



Preserving First Nations cultural heritage

Need to know



Inland Rail is being built and operated on the traditional lands of many First Nations people and communities.



We're committed to achieving excellence in cultural heritage and we recognise First Nations people's inherent connection to the land, including their historic and ongoing responsibility of stewardship and care for country.



Inland Rail is being built now to create a new freight future for Australia.



It is a fast freight backbone spanning more than 1,700km between Melbourne and Brisbane and is transforming the way goods are moved around a country as big as ours.



As the largest freight rail infrastructure project in Australia, it's progressively unlocking opportunities for our industries and regions.

Our commitment

We aim to deliver and operate the Inland Rail program with the least environmental, cultural heritage and social impact possible, while providing new benefits to the people of Australia at a local, regional and national scale.

We are committed to identifying and preserving First Nations cultural heritage during all stages of the project delivery cycle. We do this through working collaboratively with First Nations parties across project areas to identify and manage all cultural heritage.

We work with Traditional Owners to promote and share the findings of any investigations to increase the broader community's understanding of First Nations cultural heritage. This may include cultural heritage materials, survey reports and results. However, we appreciate that not all information is suitable to share more broadly due to cultural protocols and sensitivities.

Assessment results are entered into relevant government databases to ensure there is no harm to cultural heritage sites and knowledge is recorded for future generations.

The Inland Rail First Nations Participation Plan guides our approach.



Gummingurru cultural immersion tour, Queensland

Managing First Nations cultural heritage

First Nations cultural heritage is protected under Australian Government and state legislation, providing a framework for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage objects, sites and places.

We negotiate Cultural Heritage Management Plans with Traditional Owner groups along the Inland Rail alignment by working with relevant First Nations parties to conduct on-site inspections and assessments, and provide conditions to manage and preserve cultural heritage.

We engage appropriate technical advisors, where required or requested. This includes archaeologists, anthropologists, historians or environmental specialists skilled in the identification, management and preservation of First Nations cultural heritage.

- **In Victoria**, First Nations cultural heritage is protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, providing a framework for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage objects and places.
- **In New South Wales**, Part 6 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* provides for the recognition, protection and conservation of First Nations cultural heritage. This ensures blanket protection for First Nations cultural heritage that includes Aboriginal objects and places, irrespective of their level of significance or the land tenure; as well as the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales.
- **In Queensland**, the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* provides for the recognition, protection and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage. This includes the "cultural heritage duty of care" understood as the requirement to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure activities do not harm Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Preserving cultural heritage

First Nations cultural heritage can be recorded and preserved for future generations through appropriate mitigation and management, including:

- retaining cultural heritage on site
- artefact recovery
- artefact relocation
- photographic recording.

We partner with local First Nations parties to determine what's appropriate when managing cultural heritage objects and sites, and seek expert technical advice when required.



Bullawah Cultural Trail, Victoria



Ground edged stone axe



We use the term 'First Nations' to describe the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

We consult with local communities and use preferred terms (such as 'First Nations') for each Inland Rail project.

Want to know more?

ARTC is committed to working with property owners, communities, state and local governments as a vital part of our planning and consultation work, and we value your input. If you have any questions or comments, please let us know.

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