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BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Scoping remote community resilience, building better governance, finding new opportunities to grow resilience

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An Australian Government Initiative

CRC AUSTRALIA

THE NORTH AUSTRALIAN BNH CONTEXT

750,000 People
+ Communities from ‘outer regional’ to ‘very remote’.
+ Remote communities mostly inhabited by indigenous Australians (% rises with remoteness)
+ Poor infrastructure
+ Disconnect with emergency management paradigm
+ Poor infrastructure
+ Low population densities
+ Poor communications
+ Low levels of formal education and training
+ Limited labour market experience } The "Gap"
+ Poor health

= Almost no formal emergency management capacity
= No spare capacity to fall back on
= No “Plan B”
= Very limited community resilience

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Objective:

Using a ground-up approach, identify, test and trial opportunities to develop resilience in remote north Australian communities.

Key Component Projects:

1) Scoping remote north Australian community resilience and developing community governance models through action research
2) Development challenges and opportunities for building resilient remote communities in northern Australia (PES)

Direct links to north Australian Landscape Fire Management and Training projects

SCOPING RESILIENCE & BUILDING GOVERNANCE

Objectives:

1) Summarise the aspirations of communities for social and economic development and meeting cultural obligations & identify which are most vulnerable to natural hazards

2) Describe present approaches to dealing with natural hazards and outline Indigenous views of their appropriateness and effectiveness

3) Describe human capability, including skill sets and experience, formal institutions and social networks, presently available within participating communities

4) Develop an Indigenous view of options for improvement, emphasising approaches to make better use of and grow existing capability

PES OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENT REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Objectives

1) Articulate key contemporary land use management, institutional, and policy challenges facing Indigenous people and local communities in north Australia

2) Explore opportunities afforded through emerging economies related to climate change mitigation, carbon trading, and ecosystem services to help address identified challenges

3) to undertake rigorous valuation of Ecosystem Services (ES) & Payment for Environmental Service (PES) benefits which can underpin remote community resilience

4) community policy development and community resilience outcomes in north Australian and adjacent regions

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Project Team

Resilience and governance
Dr Bev Sithole (ARPNet)
Hmalan Hunter-Xenie (ARPNet)
ARPNet Practitioners
Mr Glenn James (NAILSMA)

PES
Dr Kamaljit Sangha (CDU)
Prof Jeremy Russell-Smith (CDU)
Prof Bob Costanza (ANU)

Cluster Lead End User
Suellen Flint (WADFES)

