

# policy

## & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

### OBJECTIVE:

*To establish and maintain relevant policies and strategies based on sound research and consultation.*

### Corporate Strategies

- Undertake consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure that ILC policies and services are consistent with the ILC's legislation and reflect, to the best extent possible, the expectations and requirements of its stakeholders.
- Undertake consultation and research with Indigenous peoples and other stakeholders in the review and revision of the NILS and RILS.
- Through a comprehensive evaluation system, monitor the ILC's activities and achievements against the NILS, RILS and strategic plans, including satisfaction with the ILC's services.

### Policy Development

The Board revised the NILS and RILS to take into account legislative and policy changes.

**The ILC continued to streamline its key procedures and support tools to assist applicants and the assessment of applications. This included:**

- Refining strategic projects and procedures;
- Developing and delivering an information package for use by staff in regional consultation sessions;
- Development, in consultation with field staff, of a presentation taking clients through the things that they need to consider if they are to become a landholder.

The ILC further developed its environment and heritage management framework in consideration of the requirements of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*.

**Actions undertaken included:**

- Further development of the ILC's Environmental Management System (EMS);
- Completion of an Environment Policy;
- Drafting of a Heritage Strategy currently being considered by DEH;
- Designing an Environment and Heritage Register and systems to record data;
- Circulating and training staff in environment and heritage assessment procedures; and
- Developing terms of reference for heritage plans for ILC-owned properties.

The ILC has also rolled out the implementation phase of its Evaluation framework and this is dealt with in further detail later in this section.

## Program Documentation

The ILC has the following program documentation.

**For land acquisition, the documents are:**

- Land Acquisition Program Guide;
- The four stream Program Guidelines;
- Cultural Program Guidelines;
- Social Program Guidelines;
- Environmental Program Guidelines;
- Economic Program Guidelines;
- Terms of Reference – Business Plan Economic Acquisition Program;
- Terms of Reference – Property Management Plan; and
- Land Acquisition Application (includes *How to complete the land acquisition application form* and an application form).

**For land management:**

- Land Management Program Guide (includes the Land Management Program Guidelines);
- Terms of Reference – Planning Project Outline;
- Terms of Reference – Property Management Plan;
- Terms of Reference – Small Enterprise Business Plan;
- Terms of Reference – Commercial Enterprise Business Plan;
- Terms of Reference – Strategic Project Plan; and
- Application forms for three initiatives – Group Based Planning, Enterprise Development and Regional Development (includes a *How to complete the land management application form* and an application form).

## National Indigenous Land Strategy

The NILS is reviewed at least annually and revised as required. This year, following the abolition of ATSIC and the advent of the ATSI Act, the Board made minor changes to terminology and to references to legislation. The Board also specified that the ILC will conduct regional information and consultation sessions, and use the information gathered when revising the RILS.

The Board also refined the existing Strategic Land Acquisition and Land Management mechanism by identifying the pastoral and tourism industries as focus areas for intervention.

## Regional Indigenous Land Strategies

The Board revised the Regional Indigenous Land Strategies (RILS) during 2005–2006 to take account of legislative and policy changes.

The RILS reflect the policies outlined in the NILS and provide regional information, such as demographic and landholding data, to assist Indigenous people develop land acquisition and land management plans.

The RILS are underpinned by Regional Profiles.

## Evaluation Framework

The ILC started implementation of a refined evaluation framework during the year. In particular, a Client Satisfaction Survey, regarding ILC policies and procedures, was completed. The survey revealed that respondents had high levels of satisfaction with the ILC's services.

In addition, a sample of completed projects was examined to determine their outcomes. Interviews with the client group or a desktop assessment of the project were carried out. Key views of the majority of groups interviewed were that:

Overall

- ILC assistance had helped them deliver significant benefits to members of their group (88%);
- they had more confidence in dealing with other government agencies since they received assistance from the ILC (81%); and
- they were satisfied with the ILC's policies and procedures (69%).

## CULTURAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Of the sixteen groups interviewed, eleven indicated their land was being used for cultural purposes. Activities occurring on the properties included artwork production or galleries, family gatherings, museums or keeping places, cultural programs for children such as taking kids out on country, and gathering or growing bush foods.

**Over half the groups who were interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that:**

- their group was better at making decisions since receiving ILC assistance (63%); and
- ILC assistance had helped them address social problems (56%).

Three quarters considered that the confidence or self esteem of members had improved since they received ILC assistance (75%). Among the desktop-assessed projects, 57% were delivering social benefits. Social programs included sport and recreation programs, health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, aged care, family violence prevention and intervention programs, education and work experience.

## EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING OUTCOMES

Eleven of the projects recorded that ILC assistance had contributed to employment outcomes. Of the sixteen groups interviewed, nine indicated that Indigenous people were employed on their land as a result of ILC assistance. Interestingly, it was not only projects with an economic focus that delivered employment outcomes. Social projects generated more than half of the total recorded employment outcomes.

Of the sixteen groups interviewed, ten indicated that Indigenous people had received training as a result of ILC assistance. Of the desktop-assessed projects, fourteen recorded training outcomes.

**The table below provides a summary of training outcomes:**

Table 7: Training Outcomes from ILC Assistance 2005–2006

	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total
Participated in Course	130	388	566	1084
Completed Course	117	330	533	980

The majority of training was related to two projects which together had 847 participants. One was a joint project between the ILC and other agencies to deliver weeds awareness training on Indigenous land. Approximately 500 Indigenous rangers completed this training. In the other project, while not directly funded by the ILC, ILC assistance contributed to the group's capacity to carry out its role as a service provider, including delivering training courses. This project included a high number of women as its courses focused on childcare.

**There was a mix of accredited and non-accredited training covering a diverse range of subjects, including:**

- Grazing for Profit and other pastoral industry training;
- corporate or business governance (Certificate IV and Certificate II);
- horticulture certificates (through TAFE);
- construction (Certificate II);
- furniture design (Certificate II);
- childcare (Certificate II); and
- training to obtain drivers, tractor or chemical licences.

The primary benefit delivered to groups was improved practical skills in land use and management, but benefits also included improved business and governance skills such as planning and decisionmaking.

### ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Over half of the groups interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that the environmental state of their land had improved as a result of ILC assistance. Environmental activities that had been undertaken by the groups included revegetation, weeds, fire and feral animal management, protecting threatened species and protection of watercourses.

### CLIENT FEEDBACK

When asked what the ILC had done well in its dealings with the group, ten of the sixteen client groups interviewed pointed to their interactions with ILC staff. In particular, several groups singled out their dealings with project advisors and described ILC staff as responsive, helpful, informative and supportive.

## Other Evaluation Work

Focus groups with a cross section of stakeholder organisations were also commenced during the year. This element of the evaluation, and a report on the outcomes and implications of evaluation work for ILC policies and procedures, will be completed in 2006-2007.

## Consultation

The ATSI Act provides that the Board may consult such other persons and bodies as it considers appropriate when developing the ILC's key policy documents – the NILS and the RILS. The ILC consults Indigenous organisations, including land councils and Native Title Representative Bodies, in relation to its policies, but also seeks their views on individual projects. The ILC's engagement with Indigenous organisations goes beyond consultation, as the ILC supports several regional land management projects that involve partnerships between Indigenous organisations, the ILC and other agencies.

The ILC also conducted regional information and consultation sessions during the year. These are held in key centres and involve contacting local Indigenous organisations and advertising to encourage Indigenous people with an interest in land to attend the sessions. The ILC also responded to requests from individual Indigenous groups to provide information sessions.

