



## Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority: Aboriginal People and Caring for Country Benchmarking Survey

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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There were two primary objectives associated with this project. The first objective was to assess the current (2012) 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 second objective was to compare the findings of the current 2012 survey against the findings from the previous survey undertaken in 2008 and to identify any significant changes in awareness, attitudes and beliefs.

The questionnaire was the same as that used in the 2008 survey of Aboriginal people and 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 in early 2012 and the final sample consisted of 37 completed questionnaires.

### **Sample characteristics**

The sample consisted of 52% males and 48% females with an average age of 43 years; and with Aboriginal people having lived in their local area for an average of 23 years. This compares to the 2008 survey which included 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.

The majority of respondents were from the Eurobodalla subregion (62%). This is on contrast to the 2008 survey where the majority of respondents were from the Illawarra subregion (52%).

Seventy-nine percent (52% in 2008) of Aboriginal people indicated they were living on their Traditional country and 79% (86% in 2008) 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, 77% (80% in 2008) 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 (64% in 2012 and 58% in 2008) 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, there was considerable variability in responses, although overall 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 (85%); the impacts of climate change (71%); and weeds (65%).

When Aboriginal people were asked to allocate funding to specific activities to improve the health of Country, the three most important activities identified were: (i) employment for Aboriginal people; (ii) land management activities, which included for example weed control, maintaining the health of land, water, environmental services, and cleaning and maintaining creeks; and (iii) addressing issues associated with Aboriginal health.

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 (56%) and Traditional Owner (40%) boundaries were appropriate in the management of Country.

In the management of Country between Government and Aboriginal people, the three most important issues that needed to be addressed were identified as (i) the recognition of Aboriginal heritage and connection to Country (74%); (ii) the meaningful involvement of the Aboriginal community in decision making (54%); and (iii) the recognition of Aboriginal connection to Country (49%).

Eighty-three percent of Aboriginal people indicated they knew of Traditional Aboriginal sites near where they lived, however, 52% (68% in 2008) 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 (98% in 2012 and 98% in 2008) and that most Aboriginal people cared about the Country near where they lived (98% in 2012 and 91% in 2008).

In 2012, 38% of Aboriginal people (as compared to 24% in 2008) indicated they did not understand the meaning of the term 'natural resource management'.

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

Amongst all respondents, 42% (32% in 2008) indicated they had been involved in the last 12 months in activities associated with managing or caring for Country and 7% (15% in 2008) indicated they were a member of an NRM group or network.

Of the 58% of Aboriginal people who had not been involved in these activities in the last 12 months, the main reasons for non-participation in these activities were that they 'did not have enough time or were too busy' (41%) or that they 'hadn't heard of any activities' (36%). These were also the two most common reasons given for non-participation in 2012.

### **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 40% (52% in 2008) believing the level of consultation to be very good and 53% of respondents (63% in 2008) 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 quarter (23% in 2012 and 34% in 2008) of Aboriginal people believed that the issues raised during these consultation processes were acted upon.

### **Relationship with Government**

Fifty-six percent of Aboriginal people (62% in 2008) believed they knew which Government agencies and departments were involved in managing and caring for Country.

Sixty percent (70% in 2008) of Aboriginal people were not satisfied with the way State Government organisations were caring for Country and nearly all Aboriginal people (96%) 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 37% (50% in 2008) of Aboriginal people believed Government meaningfully involved Aboriginal people in decisions about caring for Country.

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

Across all respondents, 72% indicated that they had heard of the Southern Rivers CMA (61% in 2008) and of those who had heard of the CMA, 68% indicated that they had had contact or communication with the CMA (86% in 2008).

The two most frequent forms of contact between Aboriginal people and the CMA were (i) talking to someone from the CMA (91%) and (ii) working with the CMA on projects (52%).

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 (93%);
- The CMA consults with Aboriginal people in caring for Country (94%);
- The CMA works effectively with Aboriginal organisations to address the interest of Aboriginal people (90%);
- The views of Aboriginal people are respected when the CMA consults with them about caring for Country (93%);
- The CMA listens and acts on the information provided to it by Aboriginal people (93%),
- The CMA takes into account the interest of Aboriginal people in its decision making (90%); and
- There is an appropriate level of Aboriginal representation in the CMA (81%).

It was found that 75% (81% in 2008) 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 and other stakeholders more broadly in NRM, the greater the likelihood that the resource condition targets, as identified in the CAP are able to be achieved.

This project is the second benchmarking project undertaken in the Southern Rivers CMA region and provides a basis for monitoring the capacity of the Aboriginal community, their relationship with the SRCMA and their involvement in NRM.

## 2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

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There were two primary objectives associated with this project.

The first objective was to assess the current (2012) 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 second objective was to compare the findings of the current 2012 survey against the findings from the previous survey undertaken in 2008<sup>1</sup> and to identify any significant changes in awareness, attitudes and beliefs.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> Fenton, D.M. & Rickert, A. (2008). *Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority: Aboriginal people and caring for country benchmarking survey. Southern Rivers, CMA, Wollongong.*

### **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 the same questionnaire as used in the 2008 survey of Aboriginal communities. 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 officers 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 in early 2012 and the final sample consisted of 48 completed questionnaires.

## 4 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The sample consisted of 52% males and 48% females with an average age of 43 years; and with respondents having lived in their local area for an average of 23 years. This compares to the 2008 survey which included 56% males and 44% females, with an average age of 41 years; and with respondents having also lived in their local area for an average of 23 years.

Table 1 indicates that the majority of respondents were from the Eurobodalla subregion (62%). This is in contrast to the 2008 survey where the majority of respondents were from the Illawarra subregion (52%).

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

Subregions	2008		2012	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Illawarra	33	51.6	10	21.3
Eurobodalla	16	25.0	29	61.7
Shoalhaven	10	15.6	0	0.0
Far South Coast	5	7.8	8	17.0
Total	64	100.0	47	100.0

Source: EBC (2012).

Table 2 shows that only 60% of Aboriginal people<sup>2</sup> lived in town and 31% lived on a rural property or farm. Furthermore only 19% of all respondents indicated they owned, or had a vested interest in or looked after a property outside of town (15% in 2008).

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

Location	2008		2012	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Live in town	64	88.9	27	60.0
Aboriginal community (village)	6	8.3	4	8.9
Live on a rural property or farm	2	2.8	14	31.1
Total	72	100.0	45	100.0

Source: EBC (2012).

Sixty-nine percent (52% in 2008) of Aboriginal people indicated they were living on their Traditional country and 79% (86% in 2008) indicated they knew who the Traditional Owners were in the Country in which they now lived.

<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 40% of Aboriginal people indicated they had never visited their Traditional Country<sup>3</sup> or had done so once a year or less (55% in 2008).

