

Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy

2024-2027

Bringing ancient ways of knowing into
modern days of doing conservation



Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2024-27

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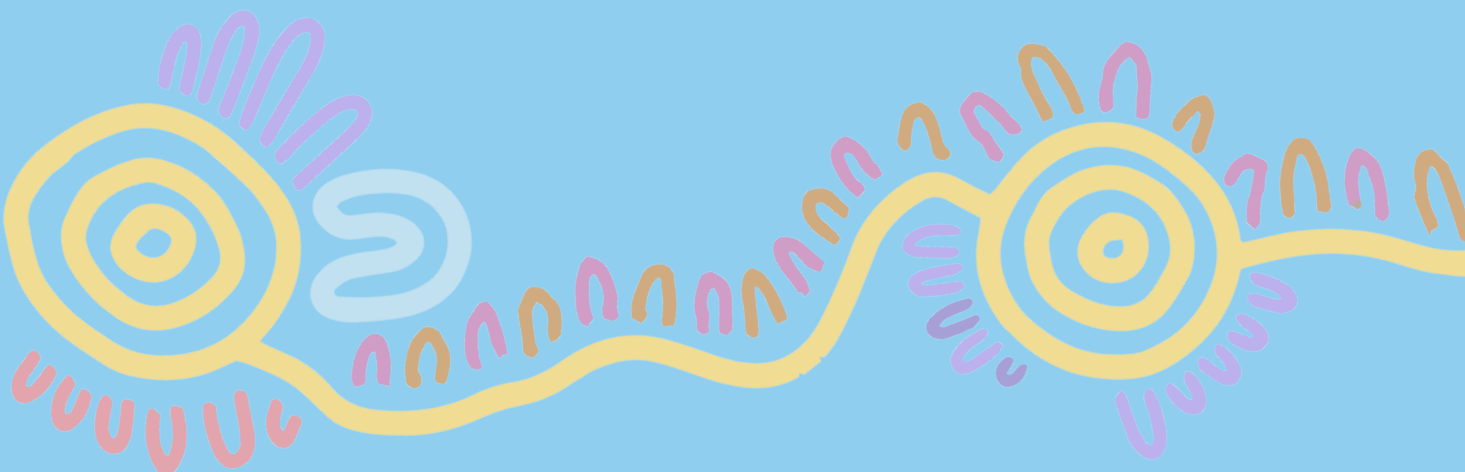
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Contents

Acknowledgement of Land, Environment and People	2
Chief Executive Officer's foreword	3
Our artwork	4
From Past to Future: Indigenous Wisdom in Biodiversity	4
About the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust	5
Strategic partnerships	5
Our commitment to Aboriginal empowerment	6
What authentic empowerment means	6
Reimagining conservation – Working together for healthy Country	7
Bringing ancient ways of knowing into modern days of doing conservation	8
BCT Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2024-27	9
Our priorities and focus	9
Our engagement approach	12
Our engagement activities	13
Gayini Nimmie-Caira	13
Cultural Biodiversity Conservation pilot	13
Northern Inland Koala – Respect and Recognition	13
Living Classrooms	13
Our shared governance approach	14
Monitoring, reporting and evaluation	14
Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy Implementation Plan	15



Acknowledgement of Land, Environment and People

The New South Wales Biodiversity Conservation Trust acknowledges the Traditional Custodians¹ - the original peoples and inhabitants of all lands across NSW - in all that we do.

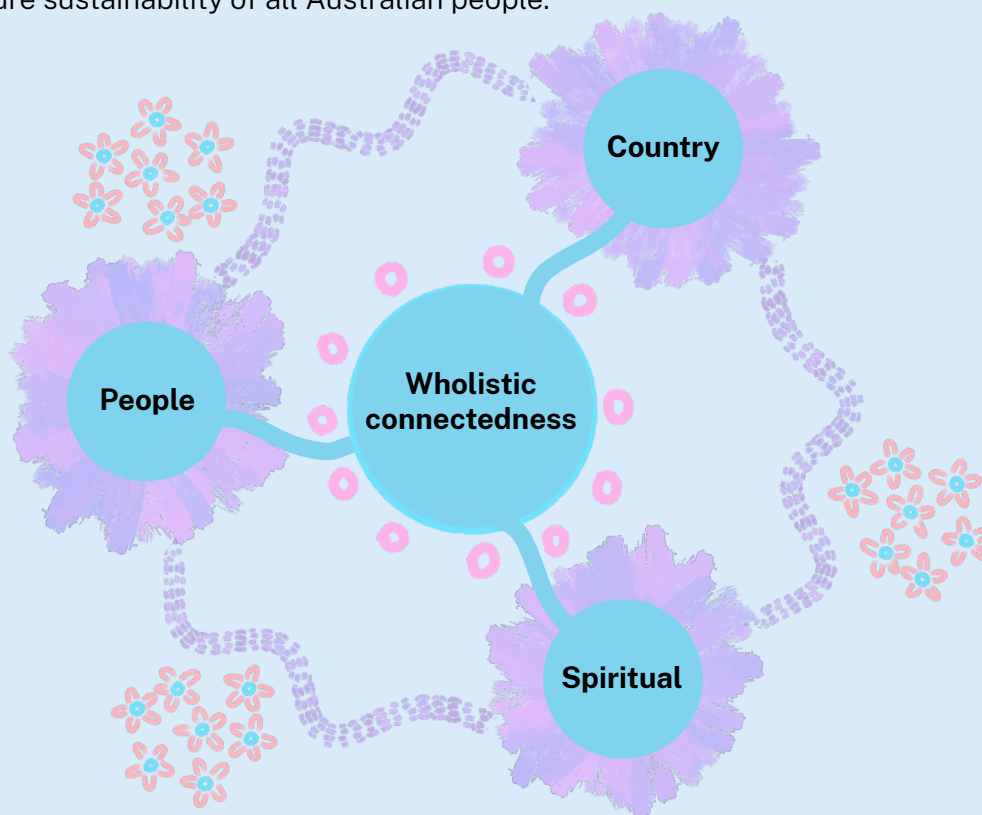
We pay sincere respect to Ancestors and Elders, past, present and future, acknowledge the diversity of Traditional Custodian groups across NSW and respect the free, prior and informed consent rights of each group to make decisions in accordance with their lore, culture and customs.

