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Earth Information Day 2021

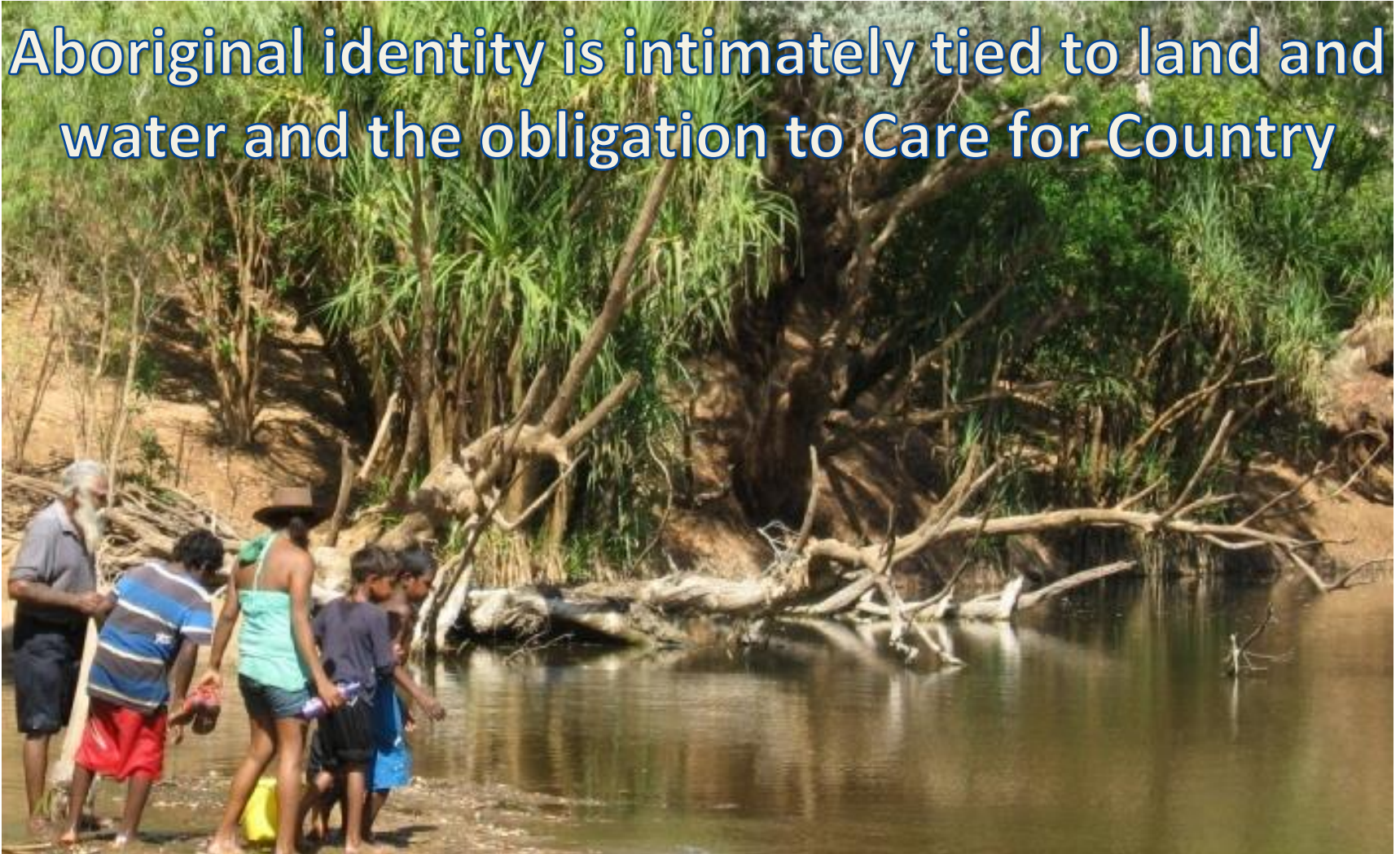
COP26 Presentation

3rd November 2021

Dr Virginia Marshall

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Aboriginal identity is intimately tied to land and water and the obligation to Care for Country



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Caring for Country

Recognising the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their traditional lands and waters is not only an ethical obligation **it is essential to global conservation and addressing climate change.**

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UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Yes to:

- Free Prior and Informed Consent
- Self-determination
- Protection of Indigenous heritage

No to:

Destruction of Aboriginal heritage sites such as the 46,000 year old Juukan Gorge rock shelters blown up by Rio Tinto



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Climate Change impacts on Indigenous people

Indigenous Australians in remote communities suffer health impacts from poor **water quality** and inadequate water infrastructure - climate change will exacerbate this.

