



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



YORTA YORTA NATION

Caring for Country and Culture

Whole of Country Plan 2012–2017



‘Gaka Yawall Ngulla Yenbena Yorta Yorta Woka’
‘Come walk with us the people on Yorta Yorta Country’

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our Whole of Country Plan reflects the aspirations and directions provided by our Elders, members, staff and stakeholders through consultations conducted to support the development of this document and our Strategic Plan (2011–2021)

Our Elders echo the advice of our Ancestors who cared for Yorta Yorta Country over thousands of years. Today we seek to once again take up Yorta Yorta's rightful role in the protection and management of country and all that exists within it.

We would like to specifically acknowledge the support we received from the following individuals and organisations:

- The Yorta Yorta Elders Council
- YYNAC Board of Directors
- YYNAC staff, particularly the NRM Project and Research Teams
- The Working on Country – YYNAC Rangers
- Australian Government – Caring for Our Country and Working on Country Teams
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Parks Victoria

Thanks also to the Traditional Owner organisations both in Australia and overseas that assisted our thinking about what is possible and important today, and into the future in relation to our role as Joint Managers and partners in caring for Yorta Yorta Country.

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FOREWORD

‘Gaka Yawall Ngulla Yenbena Yorta Yorta Woka – Come walk with us the people on Yorta Yorta Country’. This is our invitation to our partners and the broader community through this Whole of Country Plan.

Our Whole of Country Plan respects and promotes the ‘time immemorial role of Yorta Yorta in managing Country’ (Atkinson 2000). It captures our knowledge, values and priorities with an imperative to integrate that role and knowledge today with our partners and required legislative responsibilities. Yorta Yorta has always carried the role of what is termed today as ‘stewardship’. Our Whole of Country Plan captures our views about how and what needs to be the focus of stewardship activity in 2012 and beyond.

As we take this walk together we must be mindful of the leadership Yorta Yorta does and can provide with partners, and community members who share an interest and responsibilities for the protection of country – people, land, water, cultural and natural resources. Our key aspiration is to collaborate as an **‘active partner and leader’**. This includes as we research and evaluate the state of country to inform policy, program and resource decisions; as we educate and engage our own people and the broader community about cultural and natural resource management; and for the delivery of quality on-ground programs and services.

There is also a sense of urgency amongst Yorta Yorta, similar to Traditional Owners across Australia and indeed the world, to support our rightful role and responsibilities through gathering, preserving and protecting the knowledge of our Elders and Ancestors. This sense of urgency is felt in the context of impending further loss of knowledge due to our small and ageing Elders’ population, and the widespread damage that is clearly evident on country since dispossession and colonisation, and more recently as a result of climate change and extreme weather events.

Our Charter, with our partners is to heal and nurture Country and in doing so protect our precious natural and cultural resources for people now, and for generations to come.

With the support of the Australian Government’s **Caring for Our Country (CFoC) and Working on Country (WoC)** programs we have taken significant steps in achieving our goal of active partnership and leadership. Our WoC Yorta Yorta Rangers, soon to be branded as such, are being developed to lead, educate, promote and implement Yorta Yorta knowledge, values and priorities across our jointly managed Crown Lands – National Parks and Reserves. Our Yorta Yorta Rangers will play a critical role in research, leadership, and joint management education of our own and the broader community. They provide a key human resource for the development of our young people, community members, visitors, neighbours and agencies as we work together to heal, protect and manage our precious natural and cultural resources.

Our **Woka Walla (Country and Water)** Natural Resource Management employment enterprise was established in 2011 with support from the CFoC program and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (Goulburn Broken CMA). The Woka Walla has opened up a practical mechanism for the engagement and development of Yorta Yorta and other Aboriginal people in the provision of NRM and related services, such as sustainable agriculture, carbon sequestration program support, climate change and infrastructure works. The Woka Walla goes along way to assisting YYNAC with its interests in establishing economic independence as it takes YYNAC towards enterprise establishment and employment creation in an area that is of a high priority and value. This initiative is also closely aligned with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap program directions and the Australian Government's Indigenous Economic Development Strategy (2011–2018).

A significant part of Yorta Yorta Country also falls within the Commonwealth Government's Priority Employment Area Program (an area in which there is high unemployment and under-employment). The Woka Walla – with leadership from the WoC Yorta Yorta Rangers and our Yenbena Registered Training Organisation (RTO) – will continue to build education and employment pathways for our people, and the broader Aboriginal community through the opportunity to work and be developed in a niche and quality Yorta Yorta NRM service enterprise. Similar to our peers throughout Australia, we have established our enterprise to break the cycle of economic dependence and unemployment while also building the capabilities of our people for practical engagement in NRM and related caring for Country industries, with Yorta Yorta or external employers.

Our Whole of Country Plan also describes our aspirations and priorities for specific NRM activity and projects across the whole of Yorta Yorta Country, including how we can continue to build community knowledge, skills, engagement and relationships for the best possible environmental and NRM outcomes.

We look forward through the implementation of this Whole of Country Plan to collaborating as an equal and resourced partner to effectively manage Country and all within it for now, and for generations to come.

Neville Atkinson – Chairperson YYNAC

Damian Morgan-Bulled – Interim CEO YYNAC

Lance James – Spokesperson Yorta Yorta Elders Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) represents the descendants of the Original Ancestors of the lands of the Yorta Yorta Nation, specifically the Kaitheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Bangerang, Kwat Kwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Ngurai-illiam-wurrung clans. YYNAC's Charter is to represent the members of Family Groups; and to make decisions and act on matters of significance to the Yorta Yorta peoples. YYNAC is governed by a Board of Directors under the guidance of an Elders Council. YYNAC is required to ensure engagement is genuine, and reflects the principles and practices of free, prior and informed consent.

Free, prior and informed consent requires genuine engagement from the beginning of decision-making, or project planning in a way that is relevant to Yorta Yorta: it is at the heart of self-determination and real engagement in caring for country. The YYNAC Whole of Country Plan will assist both YYNAC and natural resource management (NRM) stakeholders such as government agencies and Catchment Management Authorities to foster genuine engagement and collaboration with Yorta Yorta.

YYNAC is also the State-recognised Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) on matters of cultural heritage; and the Joint Manager of the newly created Barmah National Park. Since 2004, YYNAC has also represented Yorta Yorta people on the management of all Yorta Yorta Designated Areas under a Cooperative Management Agreement with the State of Victoria, through the Yorta Yorta Joint Body (YYJB).

This Whole of Country Plan provides a clear statement of high level platforms for action across Yorta Yorta country, as well practical objectives for on-ground research, works and projects. These platforms and strategies were gathered during an extensive consultation process for the development of the YYNAC Strategic Plan 2011-2021 and the development of this Whole of Country Plan.

How was the Whole of Country Plan developed?

The Whole of Country Plan was informed by extensive consultations with Yorta Yorta Elders, community members, Board and staff members, young people, and agency stakeholders through the development of the YYNAC Strategic Plan (2011–2021); research and literature based information; and interviews provided by various other stakeholders.

Yorta Yorta people working with YYNAC in research and policy roles, and on-the-ground as Working on Country (WoC) Rangers, Cultural Heritage Officers and in the Woka Walla (NRM Enterprise team) were also critical in the development of this Plan. These individuals are noted for their practical and long-standing commitment to the assertion of Yorta Yorta Knowledge, rights and interests in the range of roles associated with caring for Country.

Yorta Yorta researchers are also noted world-wide for their expertise in traditional knowledge gathering and cultural mapping with Yorta Yorta being amongst the first Traditional Owner groups to undertake intensive cultural mapping training with First Nations peers in Canada.

Consultations

Underpinning Principles

Three key principles emerged quickly from the research and consultations. These principles underpin all activity in natural and cultural resource management and related areas, such as joint management, sustainable agriculture, water and fire management.

The 3 key principles for NRM decision-making and activity with Yorta Yorta are:

1. Yorta Yorta people have managed and cared for their Country since time immemorial – it is not a new concept or a privilege to be managing Country – it is a right and key responsibility. Yorta Yorta must be appropriately resourced to continue this stewardship role at all levels from research and policy development through to on-ground caring for Country roles and service delivery.
2. Yorta Yorta see no separation between cultural and natural resources; or between Yorta Yorta people and their Country. Yorta Yorta Elders describe:

“For Yorta Yorta people, the land and the world view in which they live is an extension of themselves. The land and water is the embodiment of their identity and existence, as river based people, passed on by the great creation spirit Biami” (Dr Wayne Atkinson)

“I think the forest is like a human body. The Murray River is the spine, and the Barmah and Moira Lakes are the kidneys on both sides. That is how the old people used to look at it. They would say – ‘this is our life’. It is a living thing. We are the land, and we are mother earth. We fit in like that.” (Uncle Colin Walker)
3. Yorta Yorta acknowledges work must be done in partnership with new ‘managers’ of Country and natural resources; new knowledge systems/science and technologies; and with a mind to the needs and interests of all those who now live and work on Yorta Yorta Country. Yorta Yorta is committed to working with its members, Elders, young people, neighbours, agencies and the broader community as it rebuilds and heals Country and people for all.

While Yorta Yorta knowledge and interests in caring for Country are timeless, today Yorta Yorta must contend with the impacts of dispossession and colonisation on Country, culture, people and the environment. The proper and equitable resourcing of Yorta Yorta to effectively participate in the management of Country and natural resources must be achieved in order to nurture Country and people back to a state of health for now, and future generations.

Equitable resourcing includes our capacity to participate equally in policy and program development; to further build and develop our Working on Country Yorta Yorta Rangers for support to the joint management program and the care of our high value areas of interest such as Barmah National Park; and to build our Natural Resource Management contracts team (the Woka Walla) for enterprise and employment creation.

