

Hunter Indoor Sports Centre

Connecting with Country

EJE Architecture

27 May 2024



 artefact

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Artefact acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters of Australia.

We acknowledge the Gadigal and Wangal of Pirrama (Pyrmont) where our Sydney office is located and the Awabakal, Worimi and Wonnarua of the Hunter Region where our Mulubinba (Newcastle) office is located.

Artefact acknowledges the Awabakal people, the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters where this project was undertaken. We thank them for sustaining and caring for Country for millennia.

Front cover: Eagle Shelter in Kau-Ma park, Fletcher (Artscape). The wedge-tailed eagle has special significance for the Awabakal people.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Artefact have prepared this Connecting with Country Framework report for the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre project. This framework, and the information and cultural knowledge gathered in the preparation of the framework, are to be used for the above project only.

This project aims to facilitate a meaningful, considered, and functional framework for understanding the relationships between Country, community and individuals and integrating this understanding into design principles for the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre site.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Artefact Heritage and Environment (Artefact) has been commissioned by Basketball Association of Newcastle Limited (BANL) to prepare a Connecting with Country Framework in accordance with the technical requirements of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs), and in support of the State Significant Development Application (SSD- 65595459) for the proposed Hunter Indoor Sport Centre with courts, indoor stadium, amenities and associated civil and landscaping works, at 2 Monash Road and 24 Wallarah Road, New Lambton.

1.2 Scope of works

This Connecting with Country Framework has been developed by Artefact in consultation with the Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) and key Aboriginal stakeholders from the area. Informed by the cultural connections to Country shared by these stakeholders, this report will provide a vision and design principles to embed Country into the development of the site, identify Country narratives and interpretive themes for the development, and provide a best practice framework for designing with Country.

1.1 Guiding Documents

The following guiding documents have been consulted during the preparation of this Connecting with Country Framework.

- Government Architect New South Wales, 2023. *Connecting with Country Framework*.

1.3 Study area

The site is located in the Awabakal LALC, at 2 Monash Road and 24 Wallarah Road, New Lambton, within the Newcastle local government area (LGA). The site comprises multiple parcels of land and is legally described as:

- Lot 2380 DP755247
- Lot 2379 DP755247
- Lot 2378 DP755247
- Lot 2377 DP755247

The project area includes the land on which the existing amenities block is located.

1.4 Terminology

This report includes a summary of the history and culture of the peoples of Awaba/Awabakal, the traditional custodians of Country, collated from colonial sources and should be read with this in mind. Note that early accounts reference the 'Awaba' as the name of the Country and group, with 'Awabakal' (meaning 'of the Awaba') used more recently, particularly in reference to people and language. Awaba/Awabakal have therefore been used interchangeably in this report.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware this report may contain words and terms in quotations from works written by non-Indigenous people in the past that may be confronting and considered inappropriate today. Artefact does not endorse these views or the use of these terms.

These historical sources have been included because they provide information on the lives of Aboriginal people in the region.

Likewise, there are spelling variations for other language words and groups and this report uses these spellings interchangeably depending on the source.

This report also contains the names and images of deceased people and descriptions of historical events, including massacres, that may be distressing to some readers.

1.5 Authorship and Acknowledgements

This Connecting with Country Framework was prepared by Alexandra Gaffikin (Senior Associate, Artefact), with assistance from Dr Elizabeth Bonshek (Senior Heritage Consultant, Artefact), Dr Stephen Gapps (Historian, Artefact), Cole Perry (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer, Artefact), Sabrina Roesner (Senior Heritage Consultant, Artefact) and Katherine Chalmers (Heritage Consultant, Artefact), with input and review by Dr Samantha Higgs (Principal, Artefact) and Carolyn MacLulich (Principal, Artefact).

Artefact worked in collaboration with a number of Aboriginal knowledge holders for this report and would like to thank all knowledge holders for their generosity and kindness in sharing cultural knowledge for this project.



Figure 1: Study area

2.0 GANSW CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK

The Connecting with Country Framework (2023), prepared by the NSW Government Architects Office (GANSW), seeks to assist design project teams to integrate Aboriginal culture into development projects. The predominant message of the framework is that the current design approach mentality needs to shift from Human Centric to Country Centric, to create a healthy Country with culturally diverse and safe spaces that simultaneously address the growing environmental problems that society faces today.

2.1 The commitment

All NSW built environment projects will be developed with a Country-centred approach guided by Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country, Country will care for us.

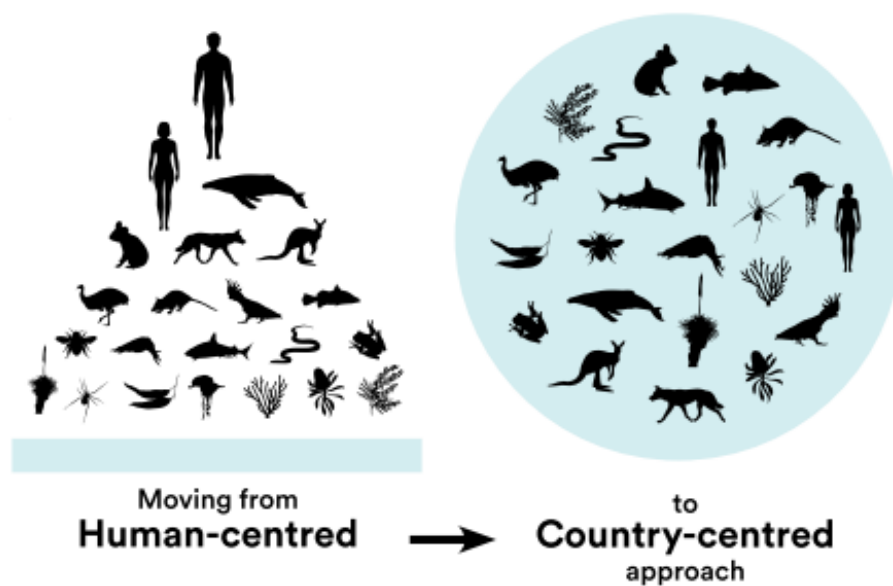


Figure 2: Human-centred or Country-centred approach (GANSW Connecting with Country)

2.2 Practices

The framework advocates for an integrated approach that combines Aboriginal knowledge and western science which recognises and appreciates the interconnectedness of all elements of society and the environment. The essential message is that if we look after Country, Country will look after us. To facilitate the behavioural change required to put Country at the forefront of new design, the framework expands upon three components of Aboriginal cultural knowledge systems and aligns them with three cognitive elements (Thinking, Feeling, Behaviour):

- **Communing with Country (Thinking):** the connection to Country through mind and spirit as demonstrated through forms of cultural expression.
- **Sensing Country (Feeling):** immersive cultural practices to provide insight into the emotional connection to Country.
- **Being on Country (Behaving):** working together to share knowledge and perspective to create cohesive and respectful designs.

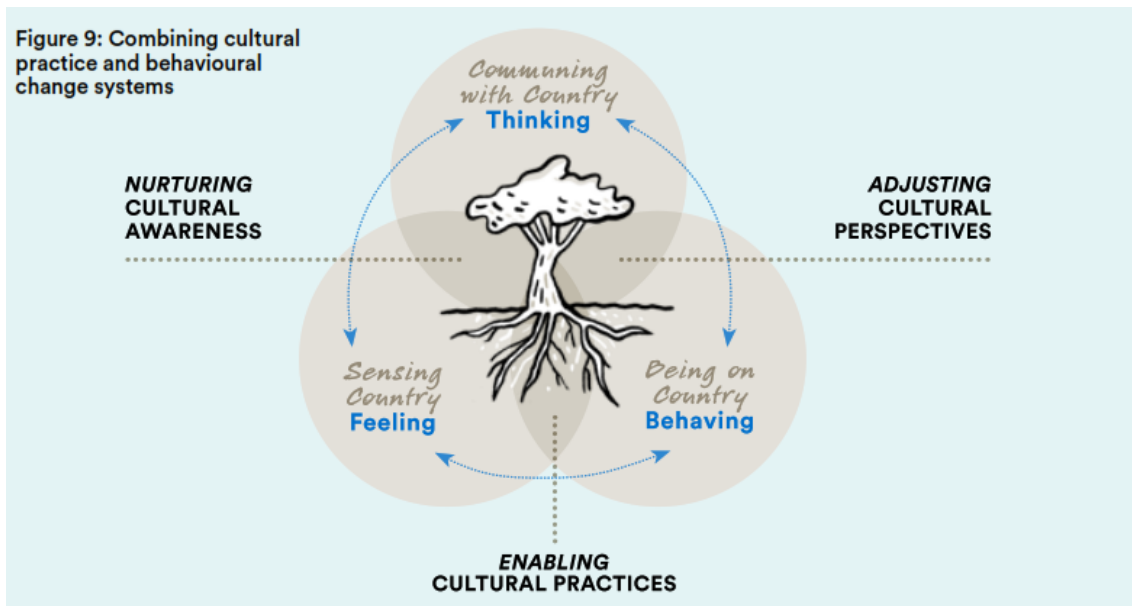


Figure 3: Combining cultural practice and behavioural change systems (GANSW Connecting with Country)

2.3 Actions

To implement this Country centric approach, the framework identifies how Country can be incorporated into each phase of the design process as guided by the Aboriginal community:

- Project formation – starting with Country: ensuring that the project teams understand the nuanced concept of Country through cultural awareness training
- Project design – imagining with Country: design led by interpretive cultural narratives and an understanding of Country
- Project delivery – shaping Country: design and construction led by the need to protect and promote Country
- Project maintenance – a commitment to nurture all parts of Country, of which the new development project is part

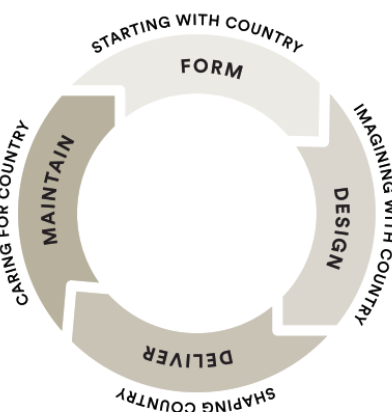


Figure 4: Project lifecycle from an Aboriginal perspective (GANSW Connecting with Country)

The framework has specific guidance around ways to Design with Country, exploring opportunities for design to support connection to Country in built environment projects. These include:

Design focus:

- Language use and first place names
- Connect to the broader landscape
- Promote and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Acknowledge our shared history

Design opportunities:

- Learn from traditional Aboriginal architecture
- Support living ecosystems
- Reawaken memories
- In between spaces
- Indirect connections

The framework also provides practical assistance for how Country can be considered in project design at a precinct wide level, a building-scale project level and a small-scale project level.