## Research

**A number of investigations and specific research projects were undertaken during the reporting period. The ILC:**

- Collated Indigenous demographic information, including employment for various regions.
- Conducted background research into the pastoral industry, including employment and training, and compiled information on major pastoral holdings in Australia.
- Reviewed best-practice frameworks for funding and service delivery to Indigenous people.
- Compiled a report, describing all properties purchased by the ILC post-2002, former ATSIC properties and remediation properties, for the Minister's Office.
- Developed terms of reference for heritage management plans.
- Produced a map overlaying forestry zones and Indigenous-held land.
- Produced a briefing paper regarding issues and options for ILC assistance to help address alcoholism in Halls Creek.
- To coordinate its services within a whole of government approach, the ILC identified the programs of other agencies that have relevance to Indigenous land holders and managers, and made these available on the ILC's Coordination Database so ILC staff could inform applicants.

## Coordination with Other Agencies

The ILC maintained close working relationships during the year with key Australian Government natural resource management agencies, most notably the Departments of Environment and Heritage (DEH) and Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). The ILC worked with the DEH regarding Indigenous Protected Areas, the development of the ILC's Heritage Strategy and provided support to the Australian Collaborative Rangelands Committee. The ILC also met extensively with the joint group DEH-DAFF regarding the *Healthy Country-Healthy People* schedule to the bilateral agreement between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments and Indigenous employment in natural resource management.

The ILC and the Australian Bush Heritage Fund worked together to progress the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in December 2003. The Indigenous Partnerships Officer, funded by both organisations, met extensively with Indigenous people to promote both organisations and to assist Indigenous people to access land management programs and obtain environmental benefits.

The ILC maintains support for Indigenous land management interests across northern Australia through its involvement in the Tropical Savannas Management Cooperative Research Centre Advisory Committee and on the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Association Steering Committee. The ILC is also represented on the governing committee of the Cooperative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management.

The ILC provided input and briefings to a range of other agencies, including the National Indigenous Council, Indigenous Business Australia, National Native Title Tribunal, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, NSW Aboriginal Land Council and Land and Water Australia regarding its functions and the support it provides to Indigenous people, specifically land management. For instance, the ILC:

- Submitted data to the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination's Australian Government Indigenous Management Information System;

- Liaised with Land Water Australia regarding an Indigenous Research and Development workshop; and
- Provided a briefing for the National Indigenous Council regarding the ILC and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Account Consultative Forum and for its meeting with the Minister and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs senior executive.

To support coordinated service delivery, the ILC maintains a Coordination Database that is used by staff to assist in advising clients about the programs of other agencies that may be of benefit and complement the support provided by the ILC. The database contains the latest information regarding agency (government and non-government) services, funding programs and contacts that may be beneficial for Indigenous landholders. Staff receive a monthly newsletter that identifies new information that has been added to the database.

### Notable additions to the Database this year include:

- The report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005*. This provides information to enable the root causes of Indigenous disadvantage to be addressed. The Report is aimed at informing Australian governments about whether policy, programs and interventions are achieving positive outcomes for Indigenous people.
- *GrantsLINK*: This provides information on Australian Government grants programs making it easier to find suitable and relevant grants for community projects. GrantsLINK also helps to find the best source of funding and provides assistance to complete application forms.
- *Community Water Grants*: These assist communities to promote a culture of wise water use, encourage best-practice measures and establishment of water-wise solutions and provide the support and means for community groups to undertake on-ground projects.
- *Money Business Program*: This program helps train local Indigenous people to work within their community and gain a range of skills to make the best possible money-management decisions.

