

# REFLECT

## Reconciliation Action Plan

February 2022 – April 2023



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT



At Sutherland Shire Council we do more than serve our community - we are our community.

We understand that our natural landscapes - the bays, beaches and bush - and our love of outdoor living gives us a unique energy that sets us apart from anywhere else.

This translates into an active community, and a living energy, that propels us forward.

To align our culture to our community, we are active, evolving, respectful and collaborative in everything we do. From having a can-do attitude, to embracing opportunity and change, being people-centred and working together as one.

That's why Sutherland Shire is a place for life; its vibrancy brings people to life and makes it a place they want to stay forever.

It's our role to enhance the spirit of our area and its people.

Prepared by  
Sutherland Shire Council

February 2022

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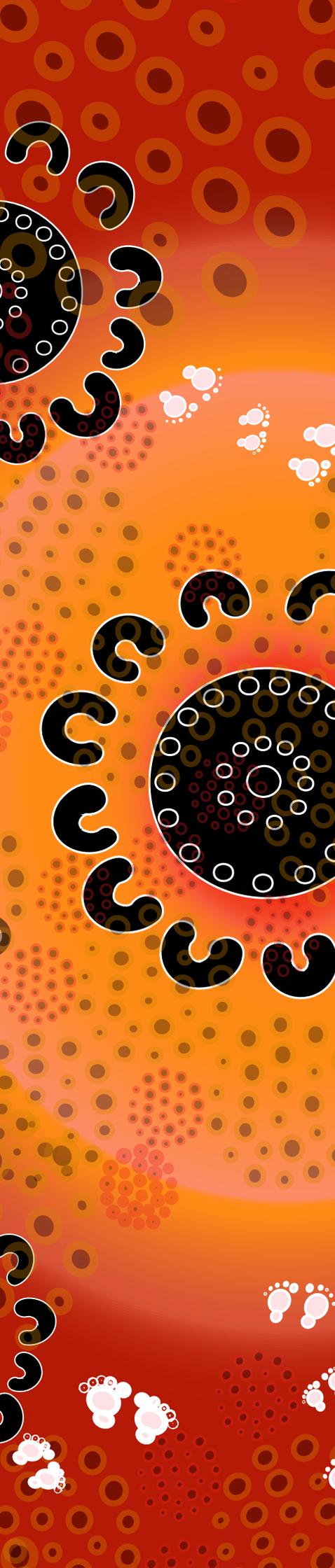
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Burnum Burnum Sanctuary



# CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country .....	4
A Message from our Mayor .....	5
A Message from our CEO .....	6
Our Vision .....	7
Our Business .....	9
Our Reconciliation Plan .....	10
Our Reconciliation Working Group .....	12
Employee experience at Sutherland Shire Council .....	13
Our Reconciliation Journey .....	14
Community Partnership .....	18
Broader Partnerships .....	18
Events and Activities .....	19
Community Services .....	20
Cultural Education and Engagement .....	21
Projects and Asset Management .....	22
Employment .....	23
Relationships .....	26
Respect .....	30
Opportunities .....	34
Governance .....	36
Artist Statement .....	39

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Sutherland Shire Council acknowledges the Dharawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land within Sutherland Shire.

We value and celebrate Dharawal culture and language, and acknowledge Dharawal people's continuing connection to the land, the sea and community.

We pay respect to the Elders and their families, past, present and emerging, and through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## WELCOME TO COUNTRY

- Aunt Deanna Schreiber, Aboriginal Elder

I acknowledge the Gweagal People of the Dharawal Nation and pay my respect to all Elders past who have made so many sacrifices, and to all Elders here, now on this land of the Dharawal which Sutherland Shire is located on, I also pay my respects to the leaders of our future. I encourage you to learn and grow and strengthen your connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history, land and heritage. To all other peoples that call Sutherland Shire home, I also pay my respect to those that stand beside us, support us, and celebrate our culture.

This RAP brings together the opportunity to reflect on the strong history of partnership and collaboration between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Sutherland Shire Council that has blossomed and grown in strength and purpose, supported through the many friendships and passion of Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee. It is a shared history that is based strongly upon cultural learning, breaking down barriers, developing respect and with the goal of becoming 'One with Country'. This Reflect RAP is an important step towards further strengthening relationships, creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and sharing and preserving culture. It is my absolute pleasure to be a part of leading Reconciliation in Sutherland Shire and I believe that through this reconciliation process the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and Council can walk together in becoming 'One with Country'.





# A MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR

Sutherland Shire Council is passionate about strengthening our community through celebrating and acknowledging our rich local history and building respectful relationships with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In the Sutherland Shire we highly value the natural environment that envelops us, the connected and caring nature of our community and the culture of the area that has evolved over 50,000 years. We are immensely proud of who we are and where we live.

In 2003 Sutherland Shire Council, in collaboration with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and La Perouse Land Council representatives, wrote, endorsed and exchanged a Reconciliation Statement with the Traditional Owners.

We strive to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment for employees, residents and visitors to the Sutherland Shire. Through developing our Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) in partnership with our RAP Working Party we will continue to build on our commitment to strengthen community relationships as we work towards a better future for our community and all Australians.

Through the development and implementation of these plans, Sutherland Shire Council aims to strengthen relationships and continue to Respect, Acknowledge and Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**Councillor Steve Simpson**  
Sutherland Shire Mayor

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

The Sutherland Shire has a significant shared history with Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander communities, and we are committed to supporting a greater understanding and reconciliation moving forward together.

We aim to foster greater respect and appreciation for Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander communities and culture now and into the future.

The development of this Reconciliation Action Plan has been a collaborative and inclusive process, drawing on the deep knowledge and cultural understanding held by local Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Relationships, respect and opportunities** are the key focus areas of Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Council as an organisation, will enliven the RAP:

**By nurturing** and developing key community partnerships, promoting reconciliation and celebrating the unique arts and culture of our Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander communities, we can strengthen relationships and connections across the community.

**By creating** opportunities in education, research, employment and procurement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we acknowledge the valuable contributions these communities provide to the Sutherland Shire.

**By increasing** our understanding, recognition, and celebration of cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning, we extend a greater respect to our Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander friends, neighbours, colleagues and family.

