

What is Indigenous land management?

Tasmanian farmers are in a unique position to support Caring for Country.

Palawa people (Aboriginal Tasmanians) have a deep connection to the lands of lutruwita/Tasmania, which has been ongoing for more than 40,000 years.

Indigenous land management reflects this connection and the strong understanding Aboriginal Tasmanians have of Country. Indigenous land management practices are diverse and varied, involving both traditional knowledge and contemporary contexts, while centring the health and resilience of land.

Country

Country is central to the spiritual and cultural identity of Aboriginal people, and relates to complex matters such as law, place, custom, belief, language and family. Caring for Country reinforces and supports these relationships.

What is Indigenous land management?

Indigenous land management, also known as caring for Country, is based on the deep connection between Aboriginal people and their traditional lands and waters.

Indigenous land management approaches are grounded in the laws, customs and knowledge that Aboriginal people have inherited from generations of ancestors over thousands of years. Activities may include:

- Resource management, including cultural burning
- Conservation and rehabilitation
- Threatened species management
- Threat mitigation, such as weed and pest reduction
- Knowledge sharing and integration

Indigenous land management is based on caring for landscapes and ecosystems for long-term resilience. It brings benefits to the environment, and for social, cultural, economic and health and wellbeing outcomes.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Indigenous land management brings significant benefits to landscapes and ecosystems. In forestry and farming, benefits include less wildfire occurrence, increased habitat and biodiversity, reduced emissions, better soil quality and overall improvement to the long-term sustainability of land.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

Indigenous land management helps to enhance and affirm the connection between Aboriginal people and Country, which in turn supports cultural identities and belonging. Engaging with caring for Country supports social and community outcomes, empowering Aboriginal people to have autonomy of their culture and practices.

ECONOMIC

Aboriginal people have valuable knowledge of Country and how to care for it. Indigenous-led land management organisations are active in Tasmania, supplying services for public and private land. This generates economic benefits and opportunities for Aboriginal organisations and individuals, as well as enhancing farm sustainability and productivity.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Country is of central importance to Aboriginal identity, culture, tradition and community. Health and wellbeing benefits produced by participating in caring for Country are well-documented, including reduced psychological stress, increased wellbeing, and better physical health outcomes.

Cultural burning

Cultural burning – also known as cool burning – is burning led or undertaken by Aboriginal individuals and organisations, applying cultural knowledge and techniques to improve the health of, and connections to, Country. Cultural burning has been undertaken in Tasmania for tens of thousands of years as a land management tool.

Cultural burning helps to protect assets and resources by:

- Reducing wildfires by lessening fuel load
- Discouraging weeds and preventing scrub takeover
- Generating new flora growth
- Encouraging the return of native fauna.

CONDUCTING A BURN

Like any form of forest fire management in Tasmania, cultural burning is subject to regulations. This includes the Forest Practices Act 1985 and Forest Practices Code. Landholders will require a Forest Practices Plan, and a permit from the Tasmanian Fire Service.

Burns require thorough planning. It's important to engage an Indigenous land management organisation early to visit your property, assess the land, identify work and prepare a burn plan.

Burns are ideally conducted in the early morning when winds are generally gentler and morning dew helps to cool the fire. Small-scale fires are lit and closely monitored to ensure fires are controlled and only undergrowth is burnt.

Post-burn monitoring is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the burn and plan any additional required management activities.



What can farmers do?

Farmers play an important role in supporting and facilitating caring for Country.

You can engage Indigenous land management providers, or work with Aboriginal organisations and individuals, to visit your farm and undertake land management activities – for mutual benefit.

You will gain valuable knowledge and perspectives of caring for Country, and be supported in planning and undertaking land management activities that increase the resilience of your land.

At the same time, you support positive environmental, cultural, social, economic and health and wellbeing outcomes that Indigenous land management offers.

Visit the Directory of Tasmanian Forestry Services to find Indigenous land management providers in your area.

www.pft.tas.gov.au/directory

References

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