Since time immemorial, Traditional Custodians have always identified landscapes and environments with which they have a cultural affiliation, as the Country where they belong. This longstanding affiliation and belonging to Country has always been central to Traditional Custodian lores, cultures, customs and obligations and practices for taking care of Country. A cultural imperative linked to lore and rules of behaviour has always been, and always will be, to take care of Country to ensure people live in balance and harmony with the land and environment.

Traditional Custodians have always known and continue to strongly advocate that if we the people do not take care of the land and environment, the land and environment will not take care of us.

Our acknowledgement is supported by a genuine desire to empower Aboriginal staff, landholders and communities and a commitment to foster two-way learning and trusted partnerships that support our work together.

Together, we can and will bring ancient ways of knowing conservation into modern days of doing in a concerted effort to restore balance and harmony with the land and environment for the shared benefit and future sustainability of all Australian people.



¹ The BCT recognise that there are a variety of terms used to define Indigenous people and culture. We recognise the current vernacular regarding Indigenous people and culture is not clear and there are different terms and terminology currently used. For the purposes of our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy, we intermittently use the terms Traditional Custodian, Aboriginal or Indigenous people. There may be, by necessity, a need to use other terms because they are contained in the writings of other documents referenced in this strategy. Relevant to this point is the fact that the United Nations (UN) use Indigenous in their administration and various policies and instruments such as the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP).

Chief Executive Officer's foreword

As stewards of the land, it is our duty to ensure that Aboriginal voices are not only heard but respected and empowered in the work that we do. Through strategic partnerships and collaborations with Aboriginal communities, organisations, and stakeholders, we strive to amplify Aboriginal voices in our conservation efforts.

Our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy is grounded in this acknowledgment of the enduring connection between Aboriginal people and Country. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust aspires to be an exemplar for authentic empowerment.

The core principles of our strategy are deeply rooted in values of equity and respect. We prioritise a rights-based approach to conservation, valuing Indigenous cultural authority and intellectual property, and weaving together our knowledge systems to bridge the gap between Indigenous wisdom and western science.

Our focus areas encompass valuing culture, equity in managing Country, and exploring economic opportunities that respect Indigenous rights. By acknowledging inherent cultural wisdom, biodiversity knowledge, conservation obligations and practices, and investing in the strengths within Aboriginal communities, we will embark on a holistic journey of healing that brings people back into balance and harmony with the land and environment. Through the memories, storylines, ceremonies and language that are shared with us, as well as Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing, we will improve our understanding of caring for Country.

On behalf of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, I invite you to work with us in our genuine desire to empower Aboriginal people and communities.

We look forward to working with you.

Erin Giuliani





From Past to Future: Indigenous Wisdom in Biodiversity

by Wayde Clarke

This piece has been designed to reflect the deep connectivity between Aboriginal Cultures and western approaches to conservation. In both worlds, we look closely to insects to learn how healthy the biodiversity of a landscape is. From sea country to inland river country, through wildflowers and among native grasses, insects thrive and drive biodiversity. They pollinate and create food and nutrition and are both cultural and western indicators of healthy Country. Through insects we learn and observe, and by weaving these knowledge systems together we achieve unity.

Wayde Clarke is a Wiradjuri/Birpai man, also known as Aléjandro. He is a queer Aboriginal artist whose work explores identity and perception through his own experiences. His work aims to take on the world and bring attention to issues that are important to him.

About the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust

The NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Trust (the BCT) was established in August 2017 to encourage and support landholders across NSW to participate in private land conservation.

Our core business is private land conservation, and our purpose is to partner with landholders to enhance and conserve biodiversity across NSW.

Our vision is vibrant private land conservation areas protecting our unique and diverse plants and animals.

Our aspirational aims under our current Business Plan (2021-2025) are to:

- enter 400 private land conservation agreements with landholders,
- secure 200,000 hectares of new conservation areas, and
- protect examples of another 50 unique under-represented NSW landscapes.

Our strategic goals are to:

- increase private land conservation in areas of strategic biodiversity value.
- deliver efficient, effective and strategic biodiversity offset outcomes.
- support participating landholders to conserve biodiversity.
- promote public knowledge, appreciation and understanding of biodiversity and the importance of conservation.

Strategic partnerships

The BCT will collaborate with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and other government agencies and non-government organisations to deliver on the purpose, vision, priorities and objectives of our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.

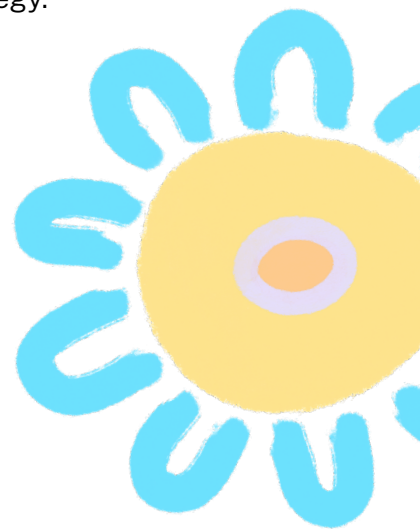
We will continue to grow strategic partnerships with:

- Aboriginal landowners and managers
- Peak bodies
- Aboriginal led trusted networks
- Aboriginal service providers
- Government agencies
- Non-Aboriginal trusted networks
- Partner organisations

In particular, the BCT maintains relationships with:

- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils (regionally)
- Aboriginal Affairs NSW
- DCCEEW's Aboriginal Support Network (ASN) and Aboriginal Network Executive (ANE).

Aboriginal landholders and communities already have established partnerships and networks that the BCT will always consider.



Our commitment to Aboriginal empowerment

In collaboration with BCT Aboriginal staff, landholders and communities we remain committed to building our understanding toward the detrimental and disruptive impacts that colonisation has had and continues to have on Traditional Custodian life and Country across NSW.

