



CULTURAL FLOWS:

**EMPOWERING FIRST NATIONS IN
THE FIGHT FOR CULTURAL WATER
AND POLICY CHANGE.**

Wednesday 1st December 2021

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Tati Tati Traditional Owner
CEO Tati Tati Kaiejin
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TATI TATI KAIEJIN

RESTORATION

Of Tati Tati knowledge,
understandings, and
connections

Social
Environmental
Healing

REPLENISHMENT

Of Country, waterways,
culture and spirit

HEALTHY COUNTRY
HEALTHY PEOPLE

Sustainable
Economic
Development

Capacity Building
Empowering First
Nations

PROGRESSION

Advancing employment
opportunities and Tati Tati
self-determination



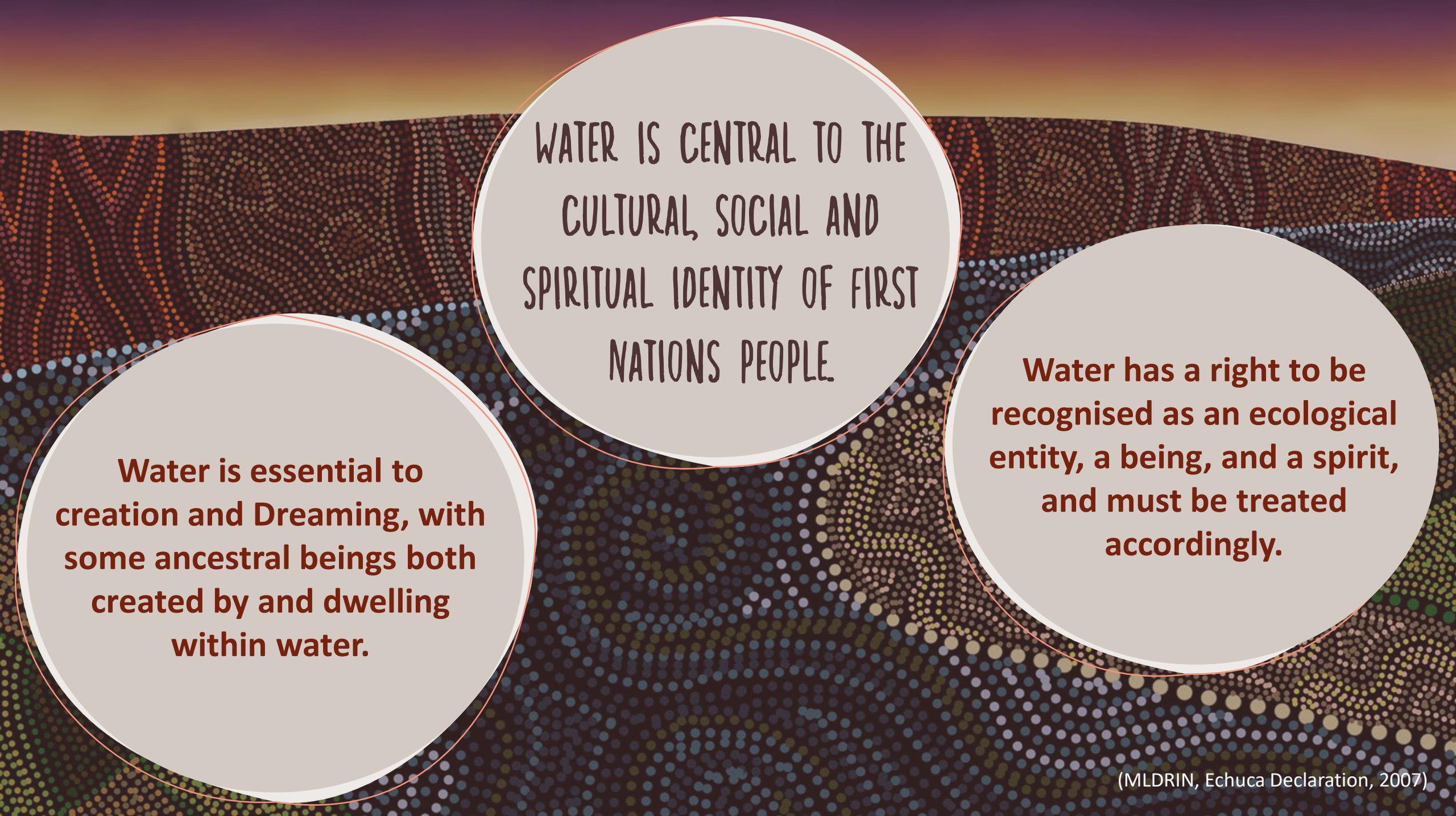
TATI TATI
KAIEJIN

MILLU KULINGI

- Murray River people

- Tati Tati Country spans the Murray River around Robinvale (VIC) and Euston (NSW).
- We are river people and know that healthy water means healthy people and Country.

