



# Our Place on Country

Aboriginal  
Outcomes Strategy  
2020-23

## Our Vision

The aspirations of Aboriginal people of NSW are advanced through the work of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and the Department of Regional New South Wales.



# About the artwork

The artwork is a visual representation of our journey within and alongside Aboriginal people and communities, creating pathways and being connected to Country. Central to the design are the footprints which have a symbolic meaning, connected to being grounded, we must stay connected to land and our feet are always on Country, no matter where you are in NSW.

Credit: Nikita Ridgeway

Published by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

[dpie.nsw.gov.au](http://dpie.nsw.gov.au)

Title: Our Place on Country Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and the Department of Regional New South Wales.

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer:

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (June 2020) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.



## Contents

<b>About the artwork</b>	<b>2</b>
.....	
<b>Leaders message</b>	<b>3</b>
.....	
<b>Aboriginal staff message</b>	<b>3</b>
.....	
<b>What is the strategy?</b>	<b>4</b>
.....	
<b>Our Place on Country</b>	<b>5</b>
.....	
Our work on Country	6
OCHRE	6
Our vision	6
Our Place on Country principles	6
Local decision making	6
Our journey	7
Our investment	8
Our Place On Country outcomes	9
<b>Our priority actions</b>	<b>10</b>
.....	

## Leaders message

New South Wales is Aboriginal land. It always was and always will be.

We are proud to work alongside Aboriginal people as they lead us to understand and help champion the wellbeing, rights and successes of Aboriginal communities. We value the strong Aboriginal networks across our departments and the richness they bring to our workplaces and the lives of our employees. We want to encourage opportunities for Aboriginal people within our departments and support the networks that advance their aspirations.

This document outlines our strategies to embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge within our two departments, working together to advocate for and celebrate the living history of Aboriginal communities that have existed within our state for thousands of generations. It is more than a statement of intent or a recognition of Aboriginal identity: it is a roadmap to empower Aboriginal voices within decision-making; to give Aboriginal people greater choice, access and control over land, water, housing and resources within the state; to drive success in Aboriginal organisations and businesses; and to create better outcomes for every Aboriginal person in NSW.

We are privileged to lead organisations committed to a better future for Aboriginal people, to stand behind our staff as they strive to create that future, and to walk beside them on the journey.



**Jim Betts** Secretary  
Department of  
Planning, Industry  
and Environment



**Gary Barnes** Secretary  
Department of Regional  
New South Wales

## Aboriginal staff message

The Aboriginal Support Network are happy to endorse Our Place on Country in alignment with our network's vision of 'equitable employment and supported employees'.

The Aboriginal Network Executive are also happy to endorse Our Place on Country in alignment with our network's vision of 'Strong People, Strong Culture'.

Both Aboriginal Networks advocate for recognition that no matter where you are across the state, you are working and living on Aboriginal land. Always was. Always will be.

Both Aboriginal Networks advocate for culturally appropriate outcomes and recognition that our Aboriginal staff bring a wealth of cultural knowledge and experience that enable us to embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge within the departments.

We look forward to collaborative opportunities to advance the aspirations of our Aboriginal staff, their communities and the departments.



ASN  
Chair  
**Michelle Shipp**



ANE  
Chair  
**Dave Kennedy**



ASN  
Secretary  
**Julie Urban**



ASN Fundraising  
Officer  
**Den Barber**



ASN Vice  
Chair  
**Guy Gibbs**



ANE Deputy  
Chair  
**Jody Orcher**



ANE  
Secretary  
**Liz Dargin**



ANE  
Treasurer  
**Leroy Johnson**





## What is the strategy?

The Strategy will help us to further grow our cultural understanding, guide us towards becoming an employer of choice for Aboriginal people and deliver better services in partnership with Aboriginal communities.

By implementing the Strategy's underlying principles of self-determination and co-design, we'll be better placed to enable Aboriginal people and communities to have greater choice, access and control over land, water, housing and resources. We'll also be working closely with Aboriginal organisations and businesses to support their success and grow NSW's Aboriginal economy.