We know colonisation resulted in Traditional Custodians being forcibly removed from their Country, but what we didn't know then and need to know now, is that in addition to the immediate breakdown of lore, culture and customs, this disconnection ignored cultural obligations and completely disregarded ancient biodiversity knowledge and conservation practices for taking care of Country.

We know that ongoing environmental damage and the impacts of climate change exacerbate the decline of Australia's unique biodiversity. We also know that, in addition to their intrinsic biodiversity values, our wonderful plants, animals and landscapes have important cultural values for Aboriginal people.

We commit to working together to bring ancient ways of knowing biodiversity into modern days of doing conservation to restore balance and harmony with the land and environment for the shared benefit and future sustainability of all Australian people.

What authentic empowerment means

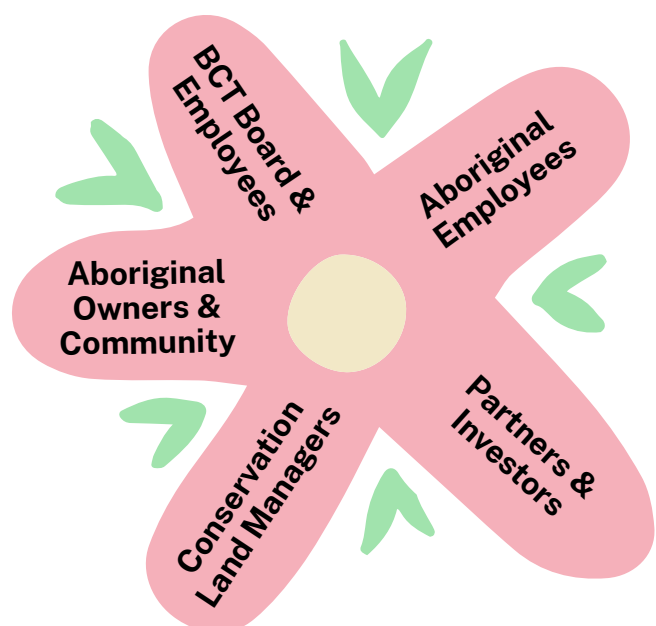
Empowerment is pure validation, where we recognise, value and celebrate Aboriginal culture. It means valuing knowledge, abilities, goals and learning. It supports Aboriginal community to feel appreciated, supported, and motivated.

It is about BCT backing Aboriginal communities to facilitate positive change by putting Aboriginal culture and participation central to BCT decision-making and contributing to better outcomes for Aboriginal people, built around genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders, strong accountability, and culturally responsive ways of working.

Empowerment fosters an environment where people have the resources, support, and confidence to act. It is also about standing together regardless of the outcome and taking responsibility for wins and setbacks.

The BCT aspires to be an exemplar for authentic empowerment. We will nurture an environment where two-way learning, collaboration, mutual understanding, respect and trusted partnerships are commonplace, and where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people work together to deliver locally-informed, culturally-informed, trauma-informed and healing-focused conservation outcomes.

By acknowledging inherent cultural wisdom, biodiversity knowledge, conservation obligations and practices, and investing in the strengths within Aboriginal communities, we will embark on a holistic journey of healing that brings people back into balance and harmony with the land and environment.

