

# Mentor guide



**A resource for community mentors and trainers to support Indigenous learners undertaking training in Conservation and Land Management**

## About this resource

This work is a Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) resource designed to build numeracy skills for those undertaking vocational training in Care and Land Management. It can also be used in any learning field requiring skills in providing appropriate information on cultural knowledge.

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## Content

About this resource.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction .....	4
About these <i>Working on Country</i> resources.....	4
Resource books.....	5
Project books .....	5
Role of a community learner mentor .....	6
What is a community learning mentor? .....	6
Characteristics of a good mentor.....	7
Roles and responsibilities .....	7
Learning support.....	7
Privacy and confidentiality.....	7
Conflict of interest .....	8
Duty of care.....	8
Keep copies and dates .....	9
Check completion .....	9
Positive feedback.....	9
Resource content and project activities .....	10

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### Quality assurance

Irena Morgan, Director, MW Training consultants, Queensland

### Resource development team

Sue Chamberlain, Project Manager and Instructional Designer, Learning Services, TAFE Qld North

Jeff Golding, Instructional Designer, Indigenous Lead Centre, Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE

Lenne Boyd, CALM Trainer, TAFE Qld North

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## Introduction

This community mentor guide provides information and ideas for supporting Indigenous learners undertaking Conservation and Land Management accredited training programs.

These learning resources and project activities cover content and assessment for the following units of competency:

**AHCILM302A Provide appropriate information on cultural knowledge**

**AHCILM305A Work with an Aboriginal Community or organisation**

**SITTGDE101 Interpret aspects of local Australian Indigenous culture**

**AHCILM301A Propose appropriate uses of traditional customs**

## About these *Working on Country* resources

These resources have been developed to allow Indigenous participants to build practical and local conservation and land care management skills for:

- collecting and recording cultural information
- working within local community protocols
- applying land care management strategies to traditional lands
- working within Indigenous organisations
- providing information on cultural knowledge to non- Indigenous Australians
- researching and determining suitable activities for Indigenous held land.

They consist of:

- Learning resources for:
  - recording and identifying cultural knowledge
  - working in Aboriginal communities and organisations
  - interpreting aspects of local Indigenous culture
  - using traditional customs appropriately
- Project books for each of the topics
- Mentor guide.

## Resource books

These resource books provide knowledge and content covered in the units of competency listed above.

They also provide a range of further links to additional information and offer some questions to think about for each topic.

The resource books encourage learners to:

- explore topics on a local level
- compare national Indigenous data and trends with the local situation
- reflect on how local cultural knowledge can be maintained and retained
- discuss and consider local protocols.

## Project books

The project books consist of a range of activities including work related activities, gathering and recording information, planning and developing conservation and land care management activities and preparing and providing information about conservation, land care management and cultural knowledge to others.



There are different types of activities in the project books. These include:

- **Workplace scenarios**
- **Gathering and recording information**
- **Planning and developing activities**
- **Preparing and providing information for others.**

## Role of a community learner mentor

Part of the role of a learning mentor is to support the learner to use these project books to create, investigate, explore and record:

- local cultural knowledge
- land care issues in the local region
- issues of potential conflict
- local plants, animals and land care sites
- cultural content where intellectual copyright exists.

### What is a community learning mentor?

The meaning of a mentor is:

1. a wise and trusted counsellor or teacher
2. an influential senior sponsor or supporter.<sup>1</sup>

The role of a land care learning mentor is to support individuals and community members to build skills and behaviours to:

- provide information on cultural knowledge
- propose uses of traditional customs
- work effectively with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island organisation
- interpret aspects of local Australian Indigenous culture.

It is **not** the role or responsibility of a community mentor to:

- train individuals in conservation and land management
- mark and assess learner's competence.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition from Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mentor?s=t>

## Characteristics of a good mentor

A good mentor is an individual who displays qualities and behaviours such as:

- attentive listening
- leads by example
- has up-to-date and correct knowledge on the topic
- supports others to be independent and to reach their potential
- guides others to come up with practical outcomes for their own situation
- a caring and compassionate attitude toward others
- ability to provide positive and constructive feedback and advice
- supports others to self-reflect and gain insights
- motivates others to achieve their potential
- communicating hope and optimism.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Learning support

The main role of a community learning mentor is to support the learner to successfully complete his/her training in a Certificate in Conservation and Land Management. Support may consist of:

- helping to read content
- regularly meeting to ensure project tasks are being completed
- advising on community protocols for working with Elders and/or traditional custodians
- working with learner to collect photos, create calendars and record information
- modelling professionalism in negotiating community information and permissions.

