Strong People, Strong Country

The Co-management of National Parks in South Australia
Connection to Country

Acknowledgement to Country, Elders & Youth
I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge I am a visitor to this country

My people are Adnyamathanha of the Northern Flinders Ranges. One of the Oldest Mountain Ranges in the World.

I would like to Acknowledge the teachings of my Adnyamathanha Ancestors, Elders, including the Land, my Grandparents and Parents, Brothers & Sisters, Husband and Children.
Aboriginal Affairs – A Timeline

- 60,000 years of Aboriginal occupation
- 1788 – British colonisation
- 1889 – British courts - ‘terra nullius’ declaring the land ‘practically unoccupied’
- 1979 – High Court of Australia – ‘by European standards, Australia had no civilised inhabitants or settled law’
- 1992 – Mabo decision – rejected the notion of ‘Terra Nullius’
- 1993 – Native Title Act – recognition of traditional connection and ownership – rights to live, use land for traditional purposes, protect values, hunt, fish, gather, teach on country
Aboriginal Australia
Aboriginal Australia
Aboriginal South Australia

South Australia

42 Nations
Aboriginal people have an intimate connection to country since the dawn of time through the Creation ‘Yura Muda’.

The Environment is like a book. We are taught by our Elders from this book. Chapters from this book is revealed as the land and our teachers believe it is time for us to move on to new learnings.
We were and still are Arraru (North Wind) and Matheri (South Wind).

We sang our way across Country, following the Yura Muda song lines.

We married with firestick placed between us, North and South Wind.

We traded and respected other groups culture, language and lore.
We listened to our Elders who taught us.

We painted and carved on rocks created by our Creation Ancestors.

We have always been here.
Connection to Country

Yura Muda

Teaches us about the:

Rules for Living

Environment

Spiritual World
Connection to Country

Ikara is our Parliament House – where Law was passed down

New Laws in the non-Aboriginal world can be made today

Aboriginal Law never changes – it is here forever!
The link between birth and culture cannot be overstated.

Birth/Born on Country you have responsibilities to care for the country and participate in or prepare for celebrations of life.

When you are born on country, you belong to that country and your spirit and the spirit of your people is there. You have a strong connection.

You know your stories, waterholes food, responsibilities, kinship etc.

You know your need to put your feet in the water and let the Land see, feel, hear and heal you.
Connection to Country

Through the ‘Yura Muda’ we are taught about all life forms in/of the environment—Animal, Plant and Human.

Our view is people and country which includes our traditional land and waters are importantly connected as a whole and the entire landscape including the solar system has spiritual significance.

There is no separation of the environment, culture, language and the health of the natural environment and solar system.

Aboriginal people are intimately connected woven together as one with the Environment.

Our wellbeing therefore is influenced by both the health of the environment and the extent which we will go to actively be involved in caring, protecting interpreting and preserving it.
The Land

Sees
Hears
Smells
Heals
Provides
Teaches
Touches
Punishes
Cares for our body, mind and spirit
Nurturing us physically, spiritually and emotionally
Aboriginal People:
Speak to the Land
Sing to the Land
Worry about the Land
Feel strong in the Land
Long for the Land
Respect the Land
Want to go home to country when
We are sick and when we die
Connection to Country

We share this land with all life forms
Aboriginal people’s metabolism was balanced by food which was converted into energy to sustain them.

We follow the seasons, the teaching and our Lore.

We moved freely, often and only took what we needed from the Land.
In just one generation, from 1850 to 1880, non-Aboriginal settlers took possession of our Land.

We struggled, we suffered, we resisted, we bled.

Many of us died.

But we are still here…
Introduction of the Pastoral Industry
Sheep & Cattle, Goats, Foxes, horses etc.
Water table dropped, shallow rooted plants disappeared, including Plants for food & medicinal purposes
Erosion started – dust etc.
Aboriginal people had to compete with sheep and cattle for water
We could no longer move around freely
Fences, restrictions to water holes etc.
Plants for healing became scarce
Land could feel the pain of its people
No longer hunt and visit important cultural sites
….Our people cried for the Land
Connection to Country
Connection to Country
Connection to Country
Connection to Country
Connection to Country
We needed to go home

More families wanted to return to country

Families started to develop cultural tourism business’

Land welcomed us home

Culture is being shared, resurrected – started to breathe new life into the Land as well as into us.

Elders feel empowered to share the culture, language and ‘Yura Muda’ as they could see the pride in the younger generations.

Using our cultural knowledge we knew where to find traditional food e.g. Mayaka, Urti, Minnera etc.

Seeds were scarce to grind, however, we cooked in the ground oven using the same methodology that was passed down thousands of years ago.
Men needed to teach the boys hunting and cooking Kangaroo and Emu etc.

The Women needed teach the girls about the gathering, grinding and cooking of seeds, fruits, berries etc.

While this is happening the journey of the Creators are being told as we relive the journey spiritually.
Connection to Country

Teaching

Sharing Cultural knowledge
Connection to Country

Approximately 16 seeds were harvested, ground to make flour

Cleaning the damper

Mai – damper
Minnera leaves
Challenges

- Treaty discussions – differing expectations
- Co-management Board operations suspended
- Change of Government – new priorities, reviews
- Handback of National Parks to Native Title Groups
- Lack of trust in capability of Native Title Groups
- Government see Aboriginal ownership as a risk
Aboriginal people need to be involved in decisions about natural and cultural resource management.

Aboriginal people have an inseparable connection with the land and natural resources which contributes to Environment Health and their own physical and spiritual wellbeing.

Governments can embrace the opportunity to make a difference to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people by ensuring our cultural rights, responsibilities and interests in the environment are acknowledged, valued and recognised.
When the Environment - Ngarpalparu Yarta is healthy then its people are healthy, physically and spiritually.

We remain a living culture. We have retained our language and our Lore, we have survived.

Our contact with, our obligation to respect our traditional Country remains strong

Our Journey continues......
IKARA/ FLINDERS RANGES NATIONAL PARK
• Significant tourism destination
• Approximately 170,000 visitors annually,
• 93,695 hectares

Co-Management Board
• 3 Departmental Officers appointed by Minister
• 1 Member nominated and appointed by Minister,
• 4 Members appointed by Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association (ATLA)
• Executive Officer Support
• First Meeting January 2012 – meets quarterly.

Significant Achievements
• Park Management Plan
• Park Interpretive Plan
• Fire Management Plan
• Policy Development
• Governance including cultural Governance
• Traditional Hunting Zone
• Sacred Canyon – Pastoral Lease now managed by IFRNP