IUCN National Committee Australia

Healthy People in a Healthy Environment
Key Directions Statement

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In partnership with

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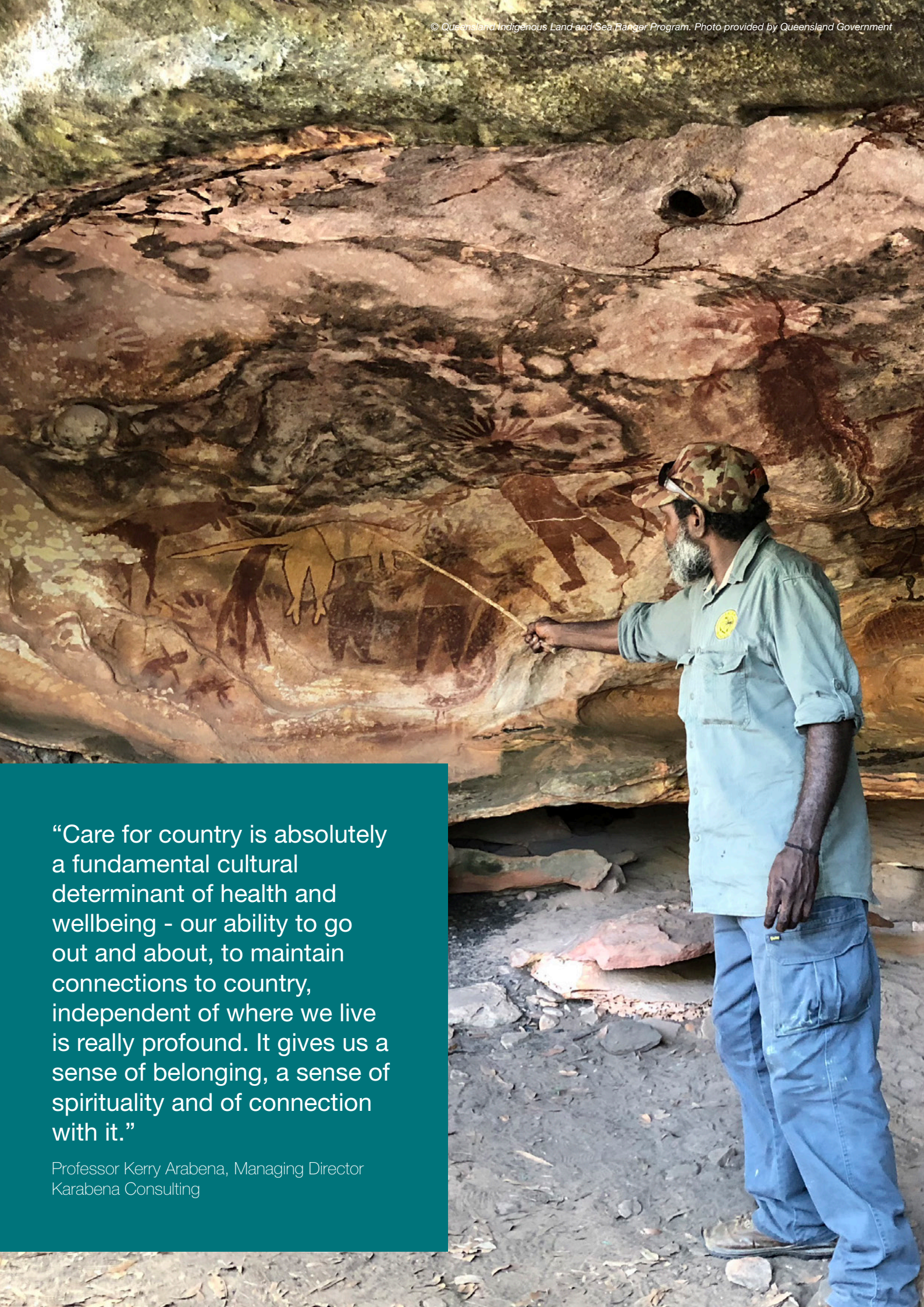

“Care for country is absolutely a fundamental cultural determinant of health and wellbeing - our ability to go out and about, to maintain connections to country, independent of where we live is really profound. It gives us a sense of belonging, a sense of spirituality and of connection with it.”

Professor Kerry Arabena, Managing Director
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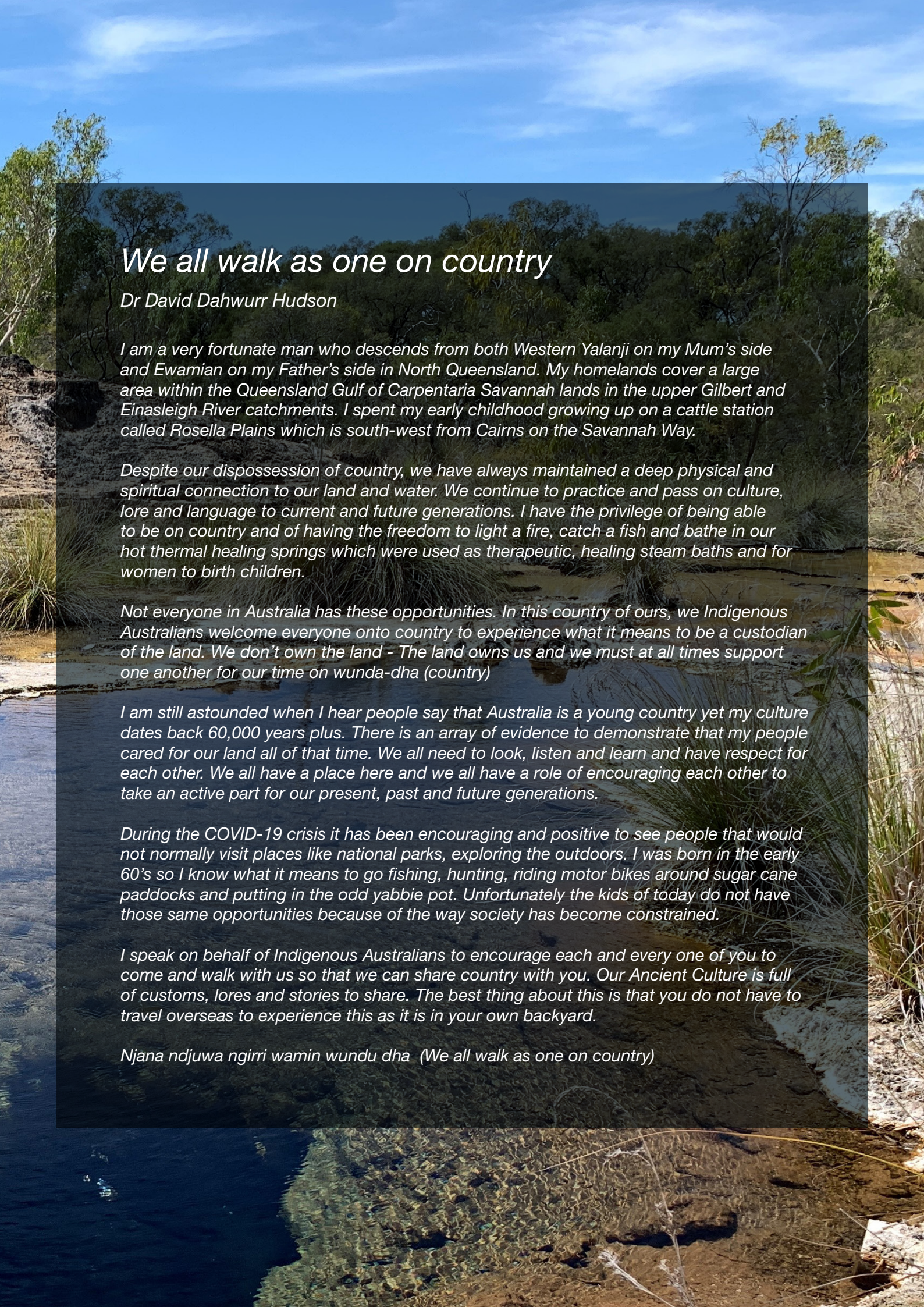

We all walk as one on country

Dr David Dahwurr Hudson

I am a very fortunate man who descends from both Western Yalanji on my Mum's side and Ewamian on my Father's side in North Queensland. My homelands cover a large area within the Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria Savannah lands in the upper Gilbert and Einasleigh River catchments. I spent my early childhood growing up on a cattle station called Rosella Plains which is south-west from Cairns on the Savannah Way.

