



IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

An ICOMOS Webinar Series

In this newsletter:

1. The Caring For Country Webinars
Page 1
2. Burning Country: Aboriginal Fire Practice in Caring for Country: Webinar 3
Page 2
3. The Caring For Country Webinar Program
Page 8
4. NAILSMA
Page 9
5. Firesticks
Page 11
6. What Aboriginal Australians can teach us about managing wildfires
Page 12
7. Caring for Country Committee
Page 13

NEWSLETTER

1. The Caring For Country Webinars

by Helen Wilson

In this newsletter, we introduce Webinar 3 in our webinars, Caring For Country in the climate crisis: **Burning Country**, presented by Ricky Archer and Victor Steffensen. Indigenous fire practice is a key aspect of caring for Country and very important to maintaining cultural connections to place. Traditional caring for Country practices, including the use of fire, can bring healing to damaged landscapes and provide answers to addressing climate change. Through community engagement and empowerment, burning Country can also provide Aboriginal communities with economic opportunities. (See 2. for more on this)

The Caring for Country webinars organized by the Caring For Country Committee, led by Helen Wilson and Kerime Danis of Australia ICOMOS, are part of the ICOMOS webinar series. The webinars address climate change and its impacts on cultural heritage, the land and traditional practices in Oceania. The series provides an opportunity for the voices of Indigenous people in Oceania to be heard and to discuss Indigenous Heritage, Cultural Landscape and Climate Change in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.





NEWSLETTER

2. Webinar 3:

Burning Country: Aboriginal fire practice in Caring For Country

Speakers: Ricky Archer and Victor Steffensen



NIFW 2018 Bundanon on Dharawal Yuin Country. Photo credit: Bear Hunt Photography

Caring For Country Webinars in the ICOMOS WEBINAR SERIES

Webinar 3:

BURNING COUNTRY: Aboriginal Fire Practice in Caring for Country

Wednesday 13th October 2021, 12.00 noon AEDT

(approx. 1 hour 30 mins)

Please Register at:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2-4e2KuZQcCpLlpZv87GAg



2. Burning Country: Aboriginal fire practice in Caring for Country

Webinar 3



IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

NEWSLETTER

2. Burning
Country:
Aboriginal
fire practice
in Caring for
Country:

About the
webinar

Indigenous fire practice is a key aspect of caring for Country and very important to maintaining cultural connections to place. In the face of climate change and other threats, caring for Country practices, including fire practice, contain answers to healing damaged landscapes and building resilience. Through community engagement and empowerment, burning Country can also provide communities with economic opportunities.

The presenters of this webinar, Ricky Archer, CEO Northern Australia Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and Victor Steffensen, co-founder of Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation, will share examples that illustrate key aspects of Indigenous fire practice and highlight the issues and opportunities that exist for its implementation across vast areas of Australia. They will also discuss the barriers to its use.



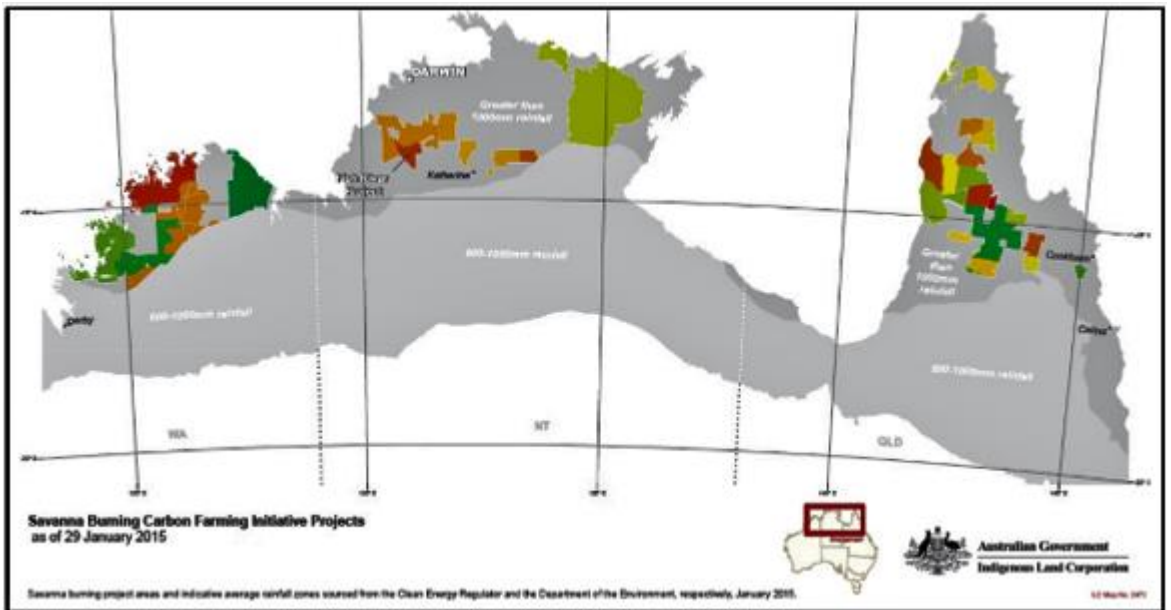
Photo credit: NAILSMA, photographer unknown



