



Health of Country



Healthy Country, healthy people, healthy culture.

For Aboriginal peoples, Country is everything in the landscape – the people, plants and animals, as well as the air, soil and rocks. It is also the relationships between them. Caring for Country is more than just caring for the environment; it is taking care of Country as if it is kin.

Aboriginal peoples value culturally significant species – those that provide food and medicine, and signal the health of Country. Greater inclusion of Aboriginal knowledges will help to manage these species and safeguard biodiversity.

Aboriginal peoples' involvement in caring for Country continues to increase, using cultural knowledge to protect biodiversity and maintain cultural sites and practices.

At a glance

How NSW is tracking

- Truth Telling is an important part of healing. Country needs the truth to be told.
- Many Aboriginal people, organisations and communities are leading the way in how biodiversity should and could be better managed.
- Cultural Fire practices are being revived by Aboriginal communities to improve the health of Country and communities. Their value in reducing risk of bushfires and improving ecosystem health is increasingly understood across government agencies and within the broader community, though there are still significant barriers.
- There is currently very limited formal recognition of the rights and interests of Aboriginal peoples in biodiversity conservation in NSW, including protection of culturally significant species. However, some notable innovative programs that partner with Aboriginal peoples to protect cultural values on public and private lands have been developed in the past three years.
- Community-based Indigenous Ranger programs have been highly successful in ecological and socio-economic outcomes over the past 25 years. In NSW all community rangers are funded by the Commonwealth. NSW is one of only two jurisdictions in Australia that does not fund an Indigenous Ranger program.

Caring for Country

As at August 2024, there were **15** community-led Indigenous Ranger groups in NSW.



Protecting Country

As at August 2024, there were **11** Indigenous Protected Areas* in NSW.



* IPAs are lands managed by Aboriginal community groups.

The big picture

Aboriginal peoples have a moral, cultural and spiritual inheritance and obligation to protect Country (land, sea, sky) because Country is integral to the cultures of Aboriginal peoples.