



Plate 1: Senior Adjumarllarl Ranger Adrian Gunarridji sprays recently germinated mimosa seedlings under treated adult plants (2004)

has become more assertive and confident and is recognised as the 'main man' in local NRM. Though quiet, he leads the other Rangers by example through his hard work and reliability.

As a result of training facilitated by TEALMES, Adrian graduated in June 2004 with a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management from Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

Adrian says he gets bored spraying mimosa but it is better than just hanging around town doing nothing. The prospect of new types of work, such as using the airboat to manage weeds in the wet season or hunting feral animals for pet meat, is more exciting. Adrian isn't as keen on office activities such as writing reports, but nevertheless is a very competent and responsible day-to-day manager of the land.

As a reward for his hard work and accepting responsibility Adrian has access to firearms to hunt for his family and has occasional after-hours use of the vehicle.

3.1.4 Three case studies of Aboriginal Rangers

Study 1: Adrian Gunarridji—Story of a Senior Adjumarllarl Ranger

Adrian is 34 and from Djulka country near Mamadawarre Outstation in western Arnhem Land. Married to Hagar Buliwana, who works at Gunbalanya Primary School, he was formally educated to Year 10 at Kormilda College in Darwin. Adrian has a wealth of experience in NRM and is dedicated to his work.

He started working casually with the NT Government 10 years ago on

mimosa control, and joined the Adjumarllarl Rangers in 2000. His skills now include all aspects of herbicide use, occupational health and safety, weed identification, map reading, fire management, feral animal control, firearm safety, inspecting animals for disease, harvest of wild animals, machine maintenance and site rehabilitation.

Since joining the Rangers Adrian

Study 2: Albert Myoung—Mimosa man from Malak Malak Land Management Team

Albert is 57 and from Malak Malak country at Wooliana on the Daly River. Albert received occasional education from the mission school in the 1950s. During the 1960s and 70s Albert worked in a variety of jobs including as a gardener at the mission, a builder's mate constructing Aboriginal housing, as a fisherman for three years in Melville Island and then again as a builder. Building was hard work from 7am to 4pm, mixing and pouring cement by hand. Albert reckons he saw his first mimosa in 1976. When CDEP started, Albert decided he would spend his time treating mimosa.

Until recently Albert was fighting mimosa on his own with minimal resources—considerable time was spent spraying mimosa with a small sprayer mounted on the community tractor. In the late 1990s NLC lent a quad bike and spray tank to Albert so he could work on areas of black soil inaccessible by tractor. In 2000 TEALMES provided a 4WD truck and spray trailer that meant other Rangers could work alongside Albert.

Since 2000 a team of three to six people assist Albert with mimosa control and he is currently senior Ranger in a team of five. Although he has had no formal training, he has a depth of knowledge regarding the control of mimosa and other weeds. Albert has worked with many Government and NLC people on a variety of weed control projects including biological control of noogoora burr and mimosa.

Shortly, Albert will be retiring and the junior Rangers



Plate 2: Senior Rangers Albert Myoung, left, from Malak Malak and Arthur Karuia, from Thamarrurr, share knowledge and experience in basal bark herbicide applications (2004)

have been encouraged to take a greater leadership role and undertake formal training with Batchelor Institute. Albert himself thought formal training was inappropriate because he is too old.

His role as senior Ranger is one of a mentor, encouraging a good work ethic in the younger men. The Wangamaty Landcare coordinator supports the Malak Malak Land Management Team, however, they do much of their work without supervision.

When asked why he had persisted for so many years Albert replied "old people have never seen anything like that. If we let it go it will choke the billabong and then we can't get geese or turtle".

Photo: Amos Shields



Plate 3: *Herbicide mixing and OH&S demonstrations during the Daly River Weed Workshop (2004) by Senior Ranger Andrew Calma, Acacia-Larrakia (standing left), and Mark Gardener, TS-CRC (kneeling).*

Study 3: Andrew Calma—Senior Ranger Acacia Larrakia Land Management Team

Andrew is 47 and has led the Acacia Larrakia Land Management Team for the last two years.

Andrew is from Darwin and has Aboriginal and Filipino heritage. Andrew went to St Mary's school in Darwin and then five years at Kingswood College in Melbourne, where he excelled at football. He returned in early 1975 to find his family had fled after Cyclone Tracey. For the next 10 years Andrew lived

in Alice Springs (where he found his family) working as a concreter, in a laundry and at a brickworks, gaining many practical skills.

Afterwards he moved back to Darwin completing his VET training in a diverse range of jobs such as gardening, carpentry, machine maintenance and surveying.

Andrew's first experiences in NRM came from his father in the 1960s

who worked as a buffalo and crocodile hunter across the Top End. Since then his varied outdoor employment has given him very practical skills suited for on-the-ground NRM work. Andrew was invited to head the Acacia Larrakia Land Management Team in 2003 because of his ability to manage a team, to train young men and his good communication skills.

Currently there are eight rangers, mostly young men who would otherwise be "getting into trouble in Darwin". Andrew is very much a mentor to these younger men and helps them with life skills such as filling in CDEP forms and getting bank accounts. The team's jobs include weed control, infrastructure construction, rubbish collection and ground maintenance in Adelaide River, Acacia and Humpty Doo communities.

As a result of skills obtained from mimosa work as part of MSFA and TEALMES the team was invited to do two weed contracts: one on gamba grass on adjacent crown land and the other on mimosa on the upper catchment of Adelaide River.

Andrew is very skilled and competent and wants a real job with comparable remuneration to council workers instead of CDEP with top-up (about \$21,000 per annum).