## Submissions

A number of submissions were made to organisations relevant to the ILC's activities. These included:

- *Western Australia Indigenous Tourism Strategy*. The ILC's input centered on the importance of Indigenous engagement, support for Indigenous tourism product at all levels and acknowledgement of the gulf between wanting to run a tourism enterprise and actually doing so.
- *Cross Border Development of Outback Tourism Issues Paper*. The ILC's comments focussed on the engagement and consultation of Indigenous stakeholders during program development and implementation, appropriate training and capacity development initiatives, and the importance of developing relationships with other tourism organisations.
- *Western Australian Government's draft Alternative Settlements Framework*. The ILC's input recommended that: evidentiary requirements arise from the need to address the consequences of dispossession rather than the proposed connection threshold, surrender of native title should not be a precondition of alternative settlement agreements, and administration of the Native Title Land and Equity Fund should be in the responsibility of an independent statutory corporation with an Indigenous-controlled board.
- *National Reserve System Evaluation and Indigenous Protected Areas Review*. The ILC's submission highlighted the significant contribution that Indigenous landholders have made to the National Reserve System (NRS), the success of the Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) program, and ILC's substantial contribution to both of these programs through Indigenous landholder assistance. The ILC further commented that there are significant untapped NRS and IPA funding opportunities available that Indigenous people are unable to access. The ILC suggested that the DEH work in partnership with the ILC to realise further funding opportunities for Indigenous people.
- *Sessional Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, Inquiry into Invasive Species and Management Programs in the Northern Territory*. The ILC's submission advocated that invasive species eradication and management programs acknowledge the significant impact they have on Indigenous people's cultural and social activities and that such activity be accounted for during development of management programs. The ILC proposed that such programs be given high priority on Indigenous-held land due to a number of circumstances, such as a lack of financial resources available to Indigenous people. The further development of Indigenous peoples' capacity and resource base to control established invasive species on their land and prevent further incursions was also recommended.
- *Productivity Commission's Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage – Key Indicators Report and Framework*. The ILC remarked that the framework was seen as an important initiative that the ILC had used in policy and program development. The ILC suggested that the benefits derived from land ownership would capture greater information than land ownership per se, and a case study or things-that-work methodology would be a more effective means of determining whether Indigenous people are gaining benefits. The ILC proposed that case studies for the 2007 report could include Indigenous landholders participating in the Indigenous Pastoral Program.

# Ecologically Sustainable Development & Environmental Performance

## LEGISLATIVE POWERS

The ILC's environmental responsibilities are set out in the ATSI Act and include to:

- Provide environmental benefits to Indigenous peoples through land acquisition and land management;
- Pursue sound land and environmental management practices; and
- Address environmental issues in the development of the NILS and RILS.

The ILC's Land Acquisition and Land Management Program Guidelines require applicants to demonstrate that sustainable benefits will be delivered; that proposed land uses are sustainable; and that they are consistent with sound land and environmental management practices. These issues are identified in procedure manuals for staff to consider.

## PRINCIPLES OF ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The ILC's activities accord with the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD); these are: integration, precaution, intergeneration, biodiversity and valuation.

Economic, environmental and social considerations are integrated into the ILC's strategic planning and decision-making framework. The NILS states that projects must deliver sustainable long-term economic, cultural, social and environmental benefits. The Corporate Plan also has social, economic and environmental objectives. The ILC has a specific environmental stream under its land acquisition and land management programs, also contributing to ESD.

The ILC is pursuing an environmental management system that includes an environment policy, specific application assessment procedures and environmental and heritage review procedures so the Board has relevant information in all the projects it considers.

An ESD Committee and the ARMC provide oversight to enhance consideration of environmental and heritage issues in the ILC's strategies, programs and projects and to ensure compliance with legislation.

The ILC's assessment of properties and projects follows clear procedures. Staff are required to:

- Consider risks and adopt a precautionary approach;
- Consider sustainable benefits, addressing intergenerational issues;
- Ensure that projects conform to sound land and environmental management practices, addressing biodiversity issues; and
- Manage the ILC's properties holistically through property and business plans so that improvements and incentive mechanisms are built into development considerations, which ensure that environmental and heritage issues are appropriately valued by the ILC.

