



OLKOLA
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

News

August 2025



Olkola Aboriginal Corporation celebrated World Female Ranger Week from 23 - 30 June 2025.

"We'd like to offer a massive shout out to all female rangers undertaking land management, and especially to mention our female workforce within Olkola Aboriginal Corporation," CEO Deb said.

"We thank them for their continuous hard work and dedication." Female rangers encouraged to apply for positions described on the back page.

World Indigenous Rangers Day was also celebrated on 31 July.

"We would also like to take a moment to appreciate and thank the Olkola Rangers, land managers and junior rangers for their continuous hard work and commitment towards looking after arrgi, cultural sites and story places, and our waterways," Deb said.



A word from CEO Deb ...

Since the 'Olkola 5' land handover in 2014 and the first 10-year Healthy Country Strategic Plan was marked in 2018, the majority of Olkola' peoples' goals and strategies over the past decade have been achieved, or are being actively managed towards completion, CEO Deb writes ...

We recognise our Olkola Elders' tremendous hard work and that their legacy continues today.

Our conservation efforts towards managing Olkola country, its waterways, cultural sites and sacred stories are ongoing.

Despite the prolonged 2025 wet season, which saw heavy rains, major flooding and breakaways that blocked access in or out of country for periods at a time, we hope everyone stayed safe.

Over a few days in mid-March, the Corporation held its annual planning workshops to debrief and review the massive work carried out in 2024.

These planning workshops were essential for mapping out and discussing the goals for our projects and programs, such as the Cultural Knowledge Centre, the Carbon Ajin program, the Bringing Alwal Home Project, the IPA & Land & Sea Ranger Program, as well as exploring training opportunities and refresher courses.

Joint management meetings with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) to collate our work plans together for the year ahead, weed management, cultural site surveys and endangered species conservation works are in planning.

Shifting to country, Olkola rangers have undertaken mapping and controlling weeds on country as well as yard and fence maintenance around the properties.

Cultural sites, including new scar trees discovered on Olkola arrgi, are regularly monitored during travels around and across to prioritise our cultural site maintenance efforts.

The Killarney Airstrip held up in great condition following post-wet season maintenance.

In May, another planning workshop with Olkola Elders and Corporation staff was held in Laura to ensure we're all geared up and ready on the ground for the busiest months of the year.



Cultural Knowledge Centre

The Olkola Cultural Knowledge Centre was officially certified in late 2024, which welcomed more facilities on the ground.

Moving onward, the next step will be stage two, focusing on the Research Centre, which will have a dedicated exhibition space, office spaces and a boardroom for planning, workshops and meetings on country.

The Corporation was successfully awarded \$2.65 million towards this stage and construction should start in early 2026.

This project is special for the Olkola People, and we look forward to reporting back on our progress.

In another major highlight, last April, we were successful in our application for funding to improve infrastructure across Olkola country.

As a result, a new generator at Strathmay Station has recently been installed.

The solar system on Glen Garland will be upgraded before the wet season.

Enhancing infrastructure on country improves the livelihoods of Olkola people living on country and the work capacity for the Olkola Rangers across the landscape.

On the ground from May to late July, the Olkola ranger crews were focused on weed management, fencing maintenance, cultural

site monitoring, and on-ground and aerial burns across the vastness of Olkola country.

Some cool shots and creative videos can be seen on our social media, some of which are on their way to reaching an average of more than 800 views!

The Olkola Rangers are on call to tackle wildfires over the next few months as the weather becomes hotter.

Mining update

The Corporation has ongoing concerns with mining on Olkola arrgi (country) and the Olkola Rangers and Land Manager staff continue to support our conservation work and efforts toward putting a stop to mining on arrgi.

AGM 2024

We thank Olkola members who attended the 23-24 Financial Year Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 14 May 2025.

We celebrate and welcome the elected Olkola Directors representing their areas for the Corporation.

Staff have worked hard to implement work plans set out at the beginning of 2025, on projects which included the ground-breaking Cultural Knowledge Centre project, IPA Program, the Carbon Ajin (fire) Abatement Program and the successful Queensland Indigenous Land & Sea Rangers Program.

All of our projects and programs have received positive feedback from our partners.

Meeting Notice: AGM 2025

Olkola Aboriginal Corporation is holding its 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Cooktown at 10 am on Wednesday, 19 November 2025.

An official meeting notice will be provided to Olkola Members 21 days before the AGM.

