



VICTORIAN TRADITIONAL OWNER  
CULTURAL LANDSCAPES **STRATEGY**

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IT'S NOT ABOUT 'FORESTS' IT'S ABOUT  
HONOURING THE DREAMING STORIES ...

IT IS A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE, [WE] NEED TO  
ENABLE CULTURAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

EMU COUNTRY, WE'RE GOING TO MANAGE FOR  
THAT EMU. CULTURAL OBJECTIVES [NEED]  
TO BE REINTRODUCED INTO LANDSCAPE.

A LIVING BIO-CULTURAL LANDSCAPE.

ALL OF THE ACTIONS [CULTURAL AND OTHER  
LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES] ARE  
UNDERTAKEN WITH THE AIM OF RETURNING  
A CULTURALLY RECOGNISABLE LANDSCAPE,  
LIKE THE OLD FELLA SAYS ...

*'IT USED TO LOOK LIKE THIS AND THAT'S WHAT  
WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS, OR IT WAS THIS BIT  
OF COUNTRY (THAT) WAS MANAGED FOR THIS  
(TOTEMIC) SPECIES AND NOW YOU LOOK  
AT IT ...AND YOU'VE GOT YOUR ROAD MAP.'*

## ABOUT THIS CULTURAL LANDSCAPES STRATEGY

The development of the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy (The Strategy) was funded by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Parks Victoria to support Traditional Owner rights and interests in managing Country according to their Lore and Customs. Facilitated by the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (Federation), the project was led by Victorian Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders and Traditional Owner Corporation Staff. The Strategy development was overseen by a Traditional Owner Technical Working group and a Co-Governance Group, where representatives of partners met to discuss the Strategy as it was developed and to ensure the effectiveness of the institutional arrangements for strategy development.

## METHODOLOGY: THE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Through partnership in a co-design process, the Federation, with Parks Victoria and DELWP worked in self-determination mode with Traditional Owners to understand how Traditional Owners wish to express their cultural values, practices, interests and knowledge associated with planning and management for all Countries in Victoria.

A collaborative governance model was created that built upon the learning from the development of the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy.

## CULTURAL LANDSCAPES STRATEGY

This Strategy document forms part of three discrete documents that together make up the Cultural Landscapes Strategy.


The three documents are:

- the *Strategy* (this document),
- the *Poster* (a short graphical presentation of the main Strategy content) and;
- the *Technical Papers* (providing additional context and rationale for the Strategy).

*NOTE: The coloured boxes contain quotes from recent one-on-one interviews or collective meetings with Victorian Traditional Owner Elders and other knowledge holders.*

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TRADITIONAL OWNERS WANT TO  
WRITE THEIR OWN STRATEGY THAT  
CONNECTS TO STATE DOCUMENTS  
...IMPORTANTLY FOR THE GOVERNMENT,  
THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES STRATEGY  
STATES CLEARLY BACK TO GOVERNMENT  
THIS IS WHAT TRADITIONAL OWNERS WANT  
AND HOW WE WANT IT TO HAPPEN.  
IT'S A COLLECTIVE VIEW'

# Preamble

European colonisation had a devastating impact upon our people and Country and continues to do so today. Our families were removed from Country and dispossessed from their homelands in an attempt to destroy our societies and culture. Speaking language was made illegal as well as practicing the ways of our ancestors. Our custodial relationship with Country was forced by Europeans to end and made way for the destruction of our homes, our food sources, our ceremony sites and trade routes making up the Cultural Landscapes forged over millennia.

Despite the introduction of many laws that caused the cessation of active management across our Countries and cultural landscapes, particularly in Victoria, knowledge has been passed on and cultural land and water management practices have continued.

Australia forms as a tapestry of interwoven cultural landscapes that are the product of the skills, knowledge and activities of Aboriginal land managers over thousands of generations. Cultural landscapes are reflections of how Aboriginal people engage with the world.

The concept of a cultural landscape is a bridging tool, in this case one that aims to bridge the ontological differences between Indigenous and 'western' world views, between Natural Resource Management (NRM) and caring for Country. This is required to take steps towards preventing the ongoing ontological violence that is perpetuated by the dominance of 'western' approaches to managing Country.

It enables a dialogue between Traditional Owners and government land managers within a framework that does not exclude one or the other world view.

Traditional Owners actively managing Country must be able to strengthen their identity, individual and collective.

The Strategy provides a pathway for Traditional Owners to repatriate management practices and begin the complex task of restoring and redressing harms to Country and, in doing so, bring healing to Country and community. This is an important step towards reconciliation, treaty and to Traditional Owners, once again, caring for Country.



## OUR VISION

WE HAVE THE ENABLING CONDITIONS  
TO HEAL COUNTRY AND CULTURE  
THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF OUR  
KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE IN THE  
CONTEMPORARY EXPRESSION OF  
LIVING BIO-CULTURAL LANDSCAPES.



# INTRODUCTION

*The Cultural [Landscapes] Strategy should be an aspirational piece. It should enable different group aspirations, recognise climate change, community change and the changing use of forests. Timing of the Strategy should be 5-20 years with clear objectives.*

*The Strategy can include and enable aspirations around healing country: active management, describe and detail cultural aspirations on Country, prioritise cultural practice. The strength in this Strategy is its connection to a suite of other [government] policies: The Regional Forest Agreements (DELWP), Forest Management Plans and the Land Management Strategy (PV).*

*Traditional Owners [want] to write their own Strategy that connects to the State documents. Allows the State to point people in the direction of Cultural Landscape Strategy, that contains the 'meat' of the view of Victorian Traditional Owners. Importantly for Government, the CLS states clearly back to Government, 'this is what Traditional Owners want and how we want it to happen, it's a collective view'*

Traditional Owner cultural landscapes are both material and symbolic and include Traditional Owner societies' unique worldview, ontology, history, institutions, practices and the networks of relationships between human and non-human animals, plants, ancestors, song lines, physical structures, trade routes and other significant cultural connections to Country.

Traditional Owner cultural landscapes reflect the management and modification of Country over many thousands of generations to provide maximum benefit to all of the inhabitants of Country, both human and non-human. Cultural landscapes are the 'planning units' of choice for Traditional Owners.

The Cultural Landscapes Strategy (the Strategy) is a strategic foundation for Traditional Owner Nations to articulate an Indigenous management paradigm that is underpinned by cultural values, practices, interests and knowledge associated with their Country in Victoria and elevate Traditional Owners' role in the policy, planning and management of Country.

The Strategy provides a contemporary expression of Traditional Owner's leading the application of their knowledge and practices in land and water management.

The actions outlined in the Strategy complement and support the broader process of reconciliation and sovereignty for Nations as well as leveraging significant environmental, social and economic benefits for all Victorians.

This document sets out key strategic themes to be respectfully integrated into Government policy, planning and processes, as part of decolonisation. However, in all processes, policies and plans, Indigenous knowledge and practice will be protected under the authority of each Traditional Owner custodian and group.

# PURPOSE

This document responds to a need to inform agency partners of re-emerging cultural elements and strategic themes.

The purpose of the Strategy is to embed, at a statewide level, Traditional Owner management of Country. To embed means to effect transformational change in contemporary land and water management, through a collaborative and strength-based approach.

The Strategy achieves this by supporting the development of institutional frameworks and operational and procedural pathways that are tailored to each Group's self-determined pathway. These will enable Traditional Owners to undertake on-Country management actions across all land tenures and according to their respective cultural obligations and economic interests.

The Strategy frames Victorian Traditional Owner rights and interests and pathways<sup>1</sup> for development in public forest and park planning and management. The Strategy will help guide Victorian land management strategies and policies, including the implementation of the Commonwealth and Victorian Government's modernised Victorian Regional Forest Agreements and the development and implementation of Forest Management Plans (DELWP) and the Land Management Strategy and Land Management Plans (Parks Victoria).

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1 Pathway refers to each Traditional Owner Nation's self-determined course to heal and care for Country, as a critical part of the realisation of Treaty and sovereignty.