Climate change will also reduce the availability of **bush food and medicine resources** impacting Indigenous health, livelihoods and wellbeing.

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Aboriginal Caring for Country

“Water is the basis for our songs and our culture. We have been looking after our waterholes and rivers for thousands of years.”

Joe Brown, Walmajarri Senior Lawman, in Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre 2007, *New Legend* 16

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Indigenous peoples own or manage at least one-quarter of the world's land surface and **they are key to maintaining biodiversity** and ecologically valuable landscapes across 38 million kms² spread across 87 countries or politically distinct areas which overlap with about 40% of all terrestrial protected areas.

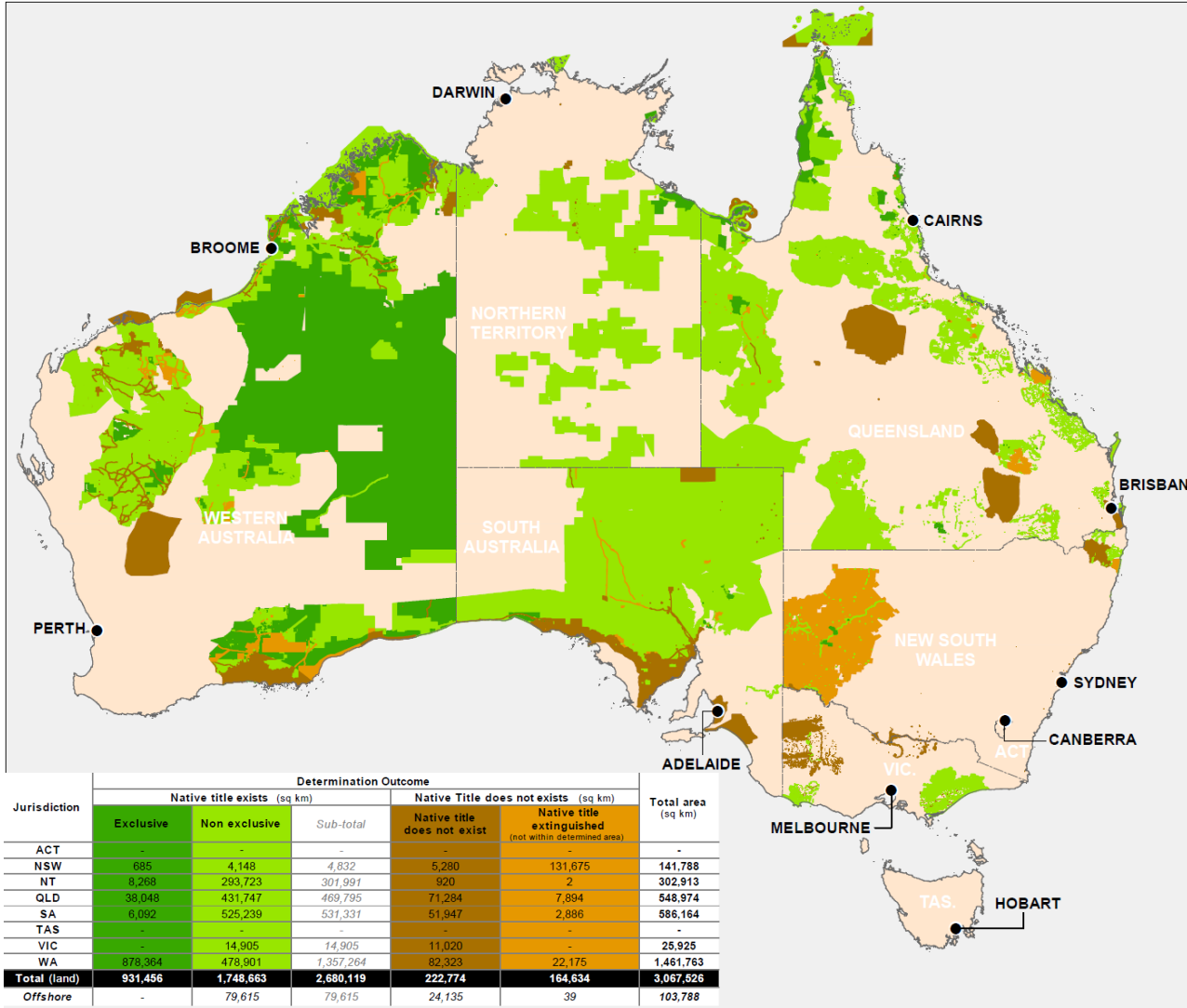
Wildlife Conservation Society 2018 ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 16 July 2018
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180716130732.htm

