reflections and suggestions which contributed to the analysis below. The gathering in Melbourne also provided an opportunity for face to face interviews/discussions with Indigenous Directors, as well as the Manager of Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers⁷, who had been difficult to reach by telephone at their respective bases in Arnhem Land.

Analysis of information

Analysis of information obtained during the Review involved:

- Transcribing notes taken during interviews and the meeting with the KKT Board;
- Compiling a list of issues derived from the interview and meeting notes, and from consideration of Annual Reports, Project Reports and other documents.

While all issues are inter-related in some way, they have been assigned to the following categories for ease of presentation and discussion in this report:

- Fundraising strategies
- Funding priorities
- Meeting needs and expectations

⁷ Formerly known as Djelk Rangers, their current formal name is Bawinanga Rangers. In this Report, on the advice of the CEO of Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, they are referred to as Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers.

- Communication
- Strategic planning

During the approximately 30 hours of interviews, discussion with interviewees inevitably covered a wide diversity of topics and opinions, some of which were beyond the scope of the Review, albeit connected in some way to KKT's activities. The information and analysis below only include opinions and suggestions from interviewees that clearly relate to the Review Terms of Reference.

Limitations of the Review

Although the reviewer has met with Traditional Owners and Rangers in Western Arnhem Land on many occasions in the past, including one visit to Kabulwarnamyo and several visits to Maningrida, the Review process did not include on-ground consultations with Traditional Owners, Rangers and other staff associated with the IPAs and Indigenous land management organisations associated with KKT. Instead, the Review is based largely on telephone interviews, face to face interviews with KKT Directors and others at a meeting in Melbourne, as well as analysis of documents and web-based information, and feedback on a draft version of this report.

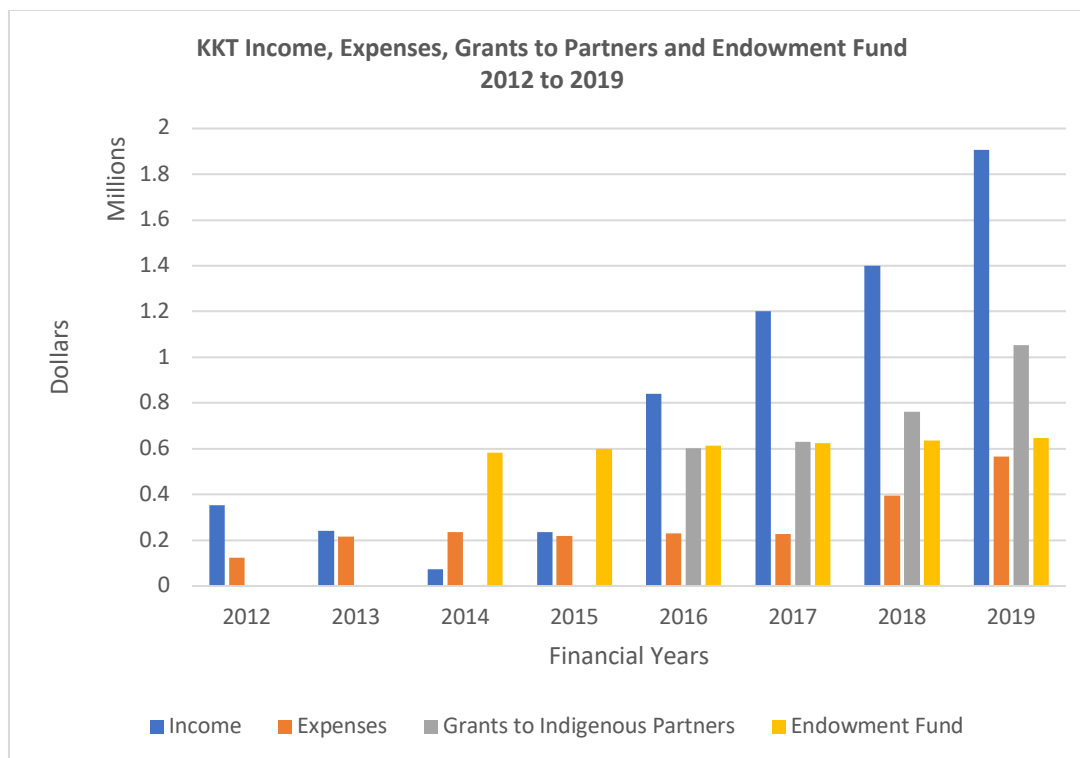
The other key limitation is that most of the interviews, including the face to face meeting with the KKT Board and others in Melbourne, occurred immediately prior to the travel restrictions, economic implications and other myriad uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is still too early to predict the full implications for KKT and its Indigenous partners, some of KKT's key fundraising activities, such as events in capital cities, face to face donor meetings, and travel to Arnhem Land, including for donor visits, have all been put on hold, and KKT is looking to other methods of engaging with supporters and partners.

While some donors have already indicated their continued support for KKT, including offers to provide greater flexibility for the use of their committed funds in response to the pandemic, the longer-term availability of philanthropic funding in a more constrained national and global economy is difficult to predict. The conclusions and suggestions arising from this Review should, therefore, be considered in the light of these COVID-induced uncertainties.

2 FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

Overview

The chart below provides an overview of KKT's income, expenses, grants, and endowment fund from the financial years 2010/2011 to 2018/2019, based on information contained in KKT's Annual Financial Statements and Reports.



While the chart presents income, expenses, grants and endowment fund on a yearly basis, the relationship between these financial metrics is more complex than the bar graphs might suggest. For example, most donations (income) typically arrive near the end of each financial year, and are then allocated as grants to Indigenous partners in the following financial year. Similarly, operational expenses in one financial year reflect the effort made to secure donations which may relate to income or grants received the following financial year. This time lag should be taken into account when considering the relationships between income, operational expenses and grants in any one year.

The chart clearly shows the two distinct phases in KKT's fundraising history: a substantial decline in income each year from 2012 to 2014 (notwithstanding the funding boost to the endowment fund in 2014⁸) and a substantial increase in income each year from 2015 to 2019. These two phases reflect the transition from the original focus on building a large endowment fund to the current focus on project-based fundraising, which commenced in 2014.

⁸ While contributions were made to the endowment fund earlier than 2014, it first appears as a line item in the financial records in that year, when a second tranche of previously committed funds was received.

Endowment funding

As noted above, KKT's original aim was to establish a large endowment fund from which annual investment returns would provide sustainable funding to support the founding Indigenous partners and other similar organisations in West and Central Arnhem Land. This approach was based on similar philanthropic funding models internationally, and strongly encouraged by the two US-based organisations, The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which together provided financial contributions in the early years, complementing the initial donation from KKT's Founders. Though the results of an initial feasibility study indicated that a start-up Trust supporting Indigenous land management in Arnhem Land would be unlikely to attract sufficient philanthropic funding to build a substantial endowment fund, this goal was pursued for several years, in accordance with the conditions of the international donations.

Most of the initial available funding was expended building contacts with philanthropists, facilitating visits by potential donors to Warddeken and Djelk IPAs, and other fundraising activities. By 2014, despite receipt of the second instalment of TNC's contribution to the endowment fund in that year, it was clear that the goal of achieving a \$30 million endowment fund was not succeeding, and that the continued existence of the Trust was at risk due to rapidly diminishing operational funds. Interviewees associated with KKT at that time spoke of the dire situation facing the Trust, which led to the decision to transition to project-based fundraising.

Despite the failure to establish a large endowment fund, several interviewees expressed the view that KKT gained useful experience in making contact with philanthropists and that Warddeken Rangers and Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers also gained experience in hosting visits by potential donors - experiences which have been valuable in developing the project-based approach in recent years. Other interviewees queried those beneficial outcomes and emphasised that the key lesson from those early years was that the US model of establishing a large endowment fund simply didn't work, and was not appropriate for KKT in Australia at that time.

While project-based fundraising is now KKT's focus, the goal of establishing a sizable endowment fund has not been discarded. KKT's endowment fund at 30 June 2019 was \$645,775 and the KKT Board's current policy is to reinvest annual returns into the fund to help it grow. During interviews with several donors an alternative approach was discussed, whereby annual returns, though currently relatively modest amounts, could be directed to tangible environmental, cultural and operational outcomes as a way of demonstrating to potential donors the benefits of growing the endowment fund: showing that a larger endowment fund would be capable of sustainably delivering even greater year-on-year outcomes for the management of Country.

Project-based funding

Donors expressed strong support for the project-based funding approach, for a variety of reasons, including:

- Funding guidelines of foundations and other donors often require targeted funding, with measurable, reportable outcomes;
- Donors generally like to be associated with identifiable projects and outcomes, rather than providing generic support to an organisation;

- Donors enjoy developing personal relationships with the individuals involved in particular projects;
- Donors may change their priorities from time to time and wish to see explicit outcomes from their investments during their period of support for an organisation;
- Directing funds to identifiable projects enables donors to invest in initiatives that match their funding priorities and personal interests.

