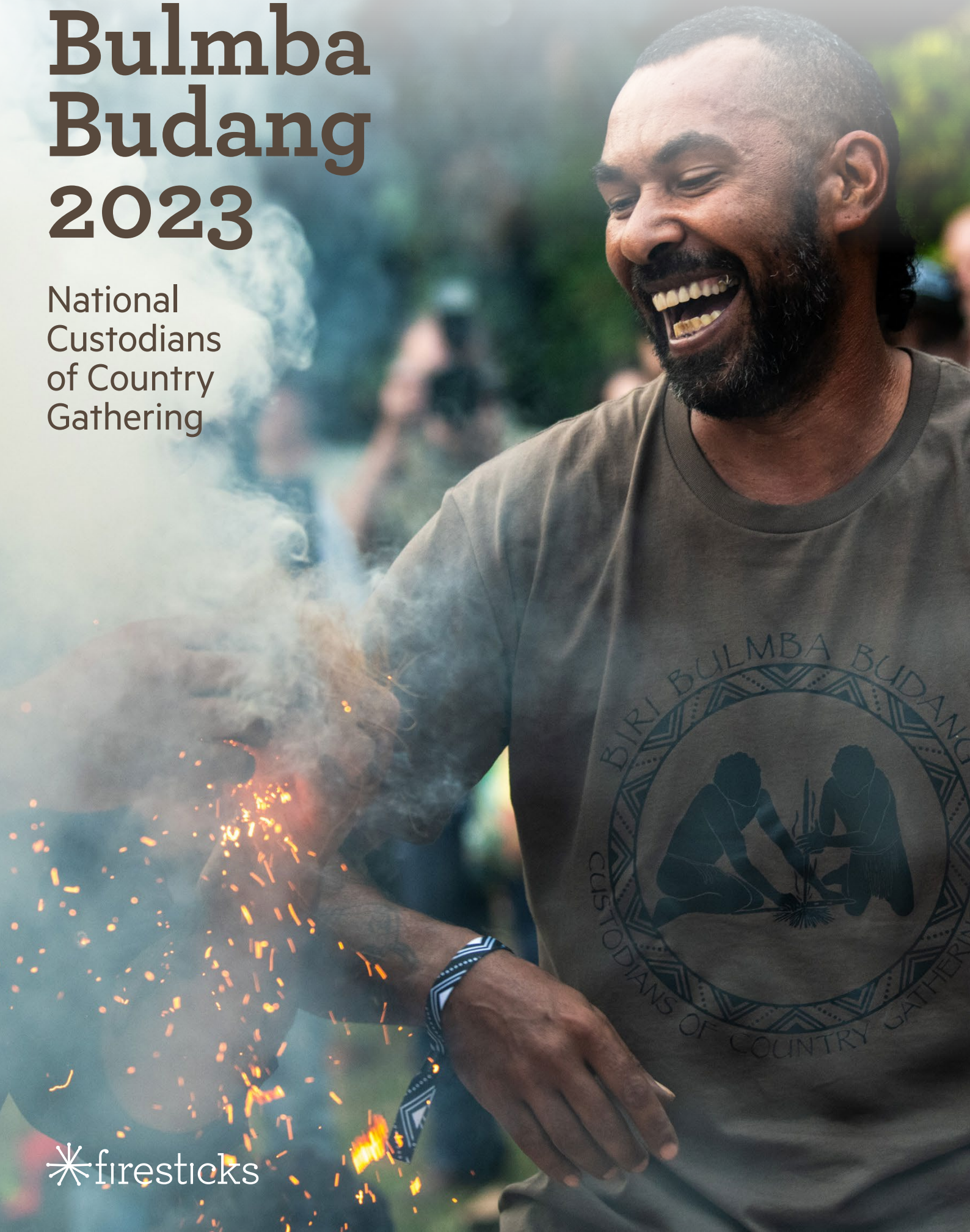
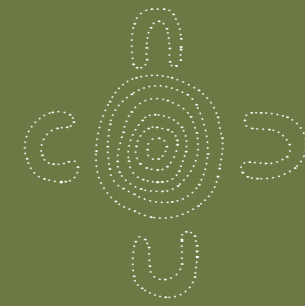


# Biri Bulmba Budang 2023

National  
Custodians  
of Country  
Gathering



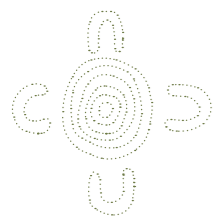




Barry Hunter is a Djabuguy Traditional Owner and one of the hosts of Biri Bulmba Budang National Custodians of Country Gathering 2023.

