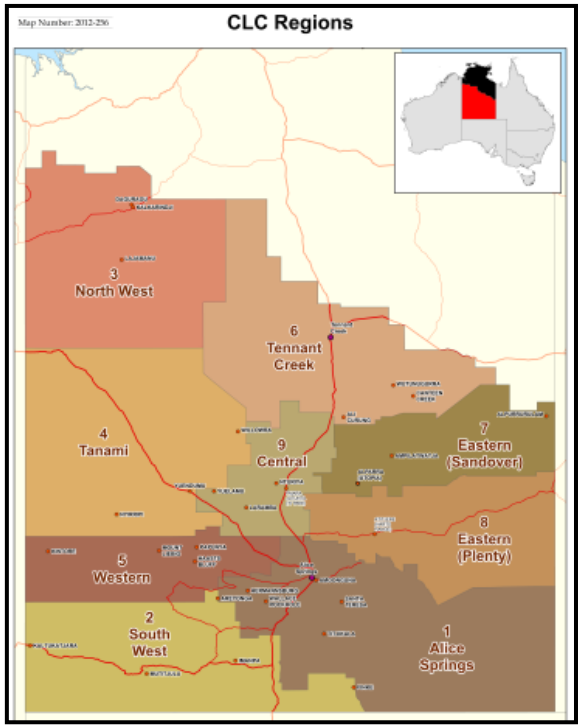
CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Fire Management Challenges and Opportunities in the Northern Tanami

Ben Kaethner, Environmental Management Coordinator

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

The Central Land Council



- The CLC is the statutory authority representing the **24,000 Aboriginal people** living across **780,000 square kilometres** of the southern half of the Northern Territory

- within the region there are more than **15 Aboriginal languages** spoken

- the Council is made up of **90 Aboriginal people elected** from communities across the region, there are 11 Executive members and one Director

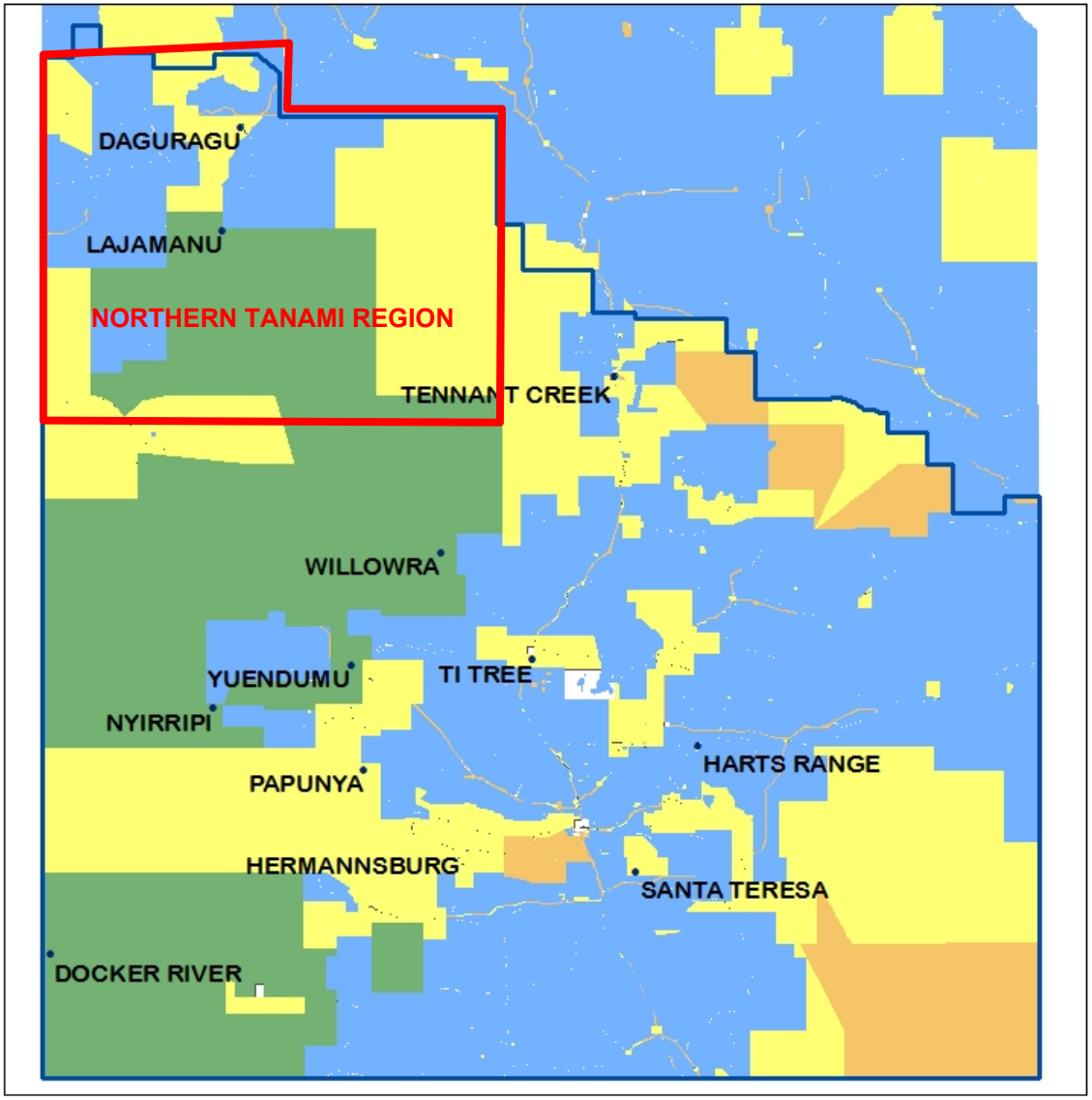
- the roots of the CLC lie in the history of **Aboriginal peoples' struggle for justice and rights to traditional lands**