NEWSLETTER

2. Burning Country:
Aboriginal fire practice in Caring for Country:
About the webinar

NAILSMA, a major landowner in the Northern Territory, works closely with Indigenous groups and organisations across Australia’s top end and has utilised savannah burning methodologies to provide economic benefits to communities across the region. Ricky Archer will describe how the application of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) provides solutions and opportunities for communities. He will also discuss the barriers that prevent adoption of traditional burning practices as a land management tool by the broader community. In 2020, the CSIRO partnered with NAILSMA to publish Our Knowledge Our Way Guidelines for Caring for Country. This document focusses on how non-Indigenous researchers should engage with Indigenous communities on projects.



Savanna Burning Carbon Farming Initiative Projects across Northern Australia (2015)
Photo credit: NAILSMA, Australian Government, Indigenous Land Corporation

Victor Steffensen, author of *Fire Country*, an essential reference on the topic of burning Country, will talk of his experience of learning about fire from elders in his Country in northern Queensland: the importance of ‘reading’ the Country, the importance of passing on knowledge to communities and the importance of implementing knowledge via action, and the importance of community being involved and benefitting from that action.





NEWSLETTER

Burning Country: Aboriginal fire practice in Caring for Country

Speaker

Ricky Archer



Ricky Archer is a Djungan man from the Western Tablelands region of North Queensland. Ricky is the CEO of NAILSMA (North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance), which focusses on caring for Country - land and sea - across northern Australia.

Ricky, who has a background in GIS, Indigenous knowledge management, and natural & cultural resource management, is passionate about the advancement and improvement of Indigenous livelihoods across the top end. Through his strong network of land and sea managers, Ricky has demonstrated an ability to connect on-ground work of Indigenous organisations with regional, state and commonwealth priorities.

In 2020, Ricky co-authored the CSIRO publication *Our Knowledge Our Way Guidelines*.



2. Burning Country: Aboriginal fire practice in Caring for Country:

Speaker
Ricky Archer



CARING FOR
COUNTRY

IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

NEWSLETTER

2. Burning
Country:
Aboriginal
fire practice
in Caring for
Country:

Speaker
Victor
Steffensen

Burning Country: Aboriginal fire practice in Caring for Country

Speaker

Victor Steffensen



Victor Steffensen is a Co-founder and Indigenous Fire Practitioner of Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation, which trains Indigenous groups along the eastern seaboard of Australia in cultural burning. Victor has co-convened the National Indigenous Fire Workshop for the past decade and has shared his knowledge and experience with First Nations people internationally.

Victor is also founder of the Living Knowledge Place, an educational platform based on community and Indigenous teaching methods.

In February 2020, Victor released his book *Fire Country—How Indigenous Fire Management Could Help Save Australia*.



NEWSLETTER

Burning Country: Aboriginal fire practice in Caring for Country

Moderator Catherine Forbes



Catherine Forbes is an architect with specialist training in heritage conservation, anthropology, international humanitarian action and disaster risk management for cultural heritage.

She is an expert member of ICOMOS's international scientific committees on Risk Preparedness (ICORP) and Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change (ISCES+CC), and their national equivalents (ANZCORP and NSCES). She is also a member of the Caring for Country committee (organisers of this webinar series) and Australia ICOMOS's representative to Blue Shield Australia.