Despite our dispossession of country, we have always maintained a deep physical and spiritual connection to our land and water. We continue to practice and pass on culture, lore and language to current and future generations. I have the privilege of being able to be on country and of having the freedom to light a fire, catch a fish and bathe in our hot thermal healing springs which were used as therapeutic, healing steam baths and for women to birth children.

Not everyone in Australia has these opportunities. In this country of ours, we Indigenous Australians welcome everyone onto country to experience what it means to be a custodian of the land. We don't own the land - The land owns us and we must at all times support one another for our time on wunda-dha (country)

I am still astounded when I hear people say that Australia is a young country yet my culture dates back 60,000 years plus. There is an array of evidence to demonstrate that my people cared for our land all of that time. We all need to look, listen and learn and have respect for each other. We all have a place here and we all have a role of encouraging each other to take an active part for our present, past and future generations.

During the COVID-19 crisis it has been encouraging and positive to see people that would not normally visit places like national parks, exploring the outdoors. I was born in the early 60's so I know what it means to go fishing, hunting, riding motor bikes around sugar cane paddocks and putting in the odd yabbie pot. Unfortunately the kids of today do not have those same opportunities because of the way society has become constrained.

I speak on behalf of Indigenous Australians to encourage each and every one of you to come and walk with us so that we can share country with you. Our Ancient Culture is full of customs, lores and stories to share. The best thing about this is that you do not have to travel overseas to experience this as it is in your own backyard.

Njana ndjuwa ngirri wamin wundu dha (We all walk as one on country)

"As with all living creatures, we need healthy habitats to survive and thrive."

Alison Hill, People & Parks Foundation

© Rebecca Spindler

Introduction

Our health is inextricably linked with the health of our environment and with our social and cultural connection with it. The devastating bushfires of 2019 to 2020 that blanketed our cities in thick, hazardous smoke, destroyed thousands of homes, consumed millions of hectares and killed an estimated one billion of our wildlife, were a tangible reminder of this.

Healthy ecosystems supply us with the vital services that underpin all life on earth, such as clean air and water, food and fibre, pollination and productive soils. Connection to nature also provides other significant benefits, such as a sense of place and identity, areas of spiritual and cultural importance, creative inspiration, intellectual curiosity and adventure.

Over the past decade, an extensive and growing number of studies clearly demonstrate the multitude of positive impacts that nature has on our social, mental and physical health and wellbeing[1,2,3]. Connecting with and experiencing nature, whether that be in remote protected areas, or enjoying natural green spaces in our cities, leads to happier, healthier communities[4].

Children, in particular, benefit from time spent in nature with research demonstrating improved mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing[5,6,7]. This is recognised in movements such as The First 1,000 Days Australia[8], a model that uses an ecological framework of social, cultural, place-based and family-based interventions to catalyse health and wellbeing outcomes for First Australians'.

The link between nature and human health and the critical importance of connection to country has been recognised by First Australians for many thousands of years. To them, country is multi-dimensional. They "talk about country, speak to country, sing to country, walk on country, worry about country …"[9]. Destroying First Australians' ties and access to country, damages the health of the people[10,11].

Traditional expertise and knowledge of caring for country and the importance of *healthy country, healthy people,* are being increasingly recognised and valued across the world.

The Promise of Sydney[12] outcome from the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress, recognises that human existence depends on ecosystems, and that rebalancing the relationship between human society and the environment is essential.

But nature is disappearing at a rapid rate. We are at a critical crossroads with more species threatened with extinction than at any time in our history[13]. Our landscapes are becoming more degraded and fragmented, habitat loss is escalating and the impacts of climate change are already devastating the environment and communities across the globe. And the once close bonds between people and nature are being eroded, to the detriment of us all.

As highlighted in the *Lancet Countdown 2019* report, "bold new approaches to policy making, research and business are needed in order to change course" to prevent this new era of increasing weather extremes, food and water security and changing patterns of infectious diseases from defining the health of our future generations"[14].

Despite this, investment in and prioritisation of conservation in Australia has declined significantly over the past few decades. And the world is not on track to meet critical international goals including the 2015 Paris Agreement, 2020 Aichi Targets and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The rapid and dramatic changes to the world we've experienced in the year 2020 are underpinned by ecological systems under duress.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder that we cannot continue to ignore the interdependance between ourselves and the natural world. If we are to curb the emergence of new diseases and pandemics and create healthier, more resilient communities, we need to take a more holistic view of public health and create a healthier environment by tackling the underlying causes of the problem - our destruction of, and conflict with, nature.

Key international meetings in the next few years, including the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, will set the tone and vital agenda for environmental action over the next decade.

This is a rare and critical opportunity for the world to change course and to lead the transformative change needed to tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis as well as to ensure that the health-culture-nature connection is forefront and centre of all future goals, frameworks and policies. It is also a chance to reinvigorate efforts to reconnect people with nature and to inspire support and action to help ensure a healthy environment for healthy people, now and into the future.

"The true legacy of this summer could be a vital turning point in recognising that 'the environment' isn't something 'over there'. The environment is the air we breathe and the water we drink; it's the soil in which we grow our food; it's the animals we identify with and the landscapes imprinted on our souls; the environment is us, all of us, together, integrally connected with everyone and everything else on this beautiful blue marble floating in space."

Excerpt from article by Tim Hollo, Executive Director of The Green Institute originally published in The Guardian on 28 March 2020

This Key Directions Statement seeks to inspire and facilitate a whole-of-community approach to developing and implementing policy and action that achieve positive human and environmental health outcomes across Australia.

The Statement's Purpose

This publication summarises the major insights and recommendations that arose out of the Australian Committee for IUCN's 'Healthy People in a Healthy Environment' symposium, held in Brisbane in September 2019. The two-day, flagship event aspired to help focus Australia's thinking on how to promote, protect and enhance the critical links between human health, social and cultural wellbeing, and a healthy environment.

The symposium provided an opportunity for the sharing of expertise, knowledge and ideas amongst a diverse array of close to 100 thought leaders and practitioners, including public health officials, environmental management agencies, conservation NGO's, First Australians, educators, social scientists and communications experts.

The key directions in this document are intended to guide decision makers and practitioners in the environmental, conservation, health and urban planning sectors who are involved in developing or are interested in health-nature policy and practice. Those present at the symposium were greatly inspired by the potential to build a healthier environment and society in Australia that is based on the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems with western scientific traditions. The intent of the authors of this document is to reflect this inspiration in the key directions.

Method of development

The recommendations presented in this publication cannot be ascribed to any single delegate or organisation.

The original draft statement was collaboratively compiled by a working group of health-nature specialists from the government, not-for-profit sectors and First Australians and later further refined by a core group of authors. The information contained in the draft was also supplemented with ideas and perspectives harvested during a workshop session held as part of the symposium. All delegates were provided with an opportunity to submit comments in response to the final draft statement before publication.

