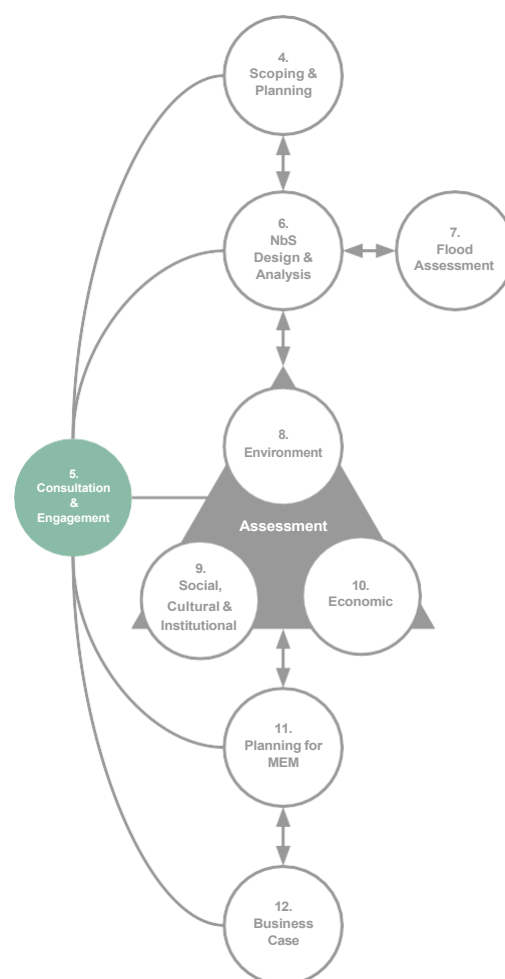


Chapter 5: Consultation and Engagement

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Key Points

- The purpose of consultation and engagement is to support democratic values; build consensus and political support; improve regulatory quality through information collection; identify risks, barriers and enablers for the project; reduce regulatory costs on enterprises, citizens and administrations; speed up responsiveness; and carry out strategic agendas.
- Consultation and engagement with local communities should be integrated throughout the project.
- First Nations Australians have long, enduring and unique relationships with Australia's lands and waters that require respect. The wellbeing, or lack of wellbeing, of First Nations Australians and the environment are often intertwined.
- It is key to engage First Nations Australians in conversations about anticipating and mitigating flooding through NbS to ensure that Country and people thrive together.
- There are ethical, legal and practical reasons to engage First Nations Australians in NbS initiatives.
- Several tools can assist with the development of a community consultation plan and we recommend that you seek these out and tailor community engagement to your local context.



5.1 Introduction

This chapter has been written based upon desktop research (referencing publicly available material) by the named authors with the intent that Guidelines readers will listen to and support the perspectives of relevant First Nations Australians and other communities in each specific context. The authors are discussing a consultation and engagement process to underpin this work, with the aim to provide a revised version in the next iteration of the Guidelines.

Appropriate and respectful engagement with all stakeholders, particularly local communities and First Nations Australians, is critically important for NbS initiatives. This is necessary for ethical, legal and practical reasons as well as to ensure ownership and consistency with government policy requirements.

In this chapter, we provide a brief guide to best-practice community engagement and focus on working with First Nations Australians and their knowledges. The chapter is intended to complement, not substitute, legal or funding requirements of stakeholder consultation and we recommend that you investigate these requirements early on, during the scoping and planning stages.

The term 'stakeholder' refers to anyone who has an interest in an issue or a project. This umbrella term includes a wide range of groups with differing rights, interests and values, and we suggest using a tailored approach to engage these different groups effectively. Stakeholder engagement is important throughout all stages of NbS project planning, development and implementation, as well as during monitoring, maintenance and evaluation (MEM). Examples of stakeholders for NbS include:

- First Nations Australians
- residents
- business owners
- land managers
- recreational fishers
- community organisations such as landcare and rivercare groups
- experts

As engagement is resource-intensive, you need to ensure that your process incorporates the right level of engagement to suit the scale, complexity and implications of the NbS. Too much consultation for the purpose will be wasteful, while inadequate or belated engagement risks undermining the NbS through inadequately conceived options or lack of stakeholder support.

There are different levels of effective engagement from simply being informed through to being actively engaged:¹

- Consultation occurs when an agency, group, community or individual seeks advice from someone else. It is a purpose-driven process in which someone takes the initiative to seek advice. It does not necessarily imply anything about what will be done with that advice when, and if, it is received.
- Participation simply means the act of taking part, in whatever form. People can participate by writing letters, attending events, sending emails or using a host of other forms of communication. Participation and involvement are often used interchangeably.

- Engagement goes further than participation. It comprises capturing people's attention and focusing their efforts on the matter at hand - for someone who is engaged, the subject means something personally to them and is sufficiently important to demand their attention. Engagement implies commitment to a process that has decisions and resulting actions. So, it is possible that people may be consulted, may participate and may even be involved, but they may not be engaged.
- Partnerships (or community-led engagement): partnership approaches may include community-led or First Nations-led, co-led, co-design and consultation models.

5.2 Undertaking consultation and engagement

5.2.1 The purpose of consultation and engagement

The purpose of consultation and engagement can broadly be summarised as:

- supporting democratic values
- building consensus and political support
- improving regulatory quality through information collection
- identifying risks, barriers and enablers for the project
- reducing regulatory costs on enterprises, citizens and administrations
- speeding up responsiveness
- carrying out strategic agendas.

5.2.2 Reasons for consultation and engagement

There are many reasons why proponents of NbS should consult with communities and other stakeholders. For example:

- Understanding the attitudes and likely reactions of the people affected: if you have useful insights into how people are likely to react to your proposal, you may be able to tailor your implementation, evaluation or communication strategy to address their concerns or suggestions.
- Making sure every practical and viable policy alternative has been considered: decision-makers can choose between policy options more confidently if they know that every viable option has been considered. Whether through local knowledge or deep or specialised experience, different stakeholder groups will comprehend flood risk, integrated catchment planning and the role of NbS from contrasting perspectives:¹
 - local perspectives - the local reality based on lived experience in the region, built through shared stories, memories of shared events and locally specific relationships between people and places
 - specialised perspectives - the collected advice from a wide range of experts, including geologists, ecologists, economists, engineers, sociologists and cultural knowledge holders, each constructed within a particular knowledge framework, discipline or paradigm
 - strategic perspectives - the tactical positioning of people and resources for future action within given political and administrative systems
 - integrative perspectives - the mutual acceptance of an overarching framework, direction or purpose, derived from a shared interpretation of the issues.

