

## Conservation of Aboriginal Heritage in NSW

### A Guide for Aboriginal Landholders

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This guide provides information on government programs and legal options that provide assistance to Aboriginal landholders in relation to natural resource management, business development and environment conservation. Contact details are listed throughout the guide and at the end.

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J Winter/OEH

Paroo River

The NSW Government acknowledges Aboriginal people as the first people and nations of the State, and recognises that Aboriginal peoples have a spiritual, social and cultural relationship with their traditional lands and waters. The Government recognises that Aboriginal communities have a role in managing the State's land, water and biodiversity.

Government programs aim to strengthen Aboriginal communities through increasing Aboriginal peoples' participation in land and natural resource management and supporting Aboriginal landholders to manage their lands for socioeconomic, cultural and environmental outcomes. Government programs can protect native vegetation, biodiversity, land, rivers and coastal waterways by providing greater opportunities for Aboriginal people to take part in management of Country, including joint management of national parks.

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There are two additional guides which provide information for:

- landholders
  - Aboriginal people and public land.
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## Contents

Programs available to assist in land management	1
Conservation Agreements	1
Environmental Trust	1
Aboriginal Places program	2
TAFE NSW courses	2
Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre Aboriginal Rural Training Program	2
NPWS – TAFE NSW Aboriginal Tour Guide Training Program	3
Green Teams	3
Green Teams Alliance	3
Aboriginal Business Development	3
Hunting and fishing	4
Water sharing plans and water licences	5
Threatened species recovery planning	5
Commonwealth Government programs	6
Indigenous Land Corporation	6
FarmReady Reimbursement Grants	6
Caring for our Country	6
Indigenous Protected Areas	6
Indigenous rangers	7
Indigenous Heritage Program	7
Legal information about protecting Aboriginal heritage on your property	7
National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 – Aboriginal cultural heritage	7
How you can be involved in land and natural resource management	8
Local Aboriginal Land Councils	8
Catchment management authorities	9
Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System	9
Contacts	10

## Abbreviations

AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information System
ALR Act	<i>Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983</i>
CAP	catchment action plan
CCHD	Country, Culture and Heritage Division (OEH)
CMA	catchment management authority
FM Act	<i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i>
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
MRSC	Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre
NPW Act	<i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i>
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW
NSWALC	NSW Aboriginal Land Council
OEH	Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Premier and Cabinet
TAFE NSW	NSW Technical and Further Education Commission
TSC Act	<i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i>

## Programs available to assist in land management

A range of government programs and policies is available to assist Aboriginal landowners to protect the environment and cultural values on their lands.

Programs and policies which support Aboriginal landholders to be more involved in protecting environmental and cultural values in the landscape are also available. These programs, administered by various agencies, can be used alone or in combination to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal landholders and communities.

### Conservation Agreements

A Conservation Agreement is a formal agreement with the Minister for the Environment made under section 69A-KA of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act). It provides permanent protection of significant natural and cultural heritage values of the land and is voluntary. Owners of freehold land, lessees of Crown land and local councils are eligible to enter into Conservation Agreements.

The area under the Conservation Agreement is registered on the title of the land ensuring that, if the land is sold, the Conservation Agreement and management requirements remain in place. Landholders who enter into a Conservation Agreement are eligible for rates relief and tax concessions, although this is not controlled by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).

A Conservation Agreement may be entered into for a number of purposes, and may involve:

- areas in which Aboriginal objects, or Aboriginal Places, of special significance are situated
- areas containing scenery, natural environments or natural phenomena worthy of preservation
- areas of special scientific (including archaeological) interest
- buildings, objects, monuments or events of national significance
- the study, preservation, protection, care or propagation of fauna or native plants or other flora
- the study, preservation, protection or care of karst environments
- the conservation of critical habitat or the conservation of threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats.

A Conservation Agreement is most suited to landholders who:

- have special features of natural and/or cultural heritage significance including native vegetation, wildlife habitat, Aboriginal sites and historic places on their property
- want their investment in the conservation of the area to be protected if they leave the property.

Conservation Agreements are established, monitored and supported as part of the OEH Conservation Partners Program. This can include monitoring advice and on-ground works funding assistance, as well as eligibility for rates exemptions under section 555 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, land tax exemptions under section 10 of the *Land Tax Management Act 1956* and income tax concessions under Division 31 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (Cwlth).