1. Integrated, cross-sector policy and practice

Key Direction: Adopt an integrated, cross-sector approach to designing and implementing evidence-based health-nature policies, programs and research

The need for greater effort on creating cross-sector partnerships between the environment and health sectors at the local, regional, and global scale was highlighted in IUCN Resolution 64 at the 2016 World Conservation Congress[15]. In applying these directions for meaningful, sustainable impacts for both public and environmental health in Australia, we need to adopt a One Health approach to the issue. *One Health*[16] recognises that human health and ecosystem health are inextricably linked and that a collaborative, multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach is needed to achieve better health outcomes for all species[17].

These cross-sector partnerships need to be further developed between and within government, non-government, community groups, corporates, research and academics and evaluated using available partnership and analysis tools. The importance of a One Health approach could not be highlighted more acutely than by the COVID-19 pandemic[18]. Aligned with the One Health framework is the interdisciplinary field of *planetary health* that focuses on understanding how natural systems support civilisational health[19].

1.1 Develop a cohesive health-nature national policy framework

A national health-nature policy framework is required to align and coordinate policy and practice across multiple jurisdictions and sectors. This framework needs to integrate environment, planning, health, climate change and education policy, as well as acknowledge the generations of Indigenous knowledge systems and mounting scientific evidence for the physical, cultural and mental health and wellbeing benefits of nature. Integration of strategies that connect human health to environmental policy and strategy need to become the norm.

The New Public Health[20] is an example of a new policy platform based on an alliance for health and nature, with parks reframed as nature-based health settings. Other recent examples of more integrated policy include the South Australian Healthy Parks Healthy People[21,22,23,24,25] and more recently, Australia's *Strategy for Nature 2019-2030*[26].

The three-way connection between human health, biodiversity and climate change and the correlation between decreasing environmental quality and increasing costs to the health sector, should also be acknowledged and considered in all adaptation policies. Climate change and escalating biodiversity loss are amongst the greatest threats to human health and wellbeing. These issues exacerbate existing health threats and create new challenges, including higher incidences of heat-related illnesses, increased spread of diseases, and unhealthy soils, air and water.

When developing this coordinated and integrated cross sector policy, we need to ensure an inclusive, transparent and participatory policy and legislation process that engages and empowers individuals

> "Many decades of research demonstrate that close proximity to nature, including parks, gardens, urban forest and green spaces, reduces the risk of several non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which account for approximately 70% of all deaths globally. The rapid increase in NCDs in developing and developed countries alike and the associated health care costs demonstrate the urgency for policy makers and urban planners to recognise and act on this overwhelming evidence."
>
> Professor Paul Bertsch, Queensland Chief Scientist

> "The link between environmental degradation and decline in human health is well-recognised. Restoring healthy, natural ecosystems is a fundamental part of any credible effort to make significant inroads into delivering cost-effective, 'no regrets' approaches to enhancing human wellbeing while reducing carbon emissions and curbing biodiversity decline."
>
> Gary Howling, Executive Director, Great Eastern Ranges Initiative

and groups, including minority groups. This will entail reaching out and partnering with a variety of community organisations that have not traditionally been involved in nature conservation and nature connection.

1.2 Create interdisciplinary research, knowledge and capacity building collaborations

Recognising Australia's many world class environmental and public health research centres, there is a need to evolve and further support cross-disciplinary hubs that collaborate to build and communicate evidence to inform health-nature policy and programs.

Formal and informal collaborations should bring together the health sciences, environmental sciences, social sciences and traditional knowledge to further explore knowledge gaps. These gaps include, understanding how different types of connection to nature affect people's health, how connection to nature translates into behavioural change, and ways to reduce barriers that limit access to nature across all socio-economic levels.

Examples of research and knowledge collaborations include:

- Creating more opportunities that facilitate cross-sector face-to-face collaboration (e.g. the Nature is Good Medicine summit in Victoria).
- Improved collaboration through online platforms.
- Creation of knowledge brokers that build connections between environmental and public health research and communication.
- Development of cross-discipline metrics to evaluate benefits to both human health and nature, including economic benefits.
- Partnerships between NGOs and traditional owners.

1.3 Create health-nature programs and practice

To build knowledge and capacity to meet the growing need for, and expectations of, nature-based health and wellbeing, we require flexible, place-based, fit-for-purpose, scalable models. These should be backed by clear policy and practice guidelines. This will require coordinated, complementary efforts across the whole-of-community, including public land managers, First Australians, local governments, education departments, program providers, schools and the media.

In tandem, we should be better showcasing how nature-based health and wellbeing outcomes can be achieved through a range of interventions. This includes facilitating everyday access to parks and other natural spaces for positive public health (e.g. environmental volunteering and outdoor education), public health promotion activities (e.g. Premier's Active April in Victoria), and outdoor healthcare programs for targeted populations and health conditions which are delivered by health practitioners (e.g. Bush Adventure Therapy).

We also need to scale up and build new program partnership models between land and water managers, health and community sector providers and funders. For example, the Australian Capital Territory Government has recently partnered with the Australian Medical Association to develop a GP-led park prescriptions model and nature settings are being included within broader medical 'social prescriptions' initiatives in Victoria.

Likewise, cross-sector partnerships, such as the Climate and Health Alliance[27], that work to catalyse action on climate change and promote the benefits of a healthy environment by framing the threat as a human health issue, are vital.

1.4 Establish new models of sustainable investment partnerships

While public investment in environmental protection and conservation is currently well below what is required to effectively conserve Australia's unique biodiversity, there is a critical need to explore and create additional targeted, sustainable investment models that incorporate and quantify the broader environmental, health, social, cultural and economic benefits of nature-based programs and conservation.

These include:

- Impact philanthropy: Increasingly funders and philanthropists are requesting evidence of the environmental and social impact of their funding. This provides motivation for good data collection across different land and water management tenures.
- Environmental and social impact investment: Where a financial return is required, some investors may tolerate a lower immediate return if future costs can demonstrably be avoided.
- Payments for ecosystem services such as carbon and water.
- Green and social bonds.
- Public social and environmental grants.
- Targeted, corporate sponsorship.
- Incubation models.

The findings of organisations and financial institutions which are already exploring this space, such as Bush Heritage's review of funding models for private land conservation[28], provide a solid source of information and data to build off. The process will also assist in highlighting the co-benefits of partnerships with health and community sector funders.

Existing shared funding models that acknowledge health-culture-nature co-benefits and build capacity within First Australian communities to manage country and support those wanting to establish Indigenous Protected Areas on their lands, should also be expanded upon. It is vital that there are more Indigenous-led, holistic initiatives with interventions that are designed and implemented under the direction of their own communities.

1.5 Raise the profile of nature-based solutions

Nature-based solutions (NBS) – actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems that

CASE STUDY

Healthy Parks Healthy People

Initially created by Parks Victoria in 2000, Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPHP) has grown from a successful marketing tagline into a global movement. HPHP recognises the importance of contact with nature as essential for human emotional, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing, and reinforces the crucial role that parks and protected areas play in nurturing healthy ecosystems. The initiative has become established not only in Australia, but has spread to places as diverse as Europe, the United States, Korea, Finland, Canada, Colombia and New Zealand. While different countries and states are at different stages of implementation, a common HPHP approach is being developed. It reinforces the need for stronger partnerships between the environment, health and community sectors in creating integrated policies, communications, research and on-ground program partnerships.

address societal challenges whilst also providing human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits should include: (1) incorporation into all relevant regional and national policies (e.g. infrastructure, trade, foreign affairs etc.); (2) investment in NBS scaled up; and (3) improved NBS capacity, research and technology.

There are a myriad of natural solutions available to us such as planting trees to cool our cities, using solar power to produce energy; managing wildfires with traditional cool season cultural burns and reducing the impact of sea-level rise on our coasts through the restoration of vital wetlands. These NBS can provide highly effective, long-term and cost-efficient human health and wellbeing benefits, whilst helping to address the climate and biodiversity crisis. NBS can also strengthen people's connection to nature and encourage investment in conservation by reinforcing the value of ecosystem services.