It's an exciting step towards embedding Aboriginal cultural knowledge within the departments. Most importantly, it will help everyone recognise we're always on Country, no matter where we're working or what we are doing.



# Our Place on Country

## Country is at the core of every Aboriginal person's identity and sense of belonging

It is the place from which Aboriginal language and culture is derived.

Aboriginal culture and language groups determine families and kinship.

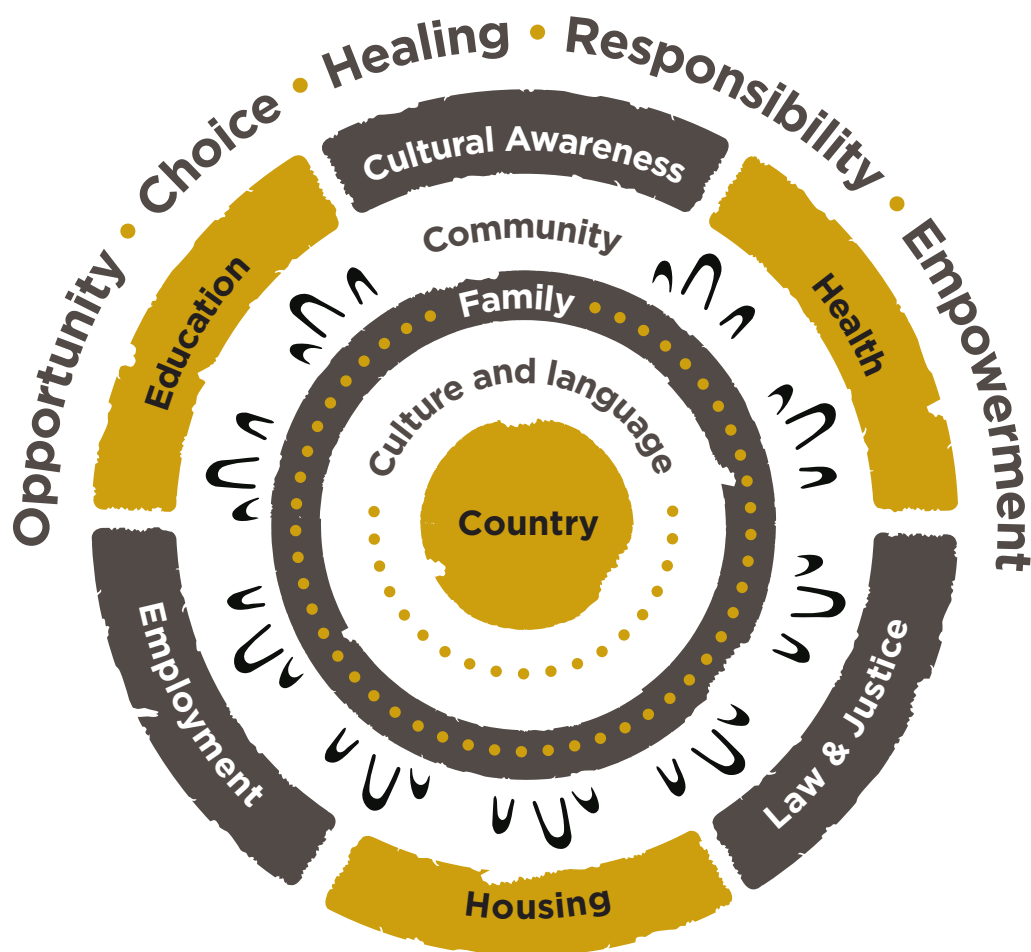
Aboriginal families and kinship systems make up communities.

Aboriginal communities are often very busy prioritising the immediate needs of community within the outer circle of issues. These issues are symptomatic of the dispossession of Aboriginal people's lands and a lack of clear voice and contribution to managing Country.