- Confirming the accuracy of the data on which your analysis was based: it pays to disclose your sources of information and reflect on the assumptions you have made. Consulting affected groups helps you check that your analysis is based on a solid foundation and provides you with useful local community input on the real costs and benefits of proposals to test the accuracy of your own estimates.
- Ensuring there are no implementation barriers or unintended consequences: the experiences of businesspeople or community group leaders can be invaluable in understanding how a market or community sector really works. If your analysis has not considered how the market might behave in the real world, talk to people with hard-earned experience. It may be a way to avoid serious negative consequences.
- Helping affected groups to feel that you have listened to them and considered their views: consultation is not just about being polite or courteous. People need to know that their opinions count on matters that affect them. It may not be possible to accommodate all of the views that emerge from consultation, but your proposed option may gain greater acceptance if you demonstrate that your decision was based on an understanding of the full spectrum of community views.

The pressure on governments to consult with communities on policy design and implementation is considerable. New forms of accountability, including administrative law, encourage community consultation as a phase within the public policy cycle, and for most authorities it is established in their current processes as best practice.

In some contexts, engagement with First Nations Australians and the broader community may also be a legislative requirement stipulated in local government Acts and their respective policy frameworks.²⁻⁴ Mandated requirements may vary and can involve engagement practices focused on 'inform' and 'consult' that, when done well, provide opportunities for communities to provide informed feedback.

Guidance note 5-1: During the scoping and planning stage of a NbS project, check whether community engagement or consultation is required for legal or funding purposes.

5.2.3 Guidance criteria for consultation

There are three criteria that should guide effective consultation and deliberative processes:

- influence: the process should have the ability to influence policy- and decision-making
- inclusion: the process should be representative of the population and inclusive of diverse viewpoints and values, providing equitable opportunity for all to participate
- deliberation: the process should provide open dialogue, access to information, respect, space to understand and reframe issues, and movement towards consensus.

As an NbS proponent you should already have well-established lines of communication with stakeholders as part of your work. Consultation on a final proposal should be a natural extension of those relationships, although it is normal for some policy matters to be highly contested, controversial or market-sensitive.

Guidance note 5-2: Three criteria guide effective consultation and deliberative processes – the process should:

- have the ability to influence policy- and decision-making
- be representative of the population and inclusive of diverse viewpoints and values, providing equal opportunity for all to participate
- provide open dialogue, access to information, respect, space to understand and reframe issues, and movement towards consensus.

5.2.4 Reasons for ongoing engagement

Community engagement is essential during the initial consultation phase but should not stop with planning activities: the MEM phase presents an ongoing opportunity for local engagement as a continuation of the activities and relationships developed and this should be factored and funded into a project.

Some NbS projects engage NRM groups, Landcare groups and volunteers for flood mitigation works across landscapes and urban areas.⁵ Works that improve environmental outcomes and involve communities can also lead to improvements in people's environmental experiences and build community connection and support for NbS. This is a strong enabling factor for NbS projects and increases the likelihood of their long-term success (see Chapter 9).

Opportunities for engagement related to MEM may include monitoring and data collection activities, as well as evaluation and maintenance, depending on local capacity and capability (see Chapter 11).

Guidance note 5-3: Consultation and engagement with local communities should be integrated throughout the entire project, including the monitoring, maintenance and evaluation phases.

In summary, the overarching purpose of community engagement is to enable human and ecological resilience for the long term through:

- better understanding of the situation and risks shared by the stakeholders affected by floods and mitigation works
- appropriate community involvement where different options and ideas may be explored
- co-production of solutions and shared capacity to respond
- better governance and integration, including diverse perspectives, transdisciplinary views and inclusive methods
- more sustainable finance and resourcing.

5.3 Engaging with First Nations Australians

First Nations Australians have long, enduring and unique relationships with Australia's lands and waters that should be respected.⁶ These lands and waters and other elements are known as Country.

(1) As Bradley Moggridge - a descendant of the Kamilaroi Nation - and his co-author Ross Thompson explain, Country is the spiritual and physical landscape within which First Nations Australians exist.⁷

(1) The concept of Country may differ for First Nations peoples across mainland and island areas of Australia.²⁷ As noted in Wissing et al., Country can refer to mainland Australia as well as "islands, seas, skies, waterways and natural and cultural features that are of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples".³⁶ For Torres Strait Islander peoples, terms such as 'ailan' (meaning island or cay) and 'ples' (meaning place, spot, position or village)

The wellbeing, or lack of wellbeing, of First Nations Australians and the environment are intertwined with “Country supporting healthy people”, and vice versa.⁸ As Bundjalung man Uncle Rick Cook, Marcus Ferguson and Oliver Costello explain: “We care for Country, as Country cares for us” (cited in Metcalfe & Costello⁸). This connection between the health of First Nations Australians and their Country is a common theme occurring in the literature at the local,⁹ state/territory¹⁰ and national level.¹¹ Building on work with the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council, which represents First Nations Australians in the Kimberley region, Jason Alexandra explains that landscapes and waterscapes are “co-evolved assemblages of cultural and natural processes which can be steered and also shaped by collective choices and actions”.¹²

There is a growing recognition that First Nations communities’ resilience, longstanding connections to their Country, traditional and other knowledges and continued customary practices are strengths that can aid with planning, response, recovery and resilience to changing climates and extreme events.^{8,13}

When planning for floods and droughts, David Kirby – a Ngemba man and 2021 New South Wales Legend of Water – explains that working with “Indigenous knowledge around water management will offer a far larger data set than is currently being used” and strengthen understandings of flooding and other water events.¹⁴ Reflecting on flooding in the Northern Rivers region of NSW in February and March 2022 when rainfall totals and water levels significantly exceeded historical records,¹⁵ Oliver Costello – a Bundjalung man and Director of Jagun Alliance – says that people “should listen to Indigenous knowledge to help Country heal” from damaged environments, perceiving floods as an opportunity to discuss how to heal rivers and people together.¹⁶

First Nations Australians must be prioritised and centred in NbS implementation and governance as their cultures provide an enduring foundation for policy and programs related to nature.¹⁷ Frantzeskaki et al. advocate for a cross-sectoral approach that brings together diverse forms of knowledges and bridges interests, with specific prioritisation of Indigenous knowledges and knowledge systems as well as inclusion of groups who, due to accessibility issues, are often unable to access nature.¹⁸

First Nations Australians are leading conversations about First Nations’ water rights,^{19–22} culturally informed water management⁷ and responsibilities for flooding events in Australia.¹⁶ It is critical to engage in conversations with First Nations Australians about flooding and NbS – or other – approaches that can help Country and people thrive together. While each physical, political, sociocultural and economic environment will differ, below are a few key points to consider when engaging with First Nations Australians regarding NbS for flood mitigation.