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Native Title Determinations

As at 30 June 2018



Determination Outcomes

-  Native title exists (exclusive)
-  Native title exists (non-exclusive)
-  Native title does not exist
-  Native title extinguished
(Not within determined area)

Some or parts of some determinations may not yet be in effect or on the National Native Title Register (NNTR). The court may decide that the determination of native title will take effect conditional upon some future event occurring, for example, the registration of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement or the establishment and registration of a prescribed body corporate (PBC). In these cases the determination, or relevant part, will not be registered on the NNTR until the condition has been met.

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Aboriginal peoples' intimate knowledge 'country' tells them that **seasonal indicators are changing** - the times when plants bloom, animals breed, and fruits ripen have shifted from traditional patterns.

Aboriginal peoples' can contribute vital knowledge and **monitor key bio-indicators to guide better land and water management.**

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Aboriginal people across northern Australia are now implementing **innovative and practical solutions** to help them resist, survive and adapt to the global threat of climate change and protect biodiversity and cultural heritage values.

- **Traditional fire management practices**
- **Protecting bush food and medicine resources**
- **Caring for water resources**

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INDIGENOUS FIRE MANAGEMENT

Indigenous rangers use traditional knowledge together with modern science and technology

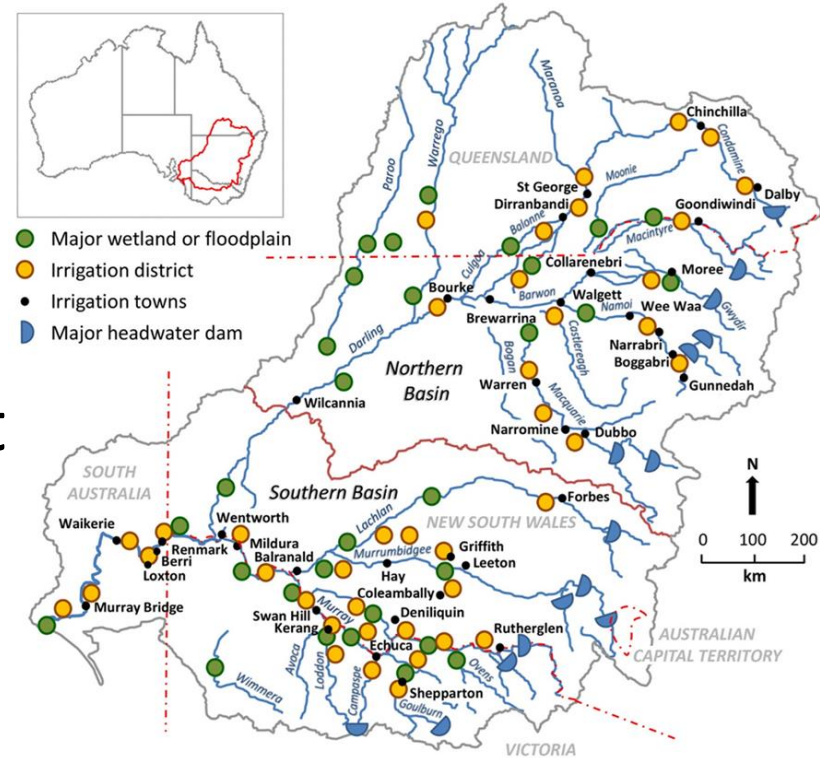
Aboriginal people in the Kimberley have been undertaking traditional fire management for thousands of years. In the last 25 years, with the introduction of native title and the recognition that western fire prevention methods have not been working effectively, we are now seeing a reinvigoration of traditional fire management in the Kimberley and all across northern Australia.



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Aboriginal water knowledge is vital to caring for water resources

“more should be done to ensure that the **depth of insight, knowledge and experience of Aboriginal people** is embraced... Without question, all inhabitants of, and stakeholders in, the Basin will share the benefit if that is the case”



Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission Report 2019: 692

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Indigenous people meet climate change challenge



Delegates to the International Indigenous Climate Change Summit
in Mexico City 2nd-3rd September 2019



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Speaking for Country

‘Human rights are not just abstract concepts that exist in documents such as treaties, conventions and declarations alone. They become meaningful only when they are able to be exercised’.

Australian Human Rights Commission, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Social Justice Report 2010: ix, xii