

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE

# Respect Local Culture



The health of the land, and looking after Country, is linked to the well-being of Aboriginal people, both physically and spiritually.

## Looking after Country

Aboriginal people have lived in our region for thousands of years, caring for the land, water, plants and animals. They have knowledge that can be shared with all of us. There are many important cultural sites, such as middens and rock art, which need to be protected and respected.

The value Aboriginal people place on the land stems from understanding and respect. They are considered the custodians of Country, which encompasses the water, plants, animals and the land. This includes areas of spiritual and social significance.

Once the only people occupying this continent, Aboriginal people used the natural resources according to their 'lore' to maintain systems and species. Traditional 'lore' is often depicted in art, songs and stories.

Cultural burning is an ancient Indigenous burning practice used to heal the land, returning the Country back to health. It protects native plants by removing weeds, which allows native plants to grow and thrive. This improves habitat for native animals and increases biodiversity.



In this activity you are going to learn about the importance of respecting Country and Aboriginal culture. There will be a focus on how cultural burns are used to heal the landscape as well as maintain traditional practices.

**STEP 1** Read through the background information about Aboriginal culture and 'Looking after Country'. It is important to understand the connection Aboriginal people have with the land, both physically and spiritually.

**STEP 2** Read through the 'Cultural Burns, Good for Country' information sheet. You can watch the video on Traditional Burning with Biraban to help develop your understanding of cultural burning.

**STEP 3** Complete the 'Healing the Land' activity sheet by describing what is happening, or what is different, in four images that represent different stages of preparing for, and implementing, a cultural burn.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Hunter Local Land Services is running a colouring-in competition of one of our cultural burn illustrations to celebrate NAIDOC Week.

Students can colour-in their sheet. Fill in their contact details and send their entries to:

Hunter Local Land Services  
Attn: Jane Lloyd-Jones  
Private Bag 2010  
Paterson NSW 2421

Or drop it off at one of our many offices.

**Entries close 15 December 2020.**



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Always Will Be.**

**8-15 NOV 2020**



**Local Land  
Services**

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# CULTURAL BURNS, GOOD FOR COUNTRY

Aboriginal people developed traditional knowledge of the land over thousands of years. They learnt how to 'read' the cultural indicators, such as:

- Soil types
- Geology
- Trees
- Ground cover (grasses and low shrubs)
- Animals and their breeding times
- Flowering times of plants

The timing and frequency of cultural burns depends on these indicators.

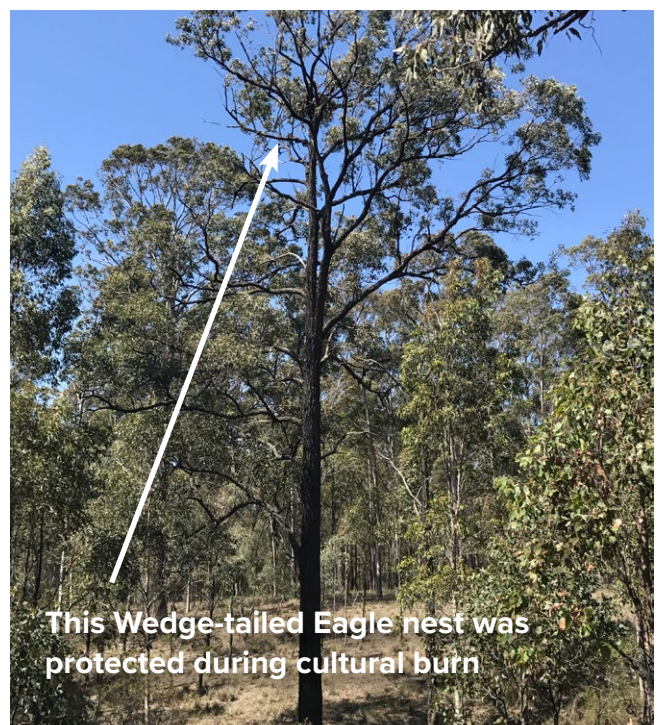
After reading the cultural indicators, the steps taken to undertake a cultural burn include:

1. Making sure the weather on the day is not too hot or windy
2. Clearing the fuel loads from around habitat trees so they aren't damaged by the fire
3. Clearing around Aboriginal objects and sites, such as scarred trees, so they aren't damaged by the fire
4. Working with an Aboriginal fire knowledge holder to apply the cultural burn technique.

Unlike hazard reduction burning, cultural burns are cooler and slower moving, usually no taller than canopy height. Animals are able to move away from the flames and aren't affected by the smoke. The intensity of the fire is controlled, the smoke volume is managed and there is no ember spotting which can cause other fires.