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

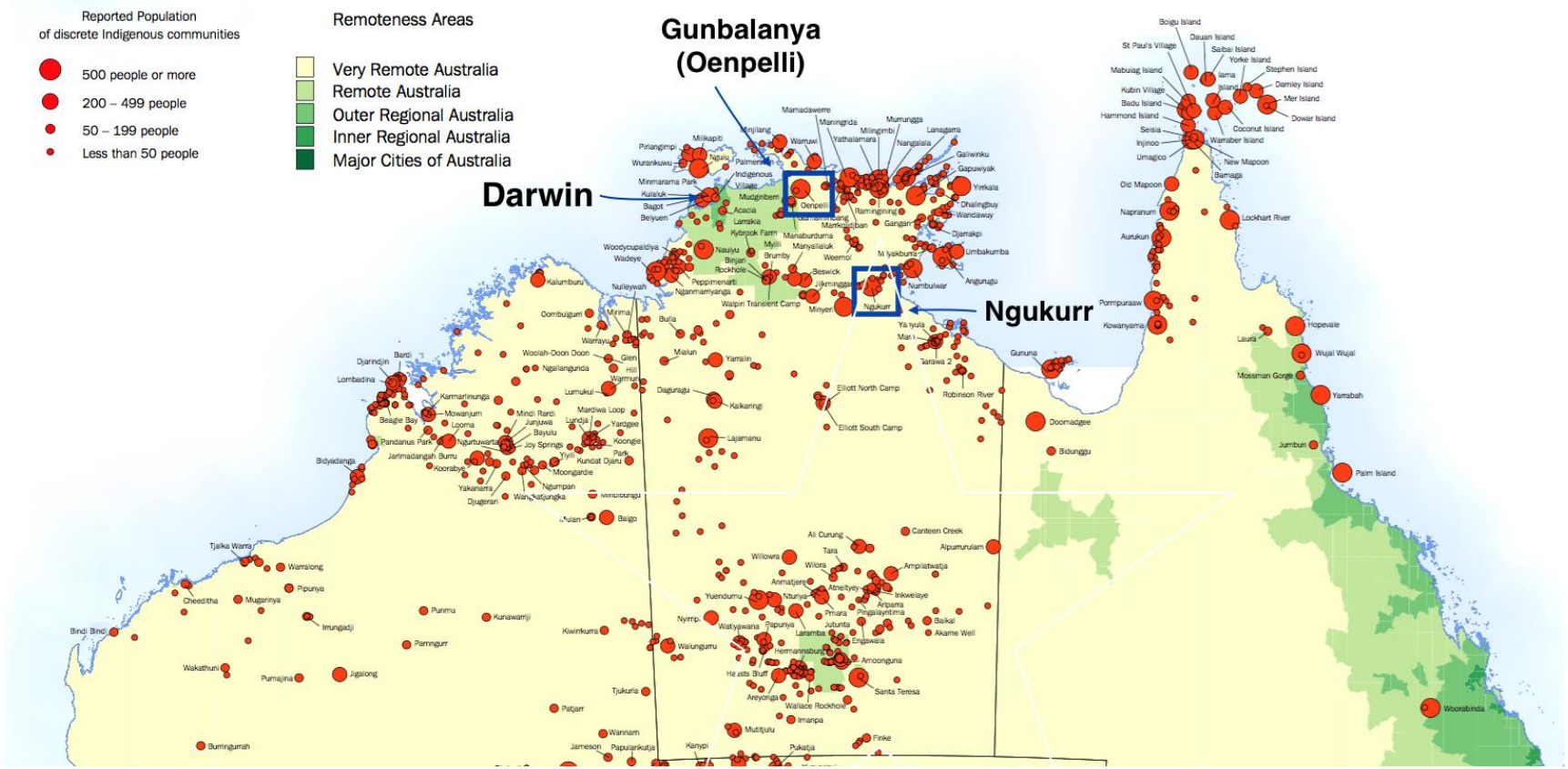
1) Assessment of resilience and EM governance issues at two remote NT communities, Ngukurr and Gunbalanya

2) 2015 post-cyclone assessment in NE Arnhem Land

3) Assessment of PES opportunities in remote communities and regions

4) Developing agency & institutional linkages across northern Australia, and with other researchers

NGUKURR & GUNBALANYA SCOPING STUDY



Indigenous communities as defined by ABS 2006

ARPNet researchers undertaking preliminary assessments (scoping study)

2 teams of community-based indigenous researchers have been trained in Ngukurr and Gunbalanya [16 community based practitioners from ARPNet]

NGUKURR

(on Roper River 300km south-west of Katherine, NT)

GUNBALANYA (Oenpelli)

NGUKURR & GUNBALANYA SCOPING STUDY

1) **ARPNet**—In-depth interviews with 194 community members (~10% sample)

2) **NAILSMA**—

(a) Review of remote Indigenous community governance issues

(b) Mapping of hard and soft infrastructure

3) **CDU**—assessment of PES opportunities

NGUKURR & GUNBALANYA SCOPING STUDY—MAIN FINDINGS

ARPNet—

- People see themselves as highly resilient to many adversities,
- But that resilience is "often challenged by government ineptitude and failed policies"

NAILSMA—

- Review reinforces failings of 'top down' approaches,
- Soft infrastructure cultural assets (e.g. kinship system) should be seen as social capital, not as a vulnerability

