



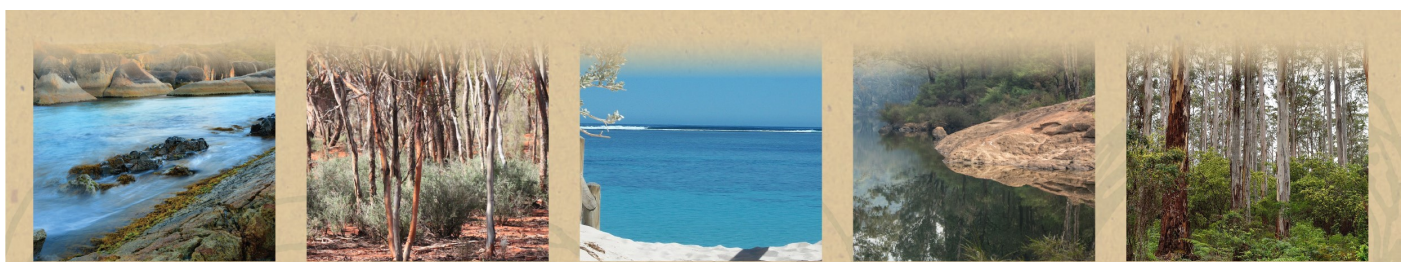
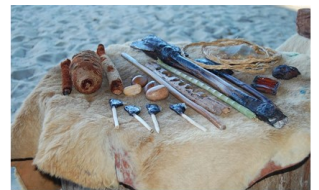
Working together to care for Country

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters it manages.

The State Government made significant amendments in 2011 to the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (CALM Act) relating to the involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of lands and waters vested with the Conservation and Parks Commission and managed by the department.

The amendments recognise Aboriginal connection to lands and waters and enables Aboriginal people to become more involved in managing Country and using parks and reserves for customary activities. These changes support the department's desire to build strong enduring relationships with Aboriginal people and have put in place a range of strategies, policies and programs that support these commitments.

All individuals, including volunteers, who undertake work by the department must follow and put in place practises to meet these outcomes. Therefore, in your role as a volunteer, it is important to gain an awareness of these important obligations and be aware how your role may impact Aboriginal people and their cultural heritage values.



Joint management

DBCA is strongly committed to involving Aboriginal people in managing land and sea through joint management arrangements.

This is done by:

- ✦ building partnerships
- ✦ working together to make decisions involving land management
- ✦ input into planning and management of country.

Joint management provides the opportunity for the department and Aboriginal people to care for country together. Currently we are working with 30 traditional owner groups throughout the state. This will increase in the future as the department aims to implement more joint management partnerships.

Valuing heritage and culture

DBCA's second management objective is to 'manage the value of the land to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal people'. This is a statutory obligation which the department follows to support cultural obligations.

This means that all work done on lands and waters managed by DBCA, including by volunteers, must respect and consider Aboriginal cultural values, providing opportunity for Aboriginal people to ensure their culture and heritage is protected now and into the future

Cultural heritage

Aboriginal people are spiritually connected to sites of significance, which belong in the landscape. It provides evidence of the lives and existence of Aboriginal people before European settlement though to the present.

Aboriginal cultural heritage is dynamic and may comprise of physical (tangible) or nonphysical (intangible) elements. The physical or tangible can be artefacts, art sites, ceremonial or burial grounds. Intangible elements include peoples' memories, storylines, ceremonies, language.

Heritage can also include more contemporary and/or historical elements such as old mission buildings, massacre sites and cemeteries.

Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2020

[Reconciliation Australia](http://reconciliation.org.au) is an independent, national not-for-profit organization promoting reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program, organisations develop business plans that document what they will do to contribute to reconciliation. DBCA has developed a RAP which was launched in 2018. The plan sets out how the department will strengthen its relationships with Aboriginal Australians and is a tool for cultural change. It details specific actions, responsibilities and timelines to ensure objectives are met.

More information on DBCA's RAP can be found here - <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/parks/aboriginal-involvement/Reconciliation%20Act%20Plan%202018.pdf>

Customary activities

The ability to carry out cultural activities on country is an important part of Aboriginal culture and connection to the land. Recent changes to the law have extended opportunities for Aboriginal people to access department-managed lands and waters to carry out customary activities.

The legislation gives Aboriginal people the ability to maintain culture, identity and to meet cultural obligations under traditional law.

To learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements, visit the Share Our Pride website: <http://shareourpride.reconciliation.org.au>.

If you have any questions on DBCA's cultural and heritage work, please contact the Aboriginal Engagement and Heritage Unit manager Rhonda Murphy via Rhonda.Murphy@dbca.wa.gov.au