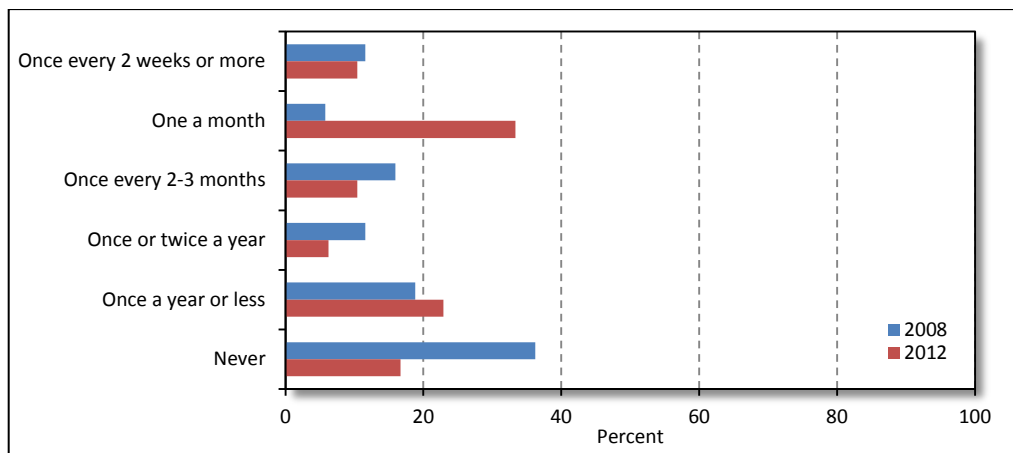


Figure 1. Frequency of visiting sites on Traditional Country

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.

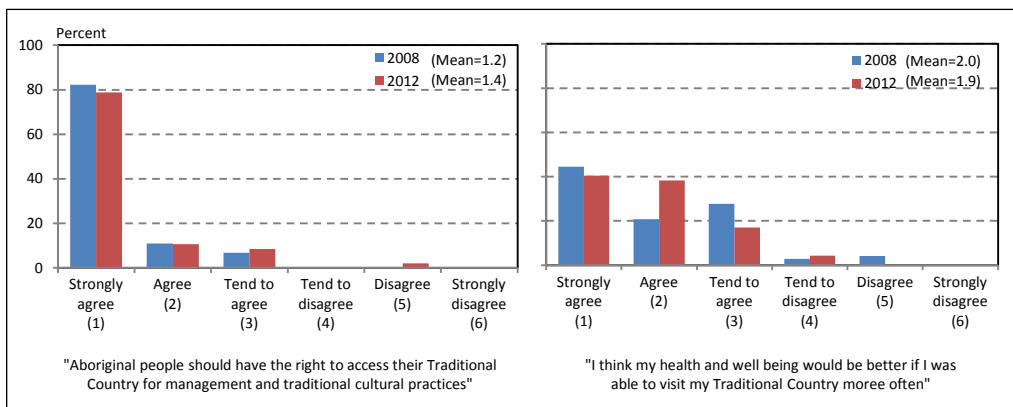


Figure 2. Beliefs about access and relationship with Country  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

<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 in 2012, 60% of Aboriginal people scored themselves as average (5) or less in relation to how much they knew about traditional knowledge.

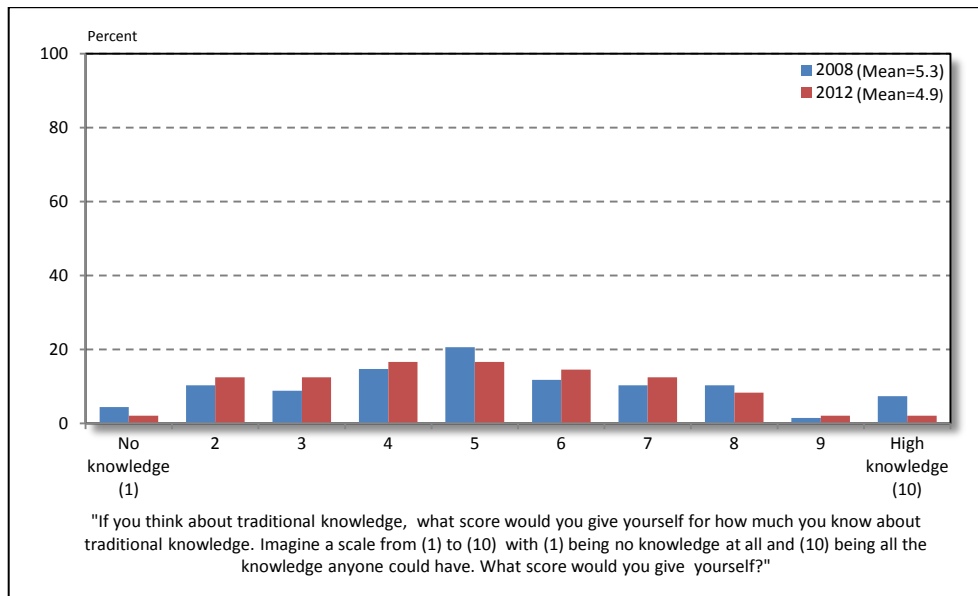


Figure 3. Level of Traditional knowledge amongst Aboriginal people  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

While the majority of Aboriginal people in this survey believed they had an average or less than average understanding of Traditional knowledge, Figure 4 shows that 77% of Aboriginal people would be interested in visiting Country to learn about traditional knowledge if they had the opportunity to do so.

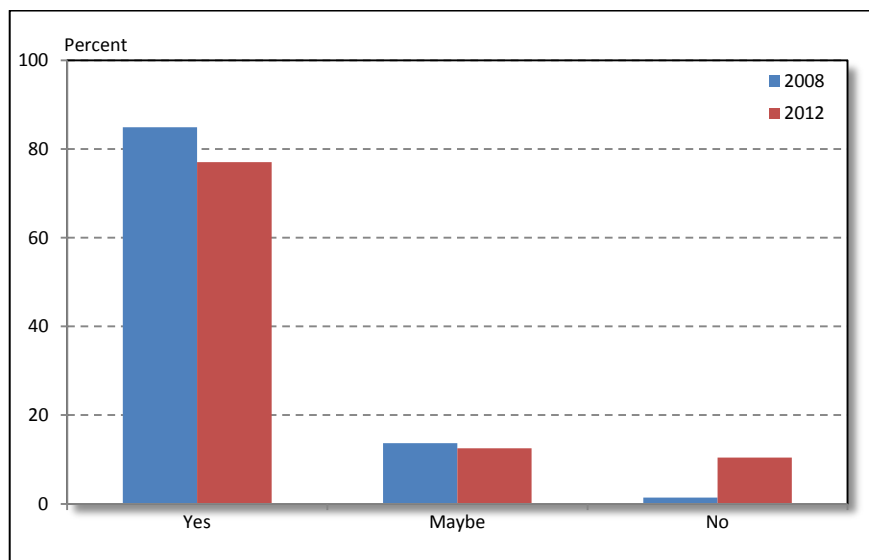


Figure 4. Opportunities to visit Country

Figure 5 shows that the majority of Aboriginal people (64%) do not believe that Traditional knowledge is included and used in decisions that are made about the management of Country. This belief is significantly more common in 2012 as compared to 2008.

