

2019 North Australia

Savanna Fire Forum

13 – 14 February 2019 | Charles Darwin University, Casuarina campus



2019 Forum Key Findings

Anna Boustead, Coordinator

Indigenous Carbon Industry Network

Thanks to event partners:



PEOPLE. LAND. OPPORTUNITY.





ICIN Indigenous
Carbon
Industry
Network

What is the Indigenous Carbon Industry Network?



Initiated by Indigenous carbon businesses at 2018 Savanna Fire Forum



Filling a critical gap in industry coordination



Supported by an Interim Steering Committee of members



Including 28 member organisations across north Australia



Broader network including 200 people

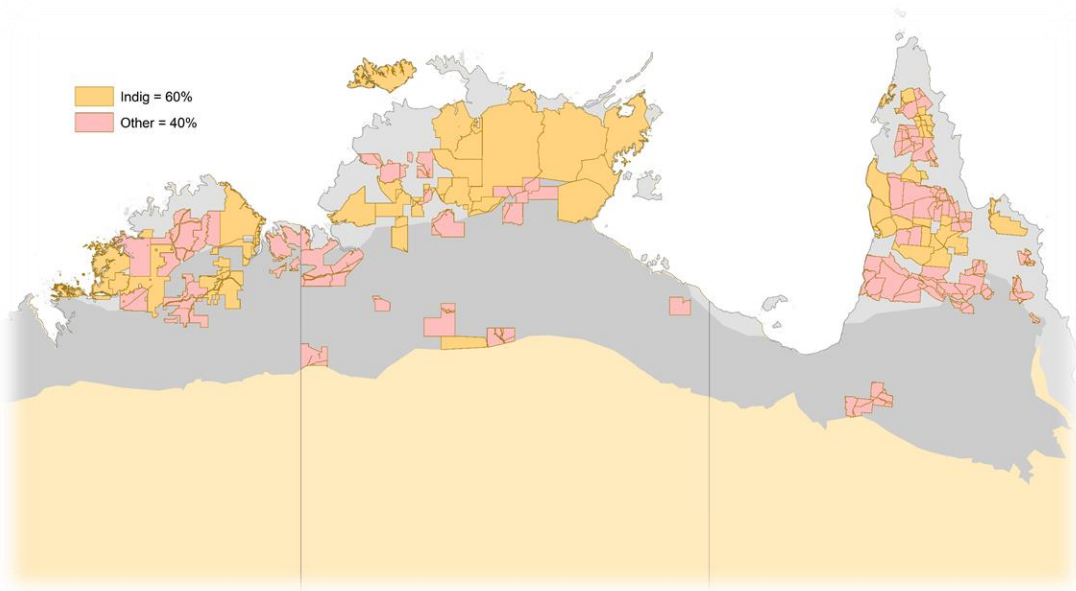


Currently funded by Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy, Northern Territory Government and Queensland Government.



Employs part-time Coordinator hosted by Warddeken Land Management.

Current state of the Indigenous Carbon industry



- Over 25 Indigenous-owned and operated savanna fire projects
- Enabling improved Indigenous fire management over 17.3 million hectares of north Australian savanna
- Abating approximately 1.2 million tonnes of CO₂e each year
- Generating over \$16 million worth of ACCUs in the 2017/18 year
- Over 10% of all ACCUs produced (across all methods) are from Indigenous carbon businesses
- Over 80% of ACCUs produced by the savanna fire emissions avoidance method are generated by Indigenous carbon businesses.
- 68% of this industry occurs in the Northern Territory (828,069 tonnes).
- 16 % each in Western Australia and Queensland



New methodologies in development (standing dead wood, living biomass).



Better coordination and communication resources (ICIN).



Developing climate change policies delivering more certainty for the industry



Growing voluntary and compliance markets.



Growing 'willingness to pay' for carbon credits generated by Indigenous carbon businesses as recognition of co-benefits and demand increases.



Potential for trading mechanisms to deliver a price on carbon in response to emissions targets.



New training courses available to build capacity of fire managers and carbon farming practitioners (Aboriginal Carbon Foundation, Skills Impact and CDU).

