



Carbon and Indigenous co-benefits

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Context

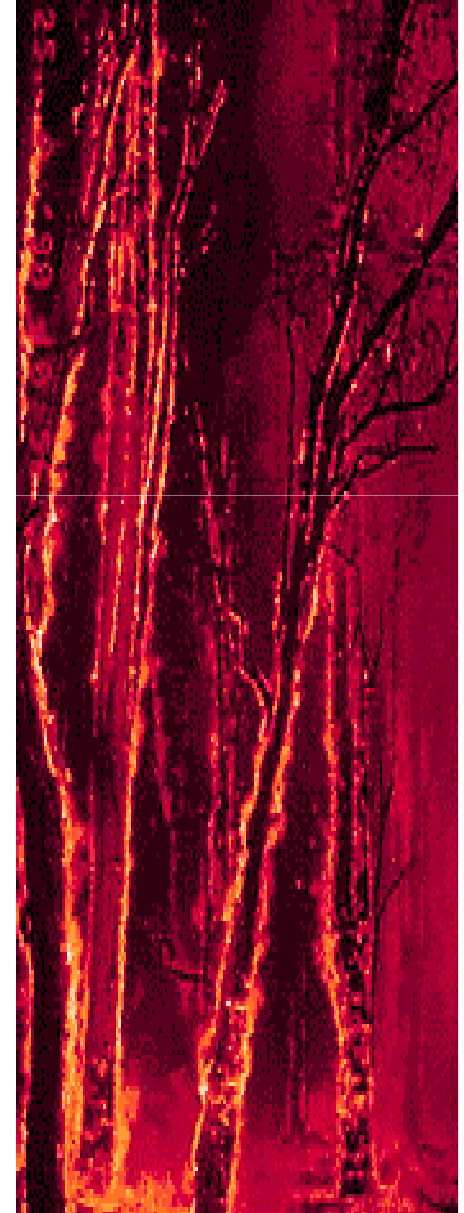
Focus of work under the **National Indigenous Climate Change (NICC) project** - a unique example of a policy-level partnership that is driven by Indigenous people and that focuses on improving the Indigenous community benefits associated with carbon offset projects.

Research space that invited cross-fertilisation of Indigenous science and sustainability science approaches in a project focused on **Indigenous pursuit of environmental and social justice**



National Indigenous Climate Change (NICC) project

- A policy-level partnership that is driven by Indigenous people
- Focuses on improving the Indigenous community benefits associated with carbon offset projects.
- Provided key input into **Australia's Carbon Farming Initiative**
- Highlighted a number of issues affecting Indigenous people's participation in Australia's carbon economy





Climate change and carbon

Climate change has focused attention on reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere

Emission trading schemes facilitate mechanisms to increase carbon stocks in return for payment:

- Tree planting
- Avoided deforestation
- Fire management

Opportunity to achieve other benefits ('co-benefits) in addition to carbon e.g. biodiversity & benefits to Indigenous communities