Notwithstanding these attributes of project-based funding, many donors acknowledged the need for projects to be genuinely driven by the priorities of Traditional Owners and Rangers, rather than the priorities of funders. Some donors also acknowledged the need for Indigenous land management organisations to have a degree of flexibility in their budgets, to adapt to changing circumstances and to cover the costs of their core operations. Several donors indicated that they had become more relaxed about how their funds were allocated as their relationship with, and trust in, KKT and their Indigenous partners had developed over time. One donor indicated a preference for grantees to determine their own meaningful milestones and reporting criteria.

Interviewees associated with Indigenous land management organisations noted that some of the challenges of project-based funding include:

- Matching their project priorities with the priorities of donors;
- Securing funding for some projects which were not high priorities for donors;
- Making sure that the priorities of Traditional Owners for the management of Country remain paramount;
- The demands in time and personnel of hosting visits by donors wishing to inspect the projects they were funding.

Project-based fundraising involving multiple stages, all requiring time and effort by multiple parties, including:

- Development and approval of a project proposal by a partner organisation;
- Consideration and approval of the proposal by KKT;
- Consideration and approval of the proposal by one or more donors;
- Development of project milestones and contracts where appropriate;
- Monitoring and reporting on project milestones as the project is implemented.

Each stage may require multiple iterations and negotiations, potentially resulting in a considerable time lag between the development of a project concept to the funding and implementation of the project on the ground. KKT is a facilitator in this multi-stage process; it is not simply a project bank that can quickly respond to partners' requests for project funding. While that may have been the case had the pursuit of a large endowment fund been successful, project-based funding is an ongoing, active process of communication between partners, KKT and donors.

Partner contributions to KKT

Where appropriate, KKT receives financial contributions from Indigenous partner organisations which are allocated to KKT's operational costs. These contributions are not a requirement of partners and are negotiated on a case by case basis; they are an expression of support for, and investment in, KKT to increase its capacity to raise further funds for the partners' projects. Warddeken Land Management and Mimal Land Management are currently making substantial annual contributions to KKT from income earned through their carbon abatement collaboration with ALFA (NT), which is discussed further below.

As noted earlier, Warddeken has also transferred funds to KKT which were received through the NT Government's Indigenous Ranger Grant program, in order to significantly increase KKT's fundraising capacity to benefit all Indigenous partners. Further details of this grant are provided below.

Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation provided an initial financial contribution to KKT to support its fundraising capacity, but has not made subsequent contributions as a result of a lapse in collaboration with KKT, described further below.

Partner core funding

Many interviewees, especially those directly associated with Indigenous land management organisations, emphasised the need to maintain funding for the core operations of Ranger groups, including the wages of coordinators and administrators, infrastructure, office expenses, vehicles and other transport costs, engagement with Traditional Owners, and cultural activities not directly associated with specific projects. Some of these costs are met through government grants associated with the Commonwealth Government's IPA program and Ranger employment program, as well as some significant contributions from non-government conservation organisations, such as Bush Heritage Australia, and other costs can be built into project budgets. However, the CEOs of Indigenous partner organisations emphasised the critical need for sustainable core funding to enable the organisations to manage existing and future projects, to meet the aspirations of Traditional Owners to satisfactorily manage Country.

The CEOs of Warddeken Land Management and Mimal Land Management both stressed the critical role played by carbon abatement funding, which can be directed to a wide range of land management and cultural heritage projects in accordance with ALFA (NT) Ltd's charitable objectives⁹, in the establishment and growth of their respective organisations and associated Ranger groups.

Several interviewees suggested strategies to boost core funding for Indigenous land management organisations, including:

- Educating donors about the necessity of the operational component of project budgets;
- Encouraging donors to explicitly contribute to core operational budgets;
- Encouraging greater flexibility in donor contributions to support core operational budgets and/or transfer funds between projects;

⁹ <https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/f8d75ed23c94f4a1b0f52e4766d94d11>

- Advocating for greater and sustainable government funding to support core operations of Indigenous land management organisations.

KKT's operational budget

Until 2014, KKT's operational expenses were devoted to building relationships with potential donors, including facilitating donor visits to Arnhem Land, rather than allocating grants to Indigenous partners. Of more relevance today is consideration of KKT's operational budget after 2014, when the transition was made to project-based fundraising from donors and allocating project-based grants to Indigenous partners.

From 2015 to 2019, operational expenses varied between just under 20% to just under 30% per year. The ratio of expenses to income decreases if the expenses for one year is measured against the income for the following year, taking into account the time tag referred to above. Using this approach, for example, the ratio of expenses to income for the 2018/2019 financial year drops from 28.2% to 20.7%.

Taking into account the time lag between operational expenses in one year and income received the following year, the income return (profit) on the operational expenses for the period 2015 to 2019 are summarised in the table below.

Expenses	Income	Profit	Multiple
2015 \$219k	2016 \$840k	\$621k	x 2.8
2016 \$230k	2017 1,200k	\$970k	x 4.2
2017 \$228k	2018 \$1,398k	\$1,171k	x 5.1
2018 \$395k	2019 \$1,907k	\$1,512k	x 3.8

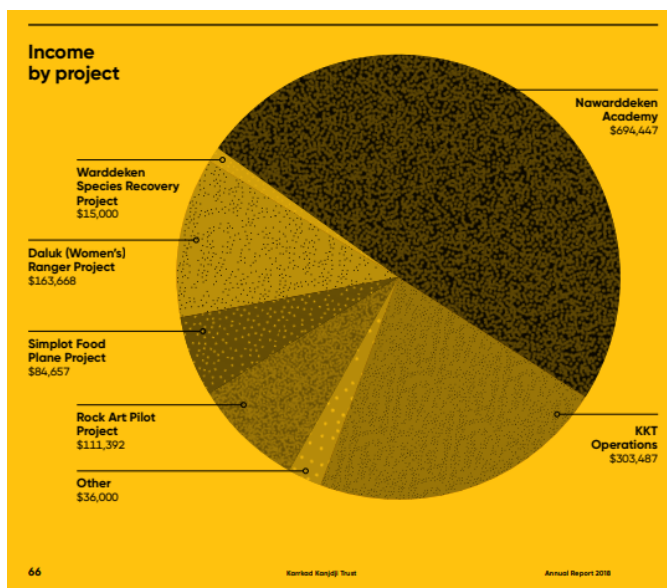
The above table indicates that, since 2015, investment in KKT's fundraising capacity (operational expenses) in one year has been multiplied between 2.8 and 5.1 times in income the following year – a substantial, albeit variable, return on investment.

While it is important for charitable trusts and foundations to minimise their operational expenses in order to maximise the benefits from funds raised, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), with which KKT is registered, cautions against using the quantum of operational expenses as a measure of a charity's effectiveness or efficiency.¹⁰ The ACNC points out that there can be substantial costs to running an effective charity, particularly charities such as KKT requiring highly skilled and experienced staff as well as substantial travel costs to very remote locations in Arnhem Land. A more relevant measure is the impact of the work undertaken using funds raised by a charity. Given its achievements and impacts, and the geographic, seasonal, and cross-cultural challenges within which it operates, KKT's operational budget, particularly since 2016, appears justifiable.

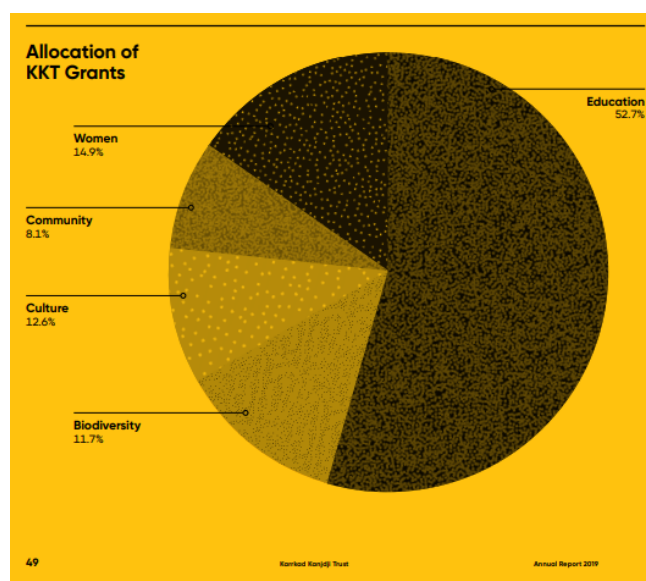
Nevertheless, one interviewee stressed that in philanthropy it is always important to strive "to do more with less", and another noted that KKT's administrative costs were greater than some philanthropic groups. It may be possible for KKT to better communicate the link between operational expenses, the funds raised, and the on-ground impact of projects supported. For example, in KKT's 2017 and 2018 Annual Reports operational costs are

¹⁰ <https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-public/understanding-charities/charities-and-administration-costs>

included in a pie chart which visually displays the relationship between operational funds and income or grants allocated to partners, whereas a similar graphic in the 2019 Annual Report does not include KKT operational expenses (see graphics for 2018 and 2019 below).