I look forward to working with our staff and community to progress this RAP and provide improved outcomes for Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander communities in the Sutherland Shire, while enhancing our caring and vibrant community.

**Manjeet Grewal**  
Chief Executive Officer



# OUR VISION

Sutherland Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been developed to build and develop collaborative relationships between Council and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, to progress reconciliation and promote and celebrate culture and improved outcomes. It supports Council's vision to be: ***a safe community that respects people and nature, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy.***

We want to:

1. Work together in Sutherland Shire as a community **informed and engaged in its future**
2. Enhance and protect the **beautiful and healthy natural environment** of Sutherland Shire
3. Sustain Sutherland Shire as a **caring and supportive community**
4. Evolve Sutherland Shire's **culturally rich and vibrant community**
5. Progress the Sutherland Shire as a **prosperous community** for all
6. Sustain Sutherland Shire as a liveable place where we can all continue to enjoy a **high quality of life.**

Our Reconciliation Action Plan and actions will be guided by this vision and by our core values of:



Sutherland Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan contributes to the delivery of Our Community Plan by delivering on the following:

### Community Strategic Plan

<b>3</b>	Sustain Sutherland Shire as a caring and supportive community
<b>3.2</b>	Support and enable all in our community
<b>3.3</b>	Opportunities will be fostered that help build a sense of community
<b>4</b>	Evolve Sutherland Shire's culturally rich and vibrant community
<b>4.1</b>	Create and strengthen community connections through shared cultural experiences
<b>4.3</b>	Protect our Aboriginal Heritage

### Delivery Program (2017-2021) Deliverables

<b>3A</b>	Develop and implement plans to facilitate healthy, connected, caring, inclusive, resilient and liveable communities:  3A.21.01 Develop the Community Development Strategy and Sector Plans
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### Community Development Strategy

<b>3.1</b>	Recognise, respect and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through development of Reconciliation Action Plans
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# OUR BUSINESS

Sutherland Shire Council is located on the land of the Dharawal Nation and provides services and manages a wide range of public assets and infrastructure to ensure our community enjoy a high quality of life now and into the future. To plan the wide range of services and infrastructure needed, we work in collaboration with State and Federal government, local agencies and our community members.

We deliver more than 300 different services, including:

- ☑ Development assessment, roads, drainage and local infrastructure
- ☑ Facilitate Community support services including Children's, youth, seniors, Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander and multicultural or CALD communities.
- ☑ Libraries, recreational and sports facilities
- ☑ Waste collection and recycling
- ☑ Arts programs, cultural and civic events
- ☑ Business and economic development

Sutherland Shire Council administers an area of 369 km square, on behalf of a community of approximately 230,000 people, with 2,435 people identifying themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Sutherland Shire is located 26 kilometres south of the Sydney CBD and boasts a unique natural environment, including beaches and natural areas including national parks which hold significance to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Incorporated in 1906, Sutherland Shire Council is one of the largest employers in the area employing over 1,300 employees with 16 employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Council administers an area of

369  
km sq

2,435

Aboriginal and/  
or Torres Strait  
Islander People  
living in  
Sutherland  
Shire

more than  
300  
different  
services  
offered



# OUR RECONCILIATION PLAN





Sutherland Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan is foundational and creates commitments to support the national reconciliation movement as well as achieve Council's vision of a connected and safe community that respects people and nature, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy.

Council strives to provide leadership to the broader community through building relationships with and celebrating Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples history, cultures, and their significance to the land and our community.

Sutherland Shire Council acknowledges that alienation from traditional lands following European settlement had a devastating impact on local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their way of life and recognise that the impacts of colonisation continue for many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As supported by Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, we are dedicated to progressing reconciliation by upholding the vision of the [2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart](#). The Statement is based on the three principles of Voice, Treaty and Truth and through the development and implementation of our RAP's we aim to support this process.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan underpins the commitment from Council to work with communities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples on an agreed set of actions to demonstrate respect, build relationships, share knowledge and provide long-term opportunities to improve health, employment and engagement outcomes.

The actions are organised under:

- **Relationships** - Partnerships, Engagement and Collaboration
- **Respect** - Cultural Learning and Development
- **Opportunities** - Employment, Procurement, Education and Research
- **Governance** - Transparency and Accountability

To ensure accountability, Council commits to report progress back to Reconciliation Australia each year and to the community via Council's various communication channels.

# OUR RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

Council's Reconciliation Working Group is responsible for the development, implementation and reporting of the RAP. Made up of members of our Aboriginal Advisory Committee, 8 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people from a number of communities, Councillors and staff, we have a dedicated and diverse representation of people committed to the RAP vision:

- Chair of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (RWG Co-Chair)
- Councillor (Co-Chair)
- Mayor
- Director – Shire Services
- Manager Business, Sport and Community Services
- Manager Library Services
- Natural Areas Aboriginal Heritage Officer, Sutherland Shire Council
- 3 x Community representatives that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Representative from La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Representative from Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Representative from Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Representative from Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation
- Events and Performing Arts Team Leader
- Community Services Team Leader
- HR Projects Advisor, People and Culture
- Communications Advisor, Communication and Engagement
- Regional Manager Children Services

# EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AT SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL



**GRAHAM AVERY**  
Natural Areas Aboriginal Heritage Officer

I was born and live on the Land of the Dharug and Dharawal people and draw on my heritage from various language groups from coastal New South Wales including Diringani, Dhurga, Gumbaynggirr, Dhanghutti and Ngiyampaa and Wiradjuri in western inland of NSW.

I am passionate about future generations being able to learn from my family heritage and it has been wonderful for me to learn so much about this history and share.

I have been working at Sutherland Shire Council for 5 years, initially on a Traineeship and since 2020 as the Natural Areas Aboriginal Heritage Officer. This role allows me to continually learn about the Dharawal country, heritage and language in the Sutherland Shire. My role is pivotal in building relationships with Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal community members and groups ensuring that natural areas and archaeological sites are protected from harm on public land.

Collaborating with council staff, executive committee, RAP Working Group, Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the general community is fundamental in revitalising the meaning of words on country, so we can feel the connection and to acknowledge it as part of our language heritage in the Sutherland Shire

Learning, building relationships, collaboration and promotion of cultural heritage are important principles to be embraced by council to protect our values of future generations and continue our journey of reconciliation.

# OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

## Our Place in History, Biddy Giles

Biddy Giles, also known as Biyarung and Granny Giles, was born around 1810 at Broughton Creek in the southern Illawarra. It is documented that Biyarung was the daughter of a man who witnessed Cook's Landing in 1770, though not much else is known of her early life. By the 1850s she was living in Wollongong with her husband Burragalong (Paddy Davis) with whom she had two daughters, Ellen and Rosie.

Biddy was a skilled woman: her excellence in hunting and fishing as well as speaking and translating the Dharawal language was demonstrated throughout her life. After leaving her husband Paddy Davis around 1858 Biddy moved to southern Sydney on the Georges River, where she remarried English husband Billy Giles. Together from the 1860s they operated fishing and hunting tours around the Georges and Hacking Rivers.

Biddy was well known for her exceptional understanding of the waters which were best for catching fish. As one customer put it 'no matter what hour of the day it was, or what was the state of the tide, or what kind was the weather, "Biddy" could, so to speak, put us "on" to the fish.' The same customer also observed that Biddy was a remarkable dog trainer and was 'astonished' at her pack of hunting dogs.



Photograph of Biddy Giles from Dolls Point in the 1880s

On these trips, Biddy would also share with her customers and people from the local area, stories of Dharawal people. One story was told to her by her father who was a small boy at the time of a major storm when several Aboriginal men women and children were trapped in a rock shelter. Biddy told how the shelter roof 'had been struck by lightning, while a large number of Aboriginal people, who had come from all parts of the South Coast – even as far as the Shoalhaven – to take part in a corroboree, were taking shelter under it during a severe storm, and that it had collapsed, burying or killing all those sheltering under it.'



Biddy Giles Park, Kirrawee

Biddy Giles played a significant role in supporting her community and is a major reason why the community is as strong as it is today. Biddy identified as a Dharawal woman and has hundreds of descendants, many of whom still live at La Perouse and Dharawal country.

Prior to the arrival of the 'First Fleet' in 1788, the area that is now known as the Sutherland Shire was populated by clans of the Dharawal language group. Dharawal lands stretched from the southern shore of Kamay Botany Bay and along the Georges River, to as far south as the Shoalhaven River, and west from Menai down to about Moss Vale.

Of the clans within Sutherland Shire, we know most about the Gweagal clan. The Gweagal (literally the people of Gwea) have been described as occupying the "southern shore of Botany Bay", although we now refer to the bay as Kamay Botany Bay in recognition of its original name, Kamay (or Gamay). Families of Gweagal were living at what is now referred to as 'Captain Cook's Landing Place' (at Kurnell) when Lieutenant James Cook and the crew of HMB Endeavour came ashore in 1770. It is this event that is acknowledged in Sutherland Shire every year on April 29th during the Meeting of Two Cultures ceremony.

Following the exploration and naming of Port Hacking by Matthew Flinders and George Bass in 1796, Port Hacking was included on the official maps of the day. It wasn't long before Europeans started to settle around Port Hacking and other parts of the Shire. In 1827 the surveyor Robert Dixon was sent to map the area more fully and to survey land already settled at Kurnell, Weeney Bay and Woronora River.

In 2003 Council published its Reconciliation Statement which:

- Acknowledged that alienation from traditional lands following European settlement had a devastating impact on Aboriginal people and their way of life.
- Recognised the ongoing impacts of colonisation which continue for many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Today, the levels of access for many Aboriginal people in regard to health, education, employment and housing opportunities are well below the national average
- Apologised for the negative impacts that European settlement has had on Aboriginal people and their way of life and
- Committed to build awareness of and celebrate the culture of the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community, support self-determination and reconciliation and work with community to improve opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Sutherland Shire Council continues to build and develop partnerships with local service providers to deliver inclusive events, activities and services to preserve and share culture with our community. We provide support where possible to advance opportunities for local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and promote improvements to outcomes and future reconciliation.

## The Gweagal People

A large part of the daily life of Gweagal families included fishing and collecting shell animals. Fishing was done either from 'tied bark' canoes using specially made fishing spears, or with fishing lines with hooks made from shell. Fishing with line and hook is believed to have been done mostly by the Gweagal women. Evidence for the collection of shell animals is widespread throughout the Shire. Ancient 'shell middens' exist along the shores of Kamay Botany Bay, Georges River and Port Hacking, as well as along the coastline south of Bundeeena. In some places the middens are metres deep and hundreds of metres long. Some have been radiocarbon dated to several thousands of years before present.

The same shell middens can also contain the bones of various types of fish, local marsupials and a range of marine creatures.

In addition to shell midden sites, there are hundreds of rock art sites. These sites feature rock engravings on open, flat areas of rock, and drawings in charcoal, red ochre or white clay (as well as hand stencils) in rock shelters across Sutherland Shire. The engravings and shelter art include depictions of fish, eels, snakes, echidnas, kangaroos and wallabies, presumably because they were valued sources of food. And life-sized engravings of whales and killer whales on Jibbon Headland and near Maianbar in the Royal National Park, and on Burraneer Point, indicate just how important these creatures were to the local Dharawal people.

## Sutherland Shire Council Reconciliation Statement 2003

The original inhabitants of the Sutherland Shire came from the Dharawal and Gandangara peoples. They lived in the area for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans and continue to hold a deep attachment to many places within the Shire. Rock engravings, middens and other sites that provide evidence of Aboriginal occupation and spirituality also exist throughout the Shire, including within National Parks, waterways and on what is now private property.

The Sutherland Shire is unique, in terms of Australian history, as Kurnell was the location of the first recorded contact point between Aboriginal people and English colonisers.

Sutherland Shire Council acknowledges that alienation from traditional lands following European settlement had a devastating impact on Aboriginal people and their way of life. These lands provided food, clothing and shelter and remain spiritually and culturally significant to Aboriginal people today.

Sutherland Shire Council also recognises that the impacts of colonisation continue for many Aboriginal people. Today, the levels of access for many Aboriginal people in regard to health, education, employment and housing opportunities are well below the national average.

