



GTANSW and RivSSTA present  
**INSPIRE COLLABORATE LEARN**  
 Mini Conference

**Friday 17 November @ Wagga Wagga Country Club  
 Plumpton Road, Wagga Wagga**

## Conference Program

TIME	SESSION	PRESENTER(S)
8.15am – 8.45am	Registration	RivSSTA and GTANSW Executive
8.45am – 9.00am	Acknowledgement of Country and Opening of Conference	Susan Caldis and Lorraine Chaffer
9.00am – 9.45am	KEYNOTE: Programming	David Latimer
9.50am – 10.50am	WORKSHOP 1: Using Inquiry Based Learning	Dr Grant Kleeman
10.50am – 11.10am	MORNING TEA	
11.10am – 12.10pm	WORKSHOP 2: Using Spatial Technologies	Lorraine Chaffer
12.15pm – 1.15pm	WORKSHOP 3: Designing an Integrated Unit of Work	Lorraine Chaffer
1.20pm – 1.45pm	LUNCH	
1.50pm – 2.50pm	WORKSHOP 4: Designing Constructively Aligned Assessment Tasks	Susan Caldis
2.50pm – 3.00pm	Plenary and Close	Susan Caldis

**COST:** \$150 per participant

**EVENT ACCREDITATION:** in process

Participants will receive a google drive link to access presentations associated with the conference program and to share resources. Participants are invited to bring assessment tasks and programs to review as required in response to key messages from workshop sessions.

Further details will be posted to the GTANSW website as they are finalised...



**[www.gtansw.org.au](http://www.gtansw.org.au)**

## Part 1: Aboriginal Land Care

**Author Jens Korff , Creative Spirits**



Over the next four issues articles by Jens Korff, owner and author of Creative Spirits, will form a series titled Aboriginal Australia. This series will contain information relevant to many sections of the K–10 Geography Syllabus

**Part 1: Aboriginal Land Care**

**Part 2: Aboriginal Fire Management**

**Part 3: Indigenous Protected Areas**

**Part 4: Threats to Aboriginal Land**

### SYLLABUS LINKS

#### Cross Curriculum Priority Area

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and cultures

#### Stage 1: Features of places / People and Places

Students investigate:

- features of places and how they are cared for
- activities that occur within places

#### Stage 2: The Earth's Environment

Students investigate:

- sustainable practices that protect environments, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

#### Stage 3: Factors that shape places

Students investigate:

- the ways people change the natural environment in Australia and another country

#### Stage 4: Landforms and Landscapes

Students investigate:

- ways people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, manage and protect landscapes

#### Stage 5: Sustainable Biomes / Environmental change and management

Students investigate:

- the human alteration of biomes to produce food, industrial materials and fibres and the environmental effects of these alterations
- environmental management, including different worldviews and the management approaches of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

## Traditional care for the land

Before the invasion Aboriginal people created a complex system of land management. There was no 'pristine wilderness', rather a patchwork of burnt and re-grown areas. Fire was their biggest ally (Part 2 will examine this practice in detail).

In using fire Aboriginal people could plan and predict plant growth and with it attract animals for hunting. They converted the land to grasslands for the "maintenance" of animals, plants and fresh drinking water, according to Bill Gammage's award-winning book *The Biggest Estate on Earth*.

Gammage explains that Aboriginal people not only thought of kangaroos when laying out their burn patterns, but also of possums, wombats, birds, insects, reptiles and plants. "Once you have started to lay out country to suit a species, you are on the way to an extraordinarily complex arrangement of the land, which you must maintain very carefully, and over many generations," he says. Burn patterns also need to consider plant cycles.

The research draws some striking conclusions [8]:

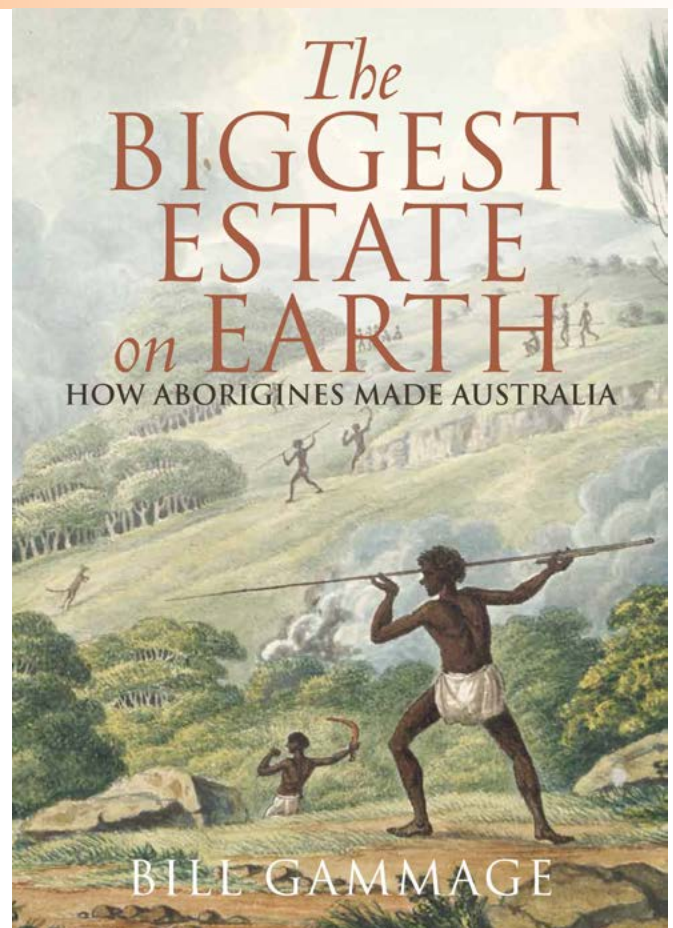
- No uncontrolled fires. Uncontrolled fire could wipe out food sources—Aboriginal people had to prevent them or die. Evidence strongly suggests that no devastating fires occurred.
- Aboriginal people were farmers. (see section below)
- Customised templates. Aboriginal people developed specific templates to suit the land, plants and animals. They knew which animals preferred what, e.g. kangaroos preferred short grass, native bees preferred desert bloodwood etc. Managing the land with fire required them consider these dependencies.
- No pristine wilderness. More trees grow in areas now known as national parks than did in 1788.