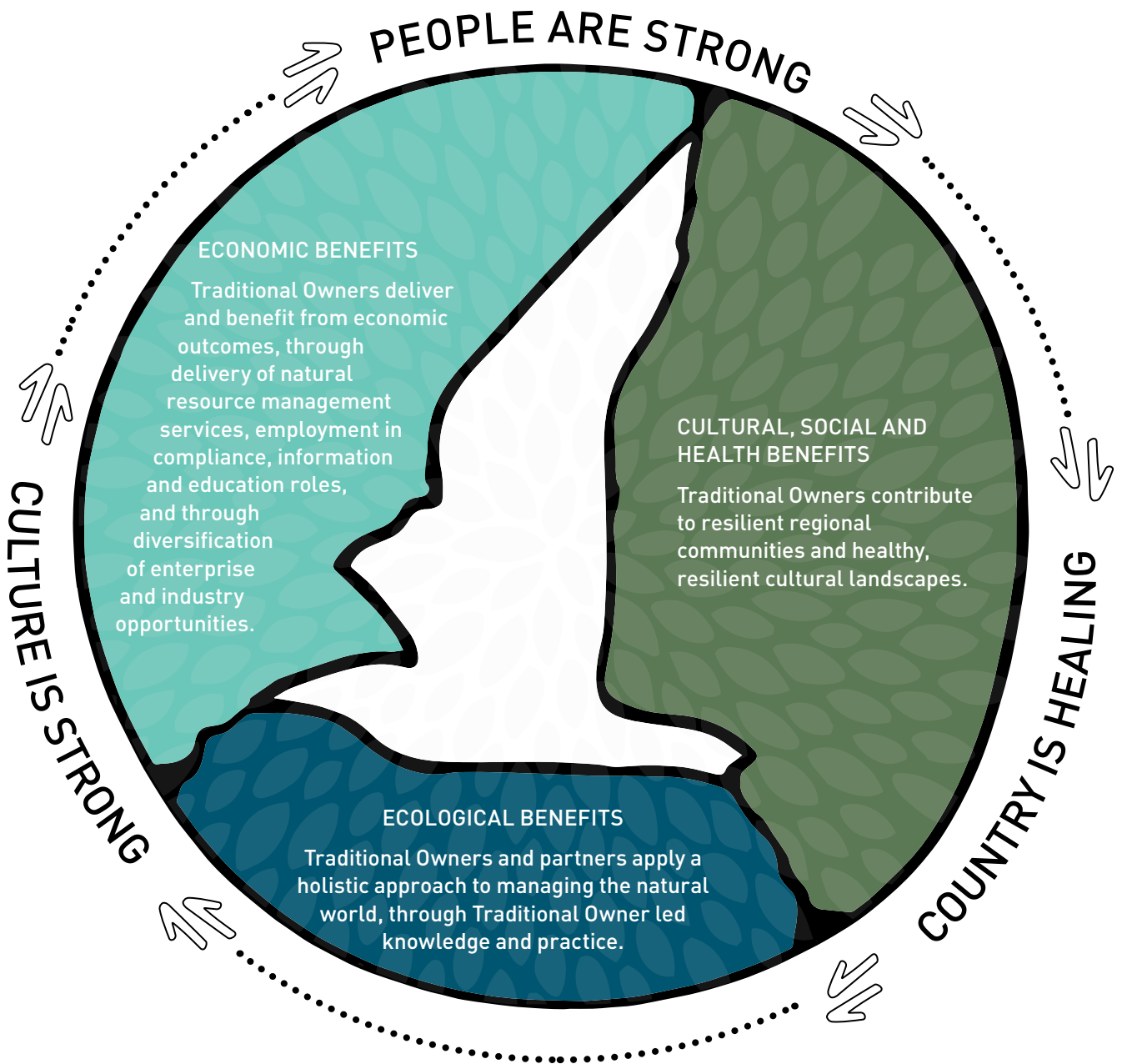
# ENABLING PRINCIPLES

Principles are drawn from conversations with Traditional Owners and their communities including Elders, Knowledge Holders and Traditional Owner Corporations.

The principles guide how partnerships will function operationally, strategically and for the long term.

<b>Principle 1</b> Traditional Owners leading management.	Traditional Owners lead the development and application of land and water management practices on Country, the responsibilities and authority of Traditional Owners is recognised and respected. Traditional Owners' knowledge and practice and connection with Country will define a cultural approach to planning and management, governance, decision making rights and intellectual sovereignty (IK/ICIP) as the foundation for leading management.
<b>Principle 2</b> Traditional Owners working together	Cultural practice is living knowledge. Indigenous knowledge and practice is shared for continual learning and adaptive management. Traditional Owners will work together on each other's Country to heal Country and guide practice development. Knowledge and practice are shared.
<b>Principle 3</b> Monitoring and evaluation supports Traditional Owners	Monitoring, evaluation and research supports Traditional Owner cultural objectives and enables adaptive learning. This will be used to build a body of evidence that allows Indigenous knowledge and practice to occur and grow.
<b>Principle 4</b> Manage Country holistically	Traditional Owners manage Country holistically to address multiple values and objectives, healing both Country and culture. Partnership arrangements and management objectives are tailored to each Country and cultural landscape context. This includes analysis of the tenure, regulatory and operational arrangements to support beneficial Indigenous management practices, together with a process of learning to continuously improve planning, management and action.
<b>Principle 5</b> Managing Country is healing	There are substantial positive impacts to Traditional Owner wellbeing and confidence through providing access and authority to practice on Country.
<b>Principle 6</b> Traditional Owner centred governance	Governance structures are purposefully designed to enable Traditional Owner groups to drive strategy direction and content. Traditional Owners co-design projects and programs that meet their rights and interests, including actions to improve the situation through implementation.
<b>Principle 7</b> Agency partnership	Partnership arrangements and management objectives are tailored to the context of each Country, including the tenure, regulatory and operational arrangements to enable beneficial Indigenous management practices, together with a process of learning to continuously improve planning, management and action.
<b>Principle 8</b> Agency resourcing	Traditional Owner Corporations are operating at the interface of Aboriginal and western worldviews, governance systems and healing Country/NRM programs. Agency sourced resourcing of Nations through their Corporations is tailored and sufficient for self-determined Nation outcomes. This will enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnerships to be effective and respectful of cultural governance.</li> <li>• developing co-capacity (including Corporation systems, staffing and skills) to enable effective delivery of NRM programs.</li> <li>• funding models that reduce transaction costs associated with multiple project level reporting, prospectus development and partnering.</li> </ul>

# MANAGING COUNTRY AS CULTURAL LANDSCAPES BENEFITS PEOPLE AND BENEFITS COUNTRY



# THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES STRATEGY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Strategy enables Traditional Owners to lead the planning and management of cultural landscapes according to cultural objectives. Together with the seven Enabling Principles, the Strategy enables Traditional Owners to meet our vision of healing Country and culture through the application of cultural knowledge and practice.

Realising these objectives will require time frames that accommodate the need to pass cultural knowledge across generations and for the restoration of Country.

Underpinning the Strategy is a Traditional Owner Strategic Framework for Managing Country (Figure 1). This framework was collaboratively designed by Traditional Owners and is intended to act as a thematic toolkit for Traditional Owners, and can be adapted to each group's self-determined pathway for healing and caring for Country.


The Framework has five Program Components describing the 10-year objectives of the Strategy:

- To restore the knowledge system.
- To strengthen Traditional Owner Nation resilience.
- To enable Traditional Owner cultural landscape planning.
- To embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice into policy, planning and the management of Country.
- To enable the application of Traditional Owner cultural objectives, knowledge and practice in the management of public land.

Program components are broken down into component sub-themes with associated actions that include policy, planning and governance instruments as well as place-based procedures and tools for managing Country.

The delivery of the strategic objectives is supported by bridging tools. Bridging tools support two-way learning and link cultural elements with policy and planning instruments. Adoption of these tools will enable Traditional Owner groups and Government partners to navigate a transition phase from sick Country to healthy Country, and from government led planning and land and water management to Indigenous led planning and management.

In order to track progress against the Strategic Framework, each component area identifies specific outcome statements and possible ways of knowing that we are making progress towards reaching the outcome. The intention is for achievement to be assessed and reported on in 2025 and 2030 and for implementation progress to be regularly reported on and issues resolved through periodic gatherings of the Co-Governance Group.



*We're bringing the government into our practice and management, not the other way around.*

FIGURE 1



### 3. TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES PLANNING

#### COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

---

To enable Traditional Owner cultural landscapes planning

#### COMPONENT AREAS

---

Cultural governance guides decision making

---

Development of planning frameworks that are tailored and appropriate to each group's pathway

---

System development for assessing health of Country

#### COMPONENT OUTCOMES

---

Cultural landscapes are the basis for land management planning

### 4. EMBEDDING TRADITIONAL OWNER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

#### COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

---

To embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice into policy, planning and the management of Country

#### COMPONENT AREAS

---

Institutional arrangements of the Government are enhanced to reflect Traditional Owner rights regarding management of Country

---

Two-way capacity is developed

---

Co-Governance arrangements are in place

#### COMPONENT OUTCOMES

---

Victorian Government policy, legislation and procedures enable and embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice across all cultural landscapes

### 5. TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES MANAGEMENT

#### COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

---

To enable the application of Traditional Owner cultural objectives, knowledge and practice in the management of public land

#### COMPONENT AREAS

---

Country Management programs are established

---

Cultural landscapes are managed by Traditional Owners through shared governance arrangements and Sole Management is established

---

Collaborative management pilots in priority cultural landscapes

#### COMPONENT OUTCOMES

---

Traditional Owners have decision making authority over the management of Traditional territories

# COMPONENT ONE

## RESTORING THE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

### COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

---

To restore and protect the  
Traditional Owner knowledge  
system

### COMPONENT AREAS

---

Reading Country Programs

---

Traditional Owner led research  
partnerships

---

Traditional Owner knowledge  
and practice networks

### COMPONENT OUTCOMES

---

Traditional Owner led practices  
are rejuvenated and knowledge  
protected and applied to meet  
cultural objectives that include  
social, ecological and economic  
co-benefits

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# 1. RESTORING THE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

**OUTCOME:** TRADITIONAL OWNER LED PRACTICES ARE REJUVENATED AND KNOWLEDGE PROTECTED AND APPLIED TO MEET CULTURAL OBJECTIVES THAT INCLUDE SOCIAL, ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC CO-BENEFITS.

*Looking after Country. That's the primary driver in all of this. We have a cultural responsibility for Country.*

*It's not about 'forests' it's about honouring the dreaming stories ... It is a cultural landscape, need to enable cultural management practices. Emu country, we're going to manage for that emu. Objectives to reintroduce into landscape. Living bio-cultural landscape.*

Restoring the knowledge system means that Traditional Owner worldviews can be strengthened, practices can be rejuvenated and knowledge applied to meet cultural objectives. Cultural objectives include social, spiritual ecological and economic benefits.

Traditional Owners approach land and water management with a holistic set of knowledge and practices that link the management of conservation and productive values to the environmental and cultural services upon which they depend. Traditional Owners continue to pass on understanding of their Countries, the resources, seasonal flows and sacred knowledge from one generation to the next.

Traditional knowledge underpins identity and is expressed through the inherent right of Traditional Owners to access and manage resources on Country, including management plans for culturally valued species and take and use rights for natural resources.

Restoring the knowledge system must reflect the fundamental principle that traditional knowledge is owned by Traditional Owners. Traditional Owners as custodians of knowledge and practice continue to decide how consent to share knowledge is given. These cultural norms underpin the influence, legitimacy and integrity of the Strategy.

# COMPONENT AREAS

## READING COUNTRY PROGRAMS

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*So like all the other creation stories that you know, within our territory, we know that there's individual responsibility, family responsibility...we have different plant species or totemic animals and there's all these obligations you play a role in.*

*We need resources for data collection, then will give the state the management objectives. The State and other [land management organisations] need to support our projects, not us supplementing theirs.*

*Impacts to cultural sites in the Nunnett-Timbarra River area [Gunaikurnai Country] were amplified by the placement of roads, tracks and containment lines on low-gradient ridgelines and spurs that are precisely the topographical features followed by our ancestors as they moved from place to place.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

Reading Country is a program of knowledge and data collection and management that provides culturally appropriate systems for the capture, storing, analysis and sharing of knowledge. This includes systems for the protection of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) as a defensible database. Reading Country programs can support Traditional Owners to lead research programs and partnerships that respond to their needs and achieve outcomes for their Country and Communities.

