First Nations engagement

Darren Murray | Principal Aboriginal Cultural Liaison Officer
The approach of Traditional Owners to caring for the natural landscape, including water, can be expressed in the words of the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations Board.
“As the First Nations peoples (Traditional Owners) we are the knowledge holders, connected to Country and with the cultural authority to share our knowledge. We offer perspectives to balance and challenge other voices and viewpoints. We aspire to owning and managing water to protect our totemic obligations, to carry out our way of life, and to teach our younger generations to maintain our connections and heritage through our own law and customs. When Country is happy, our spirits are happy.”
NSW - Approach to Aboriginal engagement

'To present community an independent method to include cultural values into Water Resource Plans.'
NSW engaging with community

- Principal Engagement Officer
  - Darren Murray

- Northern Cultural Officer
  - Kara Talbot

- Southern Cultural Officer
  - Brendon Chatfield

- Senior Native Title Officer
  - Brad Delaney
Dhiringgal Solutions
Gomeroi Nation engagement

Dhiringgal will service one of multiple engagement contracts to include cultural values.
Water Resource Plans cover the traditional lands of many nations. NSW will develop 22 water resource plans

Our approach to conduct nation by nation consultation with Aboriginal people is in consideration of the cross cultural and differing emphasis to values within each of the WRP's
Nation by Nation consultation of Aboriginal people in environmental water management is a significant element of the 22 WRPs

Development of polices to ensure environments are protected as they flow down rivers to protect many of the values and uses that are culturally significant to Aboriginal people.

Consulting with Aboriginal people in the early stages of water resource planning is necessary to ensure Community needs and values are understood and can be addressed over the life of the Plan, which will create positive impacts on Aboriginal health and wellbeing.
Two peak Traditional Owner-based organisations in the Basin with a primary focus on natural resource management.

MLDRIN was formed in 1998 and NBAN was formed in 2010. They are independent, self-determining organisations collectively comprised of delegates from 46 member Nations. These organisations promote the views and perspectives of Aboriginal people on water research, policy and management.

Through these relationships we have been able to work together to develop, use and promote a number of research tools to support and achieve the requirements of the Basin Plan.
Nation Representation

The Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations (NBAN)
Barkindji (Paakintji), Barunggam, Bidjara, Bigambul, Budjiti, Euahlayi, Gamilaroi, Gthabul, Gunggari, Gwamu (Kooma), Jarowair, Kambuwal, Kunja, Kwiambul, Maljangapa, Mandandanji, Mardigan, Murrawarri, Ngemba, Ngiyampaa, Wailwan, Wakka Wakka

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN).
Aboriginal values and uses of water

Much of the discussion focused on how water is valued and used for spiritual, cultural, environmental, economic, and social purposes. This information has helped the government understand the wide-ranging ways in which Aboriginal people have valued and used water since before European settlement right up to today.

The following pages summarise what we heard about these values and uses.

Source: QLD Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy – Aboriginal Peoples Water Needs in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin
Fishing for yellowbelly has emotional and social benefits by contributing to wellbeing and health.

Yellowbelly has an environmental value and is used as an indicator of the health of the system.

Yellowbelly is an important cultural value associated with spiritual totems, ceremonies, storytelling and hunting.

Yellowbelly is important to everyday life, such as fishing, cooking, family gatherings and education.

Yellowbelly has a livelihood and economic value associated with additional income.

Source: QLD Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy – Aboriginal Peoples Water Needs in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin