

KURNELL PLANNING PROPOSAL

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

FRAMEWORK REPORT | NOVEMBER 2023

APPENDIX

Aboriginal Cultural Narratives 251, 278 & 280-282 Captain Cook Drive, Kurnell

Desktop Research report



Prepared for Urbis / Besmaw Pty Ltd.

Yerrabingin

2023

Authorship

This research report has been created by Yerrabingin for Urbis / Besmaw Pty Ltd.

At Yerrabingin, we acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians and ancestors of the lands we walk across.

The terms First Nations, Indigenous and Aboriginal are used interchangeably throughout this report. When referring to a specific group or individual, nation or language group names are used.

This report includes reproduction of words and descriptions in historic quotes written in the past that may be confronting and would be considered inappropriate today.

Permission to publish the graphic materials from archival collections and previous publications has not been obtained as part of this study. Permission should be sought from copyright holders if the report is published with the graphic material or the graphic material is used for other purposes.

Limitations

This report is the result of a desktop study into existing resources available on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the study area. No community consultation or primary research was completed as part of the study.

Cover image

View at Kurnell, Yerrabingin Walk on Country (Yerrabingin)

Table of Contents

<i>Project Overview</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Connecting with Country Framework</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Site definition and context</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Elements of Country</i>	<i>8</i>
Deep Country.....	8
Water Country	9
Non-human kin	9
Move with Country	11
<i>Themes and stories.....</i>	<i>12</i>
Living in water landscapes	12
Berewalgal arrive	13
Preserved places	15
Summary of themes	16
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>References.....</i>	<i>19</i>

Acknowledging Country

We acknowledge Country, the Cultural Landscape that we are working upon. We acknowledge the custodianship of its people and the privilege and responsibility to Connect with Country.

As a team we are guided by the inspiration of Country, the stories and knowledge this place contains and has to share. We acknowledge its contribution to wellbeing both mental and physical, providing a refuge and safe place to learn and share.

Our vision is that sensing and caring for Country is something that transcends cultural difference and highlights the many values that are similar across the cultures of our contemporary communities. Supporting a socially inclusive, resilient, and innovative community based on, honouring the wisdom and kinship of all cultures, captured through the lens of custodianship.

We have sought to observe and share protocols of Australian First Nations cultures about Country, custodianship and clan relationships.

Often words of acknowledgment are given to Country. But to know and introduce yourself to Country you must sense and feel its presence, hear its stories, the sounds, the colours, the smells and her spirit. It is not the words as ritual, but the feeling that connects us to her and each other and reminds us of our custodial responsibility.

Country is the Codex that unlocks the largest and oldest environmental and cultural database in the world, it has millions of authors, rich with wisdom and a story that continues to grow with each new generation of custodians.

Exploring Gweagal Country, the unique landforms, climate, seasons, flora and fauna, spirituality and the connection her people have with Country through language, custodianship, and ceremony.

Aboriginal culture values sustainability, using local materials, an interconnected view of humans and the environment and using natural variations in weather and seasonality in designs. These values are evident in the material culture of Aboriginal people of the south eastern region of Australia and will be drawn on in developing design opportunities. If we look after Country, it will look after us.

Project Overview

The Kurnell Planning Proposal project will see the rezoning of the site at 251,278 & 280-282 Captain Cook Drive, Kurnell owned by Besmaw Pty Ltd. The rezoning process involves the creation of a Masterplan for the site to explore possible future uses.

As part of the project, Urbis / Besmaw have engaged Yerrabingin to produce a desktop research report identifying key Aboriginal cultural heritage narratives for the site to provide context for the design. This report presents the research findings, including the site context, the narratives and some initial design ideas related to the narratives.

Connecting with Country Framework

Recent research and recommendations about creating culturally appropriate and meaningful design with Country in the public sphere has been developed by the Government Architect NSW (GANSW).

Relevant to the Kurnell Planning Proposal project, the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework introduces the importance of engagement with Aboriginal people and organisations in the design process of public spaces and buildings to achieve the best design outcomes. It explores good design in Australia as including the Aboriginal worldview of Country.

The Framework emphasises that good design in Australia will be informed by the Aboriginal concept of Country. It will prioritise Aboriginal ways of knowing and connecting to Country and require co-design of projects with Aboriginal people.

The Connecting with Country Framework recommends considering project life cycles with an Aboriginal perspective. As illustrated in the graphic, this is broken into four steps: Form, Design, Deliver, Maintain.¹

This report contributes to the 'Form: Starting with Country' stage, by gathering existing resources on Aboriginal cultural heritage that could be used for discussion in co-design with Aboriginal advisors.

¹ Government Architect New South Wales, 2023. Connecting with Country Framework, p.43.

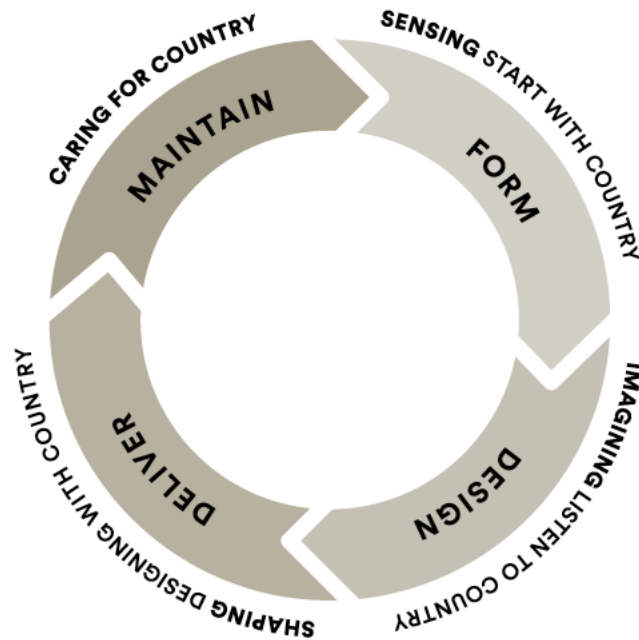


Figure 1: Illustration of model to consider project life cycles with an Aboriginal perspective | GANSW, Connecting with Country Framework

The Wanggani Dhayar (Listen to Country) design methodology developed by Yerrabingin is aligned to the principles outlined in the GANSW Connecting with Country framework. The Wanggani Dhayar process will be used by Yerrabingin in co-designing options to incorporate Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the site into the design and delivery.

Site definition and context

In order to understand and develop Aboriginal cultural narratives for the project, we consider the broader cultural landscape, Country, around the site, not just the boundaries of the development.

The Kurnell site is on Gweagal Country, part of the larger Dharawal language area. Gweagal Country reaches along the southern shores of Kamay (Botany Bay), to Deeban (Port Hacking) in to the south and westward along Tucoerah (Georges River). The wider area of Dharawal speakers covers the area southwest from the coast to Benkennie ('dry land') near Appin and Camden and down into the Illawarra ('white clay mountains near the sea'). Kurnell is said to mean 'place of wild carrots' and nearby Cronulla as 'place of pink shells'.²

² Neighbourhood Media, 2021. 'Cronulla History Part 1: The Gweagal'. Accessed 1 May 2023. <https://www.neighbourhoodmedia.com.au/post/cronulla-history-part-1-the-gweagal>

An important and sacred resource on Gweagal Country was the white clay pits. The clay was used to shape tablets on which to light fires in the base of canoes, so fish could be cooked after it was pulled fresh from the water. The clay was also used to decorate the body in corroborees and ritual dances, often dyed with berries, and eaten as an antacid medicine.³

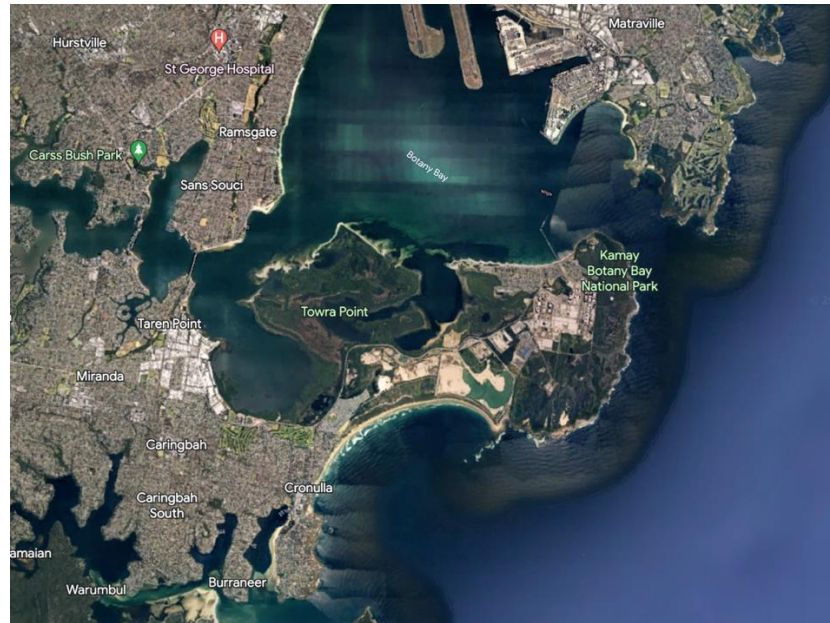


Figure 2: Location of Kurnell Peninsula in south east Sydney (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 3: Site boundaries (Source: Group GSA)

³ Neighbourhood Media, 2021. 'Cronulla History Part 1: The Gweagal'. Accessed 1 May 2023. <https://www.neighbourhoodmedia.com.au/post/cronulla-history-part-1-the-gweagal>

Elements of Country

Deep Country

Deep Country is the most ancient of connections and one that we honour for the many gifts it shares, such as the greenstone axe and the ochres that we paint with. When we dance we are celebrating and honouring the spiritual beings below our feet and their kin in Sky Country, representing the extent and connection of Country.

Deep Country at Kurnell was created over thousands of years as sea levels rose and fell and sand was pushed against the southern shore of Kamay. As with much of the southeastern area of Sydney, the major landform pre colonisation was large, shifting sand dunes. The sand dunes were moved slowly over time by the wind. This process was slowed where the dunes were vegetated. Between and around the peaks of the dunes were freshwater swamps and fens.

Prehistory summary:

- *The Peninsula has a complex geomorphic history beginning before the last interglacial. A number of palynological studies based on cores from the large fenlands and peatlands on the Kurnell Peninsula give an idea of the pre-history of the area.*
- *8000 years ago: the sea level would have been about 3m below present level, and the western part of the floor of Botany Bay would probably have been Pleistocene low dunes covered by sclerophyll woodland vegetation similar to that of the dunes at Kurnell today.*
- *About 5000 years ago: Pollen analysis from a residual fenland (with Triglochin, Baumea, Sporadanthus, Villarsia) near the present Oil Refinery by Martin shows that woodland cover with species of Eucalyptus, Angophora costata, Banksia integrifolia/Banksia serrata and species of Allocasuarina suffered losses, when a nearby coastal protobarrier was destabilised by rising sea-level, while rapidly-forming fen peat replaced slowly formed oxygen-depleted fine detritus.*
- *Over a 2000 year period woodland partly recovered, despite heavier or more frequent firing coincident with the entry of hunter-gathering aboriginal people.*
- *About 1700 years ago: Minor destabilisation of local dune brought fine sand into the fen basin. Dryland plant cover increased after this time but was mainly dominated locally by Monotoca elliptica/Leptospermum laevigatum scrub possibly linked to the higher population density, or greater continuity of tenure, of later Aboriginal people after 2000 years ago.⁴*

⁴ Martin, A.R.H. 'Kurnell Fen: an eastern Australian coastal wetland, its Holocene vegetation, relevant to sea-level change and aboriginal land use', *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology*, Volume 80, Issues 3–4, 1994, Pages 311–332

Water Country

Water Country is the connective tissue, the circulatory system, the confluences and paths within and between Country. It is the meeting of salt and fresh water, where one drop forms setting a path through Country, connecting with story and landscape.

The Besmaw site sits along the isthmus of the Kurnell peninsular, with frontage to Quibray Bay in the north and Bates Bay in the south. The project area has undergone extensive landscape modification through intensive sand mining activities. A large body of fresh water is situated across a large expanse of the southern section of the project area; this water is supplied by a freshwater aquifer and is underlain by salt water. The current extent of the body of water is a result of sand mining activities.⁵

Non-human kin

Non-Human Kin Country fills the senses with colour, smells and sounds. On Country we are surrounded by our kin the animals and plants. This is where we learn about the connection of all living things and our responsibilities and roles within this web of connections.

Pre-colonial biodiversity at the Kurnell peninsular would have been greater than today and without the impact of widespread vegetation clearance and mining. Native birds, reptiles and mammals would have occupied the landscape while an abundance of freshwater, estuarine and marine species including fish, molluscs (eg shellfish, squid and octopus) and arthropods (eg crabs) would have been readily available. This would have provided various resources for consumption by Aboriginal people.

On Kurnell Peninsula the main plant community was heath, which was a response to dry, well-drained (sandy) and nutrient-poor soils. Heaths supported faunal species such as pygmy possums, honey-eaters and many different species of reptile. The abundant wetlands in Lot 2 north and potentially Lot 8 of the study site and the mangrove ecosystem in the study site north would have provided waterbirds and their eggs, eels and fish as well as plant species for food. Vegetation would have also been used for tools and tool making.

Botany Bay was initially called Sting Ray Harbour by James Cook and other journal keepers in their logs of 1770, named after the many stingrays they caught while in the bay.

