

# SOUTHERN RIVERS CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY: ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND CARING FOR COUNTRY BENCHMARKING SURVEY



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Report prepared for:  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The objective of this report was to benchmark the engagement of the Aboriginal community in NRM activities; their beliefs about Country and managing Country; and their interaction and relationship with the Southern Rivers CMA. The project specifically addressed the 'Caring for Country' target, which stated that "from 2006 indigenous communities will be better engaged in NRM planning and resources and opportunities to 'Care for Country' [will be] increased"

Although the project provides a basis for developing initiatives in relation to increasing the involvement of Aboriginal people in NRM and understanding Aboriginal community beliefs and attitudes towards Country and the management of Country, the project focuses on benchmarking these attributes and is not an explanatory study which seeks to identify and explain the underlying causes or determinants of Aboriginal involvement, attitudes and beliefs. As the first in a series of future benchmarking studies, this project provides the basis for future comparisons and the assessment of change across time.

A questionnaire was developed which was based on issues identified and discussed in a project workshop with Aboriginal community members, CMA staff and other stakeholders and through later consultation with Aboriginal catchment and community support officers at the CMA.

The questionnaire was distributed by CMA Aboriginal catchment and community support officers to Aboriginal people within the region, with an attempt being made to obtain as regionally diverse a sample as possible. The survey was undertaken between December 2007 and May 2008 and the final sample consisted of 74 completed questionnaires.

### **Sample characteristics**

The sample consisted of 56% males and 44% females with an average age of 41 years; and with Aboriginal people having lived in their local area for an average of 23 years. The majority of respondents were from the Illawarra subregion (52%), with there being none from the Upper Shoalhaven or Snowy Monaro subregions.

Fifty-two percent of Aboriginal people indicated they were living on their Traditional country and 86% indicated they knew who the Traditional Owners were in the Country in which they now lived.

### **Accessing and visiting Country**

All Aboriginal people believed they 'should have the right to access their Traditional Country for management and Traditional cultural practices' and that the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people would be improved if they were able to visit their Traditional Country more often.

### **Traditional knowledge**

All respondents were asked to judge on a ten point scale how much they knew about Traditional knowledge. Using a ten point scale, 58% of Aboriginal people scored themselves as average (5) or less in relation to how much they knew about Traditional knowledge.

While the majority of Aboriginal people believed they had an average or less than average understanding of Traditional knowledge, over 80% of Aboriginal people were interested in visiting Country to learn about Traditional knowledge if they had the opportunity to do so.

In addition, the majority of Aboriginal people (58%) did not believe that Traditional knowledge was included and used in decisions that were made about the management of Country.

### **Health of Country**

The majority of Aboriginal people judged the Country near where they lived to be of 'average' health. When asked to judge the health of Country 10 years ago, the health of Country was seen as little different to what it is today.

The three most important issues for Aboriginal people in relation to the health of Country were the decline in native animals (69%); the management of waste and pollutants (69%); and the over use of water (66%).

When Aboriginal people were asked to allocate funding to specific activities to improve the health of Country, the two most important activities identified were (i) land management activities, which included for example bush regeneration, weed control, improving water quality and waste management; and (ii) employment for Aboriginal people. The two issues were not independent, with land management activities often seen as enabling and providing the basis for Aboriginal employment, leading to improvements in Aboriginal education, training, health and housing.

Furthermore nearly all Aboriginal people believe there to be a relationship between the health of Country and the well-being of Aboriginal people.

### **Managing Country**

The majority of Aboriginal people believed that Aboriginal Land Council (58%) and Traditional Owner (57%) boundaries were equally appropriate in the management of Country.

In the management of Country between Government and Aboriginal people, the two most important issues that people believed needed to be addressed were (i) the recognition of Aboriginal heritage and connection to Country (82%) and (ii) the meaningful involvement of the Aboriginal community in decision making (63%).

Seventy-four percent of Aboriginal people indicated they knew of Traditional Aboriginal sites near where they lived, however, two thirds (68%) of Aboriginal people did not believe that Traditional sites on Country were being well looked after.

### **Working on Country**

The majority of Aboriginal people believed that more training and employment opportunities needed to be provided for Aboriginal people in caring for Country, however, there was also a belief that too much emphasis was placed on training rather than creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

### **Learning about Country**

Aboriginal people believed that more learning and education about 'contemporary and traditional natural resource management for Aboriginal people' was required and that most Aboriginal people cared about the Country near where they lived.

However, there were differences of opinion amongst Aboriginal people about whether most young Aboriginal people cared about Country, with 53% of Aboriginal people believing most young Aboriginal people cared about Country, and an equal percentage believing they did not (47%).

### **Involvement in caring for Country**

Amongst all respondents, 32% indicated they had been involved in the last 12 months in activities associated with managing or caring for Country and 15% indicated they were a member of an NRM group or network.

Of the 68% of Aboriginal people who had not been involved in these activities in the last 12 months, the two main reasons for non-participation were (i) not enough time or too busy (46%) and (ii) that they were not aware of these activities (41%).

### **Consultation with Aboriginal people**

Aboriginal people were equally divided in relation to their beliefs about the level of consultation with Aboriginal people in caring for Country, with 52% believing the level of consultation to very good and the majority indicating the level of consultation to be better than it was two years ago.

However, while the level of consultation was regarded as 'very good', only a third (34%) of Aboriginal people believed that issues raised during consultation processes were acted upon.

### **Relationship with Government**

The majority of Aboriginal people (62%) believed they knew which Government agencies and departments were involved in managing and caring for Country.

However, 70% of Aboriginal people were not satisfied with the way State Government organisations were caring for Country and nearly all Aboriginal people believed that Government agencies and departments needed more education 'relating to Aboriginal Cultural connection to Country, Traditional ecological knowledge and the role it can play in modern NRM practices'.

In addition only 50% of Aboriginal people believed Government meaningfully involved Aboriginal people in decisions about caring for Country.

### **Relationship with the Southern Rivers CMA**

Amongst all respondents, 61% indicated that they had heard of the Southern Rivers CMA and 49% indicated that they had had contact or communication with the CMA.

The two most frequent forms of contact between Aboriginal people and the CMA were (i) talking to someone from the CMA (76%) and (ii) attending a meeting organised by the CMA (62%).

The relationship between Aboriginal people and the CMA was seen as very positive with the majority of Aboriginal people who had heard of the CMA also agreeing with the following statements:

- The CMA is doing a good job managing and caring for Country in the region (90%);
- The CMA consults with Aboriginal people in caring for Country (90%);
- The CMA works effectively with Aboriginal organisations to address the interest of Aboriginal people (93%);
- The views of Aboriginal people are respected when the CMA consults with them about caring for Country (87%);
- The CMA listens and acts on the information provided to it by Aboriginal people (90%);
- The CMA takes into account the interest of Aboriginal people in its decision making (93%).

Although there were very positive attitudes underpinning the relationship between Aboriginal people and the CMA, Aboriginal people were equally divided about the appropriate level of Aboriginal representation within the CMA.

It was found that 81% of all respondents indicated they would like to know more about the Southern Rivers CMA.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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The Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA) is one of 13 regional natural resource management (NRM) bodies in NSW. The CMAs were established in 2004 and each CMA has developed a Catchment Action Plan (CAP) and Investment Strategies to support the management of natural resources and achievement of NRM targets within each region.

In achieving the NRM targets as identified in the CAP, capacity building and engagement are integral activities which need to be undertaken to *enable* the achievement of core NRM targets and objectives. These enabling activities, which lead to intermediate outcomes within the program logic of NRM, include for example increasing community awareness and knowledge of NRM issues and increased participation and involvement in NRM activities. By increasing the capacity and involvement of landholders, the community and key stakeholders in NRM, the greater the likelihood that the resource condition targets, as identified in the CAP are able to be achieved.

This project provides the basis for benchmarking the capacity of the Aboriginal community, their relationship with the SRCMA and their involvement in NRM and will form a reference point for ongoing internal monitoring and evaluation by the CMA over the life of this and future CAPs.

## 2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

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The primary objective of this project was to benchmark the engagement of the Aboriginal community in NRM activities; their beliefs about Country and managing Country; and their interaction and relationship with the Southern Rivers CMA.

The objective of the study was to allow benchmarking of the Community and Partnerships Target<sup>1</sup> which stated that:

“By 2016 communities of the Southern Rivers region are willing and adequately supported to actively engage in natural resource management”

Furthermore, this component of the benchmarking project specifically addressed the ‘Caring for Country’ target, which stated that:

**C3: Caring for Country** From 2006 indigenous communities will be better engaged in NRM planning and resources and opportunities to ‘Care for Country’ are increased.

