Watering country: Aboriginal partnerships with environmental water managers of the Murray–Darling Basin, Australia

Deborah Nias and Sue Jackson

We acknowledge, respect and say Thank You to the Past, Present and Emerging Traditional Custodians of the land we work, live and learn on.
14% Australia’s surface area

3 longest rivers

>30,000 wetlands
>80% on private property
46 Aboriginal First Nations in MDBasin
Who are the Environmental Water Managers?

1. Government agencies – Federal and State
2. NGO’s – MDWWG and Nature Foundation of SA
3. Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority – formal contract with CEWH
4. Nari Nari Tribal Council – formal contract with CEWH
5. Some groups in informal arrangements
Barriers

LAND AND WATER OWNERSHIP OR ACCESS

RESOURCE LIMITED – FUNDING

EQUIPMENT

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO NEGOTIATE ADMINISTRATIVE PATHWAYS

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO OBSERVE PROPERLY THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO MAKE DECISIONS UNDER ABORIGINAL LAW

ROBINSON ET AL. (2014) OBSERVED THAT SUCH ‘TRANSACTION COSTS’ CAN BE SIGNIFICANT.
Carrs, Cappits and Bunberoo Creek Project
Cultural and Ecological values
Co-management (sharing) overcomes barriers and promotes resilience

Shared elements:

1. Land and water
2. Equipment and funds
3. Knowledge, experience and skills

Strengthen and invest in relationships resilient communities, resilient wetlands