

# Adrian's Story

"MY NAME IS ADRIAN BROWN. I'M A NGUNNAWAL MURRINGE (MAN). THIS CULTURAL FIRE STUFF IS OLD, IT'S ANCIENT. WHEN WE WERE KIDS, WE WERE TAUGHT HOW TO BURN AT THE QUEANBEYAN RIVER BY MY DAD, CARL BROWN.

HE JUST WANTED US TO UNDERSTAND THIS IS OUR HOME, THIS IS COUNTRY, AND THIS IS WHERE WE BELONG. IN ALL OF THAT AND WALKING UP AND DOWN THE RIVERS ALL THE TIME, THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL.

DAD WOULD LOOK AT A LANDSCAPE AND GO, 'WELL WE CAN'T HUNT HERE, CAN'T MOVE THROUGH IT'. HE ALWAYS SAID IF YOU CAN'T THROW A SPEAR THROUGH IT THEN IT'S GOOD FOR NOTHING.

DAD ALWAYS KNEW THE RIGHT TIME TO BURN,

THE WIND, THE BREEZES, AND JUST LET IT GENTLY MOVE DOWN TO THE RIVER AND JUST PUSH ITSELF OUT.

THAT'S WHAT FIRE MANAGEMENT MEANT TO HIM.

DAD TALKED ABOUT HOW HIS UNCLE, ALEC BELL, TOOK HIM OUT BUSH AND TAUGHT HIM ALL THE THINGS THAT DAD WAS SHOWING US. THERE'S THAT TRANSITION. THAT'S THE GENERATIONS. UNCLE ALEC, WHO IN TURN WAS TAUGHT BY OTHER MEN.

SO WHEN WORKING WITH ACT PARKS, I WAS CONSTANTLY RECOGNISING AREAS THAT NEEDED TO BE BURNT, BUT I STRUGGLED TO GET THEM TO UNDERSTAND. THEN SLOWLY THINGS STARTED TO BUILD. WE STARTED LOOKING AT HOW WE COULD DRAFT UP A CULTURAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND HOW THAT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED INTO THE BUSHFIRE OPERATIONAL PLAN. BUT IT'S GOT TO BE ABOUT THE TOTAL ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY AND SHARING THAT WELLBEING THAT COMES FROM BEING AROUND YOUR CULTURE.

EVERY TIME I'VE TRIED TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING,

I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT BIGGER PICTURE ABOUT OUR ANCESTORS AND HOW I COULD DO THEM JUSTICE. ALWAYS IN THE BACK OF MY MIND, I THINK ABOUT DAD. HOW POWERFUL IS THAT, THAT THIS MAN IN HIS QUIETNESS, IN HIS HUMBLINESS, HAS INFLUENCED HUNDREDS, AND NOW PROBABLY THOUSANDS, OF PEOPLE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IMPACT IS, BUT WHENEVER I HEAR PEOPLE TALK HERE ABOUT CULTURAL FIRE MANAGEMENT, I KNOW IT STEMS FROM THOSE CONVERSATIONS THAT WE STARTED BACK A VERY LONG TIME AGO.

FOR ME TO SEE A FIRE MAKES ME FEEL STRONG INSIDE. WHEN I SEE THE FLAME, I SEE THE SPIRITS, I SEE THE PEOPLE TALKING, I SEE ALL THAT AND I JUST SAY, 'WELL HERE WE GO, WE'VE WOKEN UP OUR ANCESTORS, THEY'RE SPEAKING AGAIN.'

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**CULTURAL BURNING**  
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