While Traditional Owners take a holistic approach to management of Country, the government takes a values driven approach to the management of public land. A potential tool for bridging these different planning and management paradigms is for Traditional Owners to incorporate aspects of Indigenous knowledge, including values<sup>2</sup>, into a Traditional Owner knowledge management information system. Aspects of cultural knowledge that are expressed as mapped values can then be explored alongside the western planning and management system. The government led goals, decision-making authority and resources for management of Country can be challenged and reoriented.

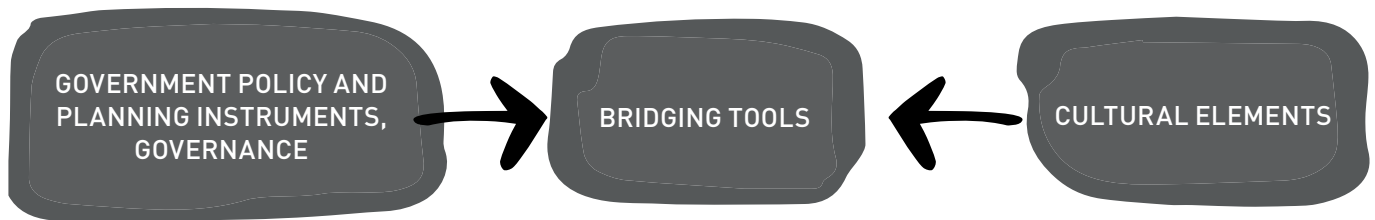
### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

The following process steps will assist groups to establish a Reading Country program:

- Establishment of Traditional Owner knowledge circle/working group.
- Development of protocols for data capture, storage, sharing and management.
- System development for recording cultural values.
- System development for Country Assessment tools (for example: Waterway Assessment and Management, Forested Country Assessment and Management, Sea Country Assessment and Management etc.).
- Participation in regional and state-wide practitioner networks for ongoing support and knowledge exchange.

<sup>2</sup> Cultural values can be attributed to sites, story places, ceremonial sites, artefact sites; landscape features, species, processes and spiritual values of importance. Values can be associated with non-living elements ('cultural heritage'), intangible elements (stories, song, dance, ceremony, practices) and as living bio-cultural knowledge (related to species and natural, including ecological, processes).

## BRIDGING TOOLS



### State-wide level policy instruments:

Information Management Systems  
(Mapshare, ABC system, SMP etc.)

Reading Country programs,  
including:

- Cultural values
- Defensible data base:
- Protocols for data capture,  
storage and management
- Indigenous Cultural and  
Intellectual property protection  
management plan

Seasonal knowledge (including  
living bio-cultural values)

Cultural heritage

Culturally significant and/or  
culturally sensitive places and  
landscapes

Culturally valued species and  
communities

## TRADITIONAL-OWNER LED RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*...If you start talking about landscape scale and land management, you've really in reality got 4 main practices... cultural fire, culturally influenced ecological watering ... and non-traditional methods of predator management and feral herbivore management. Or do we need to be a bit braver (acknowledging the failure of baiting programs) and look at re-introducing top predators...dingoes.*

*We'll look at the values that are in the cultural landscape, that currently exist and we will replicate or recreate where we can the cultural objective for this area.*

*Knowledge may be held by intergenerational farming families, may be recorded in state and national libraries and museums; and may be stolen knowledge recorded in research journals or books or held by researchers.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

Traditional Owners will drive the development of research programs. Research programs defined by Traditional Owners build an understanding of the beneficial outcomes (ecological, social, health, economic) of applying Indigenous knowledge and practice as well as supporting the recovery of stolen knowledge such as seasonal knowledge of culturally valued species. The development of protocols and ongoing cultural awareness and immersion for prospective research partners will support greater awareness around the collection and management of Indigenous Bio-cultural Knowledge for non-Indigenous research partners, and supports the movement of decolonising science.

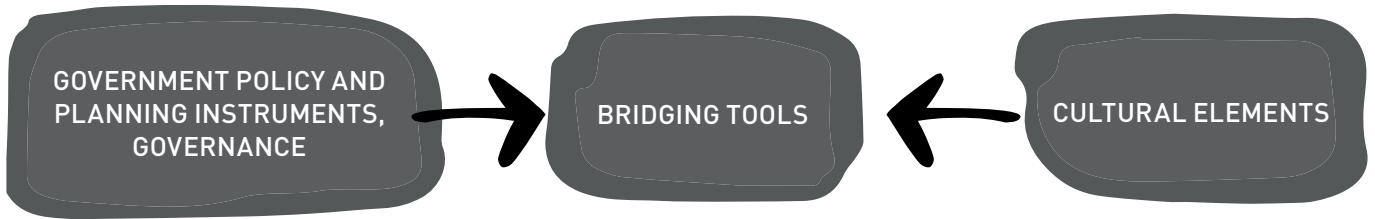
### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

A Traditional Owner led research review will be undertaken of relevant published literature (including colonial journals) on knowledge and practice associated with cultural landscapes.

Traditional Owners will also lead recovery of existing knowledge that is governed by Elders and other knowledge holders.

Traditional Owner led research partnerships are also needed to recover knowledge of past fire history and vegetation communities that characterised cultural landscapes in the pre-colonial period.

BRIDGING TOOLS



Regional policy instruments:

Forest Management Plans  
Land Management Plans

Respectful integration and resourcing of Traditional Knowledge and science (research partnerships)

Traditional Owner Knowledge

State-wide level policy instruments:

Regional Forest Agreements (DELWP) and Land Management Strategy (Parks Victoria)

Framework Document for Traditional Owner Research Programs

Traditional Owner Knowledge

## TRADITIONAL OWNER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE NETWORKS

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*All of the actions are taken with the aim of returning a culturally recognizable landscape. Like the old fella says 'it used to look like this and that's what we are working towards', or it was this bit of Country (that) was managed for this (totemic) species and now you look at it ...and you've got your road map and all of the actions [cultural and other land management practices] are towards doing that in a sense in a more respectful way.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

In a Victorian and cultural landscapes management context, Indigenous knowledge held by Traditional Owners is a knowledge-practice-belief complex that sustains health of Country in all its aspects. The application of Indigenous knowledge is undertaken through multiple cultural management practices that have the purpose of healing and strengthening Country.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Victorian Traditional Owner bio-cultural knowledge holders (Elders, young women and men and other knowledge holders) will have the opportunity to assemble and establish a process to share learning and a process for knowledge recovery and adaptation that is founded on Indigenous governance, Lore and customs where appropriate.

### BRIDGING TOOLS



#### State governance arrangements:

Project Control Groups,  
Stakeholder Reference Groups

Co-Governance groups; Knowledge groups

Cultural governance systems  
Oral transmission of knowledge from elders

Communities of practice

Knowledge sharing

## 1. RESTORING THE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

# ACTIONS AND INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

**COMPONENT OBJECTIVES:** To restore and protect the Traditional Owner knowledge system

AREAS	TRADITIONAL OWNER LED RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS	READING COUNTRY	TRADITIONAL OWNER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE NETWORKS
POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Traditional Owners led research partnerships to recover knowledge. Examples include past journey and trade routes, fire history and vegetation communities that dominated cultural landscapes in the pre-colonial period.	Support Traditional Owner groups to develop protocols and systems for data capture (including but not limited to cultural values and uses assessments, tangible and intangible cultural heritage assessments, oral stories and records), data storage, analysis and sharing.	Invest in Traditional Owner led Knowledge and Practice Networks/circles at national, statewide and group levels. These will be gender and theme based, where deemed culturally appropriate.
	Lifting standards in research partnerships and providing consistency in application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Owners knowledge led processes.</li> <li>• Traditional Owners processes for managing research partnerships and projects.</li> <li>• Supporting Traditional Owners to identify their own research needs rather than waiting for partnerships based on the interest of researchers.</li> <li>• Resourcing Traditional Owners to commit to and undertake research.</li> </ul>	A comprehensive mapping program to support data and cultural landscape modelling.	Repatriate and adapt cultural practices.
	Provide funding for Traditional Owners to reflect plant and animal life cycles, harvests and cultural practices from a cultural perspective, including but not limited to seasonal calendars.	Support development of Cultural Information Management System as a defensible database.	Restore and protect knowledge.
	Traditional Owners led review of relevant published literature (including colonial journals) on knowledge and practice associated with cultural landscapes.	Develop Take and Use Systems (for harvesting, monitoring and management) that reflect Indigenous Bio-cultural Knowledge.	Language reviews.

**COMPONENT OUTCOME:** Traditional Owner Practices are rejuvenated and knowledge protected and applied to meet cultural objectives that include social, ecological and economic co-benefits.

Possible ways of knowing that we are reaching the outcome:

<p><b>By December 2025:</b></p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity (resourcing and co-capacity) to develop protocols and management systems to protect Traditional Owner Intellectual property.</p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations and knowledge holders from each non recognised group areas have the opportunity (resourcing and co-capacity) to actively participate in national, state-wide and regional knowledge networks.</p>	<p><b>By December 2030:</b></p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have access to and control of functioning cultural information management systems.</p> <p>There is a year on year increase in number of Nation led research programs.</p>
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# COMPONENT TWO

## STRENGTHENING TRADITIONAL OWNER NATION RESILIENCE

### COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

---

To strengthen Traditional Owner Nation resilience to enable delivery of our contemporary role as custodians of Country

### COMPONENT AREAS

---

Strengthening the government funding model for Traditional Owner Corporations and Nations

---

NRM based Economic Development

---

Diverse Self Determination Pathways for Diverse Nations

### COMPONENT OUTCOMES

---

Traditional Owner Nations are enabled to lead the process to heal and strengthen Country through their governance systems and with active, adaptive management

---



## 2. STRENGTHENING TRADITIONAL OWNER NATION RESILIENCE

**OUTCOME:** TRADITIONAL OWNER NATIONS ARE ENABLED TO LEAD THE PROCESS TO HEAL AND STRENGTHEN COUNTRY THROUGH THEIR GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND WITH ACTIVE, ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT.