- more than **200 staff in the CLC** - ove r 130 staff are in the **Land Management section** and 65 are rangers

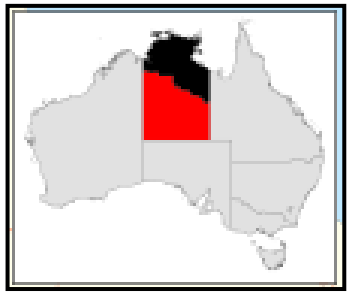
CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Tenure & Land Use

Land Tenure and Ranger Groups - CLC Region



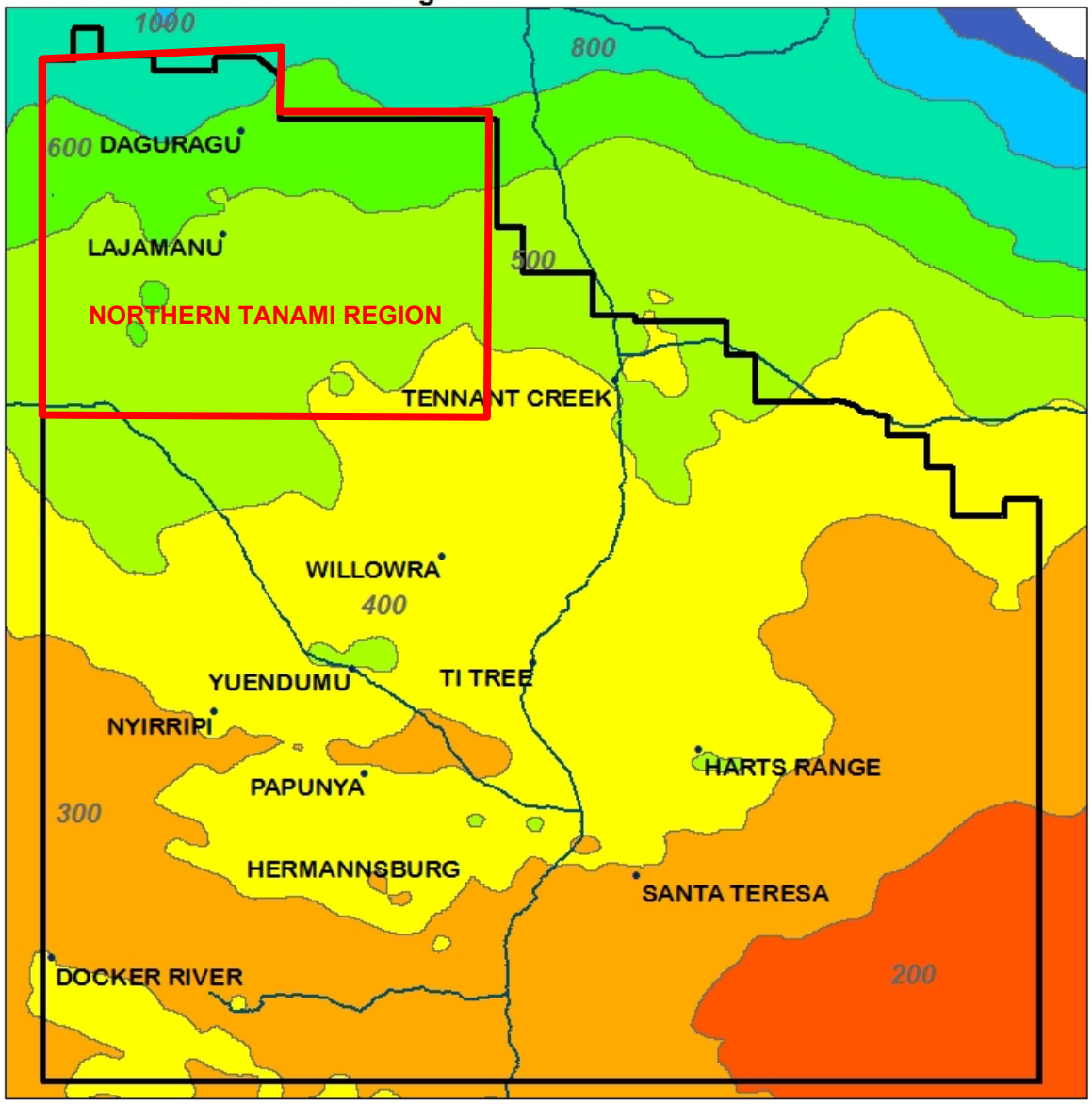
CLC Region
IPA - ALT
Aboriginal Land
Government
Private



