




## **Connecting with Country Report, North Sydney Public School.**

Site	North Sydney Public School
Project ID	SSD-11869481
Proponent	Schools Infrastructure NSW, Department of Education NSW.
Client Contact	Alfred Jury. School Infrastructure NSW.
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## Acronyms and Definitions

Acronym	Definition
<b>AIHMS</b>	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System
<b>CWC</b>	Connecting with Country
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>NSPS</b>	North Sydney Public School
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales

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Approver	Dr Paul Harvey	
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## **Executive Summary**

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Tocomwall Pty Ltd has been engaged to develop a Connecting with Country (CWC) strategy for the proposed upgrade of North Sydney Public School on behalf of Schools Infrastructure NSW, part of the Department of Education NSW. This report outlines the CwC process and the current outcomes.

Tocomwall Pty Ltd has undertaken preliminary cultural investigations for the project and prepared a consultation letter for distribution to registered stakeholders. The consultation letter is awaiting approval. Once approved, consultation will take 14 days. Following consultation Tocomwall Pty Ltd will finalise design inputs and prepare the final CWC strategy report.

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Not Used

# 1 Background

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## 1.1 Background to Proposal

Tocomwall Pty Ltd was engaged on 23 July 2021 by Schools Infrastructure NSW, part of the Department of Education NSW [The Proponent] to undertake a Connection with Country (CWC) assessment and report for North Sydney Public School, 182 Pacific Highway North Sydney NSW 2060 (henceforth 'the study area'). Tocomwall Pty Ltd has been appointed on behalf of Turner and Townsend Ltd.

Tocomwall Pty Ltd is an Aboriginal owned cultural heritage consultancy firm that provides strategic planning, cultural heritage, ecological and archaeological services across Australia. Our philosophy and practice is aimed at fostering an understanding amongst the broader community, the underlying basis of this being that strong relationships lead to ethical outcomes for Aboriginal stakeholders and clients whilst satisfying regulatory requirements. We believe that we share a responsibility with government, business, and the Aboriginal community to conserve and manage the natural, cultural and archaeological heritage of Australia.

At Tocomwall Pty Ltd, we assist our clients achieve **Aboriginal cultural heritage management outcomes** that are:

- In compliance with State and Federal Requirements;
- In line with the principles of the Burra Charter;
- Both practical and cost-effective to adopt and implement;
- In accord with the ethics and the pragmatics of the principles of ecologically sustainable development;
- Culturally appropriate and sensitive to Aboriginal community needs and aspirations; and
- Address the rights and responsibilities encompassed within the term "intergenerational equity".

Delivery of this project will be underpinned by our team's extensive knowledge of cultural heritage and landscapes across Australia. We will ensure expert individuals in the areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage, project planning and management are part of the project team and that a tailored approach is adopted to suit the needs of the client.

## 2 Project Scope

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Tocomwall Pty Ltd has been engaged to develop a CWC strategy for the proposed upgrade of North Sydney Public School on behalf of Schools Infrastructure NSW, part of the Department of Education NSW. The CWC strategy is an opportunity for Aboriginal culture to be included in the built form of the upgrade work to the school. The primary purpose of the CWC strategy is to:

1. *Consider cultural connection to the landscape of the site where the development is to take place.*
2. *Document the cultural heritage of place through time.*
3. *Recommend approaches for the architect and designers to incorporate Aboriginal cultural meaning and connectedness to place in the design and build of the upgrade work to the school*

Tocomwall will collate, assess and report on the cultural connections in a final project report that will inform the State Significant Development Application process for NSPS.



### 3 Methodology

Tocomwall Pty Ltd was appointed to undertake a CWC assessment and report for the study area. Tocomwall's approach includes a seven-stage process that includes data collection, consultation, assessment and reporting (Figure 1). Tocomwall's approach focusses on inclusive equitable stakeholder engagement that strives to provide a sense of ownership of place.