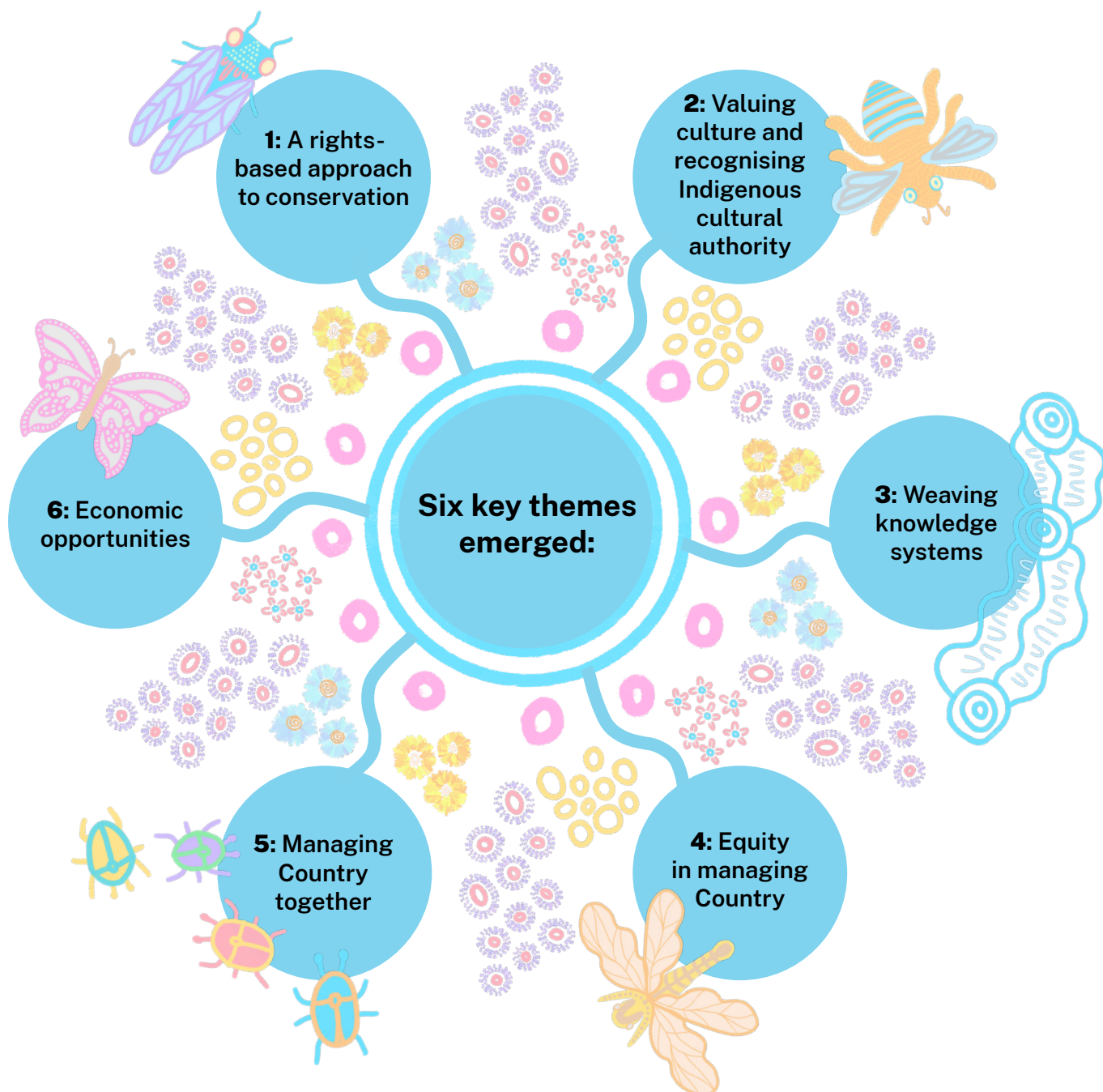


Reimagining conservation – Working together for healthy Country

In November 2022 the Reimagining Conservation –Working Together for Healthy Country Forum was held in Meanjin (Brisbane) on Yuggerah and Turrbal Country. This forum was the first of its kind in Australia which brought together equal numbers of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to talk about how we can reimagine managing land and sea Country together. This forum was jointly convened by the Australian Committee of International Union for Conservation of Nature (ACIUCN), North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NAILSMA) and Protected Areas Collaboration (PAC).

The forum was attended by over 100 people who work on Country for culture and conservation, on traditional and scientific knowledge, and in emerging economic opportunities from across Australia. At the forum people shared generously from the heart and delved into what is working and what is not working. Indigenous voices were emphasised, enabling everyone to listen and learn about where change is needed.

To continue the momentum generated at the Reimagining Conservation –Working Together for Healthy Country Forum the BCT has embedded the six emerging themes and their rationale as key priorities within our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.



Bringing ancient ways of knowing into modern days of doing conservation

As defined by western science, biodiversity – short for biological diversity, refers to all living things and their interactions which change over time as a result of the extinction of species and the evolution of new species.

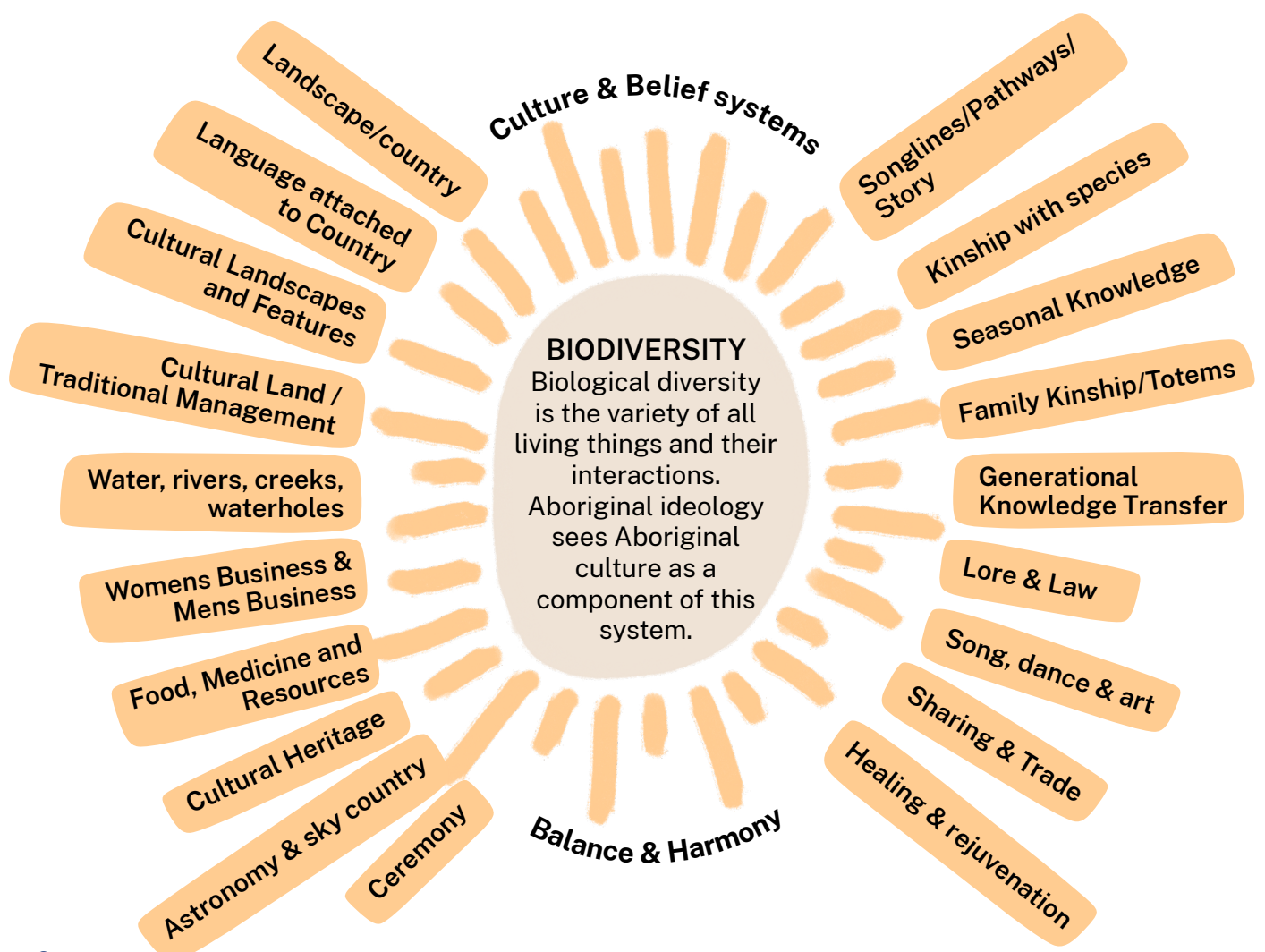
Since time immemorial, biodiversity has always been an intrinsic part of Aboriginal people's existence. Acute knowledge and understanding of biodiversity and conservation practices for taking care of land, ecosystems, plant and animal species have always been, and always will be concepts that are aligned directly to Aboriginal values, lore, culture and customs.