The following 12 high level platforms were identified as a result of this advice and through the consultation process. It is anticipated that a 'round-table' of nominated stakeholders and potential investors will be conducted in October–November 2012, to agree implementation actions and responsibilities nominated throughout this Whole of Country Plan.

The Plan also provides an Action Plan that captures target areas and strategies for practical on-ground application, that will enable 'agreed NRM works and relevant other projects to get done' while building the human capital and knowledge/skill base of Yorta Yorta people and effectively integrating Yorta Yorta Knowledge and values.

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12 PLATFORMS OF ACTION

1. Gather and promote the use of Yorta Yorta Knowledge for inclusion in whole of Country policy development and decision-making, and for the management of high value cultural and natural resources such as the Barmah National Park Ramsar site
2. Use the Whole of Country Plan with required other consultation to inform Yorta Yorta perspectives and interests in natural resource management, joint management, and related other whole of country policy and decision-making, including for priority works on country
3. Ensure Yorta Yorta are engaged as partners in relevant research, evaluation, data collection/collation and monitoring activities (strategic and operational)
4. Develop a YYNAC Whole of Country Economic Development and Employment Plan to promote opportunities for economic independence, employment and entrepreneurship that can be supported through land, water, cultural and natural resource use and management
5. Establish a Yorta Yorta Cultural Audit and Trail that builds a series of connected experiences at sites from the Lower Goulburn through to the NSW border promoting and protecting traditional knowledge, flora, fauna and historical sites. Yorta Yorta uses and management over time to sustain people and country would be promoted at these sites.
6. Support Yorta Yorta education, access and use of cultural and natural resources for customary, social, economic and recreational uses, including sustainable agriculture and tourism enterprises
7. Manage endangered and threatened flora, fauna, species and habitats
8. Improve water quality and water flows, and wetlands restoration
9. Take an active role in fire planning, operations and works, including investigating and reinvigorating Yorta Yorta traditional fire practices
10. Investigate Yorta Yorta's role and opportunities for engagement in Climate Change research, programs, services and investments.
11. Protect known archaeological and historical resources
12. Practice sustainable forest management using sound silvicultural techniques.

Partnership in Integrated and Coordinated Natural Resource Management

Implementation of this Whole of Country Plan and the 12 Platforms for Action, with YYNAC as a 'partner' – not as one of many stakeholders, – will enable Yorta Yorta to take an active role in the identification, care and protection of natural and cultural resources. In doing so, Yorta Yorta accepts the role and functions of current legislation and policy directions in combination with the obligations to care for country, and directions provided by Elders and members.

Critical legislation, strategies and Agreements include:

- YYNAC Strategic Plan 2011–2021
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (YYNAC is the recognised Registered Aboriginal Party under this Act for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage)
- Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 – this Act prescribes accountabilities for for the management of catchments to Catchment Management Authorities – as they relate to land, water and biodiversity
- Cooperative Management Agreement (2004)– this provides YYNAC with a formal role in the management of designated Crown land areas with the State of Victoria
- Climate Change Act 2010 – this provides clear support to YYNAC’s interests in building and providing climate change services, and engagement in carbon sequestration opportunities
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap, Addressing Indigenous Disadvantage makes strong links to the importance of opportunities to reconnect with culture and country, including for employment and economic development
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 – provides the legal framework for the protection and management of nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage such as the Barmah National Park (see others below)
- Indigenous Economic Development Strategy (2011–2018) Australian Government supports the growth of Indigenous business and entrepreneurship as a way to increase Indigenous employment and strengthen Indigenous communities
- Water Act 1989 – empowers the Catchment Management Authorities for regional waterway management. Regional Catchment Strategies are required to adopt an integrated waterways management system, and should reflect the best available scientific information and the aspirations and knowledge of Traditional Owners.
- Joint Management Agreement – Barmah National Park, YYNAC and the State of Victoria
- Regional Catchment Strategies – Goulburn Broken, North East, North Central and Murray.

Key places of interest to Yorta Yorta include:

- The Murray River including tributaries for many and varied food sources
- All Designated Areas contained in the Co-Management Agreement – Barmah National Park; the Ranch; Top Island Reference Area; Top End Reference Area; Murray River State Reserved Forest; Murray River Reserve to and including Ulupna Creek Reserve; Kow Swamp Water Supply Reserve, and Goulburn River State Forest; Kanyapella Timber Reserve; Kanyapella State Forest; Redgum Swamp State Forest; Monroes Reserved Forests; Loch Gary Wildlife Reserve; Reedy Swamp Wildlife Reserve; Youngs Bend State Forest; Gemmill Swamp Wildlife Reserve; Goulburn River Reserved Forest; Goulburn River Reserve; and Murchison North Crown Land.
- Gunbower Park
- Perricoota State Forest including Toolamgabby
- Murray National Park (NSW)
- The Blow Hole (Tocumwal NSW)
- Boat Rock (Mulwala NSW)
- Warby-Ovens National Park
- Yorta Yorta Country extends across Victoria and into southern New South Wales.

Caution:

Yorta Yorta is not only interested in the management of Crown Lands.

The connection between the health and uses of all land, waterways and natural resources is well understood. Yorta Yorta maintains if natural and cultural resources are to be protected while also achieving social and economic benefits for all then **a coordinated and integrated approach is required.**

The physical health of country is also directly connected to the physical, emotional and spiritual health of Yorta Yorta people. Land, water and natural resources are not only necessary for survival, but are sacred and require protection and sustainable management under Yorta Yorta Lore – a system of natural resource management that kept country and people healthy for thousands of years. Sustainable management is not limited to land and water, but is inclusive of all minerals and other natural resources, on Yorta Yorta Country both in New South Wales and Victoria. This approach can be viewed as highly complementary to Victorian Government directions for integrated catchment management, and specifically the Goulburn Broken CMA and other relevant CMAs' Regional Catchment Strategies; and Commonwealth interests in biodiversity protection and sustainable resource use.

Yorta Yorta like other Traditional Owners has always viewed Country as an interconnected whole. Yorta Yorta can play a leadership role in integrated land and water management, and the protection of cultural and natural resources. The Goulburn Broken CMA Regional Catchment Management Strategy (draft) also emphasises the concept of ‘resilience’ as a region’s ‘capacity to absorb disturbance and to continue to function in a desired way’

Resilience thinking and behaviour is not a new concept to Yorta Yorta and other Traditional Owners. The arrival of Europeans on Yorta Yorta country resulted in the rapid destruction and decline of Yorta Yorta natural and cultural resources. At that time Yorta Yorta knowledge and inherent rights to care for Country were denied. Yorta Yorta adapted and continued to protect Country and culture despite the overwhelming forces and impacts of new land and water uses and management regimes over time.

Resilience was a non-negotiable requirement for survival of the Yorta Yorta people and their culture.

Today, there is a realisation that Yorta Yorta and other Traditional Owners managed Country effectively for thousands of years. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) combined with modern-day ‘science’ and an integrated view of land, water and biodiversity is now at the forefront of progressive approaches to natural resource management. This Plan promotes a collaborative approach with Yorta Yorta as a key partner in the management of land, water and cultural-natural resources.

In taking this approach, YYNAC will work with relevant Catchment Management Authorities, government agencies, the broader community, and research institutes to achieve the best possible environmental, social and economic outcomes for the region. This includes during periods of natural disaster when the impacts on land, waterways, natural and cultural assets, and the community are high.

THE WHOLE OF COUNTRY PLAN



Introduction

This Whole of Country Plan (the Plan) provides specific advice and recommendations regarding Yorta Yorta's aspiration for genuine engagement and adequate resourcing as an active NRM partner and leader. The Plan is an action-orientated document that is specifically linked to the YYNAC Strategic Plan (2011–2021) and relevant legislative requirements and policy directions for NRM. The Plan provides Yorta Yorta advice and directions to the effective and culturally sensitive management of Yorta Yorta Country, Yorta Yorta Knowledge, natural and cultural resources.

The Whole of Country Plan also provides through its Action Plan key focus areas for practical on-ground application, and strategies that will enable 'agreed NRM works to get done' while building the human capital and knowledge/skill base of Yorta Yorta people and effectively integrating Yorta Yorta Knowledge and values.

Links to the YYNAC Strategic Plan

The YYNAC Strategic Plan (2011–21) provides the Yorta Yorta vision and desired key actions for the next ten years, as well as high level goals allocated at one and ten year time horizons. There are clear directions contained within the Strategic Plan for the use and management of natural resources. These directions are contained in the focus area: Culture (People, Land, Water and Natural Resources), and have links to other focus areas such as:

- Community engagement
- Organisational capacity building
- External communications and advocacy
- Economic development and employment

All YYNAC Strategic Plan focus areas have a relationship to natural and cultural resource management across Yorta Yorta Country. The implementation of Strategic Plan aspirations has already begun including through:

- Increased engagement of Yorta Yorta in research and caring for Country roles such as the Yorta Yorta Working on Country Rangers
- Building new governance and organisational strengthening for Joint Management
- YYNAC advising and scoping priority works on country
- The conduct of high level research and advocacy programs, led by the YYNAC Research Team, and links to national and international First Nations peers

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- Establishment of the YYNAC Woka Walla NRM contract services (procurement based) employment enterprise, and related education, training and employment activities
- Re-registration of Yenbena RTO and Training Centre as a niche Conservation and Land Management, and cultural training provider

The Whole of Country Plan also supports Strategic Plan directions to engage in equitable and meaningful NRM and Joint Management discussions and decision-making. It provides a clear statement of priorities for action, and preferred approaches to the management of Yorta Yorta cultural heritage and natural values across Country. This information is critical to the development of Joint Management Park Plans; the development and engagement of Yorta Yorta Rangers; and the education of the Parks and NRM workforce in both Victoria and NSW, and relevant Boards and decision-making bodies.