2.4 Outcomes

To help project teams fulfill their commitment to Country, the outcomes of a Country-centred approach are presented as practical indicators of success. They are:

- Healthy Country – describing healthy ecosystems and regenerative practices
- Healthy Community – which provide employment and capacity building
- Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Cultural competency through cultural awareness training
- Better places – connecting places to broader landscapes

3.0 CONSIDERING COUNTRY

This section provides an overview of Aboriginal understanding of Country and how the consideration of, and connection to, Country can influence and inform design.

3.1 What is Country?

[Country] is all sacred, every ounce of Country is important, every ounce of Country served a purpose, and it doesn't need to be just birthing sites or burial sites for it to be important or respected.

Kumarah Kelly, CEO Awabakal LALC, 18 January 2024

The concept of Country does not have a corresponding concept in Western culture but is a deeply personal yet universal worldview fundamental to Aboriginal and First Nations people. Individual relationships with and definitions of “Country” are deeply nuanced, and can vary depending on a person’s life experience, place, and personal beliefs. It is key, therefore, to deeply listen to the perspectives of Aboriginal people and remove Western biases when thinking about Country.

We know we need to develop, we need infrastructure, but we need to pay respect to the land first and foremost.

Kumarah Kelly, CEO Awabakal LALC, 18 January 2024

A definition of country as ‘land’ may be the initial association made by a Western person, but this is far too simplistic; instead, the idea of Country is an all-encompassing continuum of past, present and future, connecting tangible things like ecosystems, water, and people, as well as intangible concepts like story, identity, and home.

Country and identity are deeply linked for Aboriginal people, and an understanding of Country is key to understanding both themselves and their community. The concept of Country includes all elements regarded equally, ‘from the cosmic to the molecular and everything in between’.¹ Therefore, a person’s identity and personal value cannot be separated from Country and is connected to all elements around them. A person’s actions can positively or negatively affect all aspects of Country, including themselves.

‘I know the land, it’s a part of your life because you live and breathe it, you know? It’s where you spend your weekends, your afternoons, in those rivers, climbing something, fossicking for something. So, what we give back into the land is what we’ll get back out if it. And by looking after all of those; our waterways, our nature, our plants, the land, keeping it healthy – it will always keep us healthy.’

Michelle Perry, Worimi Elder and Founder of Karuah Kinnections basketball team, NAIDOC week 2021

Country, just like people, can be healthy or sick, and requires care and respect. A network of mutual care between the land, animals, plants, and people stretches into deep time and must be constantly protected and nurtured to ensure the health of Country. Knowledge of how to maintain this network of mutual care is expressed through Aboriginal language, stories, and cultural practices and provides the

¹ GANSW, 2020a.

bedrock of First Nations cultures. The network is interconnected and interdependent; changes in language, for example, affects all other elements.

Country is both spiritual and physical. Country is something that can be experienced, and that physical experience is key to the mutual health of First Nations people and Country itself. Walking on Country, feeling the touch of the air, sun, and wind, speaking to and listening to Country, and hunting on Country are ways of practicing culture that have been passed down for many generations. The act of being on Country and feeling the connection with place is deeply significant for Aboriginal communities and a way of ensuring that individuals and families can thrive.

Cultural practices (also called cultural law/protocols) and the languages used to refer to Country, are deeply diverse, reflecting the development of thousands of communities across Australia over millennia. All practices, however, are rooted in the idea of responsibility towards Country.

Country has been significantly disturbed by the colonisation of Australia. Delicate physical and spiritual ecosystems that have been nourished and maintained since deep time have been damaged by deforestation, loss of biodiversity, dislocation of community, and general development. The Western systems of thinking and land-use cannot maintain or nourish Country, and some knowledge of how to care for Country has been lost.

'For us to be able to continue in Culture and Heritage and respect of history, we have to come to terms with the idea of settlement and the damage it has done. We have to think about revitalising what we do have.'

Kumarah Kelly, CEO Awabakal LALC, 4 November 2022

The resilience of Aboriginal people across Australia and the strength of cultural practices, however, has allowed much cultural knowledge and lore to survive colonisation. The knowledge of Aboriginal people of how to care for Country is diverse, and includes practices of agriculture, health, spirituality, and sustainability. This deep knowledge, based on the idea of mutual responsibility, should play an essential part in future placemaking and planning.

Designs that echo traditional forms and stories and their contemporary interpretations are increasingly being integrated within new developments, sending strong, respectful messages about the timeless links between First Nations peoples and the landscape, and allowing for reflection and connection to Country. Traditional knowledge, when embedded meaningfully into development, has positive outcomes for communities and the environment. The significance of such design integration does not just lie in its aesthetics, but in the empowerment that public statements of value bring and the value of sustainable future development.

The involvement and authority of Aboriginal knowledge holders is important in developing projects that connect meaningfully with Country and promote, sustain, and nurture the health of Country.



Figure 5: The Hunter Wetlands, January 2024

3.2 Cultural Context

A number of key contextual issues are important to consider when developing a Connecting with Country framework for a new project:

Country, culture and community: The many interpretations of Country are often expressed by Aboriginal communities through cultural practices.

Caring for Country: Caring for Country is a cultural obligation that Aboriginal people undertake with a deep sense of responsibility, ownership and stewardship. Caring for Country includes caring for the wellbeing of Country's interconnected systems now and for the future.

Identify: For Aboriginal people, Country is at the core of identity. Aboriginal peoples' connection with Country has continued over thousands of years, from deep time. It is a source of valuable wisdom and knowledge that can guide all of us to improve the way we plan and design the places where we live and work.

Cultural safety: Cultural safety is about creating a socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually safe space where there is no challenge or denial of a person's identity. For Aboriginal people this means feeling safe, valued and able to participate in their cultural, spiritual and belief systems, free from racism, discrimination and lateral violence.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property: Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP) are the rights that Aboriginal people have to protect their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and cultural expression.

4.0 ABORIGINAL HISTORIES OF THE AREA

4.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the history and culture of the peoples of Awaba (Awabakal), the traditional custodians of Country. It includes information collated from colonial sources and should be read with this in mind.

Note that early accounts reference the 'Awaba' as the name of the Country and group, with 'Awabakal' (meaning 'of the Awaba') used more recently, particularly in reference to people and language. Awaba/Awabakal have therefore been used interchangeably in this report.

4.2 Mulubinba and Awaba

The Land is culturally significant to the Aboriginal descendants of the Awabakal people, and they wish to preserve and recover as much cultural heritage history as possible for future generations.

David Ahoy, Lower Hunter Aboriginal Incorporated, 17 August 2022

The Awabakal people are the traditional custodians of the land on which the site now stands and have cared for Country for tens of thousands of years. Awabakal territory traditionally encompasses modern Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, and parts of the southern Hunter Region. Prior to colonisation, the land and waters now known as Newcastle were called *Mulubinba* – meaning 'place of sea ferns' – in the Awabakal language.²

There is evidence that in the Newcastle area that chert (a flint-like quartz) was mined by local people for use in tool making. A significant number of hand axes and micro-blades have been found by the local Aboriginal community, suggesting that the stone mined in the region was used for a broad range of toolmaking purposes. The stone was cut using traditional methods to shape the rock. These tools and items would have been traded amongst the Awabakal clans as well as with neighbouring Nations. Trading of stone would primarily have occurred locally between Aboriginal groups, including between the Pambalong clan and Wonnarua and Worimi peoples, although it is also expected that trade would have occurred further afield.³

The site is located on the Lower Hunter Plain, within a shallow basin immediately west of the estuary at which the Hunter River (*Maiyaa*) meets the Tasman Sea.⁴ This plain was covered in tall open forests of river and swamp oak, broad leaved paperbarks and the occasional cabbage tree palm.⁵ These cabbage trees were used for a range of manufacturing purposes; the tree's fibres were used to make fishing line and nets, and its broad leaves were used for roof thatching.⁶ Varieties of banksia and tea tree, Sydney golden wattle and blady grass grew closer to the beachfront.⁷ The site was previously a swamp and, though now drained, is a site of mahogany swamp trees, *Eucalyptus Robusta*.