*But some of our State Forests in particular, you could do some pretty intensive work to get it back to a landscape that we could culturally recognise and in doing so there are probably some economic opportunities for mobs along the way.*

Resilient Traditional Owner Nations can deliver on their contemporary role and lead the process to heal and strengthen Country through their governance systems and with active, adaptive management.

This requires firstly, investment in their corporate structures, equipment, staff, systems and procedures. And secondly, development of pathways that will lead to the economic independence of Nations and their corporations.

Nations are also at different stages in their pathway to Victorian government recognition, reconciliation (healing) and sovereignty through Treaty/ies.

Each Nation has a different expression of this development pathway and outcome. In order for the vision of the Strategy to be realised at a statewide level, it needs to be enabling of all Nation pathways and outcomes and lead to meeting the resourcing needs and co-capacity of each Nation and its regional partners.

# COMPONENT AREAS

## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT FUNDING MODEL

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*\$120m for transition of [the forest] industry, that would be enough for TO's to transition into management.*

*... may require far more burning regimes under current conditions. We have those skills, and we'll implement the regimes as fee for service.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

Traditional Owner Nations remain under-resourced to deliver on their role and support the healing of Country. There is a need for Traditional Owner focused funding programs. This might include focused investment, program development using co-design and other approaches that will appropriately resource corporate structures and systems and Nation led healing Country programs.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Funding models that provide for stability, long term thinking and alignment of objectives. Government procurement strategies should be renewed to better support Traditional Owner Nations economic resilience.

## BRIDGING TOOLS



### State-wide level policy instruments:

Government funding model: Government budget processes, devolved grants	Traditional Owner focused funding programs	
	Resourcing for corporate structures and systems	Cultural governance systems

## SUPPORT NRM BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*We are seeking economic development opportunities e.g.: timber for craft industry, a lead role in kangaroo management. Our aim is for you (government / DELWP) to be working for us in 20 years.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

Opportunities to support the development of commercial enterprise within Traditional Owner Nations are various. On Country Natural Resource Management teams help build corporate economic independence and resilience. Other opportunities exist in sectors such as bushfood, forestry, aquaculture and tourism.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Supporting Nations to embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice in sustainable business models that strengthen Country whilst providing economic co-benefits.

## BRIDGING TOOLS



### State-wide level policy instruments:

Government funding model: Government budget processes, devolved grants	Traditional Owner focused Funding Programs	Cultural governance systems
	Resourcing for corporate structures and systems	
	Support for commercial Traditional Owner NRM teams	
	Ecosystem services development	

# DIVERSE SELF DETERMINATION PATHWAYS FOR DIVERSE NATIONS

## HOW WE GET THERE:

The Strategy recognises that different Traditional Owner groups, including those without formal corporate structures, are at different points on their pathways to Victorian Government recognition, reconciliation (healing)

and nation building and sovereignty through Treaty/ies. Each Nation has a different expression of this development pathway and outcome. These diverse pathways towards to self-determination need to be understood and supported.

## WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Self-determined pathways for Nations that support sustainable NRM based economic development. This can be expressed through the development of a Self-Determination Framework.

## BRIDGING TOOLS



### Regional policy instruments:

Pupangarli Marnmarnepu (Self Determination Reform Strategy)	Self Determination Plans Country Plans and their Sub-Strategies Traditional Owner Corporation Corporate and Business plans	Nation based goals and objectives
Parks Management Plans Forest Management Plans	Respectful integration and resourcing of Traditional Knowledge and science (research partnerships)	Traditional Owner Knowledge

### State-wide level policy instruments:

Regional Forest Agreements (DELWP)	Education and compliance role for Corporations	Cultural governance systems
Reformed public land legislation (proposed)	Traditional Owners as land managers	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country
Victorian Government Self-Determination Reform Framework	Licensing and permitting arrangements	
	Self Determination framework	Cultural governance systems
Managing Country Together Framework (Parks Victoria)		

## 2. STRENGTHENING TRADITIONAL OWNER NATION RESILIENCE

### ACTIONS AND INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

**COMPONENT OBJECTIVES:** Traditional Owner Nations are resilient and able to deliver on their contemporary role in Victorian Traditional Owner Communities

AREAS	STRENGTHENING THE FUNDING MODEL	NRM BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	DIVERSE SELF-DETERMINATION PATHWAYS FOR DIVERSE NATIONS
POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Review and Strengthen Government funding for Traditional Owner Corporations	Ecosystem services development	Develop Framework Process to support groups to activate their chosen path to self-determination
	Traditional Owner Focused funding programs	Support Commercial Traditional Owner NRM Teams	Support research and development for recovery, protection and adaptation of precolonial NRM systems
	Review Government procurement strategies to better support Traditional Owner Nations' economic resilience	Bushfoods, forestry, aquaculture and tourism development	Support an education and compliance role for Traditional Owner Corporations
	Core or baseline funding	Protecting and embedding Indigenous knowledge and practice	Transferring license and permitting arrangements for natural resource extraction or use
	Development and support of programs and budgets that reflect internal (Elders and other knowledge holders and leaders) and external (self-determination with the Government) engagement processes		

**COMPONENT OUTCOME:** Traditional Owners Nations lead the process to heal and manage country on behalf of Traditional Owner Communities

Possible ways of knowing that we are reaching the outcome:

<p><b>By December 2025:</b></p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity (resourcing, land availability and co-capacity) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recover and adapt precolonial agricultural, aquacultural and forest systems, including protecting and embedding Indigenous knowledge.</li> <li>Significantly increase and diversify government investment streams into their Corporations.</li> <li>Establish NRM teams through seed funding, and training and development.</li> </ul> <p>Victorian Government gives preferred supplier status to NRM teams, operational for two or more years, for contracted services.</p> <p>All groups supported where-ever requested to implement a self-determination plan that defines their pathway and results in an embedding of Indigenous knowledge and practice in NRM institutional arrangements (law, policy, plans and processes) and strengthening of the culture of government agency partners (Outcome 2.2. Pupangarli Marnmarnepu).</p>	<p><b>By December 2030:</b></p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity (resourcing, land availability and co-capacity) to manage their cultural landscape assets through government-recognised and supported committees of management, including licensing and permitting responsibilities.</p> <p>Commercial (operationally and financially viable) NRM teams are given preferred supplier status by the Victorian Government to heal Country and recover knowledge and practice through implementing healing and strengthening Country programs, as well as providing contract services.</p> <p>Enhanced resilience of forest-dependent Indigenous communities to changing social and economic conditions (6.5d from the State of Forests 2018 Report).</p>
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# COMPONENT THREE

## TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES PLANNING

### **COMPONENT OBJECTIVES**

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To enable Traditional Owner cultural landscapes planning

### **COMPONENT AREAS**

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Cultural governance guides decision making

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Development of planning frameworks that are tailored and appropriate to each group's pathway

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System development for assessing health of Country

### **COMPONENT OUTCOMES**

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Cultural landscapes are the basis for land management planning

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# 3. TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES PLANNING

## **OUTCOME: CULTURAL LANDSCAPES ARE THE BASIS FOR LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING.**

For Traditional Owners, planning is an ongoing, holistic and adaptive relationship with Country. Traditional Owner Cultural Landscape Planning describes the relationship between holistic objectives and actions on Country.

Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Planning is supported by Country Plans and their sub-strategies (where present) that prioritise holistic cultural objectives as the basis for management planning.

# COMPONENT AREAS

## CULTURAL GOVERNANCE GUIDES DECISION MAKING

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*Develop a cultural landscape proactive management plan. PV then will be advised what our objectives are for these parts of country e.g. snake country, here is your species list (i.e. may not include trees).*

*Cultural burning is burning for cultural objectives (and those objectives need to be identified as a first step by Traditional Owners). Agencies are confused about what cultural burning is. E.g. If these [culturally important species or places] were the objectives for managing Country, all management decisions will be based on this. What does fire look like for the bandicoot? Water Management, Weed Management?*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

Traditional Owner Cultural Landscape planning prioritises cultural objectives identified by Traditional Owners as the primary planning unit. Subsequent land management actions are determined by, and assessed against, these identified cultural objectives. Planning is supported by the development of Country Plans and their sub-strategies, Joint Management Plans and Corporate Plans, where present.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Supporting the development (or review) of Group Country Plans and sub-strategies, expressing cultural objectives for thematic aspects of Country.



**BRIDGING TOOLS**



**Regional State policy instruments:**

<p>Landscape Management Plans (Parks Victoria)</p>	<p>Cultural Landscape Management Plans State forest management plans</p>	<p>Culturally important places and landscapes Ceremony Landscape custodians Culturally valued species and communities Application of Traditional knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country-Culture-People Kinship associations</p>
<p>Government policy and strategies that inform planning and land management such as Land Management Strategy, Regional Forest Agreements (DELWP and Parks Victoria)</p>	<p>Country Plans and their strategies (forests strategy, native food and fibre strategy, sea country strategy, water strategy, bio-cultural diversity strategy, Cultural and Intellectual Property Management Plan, Culturally valued species management plans, Cultural Fire Strategy, etc.)</p>	<p>Culturally valued species and communities Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country-Culture-People</p>
	<p>Cultural covenant (private land)</p>	<p>Culturally important places and landscapes Ceremony Kinship associations Culturally valued species and communities</p>
<p><b>Regional State policy instruments:</b></p>		
<p>Managing Country Together Framework (Parks Victoria)</p>	<p>Cultural landscapes approach to planning and management</p>	<p>Cultural landscapes</p>

## PLANNING FRAMEWORKS ARE TAILORED AND APPROPRIATE TO EACH GROUP'S PATHWAY

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*All the biodiversity we are left with currently has to have been supported by a Traditional method of Landscape Management otherwise it wouldn't still be here ... if we can find those strategies (and cultural objectives) that Country was being managed for a very long time we will, by definition, protect biodiversity.*

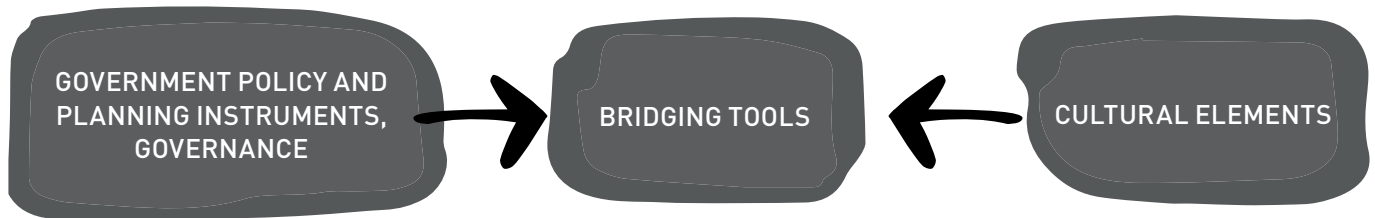
### HOW WE GET THERE:

Policy and planning instruments at State and Regional levels are complex and varied. Policy Reform is required to ensure that Planning Frameworks are tailored to, and appropriately embed, Traditional Owner led approaches to Cultural Landscape Planning.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Initially a working group with representatives from Traditional Owner Nations, DELWP and Parks Victoria will map enablers and barriers in critical policy instruments such as Parks Victoria's Land Management Strategy, DELWP's Regional Forest Agreements and DELWP's Forest Management Plans, and determine implementation actions for existing or developing policy actions.

