



Australian Government
National Indigenous
Australians Agency



NIAA

IRP Expansion Round 1

Annual Project Plan & Budget

Part 1: Negotiating the annual Project Plan

Guidance for Indigenous Rangers Program Providers



PowerPoint Presentations set up

There are two PowerPoints on negotiating the Annual Project Plan and Budget (APP&B):

- Part 1 (this PowerPoint)– Negotiating the Project Plan
- Part 2 – Negotiating the Budget

Indigenous Rangers Program (IRP) outcomes

- Managing Country at the direction of Traditional Owners / communities.
- Intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge.
- First Nations people (including women and youth) gain skills for meaningful employment.
- First Nations people transition into specialist positions and leadership roles.
- Building economic resilience of Indigenous organisations.
- Caring for Country through partnerships with community, government and non-government organisations.

These outcomes are planned and delivered through the Annual Project Plans, actioned by Ranger Teams. Your activities must also be consistent with your project schedule.

What is the Annual Project Plan & Budget (APP&B)

- The APP&B is one of the main documents provider organisations use to plan and report on the IRP.
- The APP&B outlines approved activities and budgets for each financial year by:
 - Detailing specific project deliverables (activities)
 - Breaking down how funding will be used to deliver activities (budget line items)
- The APP&B is negotiated with, and approved by, the NIAA.
- Once approved by NIAA, the APP&B is used for bi-annual activity and expenditure reporting. This includes the:
 - Mid-year report (first half of the financial year)
 - Annual report (whole year)

The Project Plan

The Project Plan is guided by environmental and cultural priorities developed in consultation with Traditional Owners, Elders, Community and other relevant stakeholders.

The Project Plan should:

- ✓ Be endorsed by Traditional Owners
- ✓ Reflect Traditional Owners' aspirations for Country (seek guidance from your Traditional Owner Governance group - Traditional Owner governance meetings may be linked to NIAA site visits)
- ✓ Include all planned activities that will be undertaken during the financial year
- ✓ Be achievable
- ✓ Demonstrate progress in managing issues over time by building on the previous year's work where relevant
- ✓ Should be described in clear and simple language, including fee-for-service activities.

When is the APP&B negotiated?

- The APP&B is negotiated prior to the start of each financial year, during the last quarter (April to June) of the previous financial year.
- The APP&B should be approved by NIAA prior to 30 June each year.
- Your Agreement Manager will provide you with the APP&B workbook.

When should the APP&B be re-negotiated?

- A change in budget or activities, for example:
 - Natural disaster
 - Where unspent funds are approved for carry-forward into the current year.

How is the APP&B negotiated?

- The APP&B can be re-negotiated and approved by an exchange of letters (email approval) with the NIAA delegate.

New IRP Projects funded in 2025

- The 2025-26 APP&B will be different from the 2024-25 APP&B:
 - The 2024-25 APP&B was for a part-year - activities mainly for setting up your ranger group
 - 2025-26 APP&B is for a full year
 - The 2025-26 APP&B includes employee planning and reporting.
- If you are unsure, check with your Agreement Manager to make sure you have the right template.
- Do not include activities for your Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Project or other IRP projects in the APP&B for your new IRP Project. If you have an IPA or other Ranger projects, you must complete a separate APP&B for these projects.
 - IPAs will have a different APP&B workbook for 2025-26. This workbook will be very similar to the IRP worksheet, but not the same. Please note the differences when completing and reporting.
 - Contact your Agreement Manager if you are unsure which APP&B to use for each of your projects.

Step 1 – Complete the Report Type Worksheet

SELECT PROGRAM:		
IRP Project Name:		
IPA Project Name:		
Organisation Name:		
Activity ID 1:		
Activity ID 2:		
Report Type:		< Select the planning or reporting period.
IRP Agreement Start Date:		
IPA Agreement Start Date:		< located in Funding Agreement
Reporting Period from:	dd/mm/yyyy	
Reporting Period to:	dd/mm/yyyy	< The APP&B and the Annual Report must cover the period 1 July to 30 June.
Ranger Group name(s)		Project Description:
		< Insert Project Description from Funding Agreement / Fusion Project Summary >

Fill out your:

- Project Name
- Your Organisation Name
- Activity ID
- Report Type
- Project Start Date
- Reporting Period dates
- Your Ranger Group Name
- Your Project Description

Choose the report you are completing

ANNUAL PROJECT PLAN AND BUDGET (APP&B)

2025-26 Financial Year version

Once your Annual Project Plan and Budget is negotiated with the NIAA (prior to June every year) it is also used for your:

- Mid-year report (6 month period: 1 July to 31 December)
- Annual report (12 month period: 1 July to 30 June)

SELECT PROGRAM:

INDIGENOUS RANGERS PROGRAM

Project Name: NIAA Northern Waters Ranger Project

Organisation Name: Environment Branch, National Indigenous Australians Agency

Activity ID: 4-XXXX001 < located in Fun

Report Type: Annual Report (Period: July - June) - due July Select the pla

Annual Project Plan and Budget for the next financial year (period: July to June) - due June

Agreement Start Date: Mid-year Report (Period: July - Dec) - due January located in Fun

Annual Report (Period: July - June) - due July

Reporting Period from: 1/01/2025 < The APP&B a

Reporting Period to: 30/06/2025

Ranger Group name(s) Environment Branch Women's Rangers **Project Descri** This example

The options are:

- Annual Project Plan and Budget
- Mid-Year Report
- Annual Report

Step 2 – Complete your Project Plan

- Mid-year reports should include details of activities for the 6 month period (1 Jul - 31 Dec).
 - Annual reports should include details of activities for the 12 month period (1 Jul - 30 Jun).

Project Name:	0
Organisation Name:	0

Report Type:	0
Reporting Period from:	0/01/1900
Reporting Period to:	0/01/1900

12 MONTH PROJECT PLAN			
Activity Description	Expected Outputs	Activity Status	Actual Outputs and Variance
Consultation and Planning			
Advisory Committees			
Traditional Owners			
PBC or other representative bodies			
Planned consultancies			
IPA Plans of Management, Healthy Country Plans, other Land and Sea Management Plans, or IRP Strategic Plans			

Step 2a – Writing your Activity Description

The Activity Description column should list and describe each of your planned activities. All planned activities should align with your funding agreement and the objectives of the IRP. Each activity should work towards a particular goal or outcome.

You should consider including the following information in your activity descriptions:

- The purpose or intended goal or outcome of the activity.
- How your rangers or staff will deliver the activity.
- If the planned activity is the result of consultation with Elders and Traditional Owners, taken from strategic planning documents), or in partnership with another organisation etc.

Activity description

Tip: try not to mix activities where possible. Consider splitting activities to cover different locations, different species, different sites etc.

Example:

- Try not to group weed and animal management activities – different species should be given their own rows.
- Fire activities – permitting, training and burning should all have their own rows.
- Cultural management activities – describe management of each site in their own rows. Some activities as a particular site may also require its own row

Step 2b – Writing your Expected Outputs

An Expected Output is the results you expect to achieve from a particular activity. You can have multiple Expected Outputs listed against one Activity Description.

When writing your Expected Output descriptions, include the following information, where possible:

- The number of rangers required to deliver or undertake the activity
- The location where the activity will be delivered.
 - Try to be as specific as possible when identifying the location of your planned activity.
- The expected timeframe this activity will occur.
 - Timeframes can be:
 - Describing a period in which the activity will occur e.g. management of x weed species, in the month prior to when it seeds in September
 - Describing how long the activity will take e.g. a week to deliver weed management over x hectares
 - Specific dates, where these are known.
 - the timeframe for Expected Outputs must be within the financial year.
- Something you can measure:
 - This can be the number of hectares of weed control, planting a specific number and type of a native plant species or the number and species of pest animals you plan to remove.