CASE STUDY

Ecological restoration and human health

The EcoHealth Network (EHN) is a global initiative formed to connect eco-health sites from around the world and foster interdisciplinary collaboration at the interface of ecological restoration and human health.

Efforts are underway worldwide to restore the ecological integrity of degraded lands and bring ecosystems back to health. However, beyond this, there is little connection between these sites and insufficient understanding, in people's minds and in practice, of the relationship between restorative activities and human health. EHN is focused on addressing these gaps by connecting restoration scientists and practitioners with human health professionals to create a platform whereby they can share knowledge and learn directly from one another's experiences; establish holistic research frameworks that include the monitoring of cultural, social and public health benefits; and communicate the results of these studies in an impactful way. The network also aims to play an important role in building capacity for future research and restoration endeavors by providing opportunities for experiential learning at sites through workshops, site visits, internships and other field-based activities.

Launched in 2019, the network has already established eight Founder Sites and formed its first interdisciplinary regional working group, the Four Islands which comprises projects and partners across New Zealand and Australia. At its inaugural meeting in Tasmania in February 2020, the group issued the *Hobart Declaration on Ecohealth*[29] outlining their shared vision and goals. By the end of 2020, the group is aiming to develop a number of human health studies embedded within both long-standing and new ecological restoration programs in the region, in order to elucidate and evaluate the benefits of linked conservation, restoration, and human health approaches.

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2. Access to nature

Key Direction: Ensure equitable access to nature for all

A significant number of Australians, particularly those from low income and disadvantaged communities, do not enjoy equal access to nature within or outside of our cities. Many of these same communities have poorer health and wellbeing outcomes more generally.

While access to health services has long been considered a basic human right, access to nature is often considered just a 'nice to have'. But there are a growing number of studies that clearly demonstrate the many benefits to human health and wellbeing of improved connection to nature, particularly in our urban environments[30,31]. From increased life satisfaction, to improved work productivity, reduced absenteeism, improved education outcomes, improved cardiovascular health and reduced cardiometabolic conditions and decreased post-operative recovery times for hospital patients, there is a growing global recognition that nature-centric, liveable cities provide a wide range of health, social economic and environmental benefits[32,33].

In the case of First Australians, access to, management, and care of country is even more fundamentally linked to their physical, cultural, spiritual and economic wellbeing. Policies and programs that enable and encourage access to country will benefit all Australians.

It should be noted that equitable access for all does not imply allowing uncontrolled access to environmentally or culturally sensitive places, but instead recognises the principle of facilitating low impact, universal access by reducing unnecessary barriers.

2.1 Enshrine access to nature as a basic human right

The ability to access, live and work in a clean and healthy environment is acknowledged by the United Nations (UN) as a basic human right and should be recognised as such in Australia. The human right to a healthy environment has already been incorporated into the constitutions of over 100 other countries.

2.2 Remove barriers that prevent access to nature

Strategies and mechanisms backed by a national commitment are needed to effectively remove known barriers that impinge on Australians' right to a healthy environment.

We need to remove the key economic, physical, social and cultural barriers that impinge on Australians' right to a healthy environment, through the right mix of regulation and incentives across urban planning, transport, environment, health, education, justice and recreation management. These strategies and mechanisms for ensuring equal access to nature for all should be backed by a national commitment. For example, ensuring that urban green spaces and national parks are accessible by public transport when feasible; providing information in multiple formats and languages; and developing infrastructure to

> "Too often urban design, policy and discipline-specific projects reinforce separations between people and their environments, which lead to unintended negative consequences for both people and planet. I see this in approaches to engineering resilience that fail to account for, or learn from, how resilience emerges in local socio-ecological systems. I look forward to a future where our built environment can contribute to, rather than detract from, our human connection to place and a healthy environment."
>
> Samantha Hayes, Bioneering Australia

CASE STUDY

Making parks more inclusive

There is strong evidence that many Australians are missing out on opportunities to connect with nature. Almost one in five of these people has a disability, with many different needs and expectations. To create more inclusive park experiences, Parks Victoria is leading a program that partners with the disability sector and local communities, with the goal of creating park experiences that are both accessible and welcoming, as well as foster improved awareness of and support for nature conservation.

Some of the actions and initiatives that have been undertaken through the program include:

- A Disability Action Plan and Cultural Diversity Action Plan to drive change.
- All terrain wheelchairs (TrailRider™ and Beach Wheelchairs) including TrailRider™ volunteer guides.
- Partnering with the autism peak body AMAZE to create 'social scripts' for children with autism.
- Providing accessible roofed accommodation and adaptive equipment (e.g. beach wheelchairs and matting) at Wilsons Promontory National Park.
- Creating all abilities facilities including canoe launching ramps, fishing platforms, a wheelchair hoist for boating, all abilities stair access at Buchan Caves and 'Changing Places™' toilets.
- Camping opportunities for all abilities in partnership with YMCA.
- Creation of guided and safe 'welcome walks' targeted to non-park users including women from a migrant background.
- Supporting a forest therapy initiative (Bush Connections) for children with brain injury.
- Partnering with Blind Sports Victoria to support a walking program in our parks for people with low vision or blindness.
- The Working Beyond Boundaries initiative at Werribee Park to enable greater connection between parks and culturally diverse communities.
- Working with refugee and migrant integration organisations to encourage nature connection and employment pathways.
- Providing targeted, relevant online information.

support visitors from diverse backgrounds. A whole of community approach is needed to improve people's ability to access their daily *nature dose* – in our homes, our schools, across our cities and in our protected areas.

By welcoming and encouraging diverse communities to experience and enjoy our green spaces and other natural environments, we will not only promote positive community health and wellbeing, but also increase awareness about, and responsibility for, nature.

2.3 Create healthy, liveable, green cities

We need to build the natural fabric of our towns and cities by increasing parklands, creating green corridors, encouraging the planting of native trees and wildlife friendly gardens, and developing green gyms and outdoor therapeutic spaces.

The spectrum of urban natural spaces, from protected areas to local parks and green infrastructure, should be considered as critical community structure that provides a wide range of services that are essential for ensuring a thriving society.
At the same time, all development should ideally incorporate biophilic design (incorporating nature into the design and development of the built environment through direct and indirect means). This is even more critical in the face of climate change. By increasing people's connectivity to the natural environment, biophilia can lead to positive, long-term behaviour change whilst also supporting climate stabilisation, site ecology and environmental health.

2.4 Remove the 'fear' from nature

Urban nature provides many people with their first and often only experiences of nature. Urban parks and green spaces can serve as stepping-stones that build the confidence of people who feel daunted by venturing into an unknown environment to seek out and explore more remote, natural places. We need to educate the broader public on the value and wonder of nature and create more opportunities in our cities and protected areas for Australians at all stages of life to feel safe, comfortable and inspired in natural spaces.

There is also a need to remind Australians that 'nature is everywhere' and that each of us is a part of nature rather than separate to it. The stories of our First Australians that encapsulate this interconnection between healthy nature and healthy people are a valuable resource for all of us to listen and learn from.

2.5 Create innovative opportunities for people to access nature

Communities are starting to look for new and innovative opportunities to access nature for their health and wellbeing. The recent growth of programs such as Bush Kinder, citizen science programs and green exercise such as Parkrun, and outdoor healthcare initiatives such as 'forest bathing' in Japan and Active in Parks[34], are a signal that our communities are starting to relearn about the restorative capacity of nature for their minds, body and soul. We need to leverage this opportunity to reinforce, facilitate and promote the additional benefits that exercise and recreation beyond the built environment provides.