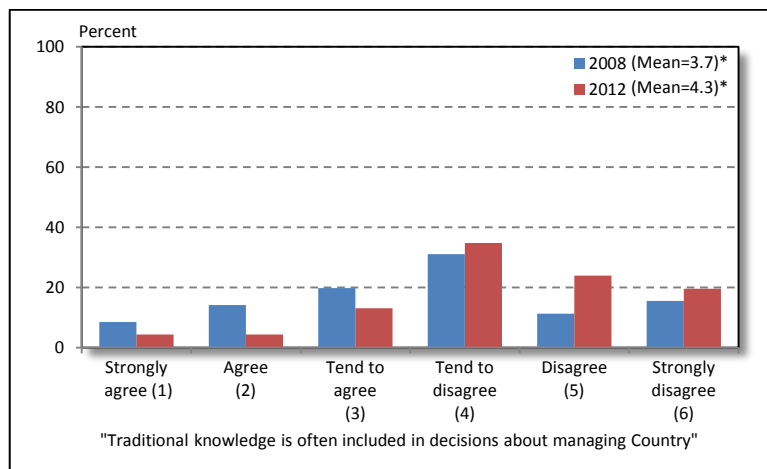


Figure 5. Traditional knowledge and the management of Country  
*(There was a significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)*

## 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 7), although overall the health of Country was seen as little different to what it is today. There was no significant difference in the mean scores between 2008 and 2012.

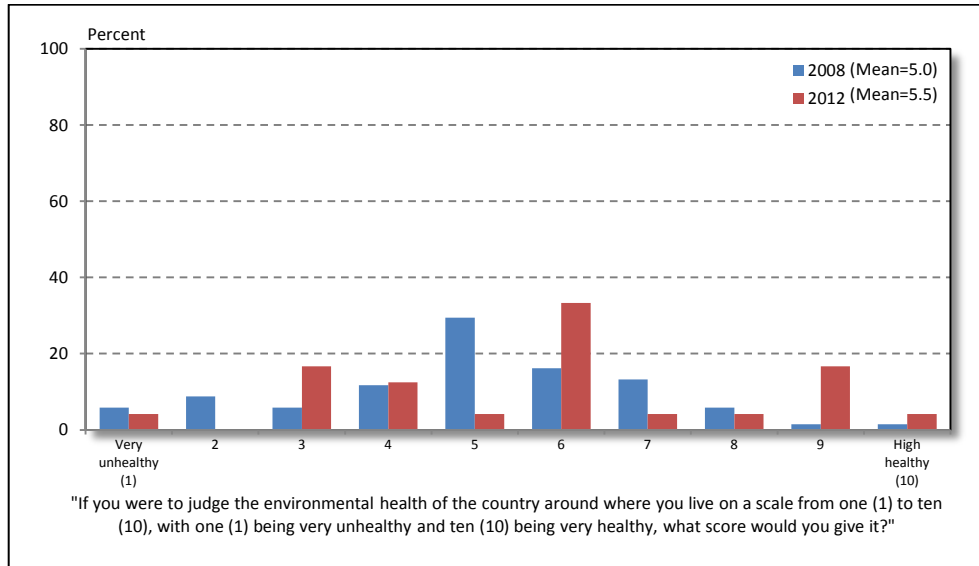


Figure 6. Current assessment of the health of Country  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

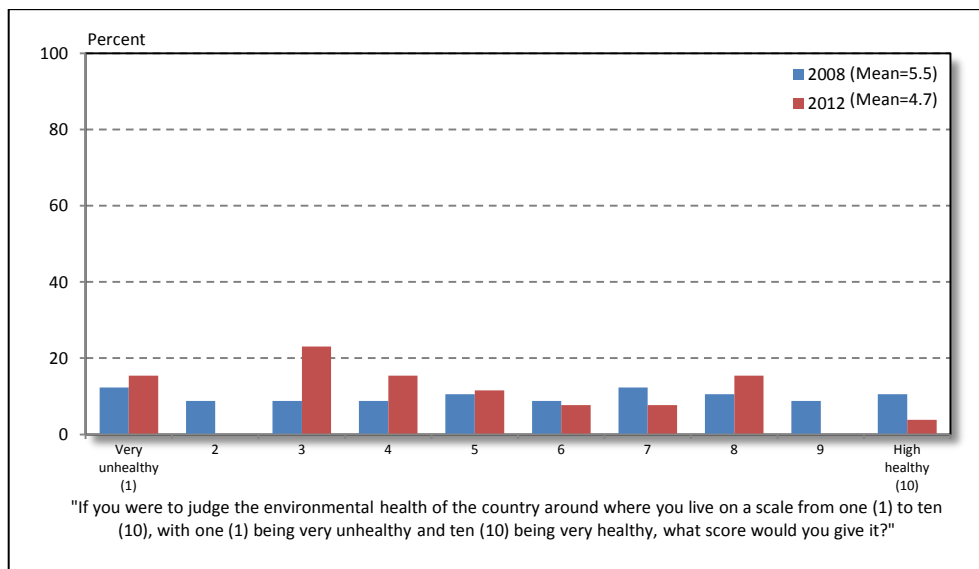


Figure 7. Assessment of the health of Country 10 years ago  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

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 8). Although 14 (29%) (compared to 7 or 10% in 2008) of respondents indicated they could not answer the question, in 2012 the three most important issues for Aboriginal people were the decline in native animals (85%); the impacts of climate change (71%); and weeds (65%).

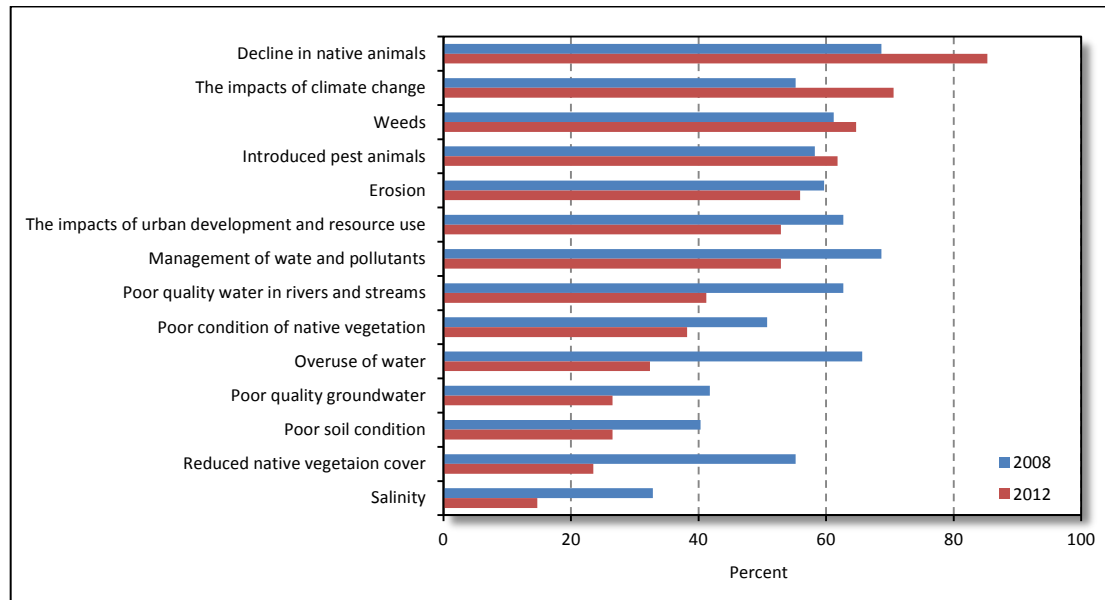


Figure 8. Issues affecting the health of Country

When Aboriginal people were asked to allocate funding to specific activities to improve the health of Country, the three most important activities identified were: (i) employment for Aboriginal people; (ii) land management activities, which included for example weed control, maintaining the health of land, water, environmental services, cleaning and maintaining creeks and storm water filtration; and (iii) addressing issues associated with Aboriginal health (Table 3).