“What a pleasure it was for this opportunity to host all the mob on Djabugay Country. The Custodians of Country Gathering brought together like minded people from across Australia, and all the way from Canada, to share knowledge and connections in relation to traditional land management. The Gathering brought greater awareness and opportunities to wider Australia about the important role of traditional Indigenous Knowledges, and allowed people who attended to learn first hand how traditional knowledge and governance can inform future solutions. I think the theme of the Gathering ties it all together, which is that we are stronger together.”





**Biri Bulmba Budang National Custodians of Country Gathering 2023 was hosted by Wet Tropics Bama with Firesticks. The event was proudly supported by Landcare Australia and the First Nations Landcare Working Group.**

The National Custodians of Country Gathering has evolved from the National Indigenous Fire Workshop that grew from the Fire Research Project of respected Kuku Thaypan Elders in Cape York.

The 2023 Gathering on Djabugay Country brought together a diverse group of people from across Australia engaged in Cultural Fire and land management practices. Participants shared knowledge and experience with each other, gaining an insight into the interconnected components of Cultural land and sea management practices and the responsibility of looking after Country.

Through cultural workshops, on-Country experiences and conference symposia, the Gathering showcased Indigenous innovation in contemporary land and sea management, including threatened species management, biodiversity, Cultural Fire and agriculture.

**The Gathering at a glance:**

- 587 participants
- 248 Indigenous participants across 49 clan groups
- 32 Indigenous facilitators and presenters
- 150 Traditional Owners from the Wet Tropics involved in 7 locally-run Field Trips
- 48% of event waste diverted from landfill







# Welcome Ceremony

DJABUGAY COUNTRY, TJAPUKAI CULTURAL PARK



Rhonda Brim welcomes us to Djabugay Country



*“When people talk about Indigenous careers, they say - ranger or football player. But we want to open that up to give Indigenous people opportunities in food, music, agriculture, farming, social enterprise, education – everything. And demonstrate the values of Indigenous knowledge across all systems.”*

– Victor Steffensen, Firesticks Co-founder and Lead Fire Practitioner















Djabugay Dancers



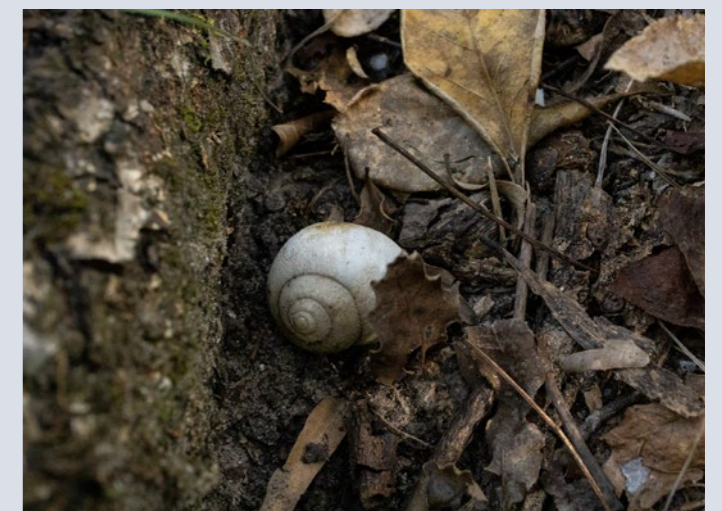
# Workshop: On Country Fire

YIRRGANYDJI COUNTRY, DUNGARRA - REDDEN ISLAND



Siobhan Singleton and Laurissa Mundraby







Siobhan Singleton



George Singleton Snr







Dawul Wuru  
Rangers have been  
conducting Cultural  
Burns at Dungarra  
- Redden Island and  
have implemented  
monitoring sites.