3. Connecting with nature

Key Direction: Opportunities to connect with nature through experiences, activities and learning should be readily available to all Australians

The 2018 *Home to Us All report*[35] initiated by the IUCN, presents the manifold benefits of connecting with nature, both for ourselves, other species and for the earth. Nature connection has even recently emerged as a new field of study, with increasing evidence showing how experiencing nature creates a connectedness with it – "an emotional affinity or love of nature, and a oneness with all that is"[36].

True nature connection refers to paying attention to nature – listening – feeling into nature – feeling with nature. Not just being an observer.

The unprecedented bushfires of 2019 to 2020 and COVID-19 pandemic brought a monumental remembering of our interconnection with the natural world and with each other.

Research also indicates that developing a personal bond with nature is more likely to create a greater sense of care and stewardship for the environment[37]. For example, Nature-based learning can empower people to become active stewards of nature by understanding the value of healthy habitat, what it looks and feels like, and how to care for it.

But many people, particularly those in our busy, rapidly developing cities have become physically and emotionally detached from the natural world. There is a critical need to reconnect our communities with the environment through meaningful, nature-based experiences, activities and learning.

CASE STUDY

#NatureforAll - a global movement to inspire love of nature

The IUCN #NatureForAll campaign is a global initiative to inspire love of nature. At its core is a very simple idea: the more people experience and share their love of nature, the more support and action there will be for its conservation. #NatureForAll was launched in 2016 by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and IUCN Commission on Education and Communication. Networks such as #NatureforAll increase opportunities to engage everyday Australians in celebrating, building and sharing their connection with nature. The movement is showing how people's personal relationship to nature provides powerful benefits for individual and societal health, wellbeing, and resilience and serves as a foundation for lifelong support for the environment.

3.1 Support interdisciplinary education that includes nature-based learning and builds health-culture-nature connection

The 2018 Oakland Declaration on Nature-based Learning[38] proclaims the vital role learning outdoors plays in creating a more sustainable future for all. With this Key Directions Statement we affirm this Declaration and the 1977 Tbilisi Declaration[39] that states, "...that environmental education serves all age groups both inside and outside formal school systems, with the aim of helping people acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, and practical skills to protect and improve the world's environment as well as to support the sound and balanced development of the world's communities."

We also support the Oakland Declaration's call "for a world where all people have equitable opportunities to experience nature as a foundation for learning and wellbeing, and as an inspiration for the protection and regeneration of the biosphere on which all life depends."

There are a multitude of ways that we can teach, learn about and understand nature. The importance of "teaching *from* country not *about* country" is emphasised by First Australians.

Building a connection to nature with an understanding and awareness of its value and the interconnectedness with our health and wellbeing should start in our early learning centres and continue throughout our education, through curriculum-linked modules that incorporate nature-based learning.

Nature-based learning experiences should not be restricted to traditional biology or environmental curricula but should be cross-disciplinary, with modules incorporated into other subjects. These include, medical degrees (e.g. the health benefits of nature), economic degrees (e.g. the financial cost of environmental degradation on human health) and law degrees (e.g. legal implications of environmental degradation on human health).

Schools should be provided with the necessary support to implement nature immersion programs and initiatives. These programs are different from the 'Outward Bound'-type experiences, in that they are not endurance programs but are designed to be based on listening, feeling, and experiencing nature in a relaxed and positive way. For example, Parks Victoria's Junior Ranger[40] program which encourages kids to explore Victoria's amazing parks with a real park ranger.

Parents can also play a role by encouraging children to swap 'screen time for green time' and discover the wonders of their own backyard or local parkland.

i) Early childhood through to secondary education

The benefits of nature-based experiences in early childhood are multiple:

- Time in natural environments offers lifelong benefits to rapidly developing bodies, brains, and personalities.
- The demonstrated value of interaction with nature during the first years of life suggests the need for special attention in early childhood together with environmental education for teachers and parents.

> "The world is on the precipice of losing the key ingredients required for a healthy natural environment - and the conditions on which human health depends. Our fragile planet, and the miraculous natural world it contains, is severely threatened by human behaviour. Engaging the community in the protection of nature is now vital to our ongoing survival."
>
> Fiona Armstrong, Executive Director, Climate and Health Alliance

- Childhood experiences are key to fostering connectedness with nature and care for the Earth; early experiences in nature help to shape and mold relationships with the natural world for a lifetime.
- The quantity and quality of access to nature - during routines of everyday life, free play, and programmed activities in and out of school – significantly affect children's development.

ii) Higher education

Presentations at the Healthy People in a Healthy Environment symposium highlighted the need for education and professional development programs that break down the dominant western, culturally constructed divide between humankind and nature. By taking a more holistic, multifaceted approach to the training of students and professionals that combines traditional western science with Indigenous knowledge traditions, true conservation leadership can emerge.

Steps to enhance nature-based learning include:

- Education programs designed to foster environmental commitment and action.
- Curricula and courses designed to include purposeful immersion in natural environments to:
  - foster deep nature connection
  - create space for reflection
  - cultivate compassion and empathy
  - promote environmental advocacy
- Education policies that enable time outdoors in nature and experiential learning about nature.

3.2 Citizen science

Citizen science emerged as a distinct field of activity over 20 years ago and has boomed in recent years. As well as contributing valuable data to publically accessible platforms such as the Atlas of Living Australia, citizen science initiatives also provide a unique way for people to connect with nature. It is also a strong motivator for conservation action[41,42,43].

The citizen science boom has been facilitated by advances in communication technology, particularly smart phone apps, geographic information systems, and open source online tools and platforms. This has enabled a far broader audience to be reached and served to motivate and connect volunteers. Examples of citizen science programs include Reef Check Australia, Birdlife Australia's Birds in Backyards, Earthwatch's ClimateWatch and the Australian Museum's FrogID.

Citizen science can also serve as a good learning tool for schools that provides students with real life, practical experience such as recording observations, working with databases and tables, and developing and testing hypotheses.

3.3 Volunteering and voluntourism

Environmental volunteering and voluntourism provide a diverse array of health and wellbeing benefits for participants as well as connecting people to nature while supporting a significant amount of hands-on conservation work. In Victoria alone there are more than 134,000 volunteers and 2,100 environmental volunteering groups who contribute 1.5 million people hours every year. However, there are many more opportunities for environmental volunteering and voluntourism to grow and diversify, with support from land and sea managers, philanthropic and corporate organisations.

3.4 Ecotourism

Ecotourism, done well, can serve as a valuable way to help people reconnect with nature, reflect on their own wellbeing and that of the planet, and change our consumptive patterns. It can also play a vital role in driving tangible onground environmental outcomes such as protection and restoration of habitat, as well as providing alternate, more sustainable sources of livelihoods for local communities.

CASE STUDY

Restoring Cultural Practice for country in Rick Farley Reserve*

Aboriginal culture has at its core, values and principles that ensure long-term sustainability. A project on the Rick Farley Reserve in far western NSW is working closely with Aboriginal Elders to restore cultural practice for country through the design of a cultural framework and coordinated activities that share, teach, and reinforce these Aboriginal cultural core values.

The purpose of the project is to explore how long-term engagement in an environmental program could be sustained through enabling Aboriginal culture as a key binder. Opportunities are created for Aboriginal people to share and apply cultural knowledge to improve habitat diversity and resilience as well as eradicate pests across 12,000 hectares of culturally significant land. Through a *two-eyed seeing* model, the project demonstrates how Aboriginal culture can work in close partnership with the western approach to science. Cultural burning is being used as one of the principal means of purposeful engagement to improve the reserve's Mallee habitat for malleefowl and other threatened species.

