Vanessa's Story

"I've always been keen to promote Aboriginal women's empowerment and engagement in caring for country.

"I'm a Black Future"覆

Statistically there are fewer Aboriginal women in caring for country roles than men, and currently the majority of voices guiding cultural burning programs are male. It's important to raise Aboriginal women's voices so that we hear from women here today as well as the voices of our brisbanes, our female ancestors.

At national parks, I completed firefighting training and attended many different fire events. Then later through cultural burning workshops I learned about applying fire to enhance the landscape rather than just reducing a hazard risk for humans. After the Black Summer fires, wider public interest in cultural burning really took off. But this is not about Aboriginal people giving knowledge to non-Aboriginal people and that's the end of the story. It needs to be a fair and just process with Aboriginal leadership.

Through my research I understand some of the gendered sensitivities about places in the landscape and shared community roles. For some groups and nations in New South Wales, Aboriginal women don't or didn't participate in cultural burning traditionally, whereas for others they talk about women being the custodians of that knowledge. So it's not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Recently I took my daughter to a cultural burn on Wonarrarua Country. I witnessed my daughter, a young Wonarrarua person, lighting a cultural burn on her grandfather's country.

And that's what cultural burning and all those cultural land management processes and caring for country are able to do.

When we talk about Indigenous wellbeing, to me, that is it."

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Cultural Burning
in Southern Australia

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