As well as adopting the Local Government and Shires Associations' "Statement of Commitment", as a mark of respect to our local Aboriginal Community Sutherland Shire Council is sorry for the negative impacts that European settlement has had on Aboriginal people and their way of life and commits to:

- Celebrating the survival of the original inhabitants and those who have moved into the area since European settlement.
- Requesting that the Aboriginal Elders conduct a "Welcoming Ceremony" at official Council functions.
- Promoting an increased awareness and understanding of our Aboriginal culture to strengthen and enrich our community.
- Encouraging Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to work together, celebrate their different cultures and go forward together.
- Observing the principle that research into Aboriginal heritage should not be carried out without the informed consent and participation of local Aboriginal communities as research partners and/or stakeholders.
- Providing support for (i) the activities of Aboriginal organisations within the Shire that promote self-determination and reconciliation and (ii) the reconciliation movement.
- Continuing to provide forums such as the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, where Council and representatives of the Aboriginal community can work together in identifying needs and developing strategies to meet such needs.
- Pro-actively seeking to develop and support strategies that produce various opportunities and social equity for Aboriginal people.
- Pro-actively encouraging applications for Council's community/arts grants from the Aboriginal community.
- Seeking ongoing funding for the provision of the specialist Aboriginal Supplementary Services, including the employment of a Care Worker to ensure the needs of Aboriginal children in child care within the Shire are met.
- Ensuring the needs of Aboriginal people are represented and continuing to seek representation/participation from the Aboriginal community on a range of Council committees.
- Flying the Aboriginal flag daily outside Council's Administration Centre.

# ABORIGINAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Council established its Aboriginal Advisory Committee in 1998 and has a long history of engagement with the local Aboriginal community through its diverse representation. The purpose of the Committee is to provide a forum for communication between the Aboriginal Community and Council to address and advance Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander issues within the Sutherland Shire, including to enhance community awareness, advance Reconciliation and to strengthen relationships.



## **BRUCE HOWELL**

Member of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Being part of the Sutherland Shire Council Aboriginal Advisory Sub-Committee has been such a positive experience. It has allowed me to work with so many dedicated people within both the local Aboriginal community and within Council—Council staff as well as elected Councillors, all the way up to the Mayor—who have all shown a commitment to serving the interests of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents within Sutherland Shire.

A fundamental achievement has been the official recognition of the Shire as being on Dharawal Country and the routine acknowledgement of the Dharawal speaking people as the Traditional Custodians whenever there are opportunities to do so. And the establishment of the Kurrnulla Aboriginal Corporation at Jannali, with assistance from Council, was a massive step forward. Since then, Council, through its Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and Kurrnulla Aboriginal Corporation have worked on countless initiatives. A shining example has been the Meeting of Two Cultures ceremony held at Kurnell on April 29th each year. An integral part of Meeting of Two Cultures has been to fully and properly include the Gweagal families who witnessed the arrival of Endeavour in 1770, such a significant part of our shared history. Similarly, the annual NAIDOC ceremonies at Gunnamatta Park focus on celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. Initiatives like these have always been a partnership between Kurrnulla Aboriginal Corporation and Sutherland Shire Council.

In fact, ‘partnership’ best describes the manner in which Sutherland Shire Council, its Advisory committee and Kurrnulla Aboriginal Corporation have worked together with and for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the shire. It has been an honour and a privilege to have had the chance to be part of that.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Kurrunulla Aboriginal Corporation are the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Sutherland Shire Local Government Area. Council partners with Kurrunulla to support community projects and activities that will advocate for, support or celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture or lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## BROADER PARTNERSHIPS

Council works with a number of local organisations to support their work and activities with the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community including:

- La Perouse, Gandangara and Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Department of Education
- TAFE NSW
- Clontarf Academy
- Kirinari Aboriginal Hostel
- The Family Co.
- Project Youth

# EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



NAIDOC Week, Gunnamatta Bay, 2018



Meeting of Two Cultures



Exhibition installation, Nganampa Kilipil (Our Stars): Art from Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, Hazelhurst Arts Centre, 2016, photography by Silversalt

- **Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country at community events** - Sutherland Shire Council pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the land by an Acknowledgement of Country during each event or ceremony held. We ensure appropriate protocols are in place so that a Welcome to Country is delivered by Elders who represent this land.
- **Aboriginal Advisory Committee** - Council coordinates quarterly Aboriginal Advisory Committee meetings to promote education and culture and to build and develop relationships with the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.
- **NAIDOC Week Celebrations** - Since 2001 Council has partnered with Kurrnulla Aboriginal Corporation and community to deliver NAIDOC week celebrations at Gunnamatta Park, to educate, raise awareness and celebrate Sutherland Shire's local Aboriginal heritage.
- **Meeting of Two Cultures** - for more than three decades Council has marked the 29 April with a commemoration ceremony to acknowledge the first contact between the Gweagal People and the crew of the Endeavour ship on the sacred shores of Kamay Botany Bay, Kurnell. Council has hosted community events celebrating the 'Whales of the Gweagal' where community elder Aunt Deanna Schreiber shared a story of the 'Whales of the Gweagal'. The whales from this story are depicted in ancient rock engravings located across the bay on Jibbon headland, and Council introduced new interpretive signage to share this story.
- **National Reconciliation Week** - Council commemorates Reconciliation Week in partnership with community through a number of ways such as holding a Yarning Circle in 2019 with Elder Aunt Deanna Schreiber and an online event with Dean Kelly sharing culture at Hungry Point and Darook Park streamed to the public in 2020. Council promotes National Reconciliation Week through its channels such as social media and local community networks.
- **Hazelhurst Arts Centre** - since 2008, Hazelhurst Arts Centre has hosted 13 exhibitions focussing on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists, providing the local community an opportunity to be educated, engage with and celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture. These include the award-winning exhibitions Nganampa Kilipil (Our Stars): Art from Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands and Weapons for Soldier: Protecting Country, Culture and Family, as well as the recent exhibition Wuliwulawala: Dharawal Women Sharing Stories. Often developed in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists and organisations, these exhibitions have featured contemporary artworks that reflect on issues such as identity, the impact of colonisation, connection to Country and resilience.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