This Strategy will help the departments do a better job of delivering our core business by:

- Developing a better understanding of Aboriginal communities and integrating this knowledge into our work
- Creating partnerships based on co-design and collaboration

This will allow us to contribute greatly to healing, starting with Country and radiating out to all other areas. Like a ripple effect. As we become stronger and more capable, we will be able to help strengthen Aboriginal communities, families, culture and language. This will all benefit Country. It will create healing for both Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal people too. One can't heal without the others involvement.







## Our work on Country

- Environment and Heritage Protection
- Planning and Infrastructure
- Planning and Economic Prosperity
- Public Space and Building Design
- Joint Management of National Parks
- Regional Development
- Aboriginal and Social Housing
- Water Management
- Waste Management and Contaminated Lands
- Aboriginal Land Claims and Native Title

## OCHRE

OCHRE is the New South Wales Government plan for Aboriginal affairs. It stands for **opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment** and is symbolic of Aboriginal communities' deep connection with Country.

Our Place on Country aims to contribute greatly to the OCHRE objectives by making sure we include these approaches in our work.

## Our vision

The aspirations of Aboriginal people of NSW are advanced through the work of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Department of Regional New South Wales.

## Our Place on Country principles


- Acknowledge, value and embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge and world views in program delivery and business as usual
- Respect Aboriginal people's rights, obligations and roles as Traditional Custodians of the land, sea and waterways
- Promote and strengthen connections to culture and identity
- Prioritise economic independence for Aboriginal people through increased employment and enterprise development
- Establish and maintain meaningful ongoing relationships with Aboriginal people and Country
- Recognise appropriate engagement and connection with Aboriginal people and Country as core to our service delivery.

## Local decision making

Local Decision Making is central to the delivery of the OCHRE plan and is underpinned by the principle of self-determination. It aims to ensure that Aboriginal communities have a genuine voice in determining what and how services are delivered to their communities. This strategy links strengthening the management of Country to issues such as education, health, employment and law and justice.

## Our journey

We are committed to the journey. We want to reach our destination. We are large and diverse organisations. Some of us are already achieving results and outcomes with Aboriginal people and communities. All of us are committed to continuously improving our performance.

Journey	Acknowledge	Integrate	Partner
Our Focus			
<b>Leadership and accountability</b>	<p>Senior executive and managers are aware and promote the importance of developing responses that address the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people impacted by our work</p>	<p>Senior executive and managers create and support opportunities for Aboriginal staff and stakeholders to reform and develop responses to address the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people impacted by our work.</p> <p>Leaders are held accountable through governance and contractual arrangements.</p>	<p>Senior executive and managers support Aboriginal staff in partnership with Aboriginal communities to develop responses to address the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people.</p> <p>Leaders are held accountable through governance and contractual arrangements and engage with Aboriginal community members on the department's performance</p>
<b>Engagement and participation</b>	<p>Staff are aware of and understand the value of developing effective working relationships with Aboriginal people.</p> <p>Staff have identified ways of liaising with and sharing information with Aboriginal people, community members and organisations.</p>	<p>Staff have developed respectful relationships with a broad range of Aboriginal people.</p> <p>Staff routinely engage with Aboriginal people to understand their perspectives and incorporate their views.</p>	<p>Staff have built and maintain collaborative, trusting and respectful relationships with a broad range of Aboriginal people.</p> <p>Aboriginal people are involved in decision making, particularly in areas that impact them and their traditional lands and waterways</p>

Journey	Acknowledge	Integrate	Partner
<b>Delivery of our priorities</b>	<p>Leaders and staff reflect on their own knowledge and beliefs about Aboriginal histories and peoples and understand that their beliefs and preconceptions have an impact on the way we engage with Aboriginal people and carry out our roles.</p> <p>Staff have completed some form of cultural capability training.</p>	<p>Leaders and staff have deepened their understanding about Aboriginal peoples, histories, cultures, and experiences and are able to take steps to incorporate that knowledge into how they approach their work.</p> <p>Staff have attended localised and tailored cultural capability training.</p>	<p>Leaders and staff are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people in a variety of contexts (e.g. local, state, service, policy).</p> <p>Staff take proactive steps to deepen their knowledge and skills, participating in a range of opportunities to learn and celebrate Aboriginal knowledge and contributions.</p>