In 2019-20, Catherine and ANZCORP prepared emergency response guidelines for heritage places affected by the bushfires that ravaged eastern Australia. She also participated in round table discussions with the NSW Heritage Council, Public Works Advisory and Department of Planning on the emergency response for bushfire affected heritage and the Federal Minister for the Environment on the post fire recovery of Australia's World Heritage areas. Both meetings involved discussions with Aboriginal elders, site managers and fire practitioners.

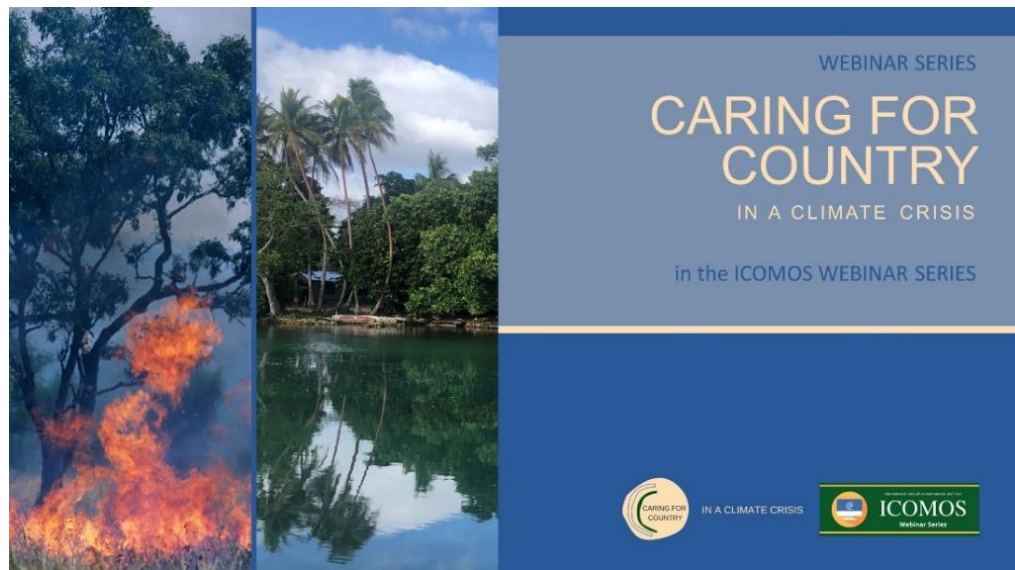


NEWSLETTER

3. The Caring For Country Webinar Program

3. The Webinar Program

by Helen Wilson



The Caring For Country Webinars in the ICOMOS Webinar Series address different aspects and examples of the impact of climate change on lands, Indigenous people and culture. Traditional lands and associated cultural practices through the process of caring for Country are of fundamental importance for Indigenous peoples. Climate change is impacting on lands, traditional practices and cultural heritage in Oceania and directly and immediately threatening this fundamental relationship.

- Webinar 1, 'Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance', was held on 4 August 2021. Videos from Webinar 1 are now available on the ICOMOS website at [ICOMOS Webinars - International Council on Monuments and Sites](#) and a link to the whole Webinar 1 will soon be added.
- Webinar 2, 'Climate Change Adaptation for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage' was held on 8th September 2021 and will be uploaded shortly at the link above.
- This webinar, Webinar 3 'Burning Country', will discuss the impact of culture and climate change on traditional fire practices and how Indigenous practices can contain the answers to addressing damaged landscapes and climate change.
- Webinar 4, to be held in November 2021, will look at community resilience and traditional practices in the Pacific Islands in adapting to climate changes.



NEWSLETTER

4. NAILSMA:
Our
Knowledge
Our Way
Guidelines

4. NAILSMA

Compiled by Catherine Forbes and Helen Wilson.

The **North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NAILSMA)** is an Indigenous led not-for-profit company operating across north Australia. NAILSMA works to assist Indigenous people manage their Country sustainably for future generations.