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

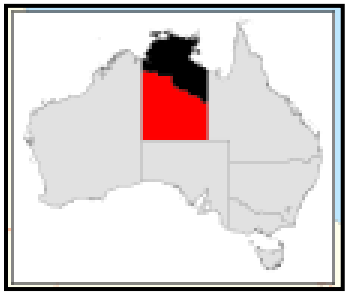
Fire Environment

Mean Annual Rainfall - CLC Region



Mean Annual Rainfall (mm)

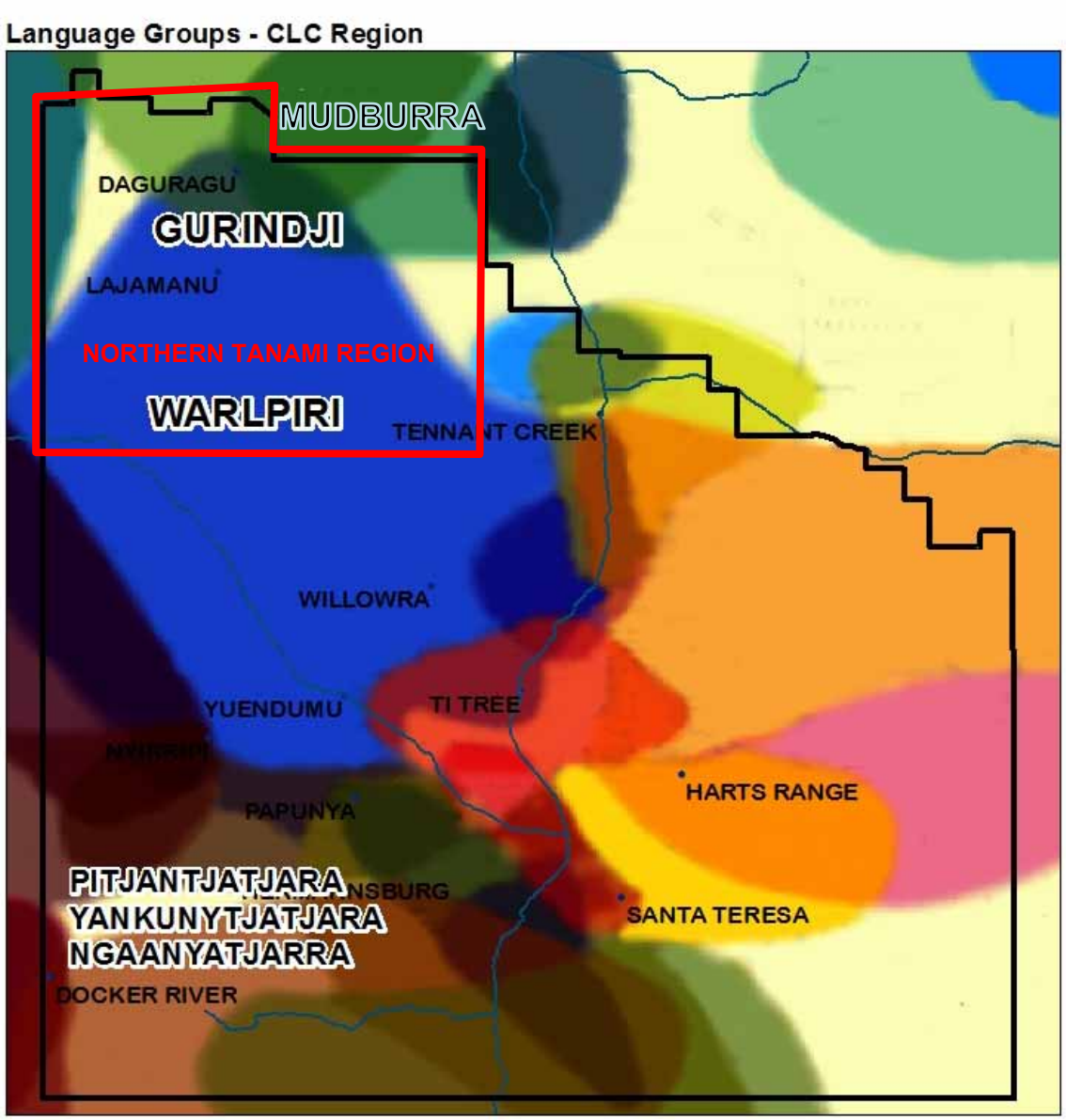
- 100-200
- 200-300
- 300-400
- 400-500
- 500-600
- 600-800
- 800-1000
- 1000-1200
- CLC Boundary
- Road



www.clc.org.au

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

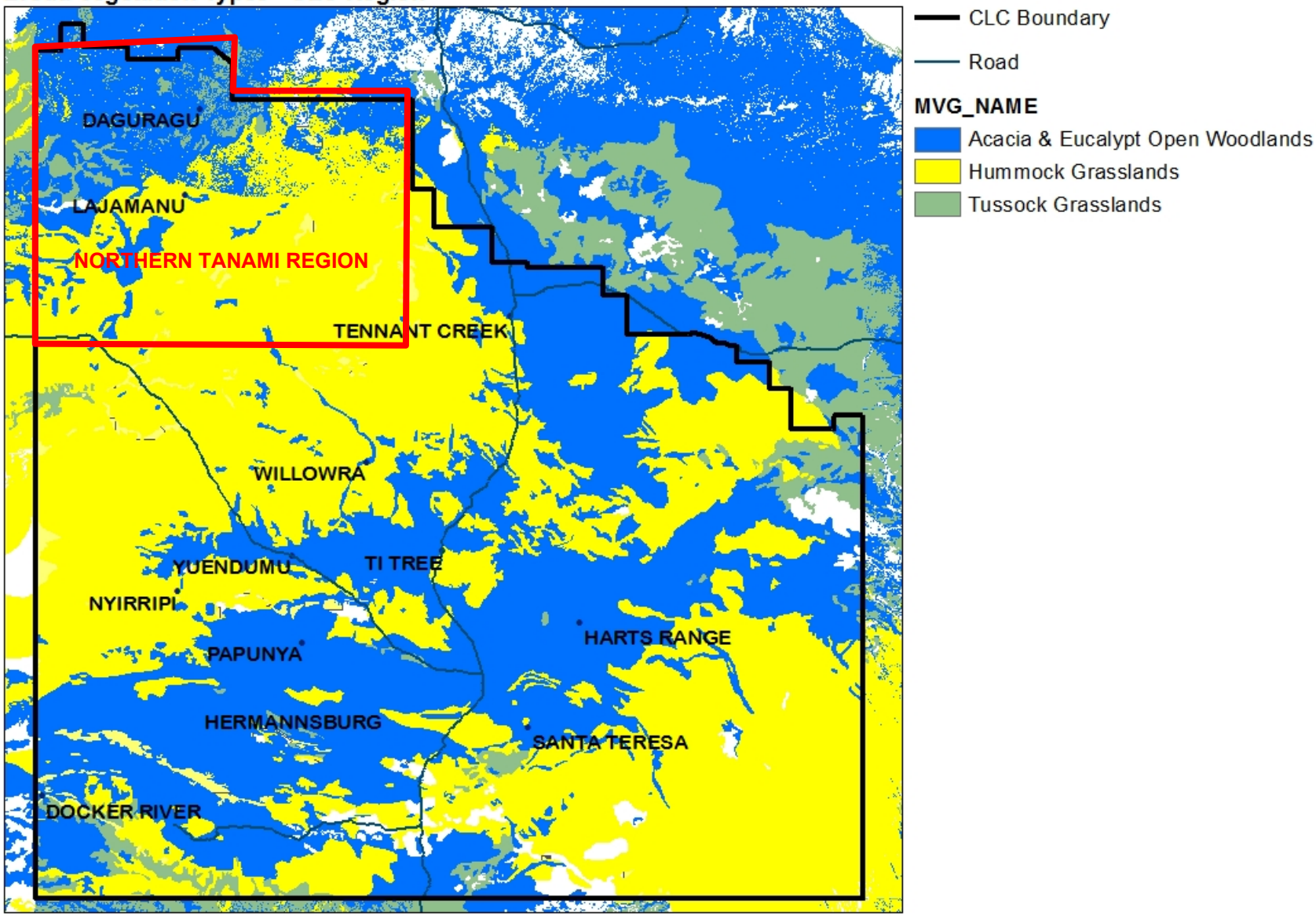
Language Groups



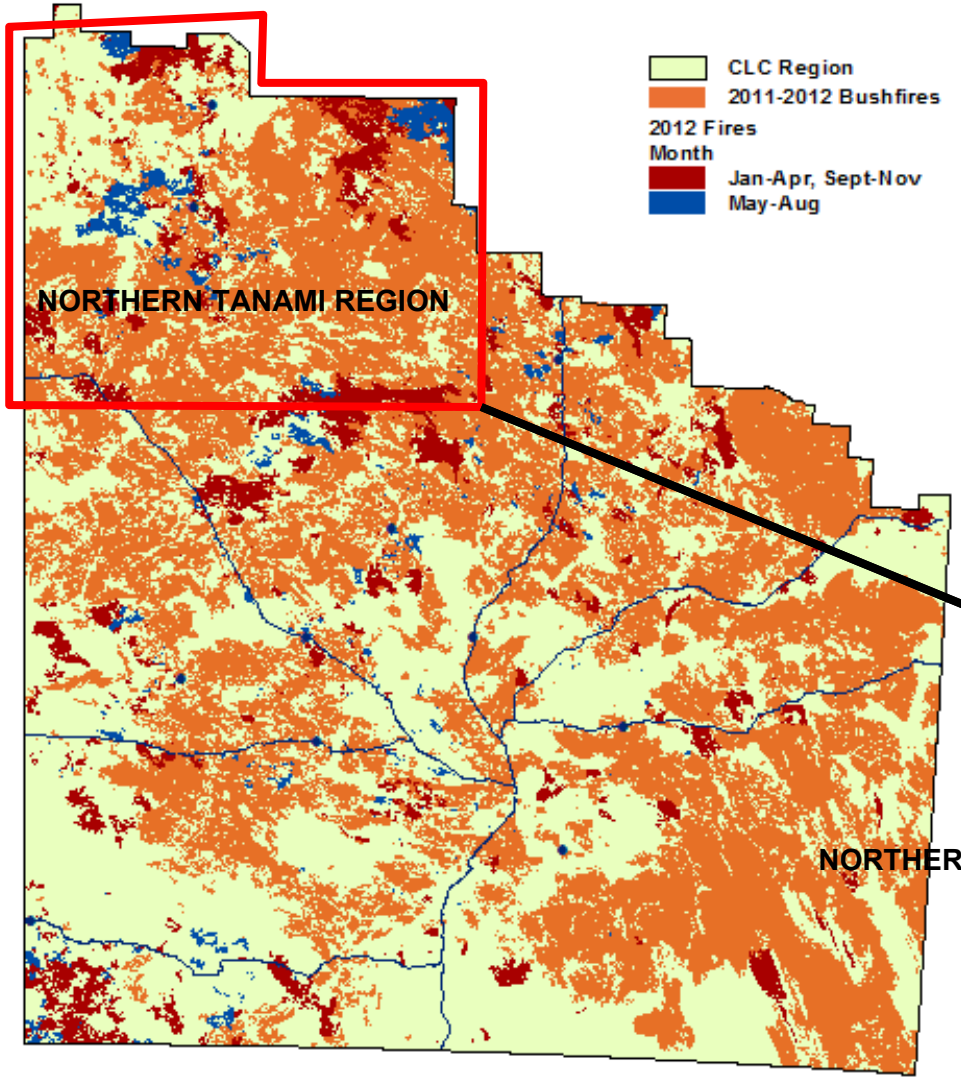
CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Fire Environment