## BRIDGING TOOLS



### Regional State policy instruments:

Landscape Management Plans (Parks Victoria)	Cultural Landscape Management Plans	Culturally important places and landscapes Ceremony Landscape custodians Culturally valued species and communities Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country-Culture-People Kinship associations
	Cultural Covenant (private land)	Culturally important places and landscapes Ceremony Kinship associations Culturally valued species and communities
	Culturally Valued Species Management Plans	Kinship associations Culturally valued species and communities
Forest Management Plans (DELWP)	Cultural Reserve Management Plans	Culturally important places Ceremony Culturally valued species and communities

### State-wide level policy instruments:

Managing Country Together Framework (Parks Victoria)	Cultural landscapes approach to planning and management	Cultural landscapes
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## SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT FOR ASSESSING HEALTH OF COUNTRY

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*The information is recorded in a huge number of disconnected places. We are connecting it. There will be crossover with other mobs with information. EM will work with other groups to ensure their knowledge is returned too. Language projects will fall out of this. Sharing across Countries.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

New planning bridging tools will be based on cultural values and an assessment of the health of Country. Medicine will be applied as practice.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Cultural indicators will be developed and applied as Traditional Owners assess the health of different Countries. Indicators will identify important species, places and suitable healing practices as they are identified and rejuvenated. The re-emergence of these practices is a process shared and connected across Countries.

### BRIDGING TOOLS



#### Regional State policy instruments:

Information Management Systems (Mapshare, ABC system, SMP etc.)	Seasonal calendar	Seasonal knowledge (including living bio-cultural values)
	Culturally Valued Species Management plans	Kinship associations Culturally valued species and communities

#### State-wide level policy instruments:

Information Management Systems (Mapshare, ABC system, SMP etc.)	Reading Country programs, including:	Seasonal knowledge (including living bio-cultural values)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring of seasonal and practice based cultural indicators</li> <li>- System development for waterway assessment, planning and monitoring, forested country assessment, planning and monitoring, sea country assessment, planning and monitoring</li> <li>- MER using cultural indicators and management</li> </ul>	Culturally significant and/or culturally sensitive places and landscapes Cultural heritage

### 3. TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES PLANNING

## ACTIONS AND INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

**COMPONENT OBJECTIVES:** To enable Traditional Owner Cultural Landscape Planning

AREAS	CULTURAL GOVERNANCE GUIDES DECISION MAKING	PLANNING FRAMEWORKS ARE TAILORED AND APPROPRIATE	SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT FOR ASSESSING HEALTH OF COUNTRY
POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Support the development of Group Country Plans and sub-strategies expressing cultural objectives. Examples include Sea Country Strategies, Inland Water Strategies Cultural Fire Strategies, Water Strategies, Forest Strategies.	Support the development of a policy reform working group to create a Traditional Owners planning framework.	Develop and support assessment approaches for planning and monitoring health of Country, based on cultural indicators.
	Support groups on request with Traditional Owners led development of a Cultural Landscapes Management Plan as a component of the Country Plan. This includes the selection of public land reserves for restoration: healing and management, identification of private properties within cultural landscapes, the identification of cultural objectives for management and governance arrangements.		

**COMPONENT OUTCOME:** Cultural landscapes are the basis for land and water management planning.

Possible ways of knowing that we are reaching the outcome:

<p>By December 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a statewide planning framework in place that incorporates Traditional Owner planning bridging tools into existing DELWP and Parks Victoria frameworks, including the forest management system (DELWP) and Managing Country Together, Adaptive Management Framework, Land Management Framework (Parks Victoria) (6.6a of the Victorian State of the Forests Report).</li> <li>• Develop and implement cultural indicators and healthy Country assessment tools as part of Reading Country.</li> </ul>	<p>By December 2030:</p> <p>Existing and future Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity now and in the future (resourcing and co-capacity) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop or review their Country Plans and associated documents, a Forests Strategy, a Cultural Landscapes Management Plan and / or Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Management Plan as required.</li> </ul>
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# COMPONENT FOUR

## EMBEDDING TRADITIONAL OWNER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

### COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

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To embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice into policy, planning and the management of Country

### COMPONENT AREAS

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Institutional arrangements of the Government are enhanced to reflect Traditional Owner rights regarding management of Country

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Two-way capacity is developed

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Co-Governance arrangements are in place

### COMPONENT OUTCOMES

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Victorian Government policy, legislation and procedures enable and embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice across all cultural landscapes

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# 4. EMBEDDING TRADITIONAL OWNER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

**OUTCOME:** VICTORIAN POLICY, LEGISLATION AND PROCEDURES ENABLE AND EMBED TRADITIONAL OWNER LED KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE SYSTEMS ACROSS ALL CULTURAL LANDSCAPES.

*Country has become sick from mismanagement. Redgums are recruiting in the northern floodplains too densely to grow into large trees. Large redgum trees have both cultural value for Traditional Owners and habitat value for native species. Traditional Owners want to practice sustainable cultural practices that expressly aim to heal Country through active management such as forest thinning, cultural water flows and cultural fire to manage the landscape once it has been healed. Are these activities rights and are they enabled in Natural Resource Agreement offence exemptions? Can the wood be legally used for commercial purposes? Do cultural burns contravene fire legislation? How does forest thinning interact with native vegetation regulations?*

Significant changes are required to existing policy and planning systems to successfully implement the actions in the Strategy. For Country to heal, Traditional Owner knowledge and practice through Traditional Owner led active management must be embedded in policy, planning and management. Institutional arrangements, government policy and planning instruments and a commitment to Collaborative Land Management pilots will support this.

The Victorian Government has committed to supporting self-determination of Traditional Owners and has implemented a policy framework to support this.

The current Victorian legislative framework supports Traditional Owner relationships to Country by establishing access rights and joint management arrangements. These arrangements were created to enable the knowledge and culture of Traditional Owner groups to be recognised and employed in the management of that land.

The framework that governs land and forest management prioritises the protection and management of biodiversity and natural values, public safety, economic sustainability and cultural heritage through regulations.

Consideration of Matters of Traditional Owner Significance<sup>3</sup> and cultural obligations in policy and legislation are often addressed at the same level as management of natural values relating to land and forests.

This framing has real world implications for Traditional Owner access and veto rights. The pathway to achieve these rights is complex, often opaque to Traditional Owner entities and not yet often mandated. Legislation contains specific clauses that address the exceptional status of Traditional Owners as partners with the Victorian Government with specific rights. However the overall framing continues to regard activities conducted by Traditional Owners on Country as impacts on the environment to be regulated.

<sup>3</sup> Matters of Traditional Owner Significance is an emerging policy area of the Regional Forest Agreements with implementation including resourcing, process and governance not yet defined.

# COMPONENT AREAS

## INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE ENHANCED TO REFLECT TRADITIONAL OWNER RIGHTS REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF COUNTRY

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*Permission is backwards.  
We shouldn't have to ask.  
Cultural practice shouldn't  
have any barriers.*

*Need an overhaul of VEAC  
(Victorian Environment  
Assessment Council). We need  
a land management review.  
We need to advocate to VEAC  
that we have cultural reserves  
set aside for cultural practice.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

Existing government institutional arrangements (law, policy, regulations, codes of practice, planning processes and governance) do not adequately enable Traditional Owner partnerships in cultural and natural resource management and planning. Neo-colonial (contemporary western world view) institutional structures are complex and until recently have provided inadequate support and recognition of the inherent rights of Traditional Owners. Specific concerns identified include lack of genuine collaboration, a preference for the "consult and inform" mode of engagement, inappropriate phasing of policy and regulatory development and a lack of the foundational resources required to meaningfully engage in government processes.

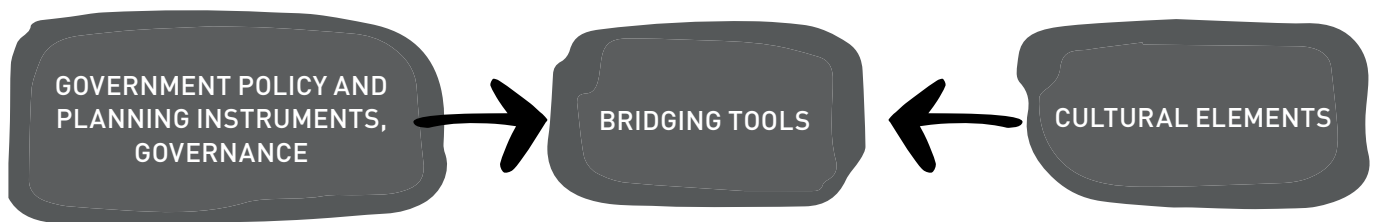
### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Government policy and planning instruments and management arrangements should reflect the Strategy. This includes meaningful and practical engagement with the Strategy and collaboration with Traditional Owners in the development of policy, planning and management documents. In the first instance, Traditional Owner rights and interests embedded in the renewed Regional Forest Agreements and the Parks Victoria Land Management Strategy must be fully and appropriately implemented and supported.