By combining practical on-ground experiences in land management (such as burning, monitoring and pest management) with cultural activities (ceremony, story, dance, and cultural camps) the project is transforming how the local community connects with landscape in a deeply meaningful way. This is having a measurable impact on their wellbeing through their sense of role and purpose, and of connection. By going back to the basics of peoples' connection with nature, as taught in Aboriginal culture, the project is creating a new approach to how a foundation for resilient social-ecological systems can be realised.

*Project partners: Mothers Ancestral Guardians Indigenous Corporation; NSW Government (Environment, Energy & Strategy Division); NSW Local Land Services (Western); NSW Bushfire Risk Management Research Hub

4. Working together for healthy country

Key Direction: Traditional knowledge and understanding of the relationship between healthy country and healthy people should be shared and embedded in learning, policy and practice

First Australians have walked our country, cared for our landscapes and waterways, and thrived in balance with nature for more than 60,000 years. To find our best way forward together, we need to practice greater listening and learning from knowledge holders and build on recent successes

CASE STUDY

Budjiti Traditional Owners and Bush Heritage healthy country partnership

Naree and Yantabulla Stations in western New South Wales are the traditional lands of the Budjiti people. The stations are managed through a partnership with conservation organisation Bush Heritage and Budjiti Traditional Owners. Through cultural camps, Budjiti Elder Phil Eulo shares his knowledge with the younger generations and Bush Heritage staff to ensure better care for, and a deeper connection with, country. This is done by Phil bringing the cultural stories of the lignum swamps, black box and coolabah floodplains, lakes, waterholes and riverine woodlands of the Paroo River and Cuttaburra Creek to life. Phil also teaches about the cultural places where his ancestors lived and the resources they used such as the campsites with their oven hearths, grinding stones, stone tools and flakes.

This sharing of knowledge inspired the development of a booklet, *Budjiti traditional use of plants,* which provides a tool for the community and promotes Budjiti connection to and knowledge of country. Embedding of cultural knowledge and science into property management plans and working together in looking after country has improved the health of country and all the people involved.

The partnership and right-way science approach for Phil means, “having access to my country, to continue my mother’s role and work as I promised here in looking after our country. Where I can teach the young ones as they are the future. Giving them strong connections with country and culture and not just Budjiti kids but kids from all walks of life to build better understanding.”

of valuing different knowledge systems across Australia. The intimate relationship between healthy country and healthy people can only be nurtured if First Australians are involved in creating and embedding traditional knowledge in lifelong learning, policy and practice.

4.1 Cultivate a right-way science and conservation approach and practice

The *right-way* science and conservation approach is based on respect, sharing knowledge, listening and learning. It brings together different systems and frameworks for thinking and knowledge to benefit both people and country. By blending traditional knowledge and empirical science the right way (consensually, respectfully, ethically, collaboratively and with trust), we build a stronger evidence base for decision making and conservation practice to keep our country and water ways healthy into the future.

Traditional Owners are often brought in too late in a process to influence decisions, to exercise cultural responsibilities to care for country and to share and incorporate traditional knowledge. The collective benefit of generations of connections with and knowledge for country is greatest when it is valued and included at the start of the conceptualisation, planning and implementation processes. This early engagement provides an opportunity to strengthen the voice of Traditional Owners as well as to acknowledge and engage expert knowledge holders in decision making, policy development, onground action, and monitoring and assessment. These benefits are further enhanced when this knowledge sharing exists among different disciplines as well. Multiple knowledge systems and expertise could greatly benefit the exploration of biodiversity, climate change, economy and human health opportunities.

Traditional Owners must be able to determine their own path for engagement in the active management of country. Distance and cultural requirements mean that time and the right people must be dedicated to engaging Traditional Owners in a way that builds and protects community. In this sense, community means First Australian communities, as well as the conservation community and the broader Australian community. Together we are stronger.

4.2 Respect the need and rights of First Australians to own, manage, connect with and get onto country

Land tenure, variable access rights and the limiting or extinguishing of Native Title all serve as barriers to driving equity across our nation for First Australians to own and access their land, have full decision making and management rights and get out on to country. These barriers must be systematically removed or re-negotiated to ensure that the health and wellbeing of Traditional Owners and their connection to country, cultural rights and practices, and knowledge of country can be maintained and strengthened. In turn, country would flourish.

The approach to engender greater land access and rights for First Australians may need to be embedded in training that improves understanding, focuses on inter-cultural and personal respect, acknowledges and addresses the effects of history, celebrates First Australians culture and builds trust across people and cultures. We should work together to reduce unnecessarily restrictive legal barriers and collaboratively develop new and pragmatic legislative and regulatory frameworks that facilitate culturally appropriate tenure and access, provide avenues to strengthened Native Title legislation and execution, and recognise legal rights to own and access country and culturally significant places.

4.3 Facilitate the sharing of First Australians and community success stories

Traditional Owners' connection to country, role in caring for country, and the importance of this relationship for health, wellbeing and cultural identity, is relevant to all Australians. It is part of our collective national identity. Inspiring stories highlighting this connection can serve to raise awareness and educate people about how we all benefit from thriving natural systems, from the wealth of knowledge Traditional Owners have and share, and from the generosity of spirit that remains at the heart of the knowledge holders and custodians across Australia in still wanting to walk and work together. We must all work to find new and constructive avenues to facilitate the sharing of stories by First Australians and the benefits of working together. The Country needs People[44] campaign, which is working to strenthen Indigenous Protected Areas and Indigenous ranger programs, has been a positive example of this.

5. Communicating nature's benefits

Key Direction: Raise awareness of the value of nature for human health and wellbeing

Our understanding of nature is socially, politically and culturally constructed. The inextricable links between our natural world, health, identity and economy are often not well understood or acknowledged beyond the environmental sector or First Australians. There is a critical need to highlight these fundamental connections in a way that is relevant to everyday Australians, mainstreams the health-nature message, builds the constituency of support for nature, and actively informs investment in improving environmental and public health.

5.1 Use storytelling as a powerful tool for engaging other sectors and broader society

Poignant stories that showcase people's positive personal connections to and experiences of nature are a powerful way of helping communities develop a better understanding and appreciation of the value of nature. Inherent in this, is the need to 'change the narrative' to one that more effectively engages broader society.

This can be achieved through using more inclusive language, simple and effective messaging, and easy call-to-actions; reframing the conversation to make it more relevant to all Australians; and not perpetuating stereotypes. Ideally, these stories should come from people in the very groups whose behaviour or values we are seeking to change, e.g. farmers talking to farmers, industry to industry.

5.2 Employ targeted, value-based messaging to build engagement and motivate real behaviour change and action

Evidence alone will not be enough to create the profound societal shift in values needed to reach the point where the intrinsic links between health, nature and culture are widely recognised and valued. By incorporating social sciences, humanities and behavioural economics into our communications activities and approaching messaging through a value-based lens instead, we can better engage people with messages that effectively resonate with them.

We need to speak to shared desires and issues like our wish for the health and happiness of our families; the desire of many to escape the frantic pace of life into the beauty and peace of nature; the wish of old people to have healthy active years and pass on their knowledge about country to younger generations; and the love of the young for vigorous adventure and new experiences.

The focus should ultimately be on changing people's behaviour, whether on a small scale or on a large scale, and on celebrating and sharing these actions. At the same time, there is a need to explore and reflect on any policy, political and/or cognitive barriers to the transformation of societies and economies towards a more sustainable future to ensure targeted communications that are effective in driving long-term behaviour change.

5.3 Improve nature's 'marketing campaign' to build the constituency of support beyond the conservation sector

Nature needs a better marketing campaign that highlights the many benefits that a healthy environment provides, whilst instilling a greater sense of care and stewardship for it.