These open forests were a rich source of food for the Awabakal people of the Lower Hunter Plain, providing varied seasonal plant and animal life. The Awabakal cared for Country by practicing fire-

² University of Newcastle Special Collections, 2013. "The many names of Newcastle – Mulubinba." *Hunter Living Histories*, accessed on 8 July 2022 via <<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2013/08/30/the-many-names-of-newcastle-mulubinba/>>.

³ Maynard et al 2021

⁴ AMBS 2005, pg. 80.

⁵ AMBS 2005, pg. 31.

⁶ Miromaa Aboriginal Language & Technology Centre, 2020. "Awabakal Dictionary: Community Edition," pg. 12.

⁷ AMBS 2005, pg. 31.

stick farming throughout these forests. Fire-stick farming results in reducing fire hazards, facilitates hunting, changing plant and animal populations, and increasing biodiversity.



Figure 6: The spongy bark of the mahogany swamp, 1 December 2022

Sea life has always been one of the most important sources of food for the Awabakal people, and Aboriginal settlement was concentrated around *Maiyaa* and the coast. *Maiyaa* (which means ‘snake’ in the Awabakal language) provided *munboonkaan* (oysters), *parimankaan* (salmon), *kirul* (mullet), jewfish, prawns, and other marine life.⁸ Awabakal women dived for lobsters and fished using lines and nets, while men generally fished using *kalaara* (spears) made with sharpened stones or shellfish. On occasions when whales would become stranded on the shore, coastal and invited inland peoples alike would gather on the shore to feast for days. The Awabakal used *nauwai* (bark canoes) to skilfully navigate and fish in deeper coastal waters. Hundreds of shell middens found along the foreshores and catchments of the Hunter River and the Tasman Sea attest to thousands of years of sustainable fishing practices and coastal life in the region.

Evidence of well-worn trackways throughout the ridges of the Sugarloaf and Watagan ranges suggests that the mountains have long held special significance to the Awabakal. The Reverend Threkhalld noted ‘circular erections of stones’ which were five- or six-foot diameter and two or three

⁸ AMBS 2005, pg. 33.

feet high.⁹ These stone structures were of spiritual importance to the Awabakal, who were wary 'of any of these stones being moved, especially the centre one', according to a mid-nineteenth century account.¹⁰ Aboriginal people across NSW also travelled to Mount Yengo for ceremonies.



Figure 7: Corroboree at Newcastle, 1818 (Source: State Library of NSW)

4.3 Post-colonisation

Newcastle is over colonised – it was colonised very early and a lot of Aboriginal people living in the area were pushed inland. The generationally told story of the land – isn't great. A lot of information of cultural history comes from settlers and their diaries.

Kumarah Kelly, CEO Awabakal LALC, 7 October 2022

European-introduced diseases had a catastrophic effect on Aboriginal people, who had no immunities to diseases like cholera, smallpox, influenza, measles and venereal disease. It has been estimated that only sixty years after the arrival of the British, the Aboriginal population of the Sydney region and surrounds had been decimated by somewhere between 60 to 90 per cent through a combination of disease and violence.¹¹ The cultural and natural landscape, too, was systematically decimated by colonists. Newcastle was established as a penal colony for re-offending convicts: they felled swathes of forest and dug out ancient shell middens for lime, used in the construction of buildings in Sydney.

During the 1820s, former convict and artist Joseph Lycett travelled to Newcastle and Lake Macquarie and painted several watercolours depicting the daily life of the Aboriginal communities at this time of deep societal unrest and change. Though these images are from a colonial perspective, Lycett's images are valuable in showing Country prior to intensive colonial development, as well as the diverse cultural, social and economic activities of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

⁹ Rev. Threlkeld quoted in Gunson 1974: 65-66.

¹⁰ W.A. Miles quotes in Gunson 1974: 65-66.

¹¹ W.A. Miles quotes in Gunson 1974, 40.



Figure 8: Aboriginal people resting by campfire, near the mouth of the Hunter River, Newcastle, New South Wales by Joseph Lycett, c. 1817. (Source: NLA)



Figure 9: Sugar Loaf Mountain by Joseph Lycett, 1824. (Source: NLA)

A major factor in the documentation of local Aboriginal life during colonisation are the diaries and works of missionary and minister Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld who opened a mission near Newcastle in 1826. Over a period of twenty-one years, Threlkeld recorded the language and Dreaming of the Awabakal people in partnership with Birabaan (Biraban), a local Aboriginal man of standing who became a translator, interpreter, and intermediary for Threlkeld. Threlkeld did not use the term 'Awabakal' to describe the people he worked with or their language that he documented; the term is thought to have derived from the works of a later linguist, adapting the Aboriginal name for Lake Macquarie – Awaba.

Biraban was an Awabakal man who had grown up in Sydney after he was taken there when he was a boy to work as a servant. He returned to the Lake Macquarie / Newcastle area in 1833 where he was recognised a chief and took the name Biraban meaning 'eagle hawk'. His fluency in English meant he was engaged for work as a translator, guide and constable.¹²



Figure 10: Reverend Lancelot E. Threlkeld c.1815 and Birabān (John M'Gill) 1839. (Source: Threlkeld, L.E. *Australian Reminiscences & Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aborigines, 1824-1859*. 2 vols, ed. Niel Gunson. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1974.)

4.4 Aboriginal communities of Broadmeadow and Newcastle

'It's the work of our Elders that have paved the way for us today.'

Amanda Kelly, 3 March 2023

In 2021, 7,410 people in the City of Newcastle LGA identified as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. At 4.4 per cent of the total population, Newcastle LGA is home to a higher than national average number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons.¹³ The western parts of Newcastle LGA have the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents¹⁴ Over the past fifty years, a range of community organisations and Aboriginal groups have been established to improve the quality of life for City of Newcastle's Aboriginal community, including:

- The Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council
- The Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council
- The Biraban Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Awabakal Ltd (formerly the Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd)
- The Wollotuka Institute

¹² Cary, H 2010, *Threkhal, Biraban and the Colonial Bible*, University of Newcastle

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021.

¹⁴ City of Newcastle, 2016.

Language and sacred sites in the region continue to be used by the Aboriginal community to connect with Country. Aboriginal-run organisations such as the Awabakal Language Program have made language resources widely available to the public, and a number of organisations have developed resources in Awabakal language, including programs developed by Miromaa Language and Technology Centre (<https://www.miromaa.org.au>).

The Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle provides support to Indigenous students at the University and facilitates an Elders in Residence and Cultural Mentors programme to 'reinforce the significance and teachings of our cultures.'¹⁵

4.5 First Nations Basketball in the Newcastle area

4.5.1 Basketball Association of Newcastle Limited

The Basketball Association of Newcastle Limited (BANL) also known as 'Newcastle Basketball' offers 'an inclusive, safe and friendly environment for participation in a variety of community activities with a primary focus on basketball.'¹⁶ They offer activities, competitions, camps and events for juniors and seniors, and are home to the NBL1 Newcastle Falcons. BANL currently has 436 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.

BANL has long benefited from contributions and involvement with the local Indigenous community. Between 2018 and 2021 Rob Russell, the then chief executive of the Awabakal LALC, served on the Newcastle Basketball Board of Directors. BANL currently has a First Nations basketball working group to assist the association in growing First Nations participation of players, coaches, referees, and administrators. In October 2023 BANL held an Indigenous Camp at the Stadium. 120 people participated in activities to get to know each other and improve their basketball skills.



Figure 11: Prize winners at the 2023 Indigenous Camp (Source: Newcastle Basketball Facebook)

¹⁵ University of Newcastle, 2022. [Newcastle's Wollotuka Institute leads the way for Indigenous education | SBS NITV](https://www.newcastle.edu.au/news/news-story/newcastle-s-wollotuka-institute-leads-the-way-for-indigenous-education)

¹⁶ Newcastle Basketball, 'About us' <https://www.newcastlebasketball.com.au/>



Figure 12: Left Knowledge tree, Right attendees at the Indigenous Camp (Source: Newcastle Basketball Facebook)

'It was such an amazing day Malakye loved every minute!! Thank you so much for running the first of hopefully many indigenous basketball camps at Newcastle Basketball Well done to everyone involved'

Malee Hall, October 2023, Newcastle Basketball Facebook post

4.6 Karuah Kinnections

In 2019 Worimi Elder and Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council acting chairwoman Michelle Perry wanted to improve the mental health of young men in her community. She reached out to various services and the result was the formation of the Karuah Kinnections men's basketball team. Helen Marquez, who worked in the mental health services field, helped set up the team, including engaging the coach - Butch Hays, former American-Australian professional basketball player. SNAP, which is Hays' own not-for-profit organisation, sponsors the team. It provided the players with a uniform and covered entry fees into the competition.¹⁷ The team is made up of young men aged 16 to 25-year-olds, who either live at 'Karuah Mission' or have grown up in the area.¹⁸



Figure 13: Karuah Kinnections, the basketball team from Worimi who play at Newcastle¹⁹

¹⁷ Watts, Ellie-Marie, July 21 2020 "New Karuah men's basketball team all about 'kinnection'" Port Stephens Examiner

¹⁸ <https://hunterprimarycare.com.au/forming-good-kinnections/>

¹⁹ <https://vimeo.com/507770392>

4.7 Team Wollotuka

The University of Newcastle has a First Nations sports team called Team Wollotuka. The team is made up of Indigenous students from across many disciplines. At the University Indigenous Nationals in 2023 they came 4th out of 33 competing teams. The Indigenous Nationals event, which began at the University of Newcastle in 1996, is a week-long mixed competition for Indigenous student-athletes across four sports: touch football, basketball, netball, and volleyball.