Where is Yorta Yorta Country?

Yorta Yorta Country takes in a unique stretch of forest-wetlands in north-central Victoria and southern New South Wales, covering approximately 2,000 square miles. Yorta Yorta country takes in the largest river red gum forests in the world and contains an internationally recognised Ramsar listed wetland. The National Parks across the Yorta Yorta people's traditional country are jointly managed between Parks Victoria and the Yorta Yorta Nation, with formal governance and Traditional Owner Land Management Board (TOLMB) being established.

There is a rich network of rivers, lagoons, creeks and wetlands that are a key feature of Yorta Yorta storylines and aspirations for natural and cultural resource management. Of particular importance to the Yorta Yorta, and of significant national and international importance is the Barmah natural and cultural landscape. This landscape lives within the heart of Yorta Yorta Country, and contains Australia's largest River Red Gum Forest (occupying 66,000 ha) and is divided by 'Dhungalla' the Murray River and its associated creeks and wetlands, a major source of Yorta Yorta foods, shelter, and cultural-spiritual materials. There are numerous significant cultural sites and resources through this and other Yorta Yorta Country.

The arrival of Europeans, had a devastating impact on traditional groups such as the Yorta Yorta, and their ancestral lands. The survival and protection of ancestral lands is vitally important for the continuity of Yorta Yorta peoples timeless connections with what they believe and assert is theirs by inherent right:

'always was and always will be Yorta Yorta land'.

Yorta Yorta also currently manages ‘Designated Areas’ under a Cooperative Management Agreement with the State of Victoria, negotiated in 2004, and is the Joint Manager of the newly established Barmah National Park which will be under the management of the TOLMB. While these arrangements, along with Yorta Yorta’s role as the Registered Aboriginal Party, support Yorta Yorta’s management role and responsibilities, Yorta Yorta’s interests in NRM are across all Yorta Yorta Country, and are not restricted to Crown Land.

Yorta Yorta Nation

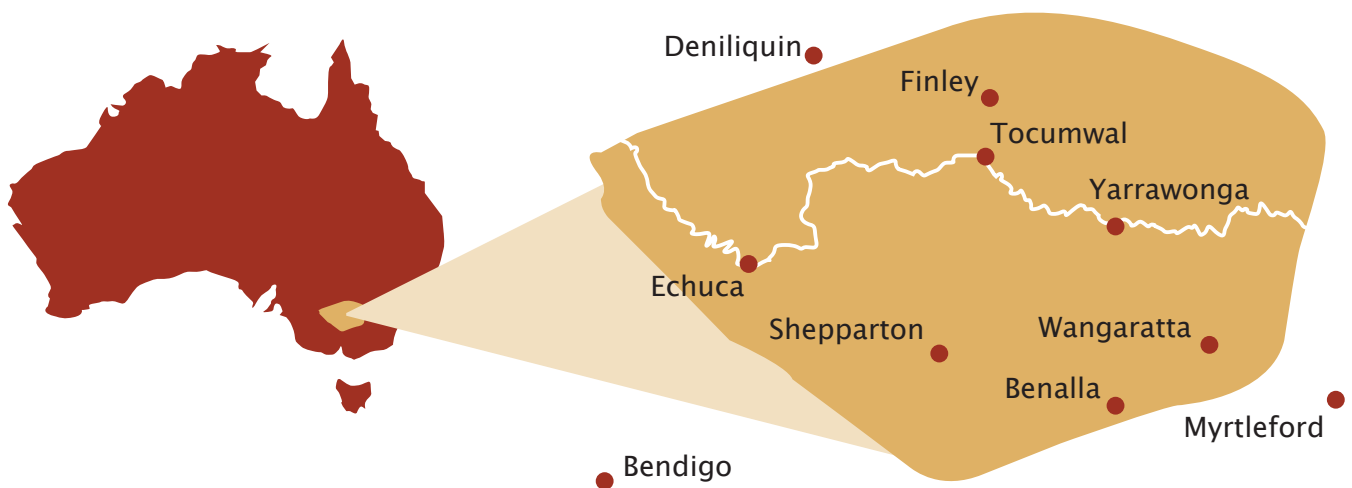


Fig. 1 Traditional Yorta Yorta land surrounding the Murray River from Albury–Wodonga in the east to Gunbower in the west

Yielima Farm

YYNAC also owns a farm adjoining the Barmah National Park called ‘Yielima’.

In many parts of Australia, and overseas, these types of cultural and natural assets are forming a critical role in breaking the cycle of economic dependence and unemployment, while also creating opportunities for reconnection with Country, culture and people, employment and enterprise.

A Master Plan was developed for Yielima Farm in 2009 (see below for a visual of the Yielima Farm area). The Master Plan incorporates attention to natural resource management; sustainable agriculture; and potential tourism and visitor experiences. It’s proposed that this Whole of Country Plan supports the implementation of key recommendations from the Master Plan including for weed and pest control; Indigenous – Yorta Yorta traditional foods planting and harvesting; and sustainable other agriculture linked to tourism and product development.

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Yorta Yorta are linked to other Indigenous owned and operated farms and farmers, for investigating and producing the best possible sustainable agriculture, carbon sequestration, and NRM programs on their farm-based assets, including for teaching and learning purposes with Yorta Yorta, other farmers and the broader community.



Aerial photograph of Yielima (15/02/2011)

The Yenbena Training Centre

Yenbena is also a Registered Training Organisation specialising in Conservation and Land Management and Corporate cultural awareness training. Yenbena has also been approached to step up and into a role as a key deliverer of employability skills and language, literacy and numeracy programs. This role and asset will further support capacity building for Yorta Yorta in NRM.



Yenbena Training Centre and Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Barmah

Yenbena is located at the foot of the Barmah Forest. The Barmah National Park and Yenbena, along with the Dharnya Cultural Centre (currently closed and managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment) are often referred to by Yorta Yorta as a potential Bush University. Yorta Yorta also aspires to a connected approach to NRM that takes in the natural and cultural resources corridor from the Lower Goulburn through to the NSW border and Yorta Yorta Country and assets in NSW. These important sites and related stories form part of the overall vision for a connected and integrated approach to NRM and capacity building for NRM and Joint Management.

Both Yenbena and Yielima can play an important role in the implementation of Strategic Plan and Whole of Country Plan directions for Yorta Yorta and the broader community. Each resource provides rich potential for education, community engagement, economic development and employment across natural and cultural resource management and sustainable agriculture.

Working on Country Rangers Program (WoC Rangers)

The Australian Government funded Yorta Yorta Rangers Working on Country program enabled the engagement of a team of Yorta Yorta Rangers to work specifically across Yorta Yorta country, and specifically around high priority Yorta Yorta cultural sites and assets. This includes the newly proclaimed Barmah National Park which contains one of the largest river red gum forests in the world an internationally recognized Ramsar listed wetland.

The Rangers were employed by YYNAC and seconded to Parks Victoria for a development period. The Australian Government contract is also managed by Parks Victoria as at the time the contract was awarded YYNAC was undertaking new governance arrangements and updating its Constitution. Parks Victoria is required to bring contract management and organizational support, and park management expertise to the Ranger project during the development hosting period.

The team of Rangers, including a Project Management/Team Leader role is expected to focus on the protection and management of Yorta Yorta cultural and natural resources. Specific activities include environmental monitoring, cultural values mapping, revegetation, weed and pest control, the protection of cultural sites, and threatened species and habitat monitoring including for totemic species.

While Rangers receive training in traditional conservation and land management knowledge and practical application, they are also expected to build Yorta Yorta knowledge and skills. This includes an induction on country and on-going education from Elders, and relevant others. Future works and training for this team includes a more intensive role in Yorta Yorta research and knowledge gathering; investigating Yorta Yorta traditional fire management regimes; and education and development of the Yorta Yorta community and the Joint Management workforce and leadership.

Woka Walla (Country and Water) YYNAC NRM Procurement Enterprise

The Woka Walla (Country and Water) NRM Contracting Enterprise was established, similar to many others around Australia, to provide a training, employment and economic development outcome for the Corporation and Yorta Yorta people. YYNAC asserts it can build employment and training outcomes through servicing a range of NRM and related works on country from fencing and weed spraying through to property/infrastructure maintenance. Where works on jointly managed lands are being scoped, the Woka Walla Manager and Yorta Yorta Rangers Project Manager/Team Leader collaborate on requirements, education and training for the best possible service delivery and development of the Woka Walla crews, including where time allows leadership and additional training required from the Rangers team.

Importantly, the Woka Walla also works outside of jointly managed lands and in contexts where private land holders, developers and business interests require a capable and ‘niche’ provider of NRM and related works.

Discussion of Platforms and Recommended Actions

The following provides a summary of key themes merging from discussions relating to the 12 key platforms for action. Each platform further supports the positioning of Yorta Yorta as an active, equal and effective partner and leader in natural and cultural resource management.

PLATFORM 1

Gather and promote the use of Yorta Yorta Knowledge for inclusion in whole of Country policy development and decision-making, and for the management of high value cultural and natural resources such as the Barmah National Park Ramsar site

There was an urgent direction to YYNAC and relevant State and Commonwealth agencies to immediately investigate and resource a Yorta Yorta Knowledge Gathering and Oral History project to inform whole of Country natural and cultural resource management, education and training programs, and tourism/interpretation activities.