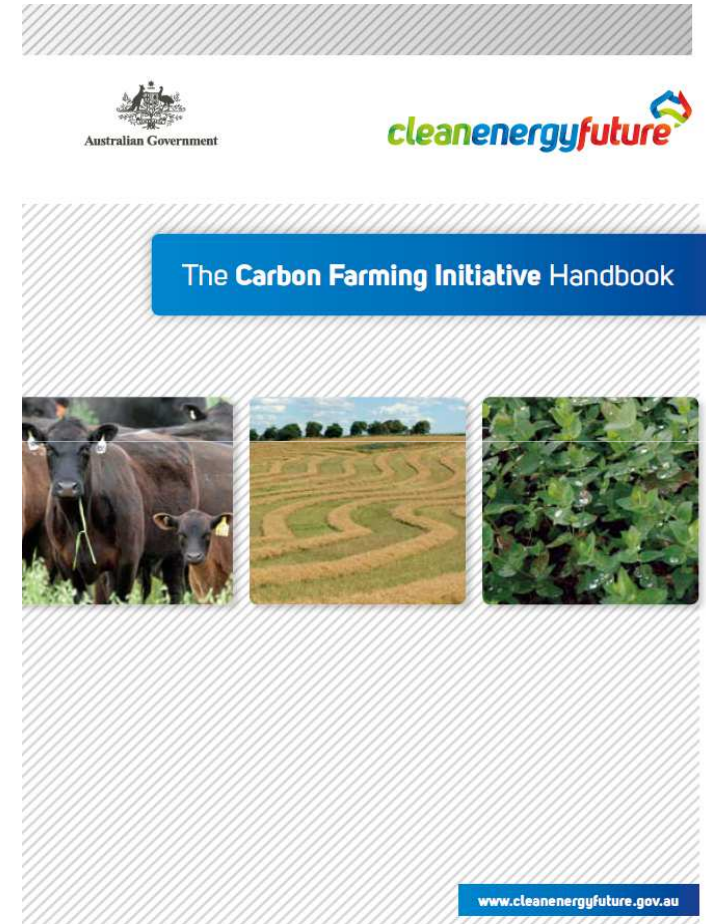


Climate change and carbon in Australia

Carbon offset scheme established by the Australian Government

Contains provisions to promote projects that provide benefits to biodiversity and/or Indigenous communities

Interest from Indigenous communities in carbon offset projects and the additional co-benefits (e.g. ecosystem services and biodiversity)





Climate change policy and Indigenous rights

Billions of dollars and numerous international standards are focused on enabling Indigenous people to engage in and benefit from carbon offset schemes around the world.

Key focus is to institutionalise **social safeguards** in carbon offset programs to proactively encourage positive contributions to Indigenous people's rights, livelihoods and well-being

Robinson, CJ et al. 2014. *Providing opportunities and setting standards for Indigenous rights to carbon and co-benefits. The National Indigenous Climate Change (NICC) Project.* Published paper. Human Rights and Environment Sustainability Conference, Yale. 5-7 September, USA.



Overview - Indigenous carbon co-benefits

What are Indigenous carbon co-benefits?

Where can Indigenous carbon co-benefits be effectively achieved?

How can we develop safeguards in carbon offset schemes to ensure Indigenous benefits are sustained?



What are Indigenous carbon co-benefits?

Indigenous organisations surveyed across Australia. The results show that

- 1) Indigenous organisations seek multiple benefits from participation in carbon sequestration and abatement projects**
- 2) They were only interested in pursuing Indigenous carbon projects if certain key preconditions were in place to:**
 - Safeguard local landscapes and livelihoods
 - Develop partnerships that enable local communities to provide informed consent and maintain decision-making authority
 - Deliver sustainable development benefits to the region and broader Australia