Although the project provides a basis for developing initiatives in relation to increasing the involvement of Aboriginal people in NRM and understanding Aboriginal community beliefs and attitudes towards Country and the management of Country, the project focuses on benchmarking these attributes and is not an explanatory study which seeks to identify and explain the underlying causes or determinants of Aboriginal involvement, attitudes and beliefs. As the first in a series of future benchmarking studies, this project provides the basis for future comparisons and the assessment of change across time.

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<sup>1</sup> Southern Rivers CMA (2006). *Catchment action plan*. Southern Rivers CMA, Wollongong, NSW.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

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There were two core components to the project methodology which included (i) the design of the questionnaire and (ii) the survey of the Aboriginal community.

#### **3.1 Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire was based on issues as identified and discussed in a project workshop with Aboriginal community members, CMA staff and other stakeholders and through later discussion and consultation with Aboriginal catchment and community support officers at the CMA. The questionnaire was designed so that it could be self completed. Furthermore the questionnaire consisted primarily of structured and close ended questions, which because they are more quantitative, are more suited to a monitoring program where comparisons and trends can be examined across time.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) included questions which focussed on:

1. Frequency of visiting and understanding of Country;
2. Beliefs about the health and management of Country;
3. Aboriginal involvement and consultation in caring for Country;
4. Beliefs about Government involvement in caring for Country;
5. Beliefs about the CMA and the involvement of Aboriginal people; and
6. Characteristics of Aboriginal respondents.

#### **3.2 Survey Sampling**

The sampling frame consisted of all Aboriginal people within the Southern Rivers NRM region.

The questionnaire was distributed by Southern Rivers CMA Aboriginal catchment and community support officers to Aboriginal people within the region, with an attempt being made to obtain as regionally diverse a sample as possible.

The survey was undertaken between December 2007 and May 2008. The final sample consisted of a total of 74 completed questionnaires.

## 4 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The sample consisted of 56% males and 44% females with an average age of 41 years; and with respondents having lived in their local area for an average of 23 years.

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were from the Illawarra subregion (52%).

Table 1. "What is the town or nearest town to where you live?"

Subregions	Count	Percent
Illawarra	33	51.6
Eurobodalla	16	25.0
Shoalhaven	10	15.6
Bega	5	7.8
Total	64	100.0

Note: Ten respondents did not provide the town location in which they lived.

Source: EBC (2008).

Table 2 shows that only 3% of Aboriginal people<sup>2</sup> lived on a rural property or farm, with the majority indicating they lived in town (89%). Furthermore only 15% of all respondents indicated they owned, or had a vested interest in or looked after a property outside of town.

Table 2. "Do you live in town, an Aboriginal community (village) or on a rural property or farm?"

Location	Count	Percent
Live in town	64	88.9
Aboriginal community (village)	6	8.3
Live on a rural property or farm	2	2.8
Total	72	100.0

Note: Two respondents did not respond to this question.

Source: EBC (2008).

Fifty-two percent of Aboriginal people indicated they were living on their Traditional country and 86% indicated they knew who the Traditional Owners were in the Country in which they now lived. Amongst those not living on their Traditional Country, Table 3 identifies the Traditional Country from which they were from.

Table 3. "What is your Traditional country?"

Traditional Country	Count	Percent
Wiradjuri	6	31.6
Kamilaroi	4	21.0
Gumbaingirr	2	10.5
Sydney Darug	1	5.3
Biripai	1	5.3
Yuin Nation	1	5.3
Bundjalung	1	5.3
Minjungagul	1	5.3
Euro	1	5.3
Wormi	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0

Note: Fifteen respondents did not identify their Traditional Country.

Source: EBC (2008).

<sup>2</sup> In addition to using the term 'respondents', the term 'Aboriginal people' is also used in the same context as this is the population of interest on which the sample is based.



## 5 ACCESSING AND VISITING COUNTRY

As shown in Figure 1, in the last two years 55% of Aboriginal people indicated they had never visited their Traditional Country<sup>3</sup> or had done so once a year or less.

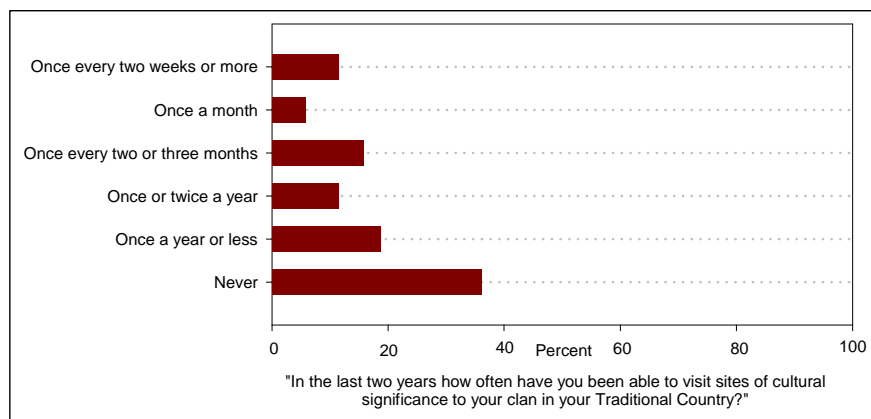


Figure 1. Frequency of visiting sites on Traditional Country

Figure 2 shows that all Aboriginal people believed they “should have the right to access their Traditional Country for management and traditional cultural practices” and that the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people would be improved if they were able to visit their Traditional Country more often.

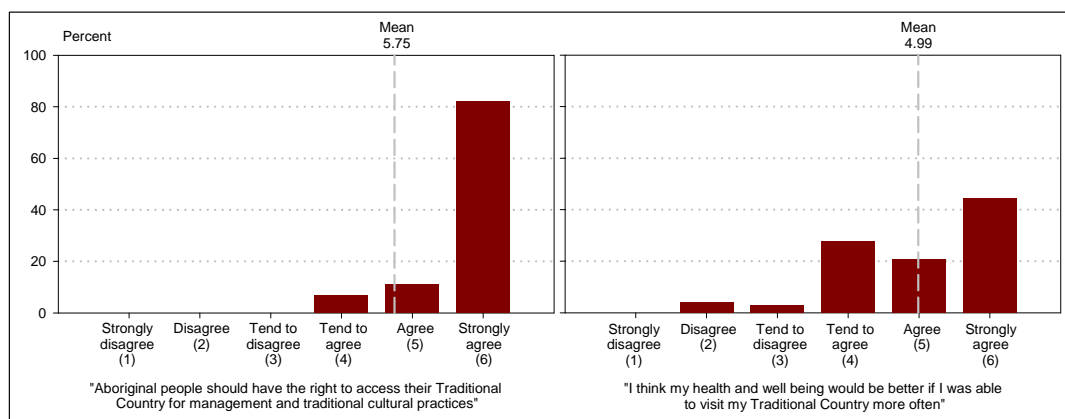


Figure 2. Beliefs about access and relationship with Country

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of Traditional Country in this context was based on the meaning ascribed to it by each of the participants in the survey.

## 6 TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

All respondents were asked to judge on a ten point scale how much they knew about Traditional knowledge. Figure 3 shows that 58% of Aboriginal people scored themselves as average (5) or less in relation to how much they knew about traditional knowledge.

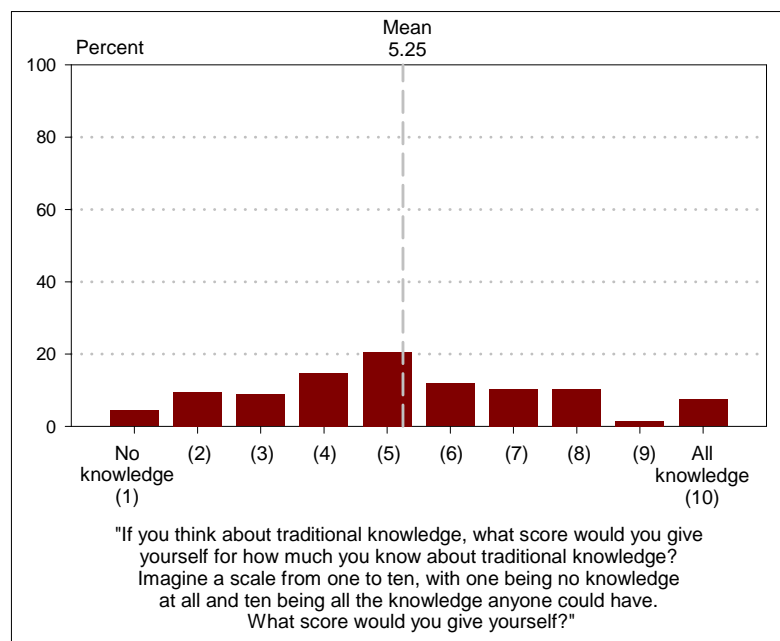


Figure 3. Level of Traditional knowledge amongst Aboriginal people

While the majority of Aboriginal people in this survey believed they had an average or less than average knowledge of Traditional knowledge, Figure 4 shows that over 80% of Aboriginal people would be interested in visiting Country to learn about traditional knowledge if they had the opportunity to do so.