The inherent rights of Traditional Owners as the managers of Country should also be considered through proposed reforms to public land legislation. Such changes could acknowledge Traditional Owner Corporations as the land manager on certain classes of public land, providing Statutory Authority to Traditional Owner objectives for Country, such as expressed in documents like Country Plans and supporting the resourcing of Traditional Owner Corporations to deliver to their statutory requirements.



## BRIDGING TOOLS



### Regional government policy instruments:

Landscape Management Plans (Parks Victoria)	Cultural Landscape Management Plans	Culturally important places and landscapes Ceremony Landscape custodians Culturally valued species and communities Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country-Culture-People Kinship associations
Forest Management Plans (DELWP)	Cultural Reserve Management Plans	Culturally important places Ceremony Culturally valued species and communities

### State-wide level policy instruments:

Reformed public land legislation (proposed), Regional Forest Agreements	Traditional Owner Corporation as land manager	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country
Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (Action Statements)	Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act Schedule for cultural species and communities	Culturally valued species and communities Kinship associations

## CO-GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN PLACE

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*The knowledge is there, we just don't have the access to Country to put it into practice and for [the enabling institutional arrangements] for everything to come together. 100% we are the knowledge holders in this space.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

There is a need to respectfully develop existing government led governance mechanisms to more closely align with cultural governance. Solutions lie in working with Victorian government policy, legislation and procedures to enable and embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice systems.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Co-governance arrangements with membership of Traditional Owner senior leaders and Government Agency senior leaders are required to support this work. A co-governance group and Technical Working Group that have formed for the development of the Strategy and will reconvene for this purpose.

### BRIDGING TOOLS



#### State governance arrangements:

Project Control Groups, Stakeholder Reference Groups	Co-Governance groups; Knowledge groups	Cultural governance systems Oral transmission of knowledge from elders
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## TWO WAY CAPACITY IS DEVELOPED

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*So in a sense, out there ... that's all Bandicoot Dreaming Country, we've got big bandicoot mountain out there, Warrion, and so we know that they were pro-actively managing it for the benefit of Bandicoot so we should be replicating those management techniques. We should be recreating habitat (and other cultural attributes) that would benefit the bandicoot. So that would be our (cultural) objective in that space.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

The application of Cultural Landscape Management on Country requires the development of two-way capacity (Traditional Owners and Agencies) to develop, manage and apply practice in contemporary settings.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:


Pilots to test institutional arrangements and practice development are recommended across all Program Components.

## BRIDGING TOOLS FOR TWO WAY CAPACITY IS DEVELOPED



### State governance arrangements:

<p>The government funding model, Traditional Owner corporation sustainable funding policy, Pupangarli Marnmarnepu (Self Determination Reform Strategy), Managing Country Together Framework (Parks Victoria)</p>	<p>Developing two-way capacity</p>	<p>Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country</p>
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TRADITIONAL OWNERS  
WANT TO PRACTICE SUSTAINABLE  
CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT EXPRESSLY  
AIM TO HEAL COUNTRY THROUGH ACTIVE  
MANAGEMENT SUCH AS FOREST THINNING,  
CULTURAL WATER FLOWS AND CULTURAL  
FIRE TO MANAGE THE LANDSCAPE  
ONCE IT HAS BEEN HEALED.

## 4. EMBEDDING TRADITIONAL OWNER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

### ACTIONS AND INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

**COMPONENT OBJECTIVES:** To embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice into policy, planning and the management of Country

AREAS	INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT ARE ENHANCED TO REFLECT TO RIGHTS REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF COUNTRY	CO-GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN PLACE	TWO-WAY CAPACITY IS DEVELOPED AND EMBEDDED
POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Traditional Owners to be recognised as the managers of public land and waters in the reformed public land legislation (proposed)	Co-governance arrangements are established as enduring perpetual institutions to guide and strengthen new institutional frameworks that enable cultural objectives and actions in planning and management	Ongoing policy, program and engagement positions are resourced in Traditional Owner organisations (e.g. water, forestry)
	Culturally valued species to be included in a new schedule to the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act		Two-way capacity (Traditional Owners and Government Agencies) to further develop, manage and apply on-Country knowledge and practice in contemporary settings
	Appointment of Traditional Owners Corporations as Committees of Management over public land assets on their countries		
	The Cultural Landscapes Strategy to be embedded with the Land Management Strategy and Regional Forest Agreements and Forest Management Plans	Working with Traditional Owners and other land managers to ensure institutional frameworks (including law, policy, planning frameworks, governance and partnerships) enable and facilitate the application of cultural practices across tenure	Learning from long term collaborative pilots incorporated into Government and Traditional Owner Corporation co-capacity

**COMPONENT OUTCOME:** Victorian Government policy, legislation, procedures and strategies enable and embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice

Possible ways of knowing that we are reaching the outcome:

<p><b>By December 2025:</b></p> <p>Traditional Owners are recognised as the managers of public land and waters in the reformed public land legislation (proposed).</p> <p>Co-governance arrangements are established and functioning as enduring perpetual institutions to guide and strengthen new institutional frameworks that enable cultural objectives and actions in planning and management.</p> <p>The Cultural Landscapes Strategy is embedded in the Land Management Strategy, Regional Forest Agreements and Forest Management Plans.</p>	<p><b>By December 2030:</b></p> <p>The Cultural Landscapes Strategy is embedded in legislative requirements of the Parks Victoria Land Management Strategy, Regional Forest Agreements and DELWP Forest Management Plans.</p> <p>All Traditional Owner Nations have institutional arrangements in place to enable access to Country and the application of knowledge and practice to heal and manage Country (contribution to indicator 6.5e in the Victorian State of the Forests Report).</p> <p>Ongoing full-time equivalent policy, program and engagement positions are resourced in Traditional Owner organisations.</p> <p>Year on year increase in area subject to cultural practice (fire, water, forest gardening) to heal Country (contribution to indicator 6.4a in the Victorian State of the Forests Report).</p>
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# COMPONENT FIVE

## TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES MANAGEMENT

### COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

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To enable the application of Traditional Owner cultural objectives, knowledge and practice in the management of public land

### COMPONENT AREAS

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Country management programs are established

Cultural landscapes are managed by traditional owners through shared governance arrangements and sole management is established

Collaborative management pilots in priority cultural landscapes

### COMPONENT OUTCOMES

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Traditional Owners have decision making authority over the management of Traditional territories

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# 5. TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES MANAGEMENT

## **OUTCOME: TRADITIONAL OWNERS HAVE DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES.**

To re-establish a holistic and integrated planning and management approach, management of Country will be through the application of multiple cultural practices that are founded on Indigenous knowledge systems.

Indigenous knowledge held by Traditional Owners is a knowledge-practice-belief framework that sustains health of Country in all its aspects. The application of Indigenous knowledge is undertaken through multiple cultural management practices that have the purpose of healing and managing Country, for example, cultural fire, cultural flow (water) management and forest gardening.

Traditional Owners take a holistic, adaptive approach to management of Country. Government as a land manager has taken steps to move away from a reductive approach to the management of public land, towards integrated planning and a tiered approach to land categorisation. Governance arrangements remain quite limited, however, with primary authority vested in government agencies for land management. Notwithstanding the existing

arrangements for partnership in land management with Traditional Owners (including Joint Management and Co-management) there are opportunities to make government land management more holistic and to better integrate cultural perspectives and Aboriginal community wellbeing.

An appropriate way of bridging these different planning, governance and management arrangements is for Traditional Owners to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and practice into the management of Country. International approaches to achieving this are being applied through collaborative management and recognised through the World Conservation Union Protected Area Management Categories V and VI<sup>vi</sup>. The Commonwealth applies and enables this form of management in its Indigenous Protected Area program.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TENURE	PLANNING INSTRUMENT	MANAGEMENT	GOVERNANCE
<b>Cultural Landscape Reserve</b>	Cultural landscapes reflect the management and modification of Country over many thousands of generations. Cultural landscapes are both material and symbolic and include Traditional Owner societies' unique worldview, ontology, history, institutions, practices and the networks of relationships between human and non-human animals, plants, ancestors, song lines, physical structures, trade routes and other significant cultural connections to Country	Multiple, both public and private	Cultural Landscapes Management Plan	IUCN Category VI. Indigenous knowledge and practice led. Landscape managed to cultural objectives, with ecological, social and economic co-benefits. Traditional Owners as land manager	Shared governance (collaborative management) through multi-stakeholder forums
<b>Cultural Reserve (including cultural forest park)</b>	Culturally important place or area within a cultural landscape	Crown Land Reserve (including currently public land designated as state forest, State Park or National Park, riparian land). Includes unreserved crown land such as sea beds and river beds. Includes land under Aboriginal Title	Cultural Reserve Management Plan	IUCN Category V, Indigenous knowledge and practice led. Asset managed to cultural objectives, with ecological, social and economic co-benefits. Traditional Owners as land manager	Sole management (governance by Indigenous Nation).
<b>Indigenous Protected Area</b>	Culturally important place or area within a cultural landscape	Various, including Aboriginal Freehold	IPA management plan	IUCN Categories II, III, IV, V and VI	Sole management
<b>Private Land Cultural Covenant</b>	Land protected under a cultural covenant as a culturally important place or area within a cultural landscape	Private	Cultural Covenant Management Plan	IUCN Category V	Shared governance, as part of cultural landscape
<b>Game Reserve</b>	Land designated for hunting of game	Crown Land Reserve	Cultural Reserve Management Plan	IUCN Category V	Sole management



# COMPONENT AREAS

## COUNTRY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ARE ESTABLISHED

### WHAT IT MEANS:

*All of the actions [cultural and other land management practices] are undertaken with the aim of returning a culturally recognisable landscape, like the old fella.....says 'it used to look like this and that's what we are working towards', or it was this bit of Country (that) was managed for this (totemic) species and now you look at it .....and you've got your road map and all of the actions [cultural and other land management practices] are towards doing that in a sense in a more respectful way.*

*So we are going to .....write a (cultural) management plan....it won't happen overnight but over the next amount of years we'll start implementing cultural land management practices.*

*I think when the mob's start working on Country it's the economy and the social stuff (as early benefits). Not to mention ....the bush is clapped out; it could use a hand couldn't it? And you know the bush is screaming out for a completely different way of looking at [planning and managing] Country really.*

### HOW WE GET THERE:

In anthropogenic (managed) cultural landscapes, cultural management practices are part of ecological processes, reflecting the interdependence of Indigenous communities and Country, developed over many thousands of years.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Following assessment of the health of Country within cultural landscapes, management actions will be identified and applied to heal Country to meet cultural objectives.