Communications should highlight both the direct, tangible benefits of a healthy environment, but also the indirect benefits, the loss of which may be a greater threat to public health in the future (e.g. health implications of climate change or antimicrobial resistance), as well as the impacts of not acting (e.g. impacts on fresh water, soil fertility and food security; and spread of diseases).

We need to move from a situation where many people consider nature as a 'nice to have' to one where it is recognised as an essential service for human wellbeing and something with its own intrinsic value. Through traditional marketing techniques, in-group messengers and succinct, plain English, targeted messaging that makes the environment 'real' for civil society, we can build a new constituency that creates support, action and connection to nature from a young age.

The Healthy Parks Healthy People campaign in Victoria, provides an example of simple slogans

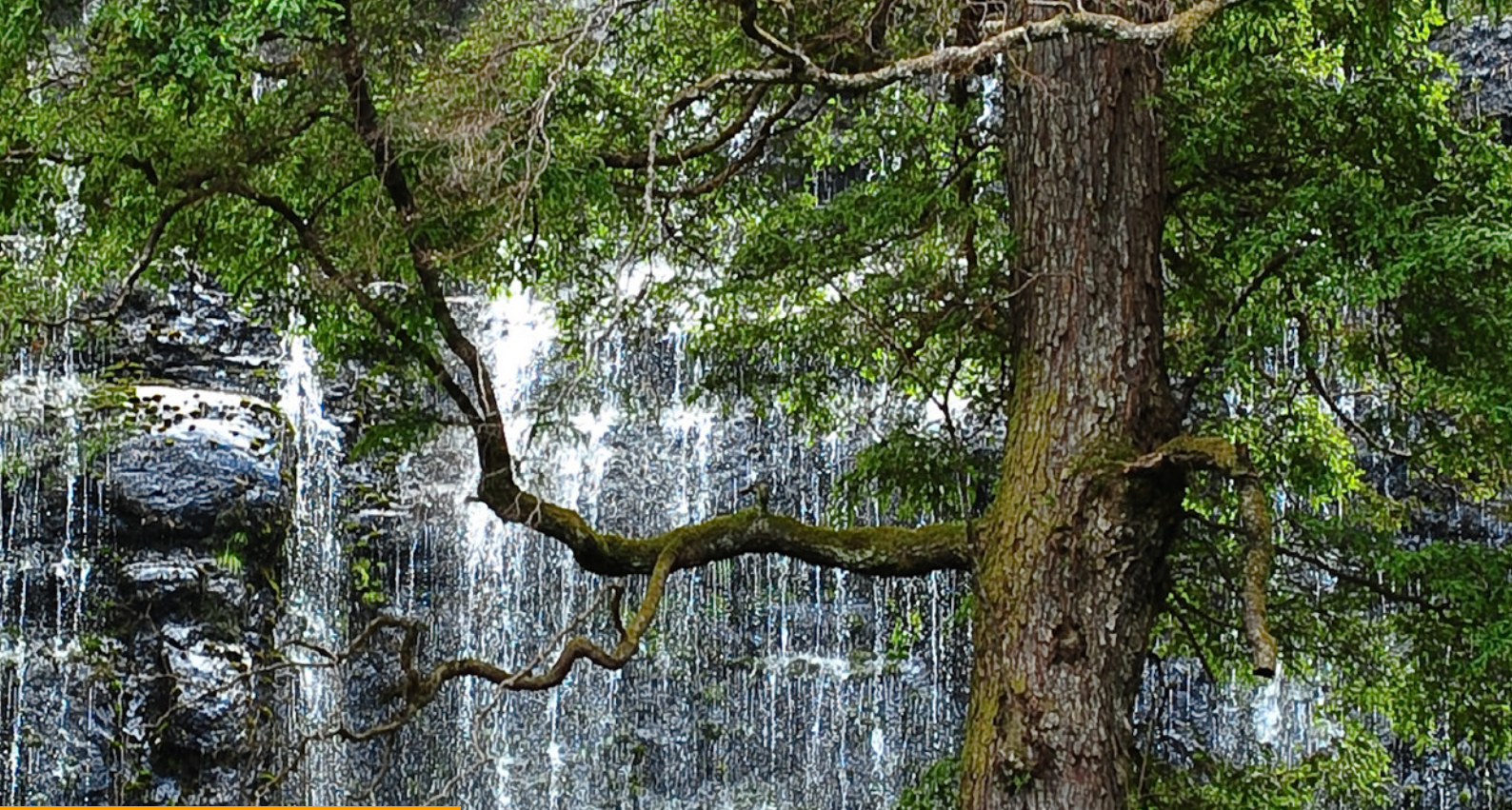
CASE STUDY

Multi-stakeholder engagement on the Great Barrier Reef – The Coral Nurture Program

Unprecedented rapid changes in coral health on the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) has created a need for new reef management approaches aimed at building ecological and social resilience. In 2018, tour operator Wavelength Reef Cruises began partnering with scientists at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) from the Future Reefs Program, to establish the Coral Nurture Program (CNP). The CNP is a unique collaboration between reef researchers and industry to develop novel "stewardship" based management of economically high value GBR locations, with the goal to drive ecological and social adaptation as reefs are subjected to continuing stress, in particular climate change.

The CNP benefits from specialist site knowledge and the existing infrastructure of tour operators, as well as innovative research-driven solutions to develop novel approaches to best rehabilitate and manage coral biomass of sites. This is achieved through community engagement promoting conservation education combined with development of new tools and practices that are guided by science and engineering.

Since 2018, the CNP has developed and established the first-ever multi-species coral nurseries, out-planted >17,000 corals and grown to include multiple tourism operators. Through dialogue with wider stakeholders, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Traditional Owners, the CNP has increased the rate and extent of coral propagation and out-planting. The CNP is ultimately introducing coral nurseries and out-planting into localised stewardship, with the goal of ensuring sustainable reef ecotourism and promoting education on the major threats – and possible solutions – to coral reefs, which involve the whole community.



CASE STUDY

The power of podcast - using the sound of the world to grow engagement

You plug your headset in to your mobile phone, put your earbuds in. You press play on your podcast app. And there, as if it's whispering just to you - the sound of the world.

So what is a podcast? Essentially, it's a piece of audio shared digitally and accessed via a website or a podcasting app, such as iTunes, Apple Podcasts, Pocketcasts, Spotify or Google Play. It's kind of like radio on demand, but made by the people, for the people. It can be made by and with experts in a particular field, or by and with people on the ground - or an intoxicating combination of both. And to make a podcast very little technology is needed - anyone can record an interview with a mobile phone.

As well as the spoken word all sorts of other things come into play - the way the speaker breathes, rushes to speak, or pauses for a moment also tells their story. An emotional connection between speaker and listener is born - the speaker feels heard and acknowledged, the listener feels moved and is inspired, by the speaker's example, to take action.

Listen: for too long many of us have been deaf to the world. Through a podcast you can literally hear the world speak - voices, birds, the way the wind weaves through the rocks and trees, the way rain falls against the ground ... footsteps through the grass.

A podcast can give a listener all these things and profoundly evoke the way humans connect with, nurture, and feel about, their home ground. We know the strength of storytelling, but until recently have privileged stories on the page, or videos that sit outside us, framed by our devices. But podcasting and the particular power of audio have become mainstream.

Listening can transport us more profoundly than words or video, inviting imagination, immersion, drifting, dreaming, empathy and most of all - engagement.

and vivid imagery depicting multiple values such as Healthy Lifestyle, Soul, Future, People, Conversation, Atmosphere, Outlook, Attitude and Spirit. The campaign has seen Victoria recognised globally as a leader in the recognition of the health-nature connection.

5.4 Use innovative communication tools, channels and partnerships to spread the message

Innovative communication tools, channels and partnerships should be actively sought out to ensure the successful spread of the health-nature message to a diversity of audiences.