Figure 14: Team Wollotuka proudly display their medals following a hugely successful campaign at the 2023 Indigenous Nationals²⁰

²⁰ <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/newsroom/featured/team-wollotuka-blitz-indigenous-nationals-including-award-for-most-promising-talent>

5.0 REGISTERED ABORIGINAL SITES IN THE AREA

NOTE: The location of Aboriginal sites is considered culturally sensitive information. It is advised that this information, including the AHIMS data appearing on the heritage map for the proposal be removed from this report if it is to enter the public domain.

An extensive search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) was undertaken on 23 October 2023 (Client Service ID: 831842) to determine the location of Aboriginal sites in relation to the current study area.

The parameters of the search were as follows:

GDA 1994 MGA Zone: 56
 Eastings: 379530.0 – 381530.0
 Northings: 6355941.0 – 6357941.0
 Buffer 2,000 metres
 Number of sites: 1

No Aboriginal sites are recorded within the study area. One Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) (AHIMS ID 38-4-2263) was identified within the broader search area, located approximately 800m southeast of the study area.

The results of the search are summarised in Table 1 and the distribution of sites shown in Figure 15: Distribution of AHIMS sites in relation to broader study area.

Table 1: Frequency of site features in AHIMS search results

Site Features	Frequency	Percentage
Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD)	1	100%
Total	1	100%

Regional archaeological evidence suggests the availability of fresh water and resources was a significant factor in repeated and long-term occupation of the Newcastle – Hunter region. Certain site types, such as culturally modified trees, are particularly vulnerable to destruction through historical occupation. As a result, more resilient site types, such as stone artefacts, are predominant in the archaeological record. Because of this, the nature and location of registered Aboriginal sites is an imperfect reflection of past Aboriginal occupation. Furthermore, the surviving archaeological record is also a reflection not only of historical land-use, disturbance, and the post-depositional events, but also reflects the sampling bias of previous archaeological investigation.

AHIMS 38-4-2263 has been identified as a PAD based on soil modelling which indicates the potential presence of underlying sand bodies which may retain artefactual material. The study area and AHIMS 38-4-2263 are understood to be part of the same landform, which may indicate similar potential exists within the study area.

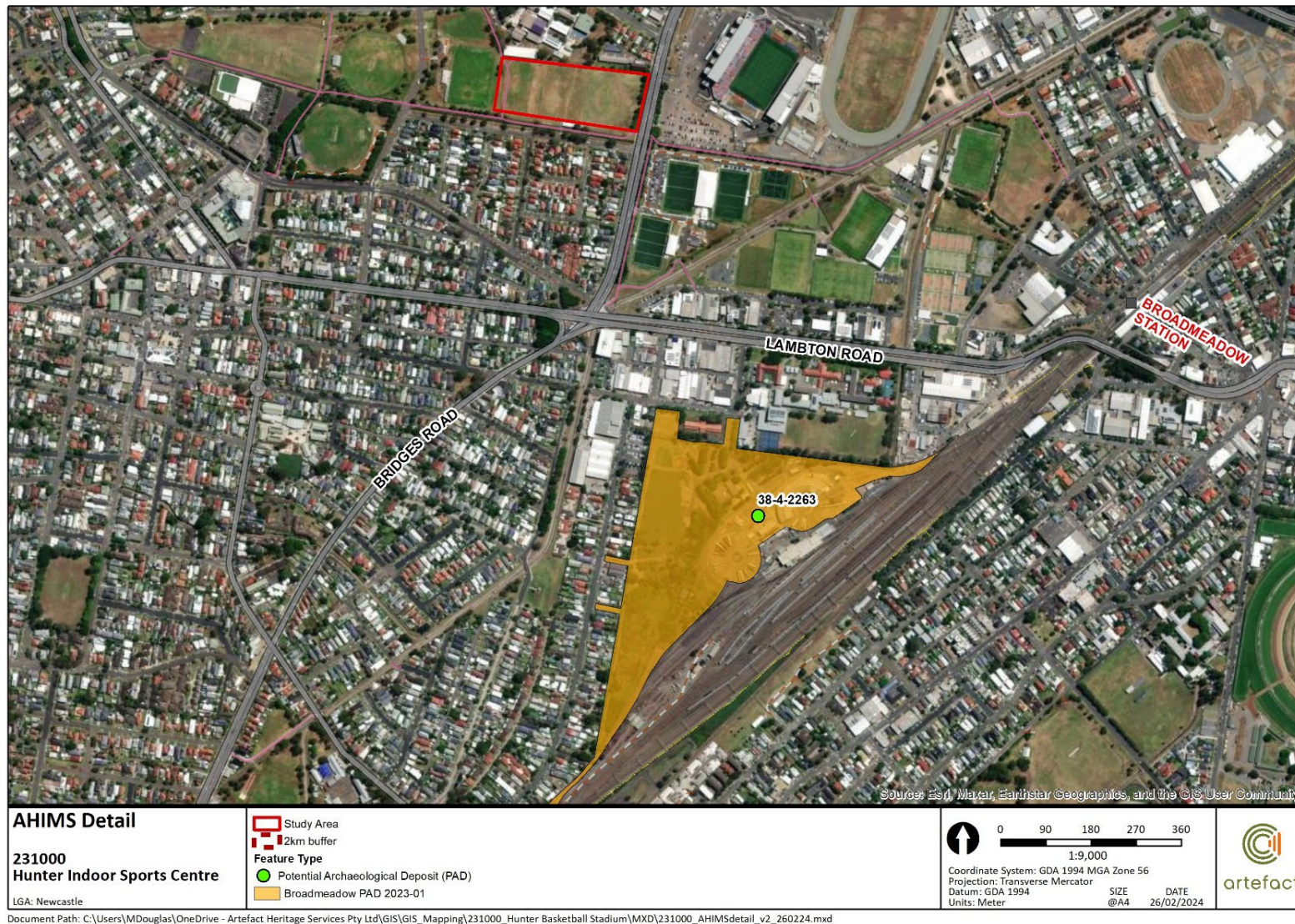


Figure 15: Distribution of AHIMS sites in relation to broader study area

6.0 HISTORICAL HERITAGE CONTEXT

The following table summarises the urban development history of the study area:

Table 2: Historical heritage context

Development	Date	Discussion
Newcastle Pasturage Reserve	1849 – c.1880	The subject site was originally part of the 2000-acre pasturage reserve. It is unlikely that any developments occurred during this phase.
Hartley Vale Colliery	1861 – c.1880	Two pits were worked to the south-east of the subject site. The colliery railway line passed from north-east to south-west to the north of the subject site.
Public Reserve	c.1880s	The study area was part of a large portion of the former common designated for public recreation following a program of drainage.
WWII	1943	The study area contained four anti-aircraft dummy gun emplacements. The eastern portion of the study area appears to have been a sporting oval, possibly a cricket ground with pitch in the centre, with a small structure on the southwest boundary.
Post WWII	current	Currently the area is utilised as an open oval, with amenities on the southern boundary alongside an open canal (both developments are outside the study area).



Figure 16: Drain construction workers at Broadmeadow, NSW, 6 April 1900 (Source: University of Newcastle Cultural Collections)

7.0 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

7.1 Consultation and Engagement Planning

7.1.1 Introduction

An understanding of the relevance and importance of the Aboriginal cultural landscape is fundamental to sensitive cultural design development aligning with the Connecting with Country principles. This understanding provides opportunities to explore Aboriginal peoples' unity with the natural environment and their traditional knowledge of spirit, places, land uses and ecology. These understandings are best developed through authentic and sustained consultation with Aboriginal knowledge holders and professionals.

7.1.2 Consultation frameworks

As the traditional custodians of the land, the local community maintains a dynamic connection to Country which informs their identity, culture, language, and ways of living.²¹ The depth of this connection requires that appropriate, effective consultation with relevant community members must take place for any archaeological or heritage works occurring on their traditional land.

Under the Burra Charter:

*Article 12. Conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has significant associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place.*²²

The Connecting with Country Framework (GANSW, 2023) recommends the following:

Building relationships with Aboriginal people requires appropriate allocation of time and resources to develop personal connections in ways Aboriginal people recommend and feel comfortable with.

Because cultural connections with Country differ between Aboriginal peoples and communities, projects need to be guided by those who are acknowledged by their communities as knowledge-holders for Country, and often in combination with nominated Aboriginal organisations such as local Aboriginal land councils (LALCs).

The Connecting with Country Framework (GANSW, 2023) highlights categories of stakeholders who could be involved:

Engagement should be undertaken in an inclusive way, and project teams should be open to diverse groups of people and points of view. In addition to LALCs, the groups that should be invited to join the engagement process include:

- 1. Traditional Custodians who have ancestral connections to a place*
- 2. people from surrounding groups/tribes/ mobs/communities/nations*

²¹ Australian Heritage Commission, 2002. Ask First: a guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values.
²² Australia ICOMOS, 2013. Burra Charter –The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance. 3.

3. those who have moved to the area since colonisation and are integrated into the community
 4. everyone else who wants a say.
-

7.1.3 Stakeholder identification

Artefact, EJE and Basketball Newcastle discussed potential Aboriginal stakeholders. The list included:

- Stakeholder identification through the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) process and the advertisement for Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs).
- Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council.
- Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council.
- Community groups and knowledge holders.
- Newcastle Basketball First Nations working group.
- BANL Aboriginal members.

For more details see the consultation log in section 15.