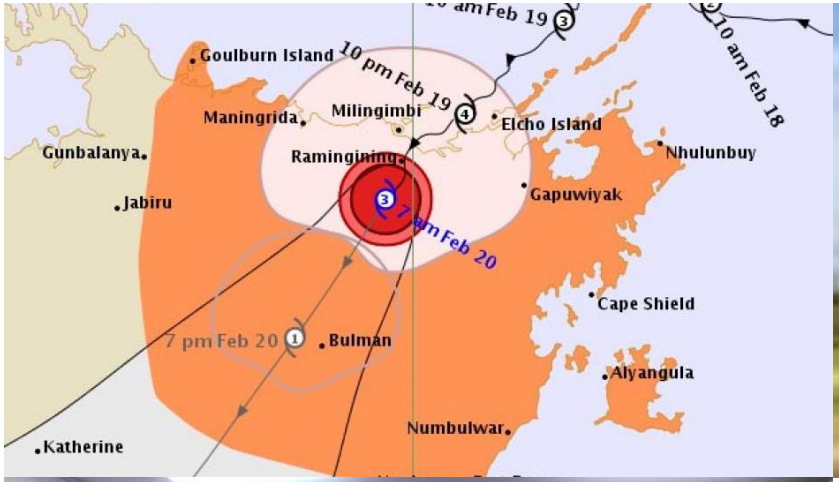
CDU—

- Substantial opportunities for developing a viable land management economy (e.g. 'savanna burning'),
- Trained ranger groups can provide an effective community asset in times of EM needs

NGUKURR & GUNBALANYA SCOPING STUDY—RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

- *Living with* Widdijith - *Protocols for building community resilience* **(Sithole *et al.*, ARPNet)**
- *Literature review on community resilience in remote north Australia* **(NAILSMA)**
- *Community asset mapping report* **(NAILSMA)**
- *Evaluating resilience in two remote Indigenous Australian communities* **(Morley *et al.*, UNE)**
- *Building the resilience of remote Indigenous communities in northern Australia* **(Sangha *et al.*, CDU, NAILSMA, ARPNet)**

NE ARNHEM LAND 2015 POST-CYCLONE ASSESSMENT—CYCLONE LAM



NE ARNHEM LAND 2015 POST-CYCLONE—*BURRUMALA* (STRONG WIND) PROJECT

- Community-led research project involving Yalu community leaders and researchers, NAILSMA, Australian Red Cross

- 40 interviews conducted to date

- Intention of building a strong organisational 'community interface' that can partner with external agencies (including EM)