Contact: Conservation Partners Program Coordinator 02 9995 6768  
conservation.partners@environment.nsw.gov.au  
[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/ConservationPartners.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/ConservationPartners.htm)

### Environmental Trust

The Environmental Trust is an independent statutory body established by the NSW Government to support environmental projects and is administered by OEH. The objectives of the Environmental Trust include to:

- support restoration and rehabilitation projects
- promote environmental education in both the public and private sectors
- fund environmental community groups
- fund the purchase of water entitlements for the purpose of increasing environmental flows in the State's rivers and restoring or rehabilitating major wetlands.

There are a number of specific programs for Aboriginal landholders managed by the Environmental Trust. Protecting our Places is an Environmental Trust program aimed at protecting land that is culturally significant to Aboriginal people and supporting environmental education projects. Another program run through the Environmental Trust is the Aboriginal Land Clean-up Program. This program aims to reduce the incidence of illegal dumping across NSW while working with Aboriginal communities to improve health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Contact: Environmental Trust 02 8837 6093, [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/envtrust.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/envtrust.htm)

### **Aboriginal Places program**

OEH recognises Aboriginal people as the primary determinants of the cultural significance of their heritage. Aboriginal Places are a way of recognising and legally protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage on all public and private lands.

Under section 84 of the NPW Act, Aboriginal Places may be declared over land that 'is or was of special significance to Aboriginal culture'. This allows Aboriginal Places to be declared to recognise and protect non-tangible cultural values (for example ceremonial, spiritual and mythological values), as well as areas containing tangible cultural material (for example middens, burials, reburials, Bora rings and rock art). Aboriginal Places will usually have a plan of management developed jointly by the Aboriginal community, OEH and landowners, to ensure longer-term cultural, access and management needs are met.

The Country, Culture and Heritage Division (CCHD) of OEH has an ongoing program of assessing and recommending the declaration and gazettal of Aboriginal Places throughout NSW. This aims to advance the recognition, protection and understanding of Aboriginal cultural values throughout NSW. CCHD works with Aboriginal community members to nominate and develop proposals for Aboriginal Places gazettal.

Contact: CCHD Community Operations Branch Regional Offices

### **TAFE NSW courses**

The NSW Technical and Further Education Commission (TAFE NSW) delivers a range of long and short courses that offer a choice of qualifications from certificate to diploma level, including in environmental and land management. Courses are offered full-time, part-time or flexibly through distance and online learning at over 130 campuses across NSW. Most campuses have an Aboriginal Coordinator and many also have Aboriginal Support Officers.

TAFE NSW offers courses that are culturally and educationally appropriate for Indigenous students. Aboriginal teachers present some of the coursework where possible, especially the cultural content. If there is no Aboriginal teacher available, Aboriginal Team Teachers or guest lecturers will teach the cultural material. There is a well-developed program of certificate courses in land management.

Contact: TAFE NSW 131 601, [www.tafensw.edu.au/services/indigenous](http://www.tafensw.edu.au/services/indigenous)

### **Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre Aboriginal Rural Training Program**

Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre (MRSC) is run by Trade and Investment. It offers short courses to primary producers and small farm owners. Its focus is on servicing the training needs of the primary producer, small farm owner and industry in a fast-paced, technological and legislative age.

MRSC offers a comprehensive program of short courses including:

- training, learning and assessment
- rural risk management
- SMARTtrain® Chemical Accreditation program
- natural resource management
- agricultural production
- animal production
- rural business management.

The Aboriginal Rural Training Program unit has many years of experience in providing natural resource skills, rural skills and management skills to Aboriginal communities in remote centres and in larger regional towns and cities. Courses can be tailor-made to suit clients.

Contact: Aboriginal Rural Training Program 1800 628 422  
[www.mrsc.nsw.edu.au/courses-and-training/courses](http://www.mrsc.nsw.edu.au/courses-and-training/courses)

### **NPWS – TAFE NSW Aboriginal Tour Guide Training Program**

The Aboriginal Tour Guide Training Program supports the development of Aboriginal tourism within NSW. The training program is run by TAFE NSW and the National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW (NPWS). The program is designed to assist Aboriginal communities to create sustainable businesses for the delivery of cultural tourism products, leading to development of Aboriginal businesses and Aboriginal employment in the public and private sector.