Traditional Custodians have always known and continue to strongly advocate that if we, the people, do not take care of the land and environment, the land and environment will not take care of us.

Many Aboriginal communities throughout Australia and across NSW continue to rediscover the ancient cultural biodiversity knowledge and conservation ways of knowing and doing through land and sea management, arts, mythology and the rejuvenation of kinship systems.

This impact of reconnecting with ancient biodiversity knowledge and conservation practices on taking care of Country has resulted in healing, increased pride, confidence and self-esteem, land and sea management skills, economic opportunities and the restoration of cultural community values.

For Aboriginal people, caring for the Country always was and always will be about living in balance and harmony with the land and environment. Monitoring of the environment and observing, learning and adapting to seasonal changes and knowing that adhering to conservation practices for taking care of ecosystems that sustain plant and animal life would also provide food and medicines, which in turn, sustained human life on this continent for more than 65,000 years.



BCT Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2024-27



The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2024-27 aligns with the purpose, vision and strategic goals of our 2021-25 Business Plan and operates in unison with:

- the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's Our Place on Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy, and
- the NSW Government's OCHRE Plan for Aboriginal Affairs – which seeks to deliver Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment symbolic with Aboriginal community's deep connection to Country.

Our Strategy also aligns with the 2022-24 NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap developed in response to the landmark National Agreement for Closing the Gap (National Agreement).

Our purpose

To work together to bring ancient ways of knowing biodiversity into modern days of doing conservation to restore balance and harmony with the land and environment for the shared benefit and future sustainability of all Australian people.

Our vision

Ancient ways of knowing biodiversity and doing conservation will be better understood, shared and commonly practiced across Australia.

Our priorities and focus

Priority 1: A rights-based approach to conservation

Biodiversity policies, governance and management must not violate the rights of Indigenous people, and must ensure the social, cultural and economic needs of Indigenous communities are met.

Our focus

We will ensure BCT biodiversity policy, governance and management practices acknowledge the rights of Traditional Custodians and delivers fair and equitable social, cultural and economic opportunities in compliance with NSW and Australian government commitments and International Conventions and Instruments for the Rights of Indigenous People.

Priority 2: Valuing culture and recognising Indigenous cultural authority

Cultural governance mechanisms can only be determined by Indigenous peoples. It is important to listen, respect, and ask Indigenous people before acting to ensure programs are in the best interests of Country and communities.

Our focus

We will develop a shared governance approach to ensure cultural biodiversity knowledge is better understood and integrated and cultural conservation values, principles and practices are embedded in all that we do.

Priority 3: Weaving knowledge systems

It is time for another scientific revolution whereby Indigenous culture becomes fully and wholly recognised as a science, and with Indigenous knowledge appropriately woven together with western conservation science.

Our focus

We will embrace ancient Indigenous biodiversity knowledge and conservation values, principles and practices and proactively explore opportunities to weave this together with western science.

Priority 4: Equity in managing Country

To be successful, biodiversity management needs to ensure equity in funding, skills, capacity, education, and self-determination. Non-indigenous partners need to be culturally competent to understand cultural protocols and build relationships based on trust.

Our focus

We will adequately resource our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy to maximise employment and business opportunities, build shared understanding and capacity through two-way learning and sustain relationships based on mutual trust and respect to optimise overall performance.

Priority 5: Managing Country together

For many Indigenous people, joint management is seen as the start of the journey towards sole management, not the end. Progress in joint and sole management is limited by lack of capacity and funding and resistance to letting Indigenous peoples take control of their Country.

Our focus

We will proactively explore opportunities to build capacity to support the progression of Traditional Custodians in co-design of managing Country.

Priority 6: Economic opportunities

New economies based on carbon, biodiversity, and native produce are bringing new opportunities for Indigenous peoples. Market mechanisms must be based on respect for the rights of local Indigenous cultures and ensure benefit to local communities.

Our focus

We will explore all employment and procurement opportunities to optimise self-determination and build Aboriginal primacy in green economies and nature-based solutions including carbon, biodiversity, water and native produce.

We will know we are successful when...

- Our purpose and vision for reimagining biodiversity and conservation management is embraced and increasingly supported.
- Aboriginal staff, landholders and communities have the resources, support, and confidence to act.
- We foster an environment where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people stand by each other regardless of the outcome and take responsibility for wins and setbacks.
- Mutual trust and respectful biodiversity and conservation-based relationships between Aboriginal people and landholders, and non-Aboriginal people and landholders, are commonplace.
- Traditional Custodian opportunities are increased through genuine support and appropriate levels of funding.
- More Aboriginal landholders participate in BCT programs and are happy that the BCT is supporting their aspirations for healthy Country.
- Two-way learning results in increased employment and economic opportunities for Indigenous people, shared understanding toward Traditional Custodian biodiversity and conservation and improved capacity of non-Indigenous staff to engage with confidence.



Our engagement approach

At the BCT, we value building strong working relationships with Traditional Custodian groups across NSW and we recognise that two-way learning, mutual trust and respectful relationships must be underpinned by an effective engagement approach.

Our engagement approach will proceed through the following stages:

Establish

- Identify and research the Traditional Custodian group/s connected to each project.
- Identify Traditional Custodian decision makers and support networks (peak bodies).
- Confirm most appropriate communication channels.
- Create a plan for initial meeting and presentation of project scope.

Build

- Initiate two-way learning.
- Develop clear messaging and agree on shared project discussion points, values and goals.
- Commit to and maintain open, respectful and transparent lines of communication.
- Foster active community pride, project participation and ownership.

Nurture

- Agree to respectfully sit, listen and learn from each other.
- Work through project problems and issues together and develop solutions and actions informed by local cultural biodiversity and conservation knowledge.
- Provide appropriate project support and resources.
- Do not promise things that cannot be delivered.
- Provide timely feedback and or responses to issues or concerns raised.

Sustain

- Regularly monitor and evaluate the project environment, performance and delivery of outcomes.
- Adjust strategies, tactics and engagement practices based on feedback and data.
- Continuously innovate and maintain a positive and proactive interest.
- Maintain consistent and reliable communication channels.