5.3.1 Understanding past legacies

As Euahlayi man and scholar Bhiemie Williamson notes, disasters are not an appropriate time to create relationships but are instead a time to work with pre-existing, established relationships.²³ In conversations about NbS for flood planning and mitigation, establishing respectful relationships with First Nations Australians is critical. To do this, it is necessary to understand and acknowledge the painful contemporary legacies and traumas of colonialism that First Nations Australians experience.²⁴ Williamson explains that First Nations Australians have a general distrust of government agencies and non-Indigenous organisations, informed by “incredibly traumatic experiences that have existed between government agencies ... and non-government organisations in our communities”.²³

may be spoken as alternatives to the concept of Country (for more details, see Shnuka⁵⁷).

Colonial impacts can be seen in the way water has often been (dis)valued and managed with extractive rather than restorative intent. Barber et al.²⁵ observe that First Nations peoples have “historically received fewer benefits from major development projects while facing greater social, cultural, and environmental impacts”.²⁵ Moggridge and Thompson note the centrality of water “to Indigenous peoples’ being and culture, but since European colonisation in 1788, water has been subject to pumping, storage, diversion, extraction and pollution and without Indigenous people’s council”.⁷ More recently, water has also been attributed a market value.⁷ Moggridge and Thompson see “a need and a great opportunity for Indigenous people to uphold and protect their water values through Indigenous-grounded methodologies or Indigenous-led water research, and so as to integrate Indigenous water knowledge into science and policy”.⁷

Talking of natural disaster response and recovery, but also relevant to disaster planning and mitigation, the trans-Tasman collaborative Recovery Capitals or ReCap project encourages efforts that:

- respect the history, culture, strengths and circumstances of affected First Nations communities
- enable communities to lead their own recovery
- develop respectful, trusting relationships and collaborations
- consider the significance of connection to Country, trauma, healing and resilience.²⁶

Guidance note 5-4: In their efforts to prevent flood disasters, NbS planners and practitioners must:

- **understand and respect the relationships that First Nations Australians have to Country**
- **research the history and impacts of colonial encounters with First Nations Australians for the region in which projects are being considered, and consider their own position related to this history**
- **be sensitive to past and ongoing traumas associated with colonial legacies for these areas**
- **actively curate culturally safe interactions that seek to understand and respect First Nations Australians’ relationship to Country.**

5.3.2 First Nations’ legal rights and lawfully defined relationships to Country

Moggridge and Thompson⁷ explain that First Nations Australians possess a rich understanding of and connection with water spanning more than 65,000 years and distributed among over 250 distinct Indigenous Nations across Australia’s diverse landscapes encompassing wet tropics, desert country, temperate zones, river lands and alpine regions.⁷ Much of these territories is now covered by specific legal rights that lawfully define relationships to Country. Significant areas of land are returning to First Nations ownership or joint management through land rights and Native Title legislation, with a large portion of this found in Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), which total almost 75 million ha (over 46%) of the National Reserve System.⁸

Water and river systems cross a range of tenure types, which may be subject to specific national Native Title claims, state/territory-level tenure arrangements or heritage legislation. It is critical that you consider land rights in connection to water management and relationships in your NbS planning. In this section, we outline some of the key legal considerations pertaining to First Nations Australians that must be part of NbS planning.

The interdependent relationships between First Nations Australians and Country are recognised in a range of legislation at the national and state/territory level, as well as through other domestic and international policy mechanisms. In their 'Indigenous' chapter of Australia's *State of the Environment 2021* report, Terri Janke – a First Nations lawyer of Meriam, Yadhagana and Wuthuthi heritage - and her co-authors provide a thorough overview of national and international frameworks that support caring for Country.²⁷ They note that national, state and territory legal frameworks formally recognise First Nations Australians' rights and interests (to varying extents) over 57% of Australia's land area through mechanisms including:

- outright purchase of land or granting Indigenous ownership of land
- Indigenous management and co-management arrangements, including IPAs
- Native Title determinations
- Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).²⁷

We recommend that you research the specific relationships that First Nations Australians have with the areas under NbS consideration because these are likely to be covered by one or more laws that protect their rights, interests or heritage. Janke et al.'s summary of national and state-/territory-level legislation is a useful guide to consider, as outlined below:

- **At the national level:** First Nations Australians' rights and interests are recognised via Australia's *Native Title Act 1993*.²⁸ Janke et al. explain that the Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC, also known as the Registered Native Title Body Corporate) is a "legally recognised decision-making entity where Native Title has been granted, and first point of contact for external organisations seeking permissions or partnerships with the Traditional Owner group".²⁷ PBC entities can represent Native Title groups when negotiating an ILUA, which is a legally binding voluntary agreement made between one or more Native Title groups and another party about the use and management of land or waters.²⁷ Examples of parties who can engage in these agreements can include miners, pastoralists and governments. For information about the status of registered and determined Native Title claims as well as ILUAs, see the National Native Title Tribunal's [Home Page](#).
- **At the state and territory level:** a range of laws recognise First Nations Australians' interests. These are summarised in Table 5-1.²⁷
- **Beyond national and state/territory legislation:** the Australian Government recognises four broader categories of protected area governance:
 - governance by government (e.g. national and marine parks)
 - shared governance (e.g. formal 'joint' management)
 - private governance (e.g. nature trusts and reserves)
 - governance by First Nations peoples and local communities (e.g. 'community'; IPAs).²⁷

While First Nations Australians' rights are recognised to varying degrees in all four categories of protected area, their leadership is more common in IPAs and formal joint management with Traditional Owners of parks, with Janke et al.²⁷ providing a summary of both, as well as an observation of increased Australian Government funding for First Nations' land management, including through Indigenous ranger programs.

