

Connecting with Country

Project Engagement Strategy

Southern Suburbs Cluster, New Liverpool Primary School
Lot 1 DP1137425
January 2022

1. Introduction

The NSW Government has invested more than \$7 billion to deliver 119 new and upgraded schools since 2017. Additional funds in the 2021-22 NSW Budget include \$7.9 billion worth of investment over the next four years, making this a \$15 billion.

School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW) aims to deliver school infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population, and support modern, flexible teaching and learning. SINSW are delivering more than 200 new and upgraded schools while maintaining a portfolio of 2,200+ schools around the state and ensuring they're safe and fit-for-purpose spaces.

New Liverpool Primary School (NLPS) is one of two individual school projects to be delivered in the Liverpool CBD area as part of SINSW's Southern Suburbs Schools Cluster (SSC). SSC is comprised of NLPS and Liverpool West Public School which is being delivered under separate planning approvals.

This engagement report has been prepared to outline the proposed Connecting with Country engagement approach for NLPS and seek agreement on the next steps. The delivery of this engagement will provide inputs for the New Liverpool Primary School. This will assist the project team in addressing the Government Architect NSW and Department of Planning Infrastructure Environment submissions in response to the NLPS State Significant Development Application.

2. Background

2.1. Connecting to Country Draft Framework

The Connecting with Country Draft Framework is a framework for developing connections with Country that can inform the planning, design, and delivery of built environment projects in NSW.

The objective of Connecting with Country is that everyone who is involved in delivering government projects will adopt the following commitment:

Through our projects, we commit to helping support the health and wellbeing of Country by valuing, respecting, and being guided by Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country – it will care for us.

The framework is informed by, and supports, a wider range of policies and objectives as show in the image below.



Source: *Connecting to Country*, NSW Government Architect (2020).

SINSW is committed to delivering on the framework through our school development projects. This reflects our Aboriginal Education Policy which includes a commitment to ensure that:

The strength, diversity, ownership and richness of Aboriginal cultures and Custodianship of Country are respected, valued and promoted.

This process is in addition to statutory requirements to assess development sites for evidence of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

2.2. Liverpool City Council

The project site is located within Liverpool City Council (LCC) LGA.

LCC acknowledges the original inhabitants of the Liverpool LGA being the Darug and Dharawal Aboriginal People. Aboriginal culture continues to strengthen and enrich the community and supports and encourages Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people working together towards reconciliation.

LCC commits to preserve past, present and future identified Aboriginal sites and cultural landscapes, and to recognise and accept the significance of the Georges River as a 'Meeting Place' for the Darug, and Dharawal Aboriginal people.

Liverpool is one of the first official settlements in Australia, built by convicts and free settlers, and has become home to people from more than 150 nations. LCC recognises the diversity of many cultures who share the values of tolerance and respect for one another. This diversity of this community is a great strength and LCC commit to working together to advance the interests of all residents.

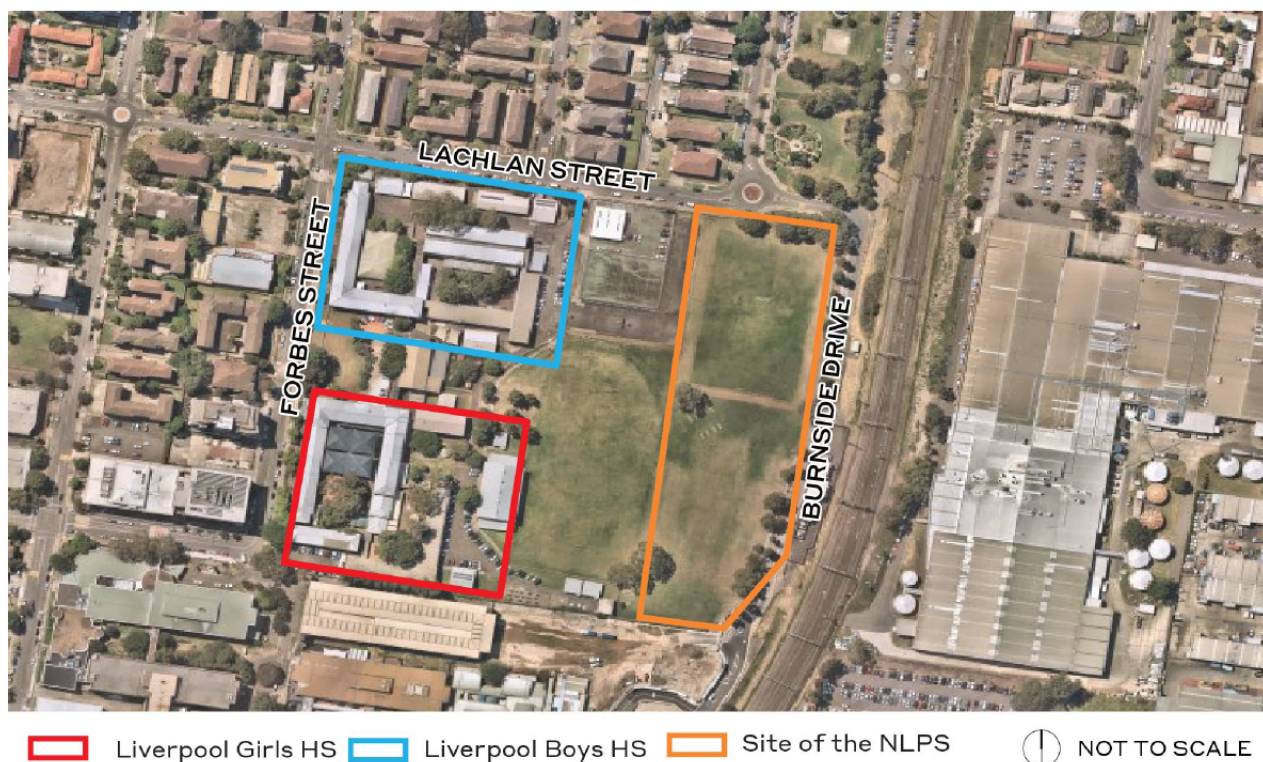
The NLPS Project Team is committed to engaging with LCC to embed the principles relating to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage within the design in planning and decision making.

2.3. Project Description

The proposed New Liverpool Primary School is located on the north-east portion of the Liverpool Boys and Liverpool Girls High Schools land. The site sits within the Cumberland plain and within an area with significant Darug History.

The new school will support high-quality educational outcomes to meet the needs of students within the local community and deliver innovative learning and teaching spaces as follows:

- Construction of a new 2-3 storey primary school building, including 44 mainstream teaching spaces, 4 support units, 4 special programs units, 2 preschool units (cold shell) and core facilities to Core 35 standard.
- Operation for 1,280 including 1,200 students, 40 support unit students and 40 preschool students.
- Associated site landscaping and open space improvements.
- Other works on the NLPS not delivered under the SSDA planning pathway include infrastructure services upgrade works, playing field and carpark works, and road works on the adjacent Burnside Drive including a kiss and drop and a new roundabout.



Due to the value of the project, it is categorised as State Significant Development and will be assessed and determined by the NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment. A key requirement of all SSD projects is that they demonstrate meaningful attempts to interpret the Aboriginal cultural heritage significance of the place into the development.

3. Proposed Engagement Approach

3.1. Objectives of Engagement

- To deliver on our commitment to Connect with Country.
- To engage meaningfully with local elders and our Aboriginal community leaders.
- To explore opportunities to reflect Country in our School Infrastructure projects.
- To contribute to the process of healing through a commitment to reconciliation.

3.2. Key Stakeholders

The key stakeholders are considered to include the following:

- Aboriginal Education Consultative Group – Liverpool Region (AECG)
- Registered Aboriginal Parties (from ACHAR)
 - Goodradigbee Cultural Heritage
 - Kamilaroi Yankuntjatjara Working Group
 - Didge Ngunawal Clan
 - A1 Indigenous Services
 - Dharug Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation
 - Darug Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments
 - Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation
 - Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council.
 - Liverpool City Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee
 - Cubbitch Barta
 - Waawaar Awaa
- SINSW Project Team - SINSW (Delivery, Communications and Planning)

3.3. Proposed Method

The design has been considered to date in a manner that is sensitive to the cultural heritage of the site, with a fundamental building design and colour palette predominantly focused on alignment with the natural landscape. Similarly, the landscape has been designed with Indigenous species and in a manner that is considerate of the natural environment. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultant, Comber, completed significant consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) during the early phases of the project, as detailed in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report, to both ascertain the significance and sensitivity of the site, develop mutual awareness, and ensure that appropriate archaeological investigation and salvage processes were implemented through the course of the works. Comber's consultation processes are detailed in the ACHAR.