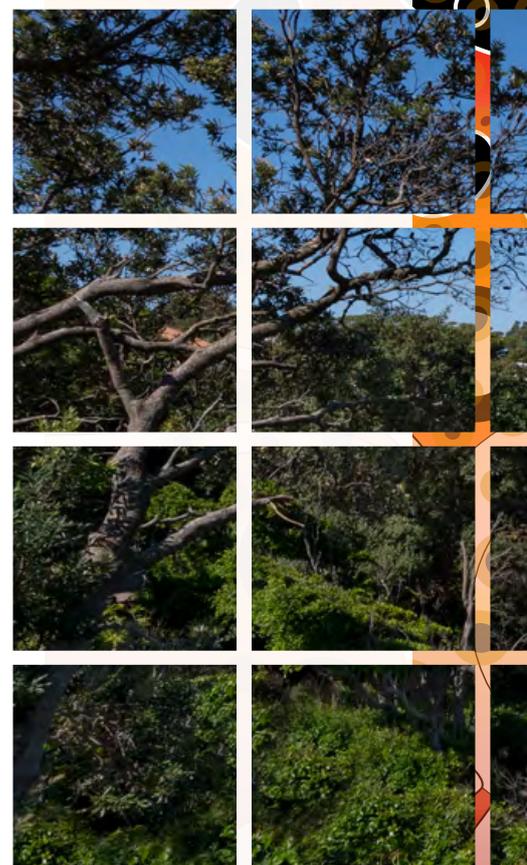
- Council's Community Services team coordinates community events and activities to aimed to promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture and improve livelihoods. Projects include intergenerational storytelling projects, support of the Eora Elders Olympics, NAIDOC Schools Colouring Competition, information resources, healthy eating programs and cultural education programs.
- **Council Grants and funding**  
Council provides funding for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander programs through our annual Community Grants and Subsidies Program and funding for Libraries 2020 Literary Competition.
- **State and Federal Grants and Funding**  
Council works collaboratively with State and Federal Government initiatives & grant opportunities to support increased participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in services provided to the community e.g. Children's Services is part of the NSW Department of Education Aboriginal Children's Early Childhood Education Strategy 2021-2025

# CULTURAL EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- **Early Childhood Education Perspectives** – Council’s Children’s Services unit designed and implemented a training program for its educators to support increased enrolments of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and provide better awareness of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture for its children and families. Children’s Services are registered with the Narragunnawali Program.
- **Cultural Safety Training** – Council partnered with Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation to deliver a pilot training program for local young people and local community organisations.
- **Cultural Awareness Training** – Council partnered with Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation and other local community organisations to deliver cultural awareness training program for local community organisations.
- **Aboriginal Sites Field Training** - Heritage Study authors Mary Dallas Consulting Archaeologists delivered training to all Council planners and land managers about using the Aboriginal Heritage Sensitivity Map and Aboriginal heritage management procedures.
- **Library and Community resources**
  - Sutherland Shire Libraries offer a collection of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander books and resources ranging from non-fiction books to fiction novels by Aboriginal Australian authors.
  - Library Services host family history and Aboriginal Storytime sessions and installed a welcome sign in Dharawal language to promote inclusion and accessibility.
  - In 2020 Library Services launched a cultural educational app to reflect on the first contact with Gweagal people and produced a video as part of the book launch for East Coast Encounters 1770: Reflections on a Cultural Clash, a collection of essays about Cook’s landing.

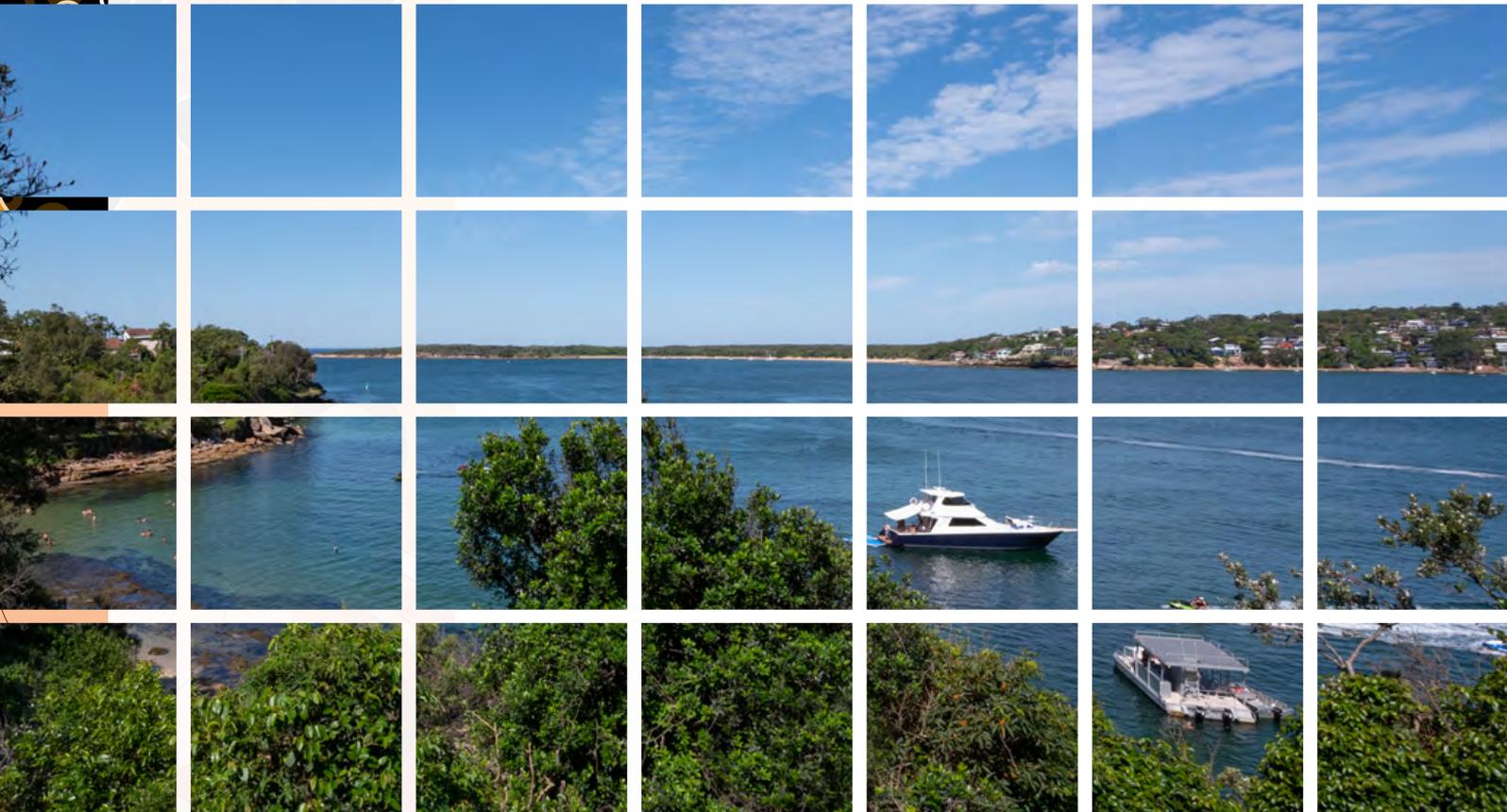
# PROJECTS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