⁵ EMM, 2020, Aboriginal archaeological assessment, 251 & 280 – 282 Captain Cook Drive, Kurnell Peninsular Proposed Amendment to SEPP (Kurnell Peninsular 1989), p.3

Kamay Botany Bay National Park

Kamay Botany Bay National Park (the park) is situated to the east of the study site. It retains natural systems and habitats and is an important part of the cultural landscape of the Kurnell area. The following section is an overview of Non-Human Kin in the park.

Native vegetation formations in Kamay Botany Bay National Park include:

- dry sclerophyll forests
- forested wetlands
- freshwater wetlands
- Grasslands
- Heathlands
- saline wetlands⁶

Endangered species:

- Port Jackson heath (*Epacris purpurascens* var. *Purpurascens*)
- Black-hooded sun orchid (*Thelymitra atronitida*)
- Botany Bay bearded greenhood orchid (*Pterostylis* sp. Botany Bay)
- Coastal groundsel (*Senecio spathulatus*)
- Magenta lilly pilly (*Syzygium paniculatum*)
- Netted bottle brush (*Callistemon linearifolius*)
- Sunshine wattle (*Acacia terminalis* subsp. *Terminalis*)⁷

An endangered population of the seagrass strapweed, listed under the Fisheries Management Act 1994, occurs in Botany Bay, within the cultural landscape of the study site. Aquatic reserves adjoining the park play an important role in conserving marine species.

The swamp oaks on the foreshore of Commemoration Flat, within the park, are likely to have regenerated from a pre-1770s genotype and therefore have genetic importance as seed (or root) stock. Most of the southern section of the park consists of extensive areas of low to medium heath dominated by old man banksia, scrub she-oak and a grass tree. Near Inscription Point there are dense thickets of the fine-leaved paperbark.

Swamps occur in small pockets and support wetland associations dominated by red-fruited saw-sedge/club rush with lemon-scented bottlebrush, swamp banksia and heath banksia. Where aeolian dunes cover the sandstone, there is a low scrub including old man banksia, coast banksia and coast tea-tree. In the northern area of the Kurnell section of the park is a

⁶ Keith DA. 2004, 'Ocean shores to desert dunes: the native vegetation of NSW and the ACT'. Department of Environment and Conservation, Sydney. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/publications/ostdd.htm

⁷ Keith DA. 2004, 'Ocean shores to desert dunes: the native vegetation of NSW and the ACT'. Department of Environment and Conservation, Sydney. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/publications/ostdd.htm

sclerophyll woodland characterised by eucalypt, acacia and casuarina species, while small pockets of swamps and wet gullies also occur.⁸

Some non-human kin found in the area include:

- Frogs
 - Green and gold bell frog (*Litoria aurea*)
 - Wallum froglet *Crinia tinnula*
- Birds
 - Grass owl *Tyto capensis*
 - Lesser sand-plover *Charadrius mongolus*
 - Little tern *Sternula albifrons*
 - Little lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla*
 - Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
 - Pied oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*
 - Powerful owl *Ninox strenua*
 - Regent honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia*
 - Sooty oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*
 - Square-tailed kite *Lophoictinia isura*
 - Swift parrot *Lathamus discolor*
- Mammals
 - Australian fur-seal *Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus*
 - Eastern bentwing-bat *Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*
 - Grey-headed flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*
 - New Zealand fur-seal *Arctocephalus forsteri*
 - Yellow-bellied sheath-tail-bat *Saccolaimus flaviventris*

Move with Country

At the heart of Country is people and community, where our spirituality is embedded in environmental consciousness. To Move with Country is to be a Custodian of Country, it is where we record and share our knowledge through story, song, dance and art.

We can understand connection to Country by looking at the cultural landscape of Country as above, as well as looking at the cultural values people have for a place.

The project area is adjacent to areas of significant heritage sites, which are a combination of historical and Aboriginal (including prehistoric) values. They are:

⁸ Keith DA. 2004, 'Ocean shores to desert dunes: the native vegetation of NSW and the ACT'. Department of Environment and Conservation, Sydney. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/publications/ostdd.htm

- Kamay Botany Bay National Park;
- Kurnell Peninsula;
- Boat Harbour House Sites Group; and
- Cronulla Sand Dune and Wanda Beach Coastal Landscape.

Themes and stories

Culture is not static, it is lived, dynamic and evolving. It is what we do, say, think, and how we live. Through design and art, culture is created and celebrated. The narratives and storylines that are chosen to be communicated through design, public art and interpretation can create new meanings and reinforce existing meanings for a place.

The narratives and storylines developed for the Kurnell site have been synthesised based on the information about the region discussed above.

In relation to the *Connecting with Country* framework, this research report is contributing to the *Imagining* stage of the project. The work in this report for the Imagining phase focuses on:

- What is the story of the place?
- What is the history of the site?
- What are the needs of the place?
- What is the purpose of this place?

The following narratives and storylines will be explored below: Living in water landscapes, Berewalgal arrive, and Preserved places.

Living in water landscapes

The waterways of the Kurnell peninsular and Botany Bay create a unique environment that influenced how people experienced, interacted and lived with Country across the diverse landscape and how they continue to be used and cared for today.

Gweagal, Bidjigal, Gadigal, Wangal and Gameygal people were living in and visiting the water landscapes across the wider region for thousands of years, when the ocean shoreline was kilometres further east and the creeks and rivers close to the current coastline were still freshwater.

Reminders of these ancient times in the Eastern suburbs landscape are a stone hearth near the Randwick UNSW Campus and Prince of Wales Hospital dated to about 8,500 years and a fireplace on Wolli Creek, near the junction of the Cooks River, next to Tempe House, dated to about 10,500 years when the Cooks River was still a freshwater stream at this location. As well

as being lower than current levels, the ocean once rose higher across the sandy landscape of south eastern Sydney, allowing a dugong to travel into the area near Alexandra Canal where it was hunted and eaten by Aboriginal people around 6,000 years ago.

The rolling sand hills, wetlands, sandy marshes, mangroves, estuaries and waterways of the south east Sydney region shifted and changed over tens of thousands of years to reach close to their current form about 8,000 - 6,000 years ago. There is a midden at Tempe on the northern side of the river from around 4,500 years ago, when the Tempe section of the Cooks River was probably at its current form, but further south towards Botany Bay, was still taking shape.

Contemporary Aboriginal people descendant from people living in the area pre-colonisation as well as Aboriginal people from across New South Wales are connected to these water landscapes in many ways, such as through kinship relations; growing up in the area and learning to swim and fish; living daily with the water landscapes and sensing the spirit of the place; working to ensure the environment and cultural sites are looked after and remembering and sharing the stories of important Aboriginal people such as Bennelong and Mahroot.