*Implementing our Country Management program throughout our territory with the intent of expanding cultural management objectives into freehold land where partnerships with private landholders can be established.*

## BRIDGING TOOLS



### Regional policy instruments:

	Respectful integration and resourcing of Traditional Knowledge and science (research partnerships)	Traditional Owner Knowledge
Reformed public land legislation (proposed)	Traditional Owner as land manager	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country

# CULTURAL LANDSCAPES ARE MANAGED BY TRADITIONAL OWNERS THROUGH SHARED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND SOLE MANAGEMENT IS ESTABLISHED

## WHAT IT MEANS:

*5 reserves have been identified by Eastern Maar and we have told State [we] want to manage these reserves. EMAC to be the committee of management for these reserves. We will be applying these principles to these sites..... This will be complete [sole] management (not joint management).*

## HOW WE GET THERE:

Traditional Owner inherent rights in Country will be recognised through governance arrangements. Traditional Owner inherent rights in Country will be recognised through both management and governance arrangements. Management will be according to cultural objectives. Governance will include multi-stakeholder forums for shared governance arrangements at the landscape scale.

*We'll start dissecting the landscape according to its cultural stories and then we'll start managing a national park by that.*

## WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Sole-management (Indigenous Nation led) arrangements will be established for the management of cultural reserves within identified cultural landscapes.

*The knowledge is there, we just don't have the access to Country to put it into practice and for [the enabling institutional arrangements] for everything to come together. 100% we are the knowledge holders in this space.*

## BRIDGING TOOLS



### Regional governance arrangements:

Reformed public land legislation (proposed) (DELWP), Land Management Strategy (Parks Victoria), Managing Country Together Framework (Parks Victoria)	Collaborative management (shared governance) Sole management	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country Cultural landscapes
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### State-wide level policy instruments:

Reformed public land legislation (proposed) (DELWP), Land Management Strategy (Parks Victoria)	Indigenous Protected Areas (IUCN Category V and VI)	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country
	MOUs for Welcomes to Country, cultural awareness training of private operators and the government, royalties from park visitation, private operators	Landscape custodians
Reformed public land legislation (proposed)	Traditional Owner as land manager	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country

# COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT PILOTS IN PRIORITY CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

## WHAT IT MEANS:

*Pick your spots. There's lots that the mob are interested in and I think that will dictate the landscapes that you work in.*

*The cultural landscape needs to be determined in order to determine what kind of cultural burning is needed [and what other cultural practices are needed].*

*If the ladder fuel is not there things have a lot more difficulty crowning [in a wildfire event]. Because of our poor management of fuel we have completely inverted the structure of our forest.*

## HOW WE GET THERE:

Traditional Owners are adaptive managers, responding to the emerging and evolving needs of Country. Disruption to the uninhibited application of key practices in Victorian Countries throughout the colonial period needs to be recognised and the relationships restored.

*If one mob wants to bring back the quoll we can find [a place] and a way of doing that and [re-developing the right cultural and environmental conditions] to support them.*

*When my mob use a resource its quite a process in terms of you know, selecting that resource and it's done very consciously of what you're taking away and addressing it [maintaining system balance and resilience through ongoing management].*

## WHAT IS REQUIRED:

Long term collaborative management pilots will be undertaken with Traditional Owner groups in priority cultural landscapes, with learning documented and acted upon. Collaborative management pilots will be adequately resourced as long term partnership projects. Pilots will:

- support the recovery and adoption of Traditional Owner practices for healing and managing Country
- reveal policy and institutional barriers to the recovery and application of knowledge and practice
- manage knowledge to understand cultural values, objectives for management and risks arising through any proposed land use activity or future event such as flood or wildfire.

## BRIDGING TOOLS FOR COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT PILOTS IN PRIORITY CULTURAL LANDSCAPES




### Regional governance arrangements:

Reformed public land legislation (proposed) (DELWP), Land Management Strategy (Parks Victoria), Managing Country Together Framework (Parks Victoria)	Collaborative management (shared governance) Sole management	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country Cultural landscapes
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### State-wide level policy instruments:

Reformed public land legislation (proposed) (DELWP), Land Management Strategy (Parks Victoria)	Indigenous Protected Areas (IUCN Category V and VI)	Application of Traditional Knowledge and practice in healing and managing Country
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THE KNOWLEDGE IS THERE,  
WE JUST DON'T HAVE THE ACCESS  
TO COUNTRY TO PUT IT INTO  
PRACTICE AND FOR EVERYTHING  
TO COME TOGETHER. 100% WE ARE  
THE KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS  
IN THIS SPACE.

## 5. TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES MANAGEMENT

# ACTIONS AND INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

**COMPONENT OBJECTIVES:** To enable the application of Traditional Owner cultural objectives, knowledge and practice in the management of public land

AREAS	COUNTRY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ARE ESTABLISHED	CULTURAL LANDSCAPES ARE MANAGED BY TRADITIONAL OWNERS THROUGH SHARED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND SOLE MANAGEMENT IS ESTABLISHED	COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT PILOTS IN PRIORITY CULTURAL LANDSCAPES
POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Practices to heal Country are adapted and applied	Management arrangements are developed and applied within identified cultural landscapes	Development of scenarios, long term pilots or examples under different conditions for undertaking collaborative cultural landscape management to guide the development of practice and procedural pathways
	Research programs to recover stolen and nascent knowledge for cultural landscapes management		
	Research programs to understand the ecological, social and economic outcomes of applying practice to heal and care for Country	Governance arrangements for sole and collaborative management are established	Healing and Caring for Country programs are established to protect and enhance important landscapes and places

**COMPONENT OUTCOME:** Traditional Owners have decision making authority over the management of Traditional territories

Possible ways of knowing that we are reaching the outcome:

<p><b>By December 2025:</b></p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity (resourcing and co-capacity) to initiate long term collaborative pilots in priority cultural landscapes (contributing to B:17 in Victorian State of the Environment report).</p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity (resourcing and co-capacity) to effectively protect and enhance culturally important places (contribution to indicator 6.4b in Victorian State of the Forests report).</p>	<p><b>By December 2030:</b></p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity (resourcing and co-capacity) to initiate shared governance arrangements and sole management arrangements for priority cultural landscapes and reserves.</p> <p>Traditional Owner Nations have the opportunity (resourcing and co-capacity) to demonstrate significant improvement in habitat quality and extent for their culturally important species (contribution to Indicators B:18, B:06 and B:15 in Victorian State of the Environment report).</p>
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# TANG TANG SWAMP

THE APPLICATION OF MULTIPLE PRACTICES TO HEAL AND MANAGE COUNTRY

**CULTURAL LANDSCAPES STRATEGY ACTION:** TO ENABLE THE APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS CULTURAL OBJECTIVES, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND.

Tang Tang Swamp is a 129 Ha wetland, located in central Victoria, around 50 km North of Bendigo. The swamp is located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country and is an extremely culturally significant area for the Djaara people.

The Swamp is a part of a larger wetland complex (Kamarooka Wetlands) that consists of a range of temporary freshwater wetlands that are connected via the Bendigo and Myers Creek.

## BACKGROUND

**Many of the Kamarooka Wetlands are now located on privately owned land, limiting Djaara people's ability to access many of these sites, however both Thunder Swamp and Tang Tang are currently managed by Parks Victoria as State Game Reserves.**

Tang Tang Swamp is listed as nationally significant, containing many Aboriginal archaeological

sites, culturally important features (scarred trees and ring trees) and important habitats for plants and animals that are of cultural value; as well as rare, threatened and migratory bird species, and vulnerable flora and fauna species. Tang Tang Swamp State Game Reserve is a periodic home to Black-tailed Native Hens, Cormorants, Pelicans, Grey Teal, Pacific Black Ducks and Brolgas.

The site is a breeding place for Sacred Kingfishers and has a nationally listed Redgum wetland.

The site is unfortunately in environmental decline due to inappropriate water regimes, spread of weed species and poor tree health and its cultural assets are also at significant risk.

## HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT

In the pre-colonial period, the area now known as Tang Tang Swamp was historically a temporary wetland, experiencing periodic wetting and drying phases in response to flows in the adjacent creek and billabong systems (now Bendigo Creek). The swamp was an important meeting, trade and ceremony place and place of celebration. This is evidenced by ancient oven mounds containing remains of kangaroos, wallabies and possums that show the seasonal occupation of Tang Tang and the abundance of cultural resources. The significant cultural values of the site were managed by the application of cultural practices to maintain

health of Country. During the colonial period, modifications to the Bendigo Creek catchment through land use changes and associated infrastructure have significantly altered the flow regime in the creek and its associated wetlands. Cultural practices could no longer be applied during this period. The current condition of the site reflects the lack of active management and neglect during the colonial period. The area is now formally managed by Parks Victoria and is grazed in autumn and spring to control weeds in the grassland areas and to reduce wildfire risk. The Swamp does receive flows from the Bendigo Creek during high rainfall periods

(2011 and 2016), however the amount of water that reaches the Swamp has been dramatically altered and the ability for the Swamp to retain water has been modified due to the historical construction of a series of drains and levees. While the Swamp has flooded twice in recent years, it has also gone extended periods with no inflows and this has had a detrimental impact on much of the surrounding vegetation. Currently, the water and land management activities at the site have not facilitated the recovery of red gums, waterfowl or fringing vegetation where significant cultural, recreation and conservation values lie.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation have self-funded a number of contemporary cultural assessments at this site, to understand cultural values and the practices required for healing and managing Country. These cultural assessments have revealed that there are still a broad range of significant food and fibre plants present and also the critical need for cultural flow (water) management, fire and gardening the environment practices to heal Country.