## Aboriginal people were farmers

Researchers found that Aboriginal people grew crops of tubers such as yams, grain such as native millet, macadamia nuts, fruits and berries. People reared dingoes, possums, emus and cassowaries, moved caterpillars to new breeding areas and carried fish stock across country [8].

There is "strong evidence" of "sophisticated farming and agriculture practices". Early explorers watched women harvesting yams, onions, and cultivating the land [11], creating reserves of flour and grain.

Bruce Pascoe's book *Dark Emu* challenges the notion that Aboriginal people were hunter-gatherers and did not settle down.



Video: Watch Bill Gammage discuss how Aboriginal people managed country, dispelling the myth that they just roamed around doing nothing.– <https://youtu.be/Sko-YDIULKY>

## Modern care & bush rangers

Caring for the land does not necessarily mean only the traditional way. Modern carers for land, such as rangers, can both continue traditions (deep knowledge about country passed on from generation to generation), as well as apply modern technologies and innovative land management practices.

Combining traditional methods and contemporary practices can in fact get the best results for the environment, for example in Indigenous Protected Areas. (Part 3 will examine these areas in detail).

The success of Aboriginal ranger programs is largely credited to the Aboriginal ownership of the work, guided by the local authority of Aboriginal elders. [12]

Traditional owners often work in partnership with government departments and other non-Aboriginal organisations to conserve and care for land.

In such mutual relationships, traditional owners and rangers perform a multitude of tasks: [1, 2, 3, 4, 12]

## Spiritual & cultural works

- protect and maintain cultural sites, stories and songlines,
- recognise important cultural areas,
- perform cultural or customary activities,
- supply meat from crocodile and feral buffalo to the local community.

## Environmental works

- record sites of resource use and special features,
- create seasonal harvest calendars,
- survey catchments,
- hunt for feral animals such as foxes, camels or cats which threaten the delicate ecosystem of the bush,
- record (new) plants,
- protect biodiversity,
- remove seeds and weeds including invasive pests like African buffel grass,
- remove rubbish left by tourists at camping spots, and ghost nets and other marine debris from seas and beaches,

- help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and earn carbon credits,
- return threatened species to their native habitat (439 animal species were threatened in 2012, up from 353 in 2001; 1344 plant species were threatened in 2012, a 20% increase from 2001 [5]),
- manage controlled burns and set fire breaks to prevent devastating bush fires and protect outstations and sacred sites,
- conduct fisheries surveillance and compliance patrols,
- help with sustainable water management, including animal rescue.

## Educational works

- teach government departments and tourists about their connection with the land, the seasons and bush foods,
- assist with providing cross-cultural education and capacity building within their communities,
- take Aboriginal children out on country so they can learn from their elders.



## FACT BOX

In 2012, Aboriginal people managed 20% of Australia's land [4].

More than 3 million adult kangaroos and 1 million joeys are "harvested" each year in Australia for human and pet consumption. This is considered the "largest commercial kill of terrestrial wildlife on Earth" [7]. For many Aboriginal tribes kangaroos are a sacred animal.

Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/37/Flying-kangaroo.jpg>

## Footnotes

- [1] 'Land is linked to well-being', *Koori Mail* 496 p.35
- [2] 'Caring for their country', *Koori Mail* 485 p.27
- [3] 'Coastline protected', *Koori Mail* 471 p.37
- [4] 'Caring for country', *Koori Mail* 519 p.64
- [5] 'Better lives for people, but nature under cloud', *SMH* 13/10/2012
- [6] 'A word that identifies us', readers letter, *Koori Mail* 488 p.25
- [7] 'Don't cull roos, says Elder', *Koori Mail* 492 p.41
- [8] 'The first farmers', *SMH* 1/10/2011
- [9] 'Indigenous Aussies in carbon rights fight', *Daily Telegraph* 16/1/2010
- [10] 'Green and Black', *Environment South Australia newsletter* Nov/Dec 1994 p.14
- [11] 'Dark Emu argues against 'Hunter Gatherer' history of Indigenous Australians', *ABC* 17/3/2014
- [12] 'Funding for indigenous ranger programs must be doubled, report says', *SMH* 15/11/2015



## CREATIVE SPIRITS

[www.CreativeSpirits.info](http://www.CreativeSpirits.info),  
Aboriginal culture - Land - Aboriginal land care,  
retrieved 17 August 2017  
<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/aboriginal-land-care#ixzz4pzkQDZOT>

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<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/>