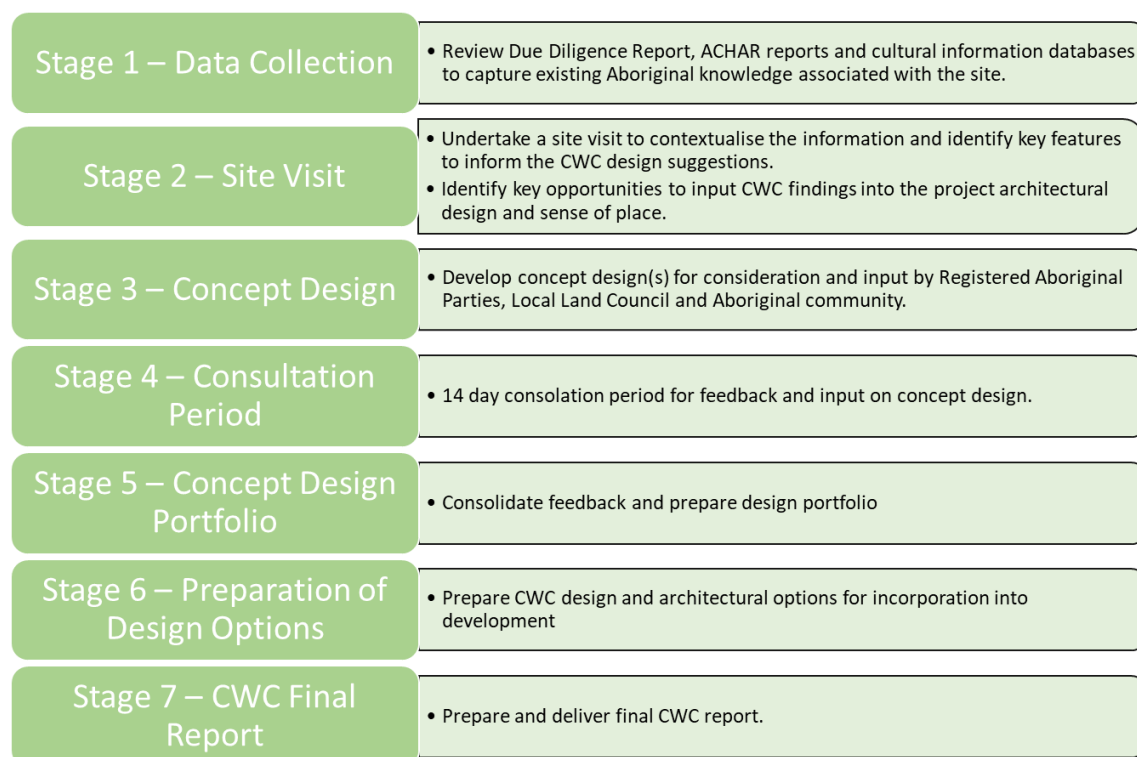


Figure 1 Tocomwall's CWC assessment and reporting process.

#### 3.1.1 Data Collection Desktop Assessment

The desktop assessment considers both published and unpublished sources such as:

- Previous Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment reports;
- Primary and secondary historical sources such as diaries, maps or photos in the first instance and published historical accounts in the latter instance. This includes a review of historical aerial photography;
- Published geological and soil mapping and associated reports to identify the relevant landscape conditions; and
- Any study area specific ancillary data such as geotechnical or land-use history studies commissioned which are usually provided by the client.

#### 3.1.2 Site Visit Fieldwork

Site visits are necessary to contextualise the information that has been collected in Stage 1 of the CWC assessment process. A Tocomwall archaeologist and anthropologist conduct 'walk

over' visual assessments noting specific features and contexts that will inform the CWC concept design portfolio and final design options.

### **3.1.3 Concept Design**

Tocomwall archaeologists and anthropologists develop built form, cultural and artistic design concepts that will best incorporate the Aboriginal cultural significance of the study area, as identified in Stage 1 and 2.