Where a learner is a speaker of English as a second or third language, discuss with the trainer the level of support you are able to provide. For example, if the learner is unable to write English well, a trainer may allow you to be the note taker for a learner. If you are writing English for a learner it may also be important to record their verbal answers as evidence.

Discuss these issues with the trainer.

### Privacy and confidentiality

Within your role as a community learning mentor you may have conversations that are private and confidential. This could be to do with:

- cultural knowledge issues
- personal issues regarding learner's study situation
- restricted community information or access
- organisational issues.



# Working on country

It is important to let the learner know that you will keep any information that relates to them private and will discuss with them any areas where you will need to pass information on, for example, information to their trainer or workplace concerning their progress.

## Conflict of interest

Conflict of interest could arise within your mentoring role under certain circumstances. What conflict of interest means is a workplace or training experience where a person, in a position of trust, is confronted with a situation where they are at risk of not being able to fulfil his/her duties impartially.

Example situations of a potential conflict of interest could include:

- your learner comes up with a suggested land care activity that you have already been discussing with Elders and/or traditional custodians
- a situation where a learner provides you with information that may not be their original material
- where a learner requires information on cultural knowledge that you are bound by confidentiality not to disclose.

When in doubt be honest with your learner that there may be a conflict of interest and contact the trainer to discuss.

## Duty of care

Duty of care is a legal term that means you have an obligation to offer reasonable care to ensure that those in your care are not harmed. As a community learning mentor you will have formed a social contract with participants to support and assist them. Because of this formal relationship you have a 'Duty of Care' to take reasonable steps to ensure that they are safe and unharmed while in your care (for example, while working with you on projects and activities for assessment).

## Keep copies and dates

If part of your role is to collect and send your learner's work to the trainer, it is important to always keep a second copy of the work submitted in case the originals are lost.

Sometimes submitted project work will have a deadline date so it is important to check this with the trainer and to make sure that the learner's work is submitted by the due date.

## Check completion

Whenever you are supporting learners to complete work that they will be assessed on, it is important to check they have:

- understood what is required
- completed all the set tasks.

## Positive feedback

Finally, the role of mentoring or supporting someone to gain new knowledge and skills in a learning situation can be a very rewarding experience. Always:

- praise the learner's efforts
- provide positive feedback on what you have gained in the relationship.

# Working on country

## Resource content and project activities

The following tables show you where resource content is located and the project activities that relate to that topic.

### AHCILM302A Provide appropriate information on cultural knowledge

Section	Topic	Project activities	Resource content
1	Investigate cultural knowledge	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4	Part 1.1 to 1.4
2	Identify locations and patterns of plants and animals in a specific area	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4	Part 2.1 to 2.4
3	Identify plants, animals and resources used for medicine and food	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	Part 3.1 to 3.4
4	Relate information on cultural knowledge to others	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4	Part 4.1 to 4.4

### SITTGDE101 Interpret aspects of local Australian Indigenous culture

Section	Topic	Project activities	Resource content
1	Talk with the local Indigenous community	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	Part 1.1 to 1.3
2	Share information about local Australian Indigenous culture	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6	Part 2.1 to 2.6

### AHCILM301A Propose appropriate uses of traditional customs

Section	Topic	Project activities	Resource content
1	Identify the role of traditional customs in Indigenous communities	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	Part 1.1 to 1.3
2	Native title rights and interests under non-Indigenous law	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5,	Part 2.1 to 2.6
3	Applications of traditional customs	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Part 3.1 to 3.3

## Working on country

### AHCILM305A Work with an Aboriginal community or organisation

Section	Topic	Project activities	Resource content
1	Define Australian history from an Aboriginal cultural and Community perspective	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6	Part 1.1 to 1.6
2	The impact of government laws and policies	2.1, 2.2, 2.3	Part 2.1 to 2.3
3	Strategies for working with Aboriginal organisations and people	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	Part 3.1 to 3.4
4	Operate effectively in a job role working with an Indigenous community or organisation	4.1, 4.2, 4.2, 4.4	Part 4.1 to 4.4