Step 3 – Outcomes vs Activities, vs Outputs

Outcomes	Activities	Outputs
<i>(The way something will turn out, a vision statement or goal)</i>	<i>(An action to deliver the outcome)</i>	<i>(Something produced, what results do you expect from the activities?)</i>
<p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural sites are maintained in accordance with Traditional Owners' expectations. 	<p>Examples of relevant activities:</p> <p><i>(these may be in different areas of the Project Plan)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold meetings of [group name] to prioritise actions for [site name]. Remove [pest plant name] around [site name]. Conduct cultural or hazard reduction burns to protect [site name] from wildfire. Erect fencing or signage around [site name]. 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting dates X Number of Hectares of weeds sprayed Publishing a plan Producing a map Constructing x km of fencing Construct x number of signs (photographs)

Activities may continue across multiple years

For ongoing activities spanning several financial years, at the beginning of each financial year:

- Update the Activity Description or Expected Output description to reflect any new expected results.
- Ensure you indicate where activities follow on from previous financial year activities.

USE S.M.A.R.T when writing your Activity Descriptions and Expected Outputs

S.M.A.R.T.	Explanation	Example
Specific	State exactly what the activity is and how and where it will be done	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 'Hold an information session at the visitor centre on bush tucker and tree planning for First Nations youth from X township. <input type="checkbox"/> 'Hold a community education session'
Measurable	Provide a numerical value by which you will measure how completed the activity is.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 'Remove marine debris along 30km of coastline, starting from Southside Beach.' <input type="checkbox"/> 'If possible, perform beach clean ups'
Attainable	Your activities and expected outputs should be realistic and achievable within your estimated time-frame and planned budget.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 'Participate in at least one fish survey in the XX River with the XX Department <input type="checkbox"/> 'Participate in five fish surveys with the XX Department each month
Relevant	The activity should contribute to the goals and outcomes of the IRP, MDBIRR or IPA programs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 'Undertake aerial spraying of Mimosa (Weed of National Significance)' <input type="checkbox"/> 'Build community arts centre extension'
Time Bound	Provide a realistic timeframe or deadline for planned activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 'Conduct ten days of patch burning on sandplain Country in April-September' <input type="checkbox"/> 'Complete patch burning activity'

Example:

Visitor Management			
Visitor Site Management			
Cultural sites are maintained in accordance with Traditional Owners Expectations	Install signs at entrance to Cultural site A and B, informing visitors of the cultural importance of the site and their obligations. Install signs first week of May. 2 signs to be installed at entrance to site A and 4 at the entrances to site B	Completed	Signs installed on May 10th to 15th - delayed due to weather inhibiting installation. All signs successfully installed at required locations
	Install 5 signs along dunes at entrances to walks, informing visitors of nesting seabirds and their obligations with regards to pet dogs. Install signs first week of May.	Completed	Signs installed on May 10th to 15th - delayed due to weather inhibiting installation. All signs successfully installed at required locations

Project Plan – Activity Description and Expected Outputs

Activity Report – Activity Status and Actual Outputs and Variance

Example:

Weed Management

Undertake weed mapping of the western quarter of the IPA, at the same time as the golden sun moth orchid mapping (5 weeks in May-June 2025). Weed mapping to use transects of 3 km. Data collected will be used to inform weed management of the IPA going forward.	Map 200 hectares of the western quarter, for 5 weeks in May-June 2025. Rangers to use transects to map weeds. Send copy of Map to NIAA.	Completed	Rangers spent 5 weeks on Country undertaking mapping of 278 hectares. Weeds species x was found to have surface coverage of 33%. Weed species y only had 32 individual identified in total and has been determined to be less of a priority of the rangers at the current time. data collected will inform weed management activities in the western corner of the IPA for 2025-26, following consultation with advisory committee.
Important cultural sites are free of invasive plants	Remove weeds around [cultural site name], 2 hectares in total.	Not Started	Similar mapping to occur in eastern grasslands next FY Will be completed in dry season

Project Plan – Activity Description and Expected Outputs

Activity Report – Activity Status and Actual Outputs and Variance

Approval of high-risk activities

- Ranger activities are commercial in nature and relevant state, territory and/or Commonwealth workplace health and safety regulations apply.
- Some activities may require evidence of approval by a statutory authority before they can be approved by the NIAA. Examples include:
 - Working with children or vulnerable people
 - Lighting fires for cultural or hazard reduction burns
 - Acquiring or operating vessels
 - Diving and snorkeling activities
 - Acquiring, storing and operating firearms
 - Operating drones
 - Operating some types of machinery
 - Handling wildlife for conservation/rehabilitation work (no hunting wildlife).
- Where a provider doesn't have approval, the activity which should be included in the APP&B will be about getting that approval. For example, accredited training, developing managing systems, negotiating permits.