The three 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 3. "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
Employment	13	34.2
Land management (general)	9	23.7
Health	6	15.8
Maintaining/protecting Aboriginal sites	3	7.9
Education and training	3	7.9
Cultural education/awareness	3	7.9
Housing	2	5.3
Increasing involvement in NRM	2	5.3
Regeneration and remedial works	2	5.3
Aged care	1	2.6
Drinking water	1	2.6
Get Aboriginal businesses started and operating	1	2.6
Government strategies that support Aboriginal participation	1	2.6
Landcare	1	2.6
Protect and preserve Aboriginal culture	1	2.6
Support for work transport	1	2.6
The oyster industry	1	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</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. 'Weeds, health of land, water, environmental services, clean and maintain creeks, storm water filtration'

Source: EBC (2012)

<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 9 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.

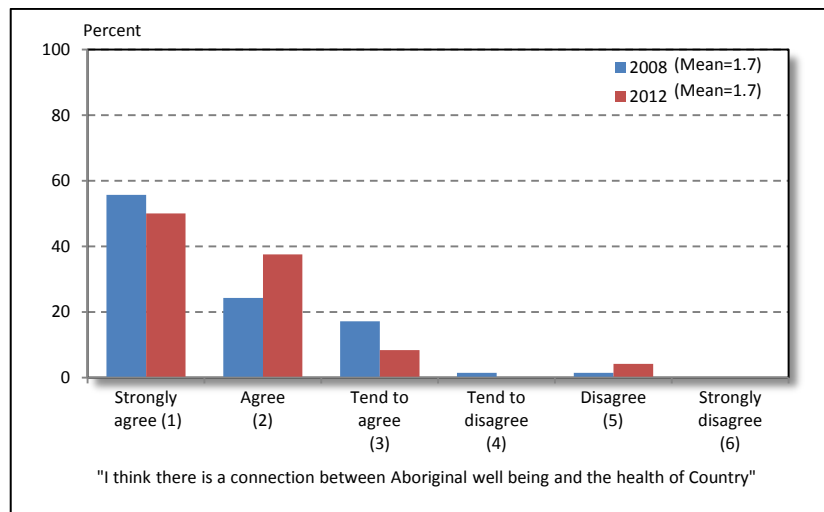


Figure 9. Aboriginal well-being and health of Country  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

## 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 10 shows that in 2012 many Aboriginal people believed more than one type of boundary was appropriate, with Aboriginal Land Council (56%) and Traditional Owner (40%) boundaries regarded as important boundaries in the management of Country.

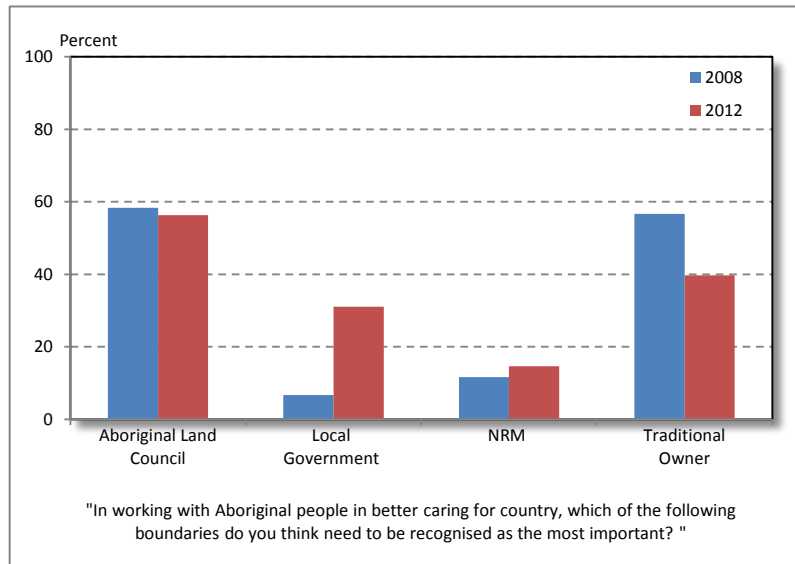


Figure 10. Boundary definition and caring for Country

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 11) and 19% (32% in 2008) of respondents did not answer the question. Amongst those who did answer the question, the three most important issues that needed to be addressed were identified as (i) the recognition of Aboriginal heritage and connection to Country (74%); (ii) the meaningful involvement of the Aboriginal community in decision making (54%); and (iii) the recognition of Aboriginal connection to Country (49%).

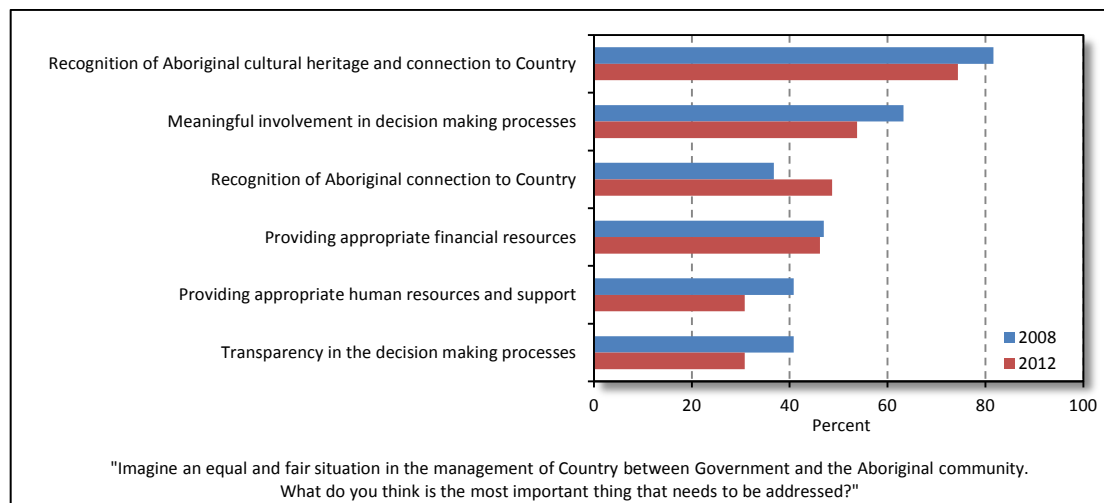


Figure 11. Boundary definition and caring for Country



Although 31% of Aboriginal people indicated they were not living on their Traditional Country, 83% of Aboriginal people indicated they knew of Traditional Aboriginal sites near where they lived.

However, 52% of Aboriginal people compared to 68% in 2008, did not believe that Traditional sites on Country were being well looked after (Figure 12).

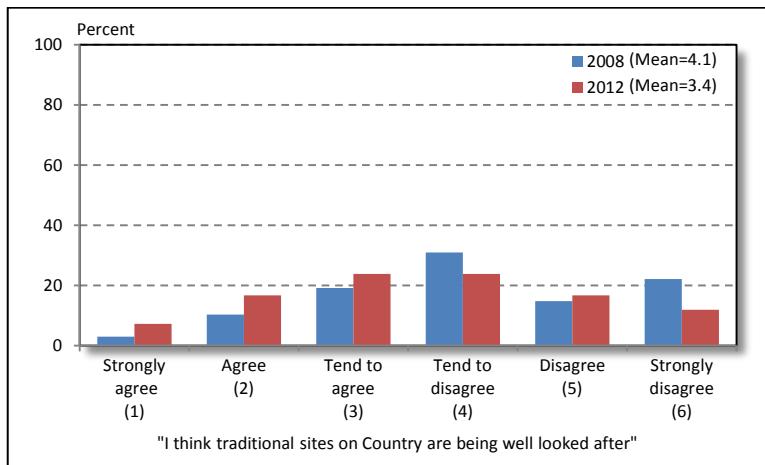


Figure 12. Caring for Traditional sites on Country  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

## 9 WORKING ON COUNTRY

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

Figure 13 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. There was no difference in the percentage of Aboriginal people agreeing with these belief statements between 2008 and 2012.