## CONTRIBUTION TO OUTCOMES

The ILC's Corporate Plan includes two objectives that are relevant to and contribute to ESD:

- To assist Indigenous people to acquire land to achieve social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits; and
- To assist Indigenous people to manage their land to derive social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits from it by building capacity for self reliance and support enterprises that deliver sustainable outcomes.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF ACTIVITIES

The following projects demonstrate the effects of the ILC's policies, programs and procedures on environmental and heritage assessment. These projects demonstrate the integration principle, in that short-term decisions about relatively small areas of land will lead to long-term, beneficial outcomes for biodiversity and whole-of-property value.

In 2005–2006, the ILC acquired Lake Pleasant View in Albany, WA, to protect an important cultural heritage site that was being quarried. The ILC and the Albany Aboriginal Heritage Reference Group have developed a work plan to protect and rehabilitate the site and surrounding vegetation, allowing Indigenous people to care for and maintain them.

Land management projects were funded on Dowrene Farm, WA, and on Mount Barney View, QLD, to redress problems of salinity, the impact of stock on flora in the riparian zone, and water quality. Fencing of creek lines began and plant material was supplied for revegetation. These measures will prevent further stock damage and enhance biodiversity by restoring the endemic flora.

A weed management program (for sicklepod (*Senna Obtusifolia*)) began at Mt Baird, QLD, to prevent serious degradation of pastoral land and limit its encroachment into rainforest fringes, river banks and remnant vegetation. The ILC provided funds for a tractor for mechanical control of weeds, provided herbicides for secondary chemical control, and provided grass seeds to restore pasture to prevent reinfestation. The area will be regularly inspected and weeds emerging again will be spot sprayed.

On Murrayfield, TAS, the ILC provided funding for fencing and revegetation to protect a forestry reserve and the habitat of the Forty-Spotted Pardalote. This was done in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment, Tasmania and Greening Australia. The ILC also funded road maintenance. The ILC obtained appropriate permits from the Aboriginal Heritage Office and all works were carried out under the supervision of a registered Cultural Heritage Officer to prevent adverse impact on cultural heritage sites. The roads will be regularly monitored by the station manager and, where any deleterious effects are identified, the Cultural Heritage Officer will be alerted.

The ILC purchased Fords Road, VIC, which had dairy effluent ponds that did not comply with Victorian Environmental Protection Authority standards. They had the potential to contaminate soil and groundwater. The ILC engaged a contractor to modify the ponds and construct an additional pond according to EPA specifications.

All these projects are reviewed by regular inspections of the works and benefits.

Actions were taken to limit the environmental impact of ILC offices. Double-sided printing and 50% recycled paper are standard, individual paper recycling boxes are used at desks, signs to remind staff to switch off lights and office equipment when not in use, energy efficient globes are installed progressively, and procurement guidelines for printers with power save modes have been established.

The effect of the ILC's policies, programs and procedures, both in field operations and office activities, is to minimise adverse impact on the environment.