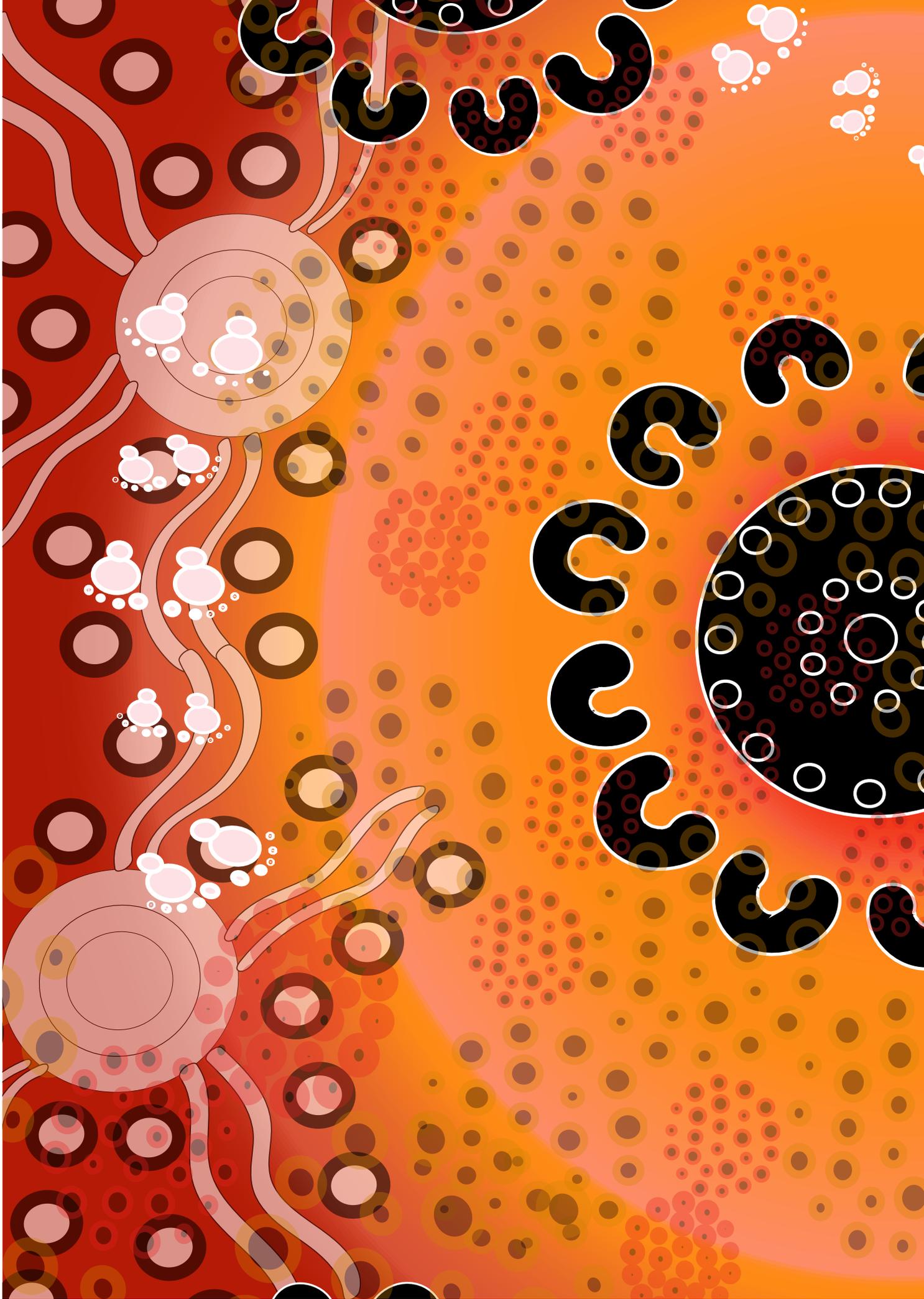
- **Aboriginal Heritage Study** - Council adopted the Aboriginal heritage study and incorporated the Aboriginal Heritage Sensitivity Map into our Geographic Information System (GIS). The Aboriginal heritage study was completed in two parts by Mary Dallas Consulting Archaeologists in consultation with the La Perouse and Gandangara LALCs. The first part covered Port Hacking and Kurnell (2002) and the second the Georges River catchment (2004). The study involved a detailed review of existing site records, previous Aboriginal heritage surveys, historical land use and Aboriginal history, as well as field inspection by land and water of selected Aboriginal sites.
- **Aboriginal Heritage Information Licence Agreement (AHILA)** Council made its first AHILA with the Heritage NSW Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (the 'AHIMS Register'). This allowed Council to hold and use information about registered Aboriginal sites. A further agreement was made in 2017 and most recently as part of the current study in 2021.
- **Gateway signage** - to recognise the significance of the 250th anniversary of first contact, Council installed new signage that acknowledges the unique place that Kurnell occupies in our nation's history while also acknowledging the Dharawal people as the traditional custodians of the land. The new signage adopts the style of gateway signage rolled out elsewhere throughout our community and allows us to reflect the character of Sutherland Shire.
- **Cultural Artworks** - In March 2000 various murals were coordinated by Kurranulla Cultural Planning and Events group at GyMEA High, St Patricks College Sutherland, Miranda Kindergarten.
- **Cultural Artist Engagement** - Engagement to create artwork of Dharawal culture for the Cronulla Lookout Development.
- **Sutherland Entertainment Centre redevelopment** - Approval for redevelopment of Sutherland Entertainment Centre including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation in outdoor public art and foyer installation.
- **Place Naming** - Bidy Giles Park Kirrawee adopted and endorsed by Local Lands Council (currently at the Geographical Names Board for gazetting). New development Greenhills named Marang Parklands.