There is a long-standing fear that more knowledge will be lost if this action is not progressed and that it needs to be adequately resourced in view of Elders health and other needs to participate effectively. This is clearly expressed by Yorta Yorta man Lee Joachim and Elders who have actively sought support to traditional knowledge and story gathering over many years. An example of a Yorta Yorta initiated activity, supported by Parks Victoria and the Australian Centre of Moving Images (ACMI), can be found on the YYNAC website videos page on <http://www.yynac.com.au/#!video-reel/cxat>

A Protocol for the use of Yorta Yorta knowledge by NRM researchers, teaching and management agencies should be developed as part of implementing this recommendation.

Currently, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation has commenced discussions with Yorta Yorta members about cultural protocols that need to be in place to guide organisations and individuals across the broad range of services and activities. This information could be used to also support the development of an NRM Protocol document for the use of Yorta Yorta Knowledge, and to guide other related activities such as research, and on-ground partnership projects.

This activity should also acknowledge and build on the existing work of the Yorta Yorta Research team, Elders and Yorta Yorta leaders who have been active in the research, education and training space in Australia and overseas over many years, including in the application of

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cultural mapping technologies, and digital oral history recording. Yorta Yorta Elders are keen to marry historical Indigenous knowledge with current scientific knowledge. For example, Elders have approached scientists from the Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) with their concerns for the turtle populations and are working together to save the totem.

This type of collaboration will also provide an opportunity to introduce science as a valuable and important tool to younger Yorta Yorta generations.

Yorta Yorta sees the value of using western/scientific technologies to assist knowledge about the state of Country, including soils, water, vegetation, species, and food sources prior to damage and disturbance caused by invasion, introduced flora, fauna, land/water management techniques, and climate change. This knowledge can then be used to educate and inform effective natural and cultural resource management planning and programs today.

Researchers should also incorporate the use of new technologies and the engagement of young people for succession building for cultural and natural resource management. This type of investment into the development of new technology skills and access to the tools required, for example general positioning system (GPS) technology; information communication technology including social media tools; film and audio tools; and traditional 'yarning' gathering and recording techniques will be critical as Yorta Yorta and other Indigenous people gather, record and seek to communicate their knowledge. In Yorta Yorta's own research to establish the success factors required for Joint Management they concluded and cited the following example.

Central Land Council Case Study

Experience has shown that where programs do involve Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) maintenance and engagement there is likely to be high levels of community investment and participation. For example, a land management project recently facilitated by the Central Land Council was, from the outset, designed to promote and support the IEK of Indigenous women. This project reported the following outcomes:

- nine on-country visits
- the involvement of 31 young people in film recording and editing training
- participation of 52 senior Traditional Owners relaying stories, songs, dance and traditional knowledge to younger people
- the involvement of 80 school children in on-country visits conducted by their Elders
- production of five DVDs containing 20 different IEK movies, together with five community booklets (CLC Annual Report 2008–9).

Case Studies: Lessons in Jointly Managing the Land, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation 2010

Case Study 1

Collaborative' Brushtail Possum Research

Yorta Yorta people were invited to participate in a research program on the Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecular*) in the Murchison East area in 2003. 'Participation' in this case involved Yorta Yorta erecting nesting boxes for the researcher. The locations for the boxes and their orientation were decided upon by the external researcher and, against the advice of Yorta Yorta participants, were mostly attached in positions where they were exposed to too much sun. As a consequence, many of the nesting possums died of heat stress. Yorta Yorta were naturally very upset that this unfortunate incident occurred and resented that fact that their wishes and their knowledge had not been respected.

Extract from Lessons in Jointly Managing the Land (YYNAC 2010)

Case Study 2

Researching the Broad-shelled Turtle

3 July, 2012

More recent research was undertaken by Yorta Yorta and scientists from the Arthur Rylah Institute on the Broad-shelled Turtle (*Chelodina expansa*) – a totemic species for the Yorta Yorta people. This species is listed as threatened within Victoria and Yorta Yorta people have



noted a decline in its abundance throughout the Barmah-Millewa Forest. Although there was some disagreement between the research partners during the initial stages of the program, a successful renegotiation of the objectives was conducted at the request of local Elders.

The new research agenda better reflected Yorta Yorta priorities. The Yorta Yorta people and ARI shared their knowledge to find out more about the local distribution and abundance of this species. The Elders shared IEK and the creation story of the turtle and ARI scientists shared survey and identification techniques and scientific knowledge of the turtles. There are plans to develop the research further and combine the results with data obtained during the aforementioned cultural mapping program. This will help to determine where and when to direct cultural water flows to ensure the on-going survival of this species in the region.

A video of this work can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEZAQqYw1MQ>

PLATFORM 2

Use the Yorta Yorta NRM Plan to inform Joint Management Policy Development, Planning and Decision-Making

Yorta Yorta seeks through its status as the Joint Managers of the newly established Barmah National Park, an active and equal role in the development of Park Management Plans, and Park/Reserve based NRM Plans. It is Yorta Yorta's view that all new plans will incorporate directions contained in this Whole of Country Plan, and engage Yorta Yorta from the start of the planning process. Relevant agencies will ensure YYNAC and community members are adequately engaged and resourced to participate as equal and active partners.

The Joint Management Agreement

The Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement provides for joint management of the Barmah National Park by:

- Recording the Government's commitment to establish a Traditional Owner Land Management Board at Barmah National Park.
- Setting out a governance framework for the Board as well as principles for its operation.
- Creating a negotiation framework for future agreements between the parties. This includes agreements to deal with the working relationship between the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and the Victorian Government and building the capacity of the Yorta Yorta people to take on further joint management functions.

Importantly, the agreement also provides for negotiation about the potential extension of joint management to areas outside of Barmah National Park.

In order to achieve holistic and effective Joint Management, the Yorta Yorta people are seeking support to conduct a significant cultural audit and research project across the whole of Yorta Yorta Country. An example of this type of research is occurring now on a smaller scale.

Yorta Yorta youth are interviewing and recording Elders Knowledge of Country. A comprehensive audit and resulting information will provide:

1. a cultural values overlay on conventional maps of the Forest
2. previously unrecorded historical information about sites
3. new diagrammatic representations of cultural sites
4. a critical and currently missing education and communication tools for both Yorta Yorta and the broader stakeholder group, including NRM decision-makers.

The smaller youth focused activity provides many outcomes that are aligned with Yorta Yorta aspirations for Joint Management, and NRM engagement across the whole of Yorta Yorta Country including:

- the development of young people for Joint Management and NRM (succession)
- gathering and preserving our Knowledge-holders/Elders information to inform priorities and approaches to cultural and resource management
- providing a meaningful mechanism for direct engagement and reconnection with Country for our people (cultural strengthening).

A critical leadership group working with Elders, and the YYNAC expertise in traditional knowledge gathering and cultural mapping, will be the Yorta Yorta Rangers. The WoC Rangers can play a role in assisting this type of research on-the-ground and educating the NRM and Parks managers about findings and appropriate management techniques.

Yorta Yorta Rangers, Woka Walla and Yenbena RTO Working Together

The Yorta Yorta Rangers should also be further developed and promoted as part of the YYNAC on-ground research and traditional knowledge gathering workforce under the guidance of the Yorta Yorta Elders Council and the YYNAC leadership. The Rangers can provide leadership and development to young Yorta Yorta including those receiving employment training and support through the Woka Walla NRM employment enterprise, and the Yenbena RTO.

This approach will also further support the education of agency staff and the broader community in Yorta Yorta cultural values in the landscape, and preferred approaches to natural and cultural resource management.

A whole of NRM agency development activity should be undertaken in conjunction with the launch and communication of this Whole of Country Plan to also assist understanding of the correct and valuable use of the Rangers resource. This includes for those taking up roles on the Traditional Owner Land Management Board (TOLMB).

A description of the key areas for activity for the Yorta Yorta Rangers Team Leader is provided below in the context of a shift to a greater emphasis in that program on traditional knowledge gathering, monitoring and research, mapping and protection of Yorta Yorta values and priorities on jointly managed lands, education, community engagement and interpretation.

Working on Country Rangers – Team Leader/Project Manager

1. Under the guidance of the YYNAC CEO, YYNAC Research Team Leaders and the Cultural Heritage Team Leader, communicate the identification of priorities for Rangers engagement in research and operational works with Parks Victoria, CMAs, DSE and relevant Australian Government authorities
2. Oversee the budget and resource allocations of the Ranger program with support from the YYNAC Finance Officer, and relevant other Finance dedicated roles i.e. with the auspice Finance Officer
3. With the delegated Regional Parks Victoria authority collaborate on the development of Rangers Work Plans, with an emphasis on Elders Council and YYNAC Board directions; Whole of Country Plan and Strategic Plan directions; and YYNAC needs and interests in furthering successful Joint Management
4. Consult as directed by YYNAC with the Board and Elders Council to ensure input and ownership of Ranger program directions and outcomes, and guidance to Yorta Yorta Knowledge gathering on park
5. Initiate and conduct an annual program review with input from a representative group of Yorta Yorta, and relevant other stakeholders such as Parks Victoria, DSE, and the CMAs
6. Provide a point of contact for both YYNAC and agencies on the Ranger program, including convening and supporting Steering Group meetings, with Administration support from YYNAC
7. Lead the development and support of the Ranger team, including appropriate induction, and learning and development programs for relevant park and NRM skills, and Yorta Yorta Knowledge and skills
8. Provide management and performance feedback activities for the Ranger team, including annual performance reviews with support from YYNAC and Parks Victoria/DSE

PLATFORM 3

Ensure Yorta Yorta are engaged as partners in relevant research, evaluation, data collection/collation and monitoring activities

There is a range of research, evaluation and monitoring activities that occur on Yorta Yorta Country. Yorta Yorta seeks engagement from the commencement of the design of research projects through to the preparation of reports, and the communication of findings to stakeholders. This approach supports Yorta Yorta's requirement for free, prior and informed decision-making and the respectful engagement of Indigenous knowledge-holders.