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Sub project aim

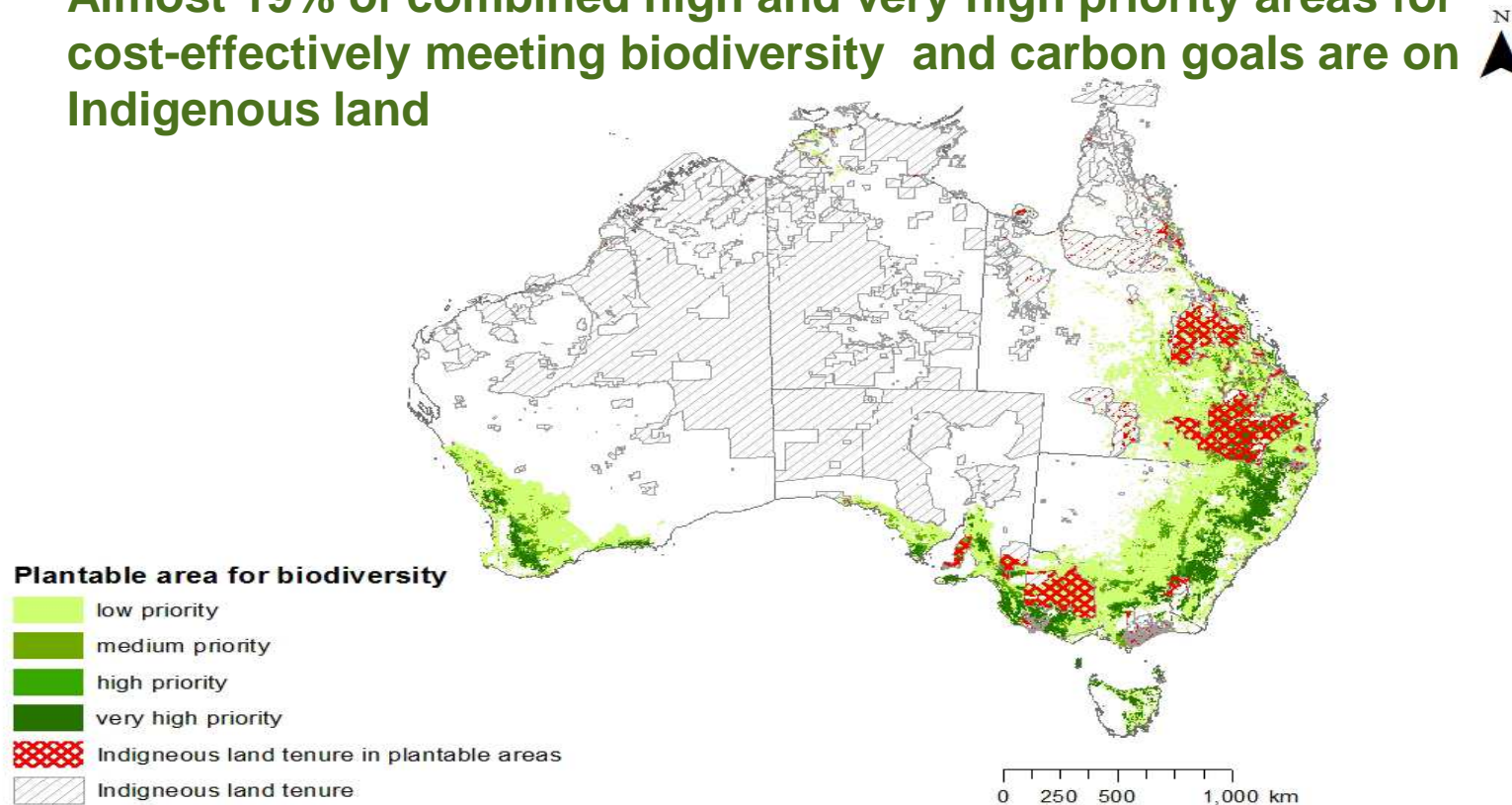
To determine the **amount** and **location** of **Indigenous land** in Australia that could most **cost-effectively** meet **carbon** and **biodiversity** goals through **planting biodiverse native vegetation**





Where can Indigenous carbon co-benefits be achieved?

Almost 19% of combined high and very high priority areas for cost-effectively meeting biodiversity and carbon goals are on Indigenous land