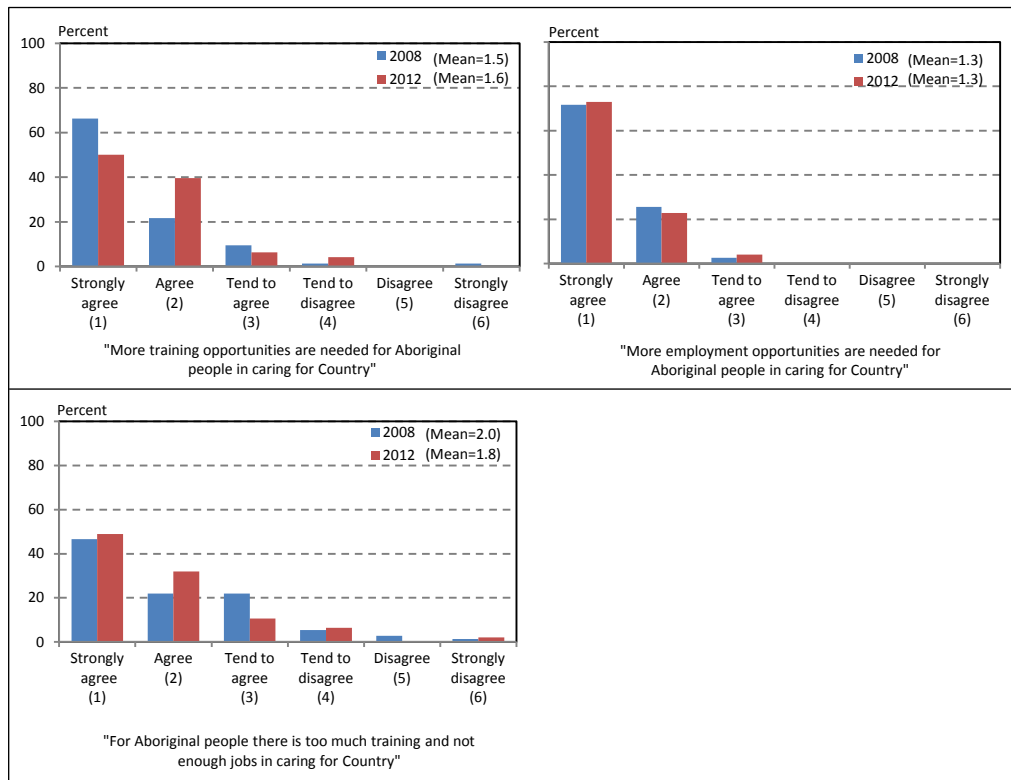


Figure 13. Beliefs about employment and training  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

## 10 LEARNING ABOUT COUNTRY

Figure 14 shows that nearly all Aboriginal people believed that more learning and education about 'contemporary and traditional natural resource management for Aboriginal people' was required (98% in 2012 and 98% in 2008) and that most Aboriginal people cared about the Country near where they lived (98% in 2012 and 91% in 2008).

Figure 14 also shows that 44% of Aboriginal people believed most young Aboriginal people cared about Country (53% in 2008).

In 2008, 24% of Aboriginal people also indicated they did not understand the meaning of the term 'natural resource management'. However, as shown in Figure 14, this percentage increased significantly in 2012 to 38% of Aboriginal people.

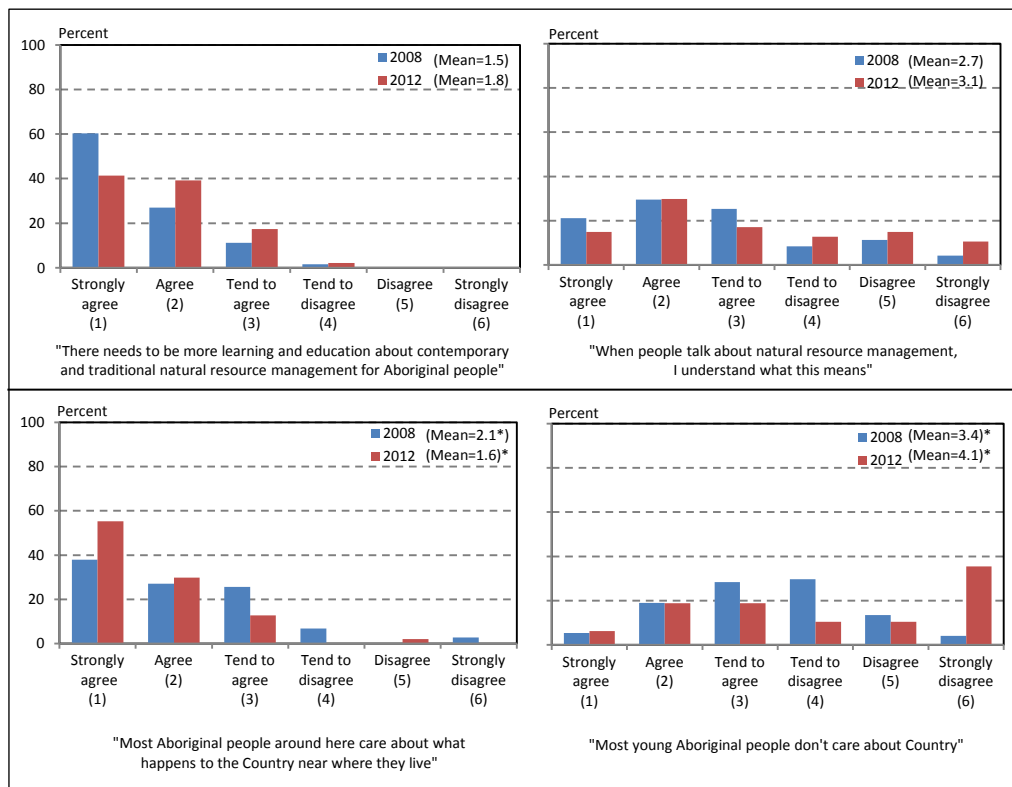


Figure 14. Learning about Country  
 (\*There was a significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

## 11 INVOLVEMENT IN CARING FOR COUNTRY

Amongst all respondents, 42% (32% in 2008) indicated they had been involved in the last 12 months in activities associated with managing or caring for Country and 7% (15% in 2008) indicated they were a member of an NRM group or network.

Of the 58% of Aboriginal people who had not been involved in these activities in the last 12 months, Figure 15 shows the reasons they provided for not being involved. As shown in Figure 15, the main reasons for non-participation in these activities were that they 'did not have enough time or were too busy' (41%) or that they 'hadn't heard of any activities' (36%). These were also the two most common reasons given for non-participation in 2012.