Industry Growth

Summary 2019 NA Savanna Fire Forum

- Two day program at Mal Nairn Auditorium, CDU (larger venue)
- Conference style forum with presentations in six themes followed by a Q and A with panel of speakers, using Sli.do and audience participation
- 200% increase in attendance from 2018 (230 participants)
- SOLD OUT one week prior despite very little promotion, demonstrating existing high level of interest and participation.
- Indigenous representation reflects current state of the industry (50% participation by Indigenous LM orgs, improved on 2018 forum)
- Attendance was also diverse, reflecting wide range of interests in savanna fire management.
- Networking event at Darwin Trailer Boat Club was also sold out (150)
- Media coverage on ABC News, ABC Radio and ABC Country Hour.



Organisation

- Hosted by ICIN for the first time (in-kind contribution) with support from Warddeken Land Management Ltd.
- Further substantial in-kind support was provided by the Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research at RIEL/CDU.
- Supported by a Working Group including funders and supporters.
- Funded by Northern Territory Government, Indigenous Land Corporation and the Australian Government (DoEE).
- Booth sponsors included Gamba Grass Roots and the Centre for Excellence in Prescribed Burning.



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Overview of program

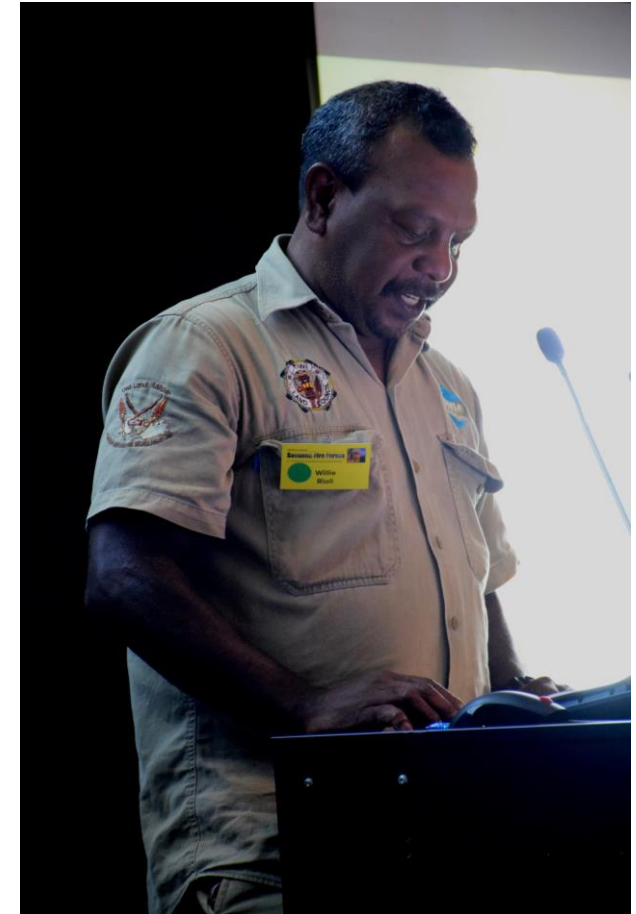
Aim: To provide a place for interested parties from across north Australia to connect and share knowledge about savanna fire management.

Themes:

- 1. Sharing Our Story:** Fire managers from across north Australia shared their knowledge and experiences from 2018/19 fire season, exploring how learnings could be applied in different situations across the north.
- 2. International & National initiatives:** Discussing how knowledge is being shared across the north and beyond through the formation of new networks and partnerships.
- 3. Sequestration Methodology:** Presentations exploring about how carbon is stored in the landscape and how the new carbon sequestration methodology can apply to savanna fire management projects.
- 4. Monitoring and Evaluation:** Outlining the latest developments in monitoring and evaluation, including mapping, surveys, measuring co-benefits and reporting.
- 5. New Developments:** Discussing the potential impact of new developments in the savanna fire management and carbon industry, such as new methodologies and training.
- 6. Supporting Savanna Fire Management:** An expert panel discussing the future for savanna fire management and key elements for ensuring success.

Speakers

- 35 diverse, high quality 10min presentations and 6 panel discussions over two days by 50 speakers.
- Indigenous representation reflects current state of the industry (40% Indigenous speakers, improved on 2018 forum)