Yorta Yorta accepts that it operates with limited human resources; and that research organisations and projects often operate within tight timelines and budgets. Levels of negotiation and participation should be negotiated and where projects are rated as a high priority for direct engagement and participation, attention to the practical requirements for the inclusion of a 'dedicated Yorta Yorta human resource' needs to be factored into budgets and project planning.

Yorta Yorta also seeks an opportunity to be engaged in practical on-ground research activities such as monitoring river health, endangered species, habitats, weeds and plants. Our Working on Country Yorta Yorta Rangers, and YYNAC Research team have the capabilities to assist this research with relevant partners.

There is a current example of culturally respectful and inclusive research occurring between Yorta Yorta researchers (Lead: Lee Joachim), and the Arthur Rylah Institute. The research and associated reports and communication documents will advise how an endangered totem, the turtle, can be saved.

This approach to the conduct and reporting of research, data collection/collation and monitoring reinforces Yorta Yorta's requirement for free, prior and informed consent decision-making and engagement, and is more likely to protect and advise the correct uses of Yorta Yorta Knowledge as it is gathered.



Practical on-ground monitoring activities are also viewed as an ideal way to achieve the following:

- Applied learning in conservation and land management skills/knowledge
- Applied learning from Yorta Yorta Knowledge holders i.e. Yorta Yorta Rangers and Elders, engaged to mentor this type of research
- Relationship building with volunteers and Landcare groups that have similar interests and roles in protecting Country
- Modeling of cultural respect and informed consent behaviours
- Increased Yorta Yorta participation and sense of ownership in research and decision-making flowing from research



Yorta Yorta youth and a scientist from the Arthur Rylah Institute identify and measure a Common Long-necked Turtle, located during the terrestrial survey

PLATFORM 4

Develop a YYNAC Whole of Country Economic Development and Employment Plan to promote opportunities for economic independence, employment and entrepreneurship that can be supported through land, water, cultural and natural resource use and management

YYNAC seeks to collaborate with relevant local, state, commonwealth, business and community stakeholders and investors to produce and implement a Whole of Country Employment and Economic Development Plan, including for procurement and contracts. This should be specifically linked to NRM and related industries, and partners. This Strategy should include the Yenbena RTO, and the YYNAC Woka Walla (Country and Water) NRM contracting services team, and support Woka Walla's registration with the Australian Indigenous Minority Suppliers Council (AIMSC).

A significant part of Yorta Yorta Country falls under the Commonwealth Government's definition of a Priority Employment Area. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap strategy also recognises the potential for addressing disadvantage and improving health and employment outcomes through reconnection and working on Country roles. It is highly recommended that the Australian Government with relevant state and local government interests continue to support the WoC Ranger, Yenbena RTO and Woka Walla programs as part of this process.

Through the development of this new Plan YYNAC is also advised to further build links and information sharing with other Traditional Owner led NRM enterprises, and Ranger teams throughout Victoria and Australia. This may include where desired collaborative bids for contract works, and resource sharing to support related education, training and employment activities.

There are precedents for whole of country economic development and employment planning across Australia, including the the Employment and Enterprise Development Agreement (EEDA) with the Gnaala Karla Booja Peoples of south-west, Western Australia. The Gnaala Karla Booja Plan actively investigates and promotes opportunities for employment and economic development with connected business, government and community partners.

See http://www.dia.wa.gov.au/PageFiles/923/EmploymentAndEnterprise_GnaalaKarlaBoojaRegion.pdf

THE WHOLE OF COUNTRY PLAN

YYNAC is working with this Traditional Owner group and others in Australia and internationally to understand better and apply effective strategies to enhance economic independence and employment, including through the appropriate management and use of land, water, cultural and natural resources.

In taking this approach Yorta Yorta asserts that it can also address disadvantage, and social, emotional and physical well-being.

COAG

Why support increased economic independence and employment on country

Connection to culture is critical for emotional, physical and spiritual well being. Culture pervades the lives of Indigenous people and is a key factor in their wellbeing – culture must be recognised in actions intended to overcome Indigenous disadvantage.

Pride in culture plays a vital role in shaping people's aspirations and choices. Efforts to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage must recognise and build on the strength of Indigenous cultures and identities.

Assuming, promoting and supporting a strong and positive view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and culture are important ways to reduce social exclusion for Indigenous Australians and to support them in their endeavours and aspirations for a positive future.

Cultural awareness and competency on the part of policy makers and people implementing government programs, the elimination of overt and systemic discrimination, and the development of programs that meet the cultural needs of Indigenous people will be an important part of the Closing the Gap initiative

Extract: The Importance of Culture (COAG)

PLATFORM 5

Establish a Yorta Yorta Cultural Audit and Trail that provides a series of connected experiences at sites from the Lower Goulburn through to the NSW border promoting and protecting traditional knowledge, flora, fauna and historical sites. Yorta Yorta uses and management over time to sustain people and country would be promoted at these sites.

YYNAC will collaborate with community members and relevant investors and stakeholders to identify, map and establish cultural values across Yorta Yorta country (Victoria and New South Wales). This information and data will inform the establishment of a cultural trail that provides a connected experience and view of the landscape, waterways, natural resources and cultural sites that will also in turn support tourism/interpretation and better natural and cultural resource engagement and management. These will include existing infrastructure at key locations such as the Barmah National Park, Yenbena and Yielima Farm with other sites and places of significance to Yorta Yorta.

The unique culture and experience of Yorta Yorta people, as one Aboriginal nation amongst many in Australia, and the truly special features of Yorta Yorta Country – its landscapes, forests, rivers, wetlands and all that exists within them, would be strongly highlighted from these destination-meeting points. Living Keeping Places and visitor experiences would be established as a celebration and experience of the landscape, culture and people and serve a critical role in generating interest, knowledge and enthusiasm for whatever it takes to protect and conserve Country and cultural/natural values for generations to come.

Yorta Yorta Working on Country Rangers are ideally positioned as on-the-ground agents with Yorta Yorta and relevant other researchers to audit, map and communicate this vital information and guide the creation of connected education and interpretation experiences, across Victorian and NSW country.

This initiative is ideally linked to Platforms 1, 3 and 4 for maximum investment and outcomes. Non-conventional partners associated with tourism, the arts, regional development and local government should be actively explored and engaged.

PLATFORM 6

Support Yorta Yorta access and use cultural and natural resources for customary, social, economic and recreational uses.

This aspiration was strongly asserted. Yorta Yorta will produce with relevant agencies Resource Use Agreements that enable Yorta Yorta access to cultural and natural resources for customary and recreational uses. These Agreements will be negotiated with respect of both legislative requirements and what is accepted knowledge about the current state of natural and cultural resource material, places, and other assets i.e. for fishing, hunting and gathering.

Key places of interest to Yorta Yorta include:

- The Murray River including tributaries for many and varied food sources
- All Designated Areas contained in the Co-Management Agreement – Barmah National Park; the Ranch; Top Island Reference Area; Top End Reference Area; Murray River State Reserved Forest; Murray River Reserve to and including Ulupna Creek Reserve; Kow Swamp Water Supply Reserve, and Goulburn River State Forest; Kanyapella Timber Reserve; Kanyapella State Forest; Redgum Swamp State Forest; Monroes Reserved Forests; Loch Gary Wildlife Reserve; Reedy Swamp Wildlife Reserve; Youngs Bend State Forest; Gemmill Swamp Wildlife Reserve; Goulburn River Reserved Forest; Goulburn River Reserve; and Murchison North Crown Land.
- Gunbower Park
- Perricoota State Forest including Toolamgabby
- Murray National Park (NSW)
- The Blow Hole (Tocumwal NSW)
- Boat Rock (Mulwala NSW)
- Warby and Lower Ovens

PLATFORM 7

Manage endangered and threatened flora, fauna, other species and habitats.

Yorta Yorta will collaborate with relevant natural and cultural resource managers for the development of an audit, monitoring and management plan for endangered species and communities. The stress placed on biota in the Murray by current European land and water management practices and from introduced species is of concern to the Yorta Yorta people.

An integrated approach to the protection and management of natural resources, including the protection of Yorta Yorta totemic species, flora and fauna will require a dedicated and collaborative effort on the part of Yorta Yorta and relevant NRM and park managers.

Of particular concern is the health and status of the turtle populations. Turtles are important to the Yorta Yorta as both a totemic protector and as a food source. Bayadherra, the Broad-shelled Turtle *Chelodina expansa*, is a totem species and plays a significant role in Yorta Yorta creation stories, acting as a provider, guide and protector. The two other turtle species, Dhungalla Watjerrupna, the Murray River Turtle *Emydura macquarii*, and Djirrungana Wanurra Watjerrupna, the Common Long-necked Turtle *Chelodina longicollis*, are culturally significant as a food source.

Land use plans and park management plans should incorporate Yorta Yorta Knowledge about endangered and threatened species, and traditional approaches to protection alongside specialised contemporary methods. Special efforts should be taken to leave clusters of natural trees when thinning operations occur in the River Red Gum areas; and to protect food, plant and breeding places for listed species across all Yorta Yorta Country.

The Yorta Yorta Rangers' Works Plans should cover as a high priority, the monitoring and protection of endangered or threatened flora, fauna, species and habitats.

An extension of this type of activity and role, along with continued delivery of YYNAC and Goulburn Broken CMA supported Youth Journey camps on Country to engage young people in the monitoring of endangered species and habitats, will go a long way to generating interest and enthusiasm for this work along with better education and protection of vulnerable flora and fauna.



