

*How did you come to be involved in NRM?*

I have always been involved in cultural heritage in the region and the employment of Aboriginal staff at South Coast NRM gave me the inspiration to work a lot closer with NRM groups and individuals. My involvement with South Coast NRM started when they were formally known as SCRIPT and once the organisation grew with other dedicated staff my interest grew in other areas of NRM. Natural resource management is an Aboriginal cultural practice that has been put to use for many thousands of years by our people. Their totemic obligations have been passed down through many generations. These types of practices have ensured the growth and survival of totemic resources, which are needed for Aboriginal Australia to survive today.

*Who or what inspires you?*

My family inspires me. Teaching my children about our culture and watching them share it with their family and friends and the wider community also. My daughter Shandell inspires me being a working mother of five. She has had immense drive and ambition to make her job a great success and has maintained her family responsibilities to an exceptional level. I had great inspiration from my parents and my ancestors to carry on the legacy of our culture and our beliefs and practices. Also knowing that we "belong" to the land through birth right, DNA practices for ceremonial and burial purposes means that we are in the soil and have that connection to country even when we are alive.

*What do you hope to achieve in the next five years?*

I have been very happy with what I have achieved to date and the greatest thing is that I have gotten to share it with my family. I hope that I have given them enough knowledge and courage to continue the work in NRM long after I am gone. And I hope that they in turn have the same experiences with their children so that the legacy continues. I would also still like to be involved with the Aboriginal Reference Group at South Coast NRM and continue to have the special working relationship we currently have. This will mean that I can contribute effectively in a process that is highly successful to the ongoing improvement of the environment, and still share our culture and encourage reconnection to country for Aboriginal people.

*What are the biggest challenges facing the South Coast environment and how can these be met?*

The most important thing to Aboriginal people is being involved and restoring their connection to country. Aboriginal people have an immense amount of knowledge that can enhance natural resource management in the region. It is about teaching people to appreciate our natural environments and iconic assets. We all need to work together to better manage the degradation of the environment. I feel the biggest challenges are the health of waterways, educating landholders how to better manage land in the face of salinity and erosion, and sustainable land use for future generations. Dieback is also a critical program that has a detrimental impact on the environment that needs to be funded.

*Lynette is a descendant of the Mirning people of the South Coast.*