Comprehension

This book is called "Coming Home to Country" but what does "Country" mean. Read the passage below and then see if you can explain, in your own words, "Country" and what it means to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples talk about "country" they are not referring to just the land under their feet, the native bush or the outback. They are talking about a connection that for many non-Indigenous people can be difficult to grasp. A connection with the living environment that is part of their very identity and which goes a long way beyond just physical elements.

For First Nations people, "country" encompasses an interdependent relationship between an individual and their ancestral lands and seas. It is spoken of like a person and spoken to, sung to, worried about and longed for. The relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the land is one of respect. An understanding that while the land sustains and provides for the people, people manage and sustain the land through culture, ceremony, spirituality, language, family, law and identity.

As Dennis Foley a Gai-mariagal and Wiradjuri man puts it "the land is the mother and we are of the land; we do not own the land rather the land owns us. The land is our food, our culture, our spirit and our identity."

Rather than owning land, people develop strong intimate knowledge and connection to a place that is related to them. They are entrusted with the cultural knowledge and responsibility to care for the land forming strong connections based on intimate knowledge that is inherent to Indigenous identity.

HASS - ACHASS109 - Develop an understanding about people, events, places and systems.

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