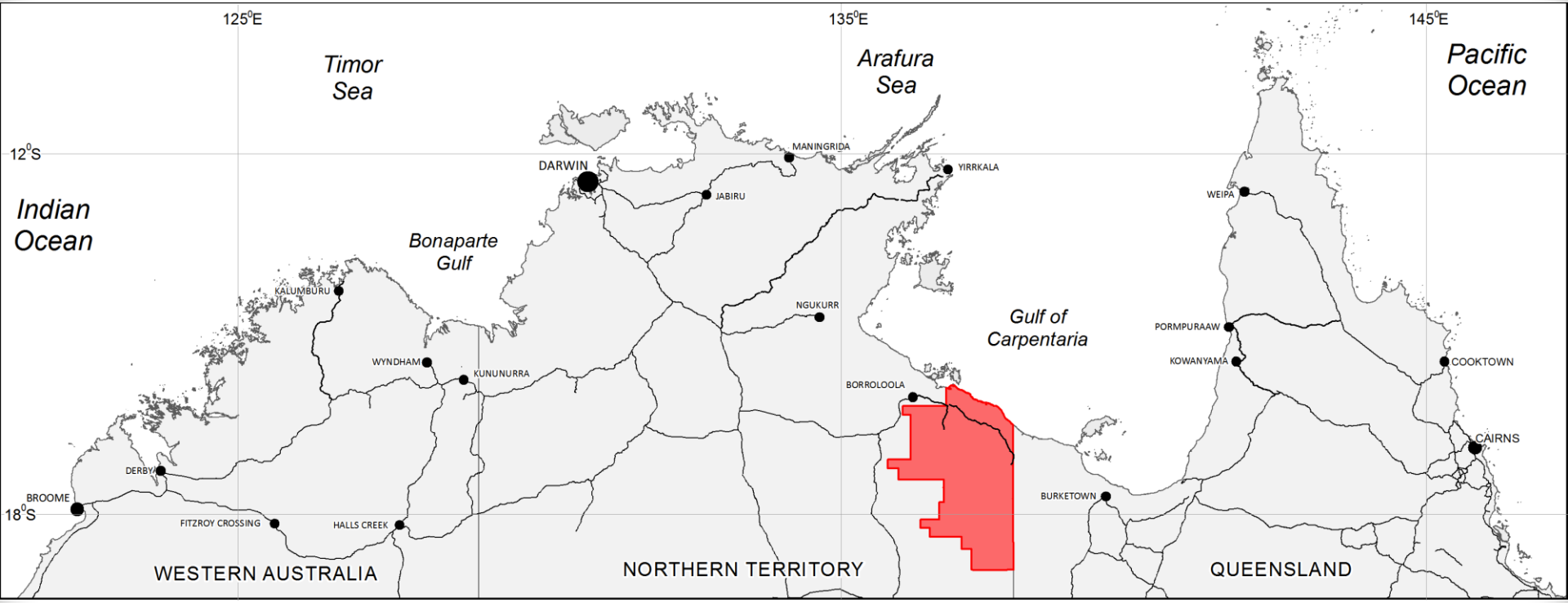
ES & PES PROJECT COMPONENTS

1) Contribution to Ngukurr and Gunbalanya study--complete

2) Assessment of ES and PES opportunities at Fish River Station (Indigenous property in NT)—ready to submit to journal

3) Ongoing assessment of ES & PES for north Australian estate—as chapter contribution to forthcoming book