## Our investment

We recognise that to improve our performance we need to invest in the development of our organisations through our people and the communities with which we work. We will:

### Develop our cultural capability

Develop a cluster-wide approach to the development of our cultural capability, leveraging efforts already in place within parts of our organisations with a particular focus on the executive and management.

### Support economic development of Aboriginal businesses through procurement

Expand current efforts to develop a cluster-wide plan to support the achievement of targets under the Aboriginal Procurement Policy and Aboriginal Participation in Construction Policy.

### Increase Aboriginal employment and workforce development

Implement cluster-wide targets and plans to increase the Aboriginal workforce across all portfolio areas within our organisations.

### Support and utilise Aboriginal staff networks

Recognise, support and utilise the value of Aboriginal staff and their networks as possessing specific capability and a skillset that adds value to our business.

### Develop a Cultural Safety Framework

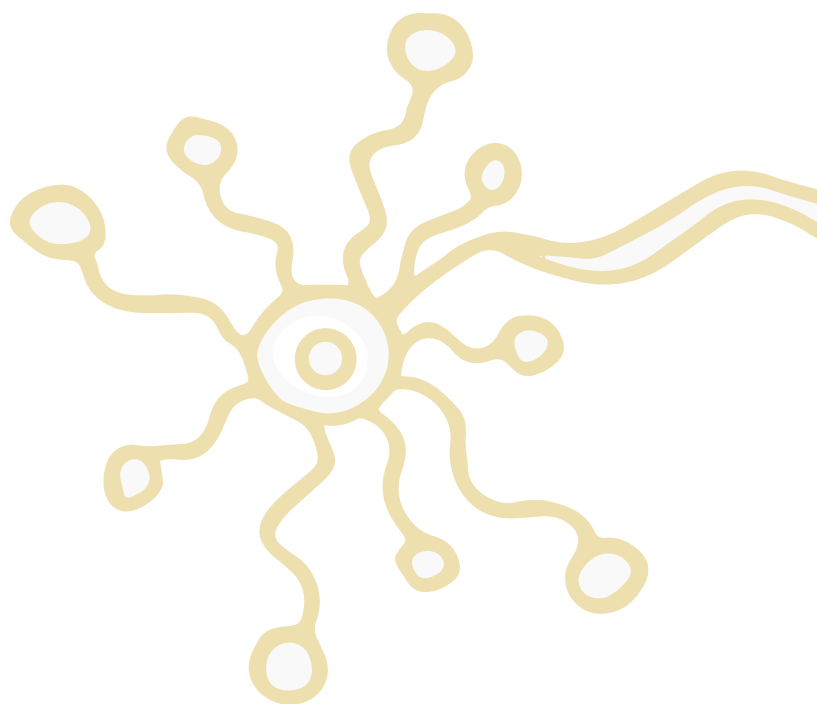
Provide our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with a safe, supportive and positive environment where they are comfortable to be themselves and express their culture and spiritual beliefs.





## Our Place On Country outcomes

- Our approach to working with Aboriginal people in NSW is consistent with the principles of self-determination and co-design
- Aboriginal people and communities have greater choice, access and control over land and water, housing and resources
- Aboriginal organisations and businesses are supported to succeed and grow NSW's first economy
- Aboriginal people and communities determine the Aboriginal culture and stories that are reflected in the built and natural environment across NSW
- Our Aboriginal workforce increases across all areas of our organisation and at all levels as we become an employer of first choice for Aboriginal people
- Residents and visitors to NSW gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal history and culture through our tangible and intangible heritage
- The continuum of Aboriginal history and culture is a visible part of NSW's built and natural environment





# Our priority actions

Each of the groups within our organisation continues to develop and implement their specific plans to enable their journey towards our common destination. The table below outlines the Priority Actions we are committed to which will be key to reaching our place on Country. We look forward to working with you to achieve these outcomes.


Priority actions	Overview	Working towards
<b>Housing and Property</b>		
<b>Roads to Home Program</b>	Partner with Local Aboriginal Land Councils to improve infrastructure and amenity for ten discrete Aboriginal communities	Improved infrastructure and amenity for ten discrete Aboriginal communities across NSW  Developed capacity of Local Aboriginal Land Councils to engage better with the NSW Planning system
<b>Social and affordable housing for Aboriginal families</b>	The <a href="#">Aboriginal Housing Office</a> will deliver 120 houses for Aboriginal families across NSW by 2022 as demand for social and affordable housing increases with population growth	Aboriginal people experiencing improved health and wellbeing and having greater access to opportunities through affordable, secure and culturally appropriate housing as well as a better social housing experience
<b>Home ownership opportunities for Aboriginal people</b>	<a href="#">Strong Family, Strong Communities Implementation Plan</a> commits the Aboriginal Housing Office to delivering 100 home ownership opportunities to Aboriginal people by June 2022	Increased numbers of Aboriginal social housing tenants transitioning to home ownership, leading to improved economic and cultural prosperity and reduced social inequity
<b><a href="#">Aboriginal Land Claims</a></b>	Transfer claimable <a href="#">Crown Land</a> to Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) to enable economic and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal communities	Improved economic and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal communities as intended under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1983)



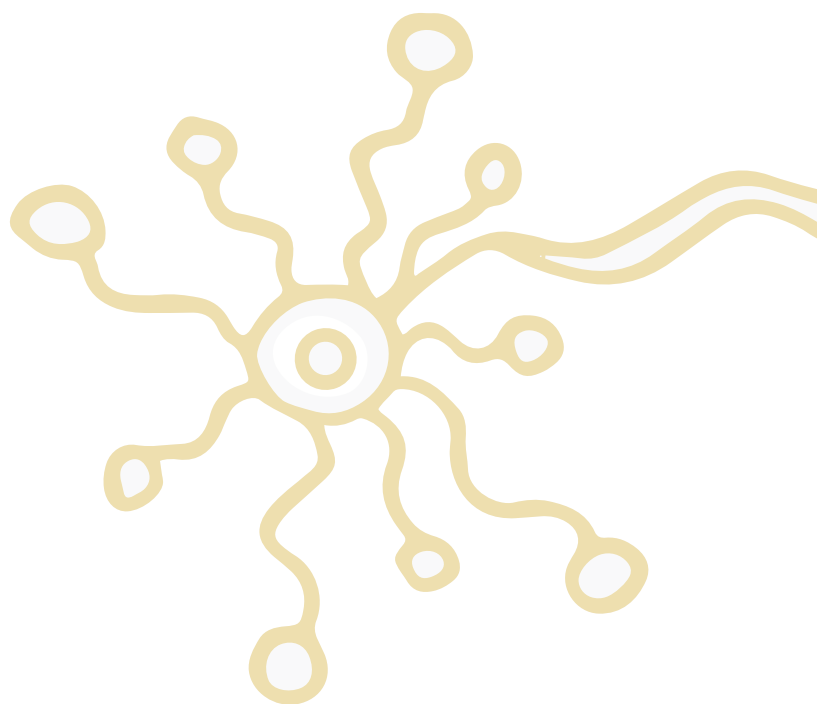
Priority actions	Overview	Working towards
<b>Department of Regional NSW</b>		
<b><a href="#">Aboriginal Fishing Package</a></b>	An integrated package to reconnect Aboriginal communities to fisheries resources	Recognition of the rights, culture and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities
<b><a href="#">Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy</a></b>	Construction opportunities for local businesses and local Aboriginal people through <a href="#">Public Works Advisory</a> contracts	Strengthening the economic prosperity of people living in remote NSW  Enabling opportunities to increase Aboriginal people's skills and economic participation
<b>Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training</b>	Develop cultural capability through formal training and opportunities for public sector staff working in Bourke pilot program.  Work with Tocal College to develop a staged approach to cultural competency for our organisation's staff.	Improved service delivery outcomes, community cohesion and resilience within pilot (Bourke) community  Embedding Aboriginal cultural knowledge within the DRNSW and the public sector more broadly
<b><a href="#">Local Land Services Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)</a></b>	Recognition that First Nations peoples have a strong ongoing social, spiritual and cultural connection with their traditional lands and waters	Recognition of the rights, culture and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities
<b>Planning</b>		
<b>The Aboriginal Land <a href="#">Planning Framework</a></b>	A comprehensive set of planning measures to address economic disadvantage within Aboriginal communities	Improved economic outcomes for Local Aboriginal Land Councils through the planning system  Increased alignment between Aboriginal Land Rights Act and land use policies
<b>Place, Design and Public Spaces</b>		
<b>Planning &amp; Public Spaces Aboriginal Strategy</b>	A combined annual strategic plan covering the <a href="#">Place, Design &amp; Public Spaces</a> and <a href="#">Planning &amp; Assessment</a> groups to develop cultural capability through formal training and opportunities	Embedding Aboriginal cultural knowledge across various roles and work areas  Enabling opportunities to increase Aboriginal people's skills and economic participation