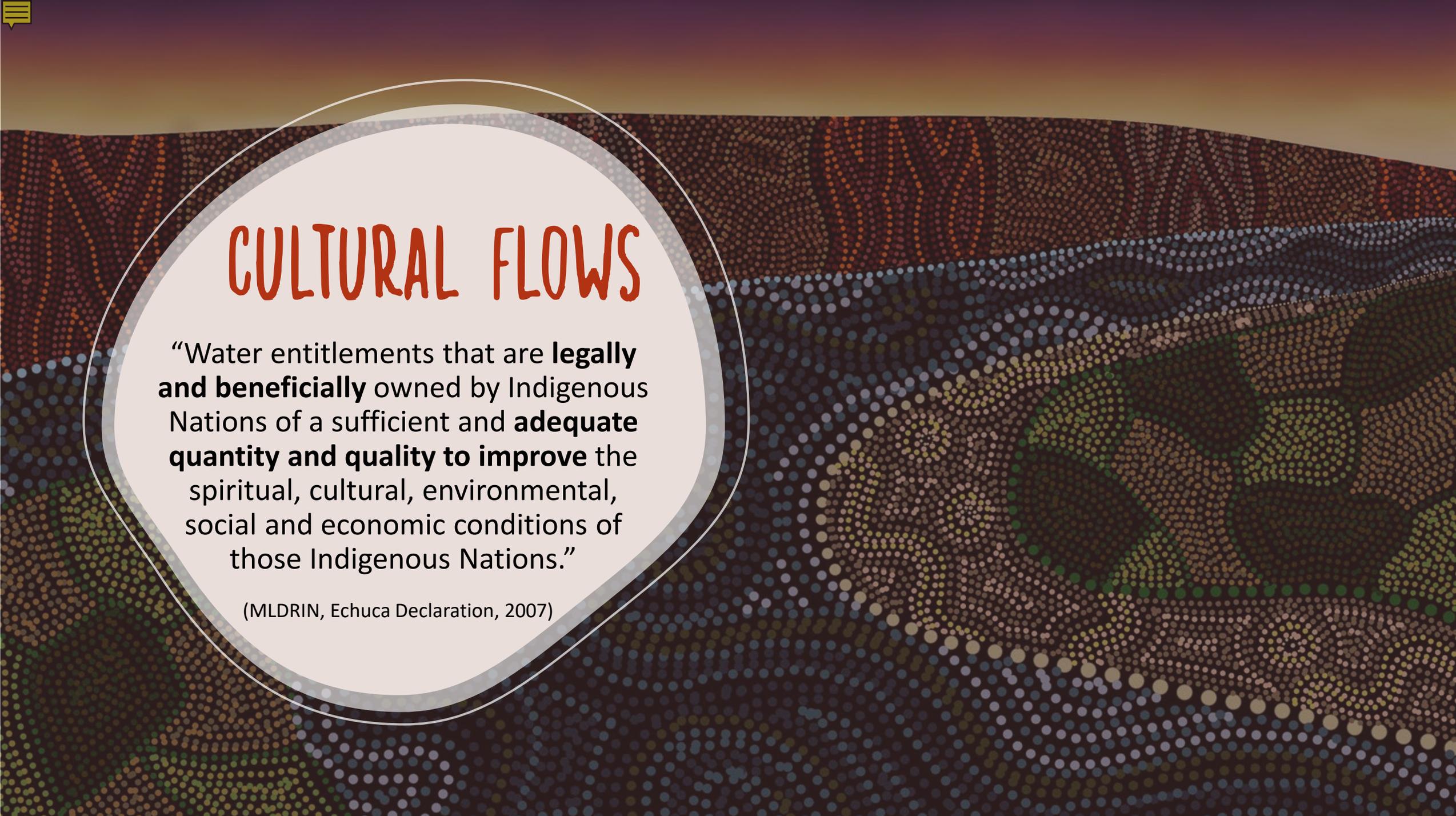




WATER IS CENTRAL TO THE
CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND
SPIRITUAL IDENTITY OF FIRST
NATIONS PEOPLE.

