



Natural
**Hazards
Research**
Australia

Call for Expressions of Interest

T8-A5: First Nations women, cultural fire knowledge, wellbeing and memory

Expressions of Interest due 5:00pm AEDT, 29 January 2025
to research@naturalhazards.com.au



Australian Government

naturalhazards.com.au

Australia's leading research centre for natural hazard resilience and disaster risk reduction

Overview

Natural Hazards Research Australia (hereafter the Centre) is seeking Expressions of Interest from project teams for the following project:

T8-A5: First Nations women, cultural fire knowledge, wellbeing and memory

Project description	The project's aim is to achieve a broader understanding of the importance of gathering and sharing cultural burning and fire knowledge that is inclusive of more than just the environmental and risk mitigation benefits.
Estimated duration	12 months
Budget	The budget envelope for this project is up to \$100,000 (ex GST) The research team should note that this is a competitive process. Assessment of EOI submissions will include a value for money component, see Evaluation Criteria.
Related national research priorities¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Communities and workforces of the future → Operational response and innovation → Resilient communities → Sustainable and healthy landscapes
Related Centre research priorities for 2024–26²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Understanding and mitigating risk → Social equity → First Nations knowledge → Future workforce
Supporting organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gambir Yidinji Cultural Heritage Protection Body → Queensland Fire Department
Centre contact	For any questions regarding this Call for EOIs, please email research@naturalhazards.com.au .
Mandatory requirement	As per the Centre's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan , research about or of benefit to First Nations peoples must be either led or co-led with a First Nations partner. All submissions to this EOI are required to specify lead or co-lead First Nations researcher/s (the Centre will adopt/reflect Indigenous cultural protocols required for this project, we note a female First Nations lead, or co-lead would be preferable).
Submission of EOI	EOIs must be prepared using the Centre's EOI submission form and Budget Template . EOIs are to be submitted to research@naturalhazards.com.au by 5:00pm AEDT on 29 January 2025

1 Natural Hazards Research Australia (2022) National research priorities for disaster risk reduction and community resilience to the impacts of natural hazards, accessible at www.naturalhazards.com.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/NatHazResAus_ResearchPriorities_FA02.pdf

2 Natural Hazards Research Australia (2024) *Biennial Research Plan 2024–26*, accessible at <https://www.naturalhazards.com.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/NHRA%20ResearchPlan24%E2%80%9326%2004.pdf>

Statement of requirements

Background and context

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements³ identified the importance of cultural burning and First Nations knowledge in relation to environmental outcomes and there has been a growing interest in how First Nations knowledges can reduce climate risks relating to fire.

However, there has been less focus on how the gathering and sharing of cultural burning knowledge impacts people's, especially women's, physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing and on their memory (genetic/ancestral) with the revitalisation of birthrights and cultural responsibility to care for Country, be that tangible and intangible and how this may be a cultural protective factor to building disaster resilience.

The need for this project was raised at a working group meeting of the Indigenous Women in Fire International Training Exchange program in Queensland.

The Indigenous Women's Training Exchange Far North Queensland (FNQ) Australia event is to be held in May 2025. The event will focus on Indigenous women and traditional burning knowledge and techniques, combining practical live fire training with indoor learning and discussion to advance participants' skills, qualifications, connections and sharing of Indigenous fire practices with other Indigenous women. The event will be the first of its kind in Australia and will be open to fire practitioners from Australia and internationally to attend, with Indigenous female fire practitioners having preference.

Women's Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (WTREX) events bring together people of all genders from The Nature Conservancy and similar organisations, state and federal agencies, tribes and universities. Ranging from rookie firefighters to experienced burn managers, the participants engage in 10 days of hands-on training, networking and mentoring in forest landscapes across the U.S. and recently, Canada, South Africa and Portugal. [Fire Women | The Nature Conservancy Virginia](#).

The working group is developing a 12-day program for 40 participants and 15 support people to take place in May 2025 in Cairns and surrounding areas in Queensland.

The event will provide a safe environment for First Nations women in fire to learn, connect with other First Nations fire practitioners and promote greater inclusion of First Nations women in fire practices.