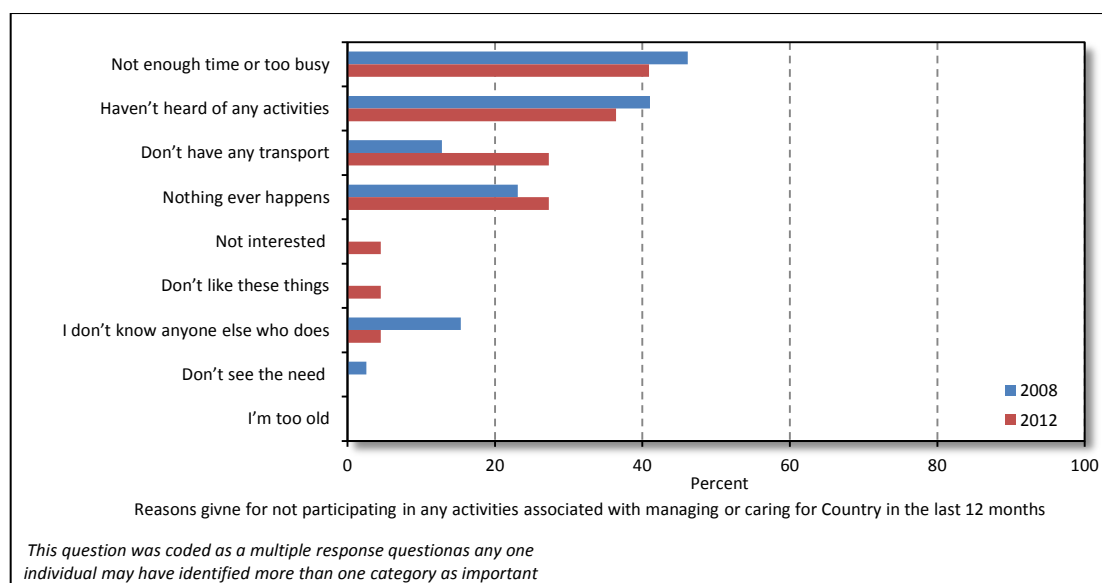


Figure 15. Reasons for non-participation in caring for Country activities

Amongst those Aboriginal people who indicated they did participate in activities associated with managing or caring for Country, Table 4 shows the type of activities in which they participated.

Table 4. Type of activities in which respondents participated (2012)

Response	Count	Percent
Aboriginal sites (care, maintenance or restoration)	4	21.0
Mogo Creek	2	10.5
Rubbish clean-up/clean-up	2	10.5
Aboriginal community worker	1	5.3
Attend workshops on Pacific Oyster	1	5.3
Fishing	1	5.3
Help Aboriginal Land Council	1	5.3
Help farmer weed and fence	1	5.3
Looking after grandmothers garden	1	5.3
Me and my kids pulled fireweed	1	5.3
TAFE (conservation and land management)	1	5.3
Wallaga Lake Cemetery and Illegal dump sites	1	5.3
Weed control on our beaches and community	1	5.3
Working with Council to help	1	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</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 (2012)

Figure 16 shows that the majority of Aboriginal people (54%) believe that local Aboriginal organisations help people to participate in activities associated with caring for Country.

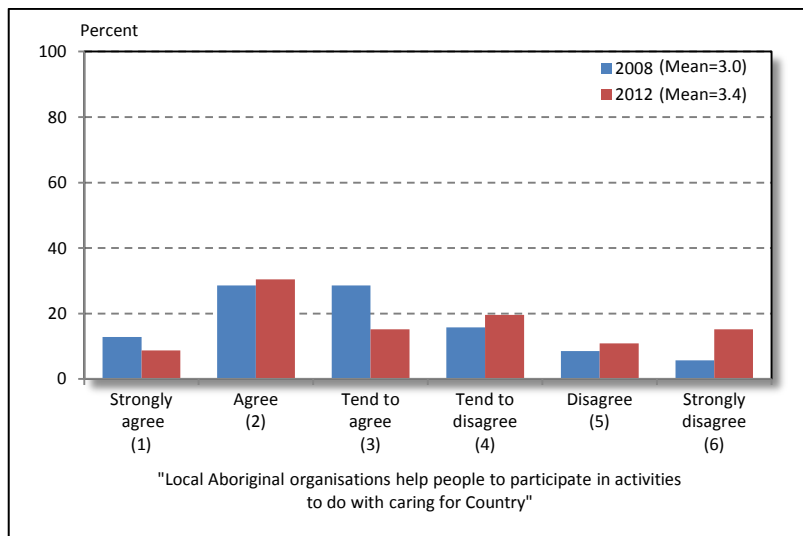


Figure 16. Local Aboriginal organisations and caring for Country  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

## 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 40% (52% in 2008) believing the level of consultation to very good (Figure 17).

Although there were differences of opinion in relation to whether current levels of consultation with Aboriginal people were adequate, 53% of respondents (63% in 2008) 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 quarter (23% in 2012 and 34% in 2008) of Aboriginal people believed that the issues raised during these consultation processes were acted upon (Figure 17).

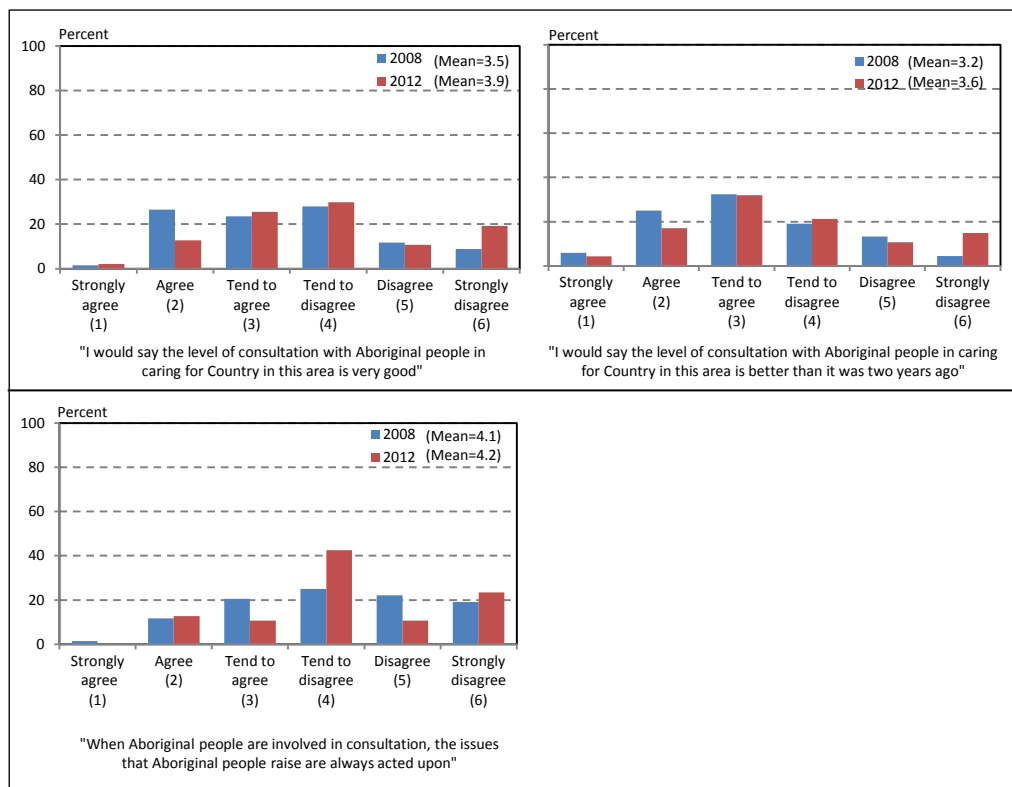


Figure 17. Consultation with Aboriginal people  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

### 13 RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT

Figure 18 shows that in 2012, 56% of Aboriginal people believed they knew which Government agencies and departments were involved in managing and caring for Country (62% in 2008).