**Water is essential to
creation and Dreaming, with
some ancestral beings both
created by and dwelling
within water.**

**Water has a right to be
recognised as an ecological
entity, a being, and a spirit,
and must be treated
accordingly.**



CULTURAL FLOWS

“Water entitlements that are **legally and beneficially** owned by Indigenous Nations of a sufficient and **adequate quantity and quality to improve** the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Indigenous Nations.”

(MLDRIN, Echuca Declaration, 2007)

CULTURAL FLOWS CONCEPTION, METHODOLOGY & FRAMEWORK



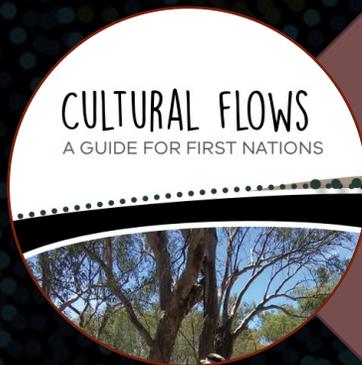
The Echuca Declaration, MLDRIN, 2007

A ground-breaking statement that outlined First Nations' rights and aspirations in water management
Adopted by Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations in
May 2010



National Cultural Flows Research Project

A seven-year long study was committed to develop pathways for a future where First Nations water allocations are embedded in water management regimes.

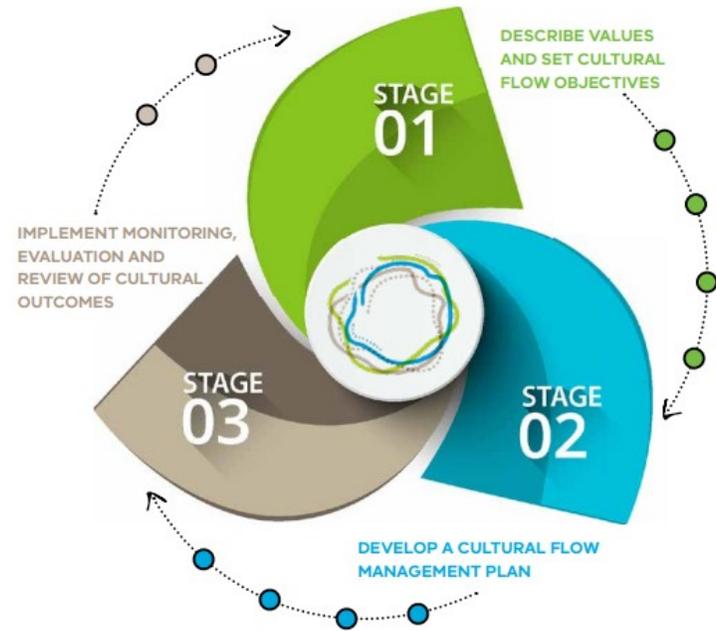


Cultural Flows: A guide for First Nations, 2017

A 10-step methodology for First Nations to describe and measure water uses and values, to advocate for and attain Cultural Flows.

CULTURAL FLOWS

A GUIDE FOR FIRST NATIONS



DESCRIBE VALUES AND SET CULTURAL FLOW OBJECTIVES

- STEP 1 Getting started
- STEP 2 Identify values
- STEP 3 Build a conceptual model
- STEP 4 Set objectives

DEVELOP A CULTURAL FLOW MANAGEMENT PLAN

- STEP 5 Summarise the cultural character
- STEP 6 Confirm conceptual relationship
- STEP 7 Determine water requirements
- STEP 8 Prepare A cultural flows management plan

IMPLEMENT MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF OUTCOMES

- STEP 9 Select what to measure
- STEP 10 Collect and analyse data, evaluate and review outcomes

Adaptively manage

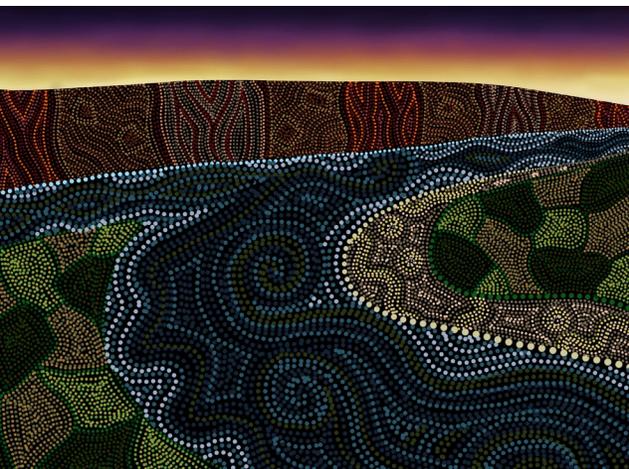
Review what you do

Learn what works



WHY CULTURAL FLOWS?