New technology provides the opportunity to create novel tools that can be used to communicate the many benefits nature provides across all socio-economic levels and age groups. These communication platforms would benefit from partnerships between health, research and environmental practitioners. This could include for example, platforms that encourage nature-based solutions as alternate ways to address human health conditions like obesity, anxiety and depression, social isolation and musculo-skeletal conditions.

Back to Nature[45] is a documentary series set to screen on the ABC in late 2020 along with a community-activating impact campaign. The series aims to shift the national conversation around sustainability and protecting the environment. It addresses the fact that many people have tuned out. Some are too overwhelmed by the scale of the problem and have become despondent, while others are disengaged by partisan polarisation around the issue. The series seeks to inspire a critical mass of Australians to become passionate nature protectors.

Collaborations outside of the traditional health and environmental sectors should also be considered. For example:

- Linking academics with the arts sector to transform key messages into distillable and broadly accessible information in new and different ways.
- Sharing messaging and stories through nature journaling, podcasts and photography groups.
- Sharing and learning from the stories of First Australians e.g. using song-lines to relate the value of land to people.
- Adding health-nature information to existing advice e.g. private medical aid, hospital resources or counseling material.
- Holding mental and physical health-based programs and events in protected areas. For example, in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, the ‘ultra-trail’ has become an annual marathon attracting runners from around the world.

5.5 Identify ambassadors and cross-sector champions that can help to spread the message and drive action and new investment in improving public and environmental health

With the right information, health and community professionals and practitioners can be amongst the most powerful advocates for nature as being key to successful disease prevention and treatment. There is a strong need for more cross-sector champions who can facilitate discussions across different disciplines; serve as an effective bridge between science, policy and practice; and help spread the health and conservation message to civil society. Health professionals can also use their status, power and expertise to advocate for policy and contribute to actions to protect ecosystems and help mitigate the impact of climate change to ensure healthy ecosystems exist to support healthy human populations and other species.

> “Have you ever rescued a riverbank? A tract of bush, an eroded beach, a waterway, some farmland, a garden or a native tree? A native animal or bird? What do you feel as you tend to tired earth, or engage with the intrinsic value of an old-growth giant, or as you look into that creature’s eyes? And, in some way, do these things rescue you?”
>
> Gretchen Miller, Freelance podcaster and former ABC RN documentary maker

6. Demonstrating impact

Key Direction: Co-design and align socio-cultural and ecological outcomes and measures across health and environment sectors

The development of integrated processes and systems that encapsulate the diverse benefits that thriving ecosystems provide us with, pose both a great challenge and a great opportunity for collaboration, cross-sector conservation action and the development of policies, engagement and investment that drive truly sustainable development.

In conjunction, the development of an outcome and evaluation framework for programs is important for measuring and demonstrating impact at the personal, professional, organisational, community and ecosystem level. Indicators for impact should include human health, wellbeing, social, cultural and ecological outcomes.

6.1 Adopt a Theory of Change approach to planning

Frameworks that apply a *Theory of Change* rationale are recommended to ensure that goals are known and shared from the outset and effectively guide implementation, with evaluation measured against progress towards meeting those goals.

An example of culture-blind planning using the theory of change is Healthy Country Planning which is based on the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation[46]. Healthy Country Planning (e.g. Wunambal Gaambera's Healthy Country Plan developed in 2010) draws on the collective experience of Traditional Owners and adaptive managers and serves as a robust, strategic approach to planning, that ensures that culture, people and their knowledge are central to the decision making process for management of their ancestral lands and seas[47].

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-23[48] and associated Outcomes Framework aimed at guiding measurement is also based on theory of change principles.

6.2 Valuing nature

We need to build the understanding and acceptance of nature as fundamental and cost-effective green infrastructure that provides us with valuable direct and indirect health benefits.
As part of this, we need to improve methods for quantifying and demonstrating nature's values to all sectors and to broader society. These should stand alongside financial statements, both for proposed development activities that are likely to degrade nature as well as environmental and social benefits created by nature.

The UN System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA 2012) is the agreed framework for measuring the economic impact of changes to natural capital. SEEA provides a multipurpose, comprehensive view of the connection between the economy and the environment, providing a framework for consistent measures of economic value in physical terms e.g. natural capital (For example quality of air, area of land per use, amount of energy generated and consumed, condition of ecosystems, percentage of biodiversity).

Ecosystem accounting remains in an experimental phase and an active area of research in Australia[49,50]. Further work should also consider the value to society of investing in the protection of the environment in health and wellbeing terms, such as lower rates of disease spread, improved air and water quality and job creation. At the same time, recognition must also be placed on values that cannot necessarily be financially quantified but are equally important, such as spiritual significance and artistic inspiration.

6.3 Avenues for implementation

i) Develop SMART goals and measures that can be shared across or adapted to different sectors

Best practice, evidence-based priority-setting and decision making should be underpinned by SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely) goals that are measured across protected areas, productive areas and urban areas on a regular basis. These goals should be aligned across the local, state, national and international levels. Currently there is little communication between

CASE STUDY

Measuring the benefits of Indigenous land and sea management programs

Indigenous land and sea management programs (ILSMPs), such as the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program and Indigenous Protected Area Program, are gaining a reputation for providing a core function in Australian Indigenous communities, with growing evidence that they deliver a variety of environmental, cultural, social and economic outcomes. A research project led by James Cook University and the University of Tasmania in 2019 provided quantified information about the multiple, local-to-national scale, socio-economic and wellbeing benefits associated with ILSMPs. Funded by the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program, the research highlighted that well-designed ILSMPs can:

- Contribute to the development of northern Australia and help close the income gap.
- Promote Indigenous business development and economic independence.
- Promote Indigenous wellbeing.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange, which is important to Indigenous wellbeing.
- Help Indigenous communities meet their wider aspirations.

The Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation (EAC) in North Queensland, manages the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program, that has undertaken several recent and planned developments which leverage investments in ILSMPs and exemplify these types of benefits.

The research also highlights that we need better methods to measure and quantify goods and services which deliver benefits beyond face value, and which benefit communities rather than individuals. It is important that governments, Indigenous organisations, industry and others fully recognise these benefits and devise ways of accounting for them, so that ILSMPs are not undervalued or overlooked in investment and development decisions.

the legislative and regulatory instruments at each of these levels, and there is a great opportunity here to reduce duplication of effort, improve data collection and streamline reporting.

Harmonised indicators should be accessible to all policy and decision makers and include:

- Extent and condition, including annual change of native vegetation.
- Key biodiversity indicators (threatened species etc.).
- Protected and productive land and water management which incorporates Traditional Knowledge, and co-management by Traditional Owners.
- Productivity (agriculture, extraction).
- Health and wellbeing of landowners, managers, Traditional Owners, local community.

All land managers and health care professionals, across tenures and jurisdictions, are already required to collect some of this data, but this information is currently not shared between sectors. A new streamlined system for minimum environmental and health measures is needed to ensure that data can be combined and used collectively to report against the goals and be re-used to report at all levels, bringing much needed transparency and consistency across jurisdictions.

ii) Provide guidelines to harmonise objectives and outcomes across health and environment

Specific guidelines for driving beneficial actions across environment and health sector will drive uptake, improve impact and enhance understanding.

Examples include:

- Health professionals including GPs, specialists and allied health professionals prescribing ‘green scripts’ and bush therapy.
- Adoption of preventative practices such as connecting with nature. For example, encouraging people to get their daily ‘nature dose’.
- Measuring community health and wellbeing as co-benefits of restoration initiatives like the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative.
- Health professionals gaining environmental and cultural training as part of their training to understand the locally specific links and the importance of access to nature.

> “If you care for country, then country cares for you.”
>
> Bilyara Bates, Board member of Mutawintji Local Aboriginal Land Council

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