Information from these consultations has informed and shaped the Connecting with Country framework presented in this report.

7.2 Previous consultation and reporting

7.2.1 Introduction

The GANSW Connecting with Country framework recommends the activity 'research and prepare' and specifically 'locate previous Aboriginal cultural heritage and technical studies relevant to the project... to avoid consultation fatigue and prevent duplicating time and effort when information is already available.' Previous technical studies have therefore been reviewed to ascertain if there are records of Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

7.2.2 Connecting with Country framework for site in Broadmeadow

In 2022 Artefact was engaged to develop a Connecting with Country framework for a site in Broadmeadow approximately 1 km south of the site of the proposed stadium in New Lambton. This section provides a synthesis of discussions with Aboriginal stakeholders and Registered Aboriginal Parties between November 2022 and February 2023 that is relevant to this project.

7.2.2.1 Cultural expression (ceremony, language)

- 'The eaglehawk or wedge-tailed eagle has special significance for the Awabakal people. Kon, their "celestial entity", looks like an Aboriginal man, but in flight resembles an eagle-hawk.' Awabakal LALC website
- 'A good outcome for this project would be increased visibility that this is Awabakal Country. Visitors should know they are on Awabakal Land.' Tracey Howie, ATAOC and Kyle Howie, A&G, 16 February 2023
- Awabakal Language is a well recorded language with lots of resources and organisations who can advise on language usage like the Awabakal Language Program / Miromaa Aboriginal Language & Technology Centre which hosts the Awabakal Dictionary - <https://awabakallanguage.org.au/awabakal-dictionary>

- 'Mount Yengo is the site of major gatherings of people from across NSW, and a site of artworks from different communities.' Peter Townsend, Cultural Heritage Officer, Awabakal LALC, 1 December 2022
- 'The Country was called Awaba. Awabakal is a more modern term used to describe the people or language of Awaba. The Awaba people were made up of a number of different clan groups – all speaking the same language.' Uncle Kevin Duncan, 21 December 2022



Figure 17: Logo of the Awabakal LALC featuring the eaglehawk of the Awabakal people (Source: Awabakal LALC)



Figure 18: Mount Yengo (Source: Artefact Heritage)

7.2.2.2 Relationship to Country (family, habitats, consultation, protocols, relationships)

- All stakeholders reiterated the importance of consultation with appropriate Traditional Knowledge Holders.
- Stakeholders emphasised the importance of employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people.
- The project is also an opportunity to share and pass on stories and culture.
- 'Connecting with Country is about understanding the land, understanding the history, and the community needs and expectation. It is very refreshing process.' Kumarah Kelly, CEO Awabakal LALC, 7 October 2022
- 'In terms of cultural protocols there is a sense of being mindful of representing mob and Country. If it isn't right, it causes pain.' Tracey Howie, ATAOC and Kyle Howie, A&G, 16 February 2023



Figure 19: Awabakal culture expressed at Nobby's, Newcastle (Source: Terras)



Figure 20: Awabakal culture expressed at the Bridge on the Inner-city motorway, Newcastle (Source: Terras)

7.2.2.3 Learning from Country (landscapes, walking on Country, health)

- The area used to be a swamp and even now, despite extensive drainage, is home to swamp mahogany trees (*Eucalyptus Robusta*).
- Local stone resources from the Newcastle area have been traded and made into tools across NSW.
- 'Our people used coal for our everyday fires, even before the Europeans started to mine it. Newcastle was one of the first industrial sites in Australia after the colonisers saw the coal.' 'Threkald went into mining coal – which was surprising. He saw the damage, but it was too much to resist.' Bob Syron, 25 October 2022 and 20 December 2022
- 'Our clan would gather freshwater crayfish, mussels, catfish, Perch, Herring, Eels, Mullet from various rivers from the Williams, Dungog, Patterson, Hunter, Barrington and the Gloucester rivers. kangaroo, Wallaby, Pademelon, Opossum, Jew lizard, Porky pine, wombat, emu, wonga, Bush turkey and Swan, where only some of the favourite foods and some only to be eaten by Elders'. Bob Syron, 25 October 2022 and 20 December 2023
- The Hunter River originally had multiple names along its length – with names reflecting activities or flora in those areas. Bob Syron, 25 October 2022 and 20 December 2022
- It is important that people / contractors working on Country do cultural inductions which include a walk on Country.

7.2.2.4 Knowledge Sharing (learning, knowledge systems, networks)

- 'Newcastle is over-colonised. It was colonised very early and a lot of Aboriginal people living in the area were pushed inland. A lot of what we know comes from settlers and their diaries and not necessarily from generational knowledge. For example, my matriarchal line is Worimi. My ancestors lived at Newcastle beach pre-colonisation, but were displaced by the Colonisers and came back later'. Kumarah Kelly, CEO Awabakal LALC, 7 October 2022
- Saretta Fielding and colleagues had previously worked on a local project called Yarns Parai (stories from Country) which includes cultural stories from the Lower Hunter region to the west of Newcastle where the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor. Broadmeadow Locomotive depot would be located just below and to the right of the Hexham Swamp landscape, slightly off the map.²³
- 'I love being able to work with people on community, capturing that history and the multi-skills of Aboriginal people to get opportunities to pass on our culture.' Saretta Fielding, 7 February 2023
- Saretta spoke about the types of knowledge to inform a project: 'There are historic documents, photographs, historic photographs, cultural heritage assessments, talking to community and Elders, digital recording, story and language,' Saretta Fielding, 7 February 2023

²³ Yarns Parai <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/637752a29b9b45d49f97d1ba35ee949c>



Figure 21: Left: Artwork of traditional Awabakal Stories and values of the land covered by the corridor investigation; right: Hexham Swamp 'dominant landscape feature rich' (Source: Saretta Fielding, Yarns Parai)

7.2.2.5 Existing projects

A number of existing projects have showcased Aboriginal connection with Country in the Newcastle area. Some examples are shown below.



Figure 22: Foreshore sculpture, with Awabakal language, Newcastle; Mural by Adnate, Newcastle

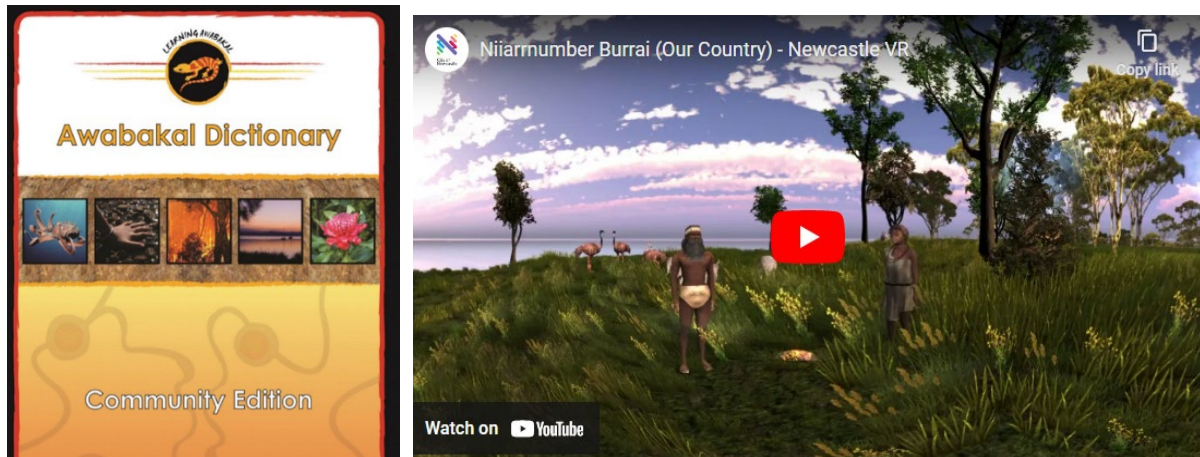


Figure 23: Left: Awabakal Dictionary, Community Edition by Miromaa; Right: 'Niiarnnumber Burrai/Our Country' a virtual reality journey through Awabakal and Worimi Country, City of Newcastle



Figure 24: Left: Tiddalik story panel, West Kotara (Terri-Lee Darcy , Auntie Phyllis Darcy, Donna Gayford McLaren); Right: Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women) storytelling workshop, Maitland



Figure 25: Left: Biriban eagle-hawk mural (original design by Biripai artist Mandy Davis), Wollotka Institute, University of Newcastle; Right: Eagle hawk sculpture and gathering space, Newcastle

7.3 First Nations jerseys by Kerri-Ann Taggart

In 2023 BANL commissioned Wonnarua woman and artist Kerri-Ann Taggart to design the First Nations jerseys.