# EMPLOYMENT

- **Current Employees** - Council currently has sixteen employees who identified as at commencement of employment they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- **Current Aboriginal Identified Position** - Council currently has one permanent position, Natural Areas Aboriginal Heritage Officer, whose role it is to provide expertise, knowledge and opportunities in managing natural areas and Aboriginal heritage in Sutherland Shire.
- **Aboriginal Traineeships** - Council has employed a number of Aboriginal trainees. In 2010 our trainee won the Southern Region Training Awards Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year. In 2016 two trainees completed their two-year traineeship with Civil Operations and were then permanently employed with council. One has since progressed to another Council unit, furthering their career.
- **Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program** - Council has previously been successful in obtaining funding which supports Aboriginal employment in the NSW Public and Local Government sectors.

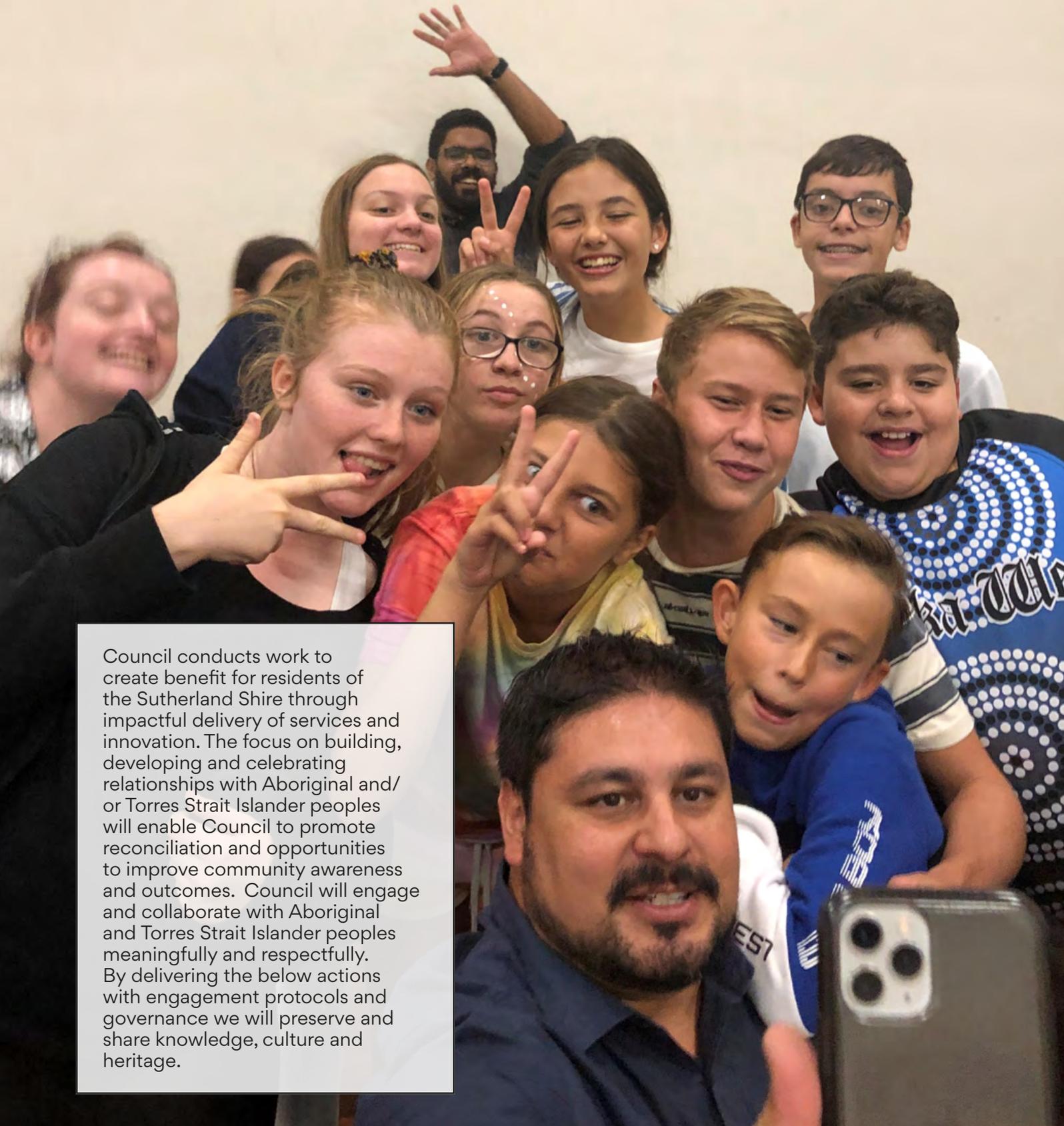






Sutherland Shire Council commits to leading and collaborating with community and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to meet Councils' Strategic Goals and actions over the next 18 months.

# RELATIONSHIPS



Council conducts work to create benefit for residents of the Sutherland Shire through impactful delivery of services and innovation. The focus on building, developing and celebrating relationships with Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples will enable Council to promote reconciliation and opportunities to improve community awareness and outcomes. Council will engage and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples meaningfully and respectfully. By delivering the below actions with engagement protocols and governance we will preserve and share knowledge, culture and heritage.