### **3.1.4 Consultation**

A 14-day consultation and review period is used to gather input and feedback on the built form, cultural and artistic design concepts developed in Stage 3. Registered Aboriginal Parties, Land Councils and Aboriginal Community Members will be invited to provide comment on the overall design(s), offer suggestions for additional considerations to incorporate in the design(s), and provide examples of motifs, artefacts or artworks for inclusion in the design(s).

Stakeholder specific to NSPS include are included in Appendix

### **3.1.5 Concept Design Portfolio**

A concept design portfolio will be used to inform discussions in a meeting with the Client to discuss the design concept(s) and the input from the consultation stage.

### **3.1.6 Preparation of Final Design Options**

Tocomwall develops a short list of final design options. These design options will be incorporated into the final project report.

### **3.1.7 Final Project Report**

A final project report that details the findings of the CWC assessment and presents final design(s) for incorporating CWC design principles into the development.

## **3.2 Timing**

Tocomwall is currently on hold at Stage 4 - Consultation (Figure 1) awaiting approval of the community consultation engagement letter (dated 10 August 2021) sent for review to Turner and Townsend on 12 August 2021 (Appendix 2). Tocomwall's current anticipated project timeline is provided in Figure 2.

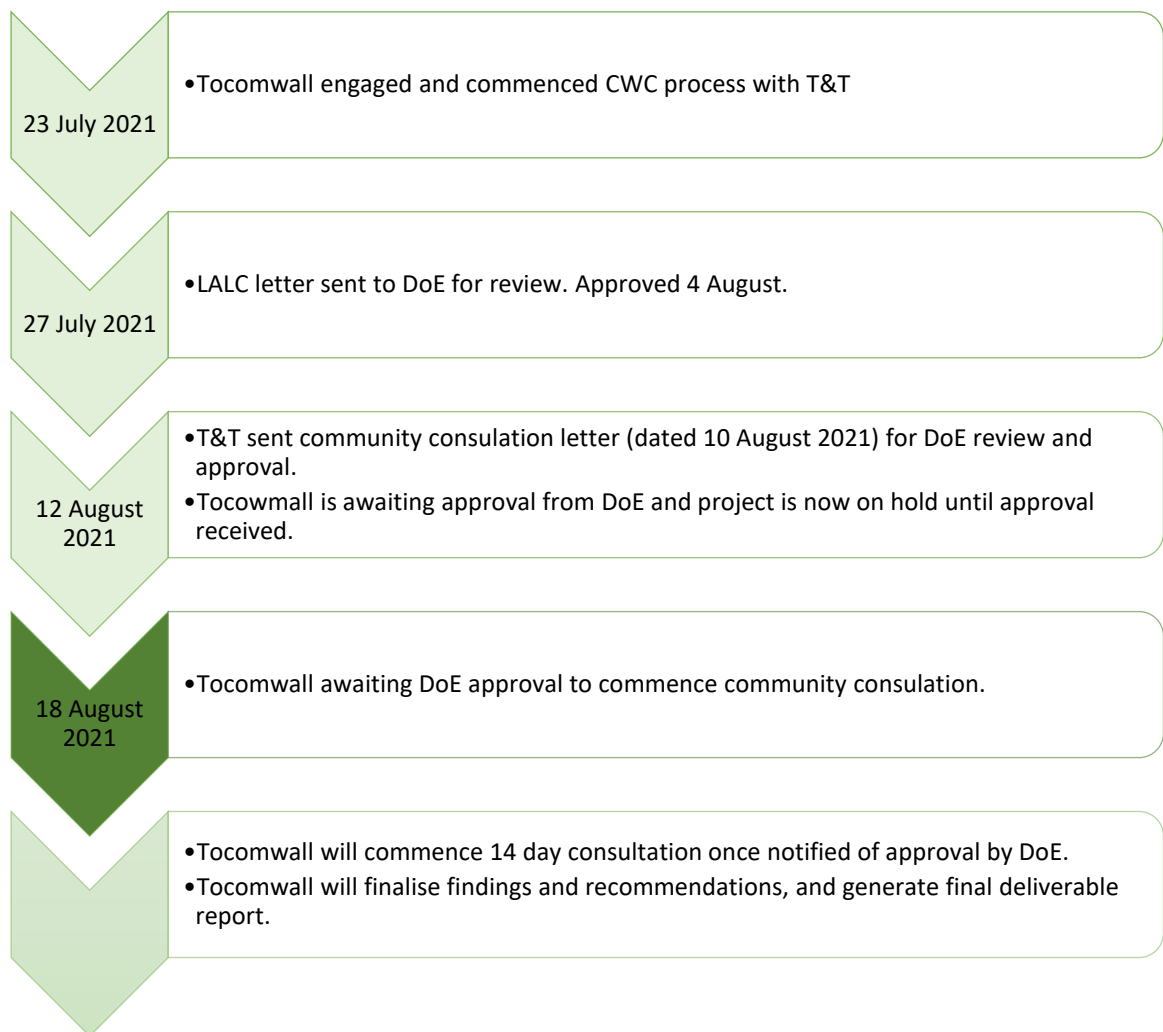


Figure 2: Indicative schedule to complete the CWC Report.

## 4 Outcomes to date

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In accordance with the proposed methodology, Tocomwall has completed stages 1 and 3 of the CWC assessment. Stage 2 has been postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### Stage 1

This stage incorporates the initial data collection and desktop assessment of the proposed site. \