Berewalgal arrive

In the late 1700s the Botany Bay area was home to several Aboriginal groups who called the area *gwea*⁹ or *gamai*¹⁰. Kameygal lived and camped near the entrance of the Cooks River and along the north shore of Botany Bay and Gweagal lived on the south of the bay around Kurnell. The estimated population of the area in 1788 was about 1000 - 1200 people.¹¹

Botany Bay was the location of the 1770 landing of the British *Endeavour* expedition and subsequent arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. The interactions and encounters recorded by the Europeans, the *Berewalgal* (people from far away) and remembered by Aboriginal people of this time tell us of their different beliefs and lifestyles. The early relationships and negotiations witness each group expressing their culture, with misunderstanding and mistrust leading to increased conflict over time.

Pres

⁹ Butler, M. 2011, *Botany*. Dictionary of Sydney website, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/botany>

¹⁰ Vincent Smith, K. 2016, *Maroot the elder*. Dictionary of Sydney website, https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/maroot_the_elder

¹¹ Butler, M. 2011, *Botany*. Dictionary of Sydney website, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/botany>

British people who arrived as part of the First Fleet recorded their observations of Aboriginal people and lifestyles. *Lady Penrhyn* ship surgeon Arthur Bowes Smyth noted 'their huts or wigwams are dispersed abt. and were joined by 'cat paths' leading from one hut to another' and Marine Captain Watkin Tench noted an Aboriginal 'village' near the mouth of Cooks River as follows, 'more than a dozen houses [gunyah or bark huts], and perhaps five times that number of people; being the most considerable establishment that we are acquainted with in the country'.¹²

The journal of Watkin Tench recounts the mostly peaceful meetings between Berewalgal of the First Fleet and Aboriginal people. The following passage, however, reveals the attitude of the Berewalgal considering themselves to be superior to Aboriginal people, which inevitably led to conflict over time:

*We had several more interviews with the natives, which ended in so friendly a manner, that we began to entertain strong hopes of bringing about a connection with them. Our first object was to win their affections, and our next to convince them of the superiority we possessed: for without the latter, the former we know would be of little importance.*¹³

The British belief that they could claim land and resources, without understanding or acknowledging the connection Aboriginal people had to the land for tens of thousands of years prior to their arrival, and the differing world views of ownership, kinship, belonging and relationships to the natural world, led to conflict that in some ways is still part of the colonial landscape of Australia. As Metro LALC CEO Nathan Moran commented in the oral history about the Cooks River area:

*We're talking about an area that first felt the impacts of colonisation, and it's not a good story. Australia is probably the worst story of any colonised continent on planet earth when it comes to race relations. From the very start they failed to acknowledge us as human beings, claiming it as a basis and right to take, to dispossess us of our land, our minerals, our resources, and at the same stage, we've got to acknowledge, openly shot us, murdered us, poisoned us... The reasons we can't converse in traditional language, the reason that the traditional names of these areas is not prevailing is because of the lack of respect and the murderous atrocities that were committed against the local people.*¹⁴

Colonisation also brought changes to the water landscapes, with new industries in the area though the nineteenth and twentieth centuries altering the flow and direction of waterways with dams and canals and heavily polluting the waterways, leading to severe reduction in

¹² Vincent Smith, K. 2016, *Maroot the elder*. Dictionary of Sydney website, https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/maroot_the_elder

¹³ Tench, W. 1789, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*.

¹⁴ Moran, N. 2017, Oral history recording. *Cooks River Aboriginal Histories Project*. <https://cooksriver.org.au/projects/cooks-river-oral-histories-project/>

marine life. The shorelines, river beds and rocky areas around the creeks and coast have also been substantially altered, limiting access to the waterways, filling in wetlands and swamp area and redirecting waterways.

Preserved places

The existence of the waterways in the study areas influenced the land usage and development over time, from places of mobility, food sources and habitation pre-colonisation, to places of industry, refuge and adaption through the 18th and 19th centuries, to places of pollution and abandonment in the 20th, to places of retreat and regeneration in the 21st century. Though the course and health of the waterways changed over time as Sydney developed, their unique landscape character meant that they were preserved from absolute development and continue to form part of the cultural landscape of modern Sydney.

The story of Kameygal man Mahroot can help us understand the experience of Aboriginal people in the Botany area through the nineteenth century. Mahroot was born at the Cooks River mouth (Gumannan) on the north shore of Kamay in 1793.¹⁵

Mahroot found his way to make a living in the colonial setting by working on whaling and sealing ships that travelled from Sydney down the south coast to Tasmania and Macquarie Island. Mahroot had to petition to be paid for his first voyage. He addressed his petition to Governor Macquarie in 1811, it was the first known civil case by an Aboriginal person. Mahroot was eventually paid in wages and goods. Over time, Mahroot became a 'Boatsteerer' and was paid equal to white men.¹⁶

Mahroot was also successful in his petition to have a piece of land granted to him on the north shore of Kamay. The land was close to a creek running into the bay at Bumborah Point, next to what is today Port Botany. Mahroot lived there with other Aboriginal people, making a living fishing and taking European people on fishing tours. Towards the end of his life, Mahroot lived on the grounds on the Sir Josphe Banks Hotel and when he died in 1850 he was buried in an Aboriginal burial ground in Botany.¹⁷ Mahroot's connection to and knowledge of the ocean and waterways meant he could make a living in the rapidly changing world and successfully navigate the Berewalgal world to secure his own place to live within a totally different framework of ownership than his own culture.

¹⁵ Vincent Smith, K. 2018, *Boatswain Maroot*, Dictionary of Sydney website.
https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/boatswain_maroot

¹⁶ Vincent Smith, K. 2018, *Boatswain Maroot*, Dictionary of Sydney website.
https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/boatswain_maroot

¹⁷ Vincent Smith, K. 2018, *Boatswain Maroot*, Dictionary of Sydney website.
https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/boatswain_maroot

Contemporary activities that are continuing and regenerating Kamegal, Gweagal, Cadigal, Wangal and Bidjigal culture are run by groups such as the Cooks River Alliance and Gamay Rangers. The Gamay Rangers are looking after Country in Kamay and areas owned by La Perouse LALC through natural and cultural resource management work.¹⁸

The Cooks River Alliance is formed by local councils in the Cooks River Valley area and works on environmental and cultural projects in the region. The Alliance works to support and promote Aboriginal connection to Country, such as through commissioning the cultural heritage study and oral history project for the area referred to in the report, and community projects such as the Wurridjal Festival, which includes cultural, environmental and creative activities for the local community to learn about the culture and environment of the area. The festival is held at the time of year to mark the season when wurridjal (mullet) enter the Cooks River as part of their reproduction journey.¹⁹

Contemporary associations of Aboriginal people to the area expressed in oral histories note the tranquility and retreat offered by the waterways, the opportunity they provide to learn about Country in an urban setting; the gratitude people feel that cultural and natural sites have survived and the shared responsibility of all people living the region to care for Country.²⁰

Summary of themes

Living in water landscapes: The region's landscape, including sand dunes, wetlands, mangroves, and waterways, evolved over thousands of years. The waterways of Kurnell Peninsula and Botany Bay have shaped the lives of Gweagal, Bidjigal, Gadigal, Wangal, and Gameygal communities for thousands of years. Remnants of their activity in the landscape, like a stone hearth near Randwick UNSW Campus and a fireplace on Wolli Creek dating back 8,500 and 10,500 years respectively, offer glimpses into their past. Aboriginal people maintain their connection to these water landscapes through kinship, daily life, environmental stewardship, and storytelling, preserving the rich history of their ancestors and cultural icons like Bennelong and Mahroot.

