MAIN TOPIC: Ecology
Sub Topic: Land Management

- Using the picture book *Papunya School Book of Country and History*, discuss the term ‘Country’ and its significance for Aboriginal peoples. See also the teachers’ notes at: [www.allenandunwin.com](http://www.allenandunwin.com)

- Aboriginal people cared for the land for tens of thousands of years before European colonisation. Students can get a good idea of changes to a place over time by reading & a guided discussion of Nadia Wheatley’s picture book *My Place*. It tells the story of one house in South Sydney and the 13 children who have lived in it over 130 years

- *My Place* has been adapted as a children’s television series, screened on ABC 3 in 2010. You can watch some clips and access other useful information on the website: [http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/myplace/](http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/myplace/)

- The picture book *You and Me, Murrawee*, about two girls enjoying the river environment, is a good discussion starter for encouraging students to imagine what their local environment was like in the past.

- Identify the changes which would have occurred in their local area as a result of European colonisation. Chart the changes.

- Invite an appropriate Aboriginal community member and a Department of Environment & Conservation (DEC) officer to discuss how Aboriginal peoples cared for the land before European settlement.

- Find out if there is an Aboriginal word(s) for looking after the land in the local Aboriginal language. Make a chart with Aboriginal words and their European translation that relate to land management and sustainability.


- If you are in a Kimberley school, invite a ranger to talk to your class about the work they do in caring for their country.

- Aboriginal people have used fire as a land management tool for thousands of years. Read about Firestick Farming in the book *Caring for Country* in the ‘Our Voices’ series.

- Invite a Department of Environment & Conservation (DEC) Indigenous Heritage Officer to discuss your local area and how students can participate in sustainable land management in their school and local community.

- Brainstorm the term “Land Management”. Why do we need to manage the land? eg. salinity, water, erosion, sustainability of food crops, animals, human life and global warming.

- Investigate how the local community practices land management? Identify whether the local Aboriginal community employ or are involved in land management practices?
- Evaluate the use of your local environment. How is it used? What are the future uses of the land in the local area? Invite an Aboriginal person into the class to discuss any environmental issues which they believe exist in your local area. Are there any particular places that are significant to them and are seen as 'land management' sites? Lakes, National Parks and river systems are examples of significant land management areas.

- Discussion: students describe their local area and its environment. Students should reflect upon what the area may have been like prior to colonisation. Which Aboriginal group occupied the area before Europeans?

- Group work: Students complete the following collaborative research task. Using a blank map of the local area mark:
  - the points of the compass. Use the Aboriginal names if they are available.
  - places of Aboriginal significance
  - natural features of the area, as distinct from man made
  - types of habitats
  - native fauna
  - native flora
  - introduced species of flora and fauna
  - places of significance to students

- Invite a Dept of Environment and Conservation Officer or a Bushcare Officer from your local council into the class to discuss conservation strategies.

- Identify a land management or conservation strategy that could be implemented for a particular habitat in the local area. Include signage using Aboriginal names for places, plants and animals in that environment.

**Resources**


- *Our land, our people*. NSW Aboriginal Land Council, 1991

- *Exploring woodlands with Noongars: teaching activities for primary and secondary schools*. Dept Conservation and Land Management, Como, WA. 1998. Download from [http://www.naturebase.net/content/view/2265/1090/1/](http://www.naturebase.net/content/view/2265/1090/1/)