2018 Annual Report
KKT expenditure on project grants and operations



2019 Annual Report
KKT expenditure on project grants

This is a matter of how information is communicated rather than the availability of that information, since the actual operational and other costs are detailed in each Annual Report, including the 2019 Annual Report.

Several interviewees enquired whether a study has been undertaken to compare the ratio of KKT's operational expenses to income with the equivalent ratio in other environment-focused charitable organisations in Australia. Other interviewees cautioned that obtaining comparative data is difficult because of differences in how operational costs are reported in different organisations, as well the diversity of purposes, geography, scale, and cultural contexts in which charitable organisations operate. While it may be possible to undertake such a comparative study taking into account all the relevant variables, it has not been undertaken as part of this Review.

As noted above, KKT's operational expenses increased from under 20% to almost 30% from 2017/2018 to 2018/2019, as shown in the budget figures contained in the respective Annual Reports. This increase was due to the ramping up of fundraising effort made possible by the NT Government grant, the results of which can be seen in the increase in donations received in 2019, with a further increase in income expected in 2019/2020. Explaining the increase in operational expenses, via a graphic and/or text, could help educate donors and others about the time lag between expenses one year and income the next, and the enhanced impacts on the ground that can be achieved when increased operational expenses are devoted to increasing revenue from donors.

Similarly, one donor indicated that they would welcome more information on the need for the 15% administrative levy on project-based donations, the implication being that donors would be more comfortable paying the levy if they better understood how it contributes to the success of the project.

At the conclusion of the current three-year NT Government grant, KKT will be in a strong position to assess and communicate the multiplier effect of increased resources devoted to their fundraising effort. This link has already been recognised by a new donor who has recently agreed to make a significant, multi-year contribution to KKT's operating expenses.

Government funding

Many interviewees noted that funds raised by KKT should continue to complement, not replace, funding currently provided by government to support Indigenous Ranger groups in Arnhem Land – the oft-repeated refrain was “KKT shouldn't let government off the hook!”.

Donors, Indigenous partners and other interviewees stressed that project-based funding provided by KKT should supplement, not supplant, IPA and Ranger employment funding currently provided by government. Indeed, some interviewees argued that there is a strong case for a substantial increase in government funding in recognition of the nationally and internationally important work undertaken by Indigenous Rangers to protect and manage Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

Several interviewees contrasted the government funding provided to IPAs with funds provided to national parks, such as Kakadu National Park which is located adjacent to Warddeken IPA. In the 2017/2018 financial year, Kakadu received \$19.8 million to manage a 28,000 km² national park¹¹, while in the same year Warddeken received \$3.6 million to manage a 14,000 km² IPA¹². While much of Kakadu's budget may be spent on managing its large number of visitors, there is clearly a significant difference between government support for national parks and IPAs.

One interviewee used this funding discrepancy between national parks and IPAs as an example of the potential role KKT could play in advocating for greater government support for Indigenous land and sea management generally – strengthening the lobbying undertaken by land councils and other regional Indigenous organisations. Such advocacy that does occur at a national level tends to be undertaken by non-government conservation organisations, which have overlapping, but not identical, land and sea management interests with those of Traditional Owners and Rangers.¹³

Some interviewees cautioned against KKT receiving funding directly from government, to ensure that Traditional Owners and their representative organisations continued to set the agenda and priorities for managing Country, rather than the priorities being set by government – the so-called “tail wagging the dog” concern. Another interviewee noted that this concern potentially applies to all funding sources, including philanthropy, and that the transaction costs of receiving financial support for projects can be greater for philanthropic funding than for government funding – due to the greater resources and effort required to build relationships and maintain communication with philanthropic donors.

¹¹ https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/Auditor-General_Report_2018-2019_49.pdf

¹² <https://www.kkt.org.au/assets/PDFs/Warddeken-AnnualReport2017-18-WEB.pdf>

¹³ The Pew Charitable Trusts (based in the U.S. with a presence in Australia), for example, supports the *Country Needs People* campaign (<https://www.countryneedspeople.org.au/>), which has been effective in generating political support to maintain and expand government funding for IPAs and Indigenous Rangers.

The current NT Government Indigenous Ranger Program grant, comprising \$500,000 over three years, resulted from a proposal developed jointly by KKT and Warddeken Land Management, which formally lodged the grant application. Although the concept of providing funding to a Ranger group to pass on to a fundraising organisation did not fit easily with the Program's assessment criteria, the Program assessment panel and its Indigenous Advisory Group ranked the proposal highly for its innovative approach and approved the application. The Manager of the NT Ranger Grants Program expressed keen interest in the outcome of this Review, with the possibility of the KKT fundraising model being replicated elsewhere in the Territory.

The key objective of the grant, and its transfer from Warddeken to KKT, is to multiply the value of the grant for the benefit of Warddeken and KKT's other partners, including new partners added during the period of the grant. Outcomes of the NT Government grant, which commenced in May 2018, to be achieved by KKT over three years, include:

- Employment of three additional staff to significantly boost KKT's fundraising capacity;
- An estimated increase of \$2 million philanthropic income per year by 2021 and \$18.7 million over ten years, with specified income milestones during the period of the grant;
- KKT to partner with three new Indigenous land management organisations;
- Substantial KKT investment in several Warddeken projects;
- Fully funded projects for two of the additional KKT partners;
- Independent review of KKT.

As the NT Government grant was made to Warddeken Land Management Ltd., and the funds transferred to KKT, there is a grant agreement between the two organisations specifying milestones and outcomes that KKT will achieve during the three-year grant period to enable Warddeken to satisfy the requirements of the NT Government grant.

One interviewee noted that the addition of new KKT partners would require the desire and consent of those potential partners, something that neither KKT nor Warddeken could guarantee in advance. As a result, although the number and timeline for adding new KKT partners is set out in the grant contract, these milestones are perhaps more realistically viewed as aspirations for KKT, and an opportunity for potential partners should they be ready and willing to take it up.

Nevertheless, KKT has already added two new partners, Mimal Land Management in 2018 and Demed/Adjumarllarl Rangers in 2019, in accordance with the NT Government grant milestones. At the Review consultation meeting in Melbourne there was some discussion about whether KKT should focus on re-invigorating its partnership with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, rather than seeking to establish a third new Indigenous land management partner as per the NT Government grant contract.

One interviewee noted that Nawarddeken Academy, which is an independent company with its own governing board (separate from Warddeken Land Management Ltd) and which receives philanthropic support via KKT, should be regarded as a separate KKT partner organisation.

The goal and timeline for the addition of new KKT partners were not included in the original proposal developed by Warddeken and KKT for the NT Government Aboriginal Ranger grant; they were included at the request of the NT Government during the negotiation of the grant contract. While this can be viewed as NT Government influencing KKT's development agenda – a potential example of the tail wagging the dog – it is also an example of the NT Government showing flexibility in its approach to supporting Indigenous land management organisations, in return for which it sought to spread the benefit from the grant beyond the existing KKT partners. All three parties to this negotiated outcome can reassess the merits of this approach at the conclusion of the grant period.

Fundraising methods

Initial donations to KKT came from the Trust Founders, and subsequently from Pew and TNC for the explicit purpose of establishing an endowment fund. As noted above, some of that initial funding was used to develop contacts with potential donors and facilitate visits by potential donors to Arnhem Land. While some additional donations were received during this phase, the donations started to significantly increase when the decision was made to transition to project-based fundraising during the in 2014. The goal of establishing a school at Kabulwarnamyo became KKT's first project-based fundraising effort, supported by individual donors with a strong commitment to education, and who subsequently encouraged other donors to make contributions to KKT.

The school at Kabulwarnamyo, which subsequently became the Nawarddeken Academy supported by government funding and a wholly own subsidiary of Warddeken Land Management with its own governance board. Although the KKT was established explicitly to establish a fund for “environmental purposes”, several interviewees explained that the school was seen as a critical need to enable Rangers to remain at Kabulwarnamyo with their families. Without a school, Rangers would have been obliged to return to larger communities such as Gunbalanya¹⁴ or Maningrida for their children's education. Several interviewees also pointed out that the Nawarddeken Academy is playing a critical role in educating the next generations of Traditional Owners and Rangers who will be responsible for the ongoing management of Warddeken IPA. The school project, and the need to secure funding to make it a reality, became the linchpin for KKT's survival and growth.