The Corporation is supporting improved access to the site to create broader public awareness of the cultural and environmental significance of the site. They have also repaired historical damage to a levee to retain natural flood water within the Swamp and applied fire and gardening (direct seeding of grasses) practices.

## FUTURE MANAGEMENT

Cultural objectives: To continue to protect and enhance the site for future Djaara generations and recreational users of the Reserve. To develop a Cultural Watering Plan for the site, which will be the first in Victoria. To then partner with key agencies to secure funding to build watering infrastructure and recover a permanent cultural flow regime.

The goal for future management of the Tang Tang Swamp as a pilot project under this Strategy is a genuine partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises to heal and manage Country through the application of Traditional Owner knowledge and practice. Traditional Owners seek the reintroduction of a range of cultural practices to Tang Tang in its planning and wise management to enable this vibrant Country to be healed, restored and managed so that its cultural values can flourish once again. Traditional Owners seek to restore a permanent cultural flow regime (connection to the Tandara Pondage) and apply

other land-based practices such as cultural fire and forest gardening.

Restoration of cultural water flows should provide for an intermittent wetting and drying regime so the red gum woodland can sustain itself and a connected network of billabongs and channels that make up this cultural landscape can be recreated. The watering regime needs to be seasonal and link to the breeding cycles of water dependent birds, including game species. Some minor structural modifications may be required to permit a suitable volume to be released as part of a cultural flow regime. Traditional Owners will also seek to replant and manage food, fibre and medicinal plants as fringe vegetation around the water body. The application of cultural fire regime will also assist regeneration and health. A Healthy Country plan may be prepared to guide the future and broader management and resourcing of activities for this important cultural landscape.

# CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

## THE VICTORIAN TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES STRATEGY ARTICULATES A PROGRESSIVE VISION FOR RESTORING TRADITIONAL OWNER MANAGEMENT OF COUNTRY.

### RESOURCING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The next step is to support resourcing to enable the Strategy Implementation Plans by each group, together with a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework. Nations will require resourcing to develop these plans according to their own requirements, including but not limited to:

- Development of Traditional Owner organisation (Nation level) implementation actions, potentially to be incorporated into Nation Self Determination Plans and/or Country Plans.
- Development of Traditional Owner (Nation level) planning frameworks, to be incorporated into Country Plans.
- Development of a Practice Guide that will provide an understanding of Traditional Owner cultural values, practices, interests and knowledge and provide tools and situational guidelines to enable Traditional owner rights, interests and pathways in forest and park planning and management.

Traditional Owner organisations require sustainable funding to deliver on their role in a self-determined way. The Government should respectfully engage with groups to determine initial requirements.

### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS

The Strategy should be aligned with key relevant legislation, policy and process including reformed public land legislation (proposed)<sup>4</sup> and the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act*.

The Strategy is of particular importance with respect to State level public land management strategies and reforms. The Government should respectfully engage with Traditional Owners on the implementation of the Regional Forest Agreement Reforms (DELWP) and the Land Management Strategy (Parks Victoria).

### COLLABORATION AND PILOTS

The Strategy outlines a number of opportunities for collaboration and pilot programs that can develop, test and monitor both management outcomes and institutional relationships. The delivery of such projects should be a priority action arising out of the Strategy.

Managing Country as Cultural Landscapes means both people and Country benefit. The result will be significant environmental, social, spiritual and economic benefits for regional Victoria. The actions outlined in this Strategy will complement and support the broader process of reconciliation. When people are strong and culture is strong, Country can heal.

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<sup>4</sup> The First Principals Review Committee (Reformed public land legislation (proposed) Sub Committee) has been formed to guide development of suitable legislation to support Cultural Landscapes Strategy actions and align with the Traditional Owner Settlement Act.



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Aboriginal Victorian/s:** Aboriginal person/s residing in Victoria

**Collaborative management** (also referred to as co-management, or joint, participatory or multi-stakeholder management): a partnership in which government agencies, local communities and resource users, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders negotiate, as appropriate to each context, the authority and responsibility for the management of a specific area or set of resources<sup>vii</sup>.

## **Country**

Country includes all of the sentient and non-sentient parts of the world and the interactions between them, according to Aboriginal lore. Indigenous lore and life originates in and is governed by Country. Country must be respected. In a western conservation context, this is more aligned to a systems and resilience approach and to an active, adaptive management approach to practice.

## **Country Plan**

The foundational, consistent planning document for Victorian Traditional Owner groups, that sets out their aspirations and goals with respect to managing Country. A Country Plan is a document that is prepared and approved by Traditional Owner Corporation groups, under self-determination principles. Where appropriate, Country Plans may include subject matter sub-strategies that form a suitable basis to guide group directions and priorities for that subject (Sea Country, Forests, Inland Waterways, etc.), aligned to the values and strategic directions expressed in the Country Plan.

## **Cultural Landscape**

Traditional Owner Cultural landscapes are both material and symbolic and include Traditional Owner societies' unique worldview, ontology, history, institutions, practices and the networks of relationships between human and non-human animals, plants, ancestors, song lines, physical structures, trade routes and other significant cultural connections to Country. Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes reflect the management and modification of Country over many thousands of generations to provide maximum benefit to all of the inhabitants of Country, both human and non-human. Cultural landscapes are the 'planning units' of choice for Traditional Owners.

## **Indigenous Bio-cultural Knowledge:**

Also called Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge incorporates the concept of bio-cultural diversity, encompasses the diversity of life in all its manifestations: biological, cultural and linguistic – which are interrelated (and possibly coevolved) within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system<sup>viii</sup>. It is one of three types of Indigenous Knowledge related to management of Country. The three types are Indigenous Bio-cultural Knowledge (or TEK), knowledge of place and contemporary conservation land management knowledge<sup>ix</sup>.

## **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property**

The definition of 'Indigenous cultural and intellectual property' (ICIP) in *Our Culture Our Future: Report on Australian Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property*

Rights follows the international standard developed in 1997 by a global study undertaken by the Chairperson of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Professor Daes. 'Indigenous cultural and intellectual property' is also the term used in the Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. ICIP refers to Indigenous peoples' rights to their heritage. Heritage consists of the intangible and tangible aspects of the whole body of cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured and refined by Indigenous people and passed on by them as part of expressing their cultural identity. The heritage of an Indigenous people is a living one and includes items that may be created in the future, based on that heritage. Each Indigenous community asserts ownership of this communally owned heritage material. Whether there are firm cultural rules and expectations will vary from community to community. In many communities, whether consent is necessary may depend on the circumstances of the proposed use, and if the person who wants to use it is part of the relevant cultural group. It is common for Indigenous communities to assert ownership over cultural material in those communities where cultural practices still occur or are being revived [Janke 2005: p96]<sup>x</sup>.

**Indigenous knowledge:** the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For rural and indigenous peoples, local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects

of day-to-day life. This knowledge is integral to a cultural complex that also encompasses language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, ritual and spirituality. These unique ways of knowing are important facets of the world's cultural diversity, and provide a foundation for locally-appropriate sustainable development (UNESC <sup>xi</sup>).

**Reading Country:** - Reading Country is a bridging tool which expresses a respectful integration of Indigenous oral cultural practices of knowledge protection and transfer (e.g. dreaming stories) and Western applied research. Reading country involves seeking the areas of change between different elements and systems of Country. It has two main components; firstly, cultural values are identified and recorded. These values may be cultural heritage, intangible heritage -as song, dance, stories, places - and living bio-cultural values – such as culturally significant plants and animals. These values are examined through narrative and yarning with Elders, mentors, peers or knowledge keepers. The second component is interaction (data analysis, interpretation and sharing as knowledge) that then manifests as priorities and actions required to heal and maintain health of Country.

Reading Country embeds data sovereignty and includes the development of other knowledge protection mechanisms (cultural governance) to ensure that the ongoing protection of Traditional Owner knowledge and practice is undertaken is culturally appropriate and Indigenous led.

**Self-determination:** All Aboriginal peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights <sup>xii</sup>).

**Traditional Owner:** Aboriginal person claiming Traditional Owner Status over a particular Country with cultural authority to act on their rights.

- i Noting "Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs". Article 11.1 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1> (accessed 04 Sep 2018)
- ii The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Knowledge Group (2019). The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy. Available at : <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/6817/fireplusstrategyplusfinal.pdf> (accessed November 2019).
- iii Aboriginal Cultural Values for Sea Country, in: *Assessment of the values of Victoria's marine environment*. Victorian Environment Assessment Council. 2019, Melbourne.
- iv The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Knowledge Group (2019). The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy. Available at : <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/6817/fireplusstrategyplusfinal.pdf> (accessed November 2019).
- v Aboriginal Cultural Values for Sea Country, in: *Assessment of the values of Victoria's marine environment*. Victorian Environment Assessment Council. 2019, Melbourne.
- vi See key principles under IUCN Category V and VI: Protected areas that conserve ecosystems and habitats, together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems (<https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-areas-categories>). (accessed February 2019).
- vii [https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC1\\_REC\\_042\\_COLLABORATIVE\\_MANAGEMENT\\_FOR\\_CONSERVA.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC1_REC_042_COLLABORATIVE_MANAGEMENT_FOR_CONSERVA.pdf) (accessed November 2020)
- viii Emilie Ens, Petina Pert, Philip Clarke, Martina Budden, Lilian Clubb, Bruce Doran, Cheryl Douras, Jitendra Gaikwad, Beth Gott, Sonia Leonard, John Locke, Joanne Packer, Gerry Turpin, Steve Wason (2015): Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge in ecosystem science and management: review and insight from Australia. *Biological conservation* 181 (2015): 133-149. et al
- ix Kirsten Maclean and the Bana Yaraliji Bubu Inc. (2011). Water Dreaming: Kuku Nyungkal People, Water and Country in the Wet Tropics. CSIRO. <https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/pub?pid=csiro:EP112722> (Accessed Nov 2020)
- x Terri Janke (2005) Managing Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 36:2, 95-107, DOI: 10.1080/00048623.2005.10721251.
- xi <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/links/related-information/what-is-local-and-indigenous-knowledge/> (accessed 03 November 2018).
- xii <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/right-self-determination> (accessed 03 November 2018)