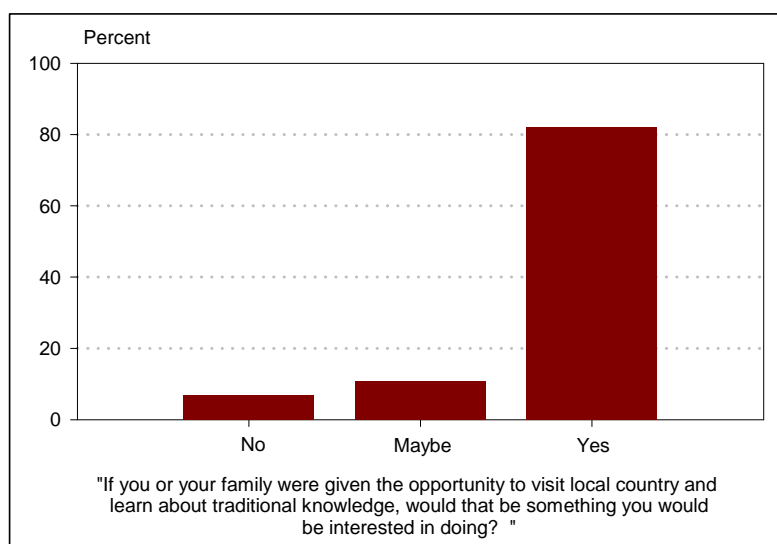


Figure 4. Opportunities to visit Country

Figure 5 shows that the majority of Aboriginal people (58%) do not believe that Traditional knowledge is included and used in decisions that are made about the management of Country.

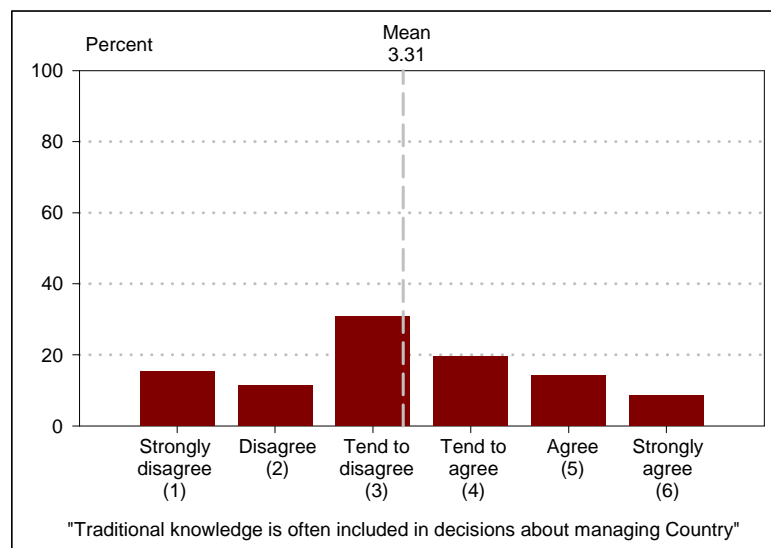


Figure 5. Traditional knowledge and the management of Country

## 7 HEALTH OF COUNTRY

All respondents were asked to judge the health of Country around where they lived using a ten point scale with end-points ‘very unhealthy’ and ‘very healthy’. Figure 6 shows that the majority of Aboriginal people judged the Country near where they lived to be of ‘average’ health. When asked to judge the health of Country 10 years ago, there was considerable variability in responses (Figure 6), although overall the health of Country was seen as little different to what it is today.

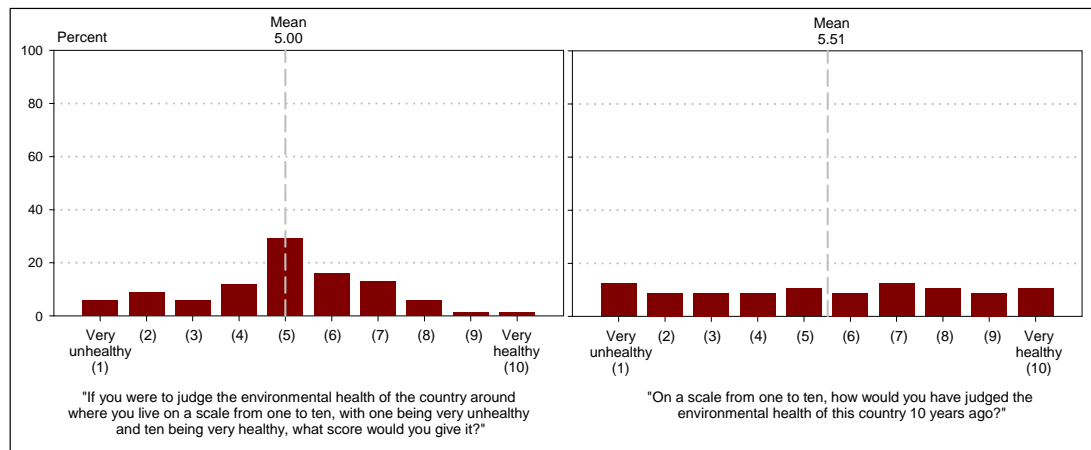


Figure 6. Assessing the health of Country

All respondents were also asked to think about the Country in which they now lived and to identify from a list of issues, those issues they thought were important in affecting the environmental health of the Country around where they lived (Figure 7). Although seven (9.5%) of respondents indicated they could not answer the question, the three most important issues for Aboriginal people were the decline in native animals (69%); the management of waste and pollutants (69%); and the over use of water (66%).

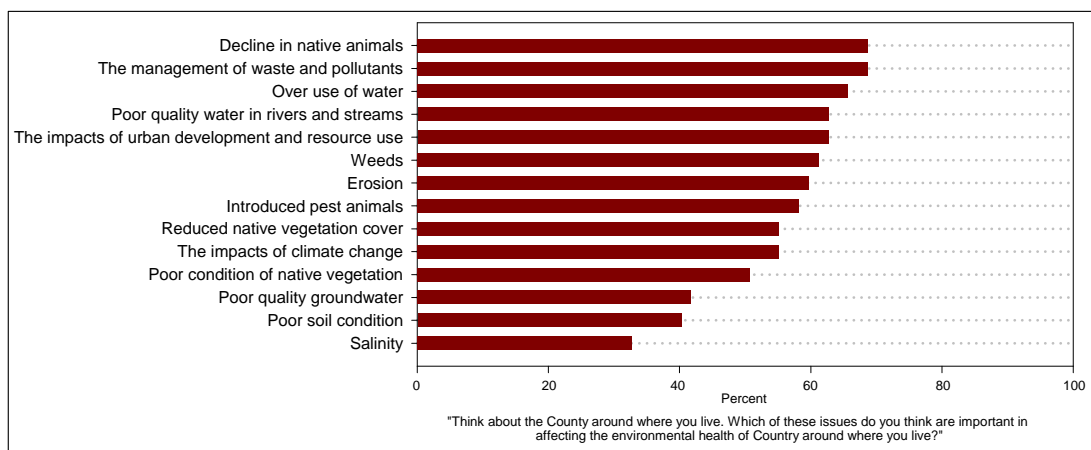


Figure 7. Issues affecting the health of Country

When Aboriginal people were asked to allocate funding to specific activities to improve the health of Country, the two most important activities identified were (i) land management activities, which included for example bush regeneration, weed control, improving water quality and waste management; and (ii) employment for Aboriginal people. The two issues were not independent with land management activities often seen as an enabling activity which provided the basis for Aboriginal employment, leading indirectly to improvements in Aboriginal education, training, health and housing<sup>4</sup>.

Table 4. "If there was \$500,000 available to better look after or improve the health of Country in your area, what would be the most important thing you think the money should be spent on?"