Many current donors were introduced to KKT as a result of pre-existing relationships (colleagues, friends of friends etc.) with KKT's past and present Balanda Directors. Subsequently, KKT was successful in securing a grant for the Nawarddeken Academy from the Tyne Reid Foundation, which in turn paved the way for other large philanthropic foundations to become donors as they then assessed KKT to be, in the words of one interviewee, “foundation ready”. Other donors were introduced to KKT through the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network¹⁵.

These networks have been further developed through KKT events held in Directors' homes in Sydney and Melbourne, which provide opportunities for potential donors to learn about KKT's activities and to meet with existing donors and with representatives of the IPAs which KKT supports. These events are supplemented by regular face to face or telephone catchups between individual donors, Directors, and staff.

¹⁴ Also known as Kunbarllanja

¹⁵ <https://www.aegn.org.au/>

KKT's website lists 52 donors/supporters, though the KKT CEO has advised that the Trust is currently engaging with approximately 200 active or prospective donors.

The website also has provisions for receiving on-line donations from the general public and which generates some income for KKT, including from several regular donors. This financial year to date, KKT has received \$1,750 in donations via the website, some of which are regular monthly gifts.

With four full-time staff (one of whom is currently on maternity leave), KKT is in a strong position to continue to grow the donor base and to apply for available philanthropic grants. Several interviewees mentioned the possibility of encouraging donors to make end-of-life bequests.

Many interviewees noted that the devastation caused by Australia's recent bushfires has highlighted the role of Indigenous peoples' knowledge and management of Country, which in turn may help facilitate KKT's fundraising for Traditional Owners' priority projects in Arnhem Land. On the other hand, as noted above, the subsequent COVID-19 pandemic may reduce opportunities for fundraising.

3 FUNDING PRIORITIES

Since the transition to project-based fundraising, KKT's funding priorities have been focused on species conservation, cultural heritage protection, employment of women, education, and community sustainability. Several interviewees noted that supporting carbon abatement projects will be an increasingly important priority for KKT in the future, as it has been for its Indigenous partners for some years.

The following brief overview of achievements and challenges within these priority areas are based on information provided in Annual Reports, Project Reports, Newsletters, and interviews.

Species conservation/Biodiversity

For an organisation established as a charity for environmental purposes it is perhaps surprising that only a relatively small proportion of grant funding has been allocated to this priority until recently. In the 2017/2018 financial year, for example, only 2% (\$15,000) was allocated to species conservation; in the 2018/2019 financial year this increased to almost 12% (\$123,000).

The context for this somewhat modest support for this funding priority is that other funding priorities, such as women's Ranger employment, also contribute significantly to species conservation and, consistent with Bininj cultural values described in IPA management plans and Healthy Country plans, "environmental purposes" embrace all aspects of Country, including rock art conservation and the application and transfer of Traditional Owners' knowledge and practices. As noted above, KKT's support for establishing the Nawarddeken Academy, discussed further below, has made it possible for Rangers and their families to live on very remote Country, implement species conservation projects and ensure that subsequent generations can continue this work.

A further limitation on species conservation funding in the past has been the preference of donors to fund other priorities such as establishing the school, women's employment, and rock art surveys. KKT also has to compete for species conservation funding with many other environment-focused charities, which in turn only represent a relatively small proportion of available philanthropic funding in Australia.

Despite these constraints, KKT funding has supported the Mayh (Species) Monitoring Project, which is monitoring 120 sites within Warddeken IPA, chosen through Traditional Owner knowledge and scientific analysis. Each year since 2017, 60 sites are monitored using camera traps over a five-week period, resulting in a comprehensive data set involving 90 animal species. This project has resulted in the first records of the *djabbo* (northern quoll) and the *bakkadji* (black-footed tree-rat) in Warddeken IPA since the arrival of the cane toad and is providing critical information for fire management in a warming climate with shorter wet seasons.

Cultural heritage protection

KKT is currently funding a five-year project to strategically document the estimated 50,000 rock art sites within Warddeken IPA – part of the cultural heritage of the Arnhem Land escarpment which contains a globally significant body of rock art. This project builds on rock art surveys and conservation carried out by Traditional Owners, Rangers and their research collaborators over many years.

This project also seeks to protect rock art from damage by fencing off areas from feral animals and clearing compostable organic matter to reduce the impacts of wildfire – prioritising areas based on the living knowledge of Elders who have memories of visiting these sites.

Employment of Women

KKT has provided support for women Rangers at Warddeken IPA for several years, through the provision of funding to employ a women's Ranger Coordinator and associated expenses; similar support is now being provided to Mimal Land Management, which also receives support for this purpose from Bush Heritage Australia. Across both these Ranger groups, women now make up almost half of the Ranger workforce.

Through funding women Rangers' coordinator positions, KKT's support has transformative benefits not only for the women Rangers and their communities, but also for the wellbeing of Country and culture. Much of Traditional Owners' knowledge of Country is gender specific, so having women engaged in day to day management activities means that the knowledge of key female Elders can be recorded, applied, and transmitted to younger generations.

Despite having reached almost numerical parity with male Rangers, several interviewees stressed the need to maintain support for women Rangers, which one interviewee referred to as a "fragile employment space". The benefits flowing to individual women, their families and their communities are too important to risk losing by reducing support in the foreseeable future.

Education

As noted elsewhere in this Review, KKT's support for children's education in Warddeken IPA was not only critical for the establishment of the Nawarddeken Academy, but was instrumental in the success of KKT's transition from seeking to build an endowment fund to becoming the project-based fundraising organisation it is today.

Following a decision by Nawarddeken Elders in 2014 to open a school at the Ranger base at Kabulwarnamyo, KKT's fundraising enabled the Nawarddeken Academy to be established the following year, and to become a registered, government-funded independent school in 2019. Student attendance has been very high, enabling Rangers, including women Rangers, and their families to remain at Kabulwarnamyo for long periods and undertake the important work of managing the Warddeken IPA. The combination of Ranger employment and the Nawarddeken Academy have enabled Traditional Owners to live on Country which had been largely abandoned for decades.

The Nawarddeken Academy is delivering primary education, and the more recently established Nawarddeken Early Learning Program is providing job and training opportunities for local women along with early education for zero to five-year-olds. Education at the Academy is delivered by qualified teachers together with Indigenous teaching assistants. Once a week, the students head out to learn on Country, during which adult community members deliver bi-cultural and multilingual components of the Academy's curriculum.

In collaboration with Mimal Land Management, KKT is currently fundraising to support the establishment of a Learning on Country program at Bulman (Gulin Gulin) School, with the aim of fulfilling community aspirations for a two-way education system that supports Indigenous knowledge alongside mainstream education.

Community Sustainability

KKT is addressing a key challenge of maintaining communities and Ranger bases on the remote Arnhem Land escarpment: regular provision of shop-sourced food supplies. Through a partnership with Simplot Australia that began in 2016, KKT funds cover the cost of fortnightly air charter flights from Jabiru to Kabulwarnamyo and Manmoyi in Warddeken IPA; this service has recently been extended to a third Ranger base at Mamardawerre in the IPA.

Carbon abatement¹⁶

Since 2015, all of KKT's Indigenous partners have been receiving funding through their partnership with ALFA (NT) Ltd. ALFA (Arnhem Land Fire Abatement) is an entirely Aboriginal-owned and not-for-profit carbon farming business, initially created by the Aboriginal Ranger groups operating the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project. However, since then, ALFA has expanded to support fire projects throughout Arnhem Land in their engagement with the carbon industry. ALFA is the registered project proponent for five projects which generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) through the savanna burning methodology. ALFA is currently the largest producer of savanna burning ACCUs, accounting for half the carbon credit issuance under the method.

¹⁶ Information provided by ALFA(NT) CEO Jennifer Ansell, KKT CEO Stacey Irving and Warddeken CEO, Shaun Ansell

As noted elsewhere in this report, carbon abatement funding has played a major role in enabling KKT's Indigenous partners to substantially develop their capacity and compliments the core Ranger operations on which KKT-funded projects depend for implementation. Several interviewees foreshadowed the growing importance of this funding source for KKT-funded projects into the future, despite growing challenges to managing northern Australia's hotter summers, later wet seasons, and shorter windows of opportunity for "cool" burns.

The CEO of Warddeken Land Management explained the significance of ALFA funding to KKT and Warddeken as follows:

This funding has been critically important to the revival and ongoing success of KKT. Funding derived from the sale of ACCUs is untied to the demands of government and private funders allowing Ranger groups to invest directly into those activities which are important to them. In the case of KKT, this has resulted in significant funding from the sale of ACCUs to be invested directly by Ranger groups into supporting KKTs core operations. The availability of ACCU revenue has also resulted in funding partnerships where Ranger groups co-invest the proceeds of ACCU sales into both seed funding KKT projects and/or bridging funding gaps, whilst KKT concurrently builds supporter bases for these specific projects. This 'matching' funding is exceptionally important in building trust and respect within the donor community and also allows projects to begin prior to being fully funded by KKT. The role of ALFA Ltd funds in enabling this cannot be understated. Ultimately both KKT and ALFA are stories of Indigenous financial empowerment.

For example, the establishment of the Nawarddeken Academy required the investment of significant ALFA derived funds by Warddeken Land Management. The noted under investment in environmental projects was offset by Warddeken Land Management investing the majority of funds into the species recovery (Mayh) project throughout its duration, whilst KKT rebuilt and began to grow a suitable donor base.¹⁷

KKT is currently collaborating with Demed Aboriginal Corporation, the administrating organisation for the Adjumarllarl Rangers, and ALFA (NT) to increase the project area over which Ardjumarllarl Rangers can undertake fire work and receive carbon abatement income. The role of philanthropic funding, via KKT, is to kick start the project, as it is not until after the first year of managed burning that the carbon credit income will become available and be reinvested in the project thereafter. The funding for this project flows from KKT to ALFA (NT), which coordinates many of the milestones for year one of the project, and will be working closely on the ground with the Adjumarllarl Rangers. Commencement of this project has been delayed by restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. MEETING NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS

Collectively, the interviews conducted for this Review brought into focus KKT's task of meeting the needs of Indigenous partners, while satisfying the expectations of donors. This is being achieved by assisting the parties to understand their respective viewpoints, which are brought together through communication, engagement and governance.

¹⁷ Quote provided by Warddeken Land Management Ltd CEO, Shaun Ansell

Donor-ready Rangers

Several interviewees stressed the need for Ranger groups to reach a threshold of capacity to be in a position to benefit from philanthropic support; one interviewee used the term “donor-ready Rangers” to convey this need to meet donor expectations. The implication is that until a Ranger group has developed clear project proposals, has developed the capacity to deliver the project and has the governance and administrative support to oversee the project, donors will be unlikely to provide support.

One of the important roles of KKT is to reassure potential donors that these capabilities are in place for particular projects – a reassurance that is further developed during KKT-facilitated donor visits to Arnhem Land. KKT also has a role in helping Ranger groups to understand the needs and expectations of donors, and to prepare the host Ranger group for donor visits. Feedback to KKT from hosts and donors after each visit helps build the capacities and understanding of all parties.

Several interviewees expressed concern that the concept of donor-ready Rangers results in well-established, well managed “top shelf” Ranger groups receiving more and more support, while the emerging Ranger groups in their early stages of development, or established Ranger groups experiencing difficulties of one sort or another, are less likely to get the support they need to become well-established or get back on track. The addition of Mimal Land Management and Adjumarllarl Rangers as KKT partners in 2018 and 2019, respectively, has demonstrated KKT’s willingness and capacity to support Indigenous land management organisations at various stages of development. However, KKT’s relationship with Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers has experienced considerable difficulties.

Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers, one of KKT’s founding Indigenous partners, the managers of Djelk IPA and one of the longest established Ranger groups in the Northern Territory, experienced a period of rapid turnover of managers at a time when their host organisation, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, had experienced its own management and financial difficulties. These difficulties were exacerbated by the legacy of a KKT-supported project (Arnhembrand art project) which had not been well received by some individuals and organisations in Maningrida where Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers are based.

While several Bawinanga/Djelk projects were proposed to KKT for fundraising support, they were considered by the KKT Board as incompatible with the environmental/IPA focus of its Deed of Trust and/or not likely to attract donor support taking into consideration all the circumstances at that time. The legacy of these circumstances was a substantial decrease in engagement between KKT and Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers, which has resulted in no KKT-funded Djelk IPA projects since the transition to project-based fundraising.

Interviewees associated with the governance and management of KKT acknowledge that, at the time of the breakdown in communication with Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers, KKT lacked a clear process for considering and approving projects. The difficulties experienced with the Arnhembrand art project led to a new policy whereby future projects considered by KKT must be community-driven and formally endorsed by the Board of KKT’s partner organisations.

Several interviewees noted that, as KKT sought to recover from its failure to establish a large endowment fund, it lacked the capacity to respond to the challenges with its relationship with Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation. Instead, KKT focused on

supporting successful projects on Warddeken IPA and building its donor base, through its well-established working relationship with Warddeken Land Management.

Communication between KKT and Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers was recently reinvigorated, through the participation of the Manager of Bawinanga/Djelk Ranger and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation Director in the most recent KKT Board Meeting and associated discussions and interviews for this Review. The CEO of Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation also contributed to this Review through email correspondence, phone interview, and response to the draft of this report – acknowledging past difficulties in the relationship with KKT and expressing a desire for future collaboration, including hosting a KKT visit to Maningrida.

While these are positive signs for future collaboration with, and support for, one of KKT’s founding Indigenous partners, the difficulties experienced in this relationship provide an opportunity for reflection on whether, and how, KKT and its partners could better respond to similar breakdowns in communication in the future. Could more have been done by KKT to adjust its governance and management practices and protocols to respond to the challenges Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers were experiencing? Could donors have been better informed about the realities faced by remote Indigenous Ranger groups to facilitate engagement during difficult times? What are KKT’s responsibilities when their Indigenous partners, especially their founding Indigenous partners, experience difficulties? What actions can Indigenous partners take to ensure that they can derive the appropriate benefit from a fundraising organisation of which they are founding members?

Ranger-ready Donors

Several donors expressed a desire to learn more about the broader context of IPAs and Ranger groups within Arnhem Land, within the Northern Territory and within Australia. These donors felt well-informed about the particular projects they were supporting, and were keen to learn more about the broader social, political and policy story behind these projects. These discussions led to the notion of “Ranger-ready donors”, as a counterpoint to “Donor-ready Rangers” discussed above.

For donors who have been supporting KKT-funded projects for several years, the backstory of IPAs and Indigenous Rangers tends to emerge over time as personal relationships and on-Country visits fill in some of the gaps. Even among this donor group, some were surprised to learn during the interviews that the first Indigenous Ranger group in Australia was established on Palm Island, Queensland in 1983, that there are currently 76 IPAs (all with Indigenous Ranger groups) across Australia (including many in southern states), that some IPAs include Sea Country, and that some IPAs include existing national parks, marine parks and other conservation areas.

Even the term “Ranger group” could be used as an entry point for providing more context to the activities supported by KKT. Just as there is more to a national park than national park rangers, there is a lot more to an IPA than a group of Rangers. Understanding what that “more” entails, could encourage donors to support IPAs and Ranger groups at every stage of their development, as well as when they face challenges that would otherwise deem them to be no longer “donor-ready”.

While it is appropriate for KKT to focus on building a strong connection between donors and the projects they are supporting, it is possible that a broadening of donors’ understanding of the bigger IPA and Ranger story may lead to enhanced fundraising opportunities. It may also

help overcome some of the donor-ready threshold issues discussed above, through building an understanding of the challenges and steps towards a successful Ranger group.

It is clear from the interviews with donors that many, perhaps all, have found their engagement with KKT and their interactions with Rangers and Traditional Owners immensely satisfying experiences. Many spoke with obvious emotion and passion about the significance of their involvement with KKT-funded projects. For many it has been their first encounter with remote Aboriginal Australia, with the everyday use of Aboriginal languages and with the deep connection between Traditional Owners and their Country and culture. Several donors spoke of the privilege and gratitude they felt for having had this opportunity, which in turn strengthened their commitment to provide ongoing support. One interviewee captured this sentiment by saying “people give to people, not projects”.

The opportunity exists for KKT to build on this connection between donors and Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land to provide a greater understanding of Indigenous Australia beyond the goals and achievements of particular projects.

Ranger-ready Governance

Current membership of the KKT Board includes:

- Directors representing the interests of Traditional Owners and managers of Country who are the holders of cultural knowledge and beneficiaries of KKT funding;
- A Director with expertise in the economic, political, cultural, social context of remote Arnhem Land; and
- Directors with expertise in finance and philanthropy and who are themselves donors to KKT.

Initially, the Traditional Owner Directors were drawn from Bininj clan groups associated with Warddeken and Djelk IPAs. With the recent addition of Mimal Land Management as a KKT partner, a Mimal Director has been appointed to the KKT Board, along with an alternate Mimal Director in the event that the primary Mimal Director is unavailable. The addition of the Demed Aboriginal Corporation as the latest Indigenous partner will require consideration of further expansion to the membership of KKT’s Board. While the Constitution of Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd specifies there must be a Director nominated by Warddeken Land Management and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, there is currently no requirement for representation of new partner organisations on the KKT Board.

The capacity to adapt the makeup of the Board as the number of Indigenous partners increases, is one mechanism for providing “Ranger-ready governance” as KKT evolves. In a broader sense, however, governance can include engagement with KKT’s Indigenous partner organisations and with the wider Traditional Owner groups whose interests those organisations serve. The hiatus in KKT’s engagement with Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers indicates that there could be benefits for reassessing these broader engagement mechanisms to enable KKT to better respond to future engagement challenges. Enhanced engagement mechanisms could be supported by additional or enhanced communication processes, discussed further below.

One mechanism to broaden Traditional Owners engagement in the governance of KKT would be to consider expanding the number of members of KKT’s trustee company, Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd, which is currently limited to the company’s Directors. Currently, Traditional

Owner input into KKT governance occurs via the partner organisation's nominated Director and through KKT's day to day collaboration with partner organisations. An expanded membership of the company could complement existing governance arrangements, and provide an opportunity for direct input by Traditional Owners at annual general meetings of the company.

Several interviewees suggested KKT would benefit from at least one additional Director with philanthropic expertise, to assist in broadening the donor base. As KKT continues to develop there may be a need to access expertise in other fields, such as carbon abatement, biodiversity research and cultural heritage management. One interviewee suggested that the Board would benefit from a Director with experience of managing an Indigenous land management organisation, though not someone managing one of KKT's partner organisations.

Several interviewees suggested one mechanism to access a wider pool of expertise would be to establish, formally or informally, a network of "Friends of KKT" that could be called upon to provide advice on particular matters. Such a group could also include individuals formerly associated with KKT and/or its Indigenous partner organisations, who still maintain a strong interest and commitment to KKT's success.

Many interviewees noted the diversity of passionate and committed individuals who have contributed to KKT's governance and management since its inception, each bringing their unique personalities and skill sets to the different stages of the organisation's development. Such observations are a reminder that while governance and management structures are important, the success or otherwise of organisations, especially small organisations like KKT, ultimately depend on the people who occupy the key positions within those structures.

5 COMMUNICATION

KKT's fundraising achievements are wholly dependent on its capacity to communicate the needs, aspirations and priorities of Indigenous partners, the challenges and successes of their projects, the priorities and expectations of donors and the decision-making and engagement processes of KKT's Directors and staff.

Interviewees expressed a high level of satisfaction with KKT's communication products and processes, both formal and informal. Several donors mentioned that they made a point of reading all KKT's newsletters, Project Reports and Annual Reports as soon as they arrive. Several donors said they particularly appreciated receiving project updates directly from KKT's Indigenous partners whose projects the donors are funding.

Representatives of KKT's Indigenous partner organisations also expressed satisfaction with KKT's communication processes, including being able to readily discuss grant reporting requirements or donor visit logistics by phone with KKT staff whenever necessary. Most interviewees highlighted the value of informal communications between all parties to complement the more formal processes. Interviewees also made some suggestions for enhancing communication, as summarised below.

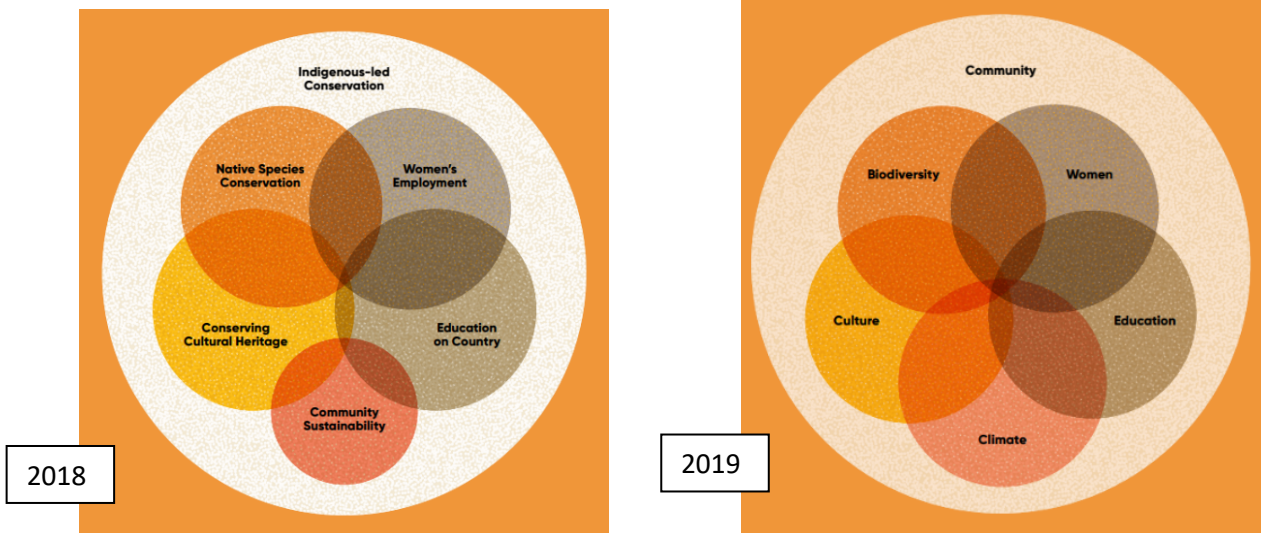
Website and Annual Reports

KKT’s website and Annual Reports were generally very well received. Several interviewees said they found the website informative and easy to navigate. The quality of information and presentation of the Annual Reports improved significantly from 2017 onward, before which more basic annual financial reports with limited additional information had been produced.

Several interviewees drew attention to some inconsistencies in the descriptions or categorisation of KKT’s activities presented on the website and in the Annual Report, and between successive editions of the Annual Report. For example, KKT’s website identifies the following project categories:

- Native Species Conservation
- Protecting Cultural Heritage
- Education on Country
- Women’s Employment
- Community Sustainability

The 2018 and 2019 Annual Reports, however, identify KKT’s “pillars” in the following graphics:



These inconsistencies are minor variations generally describing the same categories of projects, which are explained further on the website and in the Annual Reports. The exception is the “Climate” category (pillar) in the 2019 Annual Report graphic which is not elaborated on in the subsequent text. The implication is not that the presentation of KKT’s activities should be identical in all Annual Reports, but rather that changes should be transparent and easily understood, so that actual changes in direction or priorities can be readily identified year to year.

For example, is there any significance in the five pillars being surrounded by “*Indigenous-led Conservation*” in the 2018 Annual Report and five slightly different pillars being surrounded by “*Community*” in the 2019 edition? Or are these just different representations of the interconnectedness of all activities on Country supported by KKT?

In some KKT communications, the goal of the organisation is described as the protection of West and Central Arnhem Land’s “natural environment”, whereas elsewhere the goal is described as the protection of the “natural and cultural environment”, which more accurately reflects the projects supported by KKT and the values of Country as described in IPA

management plans. These differences in terminology are also reflected in the language used in KKT's foundation documents:

- The Deed of Trust refers to the ***preservation of the land of West and Central Arnhem Land, including through implementation of Indigenous Protected Area management plans;***
- The constitution of Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd describes the purpose of the Trust is to *protect, restore and enhance the natural environment of the West Arnhem Land Plateau including Indigenous Protected Areas;* and
- KKT's 2012 Mission Statement refers to the protection and management of the ***natural and cultural environment of West Arnhem Land.***

The KKT website provides a potential platform to present additional information, such as a bibliography and/or links to additional information about the wider context of Aboriginal Ranger groups and IPAs, or other aspects of Indigenous policy. This information could appear as additional documents in the "Library" webpage and/or as weblinks embedded in the text throughout the website.

The website and Annual Reports are currently the main tools for communicating the activities of KKT to potential donors and the wider world, complemented by more detailed information about particular project proposals provided to potential funders of those projects. While the Annual Reports contain valuable information about each year's activities, they inevitably describe what has happened, rather than what lies ahead. For this reason, several interviewees discussed the potential merits of producing a "prospectus" or something similar to map out the future directions, aspirations, and opportunities for KKT and its Indigenous partners – to provide a more comprehensive, forward looking introduction to the organisation. Another interviewee, however, expressed the view that potential donors might consider a prospectus to be a needless extravagance and would typically prefer to scrutinise Annual Reports and actual project proposals.

One interviewee suggested it would be helpful if the map provided in future Annual Reports could show more clearly the approximate extent of West and Central Arnhem Land. The current map shows a large area of the Top End of the Northern Territory, highlighting the Warddeken and Djelk IPAs and the proposed Mimal IPA, but does not indicate the limits of KKT's area of interest. A similar map, including the adjacent sea Country, would also be helpful on KKT's website, where currently no map is provided. Another interviewee suggested that a revised map could more accurately represent the current IPA boundaries.

As noted in Section 4 above, there are opportunities in the Annual Reports to improve communication and build understanding about operational costs. With the increase in the number of Indigenous partners, there may also be a need to communicate additional information regarding the distribution of grant funding to each partner and an explanation of the basis for that distribution.

KKT newsletters were also very well received. The images, activities and achievements of the Rangers and their communities in Arnhem Land are particularly appreciated by donors living in very different circumstances in southern Australia. Several interviewees suggested that the newsletters could be circulated more widely to build awareness of KKT's and partners' activities among a range of target audiences – government agencies, educational

institutions, potential donors, Indigenous organisations, key individuals with an interest in Indigenous land and sea management etc.

Several interviewees recalled that their first encounters with the name *Karrkad Kanjdji Trust* left them initially confused about its purpose, leading to the suggestion that including a brief descriptive sub-title (such as the example below) on the cover of Annual Reports and newsletter, and perhaps also in letterheads, may remove a potential barrier to communication and engagement with potential donors and others.

Karrkad Kanjdji Trust
Supporting Aboriginal management of Country in West & Central Arnhem Land

Communication with Traditional Owners

Several interviewees raised the potential benefit of strengthening KKT's communication with Traditional Owners associated with KKT's Indigenous partners, which also relates to the role of Traditional Owners in the broader governance of KKT, discussed in Section 4 above. At the same time there was an awareness among interviewees that KKT needs to be sensitive and responsive to the governance and communication arrangements already in place between their partner organisations and Traditional Owners. Perhaps there are opportunities to respectfully build on those existing mechanisms, including through KKT's Facebook page, which already provides opportunities to communicate directly with Traditional Owners.

Communication Strategy

Several interviewees suggested that the important role of communication within KKT's operations could be enhanced by the development of a comprehensive communication strategy, building on the success of KKT's existing communication tools. A communication strategy could enable KKT to better tailor its communication platforms and messages for its different target audiences. Such an approach could be part of a broader strategic planning process discussed below.

6 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Discussions with many interviewees concluded with suggestions around how to plan for the future of KKT, involving all parties and guided by Traditional Owners. The planning process could re-visit the Trust's goals set out a decade ago and could strengthen engagement and governance processes. The resulting strategic planning document could then be used as a communication tool in its own right, or as a source from which to develop targeted communication products for particular audiences.

The success of KKT's transition from its original focus on building an endowment fund to its current role as a project-based fundraiser, along with the prospect of improved engagement with Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers, possibility of additional partners in coming years and the implication if COVID-19, provide a timely opportunity to bring together the various strands of the organisation – governance, fundraising, communication, engagement etc. - into a comprehensive strategic planning document.

A comprehensive strategic plan could build on KKT's current in-house *Organisational Plan 2019-2023* which was developed in the lead up to the application for the current NT

Government funding. The *Organisational Plan* envisages that in 2023 KKT will have five Indigenous partners, support ten projects across all partners, employ five staff members and raise \$3.8 million. A strategic planning process would provide the opportunity to consider the communication, governance and other implications for achieving, or modifying, the goals set out in the current *Organisational Plan*. Among the issues that could be addressed in a Strategic Plan include:

- Optimal resources required for the successful protection of Country managed by partner organisations;
- Strategies and steps required to achieve optimal resources;
- Aspirations, constraints and protocols for increasing the number of KKT's partners within West and Central Arnhem Land;
- Fundraising scope, strategies, targets and protocols;
- Communication Strategy;
- Governance and engagement.

The development of a Strategic Plan would also provide an opportunity for Traditional Owners and partner organisations to consider whether they wished KKT to undertake an expanded role in publicising the achievements of KKT and its partners and/or take on an advocacy role to increase government funding and other support for the Indigenous land and sea management sector – as suggested by several interviewees.

KKT Expansion

The potential expansion of KKT's role, to include additional Indigenous partners and hence provide support for managing additional Country, was the subject of much discussion during interviews. While there were differing opinions on the merits and risks of expanding KKT's role within and beyond West and Central Arnhem Land, and even beyond Arnhem Land, there was general agreement on several key issues, including that:

- Collaboration and support for KKT's existing partners should be consolidated before taking on any additional partners;
- Any expansion should be with the informed consent of KKT's existing Indigenous partners and their respective Traditional Owners;
- That any increase in the number of Indigenous partners should only occur in response to requests made by those potential partners and their Traditional Owners;
- Any expansion of KKT's role should not be to the detriment of KKT's existing partners, especially its founding partners;
- While an increase in the number of KKT partners and geographic reach might bring efficiencies of scale, it would also bring added complexities in managing expectations and coordination.

Several interviewees also noted that any additional Indigenous partners would likely require adjustments to be made to KKT's current governance arrangements, and any expanded role beyond West and Central Arnhem Land would require changes to KKT's Deed of Trust, which currently limits KKT's operation to that area.

One interviewee noted that one of the considerations relating to the potential addition of new Indigenous partners would be whether they are self-administrating like Warddeken Land Management, whether they are administered by another local Aboriginal Corporation, as is

the case for Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers and Adjumarllal Rangers, or whether they are administered by the Northern Land Council, as are many other Ranger groups across the Top End of the Northern Territory.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Based on comments made during interviews with donors, Indigenous partners, Directors, staff and others, and analysis of achievements in education, biodiversity conservation, employment of women, cultural heritage protection and support for Ranger operations, it is clear that KKT is succeeding in its goal of supporting the management of Country in West and Central Arnhem Land – notwithstanding the lapse in collaboration with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and Bawinanga/ Rangers, which is in the process of being re-vitalised.

KKT’s success has been achieved through well-targeted project-based fundraising, rather than through the original vision of establishing a large endowment fund, which has not been achieved. The decision to focus on fundraising to establish the Nawarddeken Academy as the first KKT-supported project resulted in strong donor support, leading to a broadening of projects and philanthropic investment in subsequent years.

In pursuing the initial goal of establishing a large endowment fund, KKT was attempting two challenging tasks simultaneously: the establishment of Australia’s first philanthropic organisation devoted to supporting Indigenous land and sea management, and doing so via a funding mechanism (endowment fund) which is not common practice within Australian philanthropy. So far, though the combination of these two challenges has been unobtainable so far, KKT has become established as Australia’s first philanthropic organisation devoted to supporting Indigenous land and sea management and has every prospect of prospering into the future.

Summary of suggestions arising during the Review

Suggestions that have arisen during the course of this Review, many of which are already underway or are under consideration by KKT, are summarised below in the order they are discussed in this report, along with comments provided by KKT’s CEO.

SUGGESTIONS FROM INTERVIEWEES	KKT COMMENTS
<i>1. Annual returns on endowment fund investments</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate annual investment returns to targeted activities in order to demonstrate the ongoing benefits of a more substantial endowment fund. 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<i>2. Supporting Indigenous partners’ core operational budgets and project budgets</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate donors about the necessity of the operational component of project budgets 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage donors to explicitly contribute to core operational budgets 	<i>Underway</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage greater flexibility in donor contributions to support core operational budgets and/or to enable the transfer funds between projects 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for greater and sustainable government funding to support core operations of Indigenous land management organisations 	<i>Under consideration</i> (advocacy laws for environmental organisations are complex and must be navigated carefully)
3. KKT operational expenses and project levies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance communication of KKT's operational expenses and their beneficial impacts for Partners 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information about the purpose and impact of the 15% administration/operational levy on project-based donations. 	<i>Under consideration</i>
4. Government funding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that KKT's fundraising complements, rather than replaces, government funding for IPAs and Rangers 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that government funding doesn't dictate priorities for managing Country 	<i>Outside KKT scope</i> (projects are community-led)
5. Fundraising strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities for end-of-life bequests by donors 	<i>In current fundraising strategy</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop opportunities for on-line donations from the general public 	<i>In current fundraising strategy</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore fundraising opportunities arising from greater awareness of Indigenous land management following last summer's catastrophic bushfires 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Indigenous partners to further develop carbon abatement funding opportunities 	<i>Under consideration</i>
6. Women Rangers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue support for employment of women Rangers 	<i>Underway</i>
7. Support for emerging and existing Ranger groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how best to support emerging Ranger groups 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how KKT governance and management processes can respond to administrative or other challenges experienced by Indigenous partners 	<i>Under consideration</i>
8. Supporting Ranger-ready donors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how donors could be better equipped to understand and respond to administrative and other challenges experienced by Indigenous partners 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide donors with access to information about the broader context of IPAs and Ranger groups and other related areas of Indigenous policy 	<i>Under consideration</i>

