

Gulf rangers reduce wildfires through early burning

Since becoming active in fire management in 2007, the Gulf of Carpentaria's Garawa and Waanyi Garawa Rangers have reduced late season wildfires by 87 per cent across the land they manage.



Credit: Michael Lawrence-Taylor

Late season wildfires account for around 3 per cent of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions, and can cause greater environmental and economic damage than early season fires.

Using a combination of onground and aerial burning, [the rangers](#) have implemented an early season mosaic burning regime across their 20,000 sq km of land trusts, reducing emissions and protecting vital feeding and breeding habitat for the region's native fauna.

Senior Garawa man Jack Green was instrumental in setting up the ranger groups, which manage two separate land trusts in the western section of the Gulf.

'Before 2007 there were late season wildfires which burnt in excess of 16,000 sq km. Damage from those fires still scars the landscape today,' Mr Green said.

'You've got to have the right people out there managing the land, and we've got to teach that to our kids too so that when they grow up, they carry that knowledge forward.'

There are seven full time rangers funded by the Australian Government's Working on Country program, and 37 Traditional Owners employed part time on a seasonal basis.

Researchers from the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) Northern Australia hub have been working with the rangers and several other groups across Arnhem Land and in the Gulf to improve Indigenous governance, and

government policies and programs supporting Indigenous rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas.

The research is funded by the Australian Government as part of the National Environmental Research Program.

Source: NERP Northern Australia hub

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