Berewalgal arrive: In the late 1700s, the Botany Bay region was inhabited by Aboriginal groups, including Kameygal and Gweagal, with an estimated population of 1000-1200 people. This area marked the 1770 British Endeavour expedition landing and the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet.

¹⁸ NIAA, *Gamay Botany Bay Rangers*, <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/environment/indigenous-rangers-working-country/gamay-botany-bay-rangers>

¹⁹ Cooks River Alliance, 2021, *Wurridjal Festival 2021*, <https://cooksriver.org.au/publications/wurridjal-festival-2021-program/>

²⁰ Cooks River Alliance, Oral history recordings. *Cooks River Aboriginal Histories Project*. <https://cooksriver.org.au/projects/cooks-river-oral-histories-project/>

European accounts document interactions with Aboriginal people, revealing cultural differences and increasing conflicts due to misunderstandings. Although some early meetings were peaceful, the British viewed themselves as superior, leading to conflicts. The British failed to recognise the Indigenous connection to the land, resulting in ongoing racial tensions. Colonisation also altered the water landscapes through industries, dams, pollution, and shoreline changes, impacting marine life and access to waterways.

Preserved places: Over time, the waterways in Kurnell Peninsular and Botany Bay have played diverse roles in land usage and development, evolving from mobility, food sources, and habitation for Aboriginal people pre-colonisation to industrial centers and refuges during the 18th and 19th centuries, followed by pollution and abandonment in the 20th century, and now serving as places of retreat and regeneration in the 21st century. Despite Sydney's development, these waterways, with their unique landscape character, have been preserved, forming part of the city's cultural landscape.

Mahroot, a Kameygal man, offers insight into the Aboriginal experience in the Botany area during the 19th century. He worked on whaling and sealing ships, petitioning for fair pay, marking the first known civil case by an Aboriginal person. Mahroot's knowledge of waterways also led to him being paid equally to white men and receiving land near Kamay. He made a living by fishing and offering fishing tours, adapting to a different ownership framework.

Today, groups like the Cooks River Alliance and Gamay Rangers continue to promote and preserve Aboriginal culture, conducting natural and cultural resource management and community projects. These efforts emphasize the importance of waterways in connecting people to Country and the shared responsibility of caring for it.

Conclusion

This report has presented the findings of the desktop review into existing resources on Aboriginal cultural heritage at the Kurnell site. Resources located and reviewed included books and chapters by historians, archaeological reports, research project findings including oral histories, historical images and documents, publications by Aboriginal people and corporations, heritage assessment reports, management and strategic planning documents and visitor information websites.

Based on the review of these documents, and considering the local context of the site in the wider context of Sydney, the following themes and storylines are suggested to be further explored during co-design:

- Living in water landscapes
- Berewalgal arrive
- Preserved places

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YOU'RE INVITED TO HELP SHAPE COUNTRY AT OUR KURNELL - DESIGN JAM

Yerrabingin invites you to join us for a Design Jam to help us explore how First Nations cultures and values can be incorporated, elevated, and celebrated in the development of this project.

This Design Jam will bring together First Nations community members and the project's design team to explore a range of design ideas, merge different styles of thinking, start conversations, and refine and combine insights.

It's a process that results in a feasible, viable and desirable vision to share, and for everyone to be a part of.

Your time and valuable input will be covered as part of these events.

We hope you can join us!

Yerrabingin is an Indigenous consultancy specialising in collaborative opportunities for Indigenous communities. "Yerrabingin" means "we walk together", reflecting our approach to collaborative design, centred on cultural frameworks.



"SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL, OUR ANCESTORS, THE FIRST PEOPLE, HAVE BEEN CARING FOR COUNTRY IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY, PASSING ON THIS CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY AND CUSTODIANSHIP TO COUNTLESS GENERATIONS."

- CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY



THE DETAILS:

Workshop: Wednesday 22 March 2023

TIME: 9am - 2:30pm

Location: Woollooware Golf Club (1R Harnleigh Ave, Woollooware NSW 2230)

Morning tea and lunch included

TELL US IF YOU'RE COMING:

Please RSVP as soon as possible for catering purposes to Jordan@yerrabingin.com.au



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

TELL US THAT YOU'RE COMING: Don't forget to RSVP by phone or email

PARKING: Golf Club has parking available otherwise a 10 minute walk from Woollooware Train Station

PHONE US: 0449 674 461 (Jordan Ardler)

EMAIL US: Kerrie@yerrabingin.com.au or jordan@yerrabingin.com.au

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL FOOD REQUIREMENTS? Tell us when you RSVP



WANGANNI DHAYAR LISTEN TO COUNTRY

DESIGN JAM
KURNELL DESIGN JAM



MY COUNTRY

Country is Our Mother, Our Teacher, Our Library and Our Kin, She sustains, inspires and surrounds us.

The experience of Country is both individual and collective, both new and familiar.

From her we learn, share and flourish, continuing to care for country is central to our being, our identity.

Country is a responsibility, not a right and it is there for all who respect and cherish her.

Today we may not always be able to see Country instantly, but if we call to her, we can always sense her and again feel her embrace.



MY COUNTRY

The knowledge of this Ancient Landscape has been collected and nurtured through an oral tradition, through dance, stories, song, and art carefully designed and maintained.

Country is the Codex that unlocks the largest and oldest environmental database in the world, it has millions of authors, rich with wisdom and a story that continues to grow with each new generation.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Often words of acknowledgment are spoken/given to Country. But to know and introduce yourself to Country you must sense and feel its presence, hear its stories, the sounds, the colours, the smells and her spirit.

It is not the words as ritual, but the feeling, the thought that connects us to her and each other, reminding us of our custodial responsibility.



A TANGIBLE LANDSCAPE FULL OF INTANGIBLE WISDOM

The connection to country, the experience of a cultural landscape brings both mental and physical wellbeing, providing a refuge and safe place to learn and share.