Sixty percent (70% in 2008) of Aboriginal people were not satisfied with the way State Government organisations were caring for Country and nearly all Aboriginal people (96%) 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 18).

In addition Figure 18 also shows that only 37% of Aboriginal people (50% in 2008) believe Government meaningfully involves Aboriginal people in decisions about caring for Country.

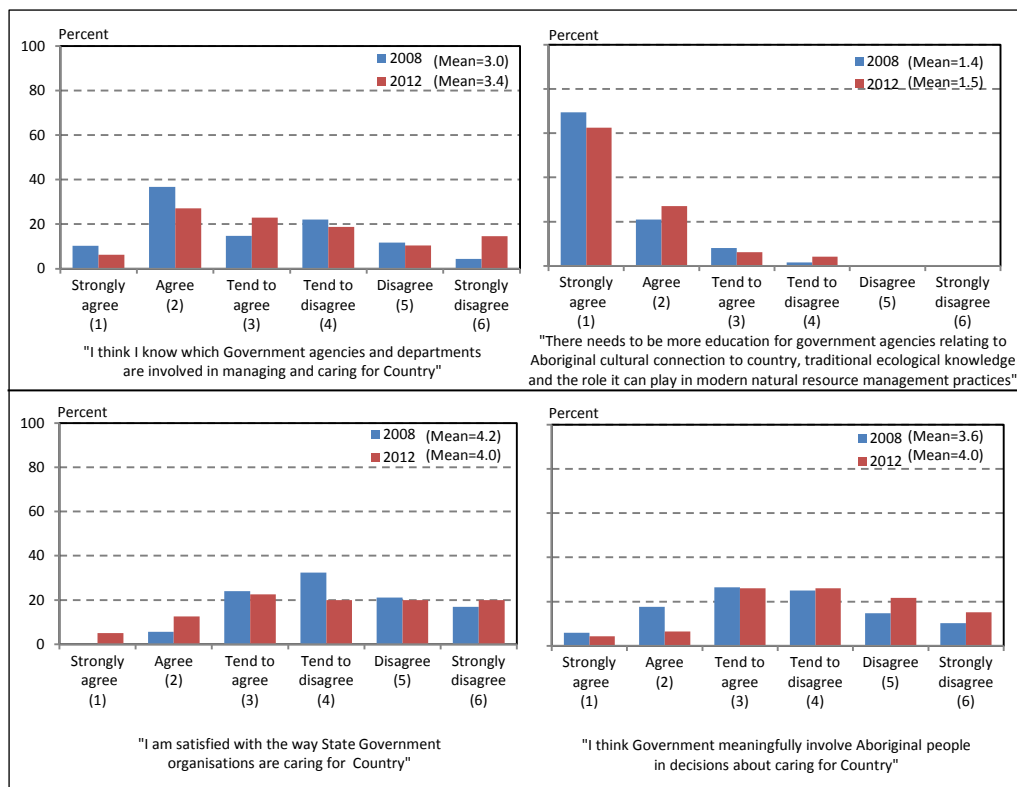


Figure 18. Relationship with Government  
(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)

## 14 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOUTHERN RIVERS CMA

Across all respondents, 72% indicated that they had heard of the Southern Rivers CMA (61% in 2008) and of those who had heard of the CMA, 68% indicated that they had had contact or communication with the CMA (86% in 2008).

Of those who had contact with the CMA, Figure 19 shows the two most frequent forms of contact between Aboriginal people and the CMA were (i) talking to someone from the CMA (91%) and (ii) working with the CMA on projects (52%).

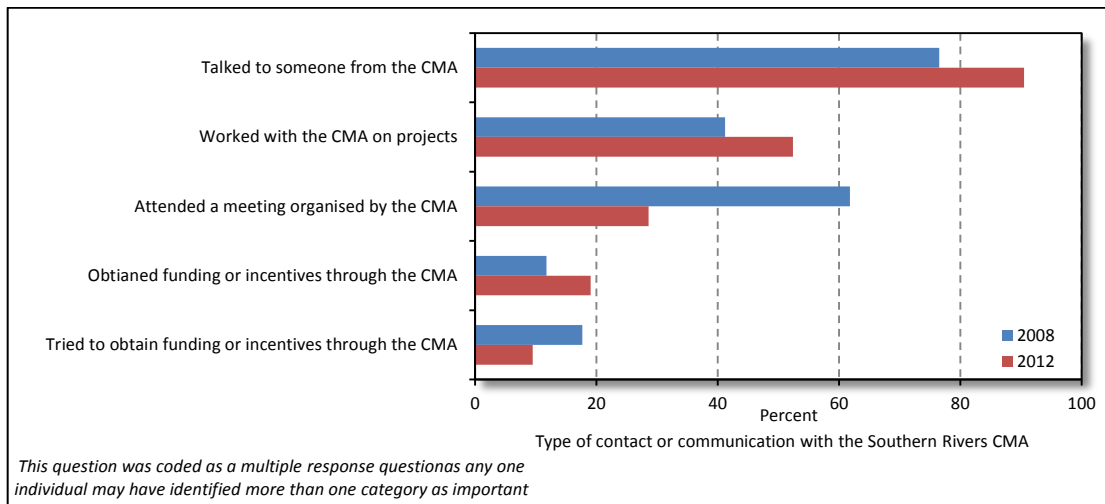


Figure 19. Type of contact with the Southern Rivers CMA

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 20). 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 (93%);
- The CMA consults with Aboriginal people in caring for Country (94%);
- The CMA works effectively with Aboriginal organisations to address the interest of Aboriginal people (90%);
- The views of Aboriginal people are respected when the CMA consults with them about caring for Country (93%);
- The CMA listens and acts on the information provided to it by Aboriginal people (93%);
- The CMA takes into account the interest of Aboriginal people in its decision making (90%); and
- There is an appropriate level of Aboriginal representation in the CMA (81%)

While many respondents had not heard of or had any contact or communication with the Southern Rivers CMA, it was found that 75% (81% in 2008) of all respondents indicated they would like to know more about the Southern Rivers CMA.