PLATFORM 8

Improve Water Quality and Water Flows, and Wetlands Restoration

Barmah–Millewa Forest receives its water from the Murray River. The stress and impacts of drought, flooding events, and climate change on the forest, river system, wetlands and natural resources has been well documented by The Living Murray Program (TLM) – a federally funded program which commenced in 2002. However, the TLM program focused on only three groups: vegetation, fish and waterbirds.

During the period 2000 to 2010 the annual discharge of water from the Murray mouth fell below 1,000 GL (Kingsford 2011). This drastic fall in discharge resulted in the drying of most floodplain habitats and the death of many of the River Red Gum Trees that grow on the floodplain.

Flooding and water flows have changed in timing and now peak during the summer irrigation season (Close 1990) This has had major consequences for the health of reptiles including turtles, and has required both Yorta Yorta and other natural resource managers to adapt our management practices and priorities, including in relation to uses and quality of water resources.

Yorta Yorta has developed and will continue to develop a close working relationship, for strategic and operational engagement and decision-making, with those managing water and related affected resources on Yorta Yorta Country, in both Victoria and NSW.

Yorta Yorta also maintain it is critical that there is capacity building for Yorta Yorta people in areas associated with monitoring water quality and flows, and sustainable use. YYNAC will seek this development with relevant agencies, including through Yenbena RTO and dedicated water management training training.

Barmah Ramsar Site

Yorta Yorta is seeking through implementation of this Whole of Country Plan increased engagement in the management and protection of the Barmah Forest Ramsar site. Yorta Yorta understands the fragility of such a precious resource and environment, having managed this area effectively for thousands of years prior to dispossession and colonisation. The conservation and protection of this site is a high priority for Yorta Yorta and an example of where our Rangers, young people and Elders should be actively engaged and supported to assist its protection according to both Yorta Yorta Lore and international obligations to do so.

Yorta Yorta aspirations for this site also include:

- Understanding better the cultural values and ecological character of the site
- Investigating and applying the best possible management approaches
- Investigating threats posed to the site and protection strategies
- Understanding the connectivity of the site within an integrated approach to water and sustainable resource use
- Educating Yorta Yorta and others about the site and its unique features and required protection
- Being more actively engaged in monitoring and protection works



Flooded Red Gum Little Rushy Swamp

PLATFORM 9

Take an active role in fire planning, operations and works, including investigating and reinvigorating Yorta Yorta traditional fire practices

Yorta Yorta will collaborate with relevant agencies responsible for fire planning and operations, including prescribed ecological burns and the detection and management of destructive wildfires. Yorta Yorta used fire as a management tool for thousands of years to promote and restore Country, protect resources, decrease fuel loads, and promote the new growth of vegetation.

Today prescribed fires using existing roads, natural fire breaks, and neighboring roads in the Yorta Yorta Nation Region are also required for the protection of Country, people, assets and cultural heritage. Yorta Yorta seeks an active role in all aspects of fire planning and operations, including through the engagement of Yorta Yorta Rangers and Woka Walla teams to assist with the use of fire for ecological and other protection works.

Yorta Yorta also seeks to investigate and reinvigorate traditional Yorta Yorta fire management knowledge and practices. Fire was long used by Yorta Yorta and other Aboriginal people across Australia to influence and shape the environment. This was required to encourage and protect the growth of particular food sources, and suitable habitats for a range of different plants and animals; to flush out animals; to reduce the fire fuel load; and to make travelling easier. This type of traditional knowledge is critical for Yorta Yorta in an integrated approach to the management of precious and fragile natural and cultural resources.

The positioning of fire breaks is also critical in relation to the potential for damage to cultural sites while Yorta Yorta acknowledges also the need to protect people and infrastructure.

Again, the Yorta Yorta Rangers in combination with the Yorta Yorta Research team are ideally placed with relevant other fire and NRM managers to investigate and recommend possible approaches that blend Yorta Yorta and contemporary fire management knowledge and regimes.

PLATFORM 10

Investigate Yorta Yorta's role and opportunities for engagement in Climate Change programs, services and investments.

There is a range of 'climate change' and 'clean energy' Australian Government initiatives and programs that Yorta Yorta wishes to explore with relevant investors and stakeholders. This includes investment into Yorta Yorta owned lands, and jointly managed areas for carbon sequestration, mitigation, revegetation and rehabilitation activities. Yorta Yorta is committed to the restoration of landscapes and waterways, including the construction of biodiversity corridors that not only heal Country and the environment, but that assist Yorta Yorta in the preservation and communication of cultural and natural values in the landscape.

Yorta Yorta also seeks an active role in the design and construction of biodiversity corridors across Yorta Yorta Country in collaboration with the range of land and water managers responsible for landscape health and healing, and reducing carbon impacts.

Yorta Yorta wishes to investigate how the Yielima Farm and related other community-owned farms could be also used to harvest and demonstrate the growth of seeds and plants for biodiversity plantings, not only for Yorta Yorta but the broader community and stakeholder groups seeking appropriate resources and education about carbon sequestration plantings, and biodiversity protection. A mix of sustainable food growing, and biodiversity plantings/ corridors could provide a key point of interest and connection between Yorta Yorta and the broader farming, and land management communities also interested in seeing how this can be done.

Yorta Yorta also sees a role for the Woka Walla teams in climate change and extreme weather event services.

The potential roles for both the Yorta Yorta Rangers and the Woka Walla NRM Services team should be factored into any planning and decision-making for climate change services.

PLATFORM 11

Protect all archaeological and historical resources across Yorta Yorta Country

YYNAC is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) and as such is the lead advisor on all matters relating to known archaeological and historical resources. However, Yorta Yorta through this Whole of Country consultation process was clear that all landscapes and waterways contain cultural values, not only tangible sites such as burial or ceremonial areas, but flora, fauna, species, waterways and places that hold Yorta Yorta story and knowledge.

YYNAC through this Whole of Country Plan, is seeking a close working relationship with all relevant agencies and the broader community to better protect and identify archaeological and historical resources, and to map and protect the cultural values in the landscape, waterways, plants, flora and fauna that exist within it.

YYNAC sees a close working relationship also between the RAP, and the Working on Country Rangers for the identification and protection of cultural heritage in Designated Areas. This relationship is also important for the education of agency staff, decision-makers and the broader community.

There is a clear aspiration to also build the Yenbena RTO for a role in quality cultural heritage training, including with the support of Yorta Yorta Elders, and embedding cultural values core in all Conservation and Land Management training.

PLATFORM 12

Practice sustainable forest management using sound silvicultural techniques.

YYNAC will seek a close working relationship with all forest managers, including for the protection of the iconic River Red Gum forest and genuine engagement in Parks Victoria's Active Forest Program. This will include capacity building for Yorta Yorta in areas associated with silviculture management, and the management of threatened species such as native plants and animals through forest management programs.

YYNAC also seeks increased on-ground engagement in the Barmah National Park area, including for works required to effectively protect and manage the forest, such as ecological thinning programs. In the conduct of this type of program, Yorta Yorta seeks a holistic and integrated approach that respects the possible use of the resource by native animals and plants, and delivers appropriate management techniques.

In regards to the River Red Gum forests, YYNAC seeks support to an immediate and continuously updated inventory that can be used to inform Yorta Yorta and forest managers about the state of the resource. The River Red Gums have played a vital role in the culture and economy of Yorta Yorta people, having provided a valuable resource for those activities over thousands of years. Yorta Yorta understands today that these uses need to be recorded, and the River Red Gums protected in view of current day pressures.

YYNAC also understands there are other user groups and interests in the forests which will require YYNAC understanding and relationship building for continued delivery.

CONCLUSION

This Whole of Country Plan has been developed to provide a practical framework for genuine engagement and collaboration between YYNAC and regional, state and commonwealth natural and cultural resource managers. It is hoped that the document and accompanying Action Plan, are treated as Living Documents, able to be revisited and refined as new challenges and opportunities arise. The success of implementation relies heavily on the genuine interests and commitments required from stakeholders and partners, including for the proper resourcing of the YYNAC workforce and Elders to participate as equal and respected partners. It will also depend on the capacity and continued goodwill of the Yorta Yorta community to proceed with discussions and planning for the acceleration of their engagement in natural and cultural resource management, across all of Yorta Yorta Country.

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YORTA YORTA NATION

Caring for Country and Culture

Natural Resource Management Plan – Action Plan 2012–2017



‘Gaka Yawall Ngulla Yenbena Yorta Yorta Woka’
‘Come walk with us the people on Yorta Yorta Country’

PLATFORM 1

Gather and promote the use of Yorta Yorta Knowledge for inclusion in whole of Country policy development and decision-making, and for the management of high value cultural and natural resources such as the Barmah National Park Ramsar site

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>1.1 Establish a Yorta Yorta Knowledge Gathering and Oral History project to inform whole of Country natural and cultural resource management planning and related other activities such as tourism, cultural strengthening, and community capacity building</p> <p>This project should engage Yorta Yorta Elders and young people, and make use of current technology for cultural mapping, oral history recording, and sharing information.</p>	2012–2014	YYNAC Elders Council & Research Team
<p>1.2 Prepare a protocol for the use and protection of Yorta Yorta Knowledge by agencies to inform natural and cultural resource management</p>	2012–13	YYNAC , DSE, AG
<p>1.3 Ensure relevant agencies are supporting Yorta Yorta capacity building in both traditional knowledge and western scientific management approaches and technologies.</p> <p>This includes through support to the Yenbena RTO for the delivery of Conservation and Land Management studies, and community capacity building for engagement in NRM and Joint management</p>	2013 – 2017	YYNAC – DSE
<p>1.4 Support the YYNAC Research team, Elders and WoC Rangers to continue cultural mapping and traditional ecological knowledge gathering with research institutes. The current Terrestrial Survey mapping with the Arthur Rylah Institute is an example of activities aimed at the identification and protection of cultural resources and knowledge and should provide a framework for further on-ground cultural mapping projects.</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC
<p>1.5 Seek collaborative funding to the regular conduct of Yorta Yorta Youth Journeys and Culture Camps that connect young people with Elders on-country for cultural Strengthening and Knowledge-skill building. Camps should also promote education and employment pathways to careers in NRM and related industries.</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC – Goulburn Broken CMA, AG CFoC, DSE *Towards a Just Society have indicated interest in support (philanthropist) DEEWR