## FOCUS AREA:

# PARTNERSHIPS – ENGAGEMENT – COLLABORATION

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022	Manager Arts and Culture  Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update the Policy and Procedure relating to requests for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples involvement in Council arranged events or community partnership projects.</li> </ul>	Jun 2022	Manager Arts and Culture  Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a community listening forum for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community to better understand needs, issues and assets and identify and strengthen relationships</li> </ul>	Sep 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Communication and Engagement

## Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	Apr 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Communication and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.</li> </ul>	27 May 3 Jun, 2022	RAP Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support employees and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> </ul>	27 May 3 Jun, 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Arts and Culture
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all employees through appropriate internal channels.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022	Manager Communication and Engagement  Manager People and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed reconciliation in educational programs provided by Children's Services.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager Children's Services

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase acknowledgment of reconciliation and Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander culture in our social media presence.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager Communication and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore Council's support of the Uluru Statement of the Heart.</li> </ul>	Apr 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
Promote harmonious relations through diversity equity and inclusion strategies to remove bias and anti- discrimination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.</li> <li>Update Anti-Discrimination Determinations and Guidelines to reflect contemporary practices.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023  Apr 2023	Manager People and Culture
Promote reconciliation through Community Engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver initiatives across all units of Council which educate and influence the community to support reconciliation.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager People and Culture
Build positive relationships through welcoming environments that promote a sense of cultural safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider opportunities to incorporate design features into Council facilities that acknowledge Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and/or connection to land.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager Asset Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and promote significant events to the broader community</li> <li>Review and refresh online channels such as Council website, apps or social media to ensure it is culturally appropriate and educational for the broader community</li> </ul>	Apr 2023  Apr 2023	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Communication and Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore membership of Welcoming Cities as part of our commitment to create welcoming environments <a href="http://welcomingcities.org.au">welcomingcities.org.au</a></li> </ul>	Apr 2023	

# RESPECT



Sutherland Shire Council's business and projects are diverse and widespread, extending across our waters and lands to preserve significant sites, landscapes and natural resources. We respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, peoples and knowledge systems and seek to acknowledge, collaborate and integrate this into our work. We work ethically and respect the rights and the needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to be included and benefit from Council's projects, services and innovation. We celebrate the success of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and the sharing of their customs, cultures, knowledge and languages to improve Sutherland Shire Council's work for the benefit of the local community.

## FOCUS AREA:

# CULTURAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Respect			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within Council.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager People and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within Council.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current diversity and inclusion training program and ensure inclusion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct cultural awareness and safety training for community organisations.</li> </ul>	Oct 2022	Manager People and Culture  Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
Identify and preserve Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage through development of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Plan</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager Assets Services

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Arts and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022  Review Dec 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee where knowledge, history or cultural guidance is required.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Arts and Culture

## Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness and share information amongst our employees about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.</li> </ul>	Jun 2022 annually	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Arts and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce our employees to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.</li> </ul>	Jun 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services  Manager Arts and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</li> </ul>	First week in Jul, 2022 annually	RAP Working Group

# OPPORTUNITIES



Sutherland Shire Council commits to building and developing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-led and driven projects to address community priorities. Council will promote and celebrate social, economic, technical and cultural knowledge to progress reconciliation and improve outcomes for everyone in the Sutherland Shire. We are committed to increasing recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in our workforce. We will learn from and develop business practices that build strong links for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in business, innovation and educational opportunities. Additionally, through the delivery of programs that increase access to education and employment for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we will build capacity and increase opportunities for future generations.

## FOCUS AREA:

# EMPLOYMENT – PROCUREMENT – EDUCATION – RESEARCH

Opportunities			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Expand employment opportunities for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People within Sutherland Shire Council through recruitment, retention and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the inclusion of dedicated Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander positions within and across Council in Trainee/Undergraduate Programs across Council.</li> </ul>	Dec 2023	Manager People and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategies, initiatives and activities to increase opportunities including employment, career progression, and development through development and implementation of Graduate and Trainee Program.</li> </ul>	Dec 2023	Manager People and Culture
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager Corporate Governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate 'Supply Nation' membership.</li> </ul>	Apr 2022	Manager Corporate Governance
Improve opportunities for young people through an intergenerational sharing and learning project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a partnership project with Kurrunulla Aboriginal Corporation to improve opportunities for young people to connect to and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and contributions'</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share intergenerational assets including, resources, stories, projects etc. with the broader Sutherland Shire community and schools in the area to promote education.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	
Provide opportunities for capacity building for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support opportunities for training and upskilling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sector staff (e.g. NRW Conference, grants training, sector development training, etc).</li> </ul>	Feb 2022 ongoing	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to identify their needs.</li> </ul>	Dec 2022	Manager People and Culture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate delivering youth leadership training for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people.</li> </ul>	Dec 2022	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>	Apr 2023	

# GOVERNANCE

Our RAP has structured, transparent and supportive governance, that incorporates an accountability for the commitment made to the actions and deliverables over the next 18 months.

## Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG will meet quarterly and as required to govern RAP implementation</li> </ul>	Apr, July, Sept 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.</li> <li>Review and apply a Terms of Reference to the RWG.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022 Apr 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.</li> </ul>	Feb 2022 Feb 2023	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify resource needed for RAP implementation</li> </ul>	Mar 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	Apr 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	Mar 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate actions into Council's annual Operational Plan for tracking and reporting</li> </ul>	Mar 2022	Manager, Corporate Strategy
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with Reconciliation Australia on Council's RAP reporting requirements</li> </ul>	Jul 2022	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	Sep 2022	
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Jan 2023	Manager Business, Sport & Community Services



Artwork Title:  
Supporting our Community by artist Amy Hill-Trindall.

# ARTIST STATEMENT

## **About the Artwork**

This digital artwork is a representation of Sutherland Shire and sacred sites and initiation ceremonies. The Community Circle in the centre represents Sutherland Shire Council working together with elders, Aunties and Uncles to protect our environment and land.

The white feet represent the spirits of the traditional owners of the land the Gweagal People.

## **About the Artist**

Amy Hill-Trindall is a Kamilaroi woman who grew up along the Georges and Woronora Rivers. Her artistic practice has been shaped by her experiences of working with elders and learning about Aboriginal art, in particular with her aunt. Amy's bright and dynamic paintings and digital drawings demonstrate her love of colour, which she uses to bring emotion and meaning to the stories she is sharing. She is inspired to teach her children and others about Aboriginal art and culture and hope that her works foster understanding and bring joy to those who experience them.



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