9. Governance and engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review opportunities to broaden engagement with Traditional Owners associated with Indigenous partners 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt membership of KKT’s Board to meet current and future requirements for appropriate representation of Indigenous partners and other expertise 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider expanding the membership of Karrkad Kanjdji Ltd. to provide greater input by Traditional Owners 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider establishing a formal or informal network of “Friends of KKT” to provide additional input into KKT decision-making and engagement 	<i>Under consideration</i>
10. Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance clarity of information provided in Annual Reports and website, including operational costs, distribution of grants among partners and consistency in terminology relating to KKT’s objectives 	<i>Underway</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise website to provide additional contextual information on IPAs and Rangers 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the current map provided in Annual Reports to better indicate the geographic area in which KKT operates, and more accurately represent the current IPA boundaries; include the revised map on the KKT website 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider expanding the distribution of KKT newsletters to broaden awareness of KKT’s and partners’ activities 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider adopting a descriptive sub-title that explains KKT’s purpose 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how to strengthen communication with Traditional Owners associated with Indigenous partners 	<i>Under consideration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive communication strategy, building on the success of KKT’s existing communication tools 	<i>Underway</i>
11. Strategic Planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with partners develop a Strategic Plan to set the direction and priorities for KKT over the next 5 to 10 years 	<i>Underway</i> <i>(Next planning cycle to commence in 12 months)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the planning process, consider whether KKT should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase its role in publicising the achievements of KKT and its partners; Advocate for greater government support for Indigenous land and sea management; Continue to increase the number of Indigenous partners, in the context of ongoing obligations to its founding partners and other current partners. 	<i>Under consideration</i>

Lessons learned

Key lessons to be learned from KKT's experience, which could be considered when establishing similar philanthropic organisations, include:

- While KKT has demonstrated that it is possible to establish a philanthropic organisation to support Indigenous management of Country in Australia, it requires sustained commitments by its associated Indigenous partners, substantial start-up funds and professional fundraising staff in order to achieve the potential of ongoing philanthropic support;
- Once the organisation is established, appropriately staffed, well governed and well supported by Indigenous partner organisations, the annual income available for supporting management of Country could be expected to be approximately three to five times the cost of raising that income;
- Begin with targeted fundraising effort to support a well-defined project that has clear objectives;
- While an endowment fund may be a possibility in the long term, it should not be the initial fundraising focus;
- Think strategically about the needs for communication and engagement with all parties;
- Sound, adaptive governance and management structures are important, as is the selection of all the individuals involved;
- Strategic planning and development of projects should be guided by Traditional Owners;
- Build in a review process –perhaps every three to five years;
- Communicate openly about the complexities, context, and challenges of supporting Indigenous management of Country;
- Consider how to build capacity in Traditional Owners, Rangers, Directors, staff and donors to make them all as “ready” as possible for their respective roles in achieving success.

Concluding Remarks

The almost four-decade history of independent Indigenous land management organisations and Ranger groups in Australia is one of Indigenous leadership and empowerment, based on the determination of Traditional Owners to protect, manage, and sustainably use their land and sea Country. The first Indigenous Ranger groups were established before there were any dedicated government programs to support Indigenous Rangers. That support came later, and though it has grown substantially over the last 20 years, through the Indigenous Protected Area Program and various Commonwealth, State and Territory Indigenous Ranger employment and grant programs, government funding has still not provided the support needed to properly protect the cultural and natural values of Country.

Indigenous people and their organisations have responded to that unmet need by steadily diversifying their sources of funding and other support, for example through fee-for-service contracts with environmental management, fisheries and quarantine agencies, development of tourism and other enterprises, partnerships with non-government conservation organisations, universities and other research institutions, and the generation of carbon abatement income from fire management programs. This diversification of support has helped fill some funding gaps for many Indigenous land management organisations and built a degree of resilience to

funding uncertainties from government sources, but under-resourcing of Indigenous land and sea management remains a significant issue across Australia.

The establishment of KKT represents an important development in addressing this issue. As a professionally-staffed fundraising facility dedicated to supporting the management of Country in West and Central Arnhem Land, KKT provides access to philanthropic funding which had hitherto not been available for this purpose. It also raises the possibility that similar fundraising facilities could be established to support Traditional Owners and Rangers elsewhere in the Northern Territory, and elsewhere in Australia. However, KKT's experience also reveals the challenges of achieving success in this endeavour.

KKT began with substantial start-up funding, well-established Indigenous partners, and well-credentialed governance and advice. After unsuccessfully pursuing the goal of building a substantial endowment fund, KKT made the transition to project-based fundraising which is now delivering significant benefits for one of its foundation partners and its two more recent partners. The fact that the other foundation partner has not yet benefited from KKT's fundraising efforts, is a reminder that it can be challenging to maintain the commitment, communication, and collaboration between all the parties involved to make the KKT "model" work.

Had the endowment fund goal succeeded, KKT may have become more like a development bank for Indigenous land and sea management in West and Central Arnhem Land, dispersing income earned from the fund to its partner organisations. Such a funding model would potentially have fewer moving parts, less complex relationships and communication, and less time lag between developing and funding projects. The reality, however, is that KKT's success relies on ongoing relationship building and management, involving Traditional Owners, Rangers, partner organisations, fund-raisers, Directors, and donors.

The message for other Indigenous land management organisations contemplating KKT's example is that it can be done, but also that it is a complex undertaking. Among other things, it requires significant start-up funding, a common understanding of what philanthropic project-based fundraising entails, employment of staff with professional fund-raising experience, appropriate governance structures and appointments, and a commitment from all parties to sustain the effort over time.

The current NT Government funded project, whereby Warddeken Land Management received a grant to transfer to KKT to employ additional fundraising staff, is a novel approach to government support for Indigenous management of Country. This initiative showed the trust and confidence Warddeken and the NT Government have in KKT's ability to significantly add value to the grant funding. KKT has rewarded that trust by demonstrating that this approach can multiply the available funds by three to five times, and hence multiply the benefits not only to Warddeken, but to other KKT partners as well. It remains to be seen whether the longer term goal of achieving sufficient philanthropic income to continue the employment of the fundraising staff beyond the life of the current grant will be achieved, especially considering the potential financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Encouragingly, KKT is currently on track to meet its income milestones towards this outcome.

These achievements so far raise the possibility that additional government funding could be invested in KKT (via one or more of their partners) to multiply available funds to further

support management of Country, and/or government funding could be invested in assisting other Indigenous land management groups to establish their own fundraising facility – while acknowledging the challenges such initiatives involve. Another option would be further government funding to KKT to continue to increase their number of partners and their geographical reach beyond West and Central Arnhem Land – a prospect that was widely discussed during interviews for this Review.

The dominant view among interviewees was that further expansion in KKT's operations should only be undertaken with extreme caution, given the need to consolidate existing relationships and partnerships, and especially to address the lapse in collaboration with one of KKT's foundation partners. Though further expansion in the number of KKT's partners is a component of the current NT Government funding contract, it will be best achieved, if at all, at a pace set by Traditional Owners and their representative organisations rather than on a pre-determined timeline.

Nevertheless, there was speculation among some interviewees that KKT could mature into a fundraising facility to support Indigenous management of Country across a wider region, such as the whole of Arnhem Land, and that, over time, similar regional fundraising facilities could be established elsewhere in Australia – perhaps a network of such facilities covering all of Australia. However, it is clear that these speculative goals, if they are ever to be achieved, need to begin, and be nurtured, at a local level where Traditional Owner authority and obligation to Country reside. KKT's history indicates that establishing a fundraising facility from the outset to service two Traditional Owners groups in two locations, with two separate administrative organisations proved to be extremely difficult.

In practice, KKT has serviced the interests of, and been supported by, one partner (Warddeken) over most of its journey, only recently servicing two additional partners (Mimal and Demed/Adjumarllarl) and is yet to successfully collaborate with its other foundation partner (Bawinanga/Djelk). While KKT recovered from the unsuccessful quest to establish a large endowment fund, it will not have achieved its original vision until it successfully rebuilds its relationship with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and brings tangible support to the Bawinanga/Djelk Rangers. Bawinanga, for its part, will not reap the benefits that collaboration with KKT can bring, until it actively engages with and nurtures KKT's potential to support the management of Djelk IPA. Discussions with all parties involved in this relationship during the course of the Review indicate a strong willingness to move on from past difficulties and to begin a new era of mutual support and reward.

Finally, this Review has highlighted the critical role that access to untied funding has played in the development of Indigenous land management organisations in West and Central Arnhem Land, exemplified by the contribution carbon abatement funding has made to supporting core operations, initiate otherwise unfunded projects and invest in KKT. As part of its successful and growing relationship with Australian philanthropy, KKT has an opportunity to further build the Ranger-readiness of donors by helping them fully grasp the Indigenous empowerment, and on-ground environmental and cultural outcomes, that result from untied funding to well governed, effective Indigenous land management organisations.

It is obvious from discussions with some donors that this awareness is already growing, with room to grow further. It is an awareness based on trust – trust that Traditional Owners, their Rangers and their land management organisations know best how to prioritise the protection and management of Country, and that the interconnectedness of people, Country, culture and

nature means that the investment in one benefits the whole. This interconnectedness, and the priorities to sustain it, have already been laid out in Traditional Owner guided IPA management plans and Healthy Country plans, the implementation of which KKT has been established to support.