Example:

Fire Management			
Rangers to organise on-Country walk with PBC (if interested), Elders from community organisation x,y,z and a, and other interested Traditional Owners to discuss fire management.	Date of on Country walk to be advised and attendees to be confirmed. This walk will be used to plan fire management activities for 2025-26 FY.	Completed	<p>Walk was organised for 19-21 May 2025. 3 PBC members and 1 Elder each from community organisation x, y and z attended along with 5 other community representatives.</p> <p>Stakeholders were asked to nominate specific areas to walk over with the Elders selecting the northern grasslands, open woodland to the south of River X and the Alpine forest to the east of the IPA base.</p> <p>Elders provided advice on how to burn to promote grassland and dragons, and discussed how to protect Alpine forest.</p>
Work with RFS to develop procedures and negotiate permits for burns.	Ranger coordinator acquires RFS permit for burn prior to plan burn period in July 2025.	Completed	Permit for a slow burn applied for on 18 May. Permit received 26 May.
Undertake a slow burn of 1 hectare (test burn) of eucalyptus woodland with acacia and grass understory. All ranger staff to attend and manage burn.	Burn date set for sometime late June 2025, pending permits and weather. Burn to be undertaken in woodlands slightly south of the proposed ranger base (within 5km). Ranger coordinator and experienced IPA staff to provide support and direction.	Completed	<p>1 Hectare burn successfully undertaken (photos attached). RFS attended mop up and Elders from community organisation a and x, and our two cultural advisers attended.</p> <p>Trainee ranger and inexperienced ranger staff gained experience in lighting and managing fires, as well as mop up and monitoring.</p>

Project Plan –Activity Description and Expected Outputs

Activity Report – Activity Status and Actual Outputs and Variance

Commercial activities

Commercial activities and fee-for-service activities delivered by IRP funded employees, or assets, must be approved by the NIAA via the Project Plan.

Commercial activities can include:

- Livestock (cattle, buffalo)
- Tourism
- Carbon abatement
- Other business activities that generate income

FEE FOR SERVICE

- Fee-for-service means the delivery of services for payment. You will be asked to report the amount of income you earned from these activities but you are not required to acquit this income as it is not considered project generated income.

PROJECT GENERATED INCOME (PGI)

- PGI means any income derived from the grant, including but not limited to, interest, the appreciated value of assets/land, insurance and dividends but does not include Fee-for-Service Income. To avoid any doubt, PGI forms part of the grant under the Project Agreement.

Describing assets in the Project Plan

- Asset leases, purchases and disposals must be approved by the NIAA.
- Assets are items with an initial cost of \$5,000 (GST exclusive) or more.
- Finance leases and fixed term leases must be approved by NIAA.
- You must maintain an ongoing asset register (included in the APP&B template).
- The NIAA registers an interests in assets such as vehicles and vessels on the National Personal Property Security Register (PPSR)

Example: describing assets in the Project Plan

Asset acquisition			
List detail of assets to be acquired in this financial year, including value. Use one row per asset.			
Complete Asset Acquisition Request form with quotes and submit to NIAA for			
Finance lease Toyota Landcruiser single-cab Utility - Estimate of \$45,000 per annum over 3 years	Asset acquisition request form submitted to NIAA for approval. Proof of purchase to NIAA when available.		
Toyota Hilux Dual Cab Utility - estimated cost \$75,000	Asset acquisition request form submitted to NIAA for approval. Proof of purchase to NIAA when available.		
7M work vessel to support freshwater lake monitoring and movement around waterways. \$280,000 estimated cost.	Submit asset acquisition form and surveyors advice to NIAA, once the vessel has been identified. Submit proof of purchase to NIAA when available along with evidence of registration with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.		
Dual axle aluminium boat trailer for work vessel - estimated cost \$30,000	Asset acquisition request form submitted to NIAA for approval. Proof of purchase to NIAA when available.		
Slip-on fire unit for Land cruiser - estimated cost \$23,000.	Asset acquisition request form submitted to NIAA for approval with this APP&B. Submit proof of purchase to NIAA when available.		
Infrastructure and Asset Management			