If your address has changed recently, please contact the Corporation to update your information to ensure you receive our correspondence.



Joint Management



The Corporation met with Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) in mid-March to recap on the collaborative work finished in 2024 and a look at how we move forward into 2025.

On the agenda were ideas such as combining resources for joint fire efforts during the program and wildfire season, and pest, plant and feral animal management

over Olkola and Alwal National Parks, including more monitoring and surveys on our endangered species such as Alwal, the Golden-shouldered Parrot.

An aerial shoot project for managing feral animals conducted in late 2024 resulted in the removal of about 1700 pigs.

There were other methods



A joint project with Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service has enabled the Corporation to set up artificial intelligence (AI) cameras on country.

The cameras have built-in 360-degree views to survey and monitor activity in real-time.

"This new technology adds significant value to land management to address events such as smoke detection, wildfires and the capability to virtually survey wildlife species, including Olkola totems and endangered species," CEO Deb said.

"More importantly, we can observe the changes to country over time during the wet season through to the hotter months of the year.

"The project is a work-in-progress, but we look forward to having more to report in future."



undertaken throughout the year for controlling feral animal numbers on country, such as the initial setup of traps for pigs using mangoes, cracked corn and molasses.

"Ongoing work on this project ensures waterways remain healthy for all shapes and sizes of wildlife to access, including our totem Alwal," CEO Deb said. "We look forward to reporting to members as this project progresses."

QPWS & Olkola staff also tackled weed management, where access was possible, treating pest plants such as Gamba Grass, Rubbervine and Sicklepod with ongoing ground treatments for these, including aerial surveys.

In mid-May, Corporation staff travelled to Elgoy to meet with neighbouring stations and QPWS staff and further discuss Olkola's fire program plans, weed and pest management works and cattle management for 2025.

"Over a few days in June, Olkola and QPWS Rangers worked to complete cultural burning around the Nukakurra Walking Trail," Deb said. "By doing this we are protecting the wildlife and the timeless signage around the trail signifying what food and fruits were available to eat and the tools used by our ancestors."

Several planning workshops and meetings were held this year with Elders and staff.

CEO Deb said the planning meetings were for the IPA & Land & Sea Ranger Program, the Carbon Ajin Program, the Sandy Creek Cultural Knowledge Centre project and joint management meetings with Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service.

Olkola staff also undertook a two-day training course with E-motion Video & Media Training late in November 2024, which entailed learning how to creatively transform traditional images and videos in a mobile-friendly video editing application - the same software we see widely used today for many purposes across social media platforms.

"Skills gained from the course included recording from different angles and perspectives, how to do voice-over introductions and scripting, implementing strategic effects, sounds and various animations to engage viewers," Deb said.

"We were able to confidently create an amazing 10-second video to showcase on Olkola's social media pages.

"The benefits of this training were that we can adjust and improve the way we curate our Facebook and Instagram posts for our followers, who include Olkola People, our partners and members, and the general public."

She said some of the newly styled and edited videos and/or images were on their way to reaching 800 views!





Managing our IPA & arrgi

One year after our official Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) ceremony on country, our Olkola knowledge holders and rangers have maintained on-going cultural heritage monitoring and surveys of sites and story places post-wet season.

More are planned as the year progresses, in accordance with the strategies and goals listed in the IPA plan.

Over a few days in June, the Olkola ranger crew did cultural protection burns at the Nukakurra Walking Trail.

"By doing this, we are protecting the habitat for animals inhabiting the area as well as the cultural signage and marked cultural sites on the trail," CEO Deb said.

"One overcast day in February, the Olkola rangers and land managers spotted

the graceful boss of Olkola arrgi, Ootalkarra (dingo), on Glen Garland."

She said many areas were not accessible for weed management.

"Pest plants such as grader grass, gamba grass, Sicklepod and Rub-bervine are a work-in-progress and our crew have been focused on fence maintenance and improved access," she said.

"Identified areas include boundary fences, creating new fences and significant track maintenance along these routes."