The workshop involved a walk through the Country to talk about the different ecosystems and how they have responded to a prior burn the rangers did earlier in the year.





Participants learnt about the process of preparing for Cultural Burns in built up areas and why it is beneficial to the local community in the area.









# Workshop: Economies, Engagement and Education

DJABUGAY COUNTRY, TJAPUKAI CULTURAL PARK











# Workshops: Cultural Connections

DJABUGAY COUNTRY, TJAPUKAI CULTURAL PARK







Participants engaged in creative and practical workshops to understand how we can use resources from Country to improve the wellbeing of people and Culture.



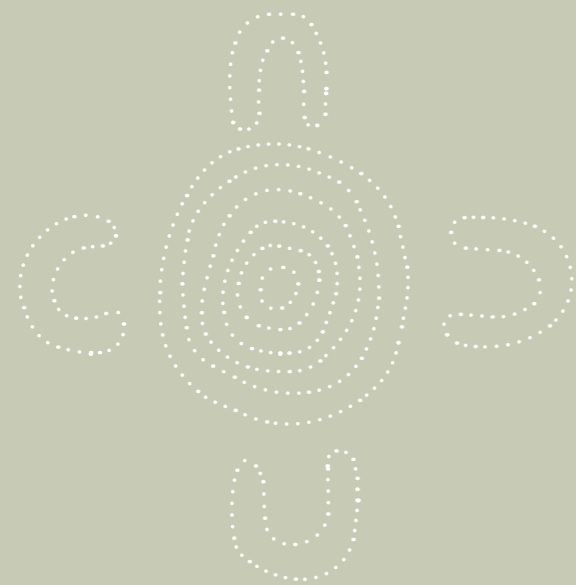




























# Cultural Field Trip: Bunda Bibandji Art and Fire Tour

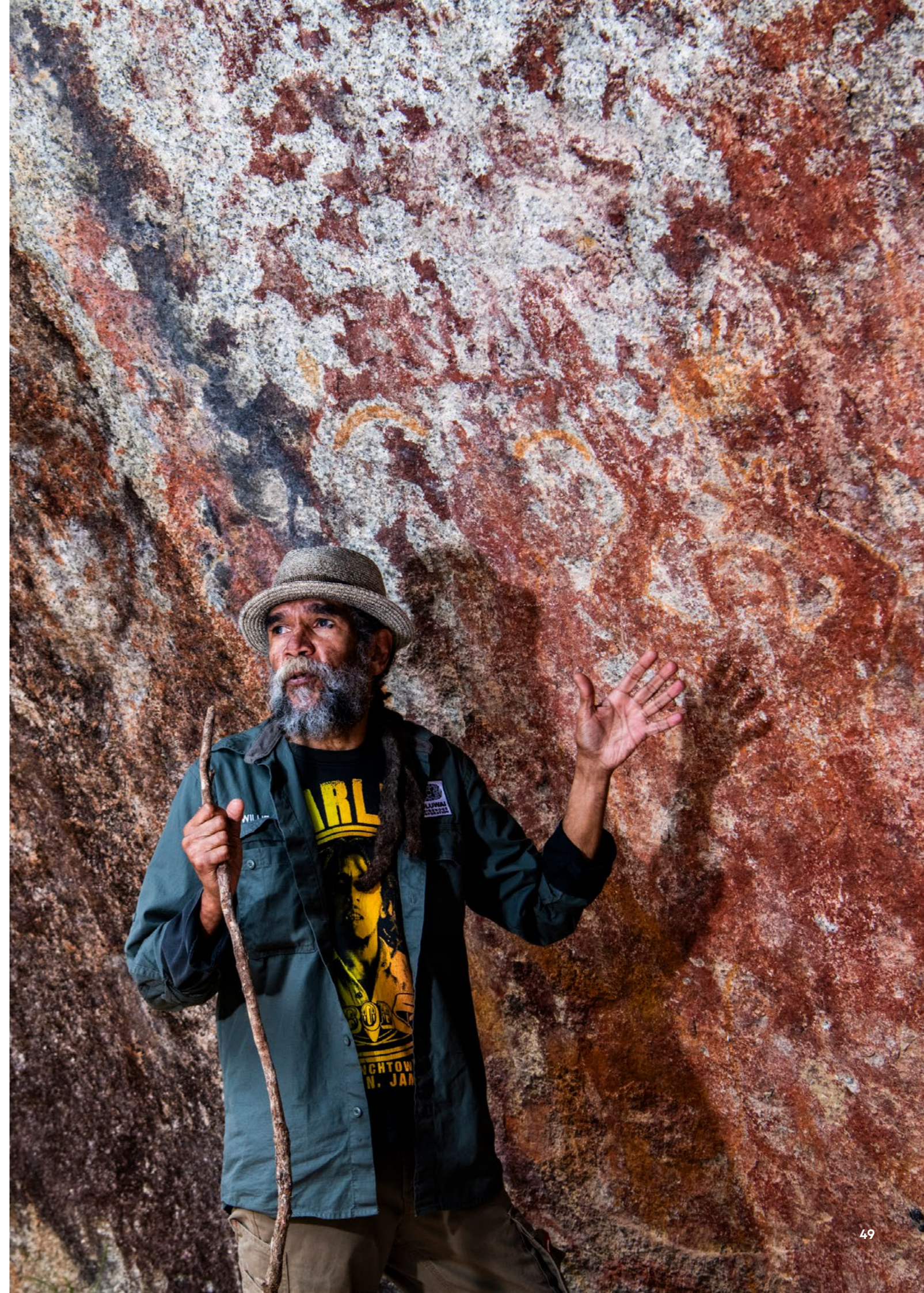
BULUWAI COUNTRY, BUNDA BIBANDJI







Participants visited rock art sites on Buluwai Country managed by Buluwai people with fire. Bunda Bibandji contains the largest rock art complex in the Cairns hinterland.







Father and son duo Willie and Astro Brim facilitated the tour, demonstrating his deep knowledge of art, culture, country and how to protect the land and its assets with fire.









# Yarning Circle: Agriculture, Water and Economies

DJABUGAY COUNTRY, TJAPUKAI CULTURAL PARK

*“We’ve regained so much country back that before we couldn’t use. For us it’s building our confidence around fire, because originally fire was just a scary concept to us, so doing these burns, it eliminates that fear.”*

Ashton Smith, Jervoise Station

Yarning circle presenters graziers Elliot and Ashton Smith from Jervoise Station and Traditional Owner representatives Richard Hoolihan and Eddie Smallwood.





Facilitator Oral McGuire



Trinity Georgetown from NQ Dry Tropics

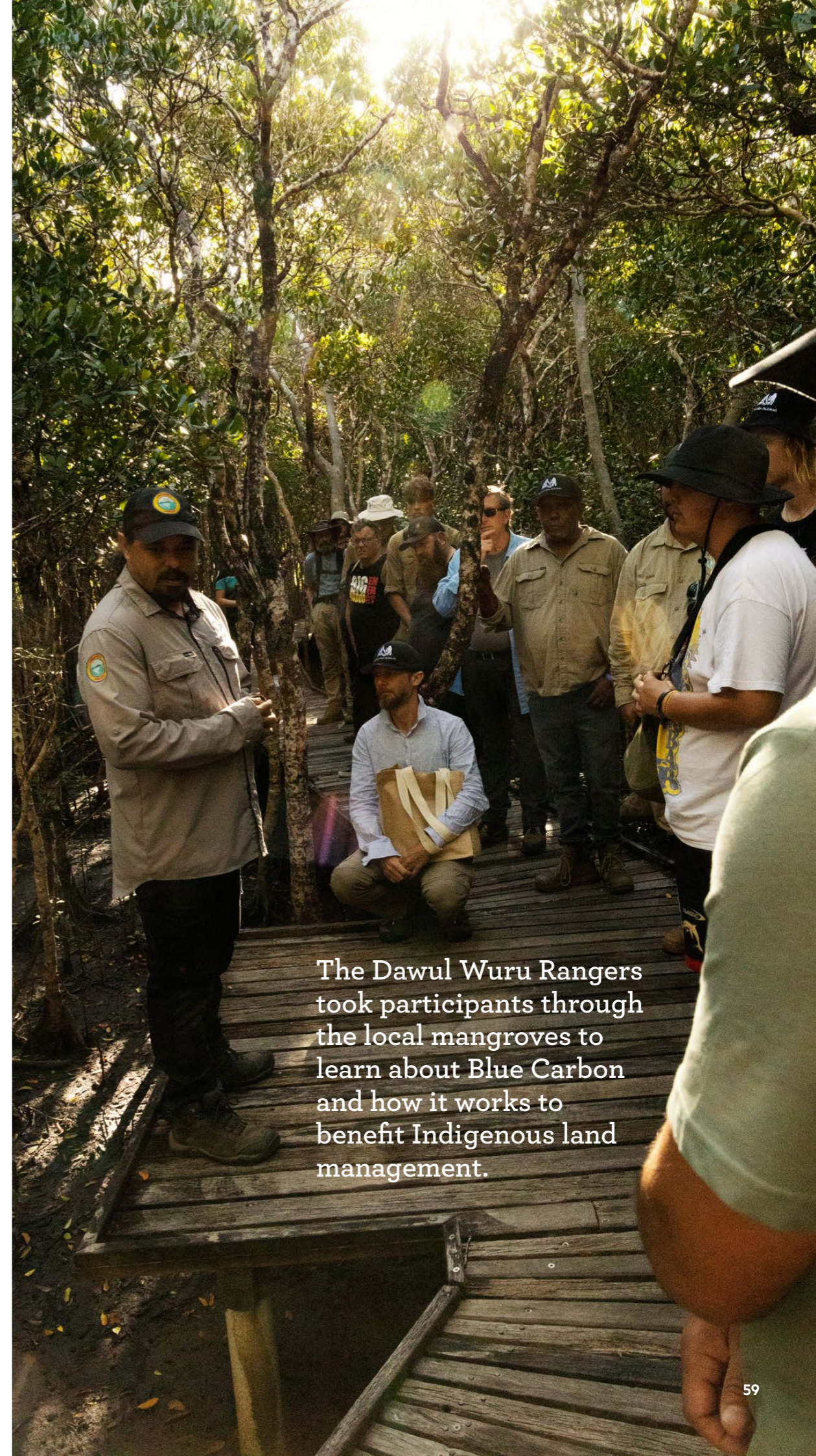


Sylvia Leighton Australian Government Landcare Farming Award winner 2022



# Workshop: Blue Carbon

YIRRGANYDJ COUNTRY, CAIRNS AIRPORT MANGROVES



The Dawul Wuru Rangers took participants through the local mangroves to learn about Blue Carbon and how it works to benefit Indigenous land management.