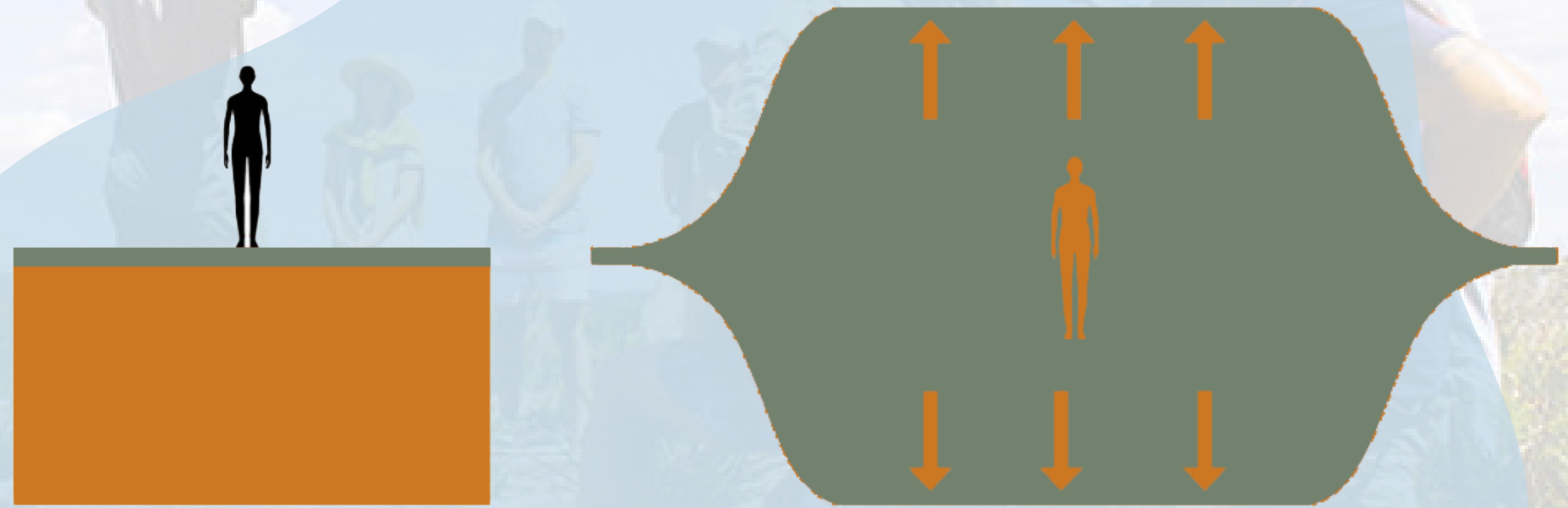


INHABITED BY COUNTRY

We inhabit and are inhabited by Country. This project offers an opportunity to celebrate the all-encompassing nature of Country.

It's infinite reach into and across the earth and into the sky.

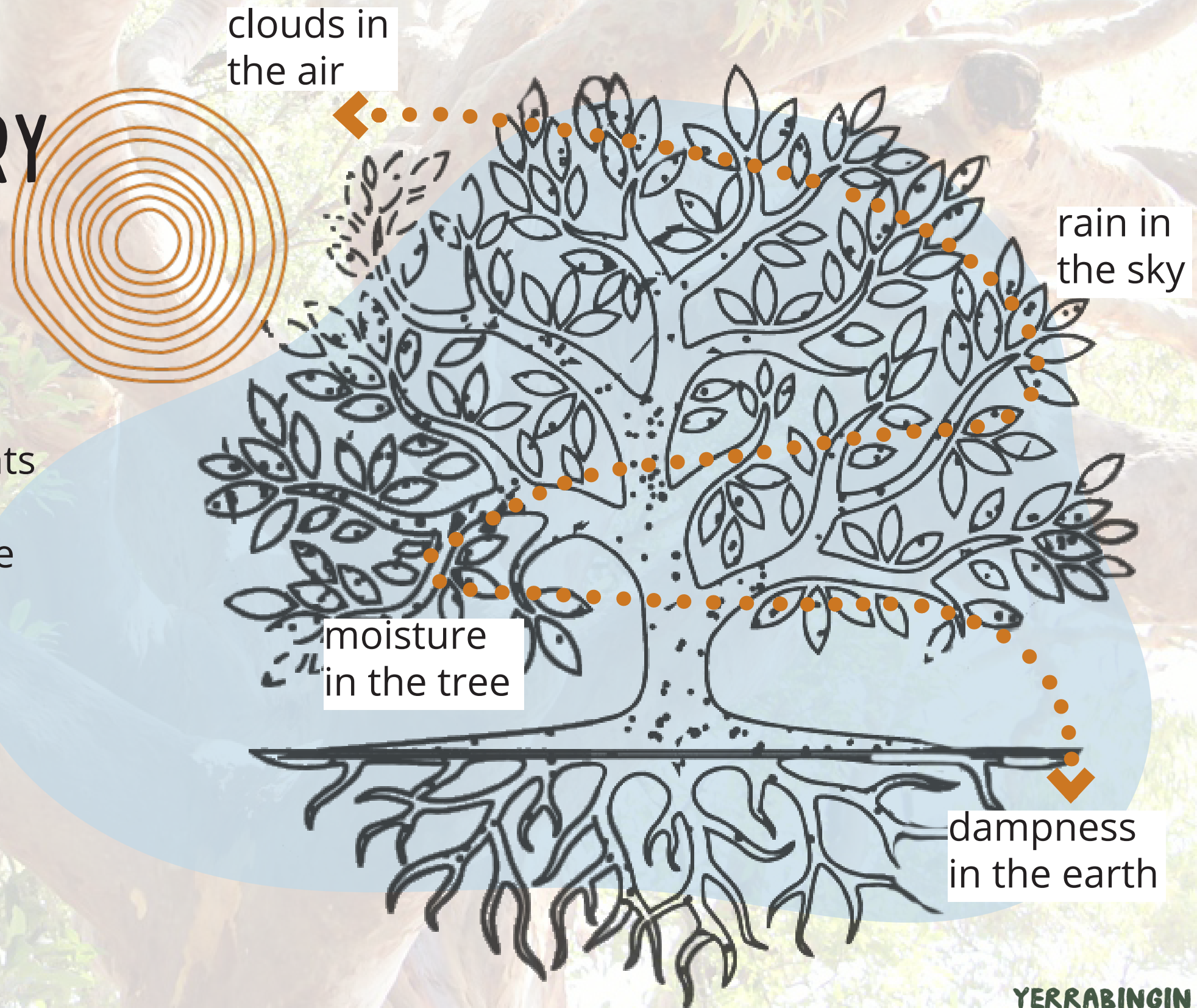
Being connected to Country transcends language and culture, a connected system of action, emotion and experience, as a Custodian of Country.



MOVE WITH COUNTRY

A core project principle is the invitation and responsibility to move with Country.

Its unique and distinctive elements are connected and open to everyone, a connective tissue, the interstices that flows between Water, Sky, Earth, ourselves and our non Human kin.



HOW MIGHT WE ?

How might we create a place to share the value of Country with all the community?



YERRABINGIN

BRAINSTORMING GOOD IDEAS / BAD IDEAS

In the next 5 minutes write down as many wonderful ideas you have?

Please also share your bad ideas?



