

# working in forests today



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer — an Aboriginal person working in forests to conserve the qualities and attributes of places that have spiritual, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations.

## Aboriginal cultural heritage officer

### Kevin Smith

**Knowledge is passed down from the elders. Kevin is a descendent from the Dunggutti Nation.**

Maintaining the connection between Aboriginal people and forests, and protecting areas of cultural heritage significance is an integral part of forest management.

'I work to identify and manage Aboriginal heritage sites, places and resources used by Aboriginal people in State forests.

'My job is very interesting as it involves talking to people from Local Aboriginal Land Councils, elders and community members to gain an understanding of their spiritual connection with the land, and to ascertain evidence of past Aboriginal activities in forests.

'There is an abundance of Aboriginal sites within our local State forests. There is physical evidence of ceremonial and other meeting places as well as teaching, initiation and occupation sites.

'Shelters, rock art, grinding grooves, rock carving, camping areas, stone artefacts, carved trees and Spiritual sites are all located within Forests NSW managed areas.

'You have got to understand that Aboriginal people are very protective about their sites. They would rather not say where sites are, as they say the best protection is not to disclose the location.

'That is why you won't see many artefacts in Local Aboriginal Land Council offices or in the homes of Aboriginal people. Forests NSW honours this confidentiality.

'Because I work outside of my traditional area, it is very important to be respectful of other custodians and their culture.

'Forests NSW recognises Aboriginal interests and values in State forests, and is working in partnership with local communities to ensure ongoing access to forests for cultural purposes like gathering and occupation.'



Forests NSW is a public trading enterprise within NSW Department of Primary Industries