Response	Count	Percent
Land management (general)	15	23.8
Employment	14	22.2
Education and training	7	11.1
Health	7	11.1
Housing	5	7.9
Maintaining Aboriginal sites	4	6.3
Education about Country	2	3.2
Increasing involvement in NRM	2	3.2
Aboriginal Landcare group	1	1.6
Aboriginal sporting activities	1	1.6
Children and youth camps	1	1.6
Co-management	1	1.6
Cultural awareness for decision makers	1	1.6
Developing bush tucker	1	1.6
Developing income	1	1.6
Installing rainwater tanks at schools	1	1.6
Removing the Minister's power to override community	1	1.6
Self management	1	1.6
Tribal traditions	1	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Note:* This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.  
*'Land management (general)' includes bush regeneration, weed control, improving water quality, waste management, walkways over wetlands.*

*Source:* EBC (2008)

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that from the perspective of NRM program logic improving social and community activities are often seen as intermediate outcomes or enabling activities which lead to NRM outcomes. In contrast, and in the case of Aboriginal people, NRM outcomes are often seen as intermediate outcomes which lead to improvements in social outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Figure 8 also shows that nearly all Aboriginal people believe there to be a relationship between the health of Country and the well-being of Aboriginal people.

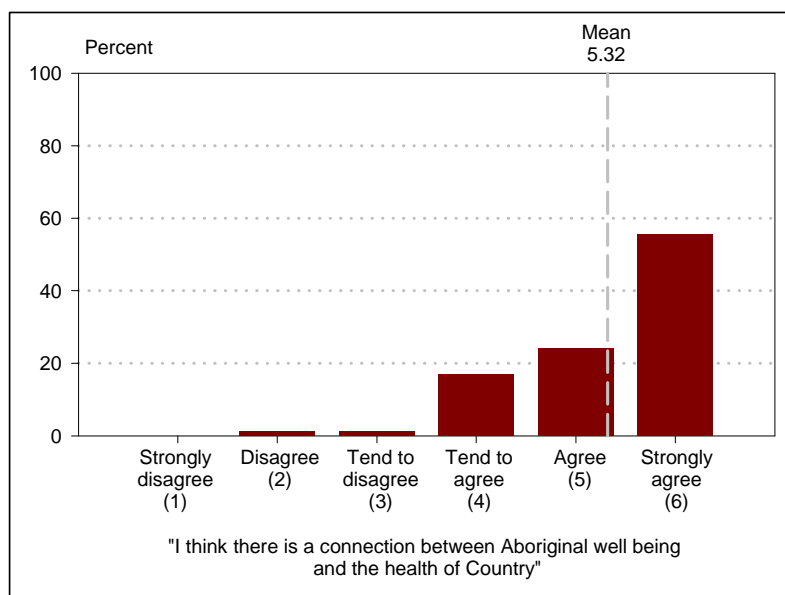


Figure 8. Aboriginal well-being and health of Country

## 8 MANAGING COUNTRY

In working with Aboriginal people in better managing Country, all respondents were asked to identify whether Traditional Owner, natural resource management, Local Government or Aboriginal Land Council boundaries should be used. Figure 9 shows that many Aboriginal people believed more than one type of boundary was appropriate, and that Aboriginal Land Council (58%) and Traditional Owner (57%) boundaries were regarded as equally appropriate in the management of Country.

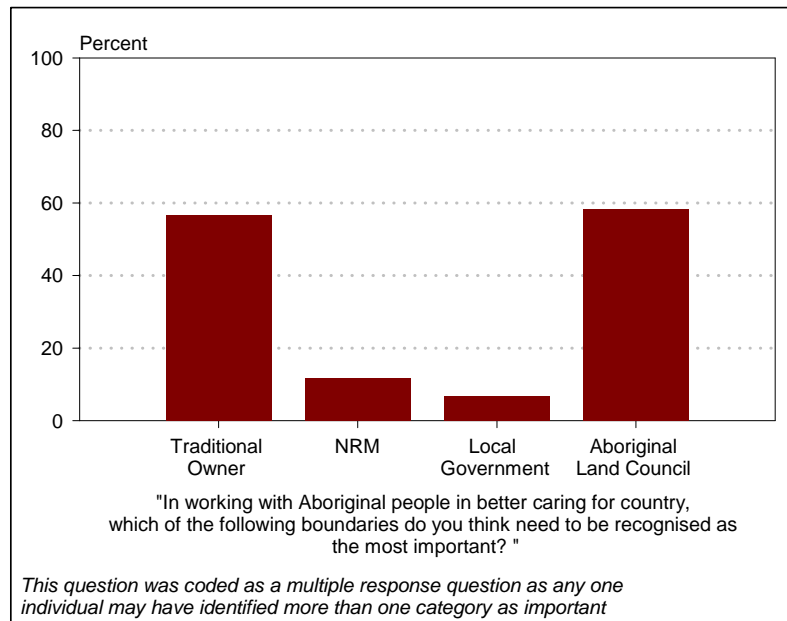


Figure 9. Boundary definition and caring for Country

All respondents were asked to identify, from a list provided to them, the important issues that needed to be addressed in the management of Country between Government and Aboriginal people. This was a difficult question for many respondents (Figure 9) and 32% of respondents did not answer the question. Amongst those who did answer the question, the two most important issues that needed to be addressed were identified as (i) the recognition of Aboriginal heritage and connection to Country (82%) and (ii) the meaningful involvement of the Aboriginal community in decision making (63%).

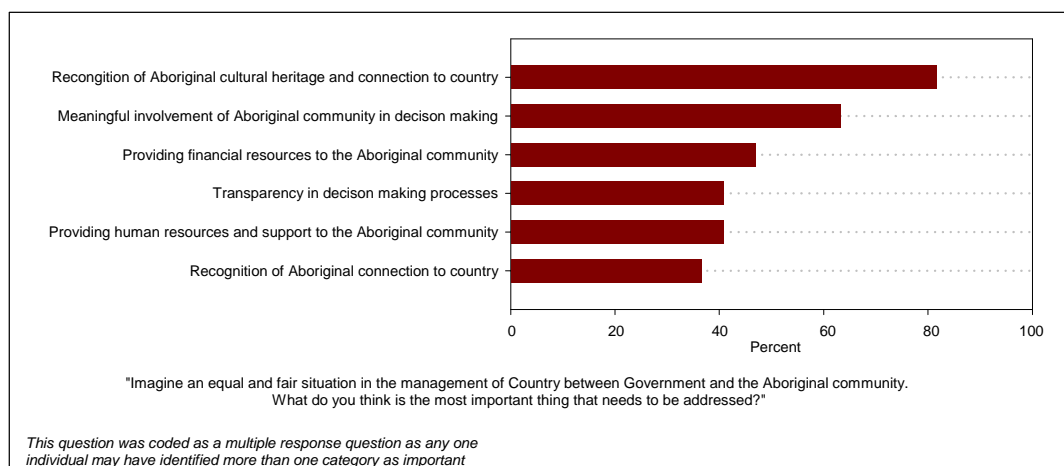


Figure 9. Boundary definition and caring for Country

Although 48% of Aboriginal people indicated they were not living on their Traditional Country, 74% of Aboriginal people indicated they knew of Traditional Aboriginal sites near where they lived.

However, two thirds or 68% of Aboriginal people did not believe that Traditional sites on Country were being well looked after (Figure 10).

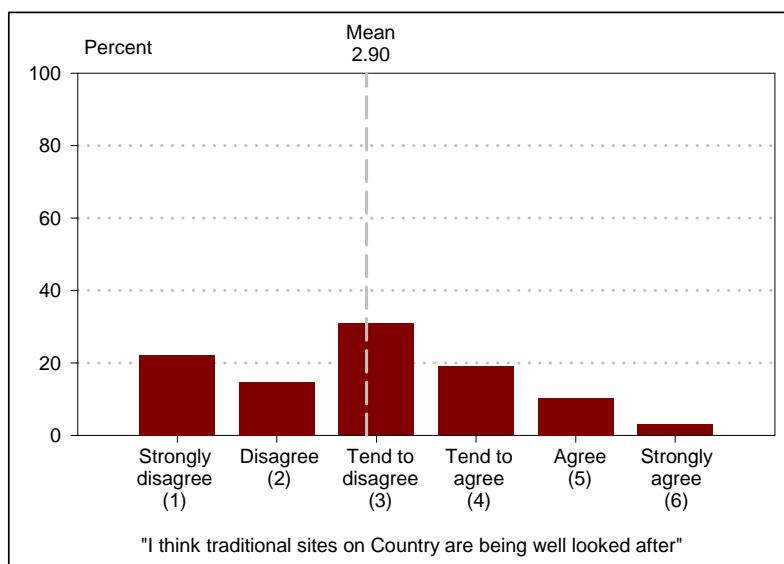


Figure 10. Caring for Traditional sites on Country



## 9 WORKING ON COUNTRY

Three questions focussed specifically on the employment and training of Aboriginal people in caring for Country.

