



ISSUE 2 · DEC 2023

# NEWSLETTER - CONSULTATION FOR A NEW MODEL FOR ABORIGINAL JOINT MANAGEMENT

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service



**Yirrayirra Waga-dyi:** This artwork has been created for the Aboriginal joint management project by Aboriginal artist Nathan Peckham, who is a proud Tubba-gah man from Wiradjuri Nation. Yirrayirra Waga-dyi means “Bush Dance” in Wiradjuri language. The artwork draws inspiration from the theme of Aboriginal people managing Aboriginal Country and Culture on park reserves in partnership with NPWS. It is a celebration of their connection to the land, sea, waters, and sky.

## New model for AJM: Stage 2 consultation underway

Following a busy Stage 1, the Aboriginal Joint Management (AJM) Unit has now moved on to Stage 2 of a three-stage consultation process to design and develop a new model to expand Aboriginal joint management across all NSW national parks in an equitable, cohesive way, that still allows flexibility to meet the needs of different Aboriginal groups across the state.

### Reflecting on Stage 1

Stage 1 consultation included 30 workshops held across NSW and online:

- 11 workshops were hosted by NPWS for members of the current joint management agreements who make up the NPWS Custodians Network
- 19 workshops were facilitated by independent contractors, Thirriwirri, to yarn with members of the Aboriginal community not in current joint management agreements with NPWS, including from Aboriginal organisations and Local Aboriginal land councils.

Hearing from 338 Aboriginal people in these workshops helped the team gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities to be addressed in the new model, and the aspirations from Aboriginal people about what could be achieved by expanding joint management in NSW.

## Online links

For more information about the project, please visit our [webpage](#)

Write to the AJM Unit at [ajm.reform@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ajm.reform@environment.nsw.gov.au)



Danielle Flakelar presents at the Custodians Workshop in Griffith (Credit: Smita Pandey, NPWS)

## Other Stage 1 stakeholder engagement

Other key stakeholders were given an opportunity to learn about the project and provide their insights during Stage 1.

- The AJM Unit presented to over 100 native title holders, claimants, and Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) Directors at the NTSCORP NSW PBC Conference in March 2023. Attendees were also invited to fill out an online survey to provide their input, to which 6 responses were received.
- In March 2023, a workshop was held with the DPE Aboriginal Culture & Heritage Staff Network. We heard from 147 Aboriginal staff members about their experiences of working in joint management with NPWS and Aboriginal communities. It was a very engaging session with a lot of passionate visions for the future from staff members.
- 64 NPWS staff currently involved in Aboriginal joint management completed an online survey to draw upon their operational experience and the challenges, opportunities, and benefits of expanding this program for NPWS as an organisation. This included 25 responses from Aboriginal staff members.

## Working with our Consultative & Reference groups

The AJM Unit has continued to engage with two external consultative groups, the Aboriginal Consultative Group (ACG) and the Stakeholder Consultative Group (SCG), on the development of the new joint management model.

The team also met regularly with the Inter-Agency Reference Group (IARG) comprised of representatives from other NSW government agencies to discuss elements of the project that overlap with their work, and opportunities for collaboration.

The NPWS Custodians Network Sub-Working Group (CSWG) is another group involved in the development of the project, with the 11 members representing the interests of the approximately 260 members of the Custodians Network.