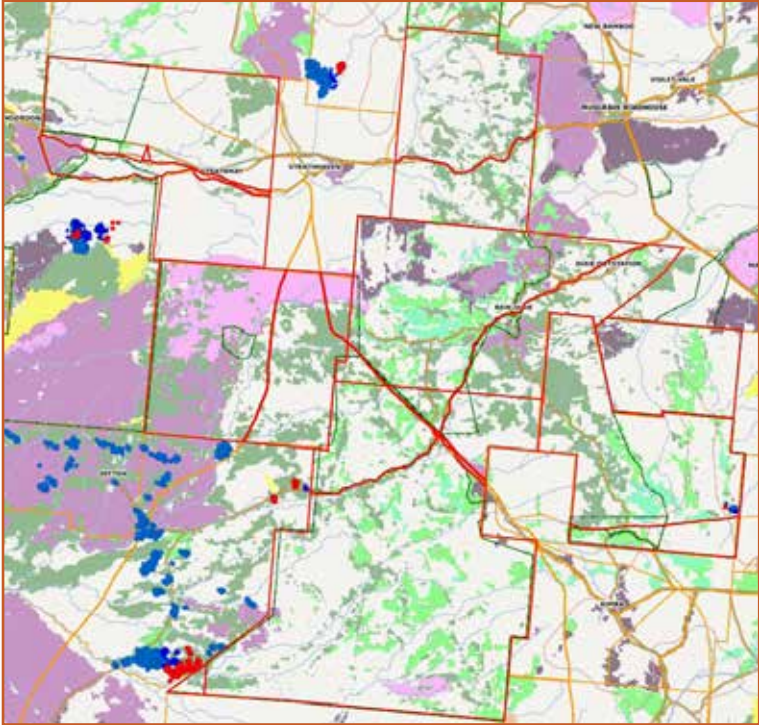
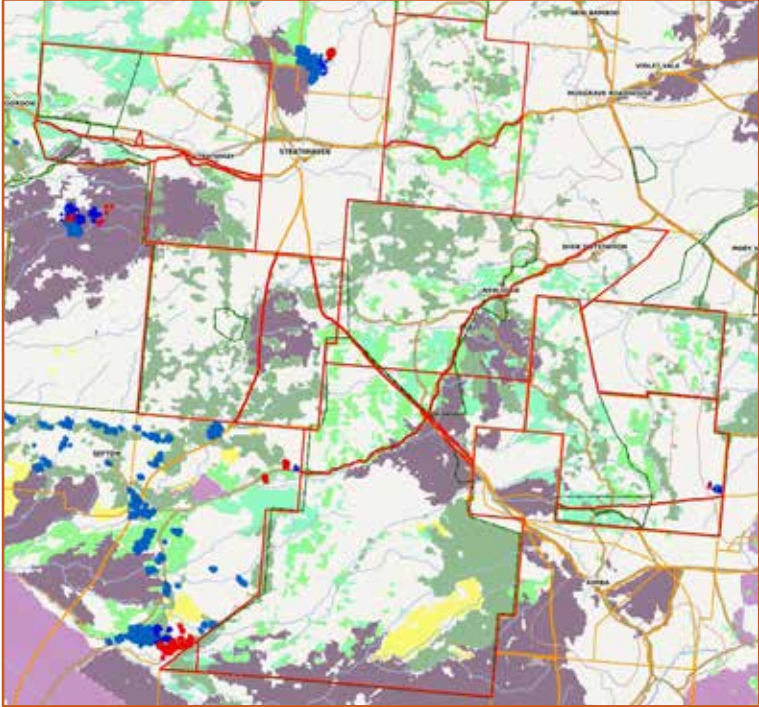
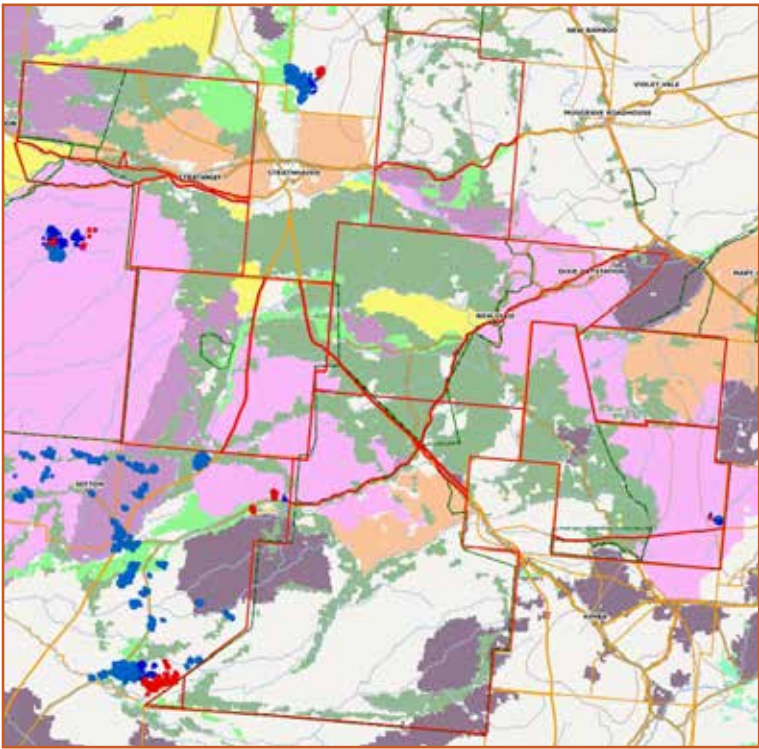