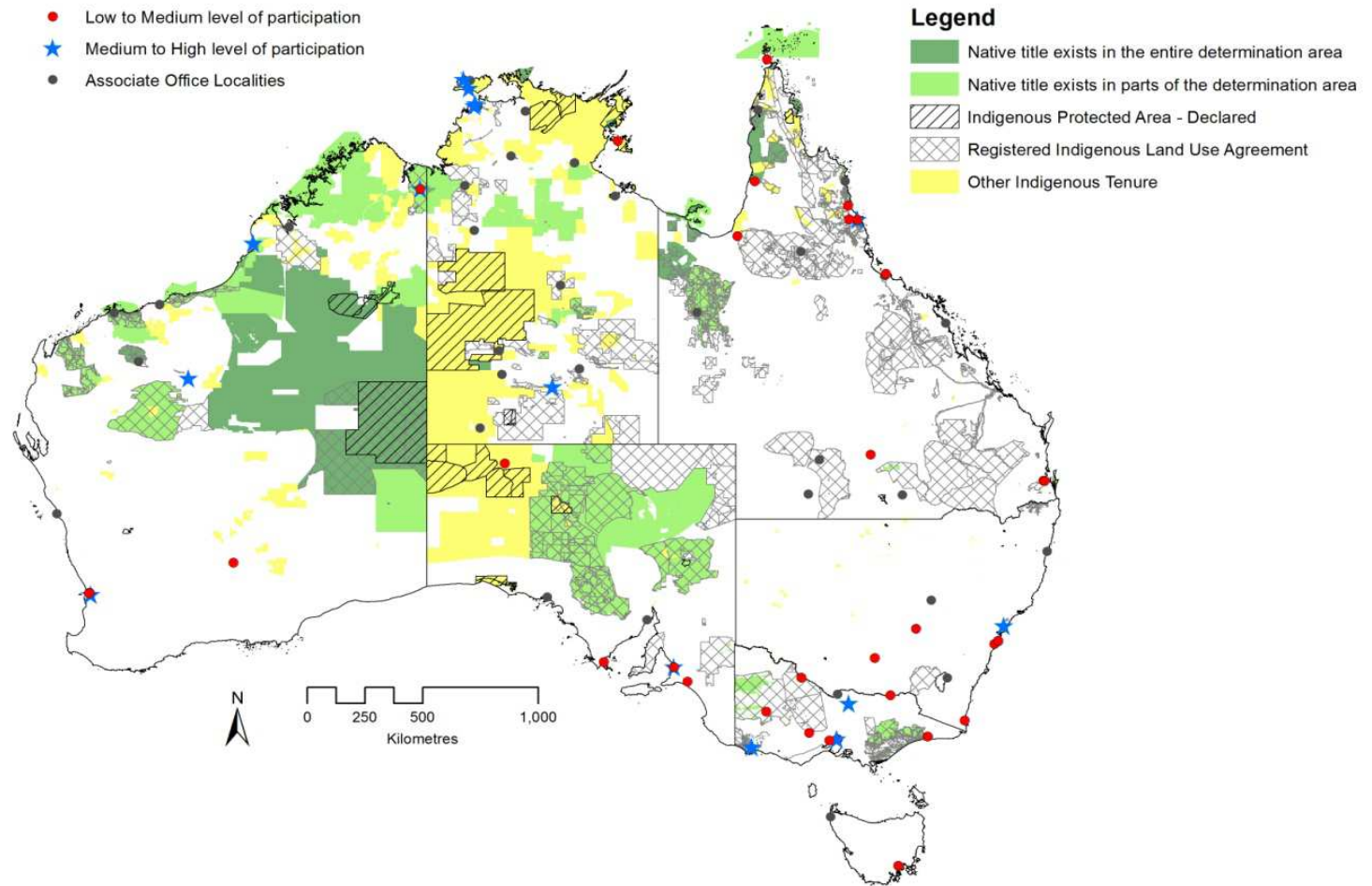


Renwick, A, C J. **Robinson**, T Martin, T May, P Polglase, H, P. Possingham, and J Carwadine. 2014. "Biodiverse Planting for Carbon and Biodiversity on Indigenous land." **PLoS ONE** 9(3): e91281. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0091281



Where can Indigenous carbon co-benefits be achieved?

Regional variations - Indigenous capacity to respond to carbon offset opportunities



Robinson, CJ, Gerrard, E, May, T and Maclean, K. 2014. Australia's Indigenous carbon economy. A national snapshot, *Geographical Research*, 52(2): 123-132



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Delivery of Indigenous carbon co-benefits