# Key consultation with Aboriginal people in Stage 1

## New model for AJM: Stage 1 consultation

ABORIGINAL  
PEOPLE  
ENGAGED  
**610**

**1**

Custodians workshops

Number of workshops: 11  
Number of attendees: 151

**2**

Regional Aboriginal workshops

Number of workshops: 19  
Number of attendees: 187

**3**

NTSCorp PBC Conference

Number of attendees: 100

**4**

Annual DPE Aboriginal Network  
Gathering workshop

Number of attendees: 147

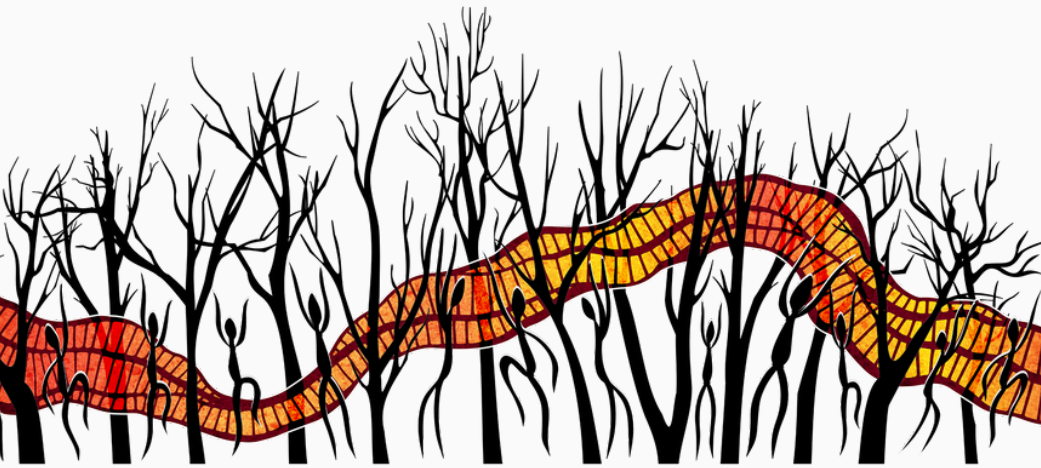
**5**

Targeted NPWS joint management staff  
online survey

Number of responses: 25

## Analysing the feedback from Stage 1

The team has thoroughly analysed the thousands of pieces of individual feedback shared by participants in Stage 1. Summary reports have been prepared detailing what was heard at the Custodians workshops with members of the Custodians Network, and the regional Aboriginal workshops with members of the Aboriginal community not currently involved in joint management with NPWS. Both reports have been published on the AJM webpage.



## NPWS Custodians Network Meeting, November 2023

NPWS held the annual Custodians Network meeting on Worimi Country near Newcastle between 14 - 16 November 2023, where the AJM Unit conducted a workshop with 45 custodians from the joint management boards and committees.

Feedback from Stage 1 was reported back to the group and NPWS also presented on the reframed key elements of the new model. The workshop focused on the 'caring for Country' and 'cultural economy and working on Country' elements and how these can be incorporated in the new model. Custodians shared insights about the importance of caring for Country activities, what they would like to see in a joint management partnership and how we can work together on Country to keep people and Country healthy.

## Stage 1 reports

Details about the feedback from Stage 1 consultation is available on the AJM [webpage](#) in the form of two **summary reports** detailing the key insights from both the Custodian and regional Aboriginal workshops

The AJM Unit webpage will be relaunched in the new year with latest updates about the project. Keep an eye out for our new [webpage](#) in 2024

Members of the NPWS Custodians Network with the NPWS staff during the Custodians Network Meeting at the Murrook Cultural Centre in Williamtown, Worimi Country (Credit: John Spencer, NPWS)



Participants at the AJM workshop during the Custodians Network Meeting at the Murrook Cultural Centre, Worimi Country (Credit: John Spencer, NPWS)

Members of the NPWS Custodians Network admire an art installation at the Murrook Cultural Centre in Williamtown, Worimi Country (Credit: John Spencer, NPWS)



## Next steps

Now in Stage 2, the AJM Unit is using the feedback from Stage 1 to scope and test options for the new model with key stakeholders. This will involve further consultation and workshops with members of the Custodians Network and the project's Consultative and Reference groups as part of developing and refining options for a new model.

After Stage 2, we will move into Stage 3 which will involve public exhibition of a draft model and opportunity for broad public consultation.

The AJM Unit filmed 3 short videos with representatives from current joint management agreements, portraying their stories and experiences of jointly managing their Country with NPWS. The videos have been posted on the [NPWS website](#) and we encourage you to give them a watch.

The AJM Unit thanks you for your support. We will continue to issue newsletters to keep you updated as the project progresses. Please spread the word by sharing information with your networks.

For more information, please visit our [webpage](#).

If you have any questions or want to discuss further about this project, please reach out to the AJM Unit at

[ajm.reform@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ajm.reform@environment.nsw.gov.au)