A specialised Connecting with Country / Aboriginal Community Consultation consultant will be engaged during the detailed consultation and design phases, to assist in ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive process is conducted. The selected Consultant will be an Aboriginal Business (a registered Supply Nation supplier).

Within the design, significant consideration has been given to ensuring that specific opportunities are available to provide tangible Aboriginal elements throughout the building and landscaping works. The intention is that each of the proposed opportunities will be the subject of rigorous consultation and meaningful interaction between the Aboriginal stakeholders, the constructors and the school community.

The proposed engagement process is provided below and will run concurrently with the delivery and commissioning phase.

- ***Initial Workshop (target date: mid-February 2022)***

This activity will be to describe the process, agree on the approach to the engagement and how future engagement will occur.

- ***Mini Connecting to Country Workshop (target date: early March 2022)***

This workshop will be co-designed with key stakeholders with a view to describing the stories and themes that are of significance to the place. This should include a Walking with Country activity.

- ***Follow-up Workshop (target date: late March 2022)***

The project team will use this material from the workshop and outline the opportunities for reflecting these stories and themes in the project. The items will be costed and prioritised and presented back to the group for endorsement.

The preferred item/items would then be incorporated into the final design of the upgrades or identified as projects that the School will deliver in the short, medium and long term with the stakeholder group.

Engagement Administration

- Regular meetings will be held as required in between key engagement sessions to refine ideas and clarify options.

The method of delivery of the specific Aboriginal elements within the buildings (for example, artworks) will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders and wherever possible produced by appropriate members of the Aboriginal community.

3.4. Emerging themes and suggested initiatives

Emerging themes and suggested initiatives will be tracked in the following table:

Emerging themes and suggested Initiatives	Description
River, Ocean, People	Stories, symbols and the like.
Naming of Buildings	Representatives to nominate proposed names for particular buildings or classrooms.
Signage & Language	Wayfinding signage in local language, informed by the local Aboriginal groups and the narrative for the site. Building signage and wayfinding signage locations to be agreed. Planting signage.
External Meeting / Waiting Areas	Welcoming space appropriate for all visitors, with appropriately located Aboriginal elements visible through key circulation routes.
Aboriginal Murals incorporated into Building Fabric	A number of locations are proposed throughout the building as potential locations for Aboriginal artworks produced by respected artists within the Aboriginal community. The exact locations will be finalised during future consultation but may include: - Artwork to face/s of lift core (this being a prominent, highly visible location within the school); - Artwork to face/s of stair 2 (this again being a prominent, highly visible location within the school); - Incorporation of significant murals onto the library bulkheads; - Incorporation of aboriginal patterning into softfall within the landscape.
Surface Patterns/colour palette	The colour and material palette has been developed in a manner sensitive to the indigenous context and native landscape. This will be finetuned during further consultation to ensure a combination of colours and materials to add interest and connection to the local Aboriginal narrative.
Animal Totems / Imagery	Information on particular totems to be obtained and incorporated into the school imagery and wayfinding.
Welcome Sign	Local language greeting/s to be shown at entrance.
Yarning Circle	Yarning circle design and location to be developed in consultation with the stakeholders in a prominent location within the landscape. Consultation will also be completed to arrange initial events upon completion of the yarning circle (for example, a smoking ceremony and education session).

Flora & Fauna - Landscaping & Gardens - Caring for Country	Resilient practices for preservation of the landscape, Connection to yarnning circle. Wellness theme. Opportunities for education groups. A plaque with a description of the planting.
Flag Poles	Flag poles to be provided, including an Aboriginal flag, with uplighting. Allowance for a group to gather.
Event Activities	- Smoking Ceremonies at key project milestones. - Sod Turning. - Community Information Day - Flag Raising - Naidoc Week (various ceremonial and educational events throughout the week to be organised by the construction contractor with input from the Aboriginal community). - Reconciliation Day events.

Table to be updated in workshops.