The program aims to achieve:

- employment of new OEH Discovery rangers
- professional development of Aboriginal people employed in private tourism
- professional development and employment of new Aboriginal tour guide positions in non-government organisations or local government
- the development of new community owned businesses
- new voluntary projects with schools and local community organisations
- participants enrolled in further study either in Certificate 3 in Tourism (Tour Guiding) or Certificate 2 in Business.

Contact: OEH 131 555

### **Green Teams**

Aboriginal Green Teams employ Aboriginal people to provide natural resource management, sustainable land use and environmental services to public or private landholders. Green Teams have been established in various ways across NSW, including as voluntary groups (for example Landcare), employees of State agencies and local councils, or as stand-alone community enterprises.

Green Teams aim to provide quality, environmentally sustainable and culturally sensitive land management solutions for landholders while also providing regional employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal workers. In many cases, Green Team managers will be able to assist landholders in working with local Aboriginal communities, including traditional owners and Elders.

Contact: CCHD Community Operations Branch Regional Offices, catchment management authorities (CMAs)

### **Green Teams Alliance**

The purpose of the Green Teams Alliance is to address high levels of unemployment and social equity issues amongst Aboriginal people living on the coast between the Hawkesbury and Tweed rivers. The Green Teams Alliance aims to capitalise on existing Aboriginal teams which are undertaking land rehabilitation work in this region. It also aims to take opportunities emerging in areas of land rehabilitation along highway developments and other major construction initiatives as well as recent changes in the legislative framework on carbon reduction initiatives.

Contact: [info@greenteamsalliance.com.au](mailto:info@greenteamsalliance.com.au)  
[www.coffsinnovation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/green-teams-alliance.pdf](http://www.coffsinnovation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/green-teams-alliance.pdf)

### **Aboriginal Business Development**

Trade and Investment offers a range of services to meet the needs of Aboriginal enterprises, including landholders operating or considering operating businesses. These services are delivered through a network of experienced Aboriginal Business Development staff across NSW. The Aboriginal Business Development team supports links between Aboriginal people and the private sector to provide employment and promote the purchase of Aboriginal goods and services.

Aboriginal Business Development services include:

- getting started in business – Aboriginal people interested in starting a business can also access free business information from a business advisory service
- managing and growing a business
- business assistance
- seminars, workshops and networking opportunities
- access to specialised business services, including assistance from a specialised business consultant, for businesses that have operated for two years or more
- assistance to enter export markets and participate in local or international industry trade shows.

Aboriginal business owners are encouraged to examine all business programs offered by Trade and Investment for which they may be eligible.

Contact: Aboriginal Business Development Manager 1300 134 359

[www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/aboriginal/bizdevelopment/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/aboriginal/bizdevelopment/Pages/default.aspx)

## **Hunting and fishing**

The ability to hunt, fish and gather food is part of Aboriginal peoples' connection to Country. Laws governing hunting and gathering of native plants and animals provide opportunities for Aboriginal landholders to commercially utilise wild foods.

Permits may be obtained from OEH for commercial harvesting of protected animals and plants after sustainability issues have been dealt with. Under the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*, native title claimants or holders or LALC members hunting feral animals within their respective areas are exempt from being required to hold a hunting licence.

The National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009 exempts Aboriginal people from prohibitions on domestic-purpose hunting or gathering of protected fauna and flora species, except for fauna and flora species and ecological communities listed under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act).

On lands reserved under the NPW Act there are additional restrictions on hunting and gathering and most activities will require either a consent or a licence from OEH, unless there has been a determination of native title. Additionally, a licence to use firearms or other regulated hunting implements may be required.

The *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (FM Act) formally recognises the 'spiritual, social and customary significance to Aboriginal persons of fisheries resources', and one of its objectives is to 'protect, and promote the continuation of Aboriginal cultural fishing'. The FM Act defines Aboriginal cultural fishing as 'fishing activities and practices carried out by Aboriginal persons for the purpose of satisfying their personal, domestic or communal needs, or for the educational, ceremonial or other traditional purposes, and which do not have a commercial purpose.'

Aboriginal people are exempt from paying the recreational fishing fee when fishing recreationally or undertaking cultural fishing in accordance with the FM Act, associated regulations and policies. Aboriginal people wishing to engage in cultural fishing must apply for a permit which may be issued to communities or groups rather than to individuals only. Aboriginal people are not required to obtain a licence under the FM Act for recreational fishing in fresh water (inland waters).

