

FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES

Landcare Australia is proud to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which we live and work. We value and respect their deep and continued spiritual and cultural connections to the land, waters and seas, and pay our respects to their Ancestors, and Elders past, present and future.

Caring for Country

For First Nations peoples, Country is viewed entirely different to that of how non-Indigenous peoples view Country. When Indigenous peoples speak about Country, they often refer to it as they would a person. Their view of Country is that it is alive and living - interrelated and interconnected on many levels. Therefore, their perception of Country is not just observed through a physical lens as consisting of earth, soil, minerals, water and air but is much more than that. It is

also more than just people, plants and animals, as it also contains spirituality. For example, the creation time (also referred to as the dreaming) and the spirit world are also connected to Country through the continuation of ceremony and song-lines. This is often reflected holistically in what they refer to as Country.

Indigenous culture and customary law require people to be responsible and obligated to care for Country. All-encompassing of this, they sing, talk and visit Country like they would their



relatives. When Country is sick, they manage it and restore vitality and life back to Country through methods that have been taught and passed down through intergenerational (countless generations transmitting cultural Traditional knowledge extending back to the creation time. Cultural fire burning practices has been one of these main management methods.

For Indigenous peoples, managing Country with controlled fire is seen to be essential for life and wellbeing of everything in and on Country. For thousands of years, they have practiced their own Indigenous science and ecological knowledge of different terrain and adaptive species of plants, trees and ecosystems. By managing Country through fire knowledge, they have gained greater understanding on how these terrains, species of plants, trees and ecosystems have flourished and improved the total wellbeing of Country.

Developing their sciences overtime, they have developed a deeper awareness of the uniqueness of plants and trees that require fire to germinate with the assistance of smoke. For instance, a cool burn fire promotes the process of fertilization and germination development so that certain species can flower and seed.

For those who still reside on their traditional homelands, they can still engage in traditional knowledge and be immersed in their learning through access to their Country. From an early age they are taught by Elders in their communities on how to survive by learning how to read the landscape and everything in it. Understanding Seasons and weather patterns helps further understand the life cycles of animals, fruits, seeds and root vegetables and when to hunt, gather and collect food.

**For other useful resources please visit this Landcare Australia web page:
www.landcareaustralia.org.au/culturallandmanagement/**

Source: Appropriate words & terminology for First Nations topics - Creative Spirits <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/media/appropriate-terminology-for-aboriginal-topics>

Source: Demonstrating inclusive and respectful language – Reconciliation Australia Plan <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/inclusive-and-respectful-language.pdf>

Source: Narragunnawali - A Guide to Using Respectful and Inclusive Language and Terminology

The content for First Nations Perspectives was developed for Landcare Australia. The purpose of this information is to provide a useful introductory resource for educators using Junior Landcare resources, for landcare groups and other environmental community groups, and for individuals. This is dynamic content and we understand that some information may change from time to time. Please contact us if you would like to provide additional information that we can include in this important resource.