Project description

This project aims to achieve a broader understanding of, and evidence on, the importance of gathering and sharing cultural burning and fire knowledge that is inclusive of more than just the environmental and risk mitigation benefits. Specifically, the project seeks to understand the impact of First Nations women-led gatherings and cultural fire knowledge exchange on wellbeing (physical, social, emotional and spiritual) and memory.

³ <https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/natural-disasters>

This will help to build awareness of the role of cultural burning not only in addressing environmental and climate/natural hazard risks but more specifically how it can link to broader social impacts and resilience building whilst maintaining the integrity of cultural burning practices.

Healthy Country means healthy people. Capturing how caring for Country and exchanging knowledge and gathering impacts the social, emotional, physical and spiritual health and memory is an important evidence base to build, especially in relation to the role of First Nations women and burning.

The project will need to capture the emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing of participants according to age demographics and role (i.e., direct participant and support roles) before, during and after burning sessions and pre- and post- event.

Stakeholders request that the researcher/research team attend several event working group meetings to support the identification of key activities during the event that would support the research.

The researcher/research team will be expected to attend the 12-day program in Far North Queensland to be held in May 2025 across Ewamain Country, Tableland Yidinji Country, Gimuy Country and Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji Country.

Expected outputs

Core outputs

- Literature review
- Research report
- Video/visual communique
- Posters
- Presentation of findings post-event with the event working group
- Stakeholder workshop on research findings and utilisation planning on how to integrate findings into organisational strategy and programs
- Hazard Note and Policy Note
- Final report – including identification of future research opportunities
- Stakeholder presentation/s
- One academic publication in a high-ranking international journal
- Please detail other innovative outputs that your team can deliver to address the anticipated outcomes below.

Additional outputs

- Project plan and plain language statement
 - Quarterly progress reports
 - Project evaluation report
 - Relevant communications outputs including but not limited to a presentation and a poster
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Collaborative approach

Researchers are expected to undertake the research using a collaborative approach to assist in the translation and transfer of knowledge to end-users and to ensure the project meets their needs. Researchers are encouraged to outline their approach to ensuring effective collaboration which could include embedding researchers within end-user organisations for a period of time.

Anticipated outcomes

There are several outcomes with national relevance:

- How cultural burning, gathering and knowledge exchange can be a protective factor in building disaster resilience with First Nations partners, First Nations staff and First Nations communities more broadly, especially with engagement of women.
- Evidence on how to reframe relationships with fire from fear-based narratives to working with fire for wellbeing.
- A better understanding of the impacts of sharing and exchanging cultural knowledge between First Nations peoples locally and internationally.
- An understanding of the broader impacts of cultural fire knowledge on wellbeing beyond environmental and what that can teach us about future workforce and cultural safety.
- Maintaining the integrity of cultural burning (e.g., it is not simply a hazard reduction technique).
- A better understanding of women-led knowledge sharing.
- A more holistic understanding of what 'healthy Country, healthy people' means.
- A better understanding of diverse groups' relationship to land and caring for Country responsibilities.
- A better understanding of the broader impacts of cultural fire knowledge on wellbeing and memory activation.
- A deeper understanding of the motivations of why people are drawn to work in the fire emergency space.
- A deeper understanding of the role of gathering in activating memory through dynamic cultural exchange.

Quality control and reporting

The project will be overseen and supported by a Project Management Committee (PMC) comprising the Principal Researcher, a Centre representative, and at least one stakeholder representative. Composition of the PMC will be determined in consultation with the Principal Researcher.

Reports

The Centre expects that the outputs delivered by this project will meet the highest scientific standards and will be suitable for publication on the Centre website and in industry newsletters, as well as in high-quality scientific journals.

The successful research organisation/s must co-develop with end-users a project plan and project summary using the Centre's templates. The project summary should explain in plain language what the project is about, what questions it intends to answer and describe the expected practical outputs that will make use of the research findings. The project plan must be approved by the PMC and will become an attachment to the contract.

Reports (and any supporting material) must be submitted to the PMC's satisfaction and will be subject to review by PMC members. The project team will be required to ensure an internal peer review process is undertaken prior to the final report being submitted.

Milestone reporting

The project team must report all milestone deliverables and engagement activities into the Centre's Project Management System. This will include sufficient justification for the completion of milestones to the satisfaction of the PMC and the Centre.