Figure 11 shows the clear majority of Aboriginal people believed that more training and employment opportunities needed to be provided for Aboriginal people in caring for Country. However, there was also a belief that too much emphasis was placed on training rather than creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

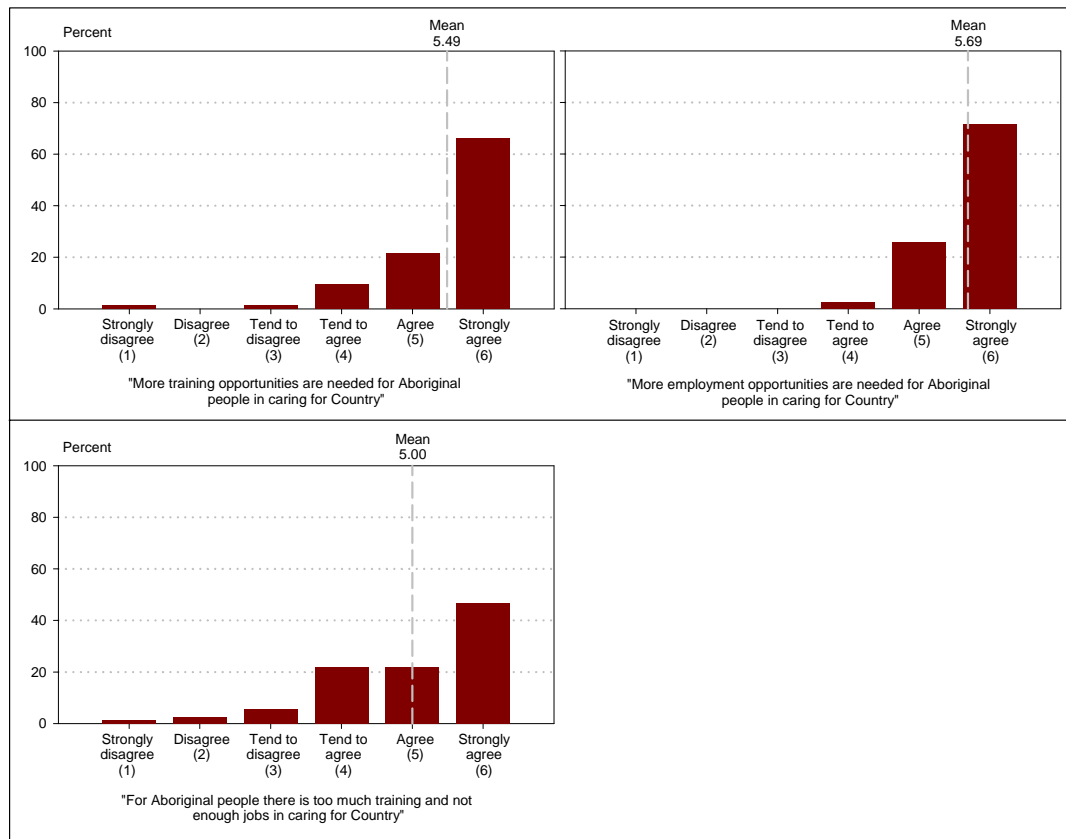


Figure 11. Beliefs about employment and training

## 10 LEARNING ABOUT COUNTRY

Figure 12 shows that nearly all Aboriginal people believed that more learning and education about ‘contemporary and traditional natural resource management for Aboriginal people’ was required and that most Aboriginal people cared about the Country near where they lived.

However, there were differences of opinion amongst Aboriginal people about whether most young Aboriginal people cared about Country. Figure 12 shows that although 53% of Aboriginal people believed most young Aboriginal people cared about Country, an equal percentage believed they did not care about Country (47%).

Figure 12 shows that approximately one-quarter (24%) of Aboriginal people indicated they did not understand what the meaning of the term ‘natural resource management’.

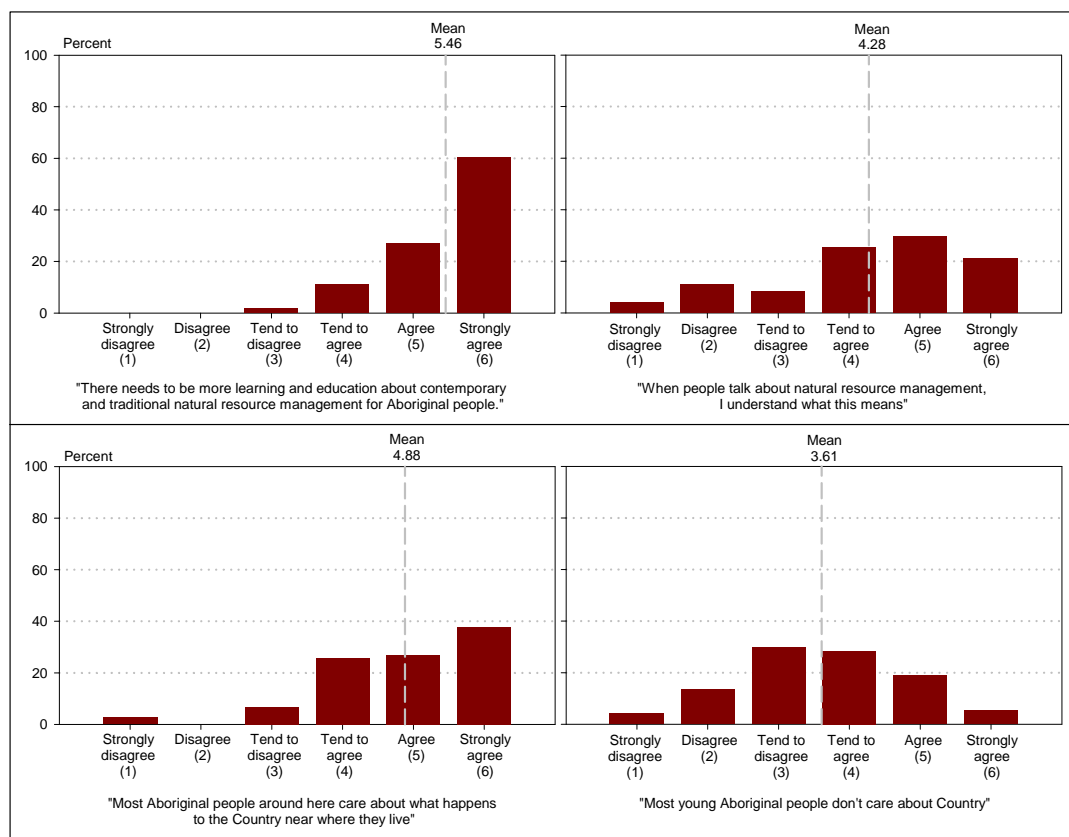


Figure 12. Learning about Country

## 11 INVOLVEMENT IN CARING FOR COUNTRY

Amongst all respondents, 32% indicated they had been involved in the last 12 months in activities associated with managing or caring for Country and 15% indicated they were a member of an NRM group or network.

Of the 68% of Aboriginal people who had not been involved in these activities in the last 12 months, Figure 13 shows the reasons they provided for not being involved. As shown in Figure 13, the two main reasons for non-participation in these activities were (i) not enough time or too busy (46%) and (ii) that they were not aware of these activities (41%).