Priority actions	Overview	Working towards
<b>Water</b>		
<b>Aboriginal Water Strategy</b>	A <a href="#">DPIE Water</a> strategy to improve Aboriginal people's access to water for cultural and economic uses	Recognition of the rights, culture and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities
<b>Environment, Energy and Science</b>		
<b><a href="#">Joint Management Agreements</a></b>	Negotiated agreements with Aboriginal people to cooperatively manage and protect national parks and reserves	Recognition of the rights, culture and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities
<b><a href="#">Climate adaptation planning pilot</a></b>	Strategic planning for climate adaptation with pilot Aboriginal landholders and their communities	Recognition of the rights, culture and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities  Proactive community led decisions on climate adaptation for Aboriginal cultural values
<b>Aboriginal Strategy &amp; Outcomes</b>		
<b>Cultural Fire Management Unit</b>	Explore potential opportunities with Aboriginal people and land owners to facilitate Cultural Fire Management across differing land tenures.	Progressing cultural fire management in NSW by strategically directing collaboration with Aboriginal land managers, land owners and cultural fire knowledge holders to preserve its cultural integrity and promote its application.
<b>LALC Planning Pilot</b>	Working with LALCs on a pilot program that enables LALCs to host a planning professional.	Building greater land use planning capacity for LALCs within the NSW planning system and improving the cultural competency of the planning profession
<b>Corporate Services</b>		
<b>Aboriginal Participation Strategy</b>	Our response to NSW Government's Aboriginal Procurement Policy	Enabling opportunities to increase Aboriginal people's skills and economic participation

Priority actions	Overview	Working towards
<b>People, Performance &amp; Culture*</b>		
<b>Aboriginal employment initiatives</b>	<p>Increase Aboriginal employment to a minimum of 3% across all grade levels by 2025.</p> <p>Double the number of Aboriginal executive leadership roles by 2025.</p>	<p>Increased public sector diversity in line with premier's priorities</p> <p>Embedding Aboriginal cultural knowledge within the department</p>
<b>Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework</b>	<p>Improve cultural capability, consciousness and safety across our workforce</p>	<p>Ongoing investment to build cultural capability and Aboriginal staff professional development opportunities</p>

\*People, Performance & Culture will support cultural capability and recruitment initiatives across each group including Corporate Services, Legal & Governance and Strategy & Reform.