Aboriginal people are not required to obtain a licence under the FM Act for recreational fishing in salt water (marine and estuarine waters) where they are:

- registered native title claimants or have had an approved determination that native title exists
- taking part in a traditional cultural activity as members of their LALC
- in the company of a member of their LALC.

Additional requirements may apply in marine parks.

Contact: OEH 131 555, Fisheries Information Line 1300 550 474, [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries)

Application for cultural fishing use: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/350053/form-24.pdf](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/350053/form-24.pdf)

## Water sharing plans and water licences

A water sharing plan is a legal document prepared under the *Water Management Act 2000*. It establishes rules for sharing water between the environmental needs of the river or aquifer and water users, and also between different types of water users such as town supply, rural domestic supply, stock watering, industry and irrigation.

By setting the rules for how water is allocated for the next 10 years, a water sharing plan provides a decade of security for the environment and water users. Large-scale water sharing plans recognise the importance of rivers and groundwater to Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal people in NSW were actively involved in the development of the first round of water sharing plans, along with landholders, conservationists, industry and government representatives.

The plans will allow Aboriginal landholders to apply for a water access licence for both commercial and cultural purposes such as manufacturing traditional artefacts, hunting, fishing, gathering, recreation, and cultural and ceremonial purposes. An Aboriginal cultural licence can also be used for drinking, food preparation and watering domestic gardens.

Water licences are available following the development by the whole community of water sharing plans in a catchment, and can help Aboriginal landowners secure water to run businesses on their lands.

Aboriginal commercial licences may be issued which allow water to be pumped from rivers during the higher flows and stored in farm dams or tanks, to be used as needed or traded. Aboriginal commercial licences can be used for commercial enterprises owned by Aboriginal landholders and could include:

- irrigated crops, such as maize
- horticulture, such as fruit, vegetables, flowers or ornamental plants
- irrigated pasture, such as lucerne for a dairy farm
- aquaculture, such as oyster or prawn farms
- non-agricultural activities, such as manufacturing or crafts.

Contact: NSW Office of Water 02 8281 7777  
[www.water.nsw.gov.au](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au)

## Threatened species recovery planning

The Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement outlines strategies and actions to be undertaken in NSW to promote the recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities and to manage threatening processes such as weeds, feral animals and climate change.

In 2002 the TSC Act was amended to require Aboriginal peoples' interests to be considered during the development of recovery plans for threatened species, populations and ecological communities. Aboriginal landholders and communities have a legislatively recognised interest in providing advice on what actions to take to restore threatened species populations and their habitats.

Contact: OEH 131 555, [www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/home\\_PAS\\_new.aspx](http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/home_PAS_new.aspx)



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Mount Kaputar

## **Commonwealth Government programs**

In partnership with the Commonwealth Government, NSW Government agencies are working to increase NSW participation in Commonwealth programs such as the Indigenous Ranger Program and Indigenous Protected Area Program. These programs provide economic development opportunities and outcomes in relation to land and natural resource management. They also build capacity within Aboriginal communities to manage Country for conservation and cultural values.

### **Indigenous Land Corporation**

The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) is a Commonwealth statutory authority with national responsibilities to assist Indigenous peoples to acquire land and to manage Indigenous-held land. ILC commenced operation on 1 June 1995 and has a seven-member board appointed by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. The Chairperson and at least four other members of the board must be Indigenous. The ILC board makes all policy and land acquisition decisions.

ILC's two main functions are to assist Indigenous people to acquire land and to manage Indigenous-held land to achieve cultural, social, environmental and economic benefits for themselves and future generations. ILC has developed national and regional Indigenous land strategies to guide its activities. These documents are available from ILC.

Contact: 1800 818 490, [ilcinfo@ilc.gov.au](mailto:ilcinfo@ilc.gov.au), [www.ilc.gov.au](http://www.ilc.gov.au)

### **FarmReady Reimbursement Grants**

The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries runs a grant program to assist farmers with training costs. Eligible participants are able to claim up to \$1500 per financial year to attend FarmReady-registered courses, with additional funding available for associated reasonable travel, accommodation and childcare expenses. Registered courses focus on areas designed to equip primary producers with the tools to manage and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

From 1 July 2011, the program guidelines have been amended to include a new key learning area for agritourism and food tourism. The guidelines have also been amended to include a co-contribution requirement for primary producers to invest 35 per cent towards their training costs with FarmReady reimbursing the remaining 65 per cent up to a maximum of \$1500 per person per financial year. Indigenous land managers are exempt from the co-contribution requirement.