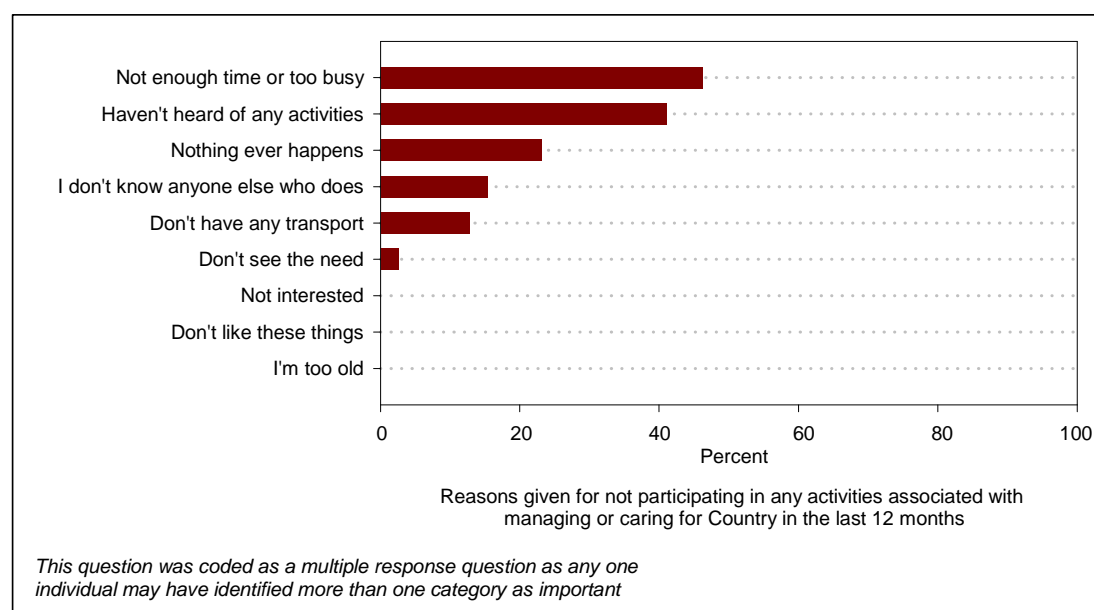


Figure 13. Reasons for non-participation in caring for Country activities

Amongst those Aboriginal people who indicated they did participate in activities associated with managing or caring for Country, Table 5 shows the type of activities in which they participated.

Table 5. Type of activities in which respondents participated

Response	Count	Percent
Planted trees	3	15.0
Work related activities	2	10.0
Aboriginal cultural heritage activities	1	5.0
Aboriginal reference group conference	1	5.0
Assess and make recommendations about middens	1	5.0
Bush regeneration	1	5.0
Clean up Australia	1	5.0
Conservation, repatriations	1	5.0
Cultural heritage survey	1	5.0
DECC/NPWS meetings and planning	1	5.0
Envirofund project	1	5.0
Involvement with schools	1	5.0
Landcare	1	5.0
Member of LALC	1	5.0
Site management, interpretation and consultation	1	5.0
Time with elders	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: This is a multiple response table which means that for each row an individual may be counted in multiple columns.

Source: EBC (2008)

Figure 14 shows that the majority of Aboriginal people (70%) believe that local Aboriginal organisations help people to participate in activities associated with caring for Country.

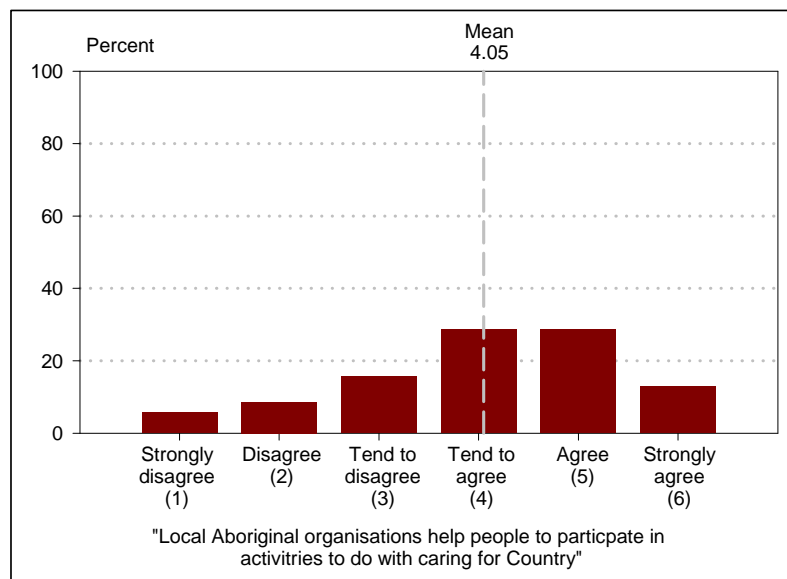


Figure 14. Local Aboriginal organisations and caring for Country

## 12 CONSULTATION WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Aboriginal people were equally divided in relation to their beliefs about the level of consultation with Aboriginal people in caring for Country, with 52% believing the level of consultation to very good (Figure 15).

Although there were differences of opinion in relation to whether current levels of consultation with Aboriginal people were adequate, 63% of respondents believed the current level of consultation to be better than it was two years ago.

However, while the level of consultation may have improved in the last two years, only a third (34%) of Aboriginal people believed that the issues raise during these consultation processes were acted upon (Figure 15).

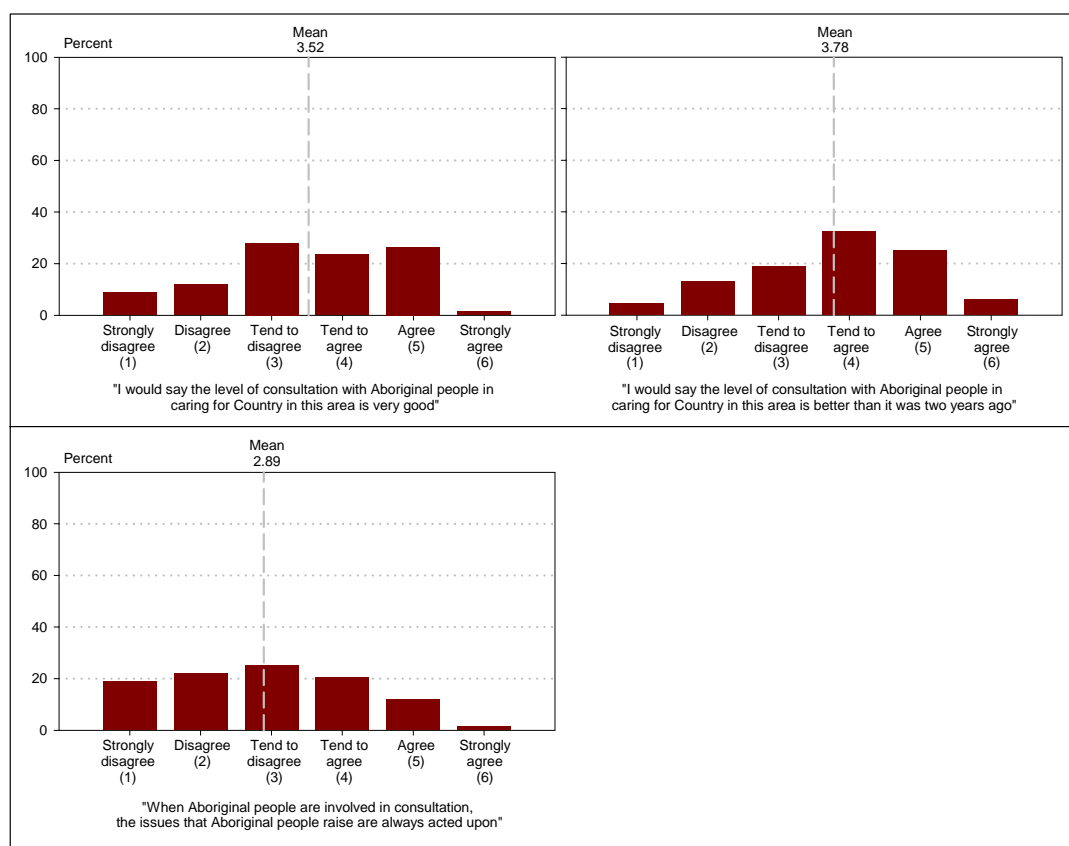


Figure 15. Consultation with Aboriginal people

### 13 RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT

Figure 16 shows that 62% of Aboriginal people believed they knew which Government agencies and departments were involved in managing and caring for Country.

However, 70% of Aboriginal people were not satisfied with the way State Government organisations were caring for Country and nearly all Aboriginal people believed that Government agencies and departments needed more education 'relating to Aboriginal Cultural connection to Country, traditional ecological knowledge and the role it can play in modern NRM practices' (Figure 16).

In addition Figure 16 also shows that only 50% of Aboriginal people believe Government meaningfully involve Aboriginal people in decisions about caring for Country.