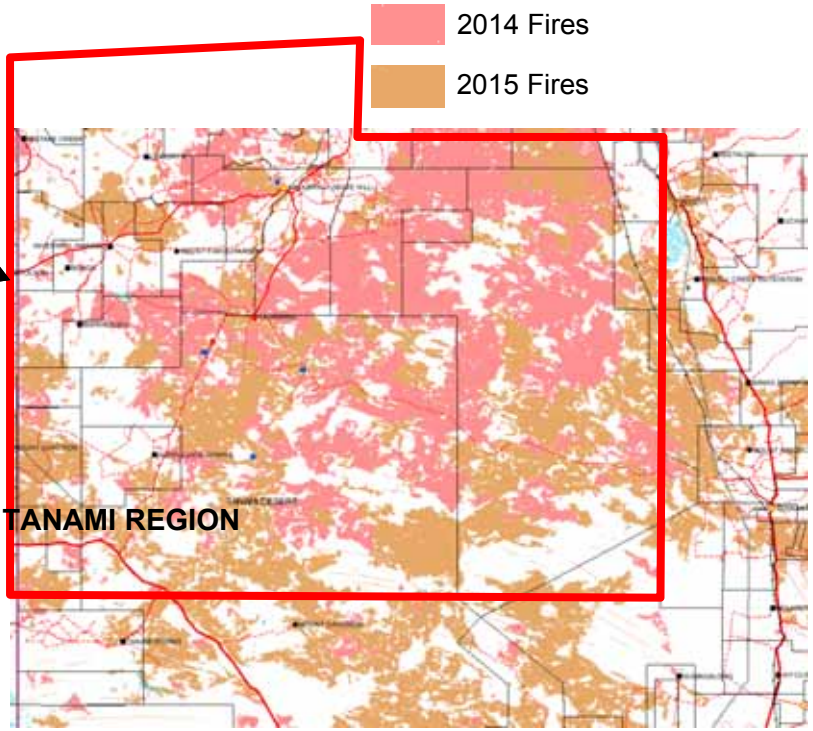
Broad Vegetation Types - CLC Region



Fires in the CLC Region 2011-2012



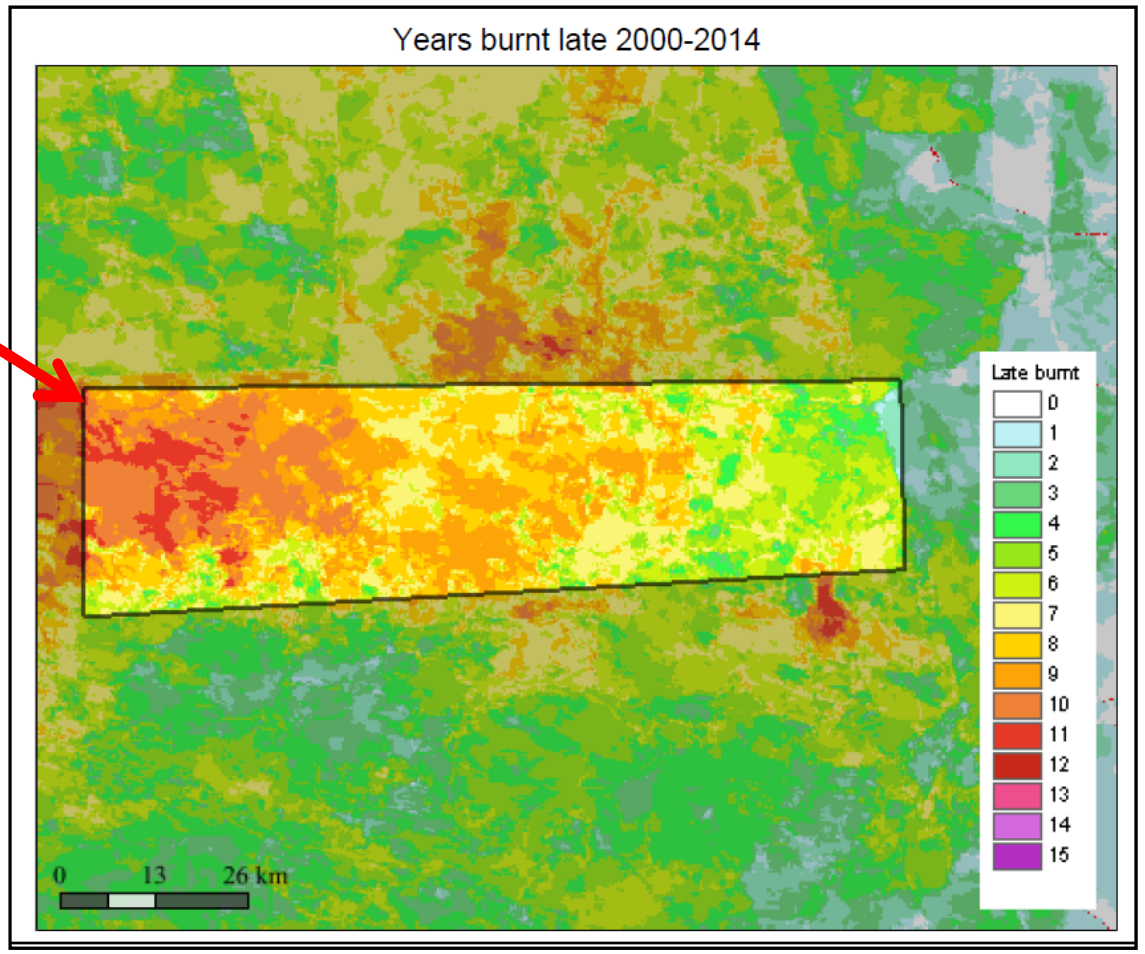
- Similar scale event for the North Tanami in 2014 - 2015



Opportunities

- Carbon abatement in the 600mm+ rainfall areas
- Karlantijpa North, Daguragu ALT, Judburra ALT (Gregory NP)
- Benefits for Elliott, Marlinja communities