This year's wet season extended its way well into April and, during those seemingly everlasting rainy months, the Olkola rangers were busily preparing and assessing equipment, and undertaking maintenance of fire equipment, buggies and vehicles used across all our projects.

In the 2024 fire season, the total area burnt on Olkola arrgi was 37.4% and a low 9.8% was burnt by wildfire in the later months of the year. "Over the years, there has been a significant improvement in managing fire operations during April to August months," CEO Deb said. "We keep a steady eye on our arrgi and stay prepared to take fast action towards combating wildfires from August onwards. Over our years of Olkola managing arrgi, we have put together some baseline data across the seasons and a picture of the results of our work programs/projects during those times of the year is starting to come together."

See right for a five-year comparison between 2014, 2019 and 2024, demonstrating the benefits of conducting well-planned on-ground mosaic and cultural burns.



Tourism plans on track



Last year, we reported stage 1 of 3 of the Olkola Cultural Knowledge Centre (OCKC) Project was officially completed and certified.

"We now have power, water, a commercial-grade kitchen and bathroom amenities on-site," CEO Deb said.

"One of the best parts of this beautiful building is a stunning and large open timber deck overlooking the lagoon, a place for yarning and simply enjoying the scenery and wildlife of Olkola Country.

"Although there have been minor setbacks along the way, we are immensely proud of what we have achieved so far."

Earlier this year Olkola Aboriginal Corporation successfully applied for \$2.65 million in government funding towards Stage 2 of

the Centre.

"This involves the completion of an Olkola research centre, with a dedicated exhibition, office spaces and a boardroom for planning, workshops and meetings on country," Deb said. "Stage 3 of the project will be a Ranger Base situated across the lagoon, which will provide much-needed accommodation across country to support the growth of the Ranger Team as more Olkola people join."

The Corporation also celebrated National Volunteers Week from 19-25 May with a meeting and a yarn with some of the organisation's long-term supporters who have been

involved in the project.

"We thank our team of volunteers for their dedication, commitment, hard work and continuous contributions," she said.

"We are also grateful for continued support from the Melbourne University for our Olkola Cultural Knowledge Centre project for the Olkola People.

"The Olkola rangers do a great job of maintaining the entirety of the Cultural Knowledge Centre grounds, which includes fencing, mitigating weeds, slashing and mowing around the new infrastructure, as well as burning in and around the area to protect it from late-season wildfires."

Olkola Aboriginal Corporation has been working hard to plan the 'Journey to Olkola Country' tourism venture, with a heavy focus on improving infrastructure across country.

"The Olkola Cultural Knowledge Centre will be central to the venture for our welcomed guests," CEO Deb said.

"The ranger crew have also been working hard on improving access to places such as the Nukakurra Walking Trail.

"In late 2024, we met and yarned with long-term partner, the Australian Conservation Foundation, who have been with us ever since our first tour launch back in 2015 and we produced a news article together."

The article said, in part: "Everyone who joined the tour was blown away by the rich landscapes, wildlife, stories and knowledge generously shared by the Olkola rangers and team. Today these tours are now entirely run and owned by Olkola."

As our planning progresses, jobs will become available for positions such as tour bus drivers, cooks/catering, tour guides and more.

If you are interested in any of these positions, please send your resume to admin@olkola.com.au


The Nukakurra Cultural Story Place

Olkola was given two virtual reality headsets, loaded with the Nukakurra 3D storytelling video, in June this year.

Back in 2022, Melbourne-based research volunteers travelled to Killarney to spend time with Olkola Elders and staff, who talked with them about the history of the Corporation and our Nukakurra Trail joint management journey.