- Restore natural paths of water
- Traditional Owner values prioritised
- Harmful & foreign techniques not used (regulators and diesel pumps)
- Cultural use & occupancy restored
- Cultural economies strengthened





OVERCOMING AQUA NULLIUS

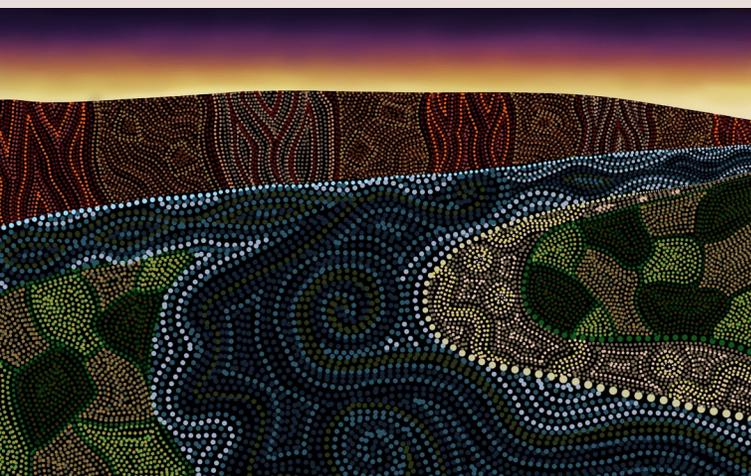
“Land and water was stolen from us; we are asserting land and water ownership.

If Margooya was handed back to Tati Tati, Victoria wouldn't crumble, Robinvale wouldn't crumble.

No one would be disadvantaged; we would be advantaged.

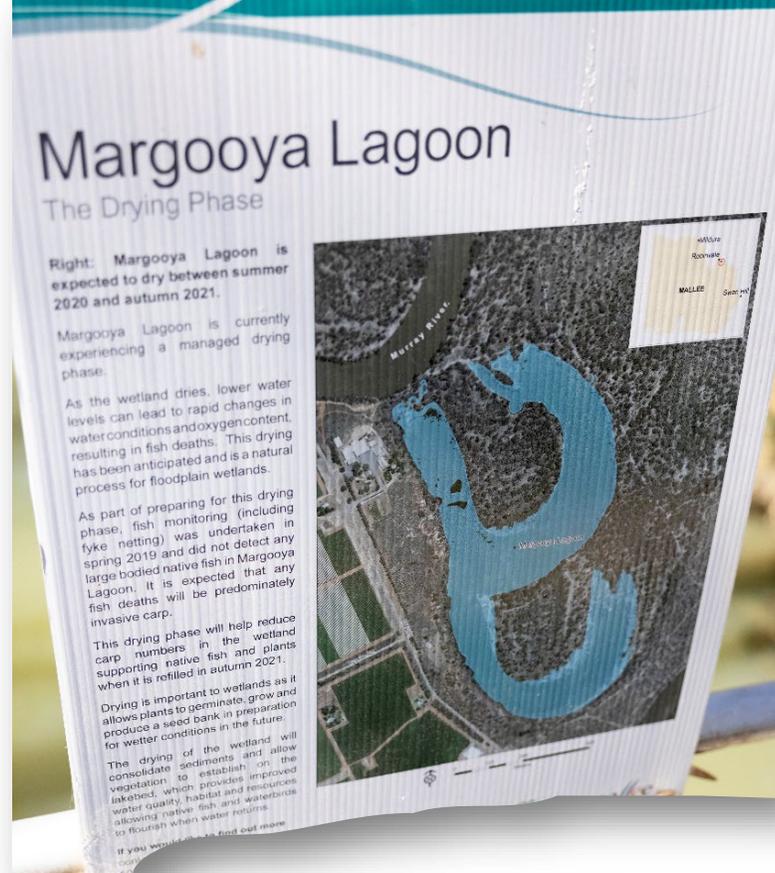
Sole management, that's what we need. Sole ownership, sovereign control.”