Time	What	Who
8:00am	Registration	
8:30am	Welcome guests and housekeeping	Anna Boustead, Coordinator Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN)
8:40am	Welcome to Country	Bilawara Lee, Larrakia Academic in Residence, Charles Darwin University
8:50am	<i>Official Opening</i>	Ms Jo Townsend, CEO, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Northern Territory Government
9:00am	Introduction	Mr Willie Rioli, Tiwi Land Council and Member ICIN Steering Committee
9:20am	Theme One: Sharing Stories Facilitator: Ken Baulch	Presenters <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neil Waina, Uunguu Rangers and Tom Vigilante, Wunambal Gaambera Rangers 2. Stuart and Terrah Guymala, Warddeken Rangers 3. Ed Slade and Donald Shadforth, Waanyi and Garawa Rangers 4. Jack Green presents: Getting Back to Jilundarina (video, NAILSMA) 5. Daryl Killin (Natural Carbon) 6. Grey Mackay (Northern Rangelands NRM)
10:40am	Morning Tea Break	
11:00am	Sharing Stories (Continued) Facilitator: Ken Baulch	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Cecilia Myers, Dunkeld Pastoral 8. Robin Dann and Luke Russ (Wunggurr Rangers) 9. Stafford Yam and Taryn David (Kowanyama Rangers) 10. Anna Pickworth and Victor Cooper (Kakadu National Park) <p>Q & A session with all presenters</p>
12:30pm	Lunch Break	<i>Booths: Gamba Grass Roots Centre for Excellence in Prescribed Burning</i>

1:30pm	Theme Two: International, National & Regional initiatives Facilitator: Mitch Hart	Presenters <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robin Beatty (321 Fire): <i>ISFMI Botswana project</i> 2. Anna Boustead (ICIN): <i>Growing the Indigenous Carbon Industry</i> 3. Deb Sparkes (Centre of Excellence for Prescribed Burning) <i>National Approaches to Prescribed Burning</i> <p>Q and A Panel</p>
2:30pm	Afternoon Tea	
3:00pm	Theme Three: Methodology Facilitator: Marnie Telfer	Presenters <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Garry Cook (CSIRO) <i>Storing carbon as dead wood in the landscape</i> 2. Sam Wagstaff (Department of the Environment and Energy) <i>Savanna Carbon Farming Roadmap</i> 3. Jarrad Holmes, <i>Understanding how credits are issued under the 2018 methods</i> 4. Gay Crowley (Firescape Ecology) <i>Information tools to support Indigenous groups to make the best decisions about their Savanna Burning projects.</i> 5. Brett Murphy (Charles Darwin University) <i>Predicting carbon sequestration by savanna trees.</i> <p>Q & A Panel</p>
4:20pm	Summarise and Finish Up	Polly Grace
6:00 – 8:00pm	Networking Event with Local Hors D'oeuvres and Drinks (ticketed, sold out)	Darwin Trailer Boat Club 8 Atkins Drive, Fannie Bay

