

# Return of the Firestick

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Australian scientific earth core sampling suggests that the mega fire ceased around 8,000 years ago signifying that fire lore, customs and practices had established a balance between man, fire, flora and fauna.

Using 'the right fire' Aboriginals maintained the balance of Country and as such enabled themselves and all living things to survive and thrive.

More than 200 years ago that balance was interrupted. Aboriginal fire lore was broken, fire practices were ceased, and the landscape changed due to vegetation clearance and uncontrolled hot bushfires.

Unfortunately, Aboriginal fire lore is still being broken. Our Country is sick. Contemporary fire and land management practices are compounding this issue, with indications showing increasing larger and more frequent devastating and costly mega fires the future trend for Australia.

Current fire and land management practices are continuing to impact the sacred canopy and dry out the environment. With climate change the need for healthy canopy and understory will be essential to assist the environment to remain cool and resilient with increasing temperatures.

Aboriginals have dealt with climate change before and ensuring fire lore and practices are reinstated will provide the needed protection and management to allow the environment to be prepared and protected.

The Return of the Firestick Project was initiated in 2015. What started as a piece of research has led to Victoria linking with Indigenous Fire Practitioners from around Australia, the establishment of a national workshop and the formation of a national body to support Indigenous communities around Australia to strengthen this knowledge and the application on Country.

The aim of the project is to reinstate the ancient cultural knowledge of the Firestick and build the capability and capacity of Indigenous communities to lead the education and training of traditional fire with land management agencies, landholders and the broader community.