



## WADJA

Aboriginal Corporation

## Wadja People Caring for Country

We are connected to Country and have traditional rights and interests to all Wadja land and waters through our traditional law and customs and built through countless generations living in intimate connection with Country. Through our ancestors and Elders, traditional laws, and ceremonies, we have maintained a continuous and unbroken connection to our Country.

Our Country is part of our identity, and our cultural and spiritual practices are a living form of Natural Resource Management (NRM).

Under Australian Law, these responsibilities have been recognised through our Registered Native Title Claim and Registered Cultural Heritage Body over Wadja Country.

### Our aspirations for our people and Country include:

- healthy Country
- clean water
- speaking for Country (decision making on Wadja Country)
- access to and ownership of Country
- employment, enterprise, and education on Country
- partnerships on projects

### To make Wadja Country healthy again we aspire to:

- be included in decisions about business on Wadja Country
- decrease land clearing on Wadja Country (farming, timber, grazing)
- secure the capital/funding/partnerships required to implement NRM projects (including weed & fire management)
- establish Wadja offices including storage for our cultural knowledge and ceremonies
- clean rubbish from Wadja Country
- have representation in NRM boards/committees such as FBA, QPWS & water boards
- see an Indigenous advisory committee established for the region



## Natural Assets

As in Wadja beliefs, in Country everything is connected. The region's six natural assets are all connected and must be cared for and protected together. Water is one of the main basis of our existence and must be protected.

We believe there is a lot to be gained by all traditional groups along river systems uniting to care for our waterways holistically and together because what happens upstream affects downstream. We also believe risks to Country and waterways shouldn't be 'mitigated' but instead eliminated.

We suggest the following assets be included in the region's natural resource management plan (CQSS2030):

- native trees
- riparian areas
- native and endangered animals
- Traditional Ecological knowledge
- right-way fire

## Working together

We have unique relationships to Wadja Country and waterways, and a responsibility in the management of our Country that has been entrusted to our care from our ancestors and Elders. We want our access and ownership of Country to be acknowledged, and our cultural responsibilities to Country respected.

We believe Traditional ecological knowledge must inform NRM or any projects because it provides a more holistic view of the ecosystem. It is a deep knowledge of place that has been in place over thousands of years and countless generations e.g., fire management.

If organisations wish to build a meaningful and trusting relationship with us to help protect Wadja Country, and they have a clear procedure or policy around how our information will be stored, accessed, and shared, then we look forward to exploring how we might work together. We particularly look forward to hearing from those who wish to support our participation in the planning, design, and delivery of NRM as well as access to and ownership of Country.

**Wadja Aboriginal Corporation (Cultural Heritage Body) can be contacted through**

Harriet Vea Vea (Chair), [hveavea@bigpond.com](mailto:hveavea@bigpond.com)

Phyllis 'Mindy' Freeman (Secretary), [phyllis79freeman@gmail.com](mailto:phyllis79freeman@gmail.com)