- Tati Tati member, online Roadmap workshop October 2021



MARGOOYA LAGOON

- Tol Tol, south of Robinvale
- Case study to capture the importance of the Cultural Flows framework
- Rather than creating a management plan for all of Country



THREATS

- Disregarding natural flow of system
- Regulator
- River mismanagement
- Human impact



Margooya Lagoon
CULTURAL FLOWS MANAGEMENT PLAN



Values

In 2018, Tati Tati Wadi Wadi engaged MLDRIN to undertake a Cultural and Biodiversity assessment of Margooya Lagoon, a watering-place that we determined as suitable for receiving water and undergoing a cultural flows assessment. The Cultural and Biodiversity assessment aimed to identify our values and aspirations for Margooya Lagoon, allowing us to address components of Stage 1 of the cultural flows methodology (Describe values and set cultural flow objectives).

Figure 1 depicts the values of Tati Tati Wadi Wadi at Margooya Lagoon. These values protect, sustain, and enhance Margooya Lagoon and are represented as a 'web' of interconnected elements.

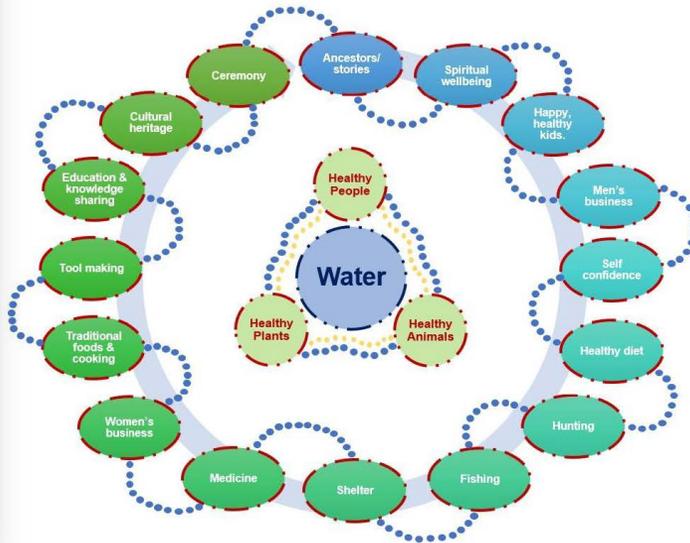


Figure 1: Tati Tati Wadi Wadi interconnected values at Margooya Lagoon.

Watering Requirements

For Culture

For Tati Tati Wadi Wadi peoples, seeing Margooya Lagoon wetlands dry and struggling is profoundly upsetting and hurtful to the spirit. Watering requirements must fulfill cultural and spiritual needs for the health and well-being of the community and strengthen cultural connections and family ties. Cultural watering requirements are as follows:

“Watering requirements of the people are the same as the land. Water is life.”
 – Tati Tati Wadi Wadi member, March 2021.

1. Water must be of high enough quality and quantity to support nation objectives (as numbered 13-16 in Objectives chapter),
2. TTWW has determined water allocations, Cultural Flows, and all aspects of decision making around water, or TTWW are included in meaningful and genuine ways throughout all processes,
3. Water allocation timing coincides with ceremony, seasonal changes, or culturally significant occasions as determined by TTWW.

TTWW traditions, cultural practices, and knowledge will be preserved and strengthened by achieving these cultural watering requirements.

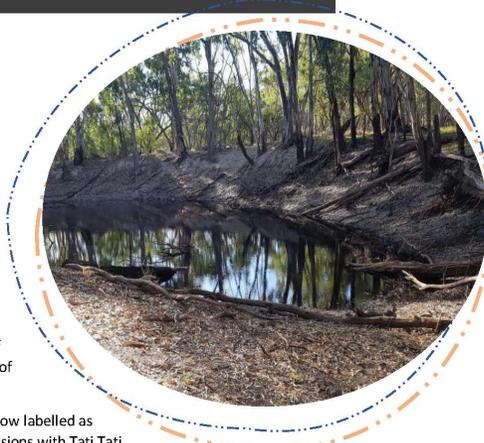


Margooya Lagoon Test Flow – 2020

Overview

In November 2020, a 15ML allocation of environmental water was committed and delivered to a floodplain creek at the Murray River side of the Margooya Lagoon wetland. The creek was previously one of three main outlets connected to and fed the Lagoon; however, this no longer occurs due to strict river and lagoon regulations of recent decades. The watering event was a way to simulate this original inundation of the creek and help revive the biodiversity of the surrounding area.