Table 5-1 State and territory laws that recognise First Nations land interests

(Source: Janke T, Cumpston Z, Hill R, Woodward E, Harkness P & von Gavel S & Morrison J (2021). Australia State of the Environment 2021: Indigenous, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, DOI: 10.26194/3JDV-NH67. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). © Commonwealth of Australia 2021).

Jurisdiction	Legislation
Australian Capital Territory	The <i>Aboriginal Land Grant (Jervis Bay Territory) Act 1986</i> (Cth) vested land in the Jervis Bay area to the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council.
New South Wales	Under the <i>Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983</i> (NSW), Aboriginal Land Councils can claim certain Crown land on behalf of Indigenous people.
Northern Territory	The <i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i> (Cth) set up a comprehensive scheme for claiming Aboriginal land. It created a process for the return of reserve land to inalienable Aboriginal freehold land, which is completely unique to the Northern Territory.
Queensland	Under the <i>Aboriginal Land Act 1991</i> (QLD) and the <i>Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991</i> (QLD), land that has been reserved for Indigenous people could be transferred to them as trustees to hold the land for the benefit of all Indigenous people.
South Australia	The <i>Aboriginal Land Trusts Act 1996</i> (SA) created the Aboriginal Lands Trust and was the first major recognition of Aboriginal people's land rights and interests. In 2013, the Aboriginal Land Rights trust was reformed and replaced by the <i>Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 2013</i> . The <i>Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act (1981)</i> (SA) and <i>Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act 1984</i> (SA), and subsequent amendments, are also significant pieces of land rights legislation recognising Aboriginal land right interests in the far northwest and central-west regions of South Australia. Act amendments are the <i>Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights (Suspension of Executive Board) Amendment Act 2017</i> and the <i>Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2016</i> .
Tasmania	The <i>Aboriginal Lands Act 1995</i> (Tas) established the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, which is responsible for holding Aboriginal land in perpetuity for all Aboriginal people in Tasmania and governing its management and use.
Victoria	After the declaration of the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Agreement Act 2010</i> (Vic), the <i>Crown Land Reserves Act 1978</i> (Vic) was amended to provide for Aboriginal title over some Crown lands because of settlement agreements.
Western Australia	Part 4 of the <i>Land Administration Act 1997</i> (WA) allows for Crown land to be set aside as a reserve for a particular purpose in the public interest, which includes for Aboriginal uses or conservation purposes. The <i>Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972</i> (WA) resulted in the establishment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, which is responsible for managing all the Aboriginal Land Trust reserves in Western Australia.

Guidance note 5-5: NbS planners and practitioners should:

- research Native Title, protected area governance and any First Nations land management arrangements that may apply in the region of project interest
- understand their obligations and requirements under any relevant national and state/territory laws on First Nations land interests, cultural heritage protection and engagement with representative bodies for First Nations peoples.

5.3.3 Building strong relationships with First Nations Australians

In this section we outline some best-practice approaches to building trust and strong relationships with First Nations Australians in ways that respect and protect, foster transparency, and encourage cultural safety and inclusion of First Nations' knowledges and experiences when considering NbS.

Seeking out and understanding cultural protocols

When seeking to build relationships with First Nations Australians, it is critical to understand local cultural protocols for First Nations groups in the area. Protocols could include obligations to ancestors, Elders and family.²⁹ Some groups may have their own publicly available protocols or guidelines for engagement, so it is important to check. Some national-level resources are included in the further resources at the end of the chapter, to consider in relation to any local-level cultural protocols relevant to the region of NbS consideration.

- the National Environmental Science Program's *Indigenous Partnerships Principles* (particularly the section on 'Scoping and building a partnership')³⁰
- the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) *Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*³¹
- the related AIATSIS publication, *A Guide to Applying the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*¹²
- *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*
- the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *Keeping Research on Track II. A Companion Document to Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders* (particularly the section on 'Cultural competency')³²
- *Our Knowledge, Our Way in Caring for Country: Indigenous-led Approaches to Strengthening and Sharing Our Knowledge for Land and Sea Management. Best Practice Guidelines from Australian Experiences*, prepared by the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).³³
- *Principles and protocols for cultural land management governance and research*³⁴, prepared for Natural Hazards Research Australia, and related resource *Using Cultural Land Management Principles and Protocols: A guide for collaborative principles, processes and protocols for governance and research*.³⁵

Understanding cultural protocols – written or unwritten – and establishing and/or building strong relationships with First Nations Australians will take time, and we encourage face-to-face interactions where possible. We also recommend being flexible – including for cultural or other obligations that First Nations Australians might have – and discussing resources needed (see Wissing et al.³⁶).

Guidance note 5-6: NbS planners and practitioners should seek out cultural protocols and consider how best to present information in order to demonstrate respect and protect ownership and governance of First Nations peoples' knowledges.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

Any discussion and decisions about NbS should create conditions for processes of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). FPIC means First Nations Australians are able “to provide, withhold, or withdraw consent at any point regarding projects impacting their territories” and is a critical aspect of partnerships or other forms of engagement with First Nations Australians.³⁶ Woodward et al. note that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other international and national laws and policies, recognise FPIC to be the best-practice approach to engaging with First Nations’ knowledges.³³ They explain that FPIC requires individuals and groups to be provided with sufficient, accessible information that includes full consideration of the proposal’s risks and benefits, in order for them to make an informed decision regarding whether to consent to the proposal.³³

Guidance note 5-7: NbS planners and practitioners should follow steps to ensure that Free, Prior and Informed Consent practices are applied throughout the NbS planning and implementation process.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty

As Williamson et al. note, aspirations to engage with and learn from First Nations Australians’ knowledges, perspectives and practices and apply these to mitigate against climate change impacts and build more resilient landscapes and communities can be double-edged.¹³ Such aspirations may provide opportunities for First Nations Australians to (re)connect with their Country and “reinvigorate their knowledges and traditions after centuries of oppression and disconnection”, but “engagements also carry significant risks to Indigenous peoples and their knowledges” depending on the type of engagement and forms of data governance.¹³ The sovereignty and governance of Indigenous data is a key building block to establishing respectful, trusting relationships with First Nations Australians.