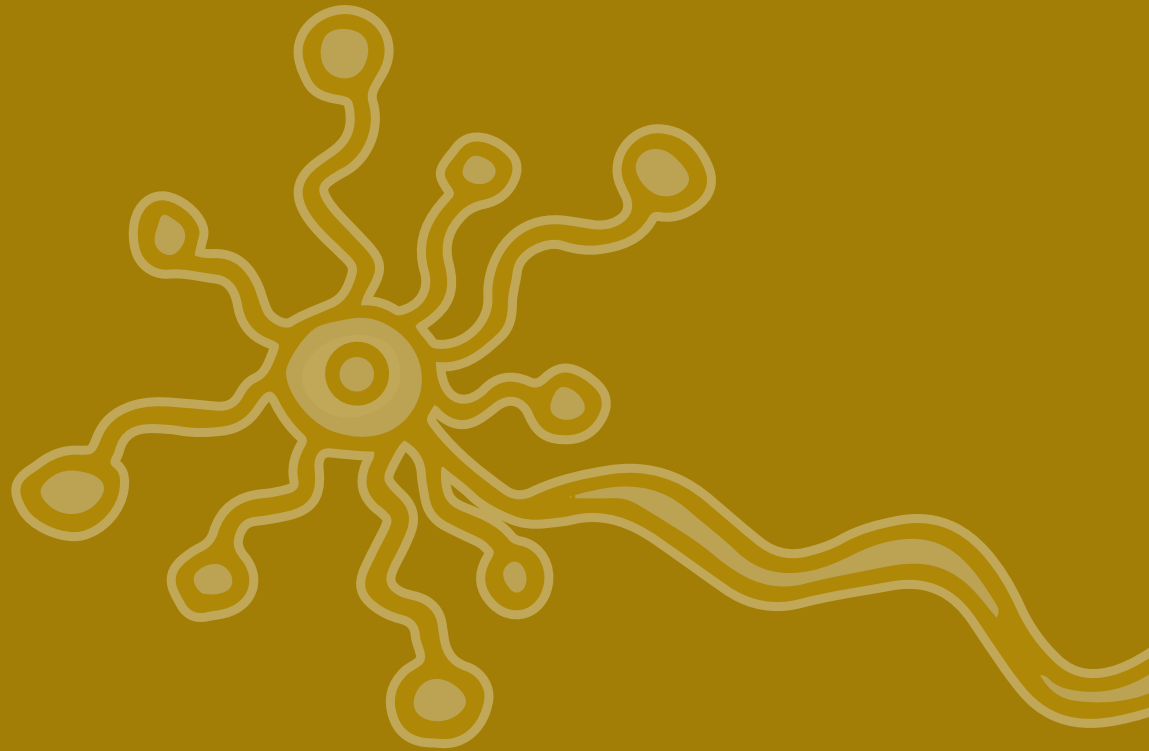




## Photography credits

- P2** Coastal Pigface – *Carpobrotus glaucescens succulent*. The juice from the leaves of this plant is medicinally used for blisters and burns. The flowers can be eaten as food. The sweet centre of the ripe purple fruit is eaten raw as food. The blooming flowers indicate schools of tailor are on the run and can be caught at shallow beach areas. Credit: Rosie Nicolai.
- P4** O'Hares Creek Shale Forest Threatened Ecological Community. Credit: Keith Horton.
- P6** Emus on the Silver City Highway, between Tibooburra and Milparinka. Credit: John Spencer.
- P9** Indigenous flag colours on pailing fence. Credit: Rosie Nicolai.
- P10** Wildlife tracks, Cambewarra Range Nature Reserve. Credit: Jacqueline Devereaux.
- P14-15** Nature Nomads beachside camping rocky foreshores with great fishing and beaches perfect for whale watching and swimming. Arakoon National Park. Credit: Nick Cubbin.





---

[Aboriginal.Strategy@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Aboriginal.Strategy@dpie.nsw.gov.au)