

Working on Country in the Molonglo catchment

Transforming the 2015-2030 Molonglo Catchment Strategy into our strategic approach is the Molonglo Conservation Group's response to the continuing uncertainty and change associated with climate adaptation, especially concerning environmental and economic viability, and the implications of these challenges for environmental and social resilience. In seeking sustainable, long-term outcomes we have expanded the holistic (inter-connected) Catchment-wide focus of the 2015-2030 Strategy for the cooperative management of the Southern Tablelands regional landscape. We broker cooperative management partnerships beyond the Molonglo catchment boundaries so that our member groups and other key stakeholders may benefit from connections made through collaborative regional projects in support of our program delivery.

Overlapping traditional cultural, statutory and catchment boundaries

The part of the NSW Southern Tablelands area that is within and surrounds the Molonglo catchment (primarily managed by NSW SE Local Land Services) overlaps with a mix of traditional Aboriginal cultural boundaries and lines of connection, and statutory Aboriginal Land Council boundaries (see maps 1 and 2, below). Aboriginal people have lived in this region and managed the landscape for a very long time. The earliest dated evidence of Aboriginal presence in the Canberra-Queanbeyan region is about 25,000 years old. There are many sites of significance to Aboriginal people and many artefacts and cultural features in the local landscape.

The history of Aboriginal people is a living history and, in the present day, this region is defined by Ngunawal traditional boundaries (spelt Ngunnawal by some clan groups and the ACT Government), traditional boundaries of the Gundungurra, Dharawal, Yuin, Ngarigo Aboriginal communities and Ngambri Aboriginal Land Council. In the ACT there are currently four Representative Aboriginal Organisations – Buru Ngunawal Aboriginal Corporation, Mirrabee, King Brown Tribal Group, and Ngarigo Currawong Clan.

Over the past 10 years Molonglo Conservation Group and the Ngunawal community have explored various forms of collaborative partnership resulting in:

- An extended series of Ngunawal perspective cultural walks and talks between 2013 and 2017.
- The Ngunawal Pathways project of 2017 - 2019, including cultural training sessions for Landcare and Park Care groups, the development of the Bullan Mura conservation management plan and the Ngunawal Pathways interpretive sign (incorporating cultural map and painting).
- In recent years this work has led to several one-off events in collaboration with various other Aboriginal organisations connected with the ACT region.
- A further series of Ngunawal walks and training is currently being conducted in collaboration with Southern ACT Catchment Group and Ginninderra Catchment Group funded through our current programs.

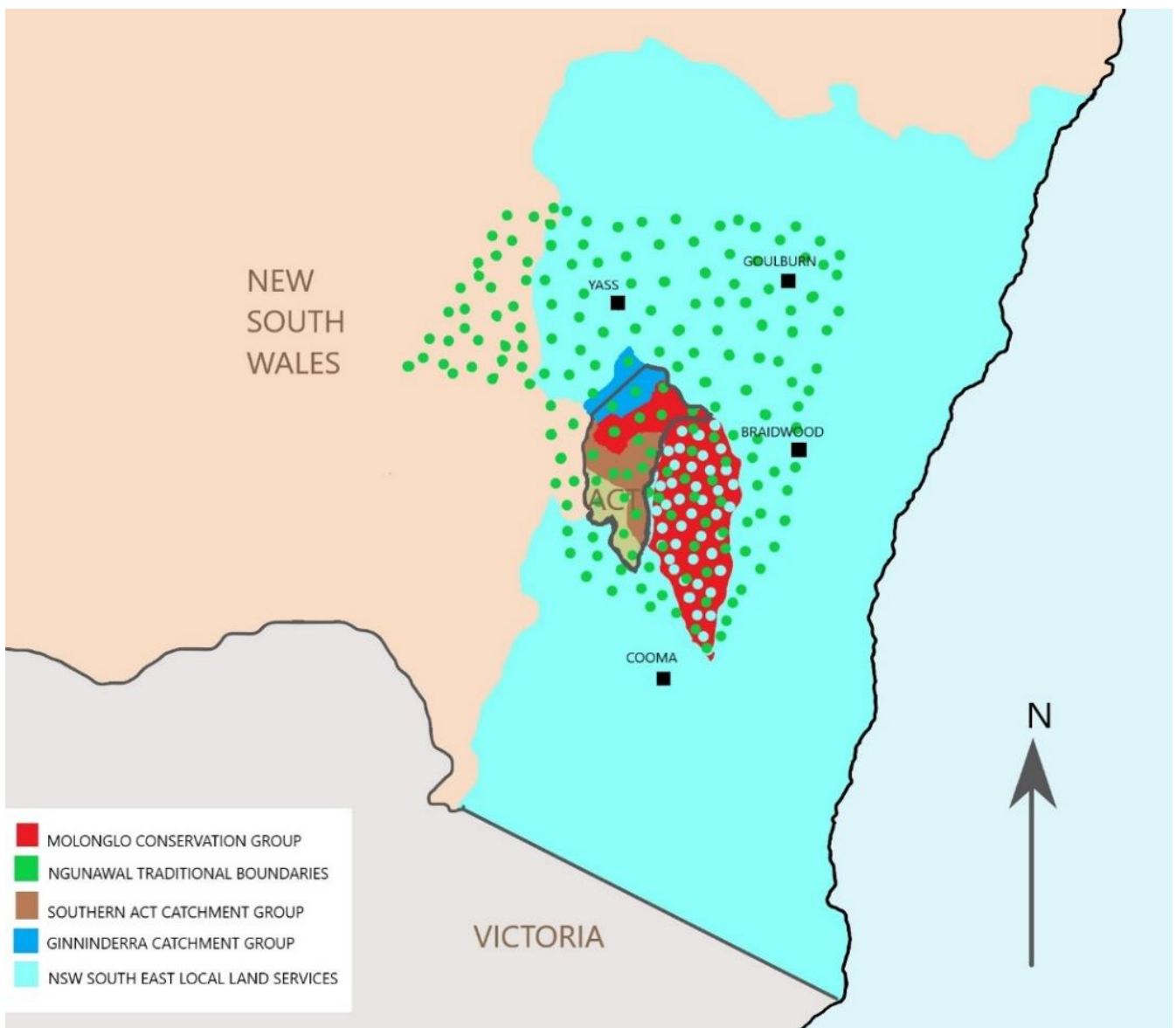
From our close association with the Ngunawal community we continue to learn about how many generations of Ngunawal clan groups cared for the local land, waterways and landmarks and retain a strong connection to Country. All of the local landscape is significant

spiritually and culturally to Ngunawal people and their connection and guidance has informed our strategic approach.

Map 1 illustrates Ngunawal cultural management boundaries that have been incorporated into the Molonglo Conservation Group’s inter-connected strategy. There are seven Ngunawal clans and each tell their own storied, living history of country that has evolved over many generations. Ngunawal territory boundaries generally correspond to the geomorphology and ecological limits of the headwaters of the ancient Murrumbidgee River system – defined by the catchments of the ancient Molonglo, Queanbeyan and Yass rivers.

The map does not include boundaries of other Aboriginal clans or statutory bodies that claim connection to the region. While we are keen to work with all Aboriginal peoples connected to this region most opportunities have been with the Ngunawal.

Map 1 Ngunawal Traditional cultural boundaries.



Map 2 illustrates Ngambri Aboriginal Land Council boundaries (<https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/ngambri/>). More information about the Ngambri and other Aboriginal Land Councils can be found at https://alc.org.au/land_council/

Map 2 Ngambri Aboriginal Land Council boundaries