ES & PES PROJECT COMPONENT—NT GULF REGIONAL CASE STUDY EXAMPLE



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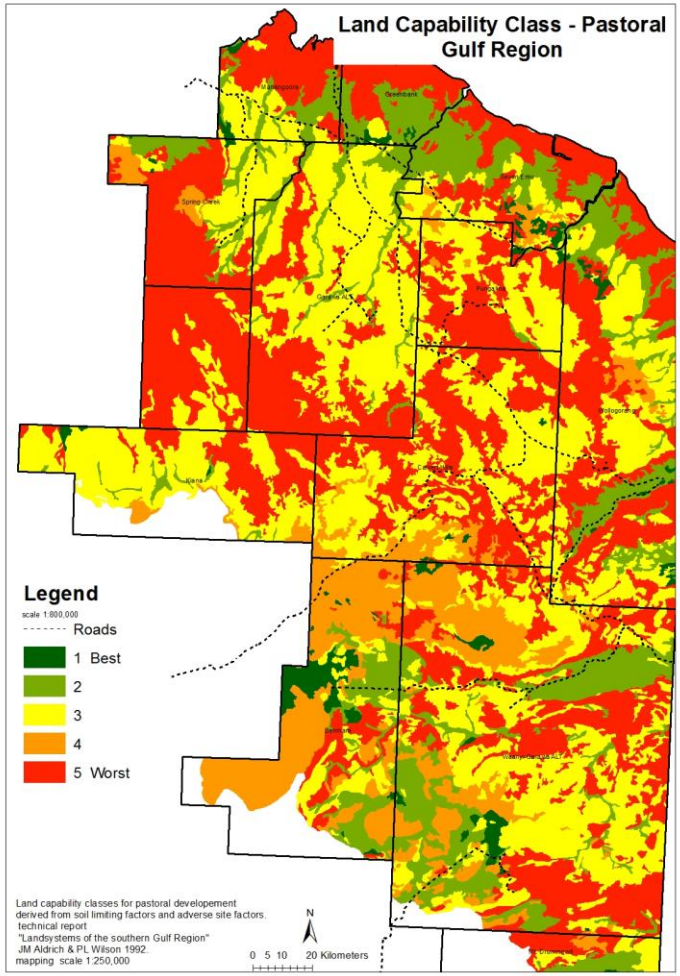
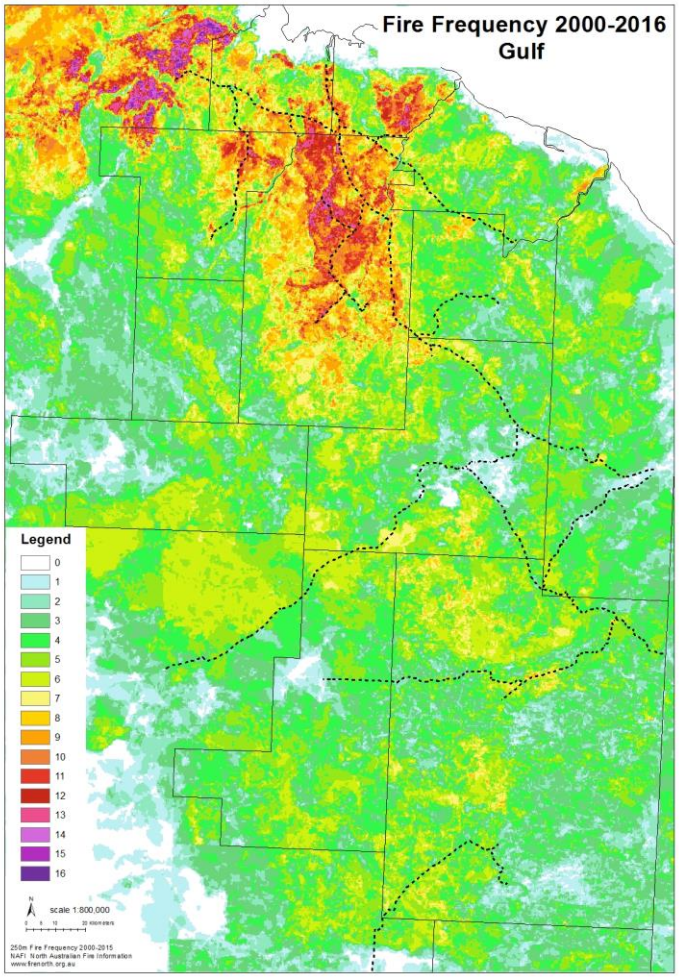
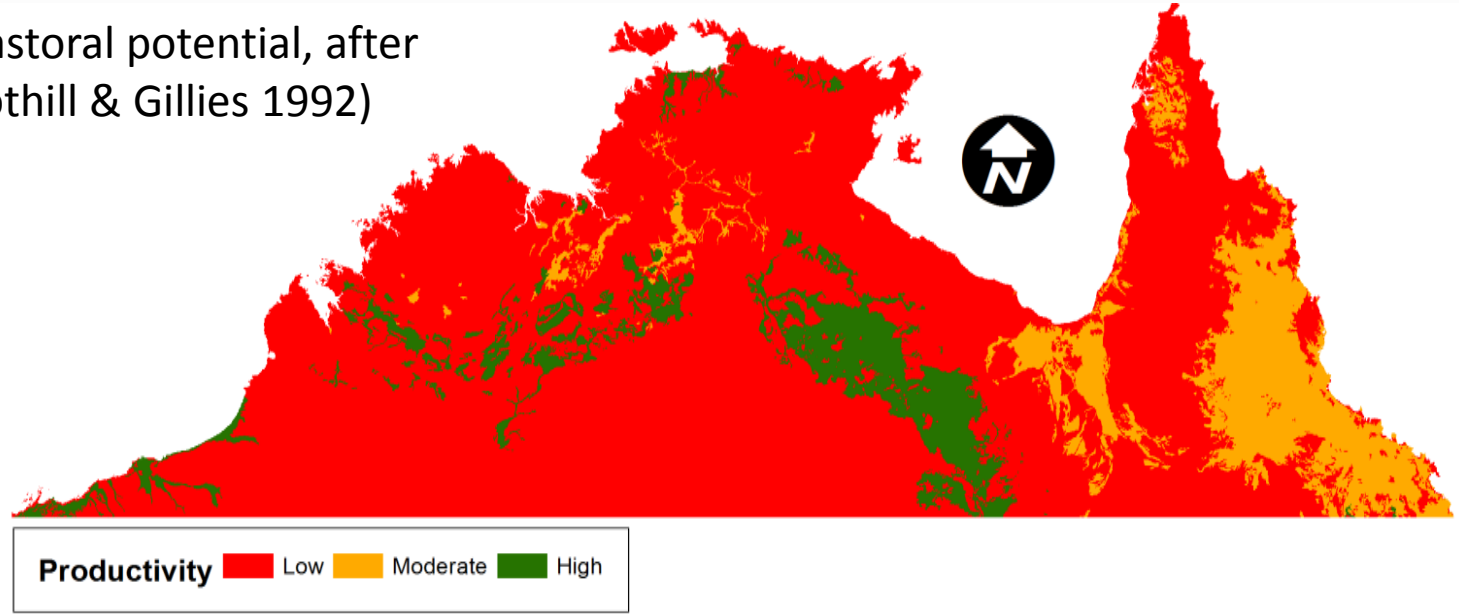
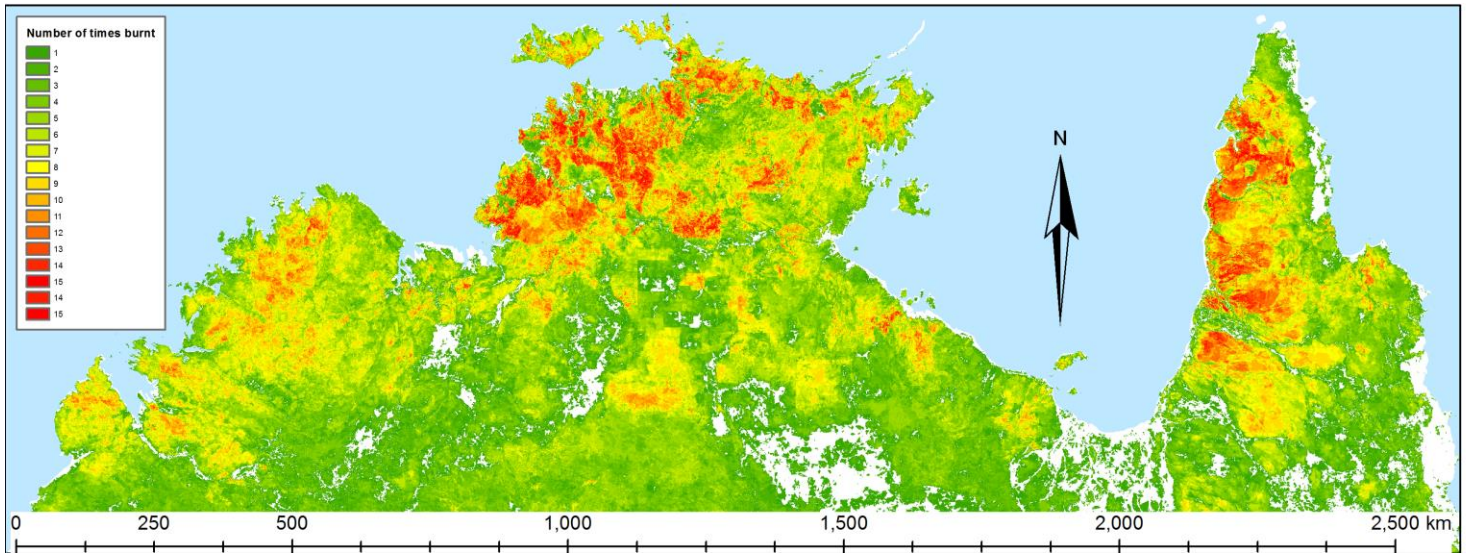




Pastoral potential, after Tothill & Gillies 1992)





MAJOR MILESTONE OUTPUT DUE 2017:
A sustainable future for north Australia

CHAPTERS

1) Cultural landscapes of north Australia
2) History of land dispossession and land rights
3) Status of the regional economy
4) **A diversified ecosystem services economy**
5) **Pathways to empowering Indigenous resilience and capacity**
6) **Policy and investment challenges for regional development**
7) What future do we want?

UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE & GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES: DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES

Darwin February 2016

UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE & GOVERNANCE IN REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES: NEXT STEPS & UTILISATION CHALLENGES

1) Build on developing institutional linkages to assemble an ongoing north Australia-wide understanding of resilience & governance challenges—e.g. lessons from current project, WA and QLD engagement experience, QLD EM assurance framework
2) Use materials assembled through current project to implement scenario planning activities in select north Australia communities—to empower community-agency partnerships
3) Build the capacity / enterprises of Indigenous ranger groups to be front-line EM resource

These same principles espoused in COAG (2011) report addressing EM issues affecting north Australian Indigenous communities