

Indigenous land and sea management

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1. Recognise the size and environmental significance of Indigenous-owned lands.
2. Respect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples including those articles that call for recognition of Indigenous rights in lands and resources.
3. Recognise that customary natural resource management is a legitimate basis for joint management of protected areas.
4. Recognise that Indigenous landowners need assistance to manage historical and emerging postcolonial threats to their ancestral lands and waters.
5. Recognise Indigenous customary marine tenure and aspirations to manage sea country.
6. Respect the contributions that Indigenous and local knowledge can make to address environmental problems and equitably resource Indigenous knowledge production and reproduction and exchange with Western science.
7. Equitably resource the investment deficit in management of Indigenous-owned lands.
8. Recognise Indigenous property rights in existing and emerging natural resource markets.
9. Resource Indigenous aspirations to live on country to ensure a peopled and managed landscape.
10. Resource research and action planning to assess and improve the cost effectiveness and sustainability of Indigenous management regimes.

Introduction

Australians are increasingly responding to national issues of climate change, water shortage, biodiversity loss and ecological sustainability: carbon pollution reduction and management of fresh water in the Murray–Darling Basin have been high profile, hotly contested political issues. What remains poorly understood is that more and more land is coming under Indigenous ownership and management and that these lands are among the most environmentally intact across the Australian continent. Given their substantial land holdings and traditions of resource management, Indigenous people will have a growing role to play in tackling national and global environmental challenges and finding solutions in both the Indigenous and national interest. This fact needs urgent recognition.