



## Indigenous Australian stories mapped for future generations

*Sophisticated mapping technology helps record and archive cultural knowledge and heritage of traditional custodians for generations to come.*

Indigenous cultural sites from the planet's oldest living culture are being identified and protected by an Australian Aboriginal Land Council, thanks to a state-of-the-art mapping system.

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) is responsible for the safeguarding of hundreds of culturally significant Indigenous sites in far north-west South Australia, some tens of thousands of years old, along with the stories, ceremonies and traditions connected to them.



*The location intelligence solution leverages Esri's world-leading ArcGIS Desktop technology, which facilitates collaboration and enables APY to organise, map and share vast amounts of their cultural data and the geographic relationship to the traditional owners' lands.*

APY partnered with Esri Australia to train its staff in the mapping of exclusion areas for activities, such as mining exploration, to protect these important cultural assets.

APY Anthropologist Natalia Ipince said the ability to bring the process in-house led to significant savings on external consultancy fees, but there were also far greater benefits.

"These sites, and the stories and wisdom which are part of them, form a cultural history that is crucial to the identity of the traditional owners of these lands," she said.

"While we are making financial saving by undertaking the mapping within APY, the traditions, places and stories we are protecting are priceless."

In recent times, Indigenous knowledge and history in particular has been highly vulnerable to damaging cultural management policies.

Contemporary risks, from mining and continuing cultural assimilation with non-Indigenous Australia, have produced an urgency to explore different methods to safeguard aboriginal heritage and its transmission.

With this in mind, and under Esri Australia's guidance, APY expanded their mapping to include recordings of Indigenous knowledge associated with the exclusion zones and then other culturally significant areas.

Esri Australia's location intelligence solution, underpinned by world-leading Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, enabled APY to organise, map and share with the traditional owners these vast amounts of cultural data and their geographic relationship to the APY lands.

"Esri Australia's location intelligence solution gives us the capability to connect dreamtime stories, genealogies, songs and

other cultural knowledge to sacred sites," Ms Ipince said.

As APY anthropologists visited locations with traditional custodians, they began recording their knowledge through text, sound recordings and photographs, and linked them to their maps using Esri Australia's GIS technology.

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**Natalia Ipince, APY Anthropologist**

"The result is a multi-dimensional map which, apart from merely representing a physical location, lets them see which people, stories and other traditional Indigenous knowledge is connected to that area," Ms Ipince said.

"Esri Australia equipped us with the skills to develop this project."

APY now have an accessible multimedia mapping system which gives Indigenous people the ability to explore APY lands, listen to songs, read stories and view images of culturally important sites.

With Esri Australia's location intelligence solution, APY can continue to record and archive this cultural knowledge and secure the heritage of traditional custodians for generations to come.



Discover the value Esri Australia's location intelligence solutions will bring to your organisation. Call us on 1800 447 111 today.