PLATFORM 2

Use the Yorta Yorta NRM Plan to inform Joint Management Policy Development, Planning and Decision-Making

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>2.1 Induct the Traditional Owner Land Management Board (TOLMB) and Yorta Yorta Joint Body (YYJB) in the contents and directions of this Whole of Country Plan and YYNAC expectations for genuine engagement in NRM decision-making, including for the development of Park Management Plans and works programs</p>	2013	YYNAC CEO TOLMB and YYJB Executive Officers
<p>2.2 Conduct an inter-agency and cross-border workshop and on-going education with key agency staff in New South Wales and Victoria to ensure YYNAC NRM aspirations are captured in park management strategic and operational planning</p>	2013	YYNAC CEO, DSE/PV/CMA, NSW NPWS
<p>2.3 Collaborate with the TOLMB, the YYJB and relevant agencies for the allocation of natural and cultural resource management works to the Working on Country (WoC) Yorta Yorta Rangers and the Woka Walla NRM Enterprise crews. Rangers focus on Jointly Managed lands and the Joint Management program. Rangers should take a leadership and training role where the Woka Walla is engaged to support contract works.</p> <p>Woka Walla can be engaged on Crown Lands and privately held lands where clients require NRM services, and seek to provide Yorta Yorta with a caring for country employment opportunity.</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC CEO TOLMB YYJB
<p>2.4 Investigate and restore the natural hydrology and fire regime in the Barmah–Millewa National Park</p>	2013–2017	TOLMB, CMA, DSE
<p>2.5 Engage the Working on Country Rangers in on-ground research, monitoring and management of invasive species, and the protection of cultural and natural resources in the Barmah–Millewa National Park and Designated Areas.</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC WoC Team Leader and Parks Victoria
<p>2.6 Explore the possibilities of creating or re-visiting old borrow pits within Yorta Yorta country as an efficient source of road material needed to upgrade the roads with the region, and more particularly the Barmah–Millewa and adjacent parks and reserves</p>	2013–2014	YYNAC, CMA, PV, Vic Roads

PLATFORM 3

Ensure Yorta Yorta are engaged as partners in relevant research, evaluation, data collection/collation and monitoring activities

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>3.1 Engage the Yorta Yorta Research team and WoC Rangers with relevant agencies to map existing and priority research activities and the preferred level/type of engagement with YYNAC</p>	2012–2013	YYNAC, AG and State NRM Agencies
<p>3.2 Support the engagement of the Yorta Yorta Rangers in research and monitoring of pests and their habitats, including through setting traps, monitoring cameras, spot lighting, surveys, GPS mapping, data recording, and identifying effective management techniques</p> <p>Data gathering and monitoring skills and activities should be included in Yorta Yorta Rangers annual Work Plans; and youth-based caring for Country education and training activities i.e. as part of the Youth Journey and Yenbena Certificates I–III in Conservation and Land Management training</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC WoC Team Leader Parks Victoria
<p>3.3 Ensure Yorta Yorta is resourced to enable genuine engagement in the development of NRM research, policies and strategies such as Regional Catchment Strategies</p>	2012–2017	DSE, CMAs, YYNAC
<p>3.4 Define soils, hydrology, vegetation and characteristics of natural communities that existed prior to alterations.</p> <p>Produce this information in ways that support knowledge building for Yorta Yorta and the broader community re the impacts of alterations, and the importance of healing, conserving and protecting cultural and natural resources</p>	2013–2014	CMA/YYNAC
<p>3.5 Initiate and complete an Historic Vegetation Mapping Project and use information as a tool for NRM planning</p>	2013–2014	YYNAC DSE CMAs

PLATFORM 4

Develop a YYNAC Whole of Country Economic Development and Employment Plan to promote opportunities for economic independence, employment and entrepreneurship that can be supported through land, water, cultural and natural resource use and management

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>4.1 Identify key land and other assets for hand-back and other acquisition arrangements as part of a Yorta Yorta Whole of Country Economic Development and Employment Plan i.e. Cummeragunja Farm and the Dharnya Centre. This should include assets such as farms for enterprise development, sustainable agriculture, mitigation banks; and tourism infrastructure/assets</p>	2013–2014	YYNAC, ILC, IBA
<p>4.2 Explore options for using Yielima Farm as a sustainable agriculture base and mitigation bank for local developments within and adjacent to the Barmah National Park. This funding source could offset the cost of wetland restoration projects, and other Yorta Yorta priority works/projects</p>	2013–2014	ILC, IBA
<p>4.3 Continue to collaborate with the AG WoC and Caring for Our Country programs to further build the Yorta Yorta Ranger workforce, and the Woka Walla NRM Enterprise.</p> <p>This should include the positioning of the WoC Rangers in 2013 for leadership in joint management on-ground research, monitoring, interpretation, education and training activities</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC, WoC, CFoC
<p>4.4 Assist Woka Walla NRM Business to build its business and client base and to meet the standards required for membership of the Australian Indigenous Minority Suppliers Council (AIMSC) http://www.aimsc.org.au/</p>	2012–2013	YYNAC, AG CFoC and CMA
<p>4.5 Encourage purchaser/client membership of AIMSC by Woka Walla NRM clients such as CMAs and government departments</p>	2012–2013	
<p>4.6 Develop a Whole of Country Economic Development and Employment Strategy that includes a focus on building a sustainable level of contract works to the Woka Walla NRM business, and quality pre-employment and training opportunities for young Yorta Yorta people. This should include structured work experience, Australian school-based apprenticeships and cadetships for higher education and capacity building.</p>	2012–2014	DEEWR, IBA

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>4.7 Work with state, commonwealth and philanthropic interests to properly resource and equip the YYNAC business team , the Woka Walla Enterprise, and the Yenbena Training Centre/RTO.</p>	2012–2014	ILC, IBA, DSE, DEEWR
<p>4.8 Collaborate with state and commonwealth stakeholders in regional development and tourism to secure investment into Yorta Yorta cultural tourism assets and products; and the development of Yorta Yorta people for tourism business enterprise Include the development of Yorta Yorta Rangers, young Yorta Yorta, and relevant others for visitor support, entertainment, education and interpretation on parks.</p>	2012–2014	ILC, IBA, DSE, RDV, Tourism Victoria, Tourism Australia, AG DITR

PLATFORM 5

Establish a Yorta Yorta Cultural Audit and Trail that provides a series of connected experiences at sites from the Lower Goulburn through to the NSW border promoting and protecting traditional knowledge, flora, fauna and historical sites. Yorta Yorta uses and management over time to sustain people and country would be promoted at these sites.

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>5.1 Conduct a Yorta Yorta Cultural Audit to inform the establishment of a Yorta Yorta cultural trail with connected Keeping Places that educate about Yorta Yorta history, cultural and natural values</p> <p>This trail would also heal and educate about what was traditionally on country – plants, animals, water, natural and cultural resources and what remains and/or is being reintroduced and protected today and why</p>	2013–2017	YYNAC, AG CFoC, Relevant NSW and Victorian State Government departments, CMAs
<p>5.2 Establish a significant Keeping Place for Yorta Yorta cultural material and activities in or near Barmah–Millewa National Park that can operate as an effective central coordination point (headquarters) for the Yorta Yorta Cultural trail with space for retail, office, equipment storage, and general visitor services</p>	2013–2017	YYNAC, TOLMB, AAV, Tourism Victoria, DSE
<p>5.3 Collaborate with education, training and employment providers and relevant other stakeholders to position Yenbena RTO as a quality cultural and natural resource management learning centre for Yorta Yorta and the broader community. This should include the development of a learning-teaching resource package to support YYNAC delivery of the new Australian Curriculum to schools; Yorta Yorta cultural awareness training; and visitor experiences from Yenbena and Barmah National Park</p>	2012–2015	AG CfoC, IBA, TOLMB, DEEWR, DoE Relevant NSW and Victorian State Government departments, CMAs
<p>5.4 Continue to seek funding to redevelop the Dharnya Centre as part of the Yorta Yorta cultural trail, and for eventual hand-back to YYNAC</p>	2013–2015	DSE, ILC/IBA, TOLMB

PLATFORM 6

Support Yorta Yorta access and use cultural and natural resources for customary, social, economic and recreational uses

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>6.1 Identify Yorta Yorta priorities for access and use of cultural and natural resources, and Yorta Yorta Access and Uses Agreements with relevant agencies that advise legal and relevant other constraints and opportunities.</p> <p>Access may include Yorta Yorta interests in culture camps, fishing, hunting, growing and gathering foods, camping, gathering firewood, visiting places of cultural significance, being able to care for country and particular sites, practicing and educating about culture, including with young people, and access to address social problems i.e. health and well-being, employment</p>	2012–2013	YYNAC, DSE, PV, CMAs, TOLMB, YYJB
<p>6.2 Conduct a survey to determine the types of game for hunting, and fishing, dates, and relevant information for Yorta Yorta and the public to safeguard safety and ensure sustainable approaches are being applied</p>	2012–2013	DSE, CMAs, DPI
<p>6.3 Collaborate with relevant authorities to develop a comprehensive road plan, and effective methods for shoulder maintenance to ensure safe travel throughout the forest, and other Yorta Yorta lands</p>	2013	YYNAC, VicRoads
<p>6.4 Work with relevant authorities and tourism interests to develop recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, horseback riding, canoeing, fishing and boating that can also educate about Yorta Yorta culture and provide an economic, social and employment outcomes for Yorta Yorta</p>	2013–2017	Tourism Victoria, Tourism Australia
<p>6.5 Establish liaison – outreach meetings with local community groups and interests, agencies and user groups to ensure the best possible communications and engagement with YYNAC for mutually beneficial outcomes (2 per year)</p>	2013–2017	YYNAC, CMAs