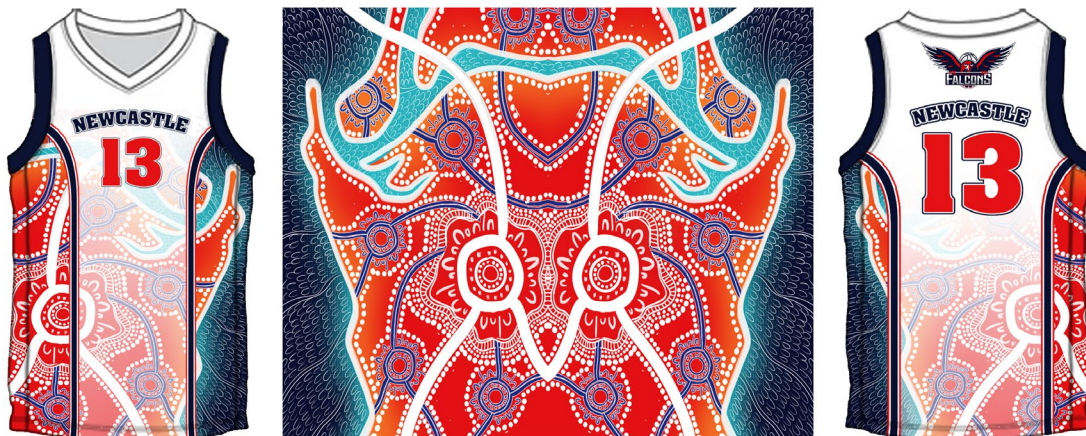


Figure 26: BANL First Nations jerseys by Kerri-Ann Taggart (2023)

Artist's statement:

Newcastle, the proud home of the great Falcons, serviced as the inspiration for this art piece. Embracing the team's signature colours of vibrant red and navy blue, the design captures the essence of the iconic coastline.

At the heart of the artwork lies the Aboriginal symbol representing a 'meeting place' and the concept of 'coming together', encircling the location of the baseball stadium in Newcastle. The three paths gracefully extend from this central symbol representing the past, present and future of Indigenous people.

Smaller 'meeting place' symbols are scattered around the stadium, paying homage to the families and surrounding communities of Newcastle who actively contribute to the thriving basketball scene.

In its fine form, the art piece incorporates warm oranges and cool light blues, evoking the mesmerizing hues of a rising sun, capturing the beautiful Newcastle skyline that overlooks the majestic Pacific Ocean.

This art piece symbolizes Newcastle Basketball's commitment to inclusivity and the recognition of the First Nations people. It represents a new dawn in their ongoing dedication to embrace the rich Indigenous heritage that surrounds us.

The final artwork was mirrored to ensure it would seamlessly fit both the front and back of the jersey. Why did I choose to mirror it? Simple because, regardless of the perspective, the Newcastle Basketball Association remains steadfast in its commitment to inclusivity and honouring the contributions of the First Nations people to basketball.

In the final mirrored rendition of the art piece, a striking falcon face takes centre stage. With an aura of pride and strength, the hidden falcon gazes upon us. Adding to the falcon imagery, a pattern resembling features decorates the outer navy blue sections, creating a captivating bird's eye view effect'.

Kerri-Ann Taggart, 2023

7.4 Consultation for this project

7.4.1 Newcastle Basketball First Nations working group, 7 November 2023

On 7 November 2023 Artefact attended a meeting of the Newcastle Basketball First Nations Working Group. Aboriginal stakeholder attendees were:

- Roimatta Selway (Roi) – A member of the committee, and her kids play basketball
- Kristy Crooks – Hunter New England LHD – on the BANL board, co-chair of the Working Group
- Gerald Bradshaw – Office of Sport Aboriginal Development Officer

Feedback

- Gerald Bradshaw– would like a local Aboriginal cultural heritage officer (ACHO) on the team
- Kristy Crooks – suggested Worimi LALC also be involved (contact Andrew Smith).
- Kristy Crooks asked if Aboriginal members of NCL BB could be consulted/included
- Mathew and Kristy Crooks – Awabakal and Worimi LALCs should be consulted
- Roi Selway – suggested Buhtabah LALC also be included as a lot of players and families live in that area
- Discussed the different forms engagement could take – walk on Country, workshop or discussion somewhere else – in person and online and that timing would depend on availability of stakeholders

7.4.2 Worimi Elder Michelle Perry, Karuah Kinnections, January 2024



Figure 27: The Karuah Kinnections group (Source: Tac Supports The Karuah Basketball Team: Tomago Aluminium)

In January 2024 Artefact contacted Michelle Perry, Worimi women, community Elder and currently on the Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council, Manager of the Koorie Kinnection men and women's basketball team, Project manager of Gathang Garuwaga (Local Aboriginal language program), and Coordinator of Parents and Learning Program.

"My passion is to help and encourage young Indigenous people to strengthen the cultural knowledge and identity" - Michelle Perry

Michelle Perry offered the following points about Karuah Kinnections and in particular the positive impact of basketball on young people's mental health:

- The team was formed soon after volunteers responded to a desperate plea for help from Michelle Perry, a Mission elder, deeply concerned about the self-harm and attempted suicide rates among the community's younger members.
- The young men at the Karuah mission are part of a vulnerable community with a shared love of basketball. With no equipment, uniforms or anywhere to train, Michelle Perry contacted Hunter Primary Care and Kate Burns at Tomago Aluminium asking for assistance. Tomago was happy to get behind such an important initiative supplying 18 pairs of new Adidas basketball shoes. Hunter Primary Care brought their shirts and Port Stephens Council are refurbishing their basketball court to train on.
- Former National Basketball League star Butch Hays from Snap Programs also got behind the team and volunteered to be their coach.

- Since the team formed, Karuah Mission has not reported a single suicide attempt and the general mental health of the young players has improved.
- The team completed their first competitive season in 2020, finishing third of the seven teams in the league.
- During the event, the team expressed their gratitude for the local support and were presented with their new shoes and uniforms.

7.4.3 Walk on Country with Awabakal LALC, 18 January 2024

A Walk on Country was conducted on 18 January 2024 by Artefact, attended by Matt Syron and Kumarah Kelly of the Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council (Awabakal LALC). Other attendees included representatives from EJE, BANL, APP and Terras.

The Walk on Country was not conducted on the study area, but at Kau Ma Park, a site which Matt Syron and Kumarah Kelly had identified as being a place that could give a sense of what the Country was like before invasion and colonisation.

7.4.3.1 Aboriginal cultural values

Country

- The landscape of Newcastle used to be swamp like and gone all the way to the coast and linked up with other water ways – Matt Syron
- It is important to be able to talk about Country and have people actually listen and take Country into account. – Kumarah Kelly
- This area would have been a place where many other mobs would have come through
- “Worimi from the north, Garinguy from the mountains in the west, the Wonarug in the plains country, Awabakal people through here with smaller clan groups (Pambalong, Budabar)” – Matt Syron
- Newcastle was known as Mulubinba which is also thought to have been a clan group – Matt Syron
- Awaba is the flat Country which would have been a hunting ground, meeting place, ceremonial area for initiations and a place for family groups to come together - Matt Syron
- When other groups would come to this area the locals would inform them of places to go, places to avoid, where to find food, where burning was occurring, and where women’s and men’s business would be discussed – Matt Syron
- It is important to recognise the distinction between men and women’s business, as there are experiences that only men or women experience and there needs to be a safe space where people can talk about these experiences with those who have lived it – Matt Syron
- “[We] need to pay our respect to the importance of what the land is and I think that sometimes that gets missed and has been missed over the past 200 years of colonization. The respect for the land and the importance of Country...but I am so happy we are starting to see a shift in that.” Kumarah Kelly
- “We know we need to develop, we need infrastructure, but we need to pay respect to the land first and foremost.” Kumarah Kelly

- “It [Country] is all sacred, every ounce of Country is important, every ounce of Country served a purposed, and it doesn’t need to be just birthing sites or burial sites for it to be important or respected” - Kumarah Kelly
- “I understand the not everyone has that cultural obligation, but we are trying to share that cultural obligation...we are trying to say it doesn’t have to be just ours, everybody in this Country can take care of it.” Kumarah Kelly
- “You are always on Country, in your office, in your home, your home sits on Country...you could be on the 40th floor you are still on Country, everything, every part of it not just bushland or countryside” – Kumarah Kelly
- Non-Aboriginal people think that only the bush is Country but Country is everything
- Not every Aboriginal person has a connection to the bush, for example:
- Kumarah is a saltwater person - “[I] go for a swim every day because that is where you feel most with your spirit” Kumarah Kelly
- Even though the Country doesn’t look like it used to its still an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration in infrastructure and architecture and how we do things – Kumarah
- Country still belongs to the local community, not in a way that is reflected in legal documentation, but it “still belongs to us spiritually” – Kumarah

Resources

- Many generations have been able to come to this area seasonally as they did not deplete or overuse the resources that were available. A few hours of hunting were sufficient and when collecting resources such as yams they only took what they needed - Matt Syron
- The thick bushland we see on flat country is not what it would have been, and the local communities would have maintained the landscape to enable them to move through and gather supplies. They would have maintained movement paths and tracks. Now the land is overgrown and overrun with invasive species – Matt Syron
- This area would have had a large bird population, as well as fish, sharks and kangaroos– Matt Syron
- Land management techniques extended to hunting as well. Area of land were managed to create a space where kangaroos could feed, but where they had to slow down so it was easier to hunt.
- Still feels like we can harness some of the hunting skills of our ancestors as we followed the birds and smells to successfully fish kingfish – Matt Syron
- Artefacts
- Shells middens and stone artefacts, even a boomerang, have been found throughout the area. There was a huge midden in the area which had built up of 20,000 years and had 20,000 people contribute to it which shows you how long people have been using this area even with seasonal migration – Matt Syron

Dreamtime and totems

- Oral histories are an important way that Dreamings and lore are passed through the generations and much of this information is based on common sense and an understanding of the landscape – Kumarah Kelly.
- “We didn’t necessarily have the word totem in...more of a manifestation of people, we didn’t have totems in our languages” – Kumarah Kelly
- “The eagle is the totem of the Awabakal people, so you will see it everywhere, the University of Newcastle’s Wollotuka building from aerial view is an eagle” – Kumarah Kelly
- Most of the dreamtime stories and lore in this area are associated with the eagle including Birraban who turned into an eagle – Kumarah Kelly
- Dreamtime stories also included “Biame or Gora keeping an eye on us” – Matt Syron
- “Even without knowing the significance of the story, there is a magnificence in that” – Kumarah Kelly