The 2020 watering allocation and event, now labelled as the "Test Flow," came about due to discussions with Tati Tati Wadi Wadi and a Mallee CMA representative at TTWW's March 2020 Cultural Flows workshop. Following on from these discussions, a proposal from the Mallee CMA was put forward to, and approved by, the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH).



TTWW feels it is important to state here that they were only enquiring about the process of environmental watering and were not giving the Mallee CMA permission to seek out water from the VEWH, nor act on their behalf. In doing so, TTWW were explicitly left out of the proposal, planning, and approval stages by the Mallee CMA.

TTWW were not provided the opportunity to discuss watering requirements, including the volume of water and the delivery location, before VEWH confirmation. These are fundamental components of water delivery that must have Traditional Owner involvement.

Outcomes

Many of the results and findings of these surveys will remain within the nation, however, the following are results from data collected during the project (figure 4).

A short film was also created solely by Tati Tati Wadi Wadi to document the journey, learnings, outcomes and experiences of their first water allocation on Country.



Figure 6: Results from the test flow, collected from Tati Tati Wadi Wadi MER.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Cultural Flows

- Cultural Flows is a lifelong concept. As such, the Cultural Flows Management Plan for Margooya Lagoon is an ongoing and live document that will grow and adapt as the people and Country that it concerns grow and change.



projects.

- TTWW recommends further Test Flow events to gain additional knowledge and understandings of natural creek inundation paths of Margooya Lagoon.

- TTWW proposes strengthening partnerships with MLDRIN, VEWH, CEWO, Parks Victoria, and Mallee CMA – many of which are already in place – to drive forward and emphasise the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge within the water space.

- With a funding agreement in place with DEWLP until 2024, Tati Tati Wadi Wadi aims to further their capacity for Traditional Owner employment, self-determination, and autonomy in holding water workshops and educational

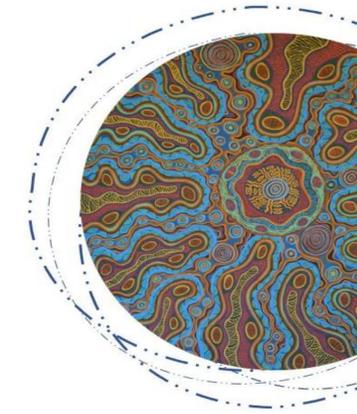
Engagement

- TTWW's rights and responsibilities to care for Country are to be respected by being involved in all stages of environmental watering processes; before, during, and after water is delivered.

- Engagement between Mallee CMA and TTWW is genuine and consistent throughout all steps of watering events and projects.

- Clear and transparent communication occurs surrounding all events taking place on Country, regardless of if TTWW are involved or not.

- All department staff and contractors to have completed the necessary cultural awareness and cultural safety training.



WHAT DO WE NEED?



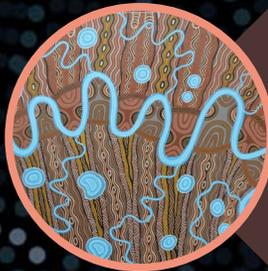
First Nations are empowered



Policy change



Management plans and water strategies



Genuine and meaningful partnerships, collaborations and agreements



HOW ARE WE MAKING CHANGE?

Roadmap for Aboriginal Access
to Water 2021

- Department of Environment,
Land, Water, and Planning

“DELWP recognises that
Traditional Owners have never
ceded rights to land and waters,
and that they should determine
where, when, and how they use
water on Country.”



HOW ARE WE MAKING CHANGE?

Cultural Water for Cultural
Economies report, 2021

- Dr. Erin O'Donnell

“Enabling Traditional Owners to exercise their inherent rights to water by increasing access to water (especially ownership and control of water) is an urgent water justice issue in Victoria.”

HOW ARE WE MAKING CHANGE?

Margooya Lagoon: Establishing a Cultural Flows model on Tati Tati Country, 2021

- Environmental Justice Australia

“Settler law and policy is fragmented and complex and does not conform easily to Aboriginal (Tati Tati) lore and custom. One of the purposes of the Cultural Flows model is to produce a clearer reconciliation between the two.”



“In practice, good faith negotiations are necessary across all levels of action, recognising and accommodating imbalances in power and resources where relevant. The result can be powerful restoration and cultural revitalisation outcomes.”

(Margooya Lagoon: Establishing a Cultural Flows model on Tati Tati Country, 2021, EJA)