

# 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.*

## Working with First Nations Communities

***Engage with meaning: Building relationships and working together with your local First Nations communities***

We aspire to work in partnership with local First Nations communities in hearing their voices about the local environment, to better understand and apply Traditional knowledge and practice, in the sustainable management of Country, led from a First Nations perspective.

We believe that developing collaborative relationships with First Nations communities, through meaningful engagement we can:

- Gain and develop a deeper understanding of First Nations perspectives.
- Achieve inspired action and better inclusive learning outcomes.
- Embark on the process of reconciliation and work together in a spirit of true healing for both First Nations peoples and Country.



Incorporating First Nations perspectives into landcare activities are key to understanding how we can better care for the land through a profoundly informed and inclusive approach. Therefore, it is not only important but essential that we foster and develop sustaining positive relationships with Australia's First Peoples. By building relationships and working together with your local First Nations community, for the successful working partnerships.

We can aim to achieve this through some basic culturally guided principles including:

- Avoiding negative language and stereotypes that can be interpreted as derogatory or show disparaging behaviour and attitudes.
- Not place labels on people as it has negative consequences that create restrictive and distorted views of people and placing them into groups, classifications and typesets.
- Avoid assumptions and negative language that present stereotypes and labels as these can infer generalisations that are not true or accurate.
- Be mindful that the way in which both language and communication styles are used are vitally important as they can

convey or imply certain meanings that can affect interactions. Consider the choice of vocabulary and be authentic in your conversations.

- Interact in an authentic way that can develop partnerships. Communication, collaboration, and consultation are also key to sustaining successful partnerships with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Strong working relationships should be built on a genuine commitment of inclusiveness. Therefore, it is important to foster an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, and inclusion.

We recommend that when landcare groups are undertaking projects, such as group excursions, ecological restoration or working on Country initiatives, or planning gardens that feature native plants, to approach and include local representatives from First Nations communities.

It is important for landcare groups to remember when actively working on land, though projects to respectfully learn about First Nations perspectives, cultural knowledge, and practices about Caring for Country. This demonstrates respect for Country, and everything connected to it.

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