A communique from the Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit on 20 June 2018, jointly prepared by Maïam nayri Wingara, the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute and the Lowitja Institute, explains that “Indigenous Data Sovereignty is a global movement concerned with the right of Indigenous peoples to govern the creation, collection, ownership and application of their data”.³⁷ For examples of resources that consider Indigenous Data Sovereignty, see the further resources section at the end of the chapter.

Guidance note 5-8: NbS planners and practitioners should consider with First Nations Australians the best ways to recognise and enable Indigenous Data Sovereignty of knowledges related to a proposed project region.

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) is a term used to refer to Indigenous peoples’ rights to their cultural heritage.⁶ The term originates from the 1992 United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, intended to refer to “both the tangible and intangible heritage passed on through the generations that enables Indigenous peoples to express their culture”⁶ (see also section 1.3 of the AIATSIS Guide¹²). ICIP rights encompass the right of control over the use and adaptation of this ICIP, as well as the rights of attribution, integrity and benefit sharing.⁶

Consider what ICIP might be involved, and who owns and has control over this ICIP, then discuss with First Nations Australians the best ways to ensure that their ICIP is respected and protected by creating an agreement or another understanding. Examples and guidance on how to address ICIP include:

- *True Tracks: Respecting Indigenous Knowledge and Culture*⁶ (see also [ICIP](#))
- the CSIRO's *Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property Principles*³⁸
- section 1.5.3 of *Our Knowledge Our Way in Caring for Country: Indigenous-led Approaches to Strengthening and Sharing Our Knowledge for Land and Sea Management. Best Practice Guidelines from Australian Experiences*.³³

Guidance note 5-9: NbS planners and practitioners should consider what Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) might be involved, and who owns and has control over this ICIP, and discuss with First Nations Australians the best ways to ensure that their ICIP is respected and protected by creating a formal agreement or another understanding.

5.3.4 Deciding the best form of engagement in context

First Nations Australians have always engaged with, and influenced, water environments in what is now known as Australia. Alexandra notes that First Nations Australians extensively “modified rivers, wetlands and waterways to form fish traps and freshwater aquaculture systems and translocated numerous plant species, including through ceremonial gifting practice”, informed by “deep totemic connections to places and animals and custodial responsibilities for the care of land, water, plants and animals”.³⁹ First Nations Australians hold rich socioenvironmental knowledges that should be respected, protected and included in conversations about how to work with nature for flood mitigation.

When engaging in NbS discussions with First Nations Australians, it is important to agree on the best forms of engagement and partnerships. In NbS conversations, “Indigenous People and Local Communities ... should be key collaborators and, ideally, leaders”.¹⁷ Partnership approaches may include Indigenous-led, co-led, co-design and consultation models.⁴⁰ Indigenous methodologies, innovation and strength-based approaches should also be considered for each project.⁴⁰ For government organisations, and as good practice generally in research and project work, decision-making must be shared as per priority (see page 6 of *The National Agreement on Closing the Gap*⁴¹).

Any approach taken should enable First Nations Australians to benefit from and put into practice their local knowledge.¹ Flexibility is important: the type of engagement will be informed by the project topic and First Nations Australians’ interest and capacity, among many other things, and the form may change over the various stages of the project process. Additionally, you should also build reflexivity into the project and partnership, creating time and culturally safe environments for First Nations individuals, organisations and/or wider communities to determine and discuss what works or worked, what isn’t or didn’t work, and what might be important to do differently in this or future partnerships.³⁶ (For further information, see the ‘Learning from Experience’ section of [NHMRC’s report](#).)

Taking a reflexive approach may also help you to understand the larger power context in which engagement has, and does, operate, and to strive towards better and best practice as well as intention. Without dismissing the sincerity of individuals hoping for improved management and First Nations peoples’ empowerment through co-management approaches, Nadasdy cautions that:

*we must also acknowledge that the complex process of co-management may have a number of other unforeseen – and unintended – consequences ... The need to integrate co-management processes with existing institutional structures of state management has led to a tendency to view co-management as a series of technical problems (primarily associated with the question of how to gather ‘traditional knowledge’ and incorporate it into the management process), rather than as a real alternative to the existing structures and practices of state management.*⁴²

In some cases, First Nations individuals, groups or organisations are leading NbS-related projects. For example, the Aboriginal-owned and directed not-for-profit organisation Jagun Alliance is running an Indigenous-led initiative known as [Heal the Rivers](#), which focuses on NbS for flood mitigation and adaptation and restoration of cultural landscapes across the Northern Rivers region of NSW (Box 5-1).⁴³

Box 5-1 First Nations-led flood recovery and landscape restoration: Jagun Alliance's *Heal the Rivers* project

The Aboriginal-owned and directed not-for-profit organisation Jagun Alliance is undertaking a project focused on restoring cultural landscapes and implementing NbS solutions for flood mitigation across the Northern Rivers region of NSW. The Indigenous-led *Heal the Rivers* project works with and respects the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property of local Aboriginal Land Councils and Native Title representatives to “deliver Aboriginal directed and culturally informed catchment management & restoration projects” for the Yarbirri (Tweed), Durrumbul (Brunswick), Baluun (Richmond) and Birrung (Clarence) river catchments.⁴³ The project is “about healing the land, the creeks and rivers as well as the communities connected to them”, drawing on and bringing “old ways” into new and increasingly volatile climatic contexts.⁴³

5.3.5 Understanding costs and benefits from First Nations' perspectives

With the diversity of relationships and responsibilities to environments between and within First Nations groups in Australia, evaluating the costs and benefits of NbS approaches will differ depending on the context and region. You will need to build strong relationships with First Nations Australians for the Country in consideration, to seek their understanding of what is the highest priority before considering costs and benefits. At times, this may mean centring the environment over humans and economics.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment notes the value of shifting from a human-centric approach to a Country-centred approach - prioritising people and their needs is widely considered to be a fundamental approach in contemporary design and planning processes, but:

... an Aboriginal world view suggests there are limitations imposed by an entirely human-centred approach to design. If people and their needs are at the 'centre' of design considerations, the landscape and nature are reduced to second-order priorities. If design and planning processes consider natural systems that include people, animals, resources and plants equally – similar to an Aboriginal world view – this could make a significant contribution to a more sustainable future. Country, as expressed in Aboriginal language, wisdom and ideas, shows a different way of thinking about how we, as humans, are part of our built and natural environment, and how we shape and are shaped by that environment.¹⁰

David Kirby also advocates to prioritise environments before, and for, people and economics. He explains that contemporary “Western water management is based on what they consider a triple bottom-line indicator: economic, social and environmental. But unfortunately, economic comes first, then social second, and then environment last”.¹⁴ In contrast, he notes that his people “had a reverse triple-bottom-line approach ... If we don't protect our catchments [environment], economic outcomes will eventually fail, and social outcomes, too”.¹⁴ (See also Conroy et al.'s critique of water practices that separate cultural, socioeconomic and environmental benefits.⁴⁴)

While noting the unique and critical role of First Nations Australians in co-designing NbS, Nias et al. suggest that we need to re-evaluate what matters when weighing up NbS opportunities. They argue that national success is often measured via GDP, which can lead to “perverse outcomes for nature and human wellbeing”, whereas a shift in focus to create benefits for people and nature could lead to “more sustainable outcomes and support greater investment in and uptake of NbS”.¹⁷ They stress the importance of making projects fit for purpose to “lead to nature positive, net zero and human wellbeing outcomes. This is particularly the case for Indigenous Australians and minority groups”.¹⁷

While some NbS projects may not constitute the usual notion of research, the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*³¹ does offer useful guidance for planners and practitioners more broadly. Principle 12 of the Code states that “research activities and outcomes should include specific benefits that respond to the needs and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including those who participate in the project and others in the community who may be affected by the research.”³¹ The Code explains that benefits can be both tangible and intangible and could, among other things, include:

- employment on the project and/or research training
- access to research results, including data, in a form that is useful and accessible
- assistance to access cultural records
- assistance with language, culture or music workshops
- development of community educational resources.³¹

Returning to the idea that healthy Country and healthy humans thrive together, NbS projects may also provide opportunities for First Nations Australians to physically, culturally and emotionally connect to and heal with Country. If projects are well (co-)designed to respect and protect ICIP and other forms of knowledges, they could provide opportunities to practise and transfer knowledges to younger generations and, if/as appropriate, create new knowledge by weaving First Nations’ and other forms of knowledges together.

Ultimately, First Nations Australians should be given the authority to define and weigh up their own short- and long-term costs and benefits – both tangible and intangible – of engaging in and/or approving any NbS projects now and for the future.

5.3.6 Directions and recommendations

Considering past colonial histories, present relationships and future opportunities for and with First Nations Australians, NbS projects may create “meaningful intercultural engagements that bring about Indigenous custodianship of thriving environments, while mitigating against perverse or unintended consequences such as the appropriation and misuse of Indigenous environmental data”.¹³ Moggridge and Thompson see both need and opportunity for First Nations peoples “to uphold and protect their water values through Indigenous-grounded methodologies or Indigenous-led water research, and so as to integrate Indigenous water knowledge into science and policy” and NbS projects could be avenues in which to support such endeavours.⁷

When engaging with First Nations Australians on NbS, you should develop an understanding of:

- the connection that First Nations groups, organisations and individuals have to Country
- historical colonial legacies of engagement with First Nations Australians, and a sensitivity to associated ongoing traumas
- cultural protocols to develop respectful, culturally safe relationships with First Nations Australians, and consider FPIC, Indigenous Data Sovereignty and ICIP as best-practice foundations for building strong, respectful and empowering relationships
- different potential forms of engagement, and be flexible and reflexive in discussions with First Nations Australians about which forms are most appropriate at each stage of the project, including any requirements for engagement and/or shared decision-making
- potential costs and benefits for First Nations Australians, as assessed and articulated by First Nations Australians.

In NbS projects, nature is inspiration and material for application. Yet nature is also essential to the culture of First Nations Australians and their identity.⁴⁵ As Uncle Rick Cook, Marcus Ferguson and Oliver Costello state, nature – wind, rain, flood, lightning, hail or fire – can “teach us stories ... we share old ways into the new ... [and] need these new ways now and for our future”.⁸ Increased efforts to respect and value contributions from, to engage with and to enable leadership by First Nations Australians and their knowledges will enrich decisions about when, where and how to implement (or not implement) NbS flood mitigation approaches.

5.4 Implementing community engagement and consultation

This section will assist you with planning and supporting effective community engagement throughout the life cycle of an NbS project. There are many useful tools and guides for community engagement. You may wish to brainstorm and adopt approaches that resonate for your project. The ‘Consider in your context’ questions are prompts to assist in clarifying what is important for your local context, including the assumptions behind the proposed strategies and actions.

5.4.1 Identifying who to engage with

While many community engagement initiatives stem from government, others are driven by concerned citizens, custodians and interest groups and can be a blend for co-created works. These might involve First Nations, environmental, recreational, agricultural, business, industry and community organisations and groups, as well as educational institutions, including local Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) or Aboriginal Land Councils, Landcare, Rivercare, fishers, ‘friends of’ groups, progress associations and chambers of commerce. Other factors that may influence engagement strategies include international interest.

It is important to consider the method you will use to identify community members and engage with them, because who you include or exclude will ultimately decide who is heard and, by extension, who you believe should be heard. The method also has the potential to bias these interactions towards certain demographics or answers. It can be worthwhile, and ethical, to work with experienced environmental social researchers in designing and implementing your engagement strategies.

Guidance note 5-10: It is important to consider the method you will use to identify community members and engage with them, because who you include or exclude will ultimately decide who is heard and, by extension, who you believe should be heard. It may be worthwhile to work with experienced environmental social researchers in designing and implementing your engagement strategies.

Several tools can help you identify affected and interested people and equity groups. Most local governments pay for Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) demographic data to be publicly accessible on [Social Atlas ID](#) for research and analysis, particularly for lower socioeconomic indicators. Community directories are another option: see local government online lists and Infoxchange, for example through [Service Seeker](#).