Value

- Identify shared educational experiences and opportunities for future development and growth.
- Collaborate to co-create, promote and market good project outcomes/case studies.
- Conduct end of project SWOT analysis to identify strengths to build on, weaknesses to learn from and reduce, opportunities to maximise and threats to minimise.
- Recognise, value and appreciate the unique knowledge and skillsets of all parties that contribute to the successful completion of the project.

Our engagement activities

The BCT recognises that Aboriginal people's cultural obligation of 'caring for Country' overlaps with the BCT's core business of biodiversity conservation. The BCT offers a unique opportunity for Aboriginal landholders via private land conservation and offsets programs which provide financial and technical support to landholders to protect the biodiversity values on their land. This could be an opportunity for Aboriginal landholders to gain ecological advice, provide two-way learning and provide ongoing conservation management or stewardship payments to support financial sustainability. Some examples of our work are outlined below.

Gayini Nimmie-Caira

The Nari Nari Tribal Council is leading critical habitat management on the largest privately held conservation agreement area in NSW. It is permanently protected under a funded conservation agreement delivered through a significant co-investment partnership with the BCT and The Nature Conservancy.

Cultural Biodiversity Conservation pilot

Through the Cultural Biodiversity Conservation pilot, eligible Aboriginal landholding organisations will be offered ongoing funding to protect and manage important sites on their land for conservation.

Organisations will receive annual payments to implement an agreed conservation management plan that is inclusive of cultural land management practices and enter into an ongoing agreement with the BCT.

Northern Inland Koala – Respect and Recognition

The BCT delivered a conservation tender that focussed on koala habitat in the Northern Inland region with funding support from the NSW Koala Strategy. As part of the tender delivery, local cultural knowledge holders were engaged to work with landholders and the BCT to ensure cultural values and protocols were recognised, respected and protected as part of the conservation agreements.



Living Classrooms

Students, teachers and Aboriginal Elders at Coffs Harbour's Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School worked with the BCT to deliver a unit of lessons sharing Aboriginal practices to care for Country and our natural environment. The Living Classrooms program offers lessons in local Aboriginal language and knowledge and the opportunity to visit sites where biodiversity is being protected under private land conservation agreements.



Our shared governance approach

At the BCT we believe that the effective governance of our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy has six main requirements:

Performance	How we use governance arrangements to contribute to our overall performance and the effective implementation of our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.
Accountability	Providing visibility of results to Aboriginal people, communities, organisations, and non-Aboriginal landholders, BCT Board, Minister and the public.
Locally Informed	Acknowledging the historical, cultural, social and economic circumstances of each community to make locally informed decisions.
Culturally Informed	Acknowledging the diverse lore, culture and custom of Traditional Custodians and communities to make culturally informed decisions.
Trauma Informed	Striving to better understand root cause factors that underpin intergenerational trauma to make trauma informed decisions.
Healing Focused	How we use governance arrangements to build shared understanding, trust and mutually respectful relationships to make healing focused decisions that contribute to restoring balance and harmony for people, with the land and the environment.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Aboriginal Empowerment Champion

Our Empowerment Champion, Chief Executive Officer, Erin Giuliani will provide strategic oversight of our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy implementation process and regular progress reports to the BCT Board.

BCT Aboriginal Engagement Working Group

Our BCT Aboriginal Engagement Working Group is responsible for the development and implementation of our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy. The Working Group will provide regular progress reports to the Chief Executive Officer.

Evaluation

An evaluation plan will be developed in the first year after the commencement of this strategy to better inform BCT measurement of success of the strategy. Plan implementation will be reviewed annually, and a full program evaluation will be undertaken toward the end of 2027.

Reporting on Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy outcomes will include:

- Reporting on program key performance indicators,
- Quarterly dashboard reporting, and,
- Annual public reporting on achievements.

Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy Implementation Plan

PRIORITY 1: A rights-based approach to conservation

Our Focus	BCT policies, governance and management practices will apply a cultural lens and be inclusive of the rights of Traditional Custodians. This will ensure the delivery of fair and equitable social, cultural and economic opportunities in compliance with NSW and Australian government commitments and International Conventions and Instruments for the Rights of Indigenous People.
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Objectives	Strategies
Embed a shared governance framework and approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appoint one Aboriginal male and female to the BCT Board to provide strategic and cultural oversight.• Cultural, social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people are prioritised across BCT.• BCT governance framework and approach will include mechanisms which ensure policy and program decision making practices align with Aboriginal cultural values and are locally informed, culturally informed, trauma informed and healing focused.• BCT policy and programs align with cultural due diligence requirements and comply with relevant State and Commonwealth legislative requirements and International Conventions that protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.• Maintain effective monitoring and evaluation of the BCT Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy
Ensure rights-based principles, policy and practices are an integral part of BCT business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement BCT cultural competency program which promotes two-way learning to embed rights, respect and recognition of Aboriginal culture and inherent place in biodiversity.• Undertake effective workforce planning and recruitment of Aboriginal people across BCT.
Empower our Aboriginal landholders and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure Aboriginal landholders and community cultural obligations and responsibilities on Country are acknowledged, respected and upheld.• Support continuous learning and capacity building for Aboriginal landholders and communities to increase program access and participation.• Maintain collaborative relationships with other State and Australian government agencies and non-government bodies that represent Aboriginal landholder and community interests and aspirations.