  - Work, training, access to country
- Investigating sub-600mm methodology

Karlantijpa North



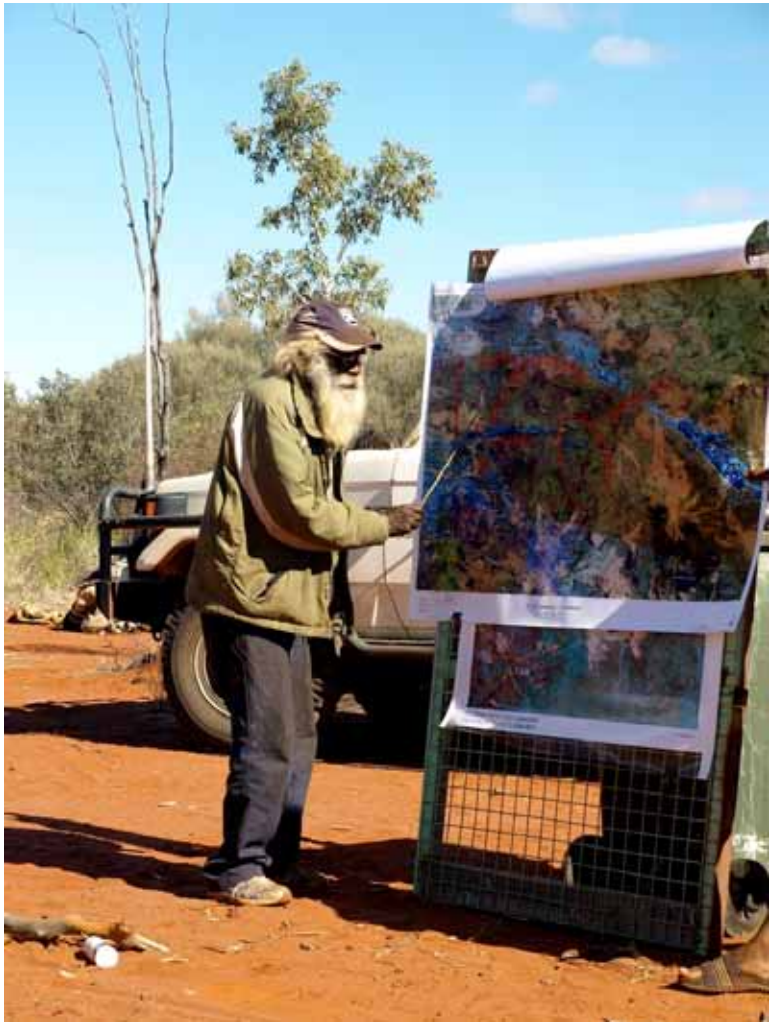
- ~3000km² in the 600mm+rainfall range with correct vegetation type
- Two years' of burning conducted, project is ready to be registered
- Regional fire management benefits

Challenges

- Big landscape requiring ongoing work
- Do we even need to do anything?
- What are we protecting?