### Stage 2

This stage requires a site visit to North Sydney Primary School. This has been postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### Stage 3

This stage involves the development of a Yarning circle concept design. Tocomwall's Yarning Circle design is centred around meeting places still used within cultural landscapes today. The design elements aim to create a culturally immersive, inclusive, and respectful setting that allows for Aboriginal culture to be transmitted from one generation to another through contemporary story and truth telling practices. Components of this design include:

- Boomerang shaped seating made from Mulga or another culturally significant hard wood.
- Inclusion of native plants in immediate landscape design

Landscape Architects, Taylor Brammer have provided a proposed landscape location for a yarning circle (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Taylor Brammer Concept Masterplan with proposed Yarning Circle Location (number 6).

## 5 Next Steps

Tocomwall is awaiting approval from DoE to commence community consultation and Stage 4.

This stage involves a 14-day consultation period which will be used to gather feedback from the local Aboriginal community on the cultural significance of the land of the proposed site, and how this significance can be included in the built form of the development and proposed designs.

Tocomwall has confirmed the list of Registered Aboriginal Parties to receive the community consultation notification letter in preparation for stage 4. The community consultation notification letter has been drafted and is pending approval. Once approved, this letter will be distributed to the Registered Aboriginal Parties for review.

Once feedback has been received from the consultation process, Tocomwall can proceed with the consolidation of findings and preparation the final report.

The next steps in the CWC process are summarised in Figure 4.

