

NEWSLETTER

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North Kimberley Fire Abatement Project Steering Committee Meeting



The North Kimberley Fire Abatement Project Steering Committee Meeting was held in Derby on November 21 - 22 2013. The meeting brought together directors and rangers from the Dambimangari, Wilinggin, Wunambal Gaambera and Balangarra Native Title Groups.

These groups have been working to do strategic early dry season burning on country to reduce the intensity of late dry season fires. This reduces carbon smoke, and takes care of country.

The groups came together at the meeting to reinvigorate the Steering Committee so they can work together on fire operations and carbon business.

NKFAP 2013 Burning Program Review

The 2013 year was a very successful season for the North Kimberley Fire Abatement Project.

- 41 Traditional Owners took part in the aerial burning;
- 273 hours chopper burning over 51 days in the field;
- 20 days remote camping with Rangers and Traditional Owners;
- Assisted with logistics of 2 remote walks;
- Around 35,000km travelled in the chopper;
- Good strategic early season burning over the 40,000km²;

We now need to look at what fires happened in 2013 to see how successful we were in stopping or reducing those late dry season burns.



NKFAP 2014 Operations

We are looking forward to the 2014 season, where we can keep learning and improving the fire management on country. At the steering committee meetings, groups discussed ideas for how we can improve operations in 2014.

These included:

- Paper maps where people in the chopper can't see the computer screen;
- More navigation training with computer;
- More base camps, foot walking, and signage about fire program on roads;
- More Traditional Owners (that are not part of Ranger teams) to be involved and Cultural Advisors to give input for each group;
- Spend time protecting cultural sites like rock art sites;
- Tourists and tourism operators need to be informed and educated about the program.



- Employment in each group

With more project staff and logistical support on the ground, as well as having Pantijan airstrip usable early in the year, the project looks forward to these improvements in 2014.

Fire Business, Carbon Business



The Australian Government's Carbon Farming Initiative has created a way to combine good fire management with good carbon business.

This is called the savanna burning methodology. Methodologies are the rules about how you can do carbon business on your land.

The savanna burning methodology is about managing fire in the traditional way, the way the old people used to. It applies in areas with greater than 1000mm of rainfall a year, this covers the very north of Australia, from Kimberley to the Cape. People are also working to make a methodology for areas with more than 600mm of rainfall.

Big fires on country in the late dry season burn lots of trees and burn big areas. All this burning produces lots of carbon smoke.

Managing country in the old way – burning early in the dry season and putting in fire breaks – stops those big fires from happening later on. So less country and less trees are burnt.

This means there is less carbon smoke going into the air.

The Carbon Farming Initiative will give carbon credits for reducing carbon smoke that goes into the air. These credits can be sold for money.

Steps involved in a Carbon Farming project

The Carbon Farming Initiative is an Australian Government scheme that allows people to earn money for projects that reduce carbon pollution. These are called carbon offset projects.

There are a number of steps to do a carbon offset project under the Carbon Farming Initiative. These can take time. It is important to plan ahead, and talk to lots of people for advice.

Step 1: What type of Carbon offset project can I do?

There are different types of carbon projects. Not all of them will be suitable for your area. You need to think about:

- Will the project work on my land?
- How much money will the project make?
- What rules apply to a certain project?
- How will I manage the project once it is set up?

Good carbon business means good planning.

Step 2: Tell the Government you want to do a project

You must register with the Government before you can do a project. For exclusive possession native title holders, only the Prescribed Body Corporate can register.

The Government call this a Registered Offset Entity.

Step 3: Get an account to keep your credits in

Carbon projects generate carbon credits for each tonne of carbon smoke they reduce. These can be sold for money. You need to have an account to keep your credits in – just like a bank account, but with the Government. This is called an Australian National Registry of Emission Units Account.

Step 4: Start your project and register it with the Government

You can start your project at any time, but you have to register it with the Government before you can start earning credits.

For some projects it is possible to claim credits from the Government before the project is registered – although the project must have started! You will need to check the rules for your project to see if this is possible.

Step 5: Project Report and Project Audit

You need to report on your project regularly. The report tells the Government how much carbon smoke you have reduced, and how many credits you can get. Before you can get credits for your project, your report must be checked by an independent auditor.

Step 6: Getting and Selling Credits

Once you have reported on your project, and the report has been audited, you can get credits. The credits will be transferred into your account.

You will need to find someone to buy the credits. Many companies need to buy credits because of the carbon tax. Companies or other organisations may also want credits so they can show they are good to the environment.

The price of credits will depend on what you decide with the buyer.

Step 7: Finalise or continue project

Different projects go for different amounts of time. Some projects – like planting trees – require you to keep looking after them, even after you've gotten all the credits. You need to know the requirements of your particular carbon offset project. Once the project time ends, you can renew the project, or you can finish up with it.

Carbon Outreach for the Kimberley

The KLC has started a new project to support carbon farming opportunities for Indigenous land owners. The project will work with Aboriginal people in the Kimberley to talk about carbon business and climate change.

The North Kimberley Fire Abatement project has taken big steps towards setting up a carbon business based on burning country the right way under the Australian Government's Carbon Farming Initiative.

Carbon business is not just about right-way fire, but could include other projects that care for country, like replanting native vegetation.



A carbon business can have many benefits, including employment, looking after country, the passing on of traditional knowledge and sustainable business opportunities for communities.

The project will engage with native title groups throughout the whole of the Kimberley to discuss the carbon story and opportunities for carbon business, so that all groups can understand and access the benefits from carbon farming.

The carbon farming opportunities for Indigenous land owners' project is supported by funding from the Australian Government.

KLC Carbon and Fire Team

The KLC has a number of people helping out with the fire process. You can get in contact with them by contacting the KLC.



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