The aim was to explore emerging technologies to digitally document the landscape of the story places along the trail and produce a 3D scan.

"Participating in this project was very exciting because of the outcomes which aligned iwth our Olkola Healthy Country Plan for bringing Country to people who cannot access it," CEO Deb said.



60 YEARS AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION


About Publications Adopt a possum Contact us Login


Our Work Get Involved Stories & News Take Action Donate

Home > Stories & News > Stories >


Caring for Olkola Country





16 December 2024





Paul Sinclair
Campaigns Director at the
Australian Conservation
Foundation.

 Copy link

The Olkola people have been custodians of their lands located in south-central Cape York peninsula for thousands of years.

The ACF article can be read here:
<https://www.acf.org.au/news/caring-for-olkola-country>

More work for rangers in extended wet season

This year's wet season has hung around for longer than expected, with some creeks still flooded even this month, head ranger Richard Ross says.

"In January, there was about 276 mm of rain and by mid-February, there had already been more than 100mm," he said.

"We really couldn't get around much.

"We got across to Nukakurra, Piggy Piggy and Sandy Creek, and did all that work over there.

"Now we've got the crew back, we've done all the ground burning before the chopper came in.

"We had one little fire and

the boys put that out, but otherwise the chopper has done their work and even though you can't predict it, we've got a pretty good hold – touch wood."

He said they were making good use of an app called NAFI – the Northern Australia Fire Information – which provided a satellite map of recent fires by the hour, day, week or month as well as currently identified 'hotspots'.

"From now on we just look at the NAFI every morning and if we see a red spot with that NAFI, there's a fire there, so we go and investigate it," he said.

"It updates every couple of hours.

"We can also see an overall picture with it, we can't predict wildfires, they are like the weather, but it's a good thing, it helps us a lot."

He said all the rangers were trained in fire management.

"Troy has been doing this since he's been there, which is a long time, and we're trying to teach the up-and-coming rangers what to do and what not to do," he said.

"They're pretty quick learners."

He said they were also working hard to keep the grader and loaders busy.

"We've done all around here, all the infrastructure, graded round," he said.

"It's a lot easier now, we've got a big loader to do the heavy stuff.

"Sandy Creek has been done, flushed and cleaned up nice, it's looking pretty cool over there.

"We've burned and cleaned around Nukakurra, and we've checked out Piggy Piggy for Gamba grass.

"We've still got a bit of time to check out some of the undergrowth around the place, and dig it out, but most of it is all pretty well under control.

"I reckon it's a good year with the burning, the ground burning was done and the chopper work meant we stopped the burning pretty early too."

He said they had a good team this year.

"We've got some new members on the team," he said.

"It's getting very hot up here now, but I think everything is going nicely."



We, the Olkola people, all stand together as one, upholding our traditions and culture with great respect for our old ways.

We lead and govern our traditional lands, business and future.

