

Carbon credit project brings benefits to communities and the environment



AS bushfires rage across NSW and parts of Queensland, a savannah burning carbon project has brought great social, environmental and economic development benefits to traditional owners on Cape York Peninsula.

In partnership with Aurukun rangers, managed by Aak Puul Ngantam (APN), located in Cape York, the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation has traded 10,000 carbon credits to the National Australia Bank earning traditional owners significant revenue from the project and protecting country.

Utilising the savannah-burning carbon-farming methodology, which implements early dry season burning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and wildfires, APN Cape York Rangers, based out of Aurukun on the western cape, were pleased with the outcome of their hard work.

APN Cape York general manager Sandy Whyte said they could use the money earned from the carbon-farming project to assist traditional owners to return to their homelands.

"Without this income, many traditional owners would be unable to be on country and pass on their knowledge to their children and grandchildren," Sandy said.

Aboriginal Carbon Foundation general manager Rowan Foley said the project had similar broad aims as a number of other projects on the cape.

"The beautiful balance between implementing a project that has great environmental value, matched with strong economic returns for traditional owners, is a sustainable manner to build a carbon economy which addresses the disadvantage that most communities face in the region," he said.

NAB's head of enterprise sustainability Alison Read said, from the bank's perspectives, there were many benefits to the project.

"It helps NAB meet our carbon-neutral commitments, it supports employment in Indigenous communities, and it benefits the environment," she said.

"Having visited far north Queensland last year with the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation, I've seen the benefits of the project first hand and fully appreciate its impact."



Dion Koometea works on a savannah burn.



The Ti Tree outstation.



Horace Wikmunea



Garrett Kerindun keeps an eye on the fire from a helicopter.

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Police shooting: Was lethal force necessary?



A 29-year-old Aboriginal woman was shot dead by police in Western Australia last week, prompting hundreds of people to gather outside the police station in Geraldton, demanding "Justice for Joyce". Joyce Clarke died in hospital last Tuesday night from a gunshot wound after police were called to a house in response to reports of a woman brandishing a knife.

WA Police Commissioner Chris Dawson said eight officers were sent to the scene.

"Some verbal communication took place between attending police and Ms Clarke before one officer fired one round from his service pistol which struck Ms Clarke," he said. Mr Dawson said there were believed to be more than 20 witnesses to the incident.

Mr Clarke's adoptive mother Leslie "Anne" Jones demanded to

know why police shot Ms Clarke instead of using a taser or another non-lethal method to subdue her.

Ms Jones was among family members and friends who gathered to protest outside the police station against what they said was excessive force used in the situation. Ms Jones told the ABC that she felt numb but was thankful for the community's support.

"My family feels very hurt and I am devastated because I know we are not going to get answers from the police," she said.

"I do still feel numb but I appreciate everybody who is here from the bottom of my heart.

"It (the system) failed her, deliberately failed her ... because (the officer) shot her and now I've got to go through all the things now to lay her to rest and that's going to be even more devastating."

Some of the protesters held signs that read "Black lives matter 2", "What is a taser for?" and "Is it open season on Blackfellas?"

Among the group was Carol Roe, the grandmother of 22-year-old Aboriginal woman Ms Dhu who died in a Pilbara hospital in 2014 two days after being locked up at the local police station for unpaid fines, after police were called to a domestic violence incident.

Family spokesman Sandy Davies told media that Joyce had returned home from a mental institution a few days before she died, and the family called police for help to get her back to hospital.

"She was having difficulty at home with her family last night and her family called police to assist to get her to the hospital, and as a result of that she was shot dead by a police officer," he said.

National Suicide Prevention and Trauma Recovery Project coordinator Gerry Georgatos said the organisation was supporting the family.

"It's as harrowing as it gets," Mr Georgatos said.
"The family is hurting and

there's a lot of confusion about what has occurred. There's a sea of grief at the moment from Mullewa to Geraldton."

Ms Clarke leaves behind a seven-year-old son, who lives with a relative.

Major Crime officers travelled to Geraldton to investigate and the Police Internal Affairs Unit will conduct a separate inquiry, which is standard protocol.

The Corruption and Crime Commission and WA Coroner will also oversee the case.

Regional WA Commander Alan Morton told media that the officer involved was traumatised and had taken immediate leave.

Commander Morton offered his condolences to Ms Clarke's family and said "one of the main areas of investigation" would centre on why a taser was not used.

"Everyone wants quick answers, but it's just unfair for me to draw early conclusions," he said.

Patrick Dodson, Labor Senator

for Western Australia, expressed concern about the shooting and called for calm.

"I acknowledge that the police have committed to conducting a thorough inquiry into this tragic death, with oversight apparently by the Corruption and Crime Commission," he said.

"Without wanting to prejudice that inquiry, I can only echo the question being posed by many in the community: Why was it necessary to resort to the lethal force of a firearm to resolve whatever trouble the police were confronting on Tuesday evening?

"I extend my deepest sympathies to the family of the dead woman.

"The Aboriginal community of Geraldton deserves a full account of what happened.

"Any inquiry, including the Coroner's inquiry, will take a long time to report and community concerns need to be settled as soon as possible." – with AAP