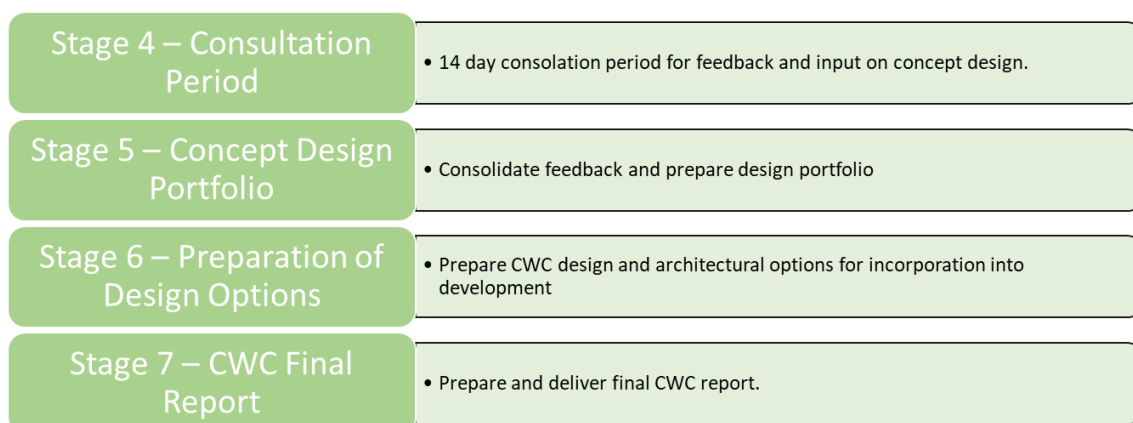


Figure 4 CWC strategy next steps.

## 6 Appendix

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## **Appendix 1**



NSPS Community Consultation List	18/08/2021
Company	First Name
A1 Indigenous Services	Carolyn
Aboriginal Education Consultative Group - Met East Inner City local committee	Deb
Amanda Hickey Cultural Services	Amanda
Anthony Williams	Anthony
Aragung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Site Assessments	Jamie
B.H. Heritage Consultants	Ralph
B.H. Heritage Consultants	Nola
Badu	Karia
Barraby Cultural Services	Lee
Biamanga	Seli
Bidjawong Aboriginal Corporation	James
Bilinga	Simalene
Butucarbin Aboriginal Corporation	Jennifer
Corroboree Aboriginal Corporation	Marilyn
Cullendulla	Corey
Darug Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments	Gordon
Darug Aboriginal Land Care	Mark
Darug Boorooberongal Elders Aboriginal Corporation	Paul
Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation	Justine
Darug Land Observations	Jamie
Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation	
Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council	Kevin
Dharug	Andrew
Dhinawan Culture & Heritage Pty Ltd	Stephen
Didge Ngunawal Clan	Lilly
DJMD Consultancy	Darren
Freeman & Marx Pty Ltd	Clive
Galamaay Cultural Consultants	Robert
Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council	Melissa
Ginninderra Aboriginal Corporation	Steven
Goobah Developments	Basil
Goodradigbee Cultural & Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Caine
Gulaga	Wendy
Gunjeewong Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	Cherie
Gunyuu	Kylie
Holroyd City Council Advisory Committee	
HSB Consultants	Patricia
Jerringong	Joanne
Kamilaroi Yankuntjatjara Working Group	Phil
Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council	
Minnamunnung	Aaron
Munyunga	Kaya
Mura Indigenous Corporation	Phillip
Muragadi Heritage Indigenous Corporation	Jesse
Murra Bidgee Mullangari Aboriginal Corporation	Darleen
Murramarang	Roxanne
Murrumbul	Mark
Ngambaa Cultural Connections	Kaarina

North Sydney Council	
North Sydney Primary School Aboriginal Liaison Office	
North Sydney Primary School P+C Representative	
North Sydney Primary School Principle	
Nundagurri	Newton
Parramatta City Council Aboriginal Advisory Committee	
Pemulwuy CHTS	Pemulwuy
Rane Consulting	Tony
Schools Infrastructure Aboriginal Education Team member	Karen
Thauaira	Shane
Thoorga Nura	John
Waawaar Awaa Aboriginal Corporation	Rodney
Wailwan Aboriginal Group	Philip
Walbunja	Hika
Walgalu	Ronald
Warragil Cultural Services	Aaron
Widescope Indigenous Group	Steven
Wingikara	Hayley
Wori Woilywa	Daniel
Wullung	Lee-Roy
Wurrumay Pty Ltd	Kerrie
Yerramurra	Robert
Yulay Cultural Services	Arika
Yurrandaali Cultural Services	Bo



## **Appendix 2**



**Tocomwall Pty Ltd**

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Tel: 02 9542 7714 Fax: 02 9524 4146

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ABN: 13 137 694 618

10 August 2021

Dear North Sydney Primary School Aboriginal Community,

I am contacting you as a registered group for consultation for North Sydney Primary School.