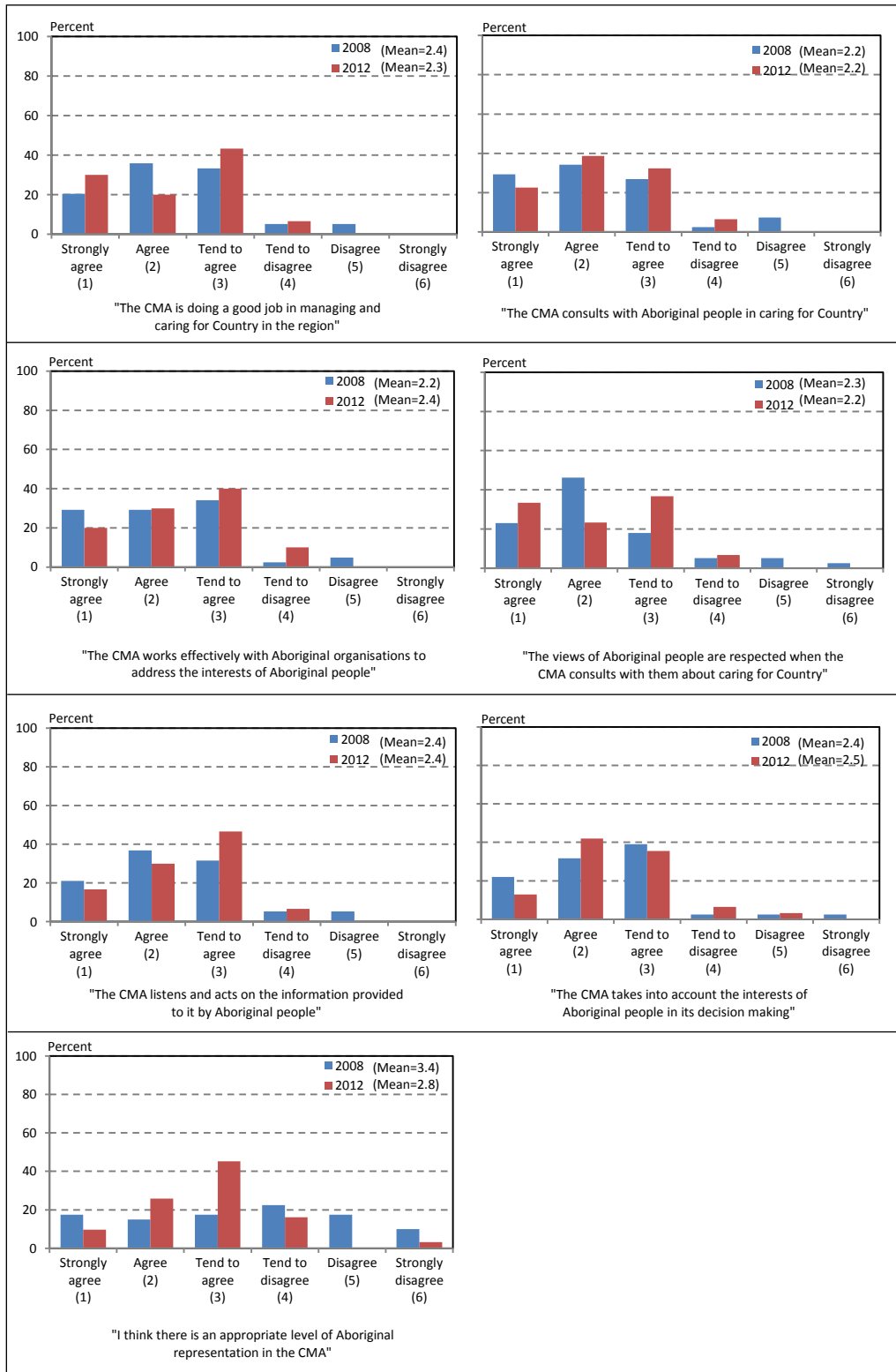


Figure 20. Relationship with the Southern Rivers CMA  
*(There was no significant difference in the means between 2008 and 2012)*

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?

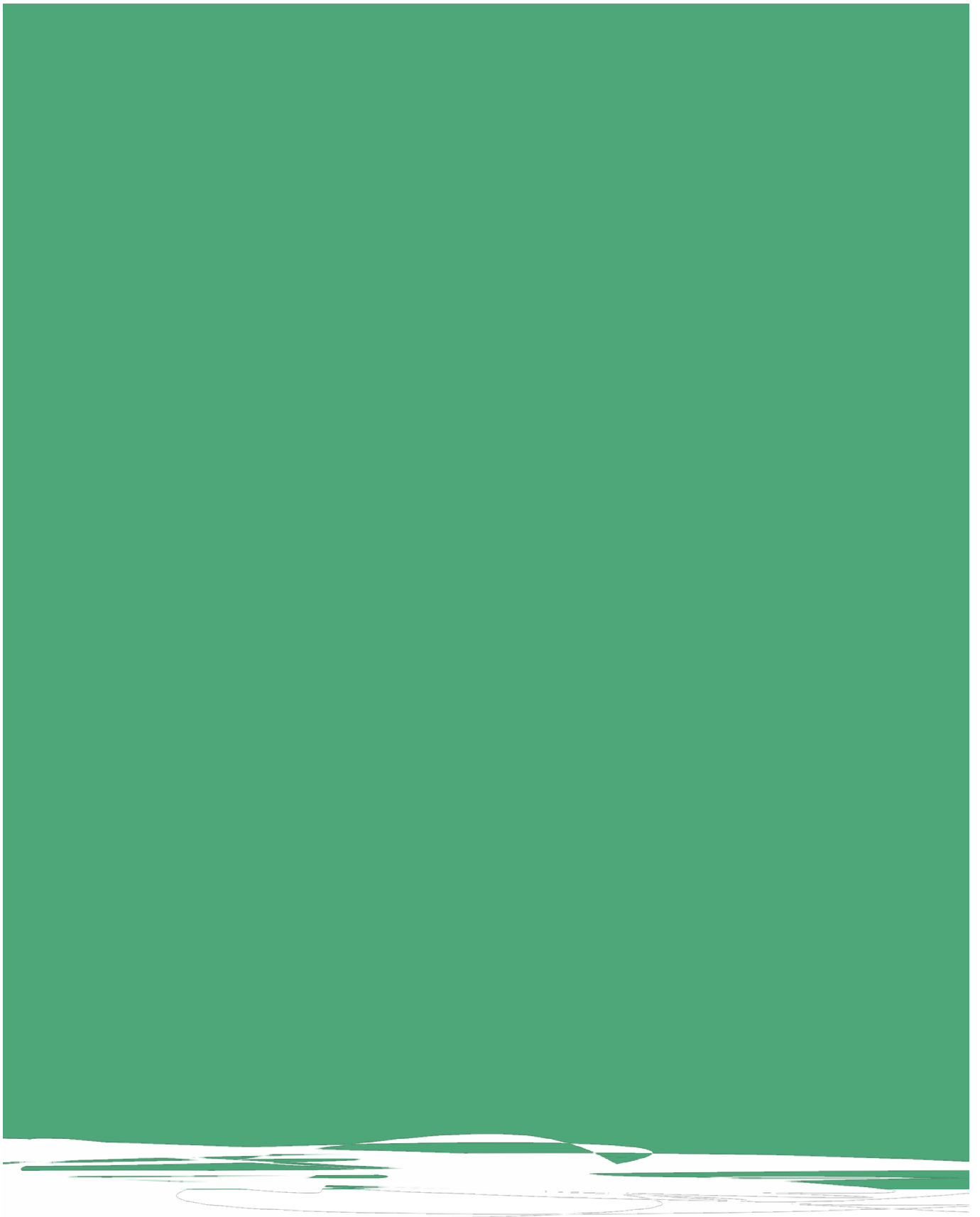
- Attended a meeting organised by the CMA
- Talked to someone from the CMA
- Worked with the CMA on projects
- Tried to obtain funding or incentives through the CMA
- Obtained funding or incentives through the CMA

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**



**Catchment Management  
Authority**  
Southern Rivers

**Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority**

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