NAILSMA website: <https://nailsma.org.au/>

NAILSMA email: admin@nailsma.org.au

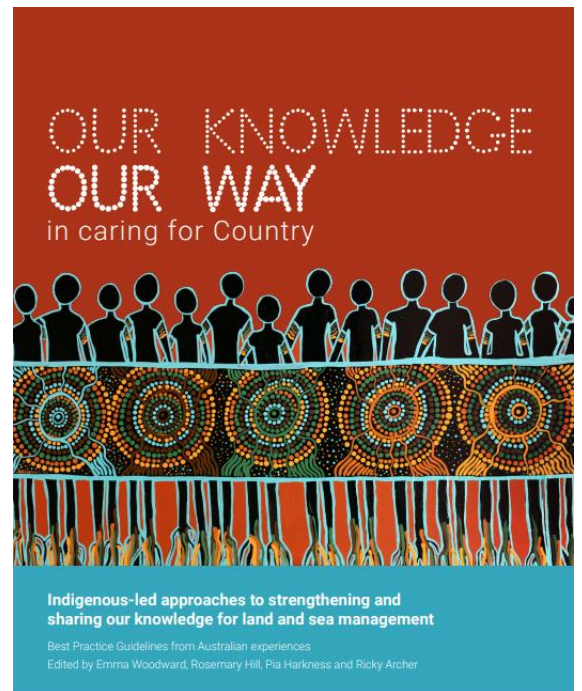
OUR KNOWLEDGE OUR WAY IN CARING FOR COUNTRY

https://nailsma.org.au/uploads/resources/OKO-W-Guidelines_FULL.pdf

NAILSMA partnered with the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) and IUCN (The International Union for Conservation of Nature-National Committee Australia) and established an Indigenous-majority Project Steering Group to ensure Indigenous leadership of the project to produce these Guidelines.

The Our Knowledge Our Way Guidelines bring together examples of what Indigenous people are doing across the country as *a useful tool to assist sharing and learning between Indigenous land and sea managers; and to educate current and future partners about the diversity of Indigenous knowledge and its applications in caring for Country, and the tools and processes that might support mutually beneficial partnerships that realise good outcomes for people and Country.*

Foreword p.xi, Woodward, E., Hill, R., Harkness, P. and R. Archer (Eds) 2020 Our Knowledge Our Way in caring for Country: Indigenous-led approaches to strengthening and sharing our knowledge for land and sea management. Best Practice Guidelines from Australian experiences. NAILSMA and CSIRO.





NEWSLETTER

4. NAILSMA: Indigenous Fire Management & Carbon Farming

4. NAILSMA

Compiled by Catherine Forbes and Helen Wilson.



INDIGENOUS FIRE MANAGEMENT AND CARBON FARMING BOOKLET

<https://nailsma.org.au/uploads/resources/Carbon-farming-A3-booklet.-May-2016.pdf>

Indigenous Fire Management & Carbon Farming was produced by NAILSMA in 2015 to encourage traditional owners to return to their Country, manage and care for their Country and earn a living through 'carbon farming'.

Government and other organisations are trying to find ways to deal with climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. One way is to pay people to start carbon farming projects that reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that go into the air. There are many different types of projects but one type allows Indigenous land managers to use traditional-style fire management techniques to reduce the frequency of big wildfires. These are called savanna fire management projects, and they combine traditional knowledge with modern, western science. (p.1)

NAILSMA Carbon/Fire Management Resources (includes access to Carbon Farming PowerPoint): <https://nailsma.org.au/resource-library?publicationType=carbon-fire-management®ion=&topic=&tag=&year=>





NEWSLETTER

5. Firesticks

5. Firesticks

Compiled by Catherine Forbes and Helen Wilson.

Victor Steffensen is a Co-founder and Indigenous Fire Practitioner of **Firesticks**, the **Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation**, an Indigenous led network working to re-invigorate the use of cultural burning. It is a mentoring, networking and training initiative for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to look after Country.

