



Aboriginal Country based planning and management



The Natural Resources Commission has partnered with Banbai Rangers and Guyra Local Aboriginal Council to deliver an Aboriginal-led, on-Country planning pilot in northern NSW.

What is Country-based planning?

Country is a term used by Aboriginal peoples to refer to the land to which they belong and their place of Dreaming.

Country can be used as the basis of planning and management approaches for lands and waters, known as **Country-based planning and management**. These approaches enable Aboriginal groups to express their own vision, values, strategies and actions for their country, irrespective of the various legislation, land ownership and other constraints imposed since European arrival.

What does the pilot aim to do?

The pilot aims to deliver a Country-based plan that identifies and targets Banbai values that can attract public and private investment. This plan will help to pro-actively address Banbai people's aspirations to manage their Country and cultural values and determine how they do business with investment partners.

The pilot will showcase how Aboriginal knowledge and practice can be used as a critical input to support decision making for policy and improved natural resource management outcomes. It will provide an example that can be further applied or scaled-up in the region or other areas of NSW.

Why do we need a pilot?

This pilot builds on previous **Aboriginal-led case studies** undertaken to explore cultural values in forests, including with the Banbai Rangers.

The studies found there are significant knowledge gaps around Aboriginal cultural values, particularly where Aboriginal people lacked access or involvement in the management and custodianship of the area. Except for Aboriginal managed lands, Aboriginal people are not adequately involved in land management and decision making, which can lead to poor environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic outcomes.

Increasing Aboriginal involvement in land management through options such as whole-of-Country planning and management approaches was a key recommendation from the studies.

These studies were delivered under the **NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program**.

Who are the Banbai Rangers?

The Banbai Rangers manage two Aboriginal-owned properties which are Indigenous Protected Areas in the northern NSW tablelands. In these areas, the rangers can autonomously access, manage, protect, and share knowledge about their cultural values in a culturally safe environment.

Traditionally, the Banbai Aboriginal Nation covered areas that includes Guyra, Ben Lomond, Mount Mitchell, and the catchment area of the Boyd and Mitchell River systems.

Who else is involved?

A cross-agency advisory group will support the Banbai Rangers in delivering the pilot, including the Commission, NSW Aboriginal Affairs, Forestry Corporation of NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Services and Local Land Services. Bhamie Williamson, an Euahlayi man and Research Fellow at Monash University will chair the group.

Where can I find more information?

Information about the pilot, and other Commission work that supports Aboriginal participation in decision-making, leadership and action in natural resource management can be found **here**.

This pilot is funded and supported by the Commission.

Photo courtesy: Banbai Rangers



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