

The NLC welcomes Aboriginal ranger funding extension

13 March 2020

The Northern Land Council welcomes the joint announcement from the Minister for Indigenous Australians Ken Wyatt and Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley that the NIAA Indigenous Ranger Program funding will be extended for another seven years to 2028.

“This is fantastic news and will provide certainty and ongoing job security to the Aboriginal land and sea managers that work across the Top End of the NT and the rest of the country, all of whom work tirelessly to care for their country for the benefit of all Australians and our future generations,” said NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour.

While welcoming the announcement, Ms Scrymgour noted that more funding is needed.

“There has simply not been enough funding to meet the demand for employment out bush and to ensure that critical operational and infrastructure needs are met. More funding is required to ensure our rangers are able to work safely and effectively.

“Many of the vehicles that our rangers drive on a daily basis are worn out and urgently need replacement.”

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi said it’s important for countrymen and women out bush to have more rangers working on their own country.

“We need more women and young rangers and to grow-up the Learning on Country Program, which links secondary school with real jobs as rangers,” he said.

“We also need to develop our carbon abatement programs and develop our fee for service work and take on more ranger compliance activities, including for our sea rangers.”

The funding announcement does not include those ranger groups funded by the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) under the Real Jobs Program. The ILSC funding currently supports six ranger groups in the NLC region and this funding is due to expire in June 2021.

“We are also really worried that the recent announcement unfortunately does not include those ranger groups funded under the Real Jobs Program,” Mr Bush-Blanasi said.

The NLC will work closely with Minister Wyatt and the ILSC to request that all funding for Indigenous rangers is managed as one program.

“We also need to fill in the long term ‘gaps in the landscape’ where Traditional Owners have long wanted to set up new ranger programs.”

Background notes:

- The NLC currently hosts 12 Indigenous ranger groups and there are an additional 20 independent groups in the NLC region.
- NIAA’s Indigenous Ranger Program funding supports 9 ranger groups hosted by the NLC.
- Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation’s Real Jobs Program supports 6 ranger groups in the NLC region, with 3 ranger groups hosted by the NLC. This funding is due to expire mid next year.

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