**Traditional Burning - Biraban**

<https://youtu.be/qYIF4SHXsAg>





# HEALING THE LAND

The following four images represent different stages of preparing for, and implementing, a cultural burn. Read through the 'Cultural Burns, Good for Country' information sheet and see if you can describe what is happening, or what is different, in each illustration.



**What can  
you see?**

1

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**What are  
they doing?**

2

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What's  
happening  
here?

3

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What's  
different?

4

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**Explain why you think cultural burns are important to Aboriginal people and for creating a healthy landscape?**

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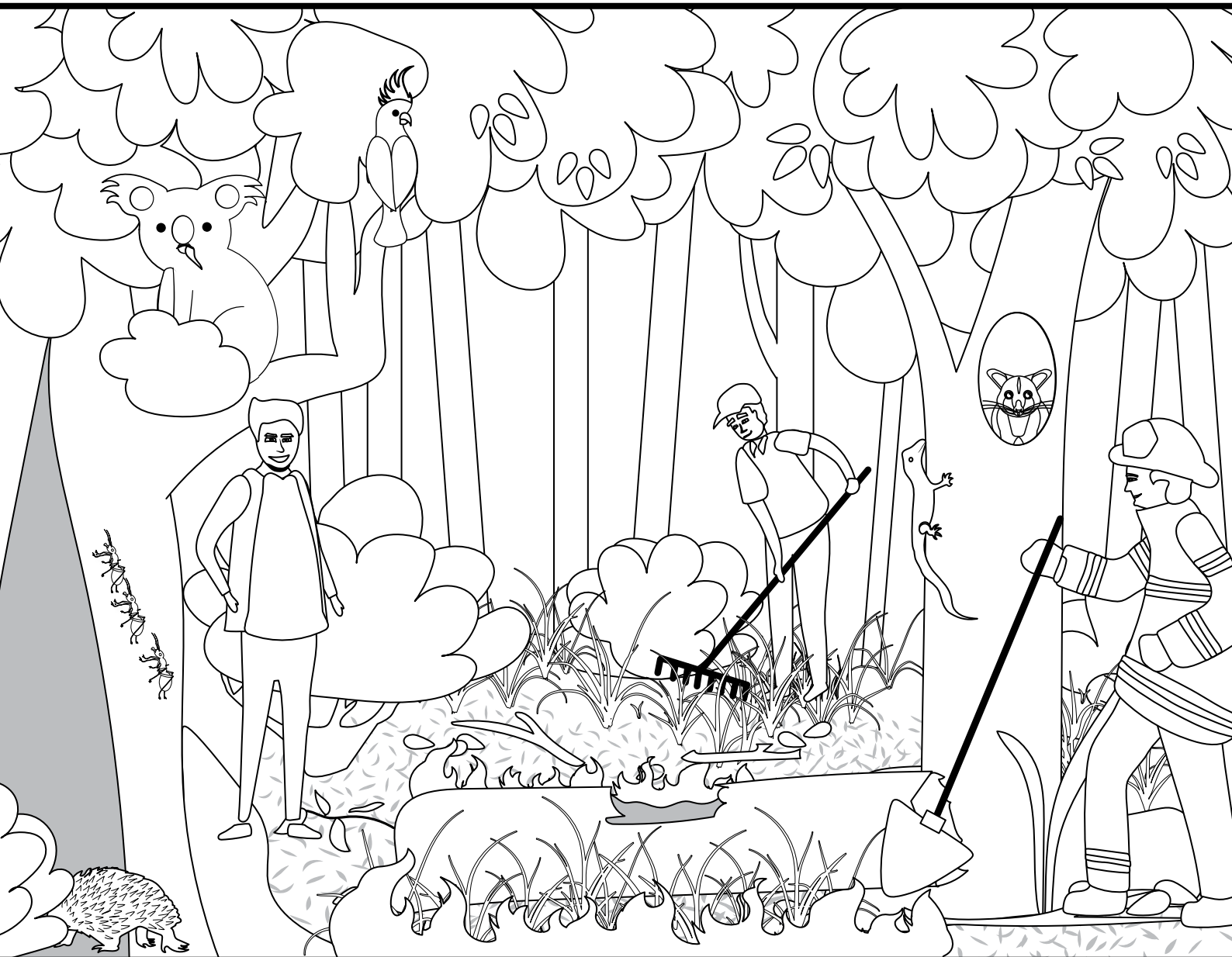
# CULTURAL BURNING COLOURING-IN COMPETITION



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**8-15 NOV 2020**

Cultural burning is spiritually and culturally important.



Colour-in our cultural burning illustration as part of our NAIDOC Week 2020 celebrations and you could win a prize. Fill in the details below and send to Jane Lloyd-Jones at Hunter Local Land Services, Private Bag 2010, Paterson NSW 2421.

Name: .....

Age: .....

Mailing Address: .....

Parent/Guardian phone number: .....

**COMPETITION CLOSSES 15 DECEMBER**