Desired outcome Key performance measures

BCT is a leader with a responsive and progressive rights-based approach to conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BCT shared governance framework and approach is adopted across all five BCT branches.• BCT's reputation and credibility with Aboriginal landholders, communities and stakeholders.• Increased investment to ensure resource levels are adequate to deliver on planned activities.• An engaged, empowered workforce.• Increased Aboriginal landholder and community access and participation in BCT products and programs.
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PRIORITY 2: Valuing culture and recognising Indigenous cultural authority

Our Focus	Ensure cultural biodiversity knowledge and conservation values, principles and practices are understood and integrated in all that we do.
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Objectives	Strategies
Value cultural knowledge and authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable Aboriginal cultural knowledge and authority to inform and guide BCT governance frameworks and programs.• Ensure Aboriginal cultural values are recognised, that free, prior and informed consent rights are acknowledged, and that intellectual property is recognised as part of the BCT governance framework and programs.• Embed cultural biodiversity values, principles and practices into all relevant BCT products and programs.
Build cultural competency of BCT Board, staff and contractors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and deliver BCT Biodiversity and Conservation-based Cultural Immersion Program as part of our cultural competency training, based on truth telling, to better understand:<ul style="list-style-type: none">» ancient biodiversity knowledge and conservation practices and their modern-day value.» the detrimental and disruptive impacts of colonisation.» barriers and enablers for Aboriginal communities to participate in BCT programs.» cultural protocols relevant to Country» cross cultural methods and strategies to de-escalate conflicts, build confidence and enhance non-Indigenous staff engagement capacity.• Design and deliver structured cultural competency evaluation processes.
Improve understanding and compliance with cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure BCT Board, staff and contractors understand and comply with cultural protocols relevant to Country.• Ensure all BCT programs and products are inclusive of cultural safety and protocols pertinent to Country.

Desired outcome	Key performance measures
If we value and recognise Indigenous biodiversity knowledge and conservation values, principles and practices and embed this into our work we will start a process which will bring current and future generations of Australians back to living in balance and harmony with the land and environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noticeable improvement in all BCT conservation efforts as reported by program participants and articulated through internal program evaluation methods.• Number of BCT staff who complete cultural competency training and participate in other BCT identified cultural training.• Participation, satisfaction rates and increased confidence and capability of BCT staff who attend cultural immersion program.• Increased number of Aboriginal landholders and community accessing and participating in BCT products and programs.

PRIORITY 3: Weaving knowledge systems

Our Focus	We will embrace ancient Indigenous biodiversity knowledge and conservation values, principles and practices and proactively explore opportunities to weave this together with western science.
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Objectives	Strategies
Afford equal value to cultural biodiversity knowledge and conservation values, principles and practices with western science.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate and promote the primacy and melding of cultural biodiversity knowledge and conservation values, principles and practices with western science.• Explore innovative opportunities to support design and delivery of a NSW-based Cultural Biodiversity Conservation Principles and Practices Research Project.• Develop and drive effective partnerships with domestic and international institutions, and the corporate and philanthropic sectors to support research and build an evidence base which strengthens advocacy and upholds Indigenous science so it can stand alongside western knowledge systems.• Build effective partnerships to support the ongoing development of cultural biodiversity knowledge, conservation, values, principles and practices.• Host a triennial BCT Cultural Biodiversity Conservation Conference in collaboration with our partners, Traditional Custodians and key government, corporate and philanthropic stakeholders, including support for Aboriginal community to host pre and post conference events.

Desired outcome	Key performance measures
If we build the business case supported by informed cultural biodiversity and conservation wisdom and knowledge and western scientific knowledge research more investment will result, and we will start the reimagination of conservation management. Two-way learning and sharing knowledge will result in the effective weaving of knowledge systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level of participation and investment by Traditional Custodians, partners, research institutions, key government, corporate and philanthropic stakeholders.• Number of BCT programs, policies and activities that have biocultural outcomes of research embedded.• Number of universities and students invested.• Publication of research papers that influence policy and practice and advocate the effective weaving of knowledge systems.• BCT Cultural Biodiversity Conservation Conference reflects high participation and satisfaction rates.• BCT Cultural Biodiversity Conservation Conference contributes to increased level of stakeholder knowledge and understanding and improved socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal community.

PRIORITY 4: Equity in managing conservation

Our Focus	We will adequately resource our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy to maximise outcomes, employment and business opportunities, build shared understanding and capacity through two-way learning, and sustain relationships based on mutual trust and respect to optimise overall performance.
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Objectives	Strategies
Adequately resource the BCT's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider all Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy initiatives in BCT annual budget planning cycles.
Position the BCT as an exemplar for Aboriginal Empowerment and as a trusted source of cultural biodiversity and conservation knowledge and advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore all funding sources and emerging opportunities for Aboriginal landholders, communities and staff to support continuous learning and increased access to employment, education, professional development and economic opportunities.• Actively promote BCT Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and initiatives to inform state and national change.• Proactively explore strategic alliances with Aboriginal organisations, investors, NGOs and agencies to maximise Aboriginal landholder opportunities and custodial obligations.
Equity in program design and operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and remove barriers to Aboriginal participation in BCT programs.• Elevate biocultural and heritage values in making investment decisions.• Identify and address disparity in program design and operations.

Desired outcome	Key performance measures
If we ensure adequate funding of all Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy initiatives we will optimise performance, maximise success and enhance the BCT's credibility and reputation as a state, national and global leader in biodiversity and conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy is considered and fairly and equitably budgeted in annual BCT budget cycles.• Amount and diversity of Aboriginal participants in BCT programs• Amount of investment and number of partnerships• Increased percentage of landholders with agreements who identify as Aboriginal (number and percentage of total agreements)

PRIORITY 5: Managing Country together

Our Focus	We will proactively explore opportunities to build capacity and support Traditional Custodians in co-design of managing Country.
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Objectives	Strategies
Promote two-way learning between Aboriginal landholders, communities and non-Aboriginal landholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop cultural biodiversity and conservation marketing materials to promote shared learning and managing Country together.• Explore opportunities to support revival of cultural practices and ceremonies on appropriate lands linked to BCT programs and projects.• Promote non-Aboriginal landholder participation in BCT's Biodiversity and Conservation-based Cultural Immersion Program.• Build strong foundations for effective and equitable partnerships by recognising cultural authority.
Proactively support Aboriginal landholders and communities to manage Country and cultural landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore opportunities for access to Country and management of Country including emerging opportunities to increase Traditional Custodian management of Country with suitable partners.• Enable protection of cultural values on BCT agreements.