PLATFORM 7

Manage endangered and threatened flora, fauna, species and habitats

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
7.1 Engage the Yorta Yorta Research Team and Working on Country Rangers to establish an inventory, monitoring plan, and monitoring activities to protect threatened species, habitats and communities, or those of special concern to Yorta Yorta	2012–2017	WoC YYNAC Team Leader, CFoC
7.2 Identify special protection areas and management strategies for listed species and communities.	2013–2014	YYNAC, DSE, CMA
7.3 Make a special effort to leave clusters of natural trees when thinning operations occur in the River Red Gum areas.		YYNAC, CMA, Parks Victoria
7.4 Locate and cover food and breeding areas used by listed species and include locations on a habitat/vegetation map	2013–2017	YYNAC, CMA, Parks Victoria
7.5 Protect – cover food, and breeding places for listed species	2012–2017	YYNAC, PV/CMA/DSE
7.6 Investigate specialised management practices for listed species that can be implemented if deemed necessary. This includes designation of buffers for aquatic and wetland resources.	2013–2017	DSE, CMA
7.7 Maintain property boundaries according to Crown Land standards so as not to alter natural communities while protecting public property from encroachment.	2012–2017	PV, DSE
7.8 Conduct some experimental plantings of identified flora during the next five year period, including as part of the Yorta Yorta Cultural trail development (biodiversity corridor)	2012–2017	YYNAC, AG CFoC, DSE, CMA
7.9 Locate, identify, and control non–native invasive plants. When these plants are discovered, control plans should be developed and implemented based on the severity of the infestation and the availability of human resources and funding.	2012–2017	YYNAC, CMA, PV

PLATFORM 8

Improve Water Quality and Water Flows, and Wetlands Restoration

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
8.1 Collaborate with relevant agencies and research institutes to build understanding of sustainable water use and cultural water flows,	2013-14	YYNAC, CMA, Office of Water
8.2 Identify hydrologic restoration needs – an assessment/inventory for Yorta Yorta Country	2013-2017	CMA, Office of Water
8.3 Monitor the results of road works and road restoration projects on water quality and flow rates – the water being discharged. The intent is to reconnect wetlands and drainage ways resulting in increased sheet flow, with increased retention (time and volume) of surface and ground water.	2012-2017	Vic Roads, CMA
8.4 Establish specialised management practices for listed species that may be implemented if deemed necessary, including designation of buffers for aquatic and wetland resources.	2012-2017	YYNAC, CMA
8.5 Engage Yorta Yorta with monitoring of water quality and regimes, including surface water and ground water quantities. This should include working with relevant agencies, and education/training providers, including Yenbena RTO, to build Water testing and monitoring skills and employment pathways in that industry for Yorta Yorta	2012-2017	YYNAC, CMA

PLATFORM 9

Take an active role in fire planning, operations and works, including investigating and reinvigorating Yorta Yorta traditional fire practices

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
9.1 Develop a Fire Management Plan, including for ecological burns in the River Red Gun districts, and environmental and cultural heritage site protection outcomes. Yorta Yorta Working on Country Rangers should be developed for the conduct of burns in Designated Areas of interest with support from Yorta Yorta Elders and YYNAC. This is a key aspiration of Yorta Yorta people.	2012–2017	TOLMB, YYNAC, PV, RAP, DSE
9.2 Assist the implementation of prescribed burn plans to decrease fuel loads, promote restoration, and maintain native community structure.	2012–2017	DSE/PV, YYNAC
9.3 Develop an annual prescribed burn engaging the Yorta Yorta Rangers and Woka Walla NRM Enterprise teams	2013–2017	YYNAC, DSE/PV
9.4 Conduct prescribed fires utilising existing roads, natural fire breaks, and neighboring roads in the Yorta Yorta Nation region.	2012–2017	YYNAC, DSE/PV
9.5 Assist the detection and suppression of destructive wildfires.	2012–2017	YYNAC, DSE/PV
9.6 Ensure the Yorta Yorta Rangers and the Woka Walla NRM Teams are trained and equipped to assist prescribed burns and wildfire suppression activities. General fire awareness training for the Yorta Yorta community and Project Fire Fighting opportunities should also be provided.	2012–2017	YYNAC, DSE/PV
9.7 Investigate how Yorta Yorta traditional knowledge and fire practices can be restored in the Barmah–Millewa National Park, as part of the development of a Fire Management Plan (9.1)	2013–2015	DSE/PV

PLATFORM 10

Investigate Yorta Yorta's role and opportunities for engagement in Climate Change programs, services and investments.

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
10.1 Investigate the feasibility of 'carbon farming' for YYNAC at Yielima Farm and other YYNAC owned farms/properties	2012-2014	AG CFoC, YYNAC, AG Climate Change Authority, DPI
10.2 Explore where on Crown Lands and YYNAC owned lands native vegetation can be grown, or regenerated for the purpose of building and storing carbon resilience	2013-2015	AG CFoC, DSE, CMAs, AG Climate Change Authority
10.3 Investigate the role of the WoC Yorta Yorta Rangers and Woka Walla for monitoring and responding to climate change and extreme weather events, such as wildfires and floods.	2012-2017	YYNAC, DSE, CMAs
10.4 Investigate and connect with other community networks and interests in climate change to further support Yorta Yorta interests in protecting ecological, cultural and natural resources	2012-2017	YYNAC, AG CFoC, AG Climate Change Authority
10.5 Ensure YYNAC is aware and engaged in the development of climate change research, including for impacts on Yorta Yorta land, water, natural and cultural resources, and people (social and economic). This includes within all levels of government, national and international research activities and outcomes.	2012-2017	YYNAC, CMA, AG Climate Change Authority

PLATFORM 11

Protect all archaeological and historical resources across Yorta Yorta Country

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
<p>11.1 Assist NRM agencies and stakeholders to understand that landscapes and waterways are embedded with cultural values; archaeological and historical resources – the imprints of Yorta Yorta people over thousands of years. This includes building agency knowledge of legislative and policy requirements for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage that remains ‘in situ’ or in highly modified landscapes.</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC, DSE, PV, CMAs, LGAs
<p>11.2 Collaborate with relevant agencies and authorities for the identification and protection of places and natural resources that have a spiritual/cultural significance i.e. where a traditional plant or mineral occurs, where trade routes were used, or ceremonies conducted</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC RAP and Elders AAV
<p>11.3 Ensure there is appropriate management and protection of cultural material including artefacts, heritage infrastructure, land and waters that hold a special significance, stories, knowledge and language.</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC RAP and Elders AAV – Agencies
<p>11.4 Build a strong working relationship between the YYNAC Registered Aboriginal Party and agencies/ authorities and community groups that may impact on known Yorta Yorta archaeological and historical resources. This includes for cultural heritage education and training, and protection strategies, potentially operating from Yenbena RTO, and accredited where desired, or required e.g. Certificate IV in Cultural Heritage, and Cultural Heritage competencies to be ‘core’ in C&LM certificates</p>	2012–2017	YYNAC, NRM Agencies, AAV

PLATFORM 12

Practice sustainable forest management using sound silvicultural techniques. Practice sustainable forest management using sound silvicultural techniques.

Strategies	Year/s	Lead Agents
12.1 Prepare, review and implement a Silviculture Management Plan.	2013–2014	Vic Forests
12.2 Conduct thinning treatments in order to investigate the effect of ecological thinning on tree health in River Red Gum forest affected by altered environmental conditions, maintain appropriate stand densities, to maintain and improve forest health, to regenerate stands, and to salvage wood following natural disasters. Future management of River Red Gum forests requires increased understanding of potential management tools that could be used to manage modified forests	2013–2017	PV, DSE, TOLMB, YYJB
12.3 Maintain an ongoing River Red Gum Inventory and inventory schedules for use as a tool for land use and management planning decisions, particularly in the Barmah–Millewa National Park.	2013–2014	PV, DSE
12.4 Support the Yorta Yorta Rangers and relevant others to monitor, evaluate and report on threatened species such as native plants and animals that may be nesting in trees marked for removal during ecological thinning programs	2012–2017	YYNAC, PV, TOLMB, YYJB
12.5 Build Yorta Yorta engagement in Parks Victoria’s Active Forest Program, including through monitoring and reporting on forest health, and the health of waterways, fish, vegetation and other natural and cultural resources within the forest.	2012–2017	YYNAC, PV, CMAs
12.6 Administer the historic apiary leases on the forest areas, while establishing stationary bee yards that do not hinder other management activities, natural systems, or listed species	2013	Vic Forests, DPI

AAV	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
AIMSC	Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council
AG CFoC	Australian Government Caring for Our Country
AG DITR	Australian Government Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources
AG WoC	Australian Government Working on Country
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DoE	Department of Environment
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
LGA	Local Government Authority
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSW NPWS	New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service
PV	Parks Victoria
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
YYNAC	Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
YYJB	Yorta Yorta Joint Body
TOLMB	Traditional Owner Land Management Board



YORTA YORTA NATION

Caring for Country and Culture

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