Consider in your context: Who decides who ‘the community’ is? Who should decide? What are the many communities? Should communities (or parts thereof) have the same or equal weighting in decision-making for NbS? How can you include individuals not connected with groups in meaningful ways?

5.4.2 Customising community engagement tools and processes

Voluntary or empowered participatory democracy approaches enable local governments to design their own engagement strategies based on the context. These approaches often prove to be more effective than prescriptive approaches.^{46,47} Rights-based approaches to engagement with affected residents and marginalised groups are also important to consider, guided by the local context.

According to [IAP2 Australasia](#)'s spectrum of public participation, community engagement usually involves planning and implementing a selection of actions comprising:

- information
- consultation
- involvement
- collaboration
- empowerment.

Various frameworks, tools and resources have been adapted from this spectrum for different contexts: see [IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum](#). Many government agency staff and employees from other interested organisations have been trained in this spectrum of engagement activities. Strong, well-organised and enabling processes that build trust are critical to community engagement. We recommend that you plan community engagement during the initial stages of the project with clear objectives, timing, methods and allocation of resources. For tools and information on the process of community engagement, see the further resources at the end of this chapter.

Strategies that you could incorporate in this plan for effective community engagement include:

- have a clear and specific purpose for community engagement
- meet people and groups where they are located, in places where they are comfortable, with people they trust
- take time to contemplate and discuss options
- consider travel, sitting fees or other remuneration for those you engage with
- consider the life circumstances of participants - depending on their availability and capacity you may need to consider accommodations if you wish to sample a diverse group representative of the community
- provide information ahead of time and consider whether support may be required to translate or communicate technical content
- keep sensitive information confidential to comply with privacy laws for research and data collection.

For a successful example of participation and partnerships for flood mitigation in a coastal context, see [Citizen science and coastal flooding in Lake Macquarie](#).

Guidance note 5-11: We recommend that you plan community engagement during the initial stages of the project with clear objectives, timing, methods and allocation of resources.

5.4.3 Avoiding risks, barriers and traps

When crafting your community engagement plan, take care to avoid barriers, risks and traps that may hinder your efforts. Examples of barriers to engagement include the following:⁴⁸

- **Resource constraints:** these are an obvious but frequent barrier to community engagement, whether it is funding or staff time that is lacking.⁴⁸ You can mitigate these issues by ensuring that adequate funds are dedicated for these activities during the scoping and planning stage and that engagement activities are prioritised for maximum impact, while also allocating resources for the evaluation and implementation of the outcomes from community engagement.⁴⁸
- **Knowledge and perception issues:** lack of knowledge on how to run effective community engagement among professionals or lack of knowledge and interest within the community on engaging with these projects is another barrier, as are perceptions among clients or professionals that community engagement is a 'nice to have' but ultimately inconvenient step. Providing education on the value of community engagement and procedural education for professionals may help bridge this gap. For NbS, this is particularly important as these projects require community buy-in for long-term survival since they often occur over an extended period of time and struggle to secure funding for long-term green infrastructure maintenance (see Chapter 9).⁴⁸
- **Regulatory barriers:** where engagement is not incentivised or required, projects may be designed with less scope for participation activities.⁴⁸ Creative ideas for incentives and a growing political culture of community engagement are attempting to counter this barrier. However, tick-box engagement requirements run the risk of doing more harm than good. Tokenistic engagement can cause fatigue from over-consultation that is extractive without giving back to communities. When considering community engagement you should also consider historical legacies of government engagement with certain communities, including some First Nations communities, to ensure that no further harm is done.

There can also be reputational risks if community engagement is poorly carried out or not carried out at all.⁴⁹

Try to avoid or minimise the following consultation traps:

- Not all citizen action groups or industry spokespeople are legitimate representatives of their community: the basis on which people claim to speak for others must be clear.
- Highly organised and expert interest groups are more likely to effectively engage in the process, digest and integrate the information provided and contribute substantive feedback. Therefore, it is important to implement measures that ensure representation and participation from emerging/grassroots/underrepresented/informal/loosely structured groups and individuals. Care needs to be taken to ensure less organised groups and members are also represented.
- There is a risk that professional lobby groups will dominate the consultation process, particularly if issues are technical.
- Credibility for the consultation process depends on sound reputation. Strategies that are perfunctory will not return positive outcomes - indeed, they can be counterproductive because the community does not appreciate you wasting its time if the consultation will not influence policy deliberations.
- Do not presume that you already know the issues or the answers.
- It can be fatal for a proposal if any relevant parties are not consulted, including other government agencies, opinion makers or affected bodies.

Guidance note 5-12: NbS planners and practitioners should strive towards best-practice community engagement, developing a plan, allocating resources and applying strategies that are appropriate and targeted to their local circumstances. Considering the reason and power behind community engagement

According to [IAP2 Australasia](#)'s spectrum of public participation, community engagement training often presents an ideal of empowering communities: 'We will implement what you decide.' There are calls to action regarding better consideration of multiple values, knowledges, power and relationships.⁵⁰⁻⁵² This has been contentious in practice and critiques have been directed at risk-averse professional and government water practitioners, particularly regarding the consideration of more community-based innovations: 'water practitioners, appear to act as the limiting factor in the adoption of alternative water supply sources and technologies; ultimately constraining a city's ability to shift towards a more resilient urban water future'.⁵³

Given these critiques, you may wish to consider the following questions and perhaps undertake a stakeholder analysis and a power analysis,⁵⁴ as well as some training (an example of this type of training can be found at [IAP2 Australasia](#)).

Consider in your context: Where do you sit in proximity to power and privilege? Are you being paid to read this? Who are the different stakeholders? What power do the stakeholders have? From what and where? How do you feel and what are the implications (such as status and job sharing or security) of government staff handing over (some) control, management and decision-making power? Who can and should be in decision-making positions and bodies to be more equitable and to share power? What might the barriers be to engagement for different people (e.g. people living under a bridge, in a car, couch surfing or under rental or mortgage stress; young people; people with caring duties; farmers)? Why, how and where would you, your colleagues or partners engage with them?