Firesticks website: <http://www.firesticks.org.au>

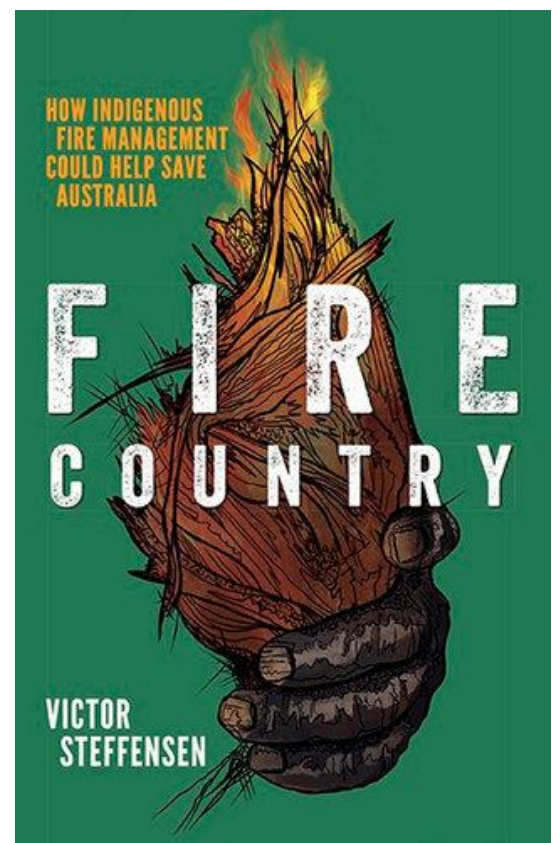
FIRE COUNTRY

Victor Steffensen's book 'Fire Country' is about Indigenous land management practices and a powerful account of First Nation people's connection to Country. There is a marked difference between Aboriginal fire management and hazard reduction. Victor explains between the two systems in an edited extract below:

<https://www.firesticks.org.au/fire-country-how-indigenous-fire-management-could-help-save-australia/>

Fire Country is published by Hardie Grant:

<https://www.hardiegrant.com/au/publishing/bookfinder/book/fire-country-by-victor-steffensen/9781741177268>



FIRESTICKS LINKS

WATCH the Living Knowledge Place films: <https://vimeo.com/user12381768>

LISTEN to Right Country – Right Fire podcasts: <https://www.firesticks.org.au/podcasts/>

SEE the film and report from 2018 National Indigenous Fire Workshop: <http://www.firesticks.org.au/bundanon-2018/>





NEWSLETTER

6. What
Aboriginal
Australians
can teach us
about
managing
wildfires

6. What Aboriginal Australians can teach us about managing wildfires

Compiled by Catherine Forbes and Helen Wilson – from [The Conversation](#), August 27, 2020 12:00 PM EDT, by [David Bowman](#) and [Greg Lehman](#) and [Andry Sculthorpe](#).



Rangers from Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa, conducting cool season burning on Martu Country, Australia. Photo Credit: © Tony Jupp, The Nature Conservancy.

Since last summer's bushfire crisis, there's been a quantum shift in public awareness of Aboriginal fire management. It's now more widely understood that Aboriginal people used landscape burning to sustain biodiversity and suppress large bushfires. The Australian government's bushfire royal commission.... recognizes the potential of incorporating Aboriginal knowledge into mainstream fire management. Its terms of reference seek to understand ways "the traditional land and fire management practices of Indigenous Australians could improve Australia's resilience to natural disasters." Incorporating Aboriginal knowledge is essential to tackling future bushfire crises. But it risks perpetuating historical injustices, by appropriating Aboriginal knowledge without recognition or compensation. So while the bushfire threat demands urgent action, we must also take care....

For further information see the rest of this article at <https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-08-27/what-aboriginal-australians-can-teach-us-about-managing-wildfires> and the wonderful vimeo (link in the article).



NEWSLETTER

7. Caring For Country Committee

7. Caring For Country Committee

by Helen Wilson and Kerime Danis
Co-Convenors, Caring For Country Committee

The Caring For Country Committee has been operating since June 2020.

The Committee comprises mostly ICOMOS members, both Indigenous and non-indigenous, from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. We were recently accepted by Australia ICOMOS as an official committee, the [CARING FOR COUNTRY COMMITTEE, a Working Group of Australia ICOMOS](#).

We are working in the Climate Change, Cultural Heritage and Indigenous area and are busy organizing a series of webinars that started in mid 2021.

Our Membership:

The Committee will run until GA2023 and conclude its work after the General Assembly in Sydney in 2023 (GA2023). We have invited Indigenous and non-indigenous members from Australia and the Pacific and we currently are looking for more members in NZ and the Pacific.

If you are interested in joining the committee and contributing to the organization of the webinars and possibly a later workshop, please contact us at caringforcountry.web@gmail.com.

Our thanks to Jaye Cook, Associate Member of Australia ICOMOS and Member of the Caring For Country Committee, for designing the graphics, logo, and templates for newsletter and presentations for the Caring For Country Webinar Series.