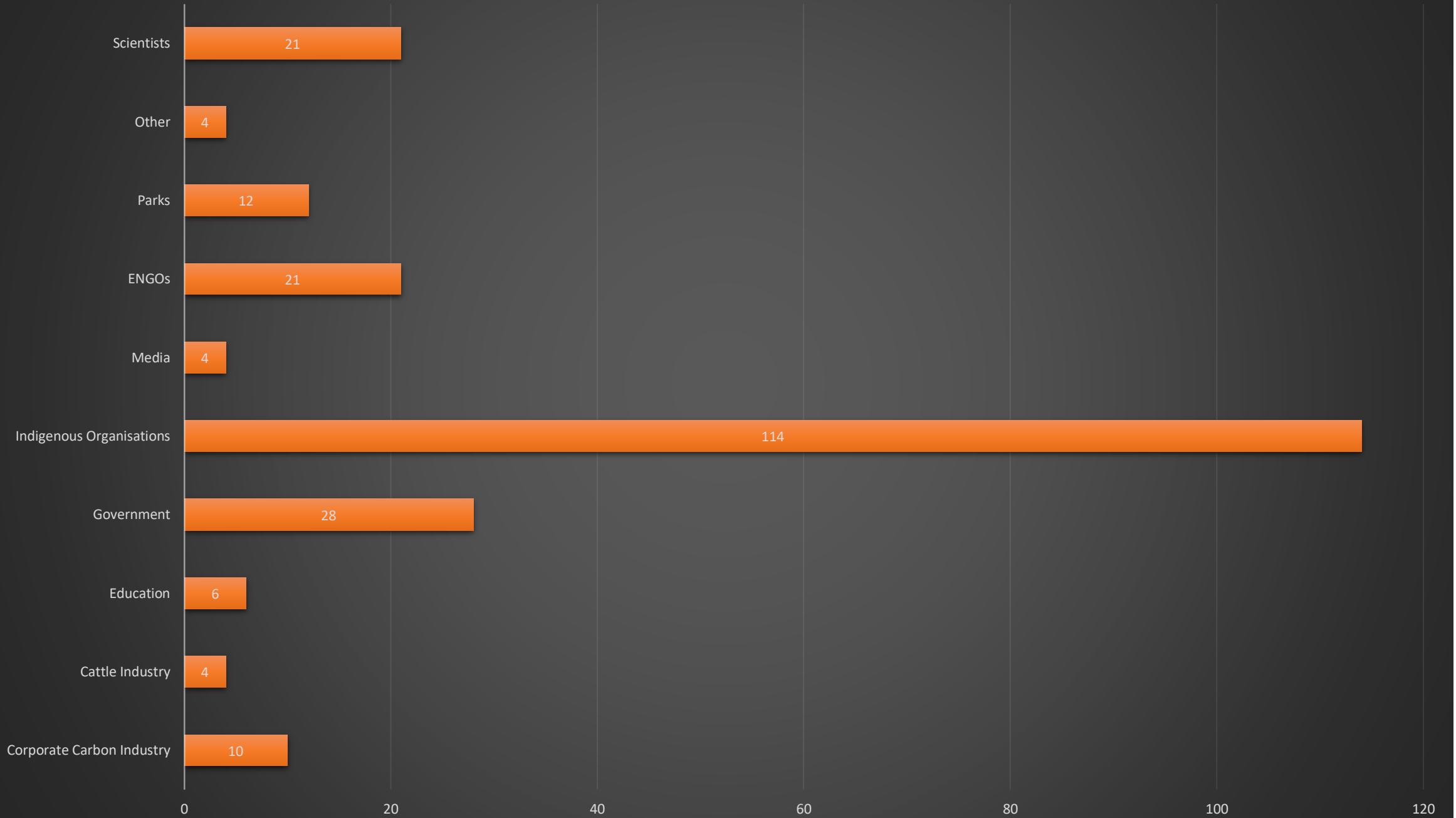
Time	What	Who
8:30am	Welcome and Introduce Themes Three and Four	Jennifer Ansell, ICIN Steering Committee
8:40am	Theme Four: Monitoring and Evaluation Facilitator: Andrew Edwards	Presenters <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Otto Campion (Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation) <i>Bininj perspective on Monitoring and Evaluation.</i> 2. Jennifer Ansell (Arnhem Land Fire Abatement NT) <i>Do Savanna Burning projects meet the fire management aspirations of Traditional Owners in Arnhem Land?</i> 3. Stefan Maier (Maitec) <i>Fire Extent, Severity and Patchiness Mapping using Daily Satellite Data.</i> 4. Peter Jacklyn (NAFI) <i>North Australia Fire Information Tool: Just Check It.</i> 5. Rohan Fisher (Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research, CDU) <i>New satellite image tools and techniques. revolutionising High-Res fire monitoring.</i> 6. Gay Crowley (Firescape Ecology) <i>Report Cards for Fire Management.</i> 7. Ian Radford (WA Parks and Wildlife, DBCA) <i>Prescribed burning benefits threatened mammals in northern Australia.</i> 8. Jay Evans (Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research, CDU) <i>Delivering effective savanna fire management for defined biodiversity conservation outcomes: an Arnhem Land case study.</i> 9. James Smith (Australian Wildlife Conservancy) <i>Managing fire for biodiversity in the Kimberley.</i>
10:30am	Morning Tea Break	
11:00am	Theme Five: New developments, training and standards Facilitator: Ricky Archer	Presenters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kate Vanson (Skills Impact) <i>Vocational Training in Carbon Farming.</i> 2. Barry Hunter and Lauren Bowyer (Aboriginal Carbon Foundation) <i>Core Benefits Standards and Training.</i> 3. Gareth Catt (10 Deserts) <i>Investigating the potential for carbon and co-benefits in the Australian deserts.</i>
12:00pm	Lunch Break	<i>Book Launch: To Burn or Not to Burn (Anthony Kerr)</i>

Attendance

- Attendance was also diverse, reflecting wide range of interests in savanna fire management.
- Sectors represented included: Scientists, Government officials, Parks managers, Indigenous Land Managers, Carbon Industry, Environmental NGOs, Fossil Fuel Industry, Cattle Industry
- There was good attendance across WA, QLD and particularly NT.
- This significant diversity of representation and knowledge in the room, including strong Indigenous participation, was highlighted by participants as a key strength of the Forum.