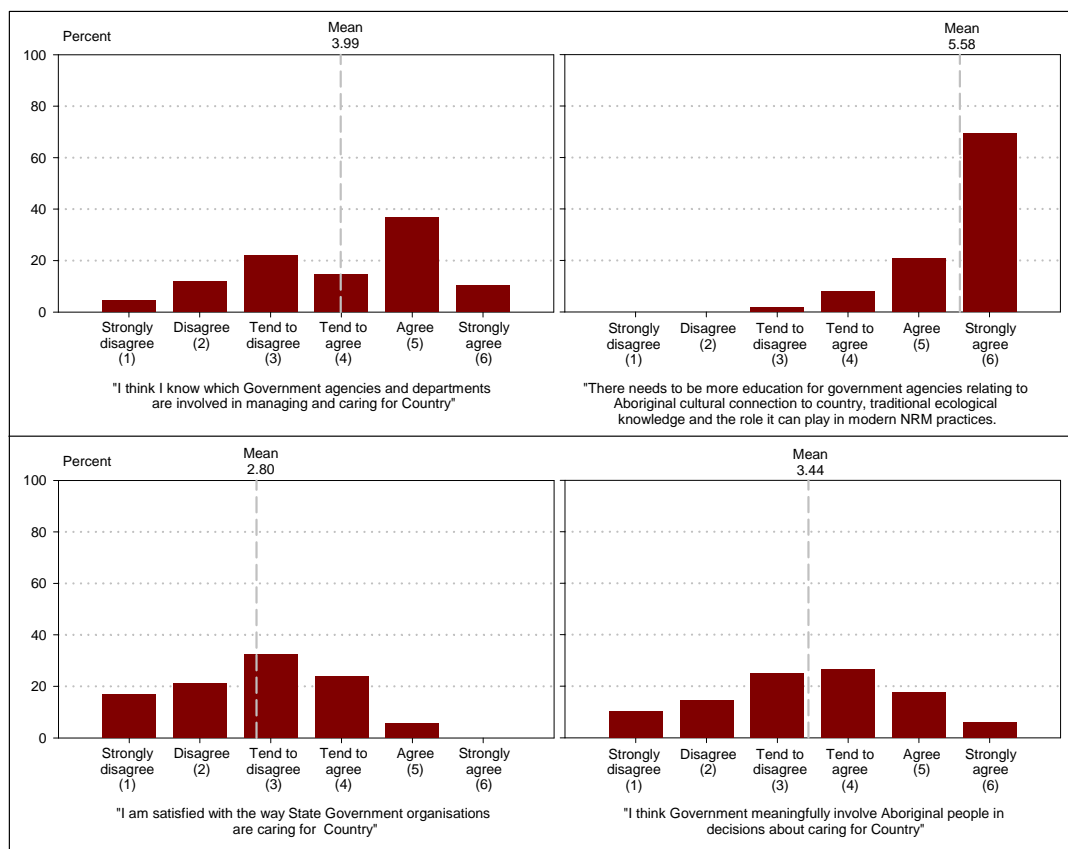


Figure 16. Relationship with Government

## 14 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

Amongst all respondents, 61% indicated that they had heard of the Southern Rivers CMA and 49% indicated that they had had contact or communication with the CMA.

Of those who had contact with the CMA, Figure 17 shows the two most frequent forms of contact between Aboriginal people and the CMA were (i) talking to someone from the CMA (76%) and (ii) attending a meeting organised by the CMA (62%).

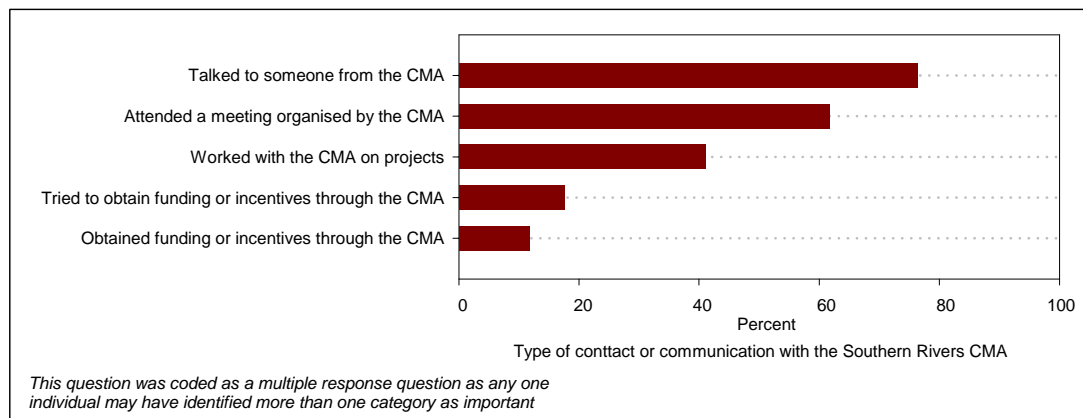


Figure 17. Type of contact with the Southern Rivers CMA

Amongst those respondents who had heard of the Southern Rivers CMA, the relationship between Aboriginal people and the CMA was seen as very positive (Figure 18). For instance, the majority of Aboriginal people who had heard of the CMA agreed with the following statements:

- The CMA is doing a good job managing and caring for Country in the region (90%);
- The CMA consults with Aboriginal people in caring for Country (90%);
- The CMA works effectively with Aboriginal organisations to address the interest of Aboriginal people (93%);
- The views of Aboriginal people are respected when the CMA consults with them about caring for Country (87%);
- The CMA listens and acts on the information provided to it by Aboriginal people (90%); and
- The CMA takes into account the interest of Aboriginal people in its decision making (93%).

Although there were very positive attitudes underpinning the relationship between Aboriginal people and the CMA, Aboriginal people were equally divided about the appropriate level of Aboriginal representation within the CMA (Figure 18)

While many respondents had not heard of or had any contact or communication with the Southern Rivers CMA, it was found that 81% of all respondents indicated they would like to know more about the Southern Rivers CMA.

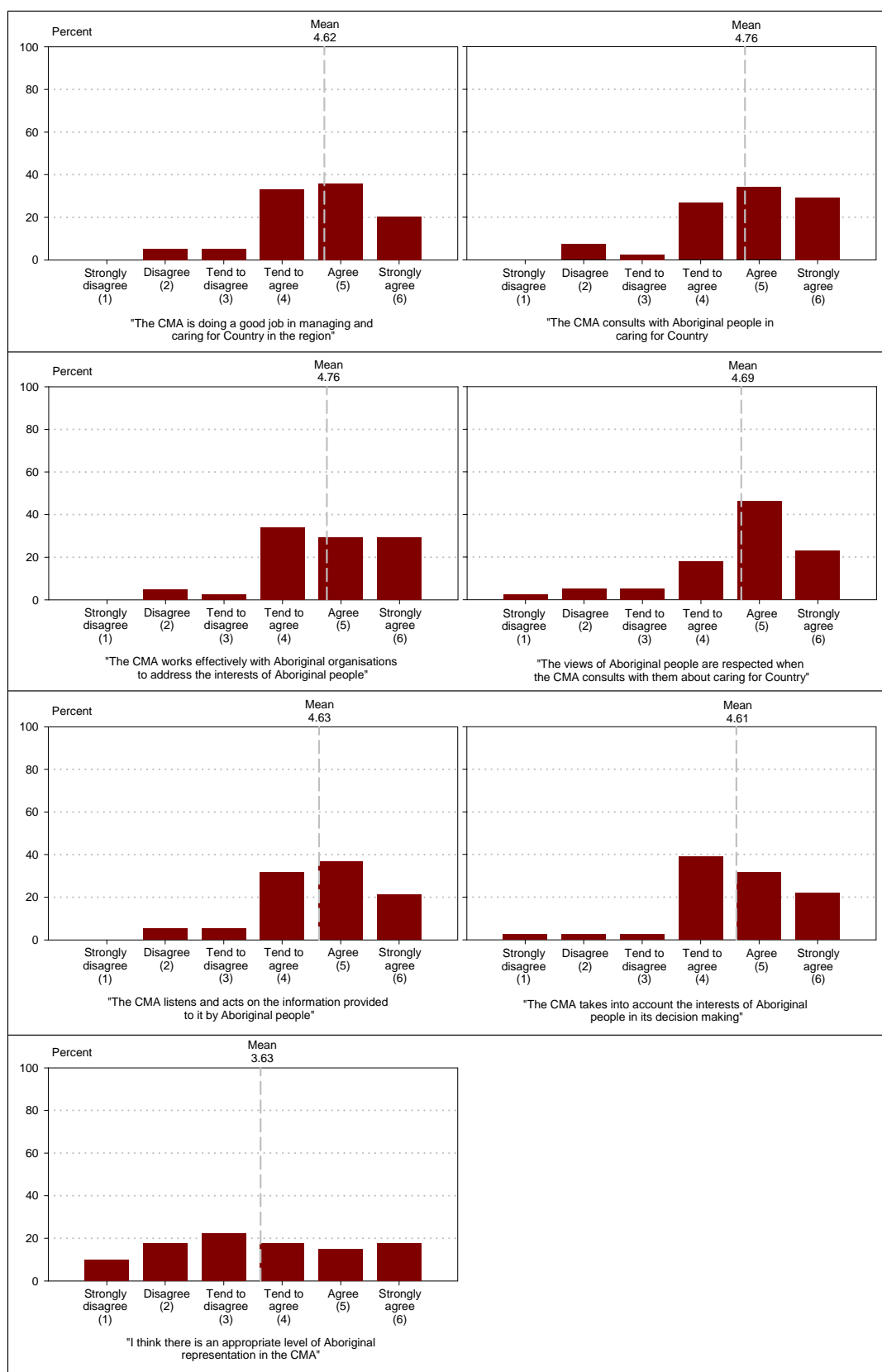


Figure 18. Relationship with the Southern Rivers CMA



Appendix A  
Aboriginal Community Questionnaire

SOUTHERN RIVERS NATURAL RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT (NRM) BENCHMARK SURVEY:  
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

This survey is being undertaken by the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (the CMA) to better understand and assist Aboriginal people in the region in 'Caring for Country'. Included in the questionnaire are questions about:

Consultation with Aboriginal people;  
Aboriginal peoples' relationship with Country;  
The use of traditional knowledge;  
Beliefs about Country; and  
Community access to training and employment.