Communication

To further assist with quality assurance, it is expected that:

- regular PMC meetings will be held
- the project team will use a consultative approach, documented in quarterly reports
- the Principal Researcher will give periodic presentations to key stakeholder groups to gain critical feedback on project milestones.

Additional quality control processes may be agreed as part of the project planning process.

Contractual arrangements

A copy of the Research Services Agreement the proposed form of contract for the purposes of this project, [can be found here](#).

The Centre reserves its rights to make amendments to the form of contract.

This agreement should be reviewed by applicants as part of the EOI submission.

If you would like to request amendments to any of the terms and conditions set out in the proposed form of contract, details of the proposed changes and the reason the changes are requested must be included in the EOI submission form. Requests for any changes will be at the sole discretion of the Centre.

Selection as a shortlisted or preferred provider does not give rise to a contract (express or implied) between the shortlisted or preferred provider and the Centre for the supply of goods or services. No legal relationship will exist between the Centre and the shortlisted or preferred provider until such time as a binding contract in writing is executed by both parties.

In the case of consortiums, the Centre requests that one consortium member be nominated as Lead Research Provider and take responsibility for subcontracting other parties.

Submitting an Expression of Interest

Application and review process

Project selection and approval will be a two-stage process. The first stage is evaluation of the EOIs that are received. The second stage is development of a project proposal, where a preferred provider will be selected and offered an opportunity to co-develop a detailed project proposal with input from key stakeholders.

Key dates

13 December 2024	Call for EOIs opens
29 January 2025	Due date for EOIs

Submission requirements for this EOI

Project teams responding to this EOI are required to submit their response using the Centre's [EOI submission form](#) and [Budget Template](#). Submissions must include:

- a statement of capability (max 600 words), including the proposed contributions of each research team member to the project
- a statement (max 400 words) about the diversity of the project team
- a statement (max 400 words) about the project's inclusion and respect of First Nations peoples, philosophies, cultures, rights and/or knowledges
- an outline (max 1000 words) describing how the project team intends to approach the project, strategies for effective collaboration and an indicative methodology
- an indicative schedule of work and interim milestones/project outputs as described in this document
- a proposed project budget in line with the budget envelope provided, including details of any in kind contribution from research organisation/s – a detailed budget to be provided using the downloadable [Budget Template](#) provided on the Centre's website
- a clear statement (max 400 words) describing the outcomes that will be delivered for this project and how they will be used by stakeholders
- a clear statement (max 400 words) describing the outputs that the proposed approach to this project will deliver and how the findings could translate into practice
- a statement (max 500 words) demonstrating the project team's relevant industry and stakeholder engagement
- a risk management statement (max 500 words)
- any requested changes to the Centre's proposed form of contract
- up to two-page CVs for each proposed project team member.

Additional information

In responding to this Call for Expressions of Interest, advice should be provided on any known or anticipated impacts of COVID or other pandemic restrictions or human resource risks on the timely delivery of the project. Where appropriate, risk management for the impacts of pandemic restrictions should be incorporated into the EOI.

Frequently asked questions

Additional information provided to individual respondents will also be published on the Centre's website to ensure access to all interested parties. Respondents are encouraged to check the website for any additional information via these published FAQs, prior to the closing date.

Evaluation criteria

After the closing date, the Centre will review submitted EOIs against the evaluation criteria below. The evaluation criteria provide an indication of those matters that should be included in the EOI and supporting material – details are provided in the table below.

The Centre reserves the right not to offer the work, or only allocate a proportion of the available funding, if a proposal does not meet the Centre's needs. The Centre reserves the right to invite any other specific researchers as it sees fit to submit proposals before or after the closing date.

Evaluation criteria	% weighting
Research capability: the capacity and capability to deliver an excellent research project in an Australian environment	25
Project approach: a demonstrated understanding of the project requirements and a proposed project approach and methodology that is appropriate, feasible and robust Relevant outline of a collaborative approach to assist in the translation and transfer of knowledge to end-users and to ensure the project meets their needs.	20
Project outcomes and outputs: demonstrate a high-level understanding of the intentions of the project and how outputs/outcomes translate to practice	20
Industry engagement: strong track record of industry engagement with the ability to support and influence Australian disaster management at a national or state/territory level through interaction with key stakeholders	20
Value for money: delivery of required outcome within available budget along with the ability to leverage the funds provided with in-kind contributions or supplementary opportunities	15