

# Recognition of sustainable Indigenous practices

Before beginning a discussion on European sustainable land use it is necessary to recognise the Indigenous heritage of this region.

It is widely accepted that Indigenous Australians altered their environment to enable their survival and that they inhabited this land for tens of thousands of years, with little change in the biodiversity in recent history. Their way of life and understanding of country, gave them a respect for natural processes and the power of natural phenomenon that enabled them to live as part of their environment, rather than trying to separate them from it. It is not likely that we will return to the life of going to a clean running stream rather than the tap for our water; or building temporary shelters out of bark rather than permanent structures out of steel and stone; or hunting and killing prey rather than raising and herding domestic animals; or spending hours gathering and preparing a diverse array of fruits, nuts and tubers rather than going to the supermarket and buying pre-processed food. What we need to do is to ensure that we have access to clean running water; that our structures are energy and resource efficient; that our methods of agriculture do not adversely affect the functioning of natural ecosystems; that the diverse array of fruits and vegetables that we consume contain sufficient vitamins and minerals to sustain good health. The Indigenous Culture of this region, the Butchulla people, achieved this for thousands of years. We are hoping to achieve this after a couple of hundred years.

*"If you look after the land, it will look after you"* the late Olga Miller (Butchulla elder) was often heard to say.

In our region, the Mary River was known as Moonaboola. By most accounts the word Tiaro comes from the Aboriginal word meaning dead tree. Wook-koo according to aboriginal legend was the name of a man from K'gari (Fraser Island). Many other names in the district are derived from aboriginal words. The late Olga Miller who was a life member of Tiaro Landcare, recorded many local indigenous stories and legends in the following publications.

**Wook-koo** re-told by Olga Miller available Woocoo Shire Council or Council libraries

**The legend of Mount Bauple** re-told by Olga Miller available from Council libraries

**Buallum and other stories** re-told by Olga Miller available from Council libraries