The questionnaire should take you no longer than 15 minutes to complete. You are not required to give your name or address and all information is confidential.

In helping you complete the questionnaire the terms 'Country' and 'Traditional Country' mean:

**Country:**

Country refers to the local and regional catchments and landscapes. It acknowledges Traditional Country however this is not the emphasis. It includes different Government and private land tenures. It does not necessarily refer to Aboriginal people with Traditional ancestry to the Country, but acknowledges all forms of vested interest.

**Traditional Country:**

This term specifically refers to and recognises Traditional Country, area or regions of Aboriginal occupation prior to and in the European settlement period. It refers to specific cultural sites, landforms and natural resources recognised by the Aboriginal people whom have ancestry to that Country.

1. What is the town or nearest town to where you live (or nearest town to where you live)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you live in town, an Aboriginal community (village) or on a rural property or farm?  
☐ Live in town  
☐ Aboriginal community (village)  
☐ Live on a rural property or farm
3. Do you own, have a vested interest in or look after a rural property outside of town?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
4. How many years have you lived in your local area? \_\_\_\_\_ years
5. In what year were you born? 19\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your gender?  
☐ Male  
☐ Female
7. Is the Country in which you now live your Traditional Country?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No...what is your Traditional Country \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you know who the Traditional Owners are of the Country you now live in?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
9. In the last two years how often have you been able to visit sites of cultural significance to your clan in your Traditional Country?  
☐ Once every two weeks or more  
☐ Once a month  
☐ Once every two or three months  
☐ Once or twice a year  
☐ Once a year or less  
☐ Never
10. Do you know of any traditional sites near where you live?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
11. If you think about traditional knowledge, what score would you give yourself for how much you know about traditional knowledge? Imagine a scale from one (1) to ten (10), with one (1) being no knowledge at all and ten (10) being all the knowledge anyone could have. What score would you give yourself?  
Score \_\_\_\_\_

12. If you or your family were given the opportunity to visit local country and learn about traditional knowledge, would that be something you would be interested in doing?
- ☐ Yes  
☐ Maybe  
☐ No
13. If you were to judge the environmental health of the country around where you live on a scale from one (1) to ten (10), with one (1) being very unhealthy and ten (10) being very healthy, what score would you give it?
- Score \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Don't know
14. On a scale from one (1) to ten (10), how would you have judged the environmental health of this country 10 years ago?
- Score \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Don't know
15. Think about the Country around where you live. Which of these issues do you think are important in affecting the environmental health of Country around where you live? (*You may tick more than one box*)
- ☐ *Don't know or...*
- ☐ Decline in native animals  
☐ Erosion (inc. stream beds, banks and gullies)  
☐ Introduced pest animals, such as foxes, pigs and rabbits  
☐ Over use of water  
☐ Poor condition of native vegetation  
☐ Poor quality groundwater  
☐ Poor quality water in rivers and streams  
☐ Poor soil condition, such as nutrient deficiency, acidity and compaction  
☐ Reduced native vegetation cover, including ground cover  
☐ Salinity  
☐ The impacts of climate change  
☐ The impacts of urban development and resource use  
☐ The management of waste and pollutants  
☐ Weeds
16. In working with Aboriginal people in better caring for country, which of the following boundaries do you think need to be recognised *as the most important?* (*Tick only one box*)
- ☐ Aboriginal Land Council boundaries  
☐ Local Government boundaries  
☐ Natural Resource Management boundaries  
☐ Traditional Owner boundaries

17. Imagine an equal and fair situation in the management of Country between Government and the Aboriginal community. What do you think is the *most important* thing that needs to be addressed?

☐ Don't know or

- ☐ Recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage and connection to Country  
☐ Recognition of Aboriginal connection to Country  
☐ Transparency in the decision making processes  
☐ Providing appropriate financial resources to the Aboriginal community  
☐ Providing appropriate human resources and support to the Aboriginal community  
☐ The meaningful involvement of the Aboriginal community in decision making processes

Could you please tick (✓) to indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement. Leave the question blank if you are undecided or can't answer.

18. Aboriginal people should have the right to access their Traditional Country for management and traditional cultural practices

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

19. I think there is a connection between Aboriginal well being and the health of Country

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

20. Most Aboriginal people around here care about what happens to the Country near where they live

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

21. Most young Aboriginal people don't care about Country

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

22. I think my health and well being would be better if I was able to visit my Traditional Country more often

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

23. There needs to be more learning and education about *contemporary and traditional natural resource management* for Aboriginal people.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

24. There needs to be more education for government agencies relating to Aboriginal cultural connection to country, traditional ecological knowledge and the role it can play in modern natural resource management practices.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

25. More training opportunities are needed for Aboriginal people in caring for Country

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

26. More employment opportunities are needed for Aboriginal people in caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
27. For Aboriginal people there is too much training and not enough jobs in caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
28. I think traditional sites on Country are being well looked after  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
29. I am satisfied with the way State Government organisations are caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
30. When people talk about natural resource management, I understand what this means  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
31. I think I know which Government agencies and departments are involved in managing and caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
32. Traditional knowledge is often included in decisions about managing Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
33. Local Aboriginal organisations help people to participate in activities to do with caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
34. I think Government meaningfully involve Aboriginal people in decisions about caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
35. I would say the level of consultation with Aboriginal people in caring for Country in this area is very good  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
36. When Aboriginal people are involved in consultation, the issues that Aboriginal people raise are always acted upon  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
37. I would say the level of consultation with Aboriginal people in caring for Country in this area is better than it was two years ago  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

38. If there was \$500,000 available to better look after or improve the health of Country in your area, what would be the most important thing you think the money should be spent on?

☐ Don't know

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39. In the last 12 months have you been involved in any activities associated with managing or caring for Country?

☐ **No...because...** (*you may tick more than one box*)

- ☐ Not enough time or too busy
- ☐ Nothing ever happens
- ☐ Not interested
- ☐ Don't have any transport
- ☐ Don't like these things
- ☐ Don't see the need
- ☐ I'm too old
- ☐ I don't know anyone else who does
- ☐ Haven't heard of any activities

Other reasons \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Yes...these activities included...**

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40. Have you heard of the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority or CMA?

☐ Yes

☐ No → *If you answered NO then go to Question 49*

41. Have you had any contact or communication with the CMA?

☐ No

☐ Yes...what was it?

- ☐ Attended a meeting organised by the CMA
- ☐ Talked to someone from the CMA
- ☐ Worked with the CMA on projects
- ☐ Tried to obtain funding or incentives through the CMA
- ☐ Obtained funding or incentives through the CMA

Other \_\_\_\_\_

42. The CMA is doing a good job in managing and caring for Country in the region  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
43. The CMA consults with Aboriginal people in caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
44. The CMA works effectively with Aboriginal organisations to address the interests of Aboriginal people  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
45. The views of Aboriginal people are respected when the CMA consults with them about caring for Country  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
46. The CMA listens and acts on the information provided to it by Aboriginal people  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
47. The CMA takes into account the interests of Aboriginal people in its decision making  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
48. I think there is an appropriate level of Aboriginal representation in the CMA  
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Tend to agree ☐ Tend to disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
49. Would you like to know more about the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority or CMA?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
50. Are you a member of a natural resource management network or group such as Landcare?  
☐ No  
☐ Yes ...what group or network are you a member of?
- 
- 

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND HELP IN  
COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**