SHARING YOUR IDEAS (20 MINS)

In your groups, team members share their ideas, posting them up on the butcher's paper.

Cluster similar or complimentary ideas together.

Next the team must decide what are their top 2 or 3 ideas to go forward with.



TEAM SKETCHES (20 MINS)

For your ideas also create a story board to explain how you see it working. What will be the outcome for the visitor?

Draw or visualise the features.



FLOWERS AND FLAMETHROWERS

(20 MINS)

Each group will select a host, the host will present and pitch their team's sketches.

The remaining team members will split and go to one of the other teams.

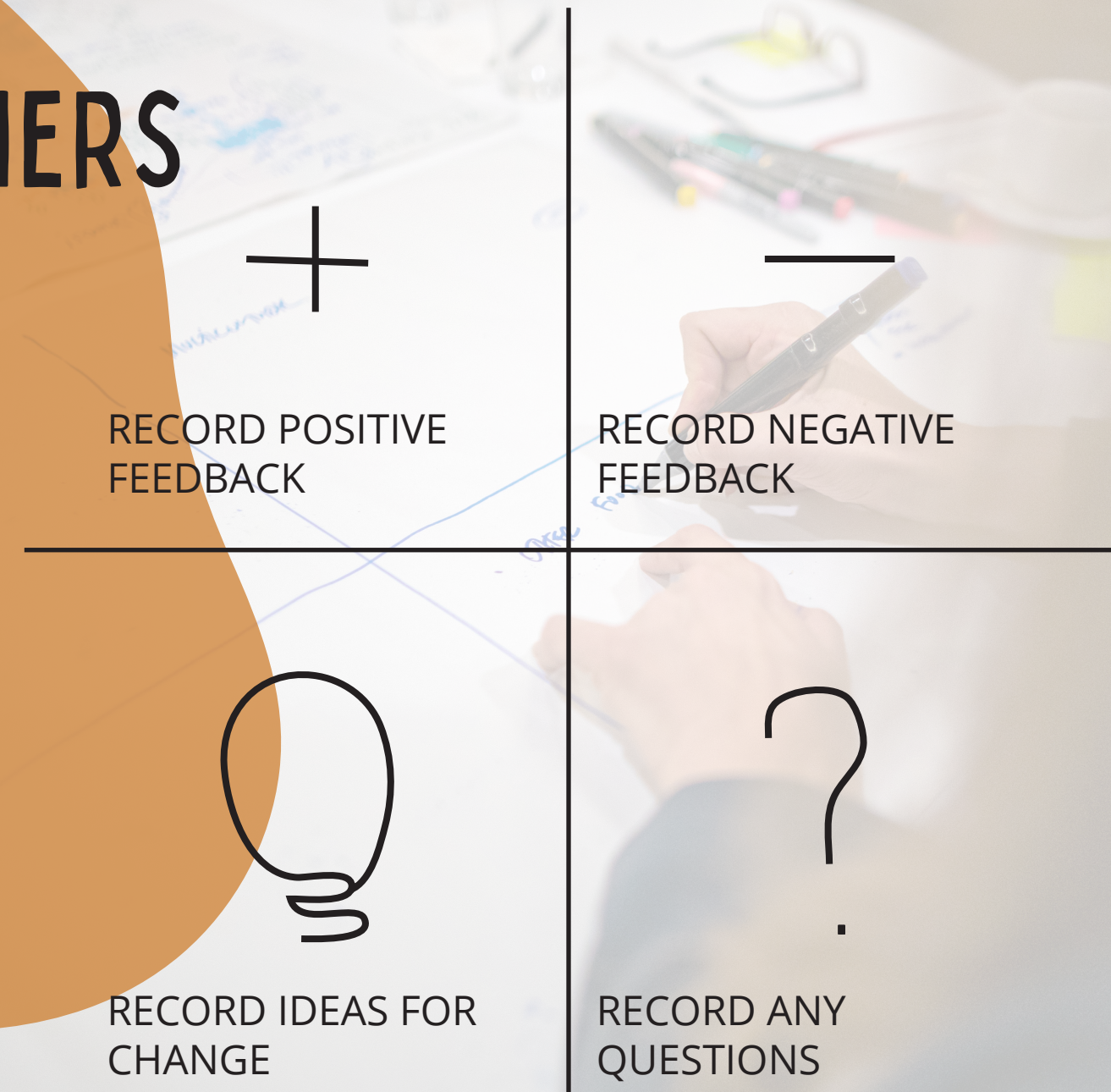
The visitors have 5 minutes to pose questions for clarifications and give positive feedback on the ideas.



FLOWERS AND FLAMETHROWERS (20 MINS)

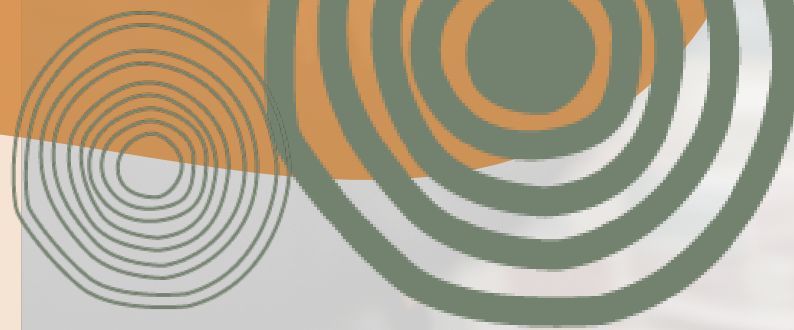
The host in 5 mins outlines the ideas and then silently records feedbacks in a matrix that includes positive and negative feedback, ideas for change or improvement and questions asked.

While feedback is being given, the host records feedback on a “feedback grid”: to share with their teams.



REFLECTION AND REDESIGN (20 MINS)

Redesigning the idea – Teams will discuss the feedback and also the inspiration from other teams' ideas and redesign (if necessary) in preparation to deliver a 5 min pitch to the whole group.



THE PITCH

How might we create a place to share the value of Country with all the community?



DISCUSSION - KEY THEMES

Which features or ideas stood out?

Which are most intriguing and exciting?

What seems most challenging and difficult to achieve?

Where do we see areas that are clear no-go's?

What must-have's are we seeing?

What was a challenge? What conflicts emerged?



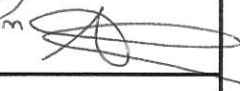
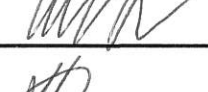
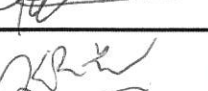
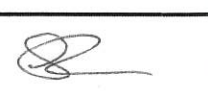
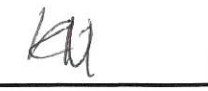
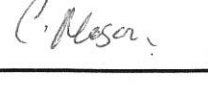


"Our culture is embedded in the landscape, and environmental consciousness. Sharing this tacit knowledge and wisdom through a cultural landscape, at this point in time, when our earth is under threat, must be a principal for all of future design approaches."



