



Kimberley Land Council

SAVANNA BURNING CARBON PROJECTS

PINDAN INFORMATION SHEET

July 2019

The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) has supported five native title groups in the Kimberley to establish and manage savanna burning carbon projects and is frequently asked to assist in the establishment of new projects. In the Southwest Kimberley, Pindan is one of the main vegetation types. This information sheet has been written to explain the issues associated with Pindan. The KLC's *'Savanna Burning Carbon Projects – An introduction to emission avoidance and sequestration'* and *'Carbon Projects: Step by Step Guide for Indigenous Australia'* provide further background information on how carbon projects work. It is recommended these documents be read together with this information sheet along with each group's **Carbon Feasibility Summary**.

What is Pindan: The word 'Pindan' is a general term widely used to describe Acacia shrubland vegetation on red sandy plains. The general term has caused some confusion because some land managers simply describe all vegetation types with red soil as Pindan.

In the context of carbon projects, the Pindan vegetation type is a naturally dense Acacia shrub layer often with some taller Eucalypt trees, on plains or dunes with deep red sandy soils. The Acacia species are often taller than 2m in height.

Where is Pindan: Pindan occurs mostly in the 600mm-1000mm rainfall zone in the Southwest Kimberley. It is a common vegetation type around Broome and Derby, and extends from the Dampier Peninsula South to Bidadanga and East to Fitzroy Crossing. Within the region, there are numerous other vegetation types in addition to Pindan.

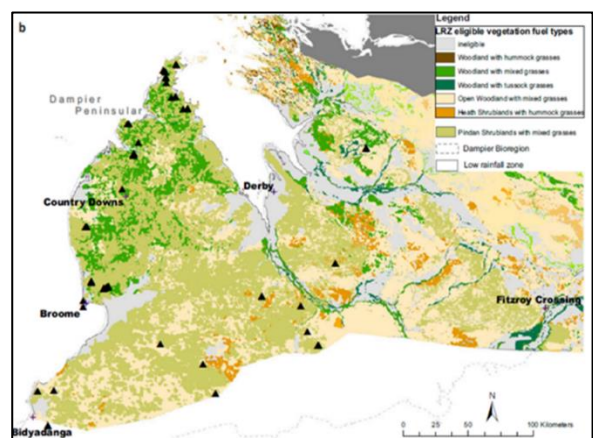
There are other regions in Australia that have similar acacia vegetation types to Pindan, but only Pindan in the Southwest Kimberley region is being considered under the savanna burning carbon methods.

Requirements for a savanna burning carbon project: Not

all land managers who want to run a carbon project can, as there are rules and requirements that need to be met. Requirements include that a project needs to be in area that receives greater than 600mm of rainfall on average each year, that the proponent must have the legal right to carry out the project, and that the consent of other interested parties ('eligible interest



Typical Pindan vegetation (Image: KLC)



Extent of Pindan (light green) and other vegetation types in the Dampier Bioregion (Lynch et al 2018)

holders') is obtained. Another important requirement is that the project can only generate carbon credits from eligible vegetation types that have been approved under the savanna burning carbon method.

Eligible vegetation types: There are five different vegetation types that are currently approved in the 600-1000mm rainfall area, such as 'Open woodland with mixed grass' and 'Heath shrublands with hummock grass'. The Pindan vegetation type is not currently included as an eligible vegetation type under the savanna burning method because of a lack of available data pertaining to fire behaviour in this type of vegetation.

Groups in the Southwest Kimberley region could register a carbon project now (if they meet all of the rules and requirements), but for many groups a large part of the potential project area contains the Pindan vegetation type. For these groups, a carbon project might not make sense from a business perspective because – under the current rules – credits would not be generated from the area with that Pindan vegetation type (Pindan accounts for more than 80% of vegetation in some areas).

Potential changes regarding Pindan: The KLC and partners have been working for a number of years towards having the Pindan vegetation type included in the savanna burning method. This has involved working with scientists and lobbying the government to make changes. If Pindan is included, it will essentially double the amount of vegetation on indigenous lands in the region that could generate carbon credits. It is therefore a very important matter for the Southwest Kimberley region.

In 2018, a scientific paper (*Lynch et al 2018*) was published that described and mapped the Pindan vegetation type, its fire behaviour and emission parameters. The paper concludes that Pindan is subject to the same regional fire regime as other vegetation types already included in the method. It is an important development as it fills some gaps in the science that had prevented Pindan from being added to the method.

It is now up to the Australian Government (Department of the Environment and Energy) to decide if it will use this science and add the Pindan vegetation type in to the method; however, it is currently unclear whether Pindan will be added to the method and how long that process might take.

If the Pindan vegetation was added under the existing method, any project that is registered now without Pindan in the method, could continue without any change, or the proponent could choose to update their vegetation map (at a cost) and have the Pindan vegetation type included in its carbon calculations.

It is also possible that Pindan is not added to an existing method, but forms part of a new method, which would then require projects to transition to the new method when developed if they want to include Pindan.

Concluding comments: It is currently unknown whether (and when) the Australian Government will include Pindan as an eligible vegetation type or not. Due to recent work, it is now possible for the KLC to provide groups with approximate forecasts of the number of carbon credits that may be possible to be generated under the current methods (no Pindan), but also what might be possible if Pindan was included in the methods at a later date. Some groups may be able to establish a feasible project even without the Pindan vegetation type being included, whilst unfortunately for some areas, even if Pindan was included, the number of potential carbon credits that could be generated from a project may still be quite low, making a project commercially unviable.

The KLC will continue to work with the Government to try and progress this issue and will keep groups informed. Groups should also consider contacting the Government themselves directly to highlight the importance of this issue.

Please contact the Carbon Manager at the KLC for more information – (08) 9194 0100.