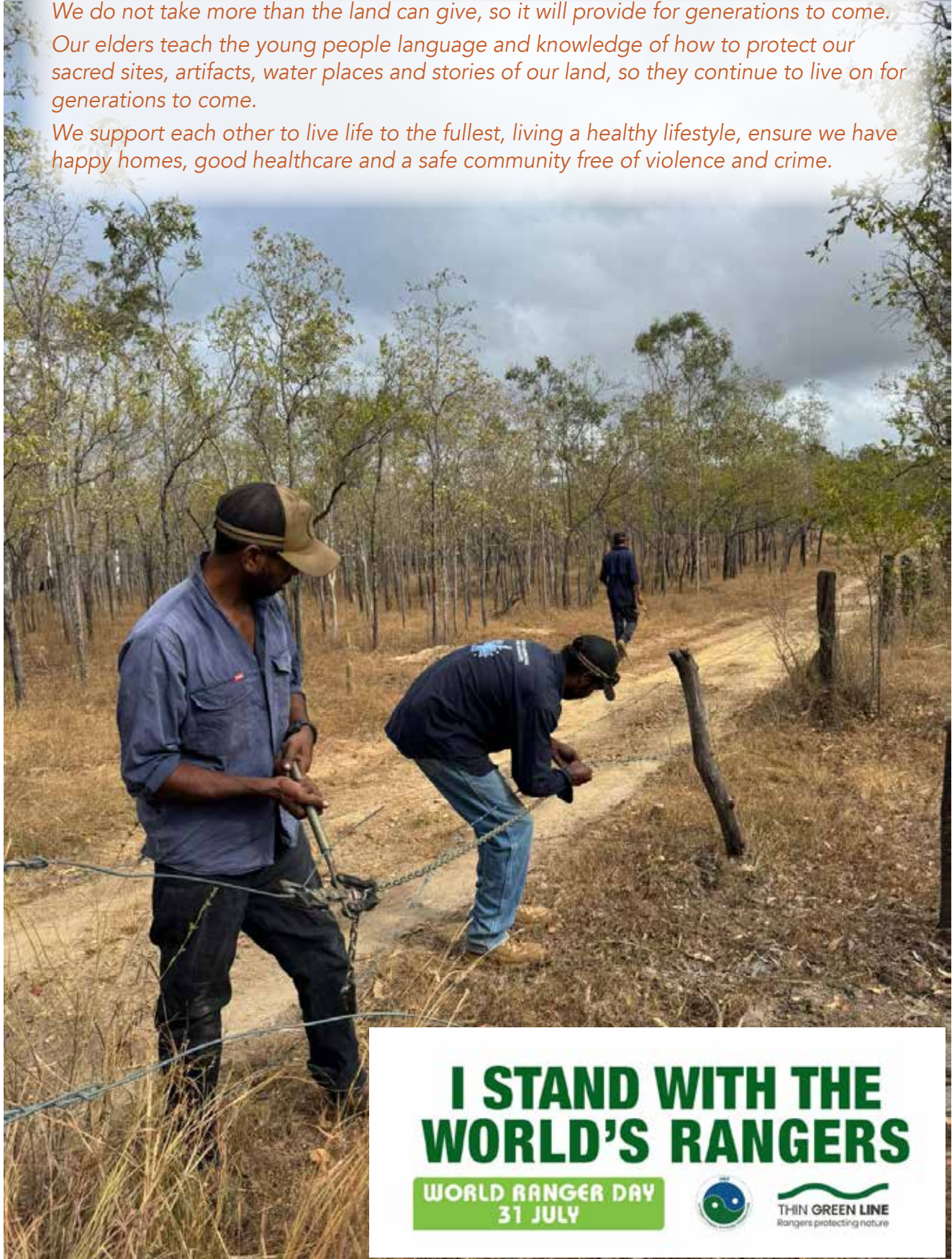
Others will listen to what we are saying and support our ways.

Our ancestors have entrusted us to carry on the traditions and to care for the country and all the animals, plants and food within.

We do not take more than the land can give, so it will provide for generations to come.

Our elders teach the young people language and knowledge of how to protect our sacred sites, artifacts, water places and stories of our land, so they continue to live on for generations to come.

We support each other to live life to the fullest, living a healthy lifestyle, ensure we have happy homes, good healthcare and a safe community free of violence and crime.



**I STAND WITH THE
WORLD'S RANGERS**

**WORLD RANGER DAY
31 JULY**



THIN GREEN LINE
Rangers protecting nature

The Laura Roadhouse 24/7 fuel bowzers have been performing well since they were installed in 2022, serving the local community and travellers during the wet and dry season as needed.



Exciting Employment Opportunities

We are looking for Olkola people who would like to develop their career within the Corporation for positions including:

- **Rangers, Land Managers and Junior Rangers**
- **Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Rangers**
- **Multiple tourism positions (tour guides, drivers, cooks and catering assistants)**

The positions involve working and camping across Olkola lands.

Criteria for all positions:

- Eagerness to undertake on-the-job training
- A current driver's licence, or willingness to obtain a driver's licence as it is essential as applicants will be required to make their own way to and from work.

We highly encourage all Olkola People (including women and youth) to apply for positions advertised. Interested applicants should to send their current resume to admin@olkola.com.au

Contact us!

Follow Olkola's social media to keep up to date on our latest news.

Instagram: [olkolaaboriginalcorporation](https://www.instagram.com/olkolaaboriginalcorporation)

Facebook: Olkola Aboriginal Corporation
Cape York

Website: <http://www.olkola.com.au/>

Corporate, General & Employment Inquiries
admin@olkola.com.au

Office Address: 11A-15 Sheridan Street, Cairns City, Q 4870

Postal Address: PO Box 523, Westcourt Cairns, Q 4870

Phone: 07 4051 2184

