Indigenous Significance

Caring for Country

The significance of caring for country (land and sea) is to first acknowledge that Australia is a country with many different 'countries'. It has many different Indigenous language groups or peoples and cultures. As a visitor to country it is very important that you remember the 'three R's'. They are responsibility, relationship and respect.

Understanding Country

Place

Remembering the 'three 'R's' will help guide you as you travel across and live on country.

Relationship – Recognise Indigenous people's relationship and connection to the land.

Responsibility – Acknowledge the ongoing responsibility Indigenous people have to their country, and recognise your own responsibility to travel and live thoughtfully.

Respect – Respect Aboriginal beliefs associated with country and culture. As a visitor, respect the wishes of your hosts and any restrictions that you have been asked to observe.[1]

"People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person; they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country and long for country…country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy…Because of this richness, country is home and peace; nourishment for body, mind and spirit; heart's ease"

Deborah Bird Rose, Nourishing Terrains [2]

"…Our story is in the land. It is written in those sacred places…"

Bill Neidjie, Gagadju Man [3]

"Country got ears and knows it people."

Nyaparu Tarran, 2004

"…The lore of the land is the very heart of our existence, and our culture–this is what land means to us. Within this meaning lies our great respect for the land and the understanding that is vital to maintain a holistic relationship with country…"

Indigenous statement in the preamble to the Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy



Badtjala people experience the destruction of their 'country' on K'gari (Fraser Island), slq neg. 59071

Adapted from:
1. Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA) . (2004) Welcome to country, respecting Indigenous culture for travellers in Australia, Canberra.

Quotes sourced from:
2. Bird Rose, D (1996) Nourishing Terrains, Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p7.

3. Neidjie, B (2002) Gagadju Man, JB Books Pty Ltd, Marleston, p32.

4. Courtesy of Nyapau Tarran, Broome, 2004.

5. Courtesy of Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy.

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Aboriginal people living and camping on country, Maryborough District, ca.1890, slq neg. 31300



Aboriginal people living and camping on country, Maryborough District, ca.1888, slq neg. 62344