### REVIEW MECHANISMS

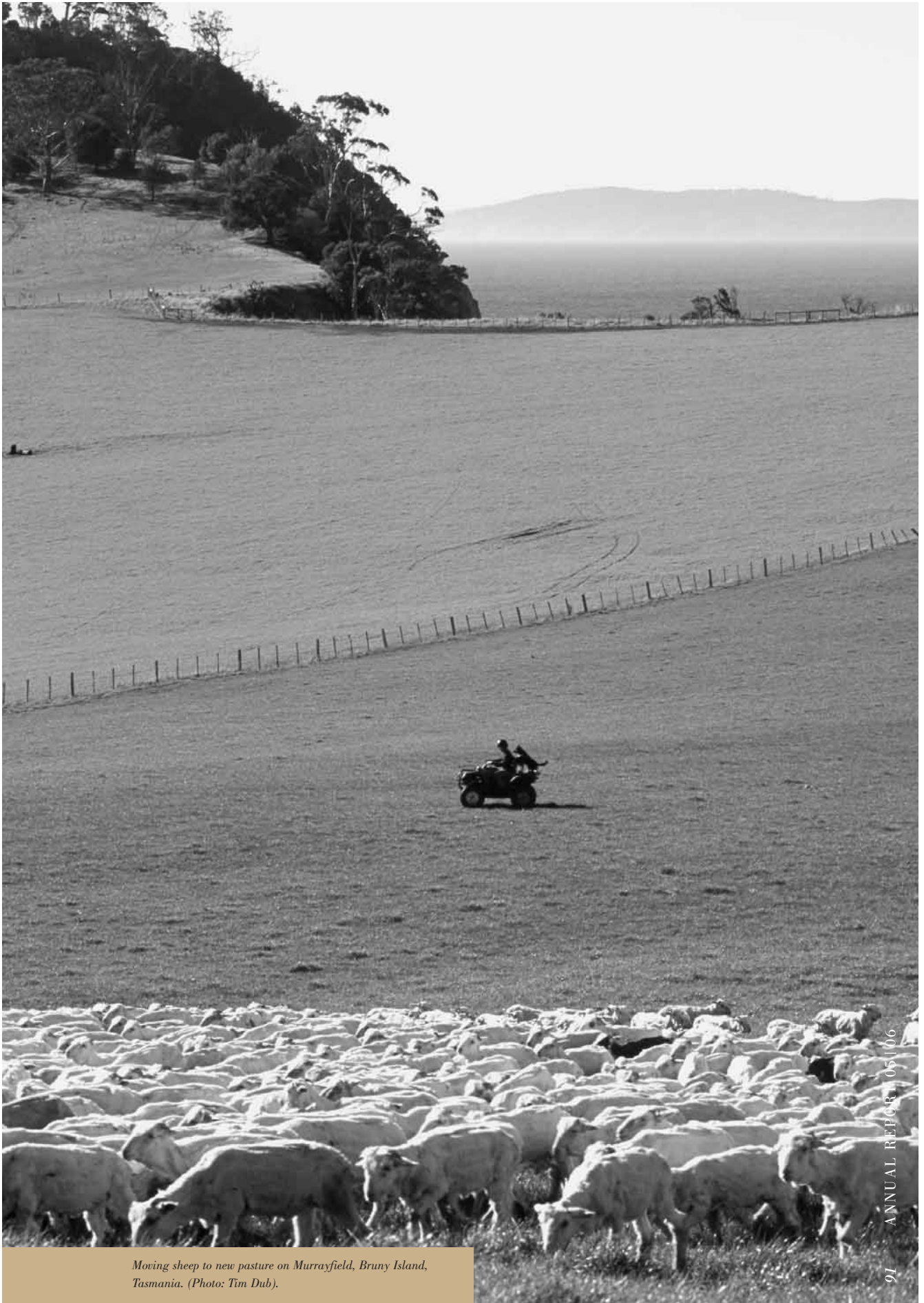
The Environment Policy is reviewed annually and the ARMC committee takes an active interest in the implementation of the ILC's environmental management system (EMS) and its compliance with environmental and heritage legislation.

The EMS incorporates the Environment Policy, procedures and a register. Staff have been trained in these procedures and reference material is available for staff on the intranet.

The ILC has adopted an appropriate corporate governance framework to ensure compliance with the EPBC Act and to review the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the organisation through implementation of an EMS, establishment of an ESD Committee and Office Working Group, oversight by the ARMC, development of the Environmental Policy and incorporation of environment and heritage considerations into assessment procedures and reports to the Board regarding specific projects.

Internal audits ensure that the ILC's land management and land acquisition activities comply with procedures, given that land acquisition legislation and ILC policy requires that environmental and heritage values are protected and managed.

The EMS has established a culture of environmental awareness. This has been developed and implemented in line with ISO standard 14001. The EMS covers activities in each office, property and project. The EMS provides a mechanism for ongoing review of the effectiveness of policies and procedures related to ESD.



*Moving sheep to new pasture on Murrayfield, Bruny Island, Tasmania. (Photo: Tim Dub).*