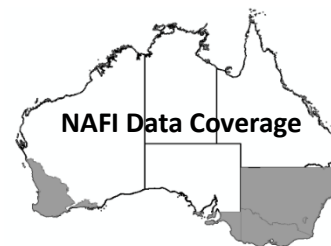


NAFI Web Service Backgrounder

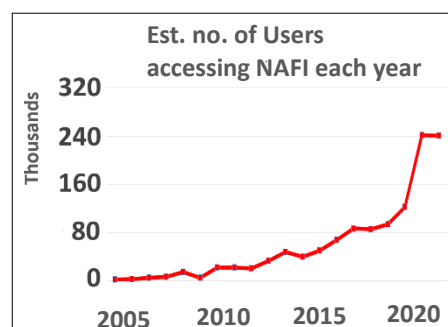
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1. **What is it?** The *North Australia and Rangelands Fire Information* (NAFI) web service (<https://firenorth.org.au>) based at Charles Darwin University (CDU), provides satellite-based maps and tools across most of Australia that allow land managers to better manage bushfires in rural and remote areas.



2. **Why is it important?** It is the only national-scale web service targeted at improving how fire is used in land management and its mix of data and tools are not found in other services. Consequently, it has been widely adopted by thousands of people such as pastoralists, Indigenous rangers and Parks rangers who need to manage fire on country across rural and remote Australia and is now embedded in their practice. Usage is growing with estimated 240,000 users a year and these people are having direct, important impacts in improving fire management. NAFI now functions like a Bureau of Meteorology website for rural and remote fire and is critical public good infrastructure across large parts of Australia.



3. **What's the funding situation?** The NAFI web service has been funded by the Federal government for over a decade from various sources on an ad-hoc basis. Federal funding is appropriate but difficult as NAFI creates benefits across a range of Federal areas (see below) and does not easily slot into existing funding streams. We have been working with these benefiting departments on funding for months. Nevertheless, current funding ran out on June 30, 2025 and NAFI is using loaned funds to operate while the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) looks to source the requested funds but there are no guarantees. Our loaned funding runs out on August 31, 2025.
4. **What funding do we need and what benefits will it bring?** Given its importance it now requires funding for at least 3 years so it can resource the service, plan for the future and retain staff. We are seeking \$3.4M over 4 years – less than \$1M a year. This is the minimum amount required for a sustainable service. In return we bring the following benefits for the public purse worth many times this investment:
 - a. **Saving emergency services \$M a year.** Worsening fire conditions driven by climate change are producing greater bushfire risks for rural communities. The NAFI web service reduces government expenditure on these risks in two ways:

- i. it helps non-government land managers like pastoralists and Indigenous Rangers reduce wildfire in the landscapes around these communities, which helps protect them;
- ii. where this management of landscapes is widespread and effective, such as in areas of far northern Australia, the protection of the communities that results saves emergency services millions of dollars a year that would otherwise need to be spent responding to wildfires threatening these towns.

b. ***Underpinning broad, significant government savings across north Australia.***

NAFI is a vital tool used by the Savanna Burning carbon offset industry across northern Australia worth many tens of millions of dollars annually with significant growth in income expected from new methods. These projects are generating hundreds of jobs for Indigenous Australians and rural communities and achieving remarkable reductions in wildfires across northern Australia. An economic analysis has shown that to achieve similar results with public expenditure would need spending over \$100M annually on welfare, emergency services and the protection of natural and cultural assets.

c. ***NAFI provides the Federal government with a way to engage with rangelands land managers.*** The widespread usage of the NAFI website across the rangelands provides federal agencies such as Geoscience Australia with a way to get their fire management data widely used, benefiting all Australians.

d. ***An efficient way for Federal spending to produce widespread public benefits.*** Federal investment over more than a decade has seen NAFI build knowledge and establish extensive networks with remote area end-users which underpin the widespread uptake of the website. Maintaining this system is far more efficient than trying to re-invent the wheel.

5. **Don't pull the plug on a global gold standard created in Australia.** The success of the Savanna Burning projects across north Australia is a globally significant achievement. It has resulted in Australian fire experts working with a dozen countries helping them set up similar projects in their savanna landscapes. In these projects the NAFI web service is being used as model for how community fire information can work with offset methodologies to build trust and integrity.

6. **Why is NAFI based at Charles Darwin University?** The NAFI Service benefits from being based at Charles Darwin University in the NT. Despite its small size, it is a global leader in research on managing fire in landscapes like those of northern and arid Australia. The networks of fire researchers, technical specialists and on-ground land managers established by CDU over many decades are vital for NAFI's success.

7. **What about industry funding?** NAFI is only seeking Federal budget funding for the public good NAFI website. Over half its funding comes from end-users paying for tailored fire data services. These users include carbon projects and government agencies.