



Developing a Sustainable Future for Biocultural Heritage and Biodiversity Conservation: The Contribution Of Traditional Management Practices Of Indigenous Australians.

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INTRODUCTION

- Millennium Development Goals & Australia
- Moving to Sustainable Development Goals
- The role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ecological knowledge in developing a Sustainable Future for Biocultural Heritage and Biodiversity Conservation

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS & AUSTRALIA

The 8 Millennium Development Goals:

MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

MDG 5: Improve maternal health

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS & AUSTRALIA

- Committed to targets set by the world's nations to reduce poverty by 2015:
 - halving extreme poverty,
 - getting all children into school,
 - closing the gap on gender inequality,
 - saving lives threatened by disease and the lack of available health care, and
 - protecting the environment.
- Considered to be achievable commitments to improve the wellbeing of the world's poorest people.
- This is outward looking and the goals underpin Australian aid programs.

MDG7 PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
- Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2000 - 2010

Helping countries adapt to the impacts of climate change and protect biodiversity, for example:

- helping with water security in Tuvalu,
- ensuring transport infrastructure in Vanuatu is better able to endure climatic extremes,
- funding local-level adaptation activities in communities throughout the region,
- helped protect 19 of the earth's largest marine ecosystems through support to the Global Environment Facility,
- Helped protect the coastal and marine ecosystems of six countries of the Asia Pacific region through the Coral Triangle Initiative.
- As one of the founding donors to the Global Crop Diversity Trust which manages the Global Seed Vault in Norway, a safe depository for unique crop varieties from around the world.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2000 - 2010

Australia has helped developing countries to move toward lower carbon growth and environmental sustainability through a range of international and regional programs, for example:

- undertaking a large scale demonstration activity with Indonesia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in Kalimantan.
- supporting the multilateral Clean Technology Fund providing financing for low carbon technologies in the energy and transport sectors. This will help expand geothermal power capacity in Indonesia and solar power in Africa.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2000 - 2010

Australia's Water and Sanitation initiative has helped increase access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and improve hygiene practices, for example:

- Assistance has helped rural and urban communities in countries including Bangladesh, East Timor, Indonesia, Mozambique, Solomon Islands and Vietnam.
- In 2009-10, Australia contributed to a joint program with Denmark and the Netherlands which helped to provide around 1200 new piped and small water schemes in Vietnam. These schemes have given approximately 2.5 million people access to clean water.
- In Indonesia, Australia helped 4.6 million people access clean water and toilets over the last ten years.

MOVING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- The Federal Government has recognised that to build a sustainable Australia improved information is needed about the economy, environment and society, and the linkages between them, to better inform decisions and policy making.
- It has also been recognised that a longer-term view is necessary including considering how actions and decisions today affect the opportunities available to future generations.
- Measuring Sustainability program supports these objectives by establishing a set of sustainability indicators for Australia.
- Accordingly the three areas under which the indicators are established are:
 - social and human capital,
 - natural capital and
 - economic capital.

SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

The set of sustainability indicators for Australia comprises:

- headline indicators, divided into themes, to provide information on key sustainability issues
- supplementary indicators for each theme, to provide additional information and support a more detailed understanding of the issues represented in the headline indicators
- cross-cutting, contextual indicators covering key demographic information:
 - Indigenous population is a contextual indicator under the topic of cultural diversity

SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

social and human capital:

- > skills and education; health; employment; security; institutions, governance and community engagement

natural capital :

- > climate and atmosphere; land, ecosystems and biodiversity; natural resources; water; waste

economic capital:

- > wealth and income; housing; transport and infrastructure; productivity and innovation.

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS CARING FOR COUNTRY

Federal Dept of the Environment:

“Indigenous Australians are key partners with us in managing Australia's environment and cultural heritage.”

Initiatives:

- Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund
- Caring for our Country
- Working on Country
- Indigenous Protected Areas
- Indigenous Heritage Program
- Indigenous Land Management Facilitators
- Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC)

CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

Include Indigenous-specific programs:

- Working on Country,
- Indigenous Protected Areas,
- Reef Rescue Indigenous Land and Sea Country Partnerships and
- The Indigenous Emissions Trading commitment.

WORKING ON COUNTRY

The Working on Country Indigenous ranger program

Reported to deliver successful environmental outcomes and address Indigenous disadvantage.

The significant environmental outcomes across remote and regional Australia claimed include improved management of:

- > fire,
- > feral animals,
- > invasive weeds,
- > threatened species and
- > coastal and marine systems.

WORKING ON COUNTRY

- The Program recognises that Indigenous people have long-held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country.
- The Aboriginal peoples of Australia own an estimated 20 per cent of the Australian continent, upon which lies some of our most environmentally precious natural assets and is rich in cultural and spiritual meaning.
- The Working on Country Program claims to build on Indigenous traditional knowledge to protect and manage land and sea country.
- More than 680 Indigenous rangers are employed in around 95 ranger teams across Australia to deliver environmental outcomes. It is expected that around 730 rangers will be trained and employed through Working on Country by June 2015.
- From 1 July 2013, over \$320 million will be available over five years to support Indigenous rangers.

INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

- Recognition that Indigenous Australians have managed their country for tens of thousands of years.
- An Indigenous Protected Area is an area of Indigenous-owned land or sea where traditional owners have entered into an agreement with the Australian Government to promote biodiversity and cultural resource conservation.
- Indigenous Protected Areas protect Australia's biodiversity while providing training and employment for Aboriginal people on their own country.
- The Indigenous Protected Areas program is claimed to be helping to close the gap of Indigenous disadvantage, with communities reporting better health, social cohesion and higher school attendance.
- Indigenous Protected Areas make a significant contribution to Australian biodiversity conservation.
- There are 60 declared Indigenous Protected Areas covering just over 48 million hectares across Australia covering an area which equates to around 36% of our National Reserve System.

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE PROGRAM

- The Indigenous Heritage Program is an Australian Government initiative that supports the identification, conservation, and promotion (where appropriate) of Indigenous heritage.
- It is an ongoing competitive annual grants program which provides funding to support the identification, conservation, and promotion of heritage places important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Since 2004, the program has provided over \$30 million to support more than 500 Indigenous heritage projects across Australia.

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE PROGRAM

Outcomes claimed include:

- The gaining of short-term employment, as well as marketable skills which contribute to greater economic participation through training in site survey and recording techniques, database management and fencing skills.
- Some organisations have reported using the cultural knowledge captured through IHP identification projects to contribute to the creation of successful cultural heritage tourism businesses.
- Projects have contributed to safe and supportive communities and community cohesion through enhanced respect for the cultural knowledge of Elders, and reinvigorated pride in culture.
- By assisting Indigenous people to access traditional lands to undertake cultural heritage activities IHP projects have also delivered improved health outcomes and healthier lifestyles for participants.

ISSUES

Ensuring improved Aboriginal representation in mainstream NRM bodies.

Better assistance to resolve disputes where they arise in relation to country.

Improved understanding and relationships between community organisations and Traditional Owners/Custodians.

What happens when the project/program is over?

How is biocultural knowledge accessed, recognised and valued?

What arrangements are in place to protect such knowledge and ensure benefit sharing takes place?

Need for arrangements / assistance to facilitate benefit sharing with communities.

Improved access to country and cultural resources.

Support for communities to develop opportunities and negotiate on their own behalf.



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THANK YOU

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