We acknowledge Country, the Cultural Landscape that we are working upon,
We acknowledge the custodianship of its people and the privilege and responsibility to
Connect with Country.

Korrell

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FIRST NATIONS SHARED GOVERNANCE MODELS



Organisation	Industry	Website	Overview	Outcomes and Benefits
Budj Bim	Design	https://www.budjbim.com.au/ https://www.budjbim.com.au/about-us/infrastructure/	One of Australia's great national heritage landscapes, Budj Bim is recognised nationally and internationally as a special place that offers unique and authentic visitor experiences of a living Indigenous culture, a history and a landscape which does not exist anywhere else.	1. Meaningful Partnership: The foundation of a shared governance model is a genuine and long-term partnership between First Nations communities and relevant stakeholders, such as government bodies, environmental organizations, and design professionals. 2. Cultural Understanding and Respect: The project begins with a deep appreciation of Indigenous culture, history, and values. This involves acknowledging and respecting traditional knowledge systems and the importance of land in Indigenous identity. 3. Co-Design and Decision-Making: First Nations communities play a central role in co-designing the masterplan. They actively participate in decision-making processes, ensuring that their voices are heard and their cultural heritage is integrated into the planning. 4. Land Stewardship: The project emphasises sustainable land management and stewardship practices, drawing from Indigenous knowledge of the environment. This can include eco-friendly design, conservation efforts, and revitalisation of traditional land use practices. 5. Economic Development: The shared governance model supports
Dhimurru	Indigenous Land Management	https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/sitecollectiondocuments/natural-resources/landcare/submissions/ilm-factsheet.pdf	The Yolngu people in north-east Arnhem Land established Dhimurru in response to concerns about unrestricted access of people to their country, the impacts of recreational activities and other problems, such as ghost nets entangling and drowning turtles. Dhimurru has a governance system based on customary institutions. The Dhimurru Vision explains, 'The decision makers are the landowners, the clans that are connected through Yothu-Yindi and Mari-Gutharra kinships'. Yolngu control and empowerment is the first guiding principle of all Dhimurru's work and Dhimurru's directors are members of the clans with relevant interests.	
Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	Registered Aboriginal Party	https://gunaikurnai.org/	GLaWAC is the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) for the Gunaikurnai people and claim area, as outlined in the agreement, providing joint management of 10 parks and reserves within the State. GLaWAC is comprised of more than 600 Traditional Owners, all of whom have proven their ancestral links. <i>"The Gunaikurnai community is proud of the way that we represent and include the mob in achieving broad respect for our culture, for the protection and healing of our land and to gain genuine economic independence."</i> - GLaWAC Corporate Vision	
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjara Yankunytjatjar a Women's Council	Social Impact	https://www.npywc.org.au/	NPY Women's council is led by women's law, authority and culture to deliver health, social and cultural services for all Anangu. In 1980 NPY Women's Council began as an advocacy body based on the need for Anangu women to have a voice and	

			representation in conversations on land rights, policy and cultural affairs of the late 70's and early 80's. In 1993 NPYWC was funded to provide services, recognizing the strength of supporting women and children for the benefit of the whole community. NPYWC is now a leader in the provision of human services in the NPY region. Proudly Anangu led, NPYWC is governed and directed by Aboriginal women across 26 desert communities in the cross-border regions of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory – an area covering 350,000 sq km.	economic opportunities for First Nations people. This can include tourism initiatives, sustainable agriculture, or cultural industries that provide employment and economic benefits to the community. 6. <i>Legal and Regulatory Frameworks: The project operates within legal frameworks that recognise Indigenous land rights and self-governance. This may involve the negotiation of land agreements, co-management arrangements, and regulatory reforms. Note that this point requires further discussion.</i> 7. Education and Capacity Building: Capacity building programs are implemented to empower First Nations communities with the skills and knowledge needed for effective participation in the planning and management process. 8. Holistic Approach: The masterplan takes a holistic view of the community's needs, encompassing housing, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and cultural revitalisation, with the aim of improving overall quality of life. 9. Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are put in place to assess the project's progress, adapt to changing circumstances, and ensure it aligns with community priorities. 10. Community Engagement: Ongoing community engagement is key to the success of the shared governance model. This includes open dialogues, consultations, and feedback
Garguree Swampcare Group	Indigenous Land Management	https://www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au/groups/garguree-swampcare/ https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/environment/swampcare https://nationallandcareconference.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/N-SW-Indigenous-Land-Management-Garguree.pdf	Garguree Swampcare is open to all the community, and the group's journey to bring regeneration and re-connection to this beautiful site has been a labour of love for many people. With the recognition of The Gully as an Aboriginal place in 2002, a joint management initiative began between The Gully Traditional Owners and the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC). In 2012, Garguree Swampcare was born. This addressed the desire and need to redress the environmental and community impact of past events in a cultural way by Connecting to Country, identifying the need to repair the core swamp system caused by the stands of large willows and other woody weeds, and to encourage the spread of water flow back through the swamp to rehydrate the natural system.	
Nari Nari Tribal Council	Indigenous Land Management	https://www.narinari.org/	Nari Nari Tribal Council aims to become an example of culture and heritage protection and enhancement, environmental awareness and reconciliation, and sets itself to be a respected and revered organisation within both the Aboriginal and wider community. NNTC believes the works being undertaken are of regional, national and international significance. NNTC plans to improve upon the resources that are held by the organisation, for the betterment of members of the community	
Wurundjeri Woi Wurring Cultural Heritage Aboriginal	Indigenous Land Management	https://nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards/2021-kpmg-indigenous-land-management-award-vic/	The Narrap Unit has had a significant impact on Natural Resource Management (NRM) within Wurundjeri country, bringing Indigenous land management practices back into use. The biggest influence of the Unit has been the reintroduction of cultural burns to the landscape.	

Corporation: Narrap Unit		https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/services/natural-resource-management/narrap-country-team/	The Unit employs the use of cool burns in consultation with organisations such as Forest Management Victoria, the Country Fire Authority and land managers throughout Wurundjeri Country. All team members have a minimum Certificate III in Conservation Management and learn on the job from its mostly Indigenous crew. The increased demand for the Narrap Unit has led to a five-fold expansion of their work. The current team of 20 full-time employees, including a woman-only crew, is expected to grow to 40 in the next two years. The Narrap Unit is an excellent example of indigenous self-determination, underlined by sound relationships, integrity and a passion for their work.	mechanisms to maintain transparency and accountability. 11. Knowledge Exchange: The project encourages knowledge exchange between Indigenous communities and other stakeholders, fostering a two-way learning process and enriching the planning and management approach. 12. Sustainability and Long-Term Vision: The shared governance model is designed for the long term, with a focus on preserving Indigenous culture, strengthening self-governance, and leaving a positive legacy for future generations.
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