Regional Aboriginal Fire Management Committees

- Senior community representatives review ranger fire work
- Presentations from fire authorities & scientists
- Review regional funding proposals and develop projects
- Develop work plans based on seasonal conditions



Regional Aboriginal Fire Management Committees

- Facilitated by CLC to plan and review regional fire management
- Warlu Committee represents the Tanami region (Warlpiri and Gurindji)
- Waru Tri-State Committee represents the NPY region through NT, SA & WA

CLC Fire Programme

Support TOs in their fire management aspirations on their land, through:

- Planning and implementing fire management works that include conservation and culture.
- Providing a link between TOs, other land managers and emergency services.
- Giving a stronger voice to Aboriginal fire managers through the formation of regional governance structures.
- Seeking funding and financial opportunities for Indigenous fire management projects
- Training rangers and Traditional Owners in contemporary fire management.

Funding

- One ABA (Aboriginals Benefits Account) - funded fire management position
- Three Biodiversity-Funded Fire Mgt positions
- Operational funds from a combination of IPA and Ranger operations, Biodiversity Fund and Territory NRM small grants

Aerial Incendiary Burning

- Efficient
- Necessary for landscape burning
- Cultural Co-benefits required

Fire Response

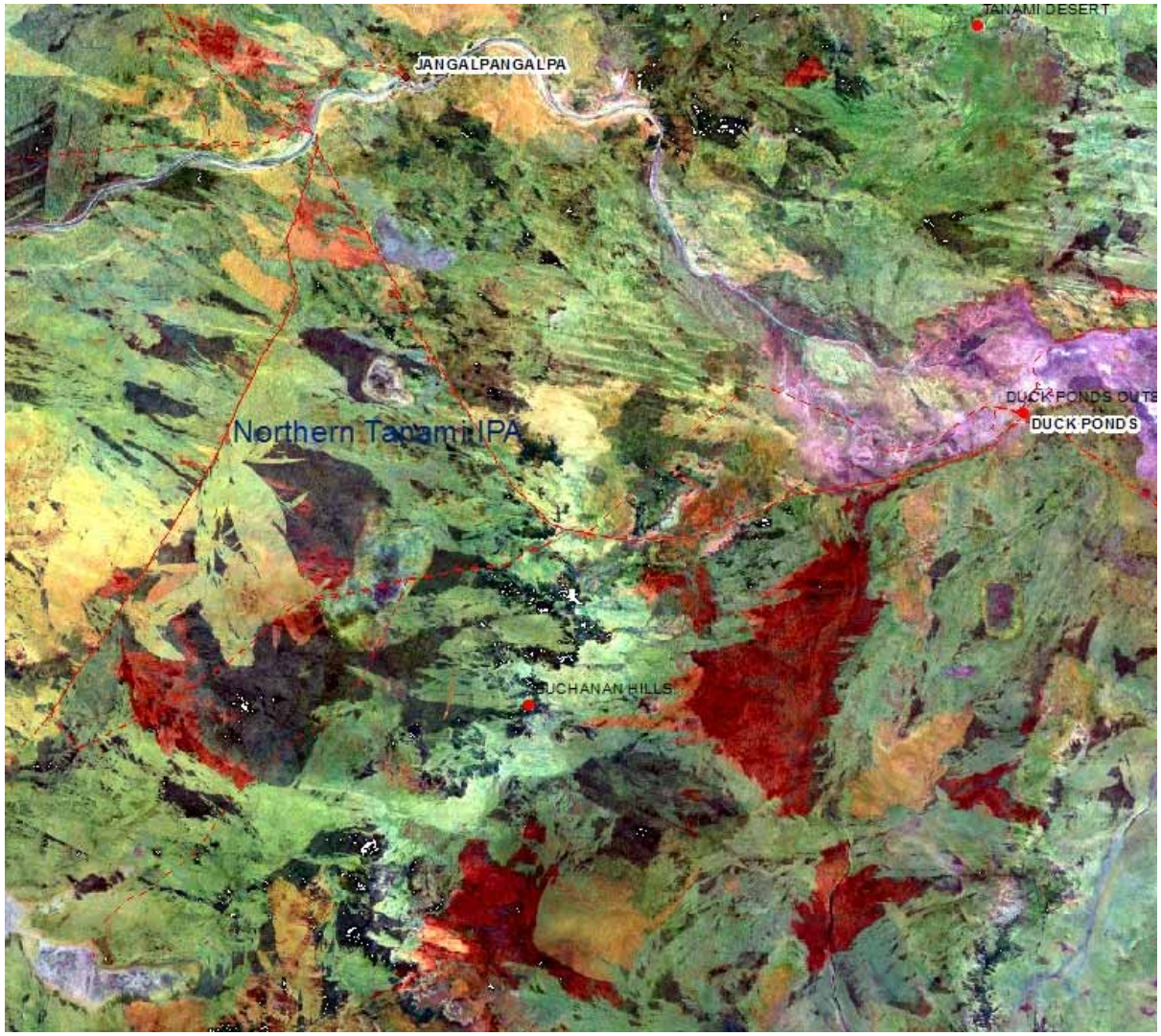
- Limited capacity & opportunities for experience
- Aim for all rangers to have FF1 training
- Work Safely Around Aircraft and Operate Aerial Incendiary Training

