



# Pathways to Country

## *Celebrating a living culture*

Aboriginal people have an intangible connection between people and landscape, woven through stories passed down through generations, holding a unique and important knowledge. The connection between people and country is a pathway that transports ancient knowledge of landscape, to the people of today.

This project seeks to unearth and renew old pathways to reconnect people with country and facilitate a greater connection between Aboriginal people and land managers in the Western Local Land Services region of NSW.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have shared ambitions, this project has a number of strategies for us to help realise these and move forward together. These strategies include:

- protection of sensitive and significant sites on private land
- recording of traditional ecological knowledge and land management techniques
- creating opportunities to share cultural stories and knowledge.

This project recognises that:

- Aboriginal cultural heritage is intrinsically linked to the landscape, traditions and culture of Western NSW, and that there is a need to work with the broader community to understand, value and protect important cultural assets.
- Land managers often have long, multi-generational periods of tenure on properties in Western NSW, and recognise and protect the cultural heritage values on their land, but may have limited knowledge of how to identify Aboriginal cultural heritage, and the best techniques for protecting such values.
- Aboriginal communities also have long standing associations with Western NSW landscapes, and key people, particularly Elders within the community have knowledge of where important sites exist and where cultural heritage values need consideration. They also have insights into traditional land management practices which may be valuable to consider in making management decisions.
- There can be a degree of uncertainty and mistrust between land managers and Aboriginal communities. This can be for a range of reasons, such as misunderstanding or misinformation with respect to native title. This misinterpretation could be due to the fact that few clear pathways between the communities exist to share knowledge, values and understanding, and to create relationships.

By working together through this project, we will build pathways to stronger relationships over values that we all share, increase our knowledge, and protect things that are important for many future generations.



# Strategic themes

## **Protecting sensitive and significant sites on private land**

Are you a landholder who has, or think you have, a significant site or artefact on your property? Or are you an Aboriginal community member who has knowledge of sites but no contact with the land manager? Western Local Land Services can facilitate a discrete way in which parties can communicate, sites can be assessed, identified and even protected.

Factors to be considered include:

- the cultural nature and significance of the site
- physical threats
- protection methods
- costs
- partnering with local communities and traditional owners to protect the site.

## **Sharing and recording of traditional ecological knowledge and land management techniques**

When land management techniques are discussed between landholders and traditional owners, new knowledge may emerge about land management and cultural values. Western Local Land Services can facilitate the recording and utilisation of this information in the most appropriate way, by:

- recording land management information in databases
- trialling traditional land management techniques on private land (e.g cultural burning)
- mapping of traditional ecological knowledge and land use (e.g medicine plants)
- developing materials to share information (e.g brochure, short film).

## **Creating opportunities to share cultural stories and knowledge**

The Pathways to Country project will create opportunities for local Aboriginal community members and land managers to share knowledge of personal histories and stories relating to the Aboriginal cultural history of the landscape.

This includes:

- dreaming and creation stories
- traditional foods and water sources
- songlines and landscape interpretation
- histories of Aboriginal stockmen and pastoral relationships
- understanding kinship traditional boundaries.



# Five step process

## 1. Talk to us - confidentially

The first step is to have a confidential conversation with Western Local Land Services about it. We can discuss on the phone or visit the property. This conversation is private and there is no requirement to share any specific information.

## 2. Make an assessment

If the landholder wants to go further, the next step is to confirm what the proposed site or activity is. Western Local Land Services will arrange to talk with someone who holds knowledge of the sites, traditional practice, or stories such as a qualified staff member, landholder, traditional owner or custodian of the landscape the property is in.

## 3. Plan together

For landholders that wish to go on to protect sites, capture knowledge, or share stories, Western Local Land Services will assist in developing a plan of action or proposal which will then be considered for funding.

## 4. Make it happen

If the project has been prioritised, Western Local Land Services will develop a contract directly with the proponent or assist in engaging a suitable contractor, in consultation with the landholder, to undertake the project.

## 5. Share the story

Western Local Land Services can help facilitate an event with landholders and key traditional owners, to share knowledge and share stories, and also celebrate and acknowledge successes.



## How to get started

If you are a land manager or a community member in the Western Local Land Services region and are interested in this project, or would like some more information, please contact your nearest Western Local Land Services office on the details below:

### Balranald

P: (03) 5020 1691  
82 Market Street, Balranald 2715

### Bourke

P: (02) 6870 8600  
21 Mitchell Street, Bourke 2835

### Brewarrina

P: (02) 6839 2047  
24 Bathurst Street, Brewarrina 2839

### Broken Hill

P: (08) 8087 3378  
32 Sulphide Street, Broken Hill 2880

### Broken Hill - Biosecurity Office

P: (08) 8087 3378  
Adelaide Road, Broken Hill 2880

### Buronga

P: (03) 5021 9460  
32 Enterprise Way, Buronga 2739

### Cobar

P: (02) 6836 1575  
62 Marshall Street, Cobar 2835

### Cobar - Biosecurity Office

P: (02) 6836 2081  
Broomfield Street, Cobar 2835

### Dubbo

P: (02) 5852 1204  
209 Cobra St, Dubbo 2830

### Hillston

P: (02) 6967 2507  
180 High Street, Hillston 2675

### Tibooburra

P: 0436 475 814  
1 Wills St, Tibooburra 2880

### Wentworth

P: (03) 5027 3064  
1 Silver City Highway, Wentworth 2648

### Wilcannia

P: (08) 8091 5070  
43 Woore Street, Wilcannia 2836

## For our future philanthropic, agency and organisational funding partners and contributors

As a regional NSW government agency with a diverse and engaged local Board and wide range of active Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal advisors to our business, Western Local Land Services has a unique opportunity to facilitate the development of stronger relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal land managers in the Western Local Land Services region.

We also believe this will lead to better outcomes for managing country, more opportunities for Aboriginal businesses to work alongside and partner with all land managers in the region, and more opportunity for diversification of income streams on properties in the Western region.

Our actions are limited by the budgetary framework we operate in, but we believe in the power of strong partnerships and would welcome a discussion with you about this.

Please make contact with us to discuss partnership opportunities:

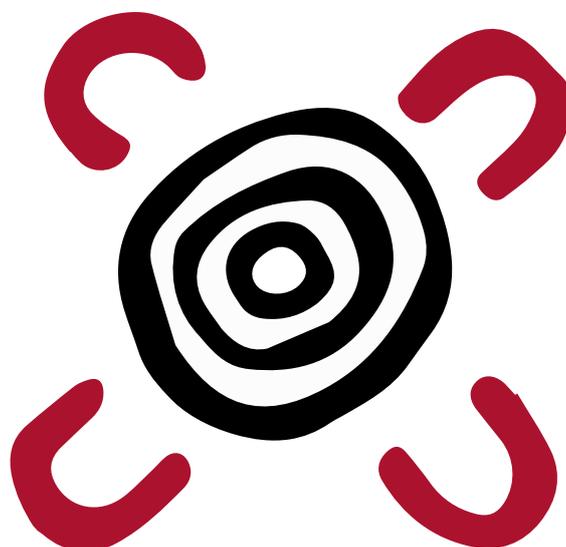
### Ben Slingsby

#### Team Leader Land Services

P: (03) 5021 9408 or 0409 334 970

E: [ben.slingsby@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ben.slingsby@lls.nsw.gov.au)

*Artwork developed by Cheryl Blore in collaboration with the Western Local Land Services Aboriginal Community Advisory Group.*



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