Tocomwall Pty Ltd has been engaged to develop a Connecting with Country (CwC) strategy for the proposed upgrade of North Sydney Primary School on behalf of Schools Infrastructure NSW, part of the Department of Education NSW, and in accordance with the project brief.

**Project Brief**

*Connecting with Country (CWC) proposals are an opportunity for Aboriginal culture to be included in the built form of new developments. Tocomwall Pty Ltd is to work with designers, architects and constructors to:*

- 1. Consider cultural connection to the landscape of the site where the development is to take place.*
- 2. Document the cultural heritage of place through time.*
- 3. Recommend tangible approaches for architect and designers to incorporate Aboriginal cultural meaning and connectedness to place in the design, built form and visual amenity of new constructions.*

Tocomwall Pty Ltd invites you to:

1. Share what do you feel is culturally significant to the site of the proposed project.
2. Describe what you would like to see in the built format and design of the project. This may involve specific shapes, symbols, colours, plants, etc.
3. Consider the inclusion of a Yarning Circle. Do you feel this space is important for this project, and what can we include to make this design more meaningful for local Aboriginal communities?

Could you please provide any comments that you may have within 14 days of the date of this letter via my email (preferred) at [info@tocomwall.com.au](mailto:info@tocomwall.com.au) or on mail at the above listed address. Alternatively, please contact me to arrange a virtual meeting or phone call.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

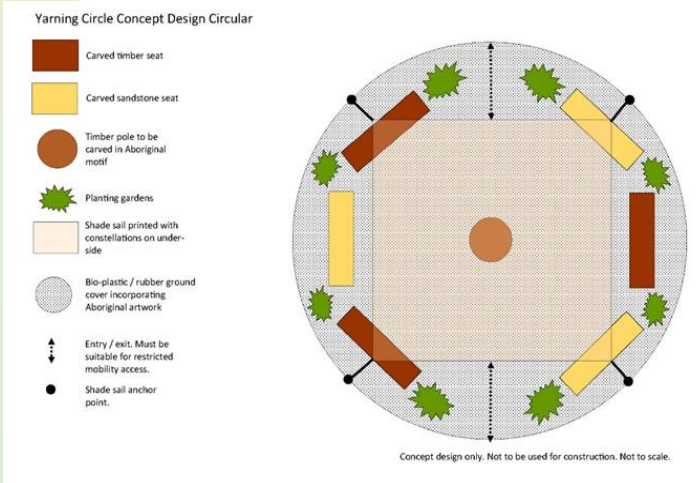
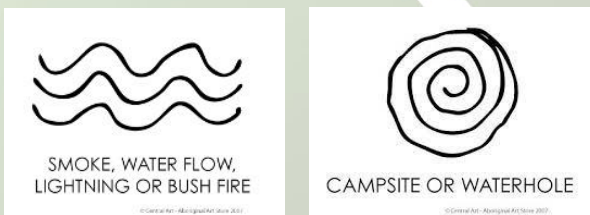

Regards

Cassandra Chivers  
CWC Anthropologist

## Connecting with Country Concept Designs

Below (Table 1) provides a list of examples of materials, textures and motifs that may be suitable for use in the design of North Sydney Primary School (note: these are examples only and not specific to the project site).

Table 1 – Concept design examples for keeping place CWC proposals.

Feature	Significance	Design example
Meeting place	Shared spaces used for gatherings.	<p>- Inclusion of a Yarning Circle.</p> 
Permanent waterways	Opportunity to gather water, food, and other resources sustainably.	<p>- Inclusion of water feature.          - Use of water-related symbols.</p> 
Stone artefacts	Stones used to create tools and weapons.	<p>- Inclusion of artefacts as an education tool.          - Use of stone materials/textures/colours in design.</p> 
Woodland	Woodlands have many uses to Aboriginal community.	<p>- Planting of native trees/plants – link to NAIDOC Week 2021, Heal Country.          - Leaf motif used in designs.</p> 