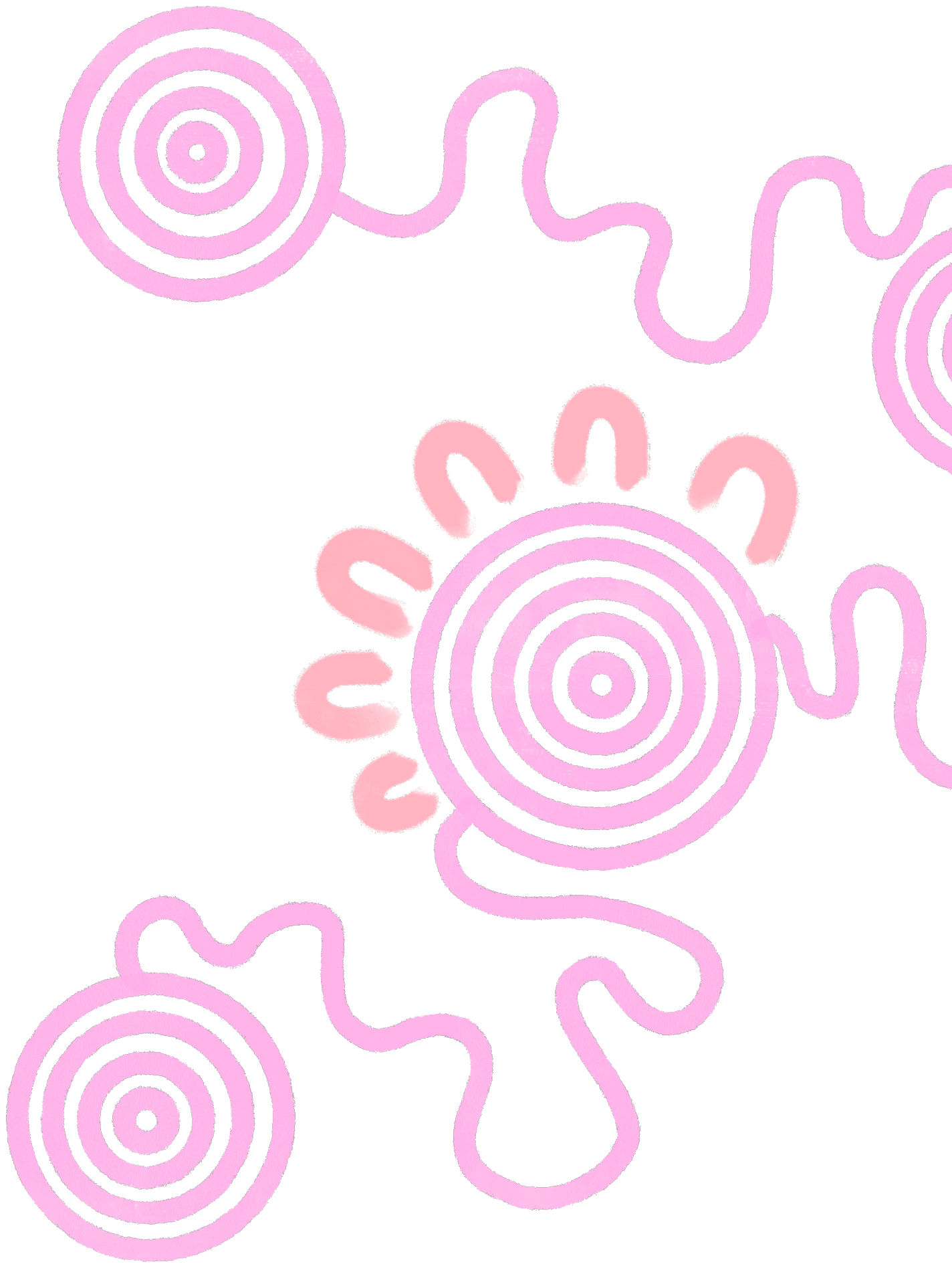
Desired outcome	Key performance measures
Build understanding and create mutually respectful relationships between Traditional Custodians and non-Indigenous landholders to create two-way learning and enhance conservation outcomes inclusive of Aboriginal peoples' cultural ways of knowing, doing and being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased opportunities for Traditional Custodians to manage Country for cultural land conservation.• Participation rates and number accessing Country, undertaking management and cultural practices.• Number of Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments completed on land that is part of BCT programs and projects.• Increased opportunity for non-Indigenous landholders to learn from traditional custodians about culture and conservation of Country.• Increase in the number of targeted engagement/communication products.• Increase the number of BCT engagement/communication products with an Indigenous lens.• Increased positive cultural, social and emotional outcomes along with conservation outcomes

PRIORITY 6: Economic opportunities

Our Focus	We will explore all employment and procurement opportunities to optimise self-determination and build Aboriginal primacy in green economies and nature-based solutions including carbon, biodiversity, water and native produce.
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Objectives	Strategies
Maximise BCT employment, training and career pathway opportunities for Aboriginal people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactively identify employment, training and career pathway opportunities for Aboriginal people in BCT at all levels - from entry to executive leadership.• Proactively support Aboriginal businesses in alignment with NSW Government Aboriginal Procurement Policy, NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and NSW OCHRE for Aboriginal Affairs.
Provide a platform for the development of local Aboriginal economies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-design BCT programs to support economic benefits to Aboriginal communities in addition to biodiversity outcomes.• Proactively identify complementary opportunities and products that support Aboriginal community aspirations (e.g., carbon and water) to enable access to multiple economic benefits that also strengthen biodiversity outcomes.• Identify opportunities for cultural service delivery to support on ground management outcomes from BCT programs.• Ensure underlying rights and interests of Aboriginal people (including those coexisting in natural systems) are protected and reflected in emerging market frameworks.• Ensure economic rights of Aboriginal people to protection and preservation of cultural and environmental assets are acknowledged and accepted with legal ownership as a primary condition.

Desired outcome	Key performance measures
New economies based on biodiversity are bringing new opportunities for Aboriginal people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in the number of Aboriginal people employed, trained and retained across all levels of BCT.• Increased Aboriginal landholders with funded agreements.• Level of Aboriginal landholder satisfaction with BCT programs.• Increased Aboriginal owned business engagement in delivery of services and social enterprise.• Increase partnership and investment opportunities with complimentary programs and products.



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