Attendees by Sector



Theme One: Sharing Stories

Facilitated by Ken Baulch, of Bushfires NT

- Over 19 people, 11 different organisations, shared their experiences from the field in the area of fire and carbon operations across northern Australia.
- Provided an extensive insight into the challenges and benefits of good savanna fire management.
- Clearly demonstrated the extremely high level of expertise within the industry, which, complemented by a strong willingness to share and reflect, is resulting in constant improvements and growth.

Key lessons include:

1. Indigenous fire management generates cultural, economic and environmental benefits and significantly decreases greenhouse gas emissions.
2. It offers an opportunity to reconnect with the homeland and exchange traditional knowledge among generations whilst providing a source of income.
3. Fire managers are not alone, they are supported by a network of collaborations and partnerships.
4. Communication and training are the key for a successful land management plan.



Theme Two: International & National Initiatives

Facilitated by Mitch Hart of PEW Charitable Trust.

A high-level snapshot of just some of the exciting initiatives occurring within the savanna industry at a national and international scale. Key lessons include:

1. Northern Australia fire practitioners are leading the world in savanna burning, in terms of Indigenous cultural outcomes as well as carbon industry outcomes.
2. The savanna carbon industry is a strong industry with huge potential for growth.
3. A key enabler for growth within the industry is a strong and supported network of savanna fire operators and ongoing industry collaboration. Opportunities for collaboration, training and learning should be encouraged and facilitated.
4. Indigenous land owners and managers are key stakeholders in the savanna carbon industry and need to be engaged and consulted with accordingly to ensure that policy frameworks are appropriate.
5. Savanna burning practitioners have a strong story to tell. This industry is getting organized to show decision-makers the importance of the industry and how it delivers globally significant social, economic and environmental outcomes.



Theme Three: Methodology (Carbon)

Facilitated by Marnie Telfer of the Indigenous Land and Sea Council.

A very detailed and technical look at current and emerging opportunities within the area of savanna sequestration. Key learnings include:

1. The Savanna Carbon Farming Roadmap is intended to be informed by stakeholder input and address the industry's future priorities.
2. The Sequestration Method is based on averages. This means that transition timing only impacts the crediting period, but does not impact the total credits earned from sequestration. Therefore, there is no need to rush the transition from a sequestration perspective.
3. Transition to the Sequestration Method may not be feasible for all regions or groups. It needs to be a business decision based on the risk and potential return in each individual case.
4. "Standing Dead Wood" is proposed to be added to the Sequestration Method via the Technical Guidance Document, with LiDAR technology able to support the calculations.
5. High-intensity fires appear to impact tree growth, recruitment and survival/mortality (some discussion).

Theme Four: Monitoring and Evaluation

Facilitated by Andrew Edwards of the Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research.

Nine presentations updated participants on various tools, methods and projects underway to improve savanna fire monitoring and evaluation.

Key lessons include:

- While strong science and methods are crucial underpinnings of the savanna fire industry, ensuring this information is accessible and relevant to people on the ground remains key.
- Further demonstrated that the Savanna Fire Industry remains committed to continuous improvement and development, with a constant willingness to reflect on lessons learned, and embrace new tools to ensure ongoing improvement.
- Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation, utilizing a range of locally appropriate tools, is a key way to achieve this improvement.

A presentation by Otto Bulmaniya Champion, of Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation, presenting a Bininj perspective on M&E, was widely acknowledged as one of the overall highlights of the Forum. He suggested ways to improve two-way learning and collaboration on culturally relevant monitoring and evaluation frameworks.



Theme Five: New Developments

Facilitated by Ricky Archer of NAILSMA.

Discussed new training, standards and developments within the field of savanna burning. Three diverse projects from across the industry were presented:

- **Skills Impact** presented on Vocational Training in Carbon Farming. The Australian Government has funded Skills Impact to develop a VET course on Carbon Farming.
- **Aboriginal Carbon Foundation** presented on core benefits standards and training. ACF supplies training to landholders and carbon practitioners and is a carbon aggregator. Training focuses on increasing understanding around the entire Savanna Burning methodology, not just the land management outcomes. Work on 'core benefits' focuses on assisting Indigenous groups articulate the core benefits of Savanna Burning programs, including good stories, how to measure these benefits, and training regionally based verifiers to assess them.
- **The 10 Deserts Project** provided an overview of the work being undertaken to investigate the potential for carbon and co-benefits in the Australian deserts. The Ten Deserts project is an alliance across central Australia, looking to build capacity, manage key threats, create new markets, and look at co-benefits for Indigenous groups. Carbon is being investigated as a potential opportunity to increase resources to manage and address these changed fire regimes.