Culture and the built environment

- It is important for kids to see their culture reflected in the built environment – Matt Syron
- “Who is going to be playing in the Basketball stadiums? All the mob from around here and to have them walk in there, how welcoming for them to say ‘that’s my family or my families line, my totem and my dad talked to these people about that.’” – Matt Syron
- “You see pictures of people around here, [Kumarah’s] got a daughter and grandmother painted on a wall out here, they are painting Lycett on the walls...[so people can say] ‘woah that’s here, that’s my family’” – Matt Syron
- It’s nice to see kites that are Black cockatoos and eagles – Kumarah Kelly
- Colour schemes could reference the colours in the surrounding environment reference abundant flora such as acacias or the colours of the wildlife – Matt Syron

Community engagement

- Not only do new developments need to reflect the culture, they need to include employment strategies and policies and use local artists and give back to the community. The Aboriginal dollar lasts a day, the average dollar lasts about 30 days – Kumarah Kelly
- “Give back to the local people because that’s how we are going to be able to build our wealth and I don’t mean wealth in money but wealth in connection” – Kumarah Kelly
- Colonisation has “muddied the waters” about clans, so stories will vary between people, but all stories still need to be considered – Matt Syron
- LALCs and cultural heritage officers need to be engaged earlier about development sites to determine if they are sacred – Kumarah Kelly
- “[Consultation] serves a purpose, paying the respects back to the earth...In a spiritual sense I wouldn’t want to misstep and not take care of Country cause the spirits may come and get me.” Kumara
- It’s important to reach out to people that aren’t in community groups, or go to events, but have a connection and be knowledge holders – Kumarah Kelly

- The way to avoid making projects tokenistic is to involve the local people – Kumarah Kelly
- “Everyone’s story has a matter of importance” – Matt Syron



Figure 28: Kumarah Kelly and Matt Syron of the Awabakal LALC

7.4.4 Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, ACHAR, February 2024

Artefact carried out an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) in 2024 as part of this project. The following Aboriginal cultural heritage values were ascertained from the ACHAR, previous studies and correspondence with the RAPs.

Cultural heritage value	Description	Source
Ongoing and long-term occupation of the region	Regional archaeological evidence suggests the availability of fresh water and resources indicates repeated and long-term Aboriginal occupation of the Newcastle area	AMBS 2005; Artefact 2016; Umwelt 2020
Hunter River or <i>Maiyaa</i>	Settlements were concentrated around the river and the coast, with abundant resources available to the local and neighbouring tribes of Aboriginal people	AMBS 2005
Styx Creek	Creek lines are of importance to Aboriginal people past and present as camping places and for resources	Attenbrow 2010
Hunting grounds	The area – across the flat lands the stretch from the Hunter River – used to be an area for hunting kangaroos and wallabies.	Matt Syron, Awabakal LALC 2023

Cultural heritage value	Description	Source
Tool manufacture	The Hunter River was a location for gathering of tuff pebbles, and primary, secondary and tertiary reduction took place along the shoreline for the production of stone tools	Umwelt 2020
History of occupation and landscape modification	Although colonial settlement and urban and industrial development has transformed the landscape, the spatial and stratigraphic impact of settlement requires better understanding and areas of intact terrain may be found throughout the “developed” landscape	AMBS 2005

7.4.5 Email consultation with BANL First Nations members, 31 January 2024

First Nations members of BANL were contacted on 31 January 2024 to ask if they would like to be consulted and contribute to the framework. The following Aboriginal cultural heritage values were included in responses received from five members:

- The importance of including Torres Strait Islander members in consultation: ‘as quite often it is underrepresented’ – Natalie Hickson, 31 January 2024
- Bradley Lombardi suggested that there was more flow between outdoor and indoor spaces so that the ‘space of the courts had an openness to flow, from the natural light and spaces outside into the building - so that building becomes joined to the natural space outside’. He was keen that there were less glass door partitions.
- Bradley also suggested ‘a flowing space with seating and restful spaces to sit and wait for games and interact with the building on a spiritual level, with use of sound and water’ - Bradley Lombardi, 31 January 2024
- It is important to get the views of junior First Nations members who are keen to contribute.

7.4.6 Consultation meeting with BANL First Nations members, 11 April 2024

First Nations members of BANL were then invited to a workshop on 11 April 2024 at the Dance Studio at BANL.

Attendees

- Annika and Nikki
- Gerald Bradshaw
- Alex Gaffikin (Artefact)
- Emma Ranck (Terras)
- Kate Hopoi (Terras)
- Phil Hendry (EJE)
- Matt Neason (BANL)
- Simone Larsen (APP)



Figure 29: First Nations BANL Workshop, 11 April 2024

7.4.6.1 First Nations cultural heritage values

First Nations cultural heritage values shared during the workshop included:

How can the new sports centre be welcoming to First Nations players and their families?

- Signage with a Welcome to Country
- Flags and visuals
- Local animals incorporated into jersey design
- Design places to allow players to have a chat or a yarn - these could be a circle or yarning circle. At the moment there aren't many places to socialise before or after matches and coming with friends or socialising with friends is an important motivator for First Nations players. It was also noted that these spaces are important for younger players as a way to socialise "away from parents" but in a safe space. The group were pleased to see these areas already in the designs and in particular use of outdoor spaces for social spaces.
- The group described outdoor spaces, green areas and pockets as a way to escape the over stimulation' of the inside areas. These could also be places to 'debrief'.
- The group mentioned having more Indigenous artwork on the walls and floors – like dot paintings
- There was a discussion about commemorating or celebrating First Nations basketball players, para-Olympians or other sportspeople in a hall of fame like:
 - Patty Mills
 - Claude Williams
 - Coombes

- A further discussion about the rich history of Newcastle basketball and it's Indigenous players. But it was also noted that the stadium will become one of the largest in NSW and therefore a facility for basketball players across NSW – so perhaps could commemorate First Nations players across NSW.
- It is important to acknowledge the local area but linked to the idea that the facility would be for players across NSW it was noted that there would be First Nations players coming from across NSW and it would be lovely to welcome them and make them feel welcome; acknowledging the different Countries they come from. One suggestion was that there will be 'lots of Indigenous kids coming from all over.' And there could be a visual showing people 'coming from different areas' e.g. Kempsey, Central Coast, Albury, Sydney South West, Maitland'. 'It could be a focal point of acknowledgement and acceptance'. 'A united space' and 'A welcoming space for people who are "emerging" and have just learned about their own cultural connections'.
- Court jump circles or the tip off areas (markings on basketball courts) could include First Nations designs
- Totems could be used in signage and designs
- 'It's important to get the local Land Council in' – Gerald Bradshaw
- Engage First Nations Trainees to connect with local First Nations Community and encourage young people to join the program
- Ensure to have Aboriginal staff as part of the Team. During the season or at programs such as camps it would be good to have Aboriginal staff present and ensure they are pointed out to Aboriginal kids that are participating. They could act as their peer or mentor during the program and check in with them on their well-being and goals for the season. Have dedicated 'check ins'.

What is BANL already doing well?

- Kristy Crooks was instrumental in getting together an Indigenous Advisory Working Group
- Newcastle Falcons Indigenous Round
- First Nations basketball camp
- The singlets for the Indigenous round by Kerri-Ann Taggart (see section 7.3)
- The sports centre is multicultural
- The group particularly thanked Matt Neason for the work he is doing at the stadium
- Equal representation of female participants and players

What Aboriginal cultural values should be included in the design?

- 'Family, mob, fairness, Country, earth'
- 'If you don't acknowledge the past, how can you move forward' – Gerald Bradshaw
- 'Acknowledgement and acceptance'

What facilities should there be?

- Natural gathering spaces
- Paintings / designs on the walls and floors

- Spaces to connect and be social after games and training.
- Incorporate local language, elements such as flora and fauna and other local values into design elements and creative features of the building e.g. play spaces and the show court. Example: Name play equipment after local animals.
- Incorporating Awabakal language into design and building elements
- Run local Aboriginal Activity Days and Programs. For example, invite Aboriginal players or artists to run programs (e.g. training) and activities (e.g. mural painting)
- Plantings and vegetation management and design should be carefully considered e.g. visibility from road and access.
- Images and representations of Aboriginal basketball players within the building entrance.

What other sports facilities could be seen as welcoming or best practice?

- Annika recommended the facilities at Homebush where she described how the pool had paintings on the walls, photos of people and names of the Olympians, and faces built into the walls
- Gerald Bradshaw recommended the WACA stadium as including things of local and cultural significance

WA Cricket is implementing a cultural narrative that infuses Aboriginal culture into the planning and design process in recognition of the traditional owners of the land on which the WACA Ground resides. The WACA Ground site has long been used to connect people through sharing food, stories and ceremony and is still today a place of coming together.²⁴

- Gerald Bradshaw described a place “about an hour out of Jindabyne” which had a wall of fame of local significant Aboriginal people

Other people to connect with

- Gerald Bradshaw recommended Darren Allie, Basketball NSW
- Gerald Bradshaw recommended Kristy Crooks (Kristy had been invited but was attending another Basketball meeting).