Contact: FarmReady Program Administrator 1800 087 670, [admin@farmready.gov.au](mailto:admin@farmready.gov.au), [www.farmready.gov.au](http://www.farmready.gov.au)

### **Caring for our Country**

Caring for our Country is the Commonwealth Government's funding program for natural resource management. Program areas cover funding of projects to manage land, active use of traditional knowledge in land management, employment of Aboriginal rangers, agreements for conservation and Aboriginal management of areas of land.

Contact: 1800 552 008, [www.nrm.gov.au/nrm/indigenous/index.html](http://www.nrm.gov.au/nrm/indigenous/index.html)

### **Indigenous Protected Areas**

An Indigenous Protected Area is an area of Indigenous-owned land or sea where traditional owners have entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to promote biodiversity and cultural resource conservation.

Indigenous communities can receive funding and other assistance from the Commonwealth Government to develop and declare their own Indigenous Protected Area. Most of each Indigenous Protected Area's budget is spent locally, ensuring ongoing employment and the viability of local businesses. Some Indigenous Protected Areas establish tourism businesses or bush tucker nurseries for the manufacture and sale of Indigenous foods. These activities have many real benefits to health, education, employment and social cohesion.

Indigenous Protected Areas create the opportunity for Aboriginal communities to continue their cultural traditions while caring for Country and promoting community wellbeing. Many Indigenous

Protected Areas are also in regions of high unemployment, so the rangers and managers become role models for their communities.

The goals of the Indigenous Protected Areas element of the Caring for our Country initiative are to:

- support Indigenous landowners to develop, declare and manage Indigenous Protected Areas on their lands as part of Australia's National Reserve System
- support Indigenous interests to develop cooperative management arrangements with government agencies managing protected areas
- support the integration of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge with contemporary protected area management practices.

Contact: 1800 552 008, [www.environment.gov.au/workingoncountry](http://www.environment.gov.au/workingoncountry)

### **Indigenous rangers**

Indigenous rangers are involved in a diverse range of environmental activities across Australia such as fire management, threatened species survey and management, weed and feral animal control, water quality monitoring, transfer of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage management.

Contact: 1800 552 008, [www.environment.gov.au/workingoncountry](http://www.environment.gov.au/workingoncountry)

### **Indigenous Heritage Program**

The Indigenous Heritage Program supports the identification, conservation and promotion (where appropriate) of Indigenous heritage. The program may also help identify places likely to have outstanding Indigenous heritage value suitable for inclusion on the National Heritage List.

Individual project funding for organisations will in general be available up to a maximum of \$100,000. Individual applicants will generally be eligible for funding of up to \$5000. Applications for more than these amounts may be considered where the applicant demonstrates special circumstances or a genuine requirement for additional funds.

Applications are assessed by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts against the criteria in the guidelines for applicants.

Contact: 1800 982 280, [www.environment.gov.au/heritage/programs/ihp/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/programs/ihp/index.html)

### **Legal information about protecting Aboriginal heritage on your property**

As well as the programs and policies outlined in this guide, Aboriginal landholders are entitled to the full range of legal protection and obligation as other landholders in NSW. Land that has been granted under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (ALR Act) is granted subject to native title rights, so Aboriginal landowners who own land granted under the ALR Act need to take native title rights into consideration when managing their land. Conservation Agreements can be used by Aboriginal landowners to attach conditions to land titles in perpetuity in order to further protect Aboriginal heritage values.

### **National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 – Aboriginal cultural heritage**

Under amendments made to the NPW Act new offences for harming or desecrating Aboriginal objects came into effect from 1 October 2010. The first offence is knowingly harming or desecrating an Aboriginal object and the second is a strict liability offence. The knowledge offence attracts a higher penalty. There is also a new strict liability offence of harming or desecrating an Aboriginal Place. The maximum penalty for this offence is \$550,000 for individuals or imprisonment for two years, or both. In the case of a corporation the maximum penalty is \$1.1 million. A due diligence defence is available for the strict liability offence of harming Aboriginal objects (but not Aboriginal Places).