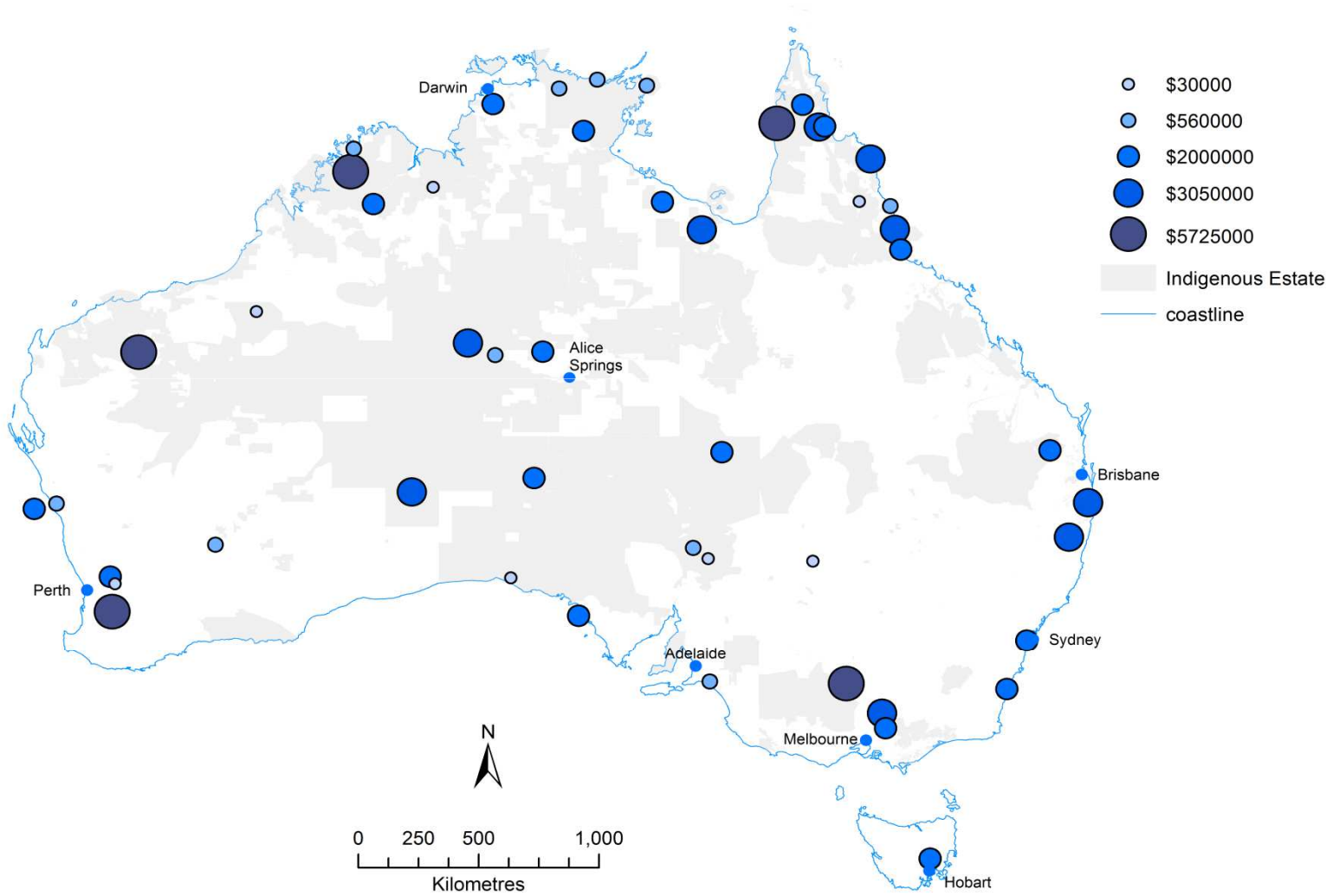
The Australian government encouraged Indigenous people's participation in the CFI through

- \$AU 22 million 'Indigenous carbon farming fund' (ICF) designed to facilitate carbon farming projects established by Indigenous communities ('Indigenous CFI projects').
- \$AU 1 billion Biodiversity Fund - allocated to Indigenous and non-Indigenous landholders for projects that deliver voluntary biodiversity and environmental carbon co-benefits.





Delivery of Indigenous carbon co-benefits





Discussion points

Analysing **Indigenous people's motivations** for participating in carbon offset activities highlights the potential intensity and diversity of cultural values and benefits that need to be considered when devising social safeguards to encourage these positive contributions



In Australia, **investment** directed at making Indigenous communities 'carbon ready' needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that, in addition to delivering carbon returns, projects receive strong local support and align with Indigenous people's motivations and institutional capacities.

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Thank You