

# Recognising culturally significant entities

## Project information



National Environmental Science Program



Red kangaroos,  
Flinders Ranges National Park.  
Photo: Luke/AdobeStock.

The cultural significance of species and communities are often overlooked in environmental policy-making decisions. This project will **establish a consistent definition for culturally significant entities** to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge and considerations of cultural significance are **integral parts** of environmental policy-making processes and recovery strategies.

## Background

Culturally significant entities are species and ecological communities of cultural significance to Indigenous Australians. At present there is no consistent national definition of a culturally significant entity. This means they are not considered by policy-makers and biodiversity conservation practitioners in the same way as other entities, such as threatened species.

## Project goals

We are establishing a consistent definition for culturally significant entities. This will involve proposing an approach to recognise them in national legislation, policy and strategic-planning mechanisms. We're also devising mechanisms for governments and researchers to support Indigenous-led nominations of priority culturally significant entities at a place-based scale.

This project is highlighting the importance of collaborative and Indigenous-led management of culturally significant entities and empowering place-based decision-making in conservation planning.

## Key research goals

To address these challenges, this project is:

- describing an Indigenous-led definition and biocultural objectives for culturally significant entities
- supporting recognition of culturally significant entities in national policy
- developing awareness of culturally significant entities nationally
- improving the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in conservation planning for threatened species and ecological communities
- suggesting pathways for the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in regional planning and environmental impact assessment processes.



Golden-shouldered Parrot in Queensland Australia. By Imogen/Adobestock.

## What is the NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub?

The Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program (NESP) funds environment and climate research. NESP currently supports 4 multi-disciplinary research hubs, each hosted by an Australian research institution.

The program:

- provides evidence for the design, delivery and on-ground outcomes for environmental programs
- helps decision-makers, including from Indigenous communities, build resilience
- supports positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.

This project is funded by the NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub, which is hosted by the University of Western Australia and supports the management of Australia's terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.



Grass trees in Western Australia. By Imagevixen/AdobeStock.

## Further information

This project is led by Professor Stephen van Leeuwen and Teagan Shields from Curtin University.

This document and further information are available from the project website:

[nesplandscapes.edu.au/projects/nesp-rh/culturally-significant-entities/](https://nesplandscapes.edu.au/projects/nesp-rh/culturally-significant-entities/)

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Landscapes**

**National Environmental Science Program**



**Curtin University**

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