Like all landholders in NSW, Aboriginal landholders are affected by the changes to how the NPW Act works to protect Aboriginal heritage. However, there are exemptions for all new offences covering traditional Aboriginal cultural activities, declared emergencies, emergency firefighting or bushfire

hazard reduction work done in accordance with the *Rural Fires Act 1983*, and actions consistent with a Conservation Agreement that relate to the preservation of Aboriginal objects or Places, conservation or restoration measures undertaken by or on behalf of the Chief Executive of OEH and additional low impact defences prescribed by the Regulations.

Contact: OEH: 131 555, [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/ACHregulation.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/ACHregulation.htm)

## How you can be involved in land and natural resource management

There are many ways Aboriginal landholders can get involved through the programs listed above or where available through local landholder groups, involvement in local Green Team initiatives or through initiatives of LALCs. In addition, contact with CMAs as a landholder as well as through the CMA Aboriginal Reference Group can give access to locally organised natural resource management activities and processes.

### Local Aboriginal Land Councils

LALCs coordinate a range of employment and land management programs, and can provide an effective way to contact the local Aboriginal community or arrange a land management project in partnership with the local Aboriginal community. All Aboriginal people in NSW are eligible to join a land council and vote in land council elections.

The ALR Act establishes land councils as the elected representatives of Aboriginal people in NSW. At the State level, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) is the peak representative body for the Aboriginal communities of NSW. All Aboriginal people in NSW are eligible to join a land council and vote in land council elections.

There are 119 LALCs in NSW, each responsible for representing the Aboriginal communities within their boundaries. LALCs are autonomous bodies which are governed by boards of Aboriginal community members who are elected every two years. The responsibilities of NSWALC and LALCs under the ALR Act include the acquisition and management and the protection and promotion of Aboriginal culture and heritage.

Land owned by LALCs is primarily freehold land, though some LALCs also hold other forms of land title including joint management leases over national parks. As per the ALR Act, LALCs hold land for the economic, social and cultural benefit of Aboriginal people living within their boundaries.



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Sulphur crested cockatoo, *Cacatua galerita*

LALCs may hold information about Aboriginal Places and objects within the area that may not be recorded elsewhere. LALCs also have experience in identifying Aboriginal heritage sites for Aboriginal heritage assessments. LALCs are key groups to be notified for advice in relation to land, natural resource and local culture and heritage matters, including where consultation is required under the NPW Act.

NSWALC has four regional (zone) offices which provide assistance to land councils and manage a range of regional projects. NSWALC manages a number of State-focused programs and can provide advice on policy issues.

Contact: 02 9689 4444, [www.alc.org.au](http://www.alc.org.au)

## Catchment management authorities

CMA's have been established across NSW to ensure that regional landholders have a say in how natural resources are managed in their catchments. Thirteen CMA's are working with farmers, Landcare and other 'carer' groups, Aboriginal communities, local government, industry and State agencies to respond to the key natural resource management issues facing their catchments. CMA's are responsible for administering and managing native vegetation consents under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, including property vegetation plans for land clearing consents.

CMA's are responsible for managing natural resources at the catchment scale. Key roles include preparing catchment action plans (CAPs) and managing incentive programs to implement the plans. The preparation of CAPs involves integrating previous work with the latest information and science and with local knowledge. CMA's also consult Aboriginal communities on CAPs, natural resource management programs and investment strategies.

CMA's can assist Aboriginal landowners by providing advice and, in some cases, natural resource management investment based on the relevant CAP. A CMA can help direct Government's investment funds to natural resource management works on Aboriginal owned lands, and can provide specific advice about preparing property management plans and property vegetation plans.

Each CMA has at least one permanent Aboriginal identified position called a Catchment Officer (Aboriginal Communities). Some CMA's may also have other contract positions. These dedicated staff work closely with Aboriginal Reference Groups and Aboriginal landholders and communities within each catchment to implement natural resource management programs. Aboriginal Reference Groups advise CMA's on priority natural resource management and cultural heritage issues for Aboriginal communities. They also act as a conduit for the exchange of information between CMA's and local Aboriginal landholders and communities on natural resource management issues.

