



# Stronger together

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## Charles Sturt University

At Charles Sturt University, the Wiradjuri phrase *Yindyamarra Winhanganha* - 'the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in' - is at the heart of everything we stand for.

It reflects the belief that through our actions, we can create a world worth living in.

As a university with our roots firmly in the regions, we are the largest provider of undergraduate agricultural education in Australia.

Our campuses are located across a significant range of Indigenous nations, and we are one of the two largest providers of Indigenous education in Australia.

So how can we use our strengths to increase the historically low participation rate of Indigenous students in the study of agriculture and improve modern land management practice?

Through the creation of the Charles Sturt University Indigenous Agriculture Initiative, that

- addresses the critical threat to agriculture posed by the loss of First Nations knowledge of land management;
- encourages greater Indigenous participation in undergraduate, postgraduate and research programs, and;
- creates synergistic outcomes for both cultures.

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## Our vision

The communities of Charles Sturt University have in recent times endured unprecedented drought and bushfire events.

Australian agriculture cannot afford to ignore the learning of the Indigenous people who have been managing the landscape for over 120,000 years.

At Charles Sturt University, we believe the preservation and integration of Indigenous land management into contemporary agriculture study and research has the potential to create better outcomes for all.

It also has the capacity to facilitate greater participation of Indigenous people in the agricultural sector where they have been under-represented for generations.

To achieve this, we need to:

- establish a research unit to specifically consider aspects of Indigenous land management;
- increase the number of Indigenous students in agriculture through the delivery of a curriculum that is relevant to Indigenous culture and the creation of annual scholarships;
- create a higher degree program for Indigenous students to ensure traditional practice and learnings are brought into the digital age.



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**Our goal is to fund  
a \$12.28m five year  
program**

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## Support us, support the regions

We want your help to address the critical threat to agriculture posed by the loss of First Nations land management knowledge through the creation of an Indigenous Agriculture Initiative.

The initiative enhances opportunities to engage with Indigenous leaders in creating solutions to the environmental challenges that threaten sustained agricultural productivity and the welfare of communities dependent on it.

If you believe in supporting the preservation and integration of Indigenous land management into contemporary agriculture study and increased participation of Indigenous students, supporting the Indigenous Agriculture Initiative provides a targeted, meaningful way to make a difference.

If you want to discuss how you can help contact the Charles Sturt Advancement Office on +612 69 33 2067 or [advancement@csu.edu.au](mailto:advancement@csu.edu.au)

## The proposal

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### The vision

Develop an understanding of Indigenous land management practices so that future land management can be a synergistic collaboration that delivers long term benefit to all through sustainable production systems and environmental resilience.

### The aim

Collaborate with First Nations peoples to create a compendium of Indigenous landscape knowledge and opportunities including:

- Land management applications;
- Identification of potentially commercial native plant opportunities for development;
- Compilation of Indigenous seasonal and other climate indicators;
- Development of technology for dissemination and augmentation of environmentally significant traditional knowledge; and
- Evaluation of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous land management cultures can be synergistically integrated for improved outcomes, better drought preparedness, plus greater mutual understanding and reconciliation.

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## The things that divide us and the things that bring us together

*The overlap of land management practices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures in Australia provides opportunities and synergies for both cultures.*



## The project components

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In order to deliver on the mission and objectives we see the project with several key components:

- a. Ethical collection and protection of Indigenous knowledge relating to land management practices, associated plant and animal knowledge and drought amelioration know-how;
- b. Analysis of this knowledge using meteorological data to provide scientific explanations and support. Included in this investigation would be an evaluation and scientific underpinning of current alternative agriculture trends including regenerative agriculture; we see the output as a book &/or thesis with web presence readily available to all;
- c. Collating knowledge on seasonal indicators for the development of e.g. a phone app to disseminate knowledge and promote collaborative citizen science. The technology is designed to facilitate field research relating to weather patterns and promote the value of Indigenous knowledge amongst non-Indigenous farming communities;
- d. Exploration of native plants for their commercial and environmental benefits and, where appropriate, undertake agronomic evaluations to enhance knowledge on cultivation, economic value and potential for varietal improvement; and
- e. Provide higher education undergraduate pathways for Indigenous undergraduates in agriculture/ horticulture and agribusiness through scholarship programs, as well as higher degree research to provide role models in agricultural research in the Indigenous communities.

This includes the embedding of appropriate cultural content into undergraduate courses and a focus on culture change to actively attract, support and promote Indigenous people in science disciplines at Charles Sturt University.

## Indigenous Agriculture Initiative – funding requirement

### Research Program

Economic and agronomic evaluation of new Indigenous industries = \$420K

Indigenous land management practices that sustain = \$420K

Indigenous livestock and native animal management = \$420K

Technology applications = \$420K

### Scholarship Program

Higher degree students  
At least 1 per research program @\$45K stipend, plus \$10K operating for 4 years = \$880K

Higher education pathways at undergraduate levels at 4 per year  
yr 1 \$100K  
yr 2 \$200K,  
yr 3 \$300K,  
yr 4+ \$400K + pipeline  
= \$1.6 m

### Coordination

Coordinator/academic @ \$140K/year for 5 years = \$700K  
Community liaison officer @ \$140K/year for 5 years = \$700K

**GRAND TOTAL (over 5 years) = \$12.28 million**





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FOUNDATION

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