Theme Six: Future of savanna fire management industry

Facilitated by Polly Grace.

Q&A style panel discussion focused on the future of the savanna fire management industry.

The panel included:

- **Cissy Gore Birch (Bush Heritage);**
- **Ricky Archer (NAILSMA);**
- **Megan Surawski (Department of Environment, QLD);**
- **Will Durack (Kimberley Land Council);**
- **Ken Baulch (Bushfires NT); and**
- **Katrina Maguire (Department of the Environment and Energy).**

Ricky Archer provided a brief overview of the state of the savanna industry, highlighting key opportunities and challenges.



Theme Six: Key findings

Supportive and holistic government policy is critical to industry success. Cooperation between State, Territory and Federal governments, as well as ongoing engagement with industry stakeholder's is vital. Key lessons:

- Improved public understanding of both climate change and savanna burning leading to improved public awareness and support for the industry;
- Ensuring that the traditional knowledge at the foundation of the method is not lost or overlooked;
- Fostering trust between industry and government, and within industry itself;
- Investment in and engagement with young people, particularly in light of the inter-generational commitments required under sequestration;
- Improved information dissemination, meaning information is not just available but is provided in a format that can be accessed and understood by people on the ground;
- Increased indigenous ownership and leadership, noting again the Indigenous foundation of the savanna industry;
- Investment in two-way science to strengthen the foundation of the industry;
- Improve understanding of the benefits associated with savanna burning and investment in tools to better unlock these;
- Ensuring the ongoing integrity of Australian Carbon Credit Units through ensuring the integrity of the method;
- Secure and stable ranger funding as the backbone to savanna activities.

Conclusion

The 2019 North Australia Savanna Fire Forum has been **praised by participants as a great success**. As was evident from the two days, one of the key strengths of the industry is the **wealth of knowledge and skills it represents**, and the **collaboration** that exists across individuals working in the industry.

Key lessons include:

1. Whether for on-ground fire operations, desktop research, or project or method development, **communication, outreach and engagement** across the industry, and to outside stakeholders, **is key to ongoing success**.
2. One of the **key strengths** of the industry comes from the **strong collaboration** among stakeholders. **Sharing experience to enhance best practice – whether through forums such as this one, or networks such as the ICIN – are invaluable**.
3. The savanna fire industry is, and must remain, both **dynamic and reflective**. Access to **accurate and accessible information** remains important. Using **the best available information** to constantly reflect and ensure that outcomes remain aligned with goals and purposes is important. There are many existing and emerging tools to help achieve this. **Resourcing of these tools is critical**.
4. A number of education initiatives are emerging. **Ensuring that training and industry development are well-informed and align with practitioner needs** will be important going forward.

Evaluation

- Feedback from participants and speakers about the forum was overwhelmingly positive.
- Most said that they had enjoyed the forum.
- Most said that it was useful to their job.
- Most said they were likely to recommend the forum to others.



Feedback – key highlights

- Diversity of representation of both speakers and participants, particularly by Indigenous land managers
- Diversity of content of presentations
- Inspiring feeling from the forum, collaborative nature of the industry
- Sharing stories theme
- Organisation
- Networking event
- Key learnings were generally about getting a sense for how much the industry has grown from shared knowledge and collaboration, as well as updates on science and policy.



Improvements for next year

- Include break out workshops on themes with a specific audience (eg carbon industry, mapping)
- More opportunities for discussion
- Integrate Shared Stories theme better throughout forum to link research and policy with operational context
- Reach out to other industry sectors
- Consider ESL participants more carefully
- Increase length of breaks to provide more networking time
- Increase ticket price slightly from \$30 to \$50 to cover costs



Take home points for NAFM

- There is an extraordinarily high level of interest in attending and presenting at the NA Savanna Fire Forum, driven by word of mouth
- Collaboration is the key to success (thanks to the Working Group) for access to expert networks and good organization on a shoestring budget
- The Indigenous-led nature of this year's forum gave proper context to discussions, and was articulated as a key highlight for many participants.
- This industry is massive, and growing!
- Supporting accessible forums such as these is key to the ongoing growth of the industry and a sign of its maturity.
- ICIN was proud to host the forum and would be happy to do it all again next year (pending funding!) with the support of the working group, particularly DCBR RIEL/CDU.



Thank You



ICIN Indigenous
Carbon
Industry
Network

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*Presentations are available on the Darwin
Centre for Bushfire Research website*