In general, Aboriginal Reference Groups have a strategic role in:

- working with the CMA to develop ways to engage Aboriginal people in natural resource management throughout the catchment
- promoting natural resource management funding opportunities for Aboriginal communities through the CAP and investment strategy
- strengthening the partnership between the CMA and local Aboriginal communities
- assisting delivery of natural resource management projects to Aboriginal communities
- providing advice to CMA Boards on policies, strategies and actions relating to natural resource issues affecting Aboriginal communities during the development of CAPs.

Contact: [www.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cma.nsw.gov.au)

## Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System

OEH maintains the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) which includes:

- information about Aboriginal objects that have been reported to the Chief Executive of OEH
- information about Aboriginal Places which have been declared by the Minister to have special significance with respect to Aboriginal culture
- archaeological reports.

AHIMS refers to recorded Aboriginal objects and Places as Aboriginal sites.

AHIMS Web Services is a system that allows users to search information about recorded Aboriginal objects and Places in a fast and efficient way via the internet. For some activities the NPW Act requires that you exercise due diligence to check if Aboriginal sites will be harmed by your activities – checking AHIMS is part of due diligence.

There are other reasons to use AHIMS:

- conveyancing prior to purchase or sale of a property
- Aboriginal heritage research, studies and assessments
- application for fire hazard reduction certificates
- Aboriginal community initiatives.

Contact: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/AboriginalHeritageInformationManagementSystem.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/AboriginalHeritageInformationManagementSystem.htm)

## Contacts

### OEH

- General Inquiries: 131 555, [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au), [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)
- Aboriginal Co-management Unit (NPWS): 02 9585 6632  
[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/jointmanagement/index.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/jointmanagement/index.htm)
- CCHD Community Operations Branch, Metro Region: 02 9995 5000
- CCHD Community Operations Branch, Far West Region: 02 6966 8100
- CCHD Community Operations Branch, North West Region: 02 6881 4611
- CCHD Community Operations Branch, Northern Region: 02 6659 8294
- CCHD Community Operations Branch, Southern Region: 02 6229 7177
- Conservation Partners Program Coordinator: 02 9995 6768  
[conservation.partners@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:conservation.partners@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/ConservationPartners.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/ConservationPartners.htm)
- Land Alive: [LandAlive@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:LandAlive@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/landalive/index.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/landalive/index.htm)
- Protection of cultural objects and sites: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/ACHregulation.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/ACHregulation.htm)

Aboriginal Rural Training Program: 1800 628 422

[www.mrsc.nsw.edu.au/courses-and-training/courses](http://www.mrsc.nsw.edu.au/courses-and-training/courses)

CMAs: [www.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cma.nsw.gov.au)

Communitybuilders: [www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/research](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/research) (case studies, discussion papers, toolkits and contacts that could be applied to community based land management projects)

Environmental Trust: 02 8837 6093, [info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/envtrust.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/envtrust.htm)

Fisheries Information Line: 1300 550 474, [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries)

Green Team Alliance (North Coast): [info@greenteamsalliance.com.au](mailto:info@greenteamsalliance.com.au)  
[www.coffsinnovation.com.au/documents/green-teams-alliance.pdf](http://www.coffsinnovation.com.au/documents/green-teams-alliance.pdf)

Indigenous Land Corporation: 1800 818 490, [ilcinfo@ilc.gov.au](mailto:ilcinfo@ilc.gov.au), [www.ilc.gov.au](http://www.ilc.gov.au)

Land and Property Management Authority: 1300 052 637

NSW Aboriginal Land Council: 02 9689 4444, [www.alc.org.au](http://www.alc.org.au)

NSW Native Title Tribunal: 1800 640 501, [enquiries@nntt.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@nntt.gov.au)

TAFE NSW: 131 601, [www.tafensw.edu.au/services/indigenous](http://www.tafensw.edu.au/services/indigenous)

Trade and Investment: [www.dtiris.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dtiris.nsw.gov.au)

- Aboriginal Business Development: 1300 134 359,  
[www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/aboriginal/bizdevelopment/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/aboriginal/bizdevelopment/Pages/default.aspx)

Working on Country (Commonwealth): 1800 552 008, [workingoncountry@environment.gov.au](mailto:workingoncountry@environment.gov.au)  
[www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/workingoncountry/index.html)

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