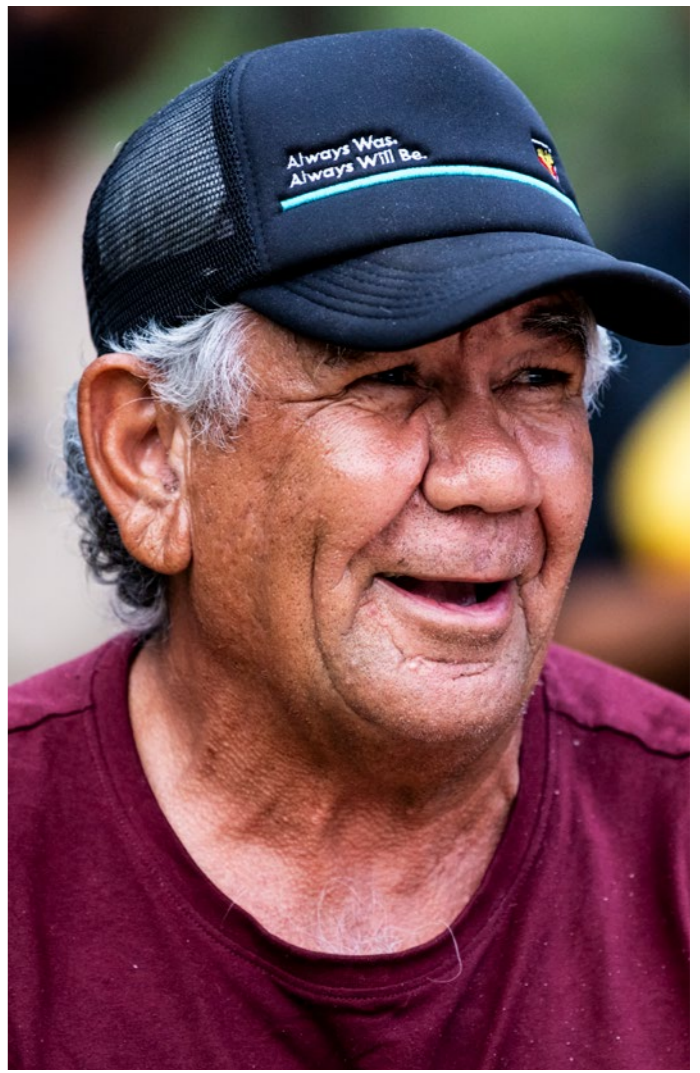
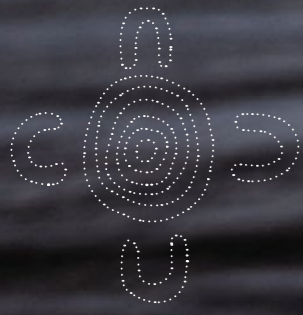




# Fire Stick Race

DJABUGAY COUNTRY, TJAPUKAI CULTURAL PARK











# Workshops: Connection, Resonance, and Plant Knowledge

DJABUGAY COUNTRY, TJAPUKAI CULTURAL PARK







Merindi Schiber and Natalia Mann invited participants to connect with trees through language and resonance of sound.











# Spear Throwing Competition

DJABUGAY COUNTRY, TJAPUKAI CULTURAL PARK











Thank you for being a part of Biri Bulmba Budang  
National Custodians of Country Gathering 2023!





# Thank you

Major partners



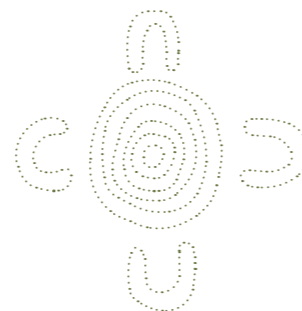
The National Custodians of Country Gathering 2023 is proudly supported by



The National Custodians of Country Gathering 2023 received grant funding from the Australian Government.

Thank you to the National Custodians of Country organising committee:

- Dr. Peta Standley | Firesticks
- Vicki Wundersitz | Firesticks
- Rachel Steffensen | Firesticks
- Gebro Buli | Firesticks
- Anese Burns | Firesticks
- Kylee Clubb | Firesticks
- Karen Walsh | Landcare Australia
- Melissa Higgins | Landcare Australia
- Lisa Cunningham | Face to Face Events
- Michelle Wenden | Djabugay





*“I felt privileged to be amongst so many First Nations People and enjoyed the conference immensely. We attended the Indigenous Social Enterprise presentation, weaving and went on cultural field trips for a Country Fire Workshop and Blue Carbon tour. We enjoyed much learning about culture and were warmly welcomed.*

*I was fascinated as Siobhan Singleton passionately taught us about caring for Country with fire and the fact that there is so much that hasn't been done over the last 100 years. I'm glad to hear that planning of this restoration of country is now starting to be realised. We enjoyed the entertainment provided and met wonderful people throughout the day.”*

– Androulla Mack, National Custodians of Country Gathering participant



[firesticks.org.au](http://firesticks.org.au)

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All images by Annette Ruzicka and Leo Goddard.