Training

- Deliver Work Safely around Aircraft and Operate Aerial Incendiary training annually.
- Central Australian context in delivery is very important
- Currently expensive

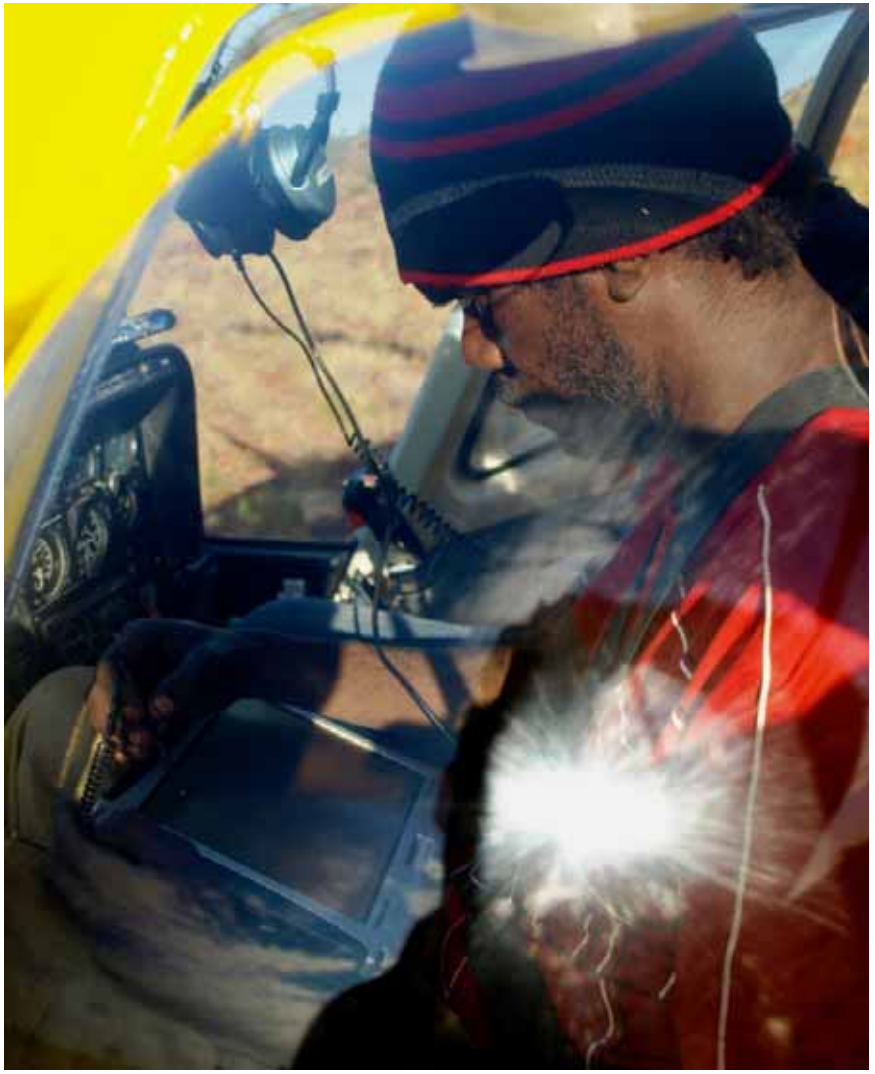
Tools – Spatial

- Satellite images:
  - MODIS – 250m
  - Landsat – 30m
  - GIS mapping
- North Australia Fire Information (NAFI)
- All are good visual ways of engaging TOs in planning



Tools – Spatial

- Enhanced landscape planning capacity
- Increasing use of technology, with training requirements for rangers
- NAFI firescars adequate for reporting in most cases, but become less value as fire size decreases (the overall aim)



Key Messages

- The fire management program is dependant on Traditional Owner support, and has Indigenous culture at its core.
- Through its cultural component, it also achieves other land management goals – particularly conservation and ranger skills development
- In order to improve fire regimes (increased temporal and spatial diversity of fires) in the long term, the community must be given opportunities to conduct their own fire management.
- Spatial tools are indispensable for planning
- Ongoing fire management at identified locations is more beneficial than one-offs
- Current and future carbon abatement has the potential to offset some costs.

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Ben Kaethner
Co-ordinator, Environmental Management
Central Land Council
ben.kaethner@clc.org.au
(08) 8951 6282

Thanks to the program partners and funders:

Australian Government
Department of the Environment

Territory Natural Resource Management

CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™