




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.11 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to partnering with our traditional owners to cooperatively care for country across Queensland. After all, who is better to care for country—managing native wetlands, bushlands, coastal areas and estuaries across Queensland—than the people who have been caring for it for over 60,000 years? An important aspect of our partnership is the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program. In 2020 we committed to doubling the number of funded Indigenous land and sea ranger positions from 100 to 200 by 2023-24. I am proud to announce that we have delivered on that commitment. I am pleased to announce today that the distribution of the final 46 new ranger positions will join the 154 rangers already employed and delivering valuable environmental and cultural services across Queensland.

Having the full complement of 200 rangers employed boosts the Palaszczuk government's investment in Indigenous land and sea rangers to almost \$27 million this year. Traditional owner organisations were selected through a competitive funding round and will receive grants and other support to employ community-based rangers. A total of 15 First Nations organisations will benefit from this latest investment in 46 ranger jobs. New ranger teams will be established in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Cape York, Sunshine Coast, Central Queensland and South Burnett. Ten new rangers will be added to existing ranger teams based in Burketown, K'gari, Kuranda and Cape York.

This program is not just an investment in jobs and our environment; it is also an investment in rebuilding Indigenous knowledge and empowering Queensland's traditional owners to care for country. Rangers are combining traditional knowledge with new technologies to protect and conserve country based on traditional owner and community priorities. Land and sea rangers are undertaking fire management, biodiversity surveys, marine debris removal from beaches and estuaries, feral animal control, weed treatment and cultural site management. Over the past year Indigenous land and sea rangers have carried out fire management over more than 665,000 hectares of land, completed more than 920 biodiversity surveys, removed more than 9,000 kilograms of marine debris from Queensland foreshores, and recorded and monitored 570 culturally significant sites.

Indigenous land and sea rangers are integral to the protection of Queensland's threatened species including marine turtle, dugong, migratory shorebirds and the golden-shouldered parrot. They also play a key role in their communities. They are delivering junior ranger and youth engagement services including in-class talks at Queensland schools and on-country camps. In 2022-23 ranger groups engaged more than 3,700 young people in over 120 activities. The program has a strong emphasis on training with many rangers achieving qualifications in conservation and land management

and completing leadership development. A total of 29 rangers are currently completing a tailored Indigenous ranger leadership program, which is helping to foster a new generation of leaders in the care of country.

The Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program supports jobs and delivers positive environmental, cultural, social and economic outcomes for First Nations communities. Delivery of funding to double the number of rangers in Queensland reflects our government's strong and deep commitment to partnering with traditional owners across Queensland.