IAP2 Australasia's spectrum could be further extended to autonomy, where communities implement what they decide. This is already the case for areas with exclusive Native Title; for example, the Yawuru model on 276,000 ha at Roebuck Plains, which includes cattle yards, horticulture, tourism and ecological work. Additional appropriate expertise is usually invited in. True empowerment may involve questioning the entire structure of the initiative, which goes beyond the usual engagement framework. For example, to what extent can a First Nations community be empowered when the initiative is operating from non-First Nations ways of doing? How appropriate, intergenerational and fair are the governance and decision-making arrangements?^{55,56} In some situations, communities may not have a choice as there is limited or no assistance from public funds. (See the further resources section for examples of community autonomy.)

Consider in your context: In what context is more community participation and decision-making beneficial, and to whom?

5.4.4 Community engagement throughout the NbS life cycle

Community and stakeholder engagement should not stop with planning activities: MEM presents ongoing opportunities for local engagement beyond the initial design. Engagement during the MEM phase should be a continuation of the activities completed during NbS planning, building on social and cultural considerations for NbS. Opportunities for engagement related to MEM include monitoring and data collection activities but can also include evaluation and maintenance, depending on local capacity and capability. These can be a huge enabler for NbS, especially those that take years to realise or that run counter to traditional ideas of what flood mitigation looks like (see Chapter 9). See Chapter 11 for further information on opportunities for engagement during MEM.

5.5 Further resources

Tools referenced throughout the chapter

National Native Title Tribunal: <https://www.nntt.gov.au/Pages/Home-Page.aspx>

ICIP: <https://www.terrijanke.com.au/icip>

NHMRC Report: Keeping research on track II: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/keeping-research-track-ii>

Heal the Rivers: <https://www.jagunalliance.org.au/heal-the-rivers>

Social Atlas ID: <https://profile.id.com.au/>

Service Seeker: <https://www.serviceseeker.com.au/>

IAP2 Australasia: <https://iap2.org.au/training/>

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum: <https://iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum/>

Citizen science and coastal flooding in Lake Macquarie: <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/stories-and-case-studies/lake-macquarie-citizen-science>

Seeking out and understanding cultural protocols (National-level resources)

the National Environmental Science Program's *Indigenous Partnerships Principles* (particularly the section on 'Scoping and building a partnership'): <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/env/pages/2f561690-b47e-4bf2-b028-d18739b3486f/files/nesp-indigenous-partnerships-principles.pdf>

the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) *Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/code-ethics>

the related AIATSIS publication, *A Guide to Applying the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-02/aiatsis-guide-code-ethics-jan22.pdf>

Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies

the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *Keeping Research on Track II. A Companion Document to Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders* (particularly the section on 'Cultural competency'): www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ind3

Our Knowledge, Our Way in Caring for Country: Indigenous-led Approaches to Strengthening and Sharing Our Knowledge for Land and Sea Management. Best Practice Guidelines from Australian Experiences, prepared by the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO): <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/indigenous-science/Indigenous-knowledge/Our-Knowledge-Our-Way>

Natural Hazards Research Australia: *New guide to cultural land management and First Nations research resources*: <https://www.naturalhazards.com.au/news-and-events/news-and-views/new-guide-cultural-land-management-and-first-nations-research>

Principles and protocols for cultural land management governance and research, prepared for Natural Hazards Research Australia: https://www.naturalhazards.com.au/sites/default/files/2023-09/Principles%20and%20protocols%20for%20cultural%20land%20management%20governance%20and%20research_v02.pdf

Related resource: *Using Cultural Land Management Principles and Protocols: A guide for collaborative principles, processes and protocols for governance and research*: <https://www.naturalhazards.com.au/sites/default/files/2024-06/NHRA%20PPCLM%2007.pdf>

Indigenous Data Sovereignty

Bodkin-Andrews, G., Prehn, J., Price, C., Walter, M., & Martin, K. (2024). Investigating Racism Measures Through an Indigenous Data Sovereignty Lens. In *Longitudinal Methods in Youth Research*. Springer Nature Singapore, 15, 163-185. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-2332-4_13

Kukutai, T., & Taylor, J. (2016). *Indigenous data sovereignty: toward an agenda*. Australian National University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1q1crgf.1>

Maiam nayri Wingara, & Australian Indigenous Governance Institute. (2018). *Indigenous Data Sovereignty Communique*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3043afb40b9d20411f3512/t/63ed934fe861fa061ebb9202/1676514134724/Communique-Indigenous-Data-Sovereignty-Summit.pdf>

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The website of Maïam nayri Wingara: <https://www.maïamnayriwingara.org/>

Williamson, B., Provost, S., & Price, C. (2023). Operationalising Indigenous data sovereignty in environmental research and governance. *Environment and Planning F*, 2(1–2), 281–304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26349825221125496>

Community-initiated actions and campaigns

This article provides an example of interested parties including Ozfish, the Mulloon Institute, environmentalists and potential investors in the Nature Repair Market. It indicates likely upcoming shifts to make landscape-scale works easier to support and implement: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-31/environment-nature-destruction-permit-waterways-conservation/104729768>

The Monash Water Sensitive Cities initiative shows case studies of community and water practitioner partnership projects that may be possible in your area: <https://watersensitivecities.org.au/>

Nature-based community engagement resources

Australian Government Disaster Resilience Hub. See page 13 for example approaches: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-community-engagement/>

Murray Darling Basin engagement strategy ideas: <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/server/api/core/bitstreams/cc257dc0-ad44-4b6b-ae71-97ccb1049faf/content>

Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment includes engagement planning resources and a toolkit: <https://thedeck.org.au/resource/tools-resources/toolkits/effective-engagement-building-relationships-with-community-and-other-stakeholders/>

Australian National University engagement standards for infrastructure: <https://www.nextgenengagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Download-the-full-IEE-Standards-and-Indicators-here.pdf>

Community autonomy examples

The [Walk Out, Walk On](https://walkoutwalkon.net/) movement, and the related book by Australian author Margaret Wheatly, have examples of actions where community members feel energised and where minimal finance or resourcing was available or required: <https://walkoutwalkon.net/>

ABCD or [Asset Based Community Development](https://www.jeder.com.au/asset-based-community-development/) builds on the strengths, gifts, talents and resources of individuals and communities to inclusive and sustainable communities: <https://www.jeder.com.au/asset-based-community-development/>

First Nations' initiatives such as this example in the energy sector could provide inspiration for funding and supporting autonomy: <https://www.firstnationscleanenergy.org.au/>

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