

Global Nature Positive Summit 2024

First Nations Statement

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay respect to their Elders past and present and to the pivotal role that First Nations Peoples continue to play in caring for Country across Australia.

It is very fitting that the first-ever Global Nature Positive Summit is being held in this incredible place now known to the world as Sydney, Australia. I/We stand here on Gadigal land as one/a few of many First Peoples, united by our extensive Knowledge of our respective traditional lands - what we call Country. Our nature lore is set in stone with many stories still inscribed on rocks and in the ground all across Country. They intertwine with the natural systems of Mother Earth. The water flow, sun, moon and stars - all these things assist in the connectiveness of everything. We know how to care for Mother Earth because we listen to her - especially when she tells us things are not in balance.

Nature Positive may sound like a new concept, but First Peoples have been nature-positive for millennia. We call it caring for Country. Whether it's land, sea or sky, caring for Country has been part of our stories and songlines for generations. It's driven by one simple principle: leaving Country better than you found it. On countless occasions, the world has seen the social and economic good that comes when indigenous peoples are supported to care for Country. To have Healthy Country, we must invest in it. We must provide First Peoples the resources and cultural authority they need to revitalise their Knowledge and practices on Country.

Indigenous voices are vital to the success of nature-positive initiatives in Australia and globally. We must all commit to First Peoples being engaged in the nature-positive agenda and nature law reforms right from the start. The right decisions about nature-positive and Country are made when we are part of the process. This is evident in how nature is when First Peoples are rightfully practising Traditional Custodianship, and how it is when we are forcefully removed from that role. We must move towards a nature-positive future, and First Peoples play a key role in shaping this. There is no journey without us, and we are proud to reach out our hand for yours and lead everyone towards a brighter future for nature together.