²⁴ WACA <https://www.wacricket.com.au/waca-ground/waca-ground-improvement-project>



Figure 30: Example of designs on a basketball court (Source: MSF Sports)

Women in sport

- The group were keen on encouraging more women into sport. Gerald Bradshaw mentioned the 'I am a girl' program run by Basketball NSW <https://www.bnsw.com.au/i-am-a-girl/>

I AM A GIRL I CAN DO ANYTHING

I AM A GIRL – is a program run by Basketball NSW that aims to create a platform to encourage females of all ages to play, referee, coach, officiate and administrate BASKETBALL. The program provides pathways and assists in the development of female role models.

This program is supported by the New South Wales Governments Strategic Focus on women and girls.²⁵



Figure 31: 'I am a girl – come 'n' try' logo (Source: Newcastle Basketball website)

²⁵ <https://www.bnsw.com.au/i-am-a-girl/>

Sponsorship

- The group discussed sponsors walls. It was described how it was important to support kids from poorer backgrounds – and what a big difference it makes. Discussed about how acknowledgment of donors and recipients could be done respectfully. Noted that some people are too proud to ask for help and some don't want to reach out. Mentioned that it can also be divisive and so some people don't want their names to be displayed when they donate as it becomes a topic of conversation. An anonymous way to acknowledge and thank people could also be considered.

7.5 Ongoing consultation

It is recommended that consultation be carried out by current and future project teams throughout the lifetime of the development of the site, during the SSDA stage and post-SSDA stages. Consultation and engagement could include:

- Engagement of Aboriginal owned businesses and organisations.
- Training and internships for early career Aboriginal professionals and students.
- Commissioning of artistic works from locally connected Aboriginal artists.
- Ongoing approvals from Aboriginal traditional knowledge holders.
- Cultural tours and walks on Country.
- Involvement of RAPs in potential archaeological and heritage work.

8.0 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

A summary of the Aboriginal cultural heritage values from historical research, previous consultation and ongoing consultation.

8.1 Awaba Country

Awaba (Awabakal) Country traditionally encompasses modern Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, and parts of the southern Hunter Region. Prior to colonisation, the land and waters now known as Newcastle were called *Mulubinba* – meaning ‘place of sea ferns’ – in the Awabakal language.²⁶ The New Lambton and Broadmeadow areas – and all the way up to Hamilton - used to be kangaroo and wallaby hunting ground.

8.2 Awabakal people

The Awabakal people are the traditional custodians of the land on which the site now stands and have cared for Country for tens of thousands of years. The Pembalong clan had Country from Newcastle to Sugar Loaf, and down to Lake Macquarie.

8.3 Language

For Aboriginal people, connection with Country is intrinsically connected to identity through language, cultural practices and long held relationship between people and the land. Awabakal language is a well recorded language with lots of resources, and organisations which can advise on language usage, like the Awabakal Language Program / Miromaa Aboriginal Language & Technology Centre which hosts the Awabakal Dictionary.

8.4 Caring for Country

Aboriginal people advocate for a focus on healing the living landscape and projects that encourage the return and flourishing of local plants and wildlife. Even when indoors there should be a connection to Country through light, air and water.

8.5 Songlines, stories and totems

The eaglehawk or wedge-tailed eagle has special significance for the Awabakal people. There are many Dreamings associated with the eagle including that of Birraban who turned into an eagle.

8.6 Histories of resilience

Newcastle was colonised very early on due to its resources of coal and timber, with devastating effects. Colonisation by the British had a huge impact on the Awabakal people including displacement, disease, murder and loss of Traditional Knowledge, with many Aboriginal people living in the area forced inland. However, a lot of knowledge of Awabakal history comes from colonisers and their diaries, adding important information to existing Aboriginal generational knowledge. Visitors should know they are on Awabakal Land.

²⁶ University of Newcastle Special Collections, 2013. “The many names of Newcastle – Mulubinba.” *Hunter Living Histories*, accessed on 8 July 2022 via <<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2013/08/30/the-many-names-of-newcastle-mulubinba/>>.

8.7 The value of Basketball

Basketball brings people together of all ages and backgrounds, and particularly for younger members of the Aboriginal community, it offers a safe space for them to socialise and celebrate their cultural heritage. Through basketball, the First Nations community can celebrate their heritage by acknowledging key people, and by incorporating significant designs into jerseys and onto the courts. Basketball is more than just a sport, it is a community which empowers its members.

8.8 Gathering together

Having culturally safe spaces to gather and socialise is important for First Nations people. These spaces can be used for ceremony, education and relaxation. A culturally safe space is one that is designed in consultation with First Nations people, reflects Aboriginal cultural values in a positive and inclusive way and makes Aboriginal cultural values visible.

9.0 PRACTICES

This section explores how key elements of Aboriginal knowledge systems can be aligned with cognitive concepts of thinking, feeling and behaving, which are fundamental in the Connecting with Country design process, and provides examples of actions that can be undertaken by project teams to reframe their design approach to be Country centred.

9.1 Thinking

'Communing with Country' describes a cultural practice used by Aboriginal people to connect with Country through their mind and spirit. The word 'communing' has been selected to convey a specific meaning: being in deep and intimate conversation with Country but not in a religious sense as some may understand it. Communing with Country is presented as an invitation to explore the deep connection Aboriginal people have with Country, demonstrated through various forms of cultural expression. Project teams can learn about cultural practice as a way to deepen cultural understanding, guided and mediated by Aboriginal people.

Activities:

- Engage in cultural awareness training,

9.2 Feeling

Understanding how emotions and feelings shape our responses to experiences and knowledge is an important step towards changing our approach. Where guided by Aboriginal people, being immersed in Country can awaken our senses and feelings and inform a deeper understanding of Country.

Activities:

- Walk on Country
- Participate in appropriate ceremony

9.3 Behaving

Being on Country refers to the experience of being connected to and living in harmony with Country. Being on Country requires an understanding and balancing of complex systems of knowledge sharing, interrelationships, protocols and behaviours.

For many Aboriginal people, being on Country is also an important part of their identity and sense of belonging. It provides a connection to their ancestors and other living entities, to their cultural heritage, and to the broader community of humans and living beings that inhabit Country. A vital part of being on Country is through knowledge-sharing practices to support the health and wellbeing of Country. Knowledge is contained and shared within the cultural expression of many Aboriginal peoples.

Activities

- Ensure Aboriginal people retain authorship and control of their cultural knowledge and intellectual property, and how it is shared with others.
- Invite Aboriginal people to co-design and co-manage projects rather than just being asked to provide their cultural knowledge, stories and insights to help develop projects.
- Respect Elders and family, and community protocols
- Listen and observe closely, and be modest
- Ensure the design process is collaborative and inclusive.

10.0 ACTIONS

This section discusses actions which can be undertaken throughout the lifecycle of a project to facilitate the shift from Human-centric to Country-centric development.

10.1 Form – Starting with Country

The preparation of this Connecting with Country Framework is fundamental to shifting to the Country-Centric design approach, as it identifies Aboriginal cultural values and provides practical means of ensuring these values are reflected in the development. The table below identifies actions that have been taken in the preparation of this report which demonstrate how the Country-centred approach has been achieved and provides recommendations for further actions required to start with Country.

Activity	Action	Outcomes and recommendations
Research and prepare	Locate previous Aboriginal cultural heritage and technical studies relevant to the project.	Outcomes - Artefact reviewed/summarised the consultation previously carried out in the Broadmeadow area. - Artefact has prepared an ACHAR for this project which reviewed other archaeological projects. Recommendation - All project teams should consult this report to understand the Aboriginal cultural values of the area (recommendations).
	Considering undertaking cultural awareness training, including identifying the Aboriginal stakeholders you will be working with	Outcomes - This Connecting with Country Framework was produced in accordance with consultation undertaken with the Awabakal LALC and First Nations members of BANL. - The project team undertook a walk on Country / Cultural awareness training on 19 January 2024. Recommendations - Cultural awareness training should be undertaken by all parties assisting in the preparation of the Project.
Allocate time and resources	Allocate sufficient time and resources for community to participate, ensuring there	Outcomes Artefact organised consultation with key stakeholders at suitable times and locations for attendees.

Activity	Action	Outcomes and recommendations
	is flexibility with timing and location of meeting	Recommendations Project teams should ensure that project timelines and budgets account for knowledge sharing workshops that are flexible.
Empower	Enable Aboriginal community to lead and guide the project from the outset and throughout the project lifecycle, including financial decision making	Outcomes - First Nations members of BANL responded positively to being asked to be involved. Recommendations - Any future consultation by the project team should be led by community. - Community should be involved as co-designers/co-managers where possible to ensure that community is involved in ongoing development and not just being asked to share knowledge.
Collaborate	Follow established community engagement protocols	Outcomes - The Awabakal LALC were approached first and protocols were discussed and agreed with them. - ICIP and other protocols were discussed at the start of the walk on Country / Cultural awareness training on 19 January 2024. Recommendations - To understand cultural protocol project teams should undergo cultural awareness training.
Share knowledge	Discuss with all involved how historic events and cultural narratives will be supported	Outcomes Through consultation and historical research this Connecting with Country Framework has identified key historical and cultural narratives. Example of how these narratives can be interpreted are described in section 11.

Activity	Action	Outcomes and recommendations
		Recommendations The client could consider developing a Heritage Interpretation and Art Plan, based on consultation and stakeholder review, to ensure cultural narratives are acknowledged and represented.
	Listen to community concerns about building development and how it will affect Country	Outcomes See section 7.0 for discussions held during consultation about the relationship between Country and development.
		Recommendations This report could be distributed to stakeholders to gather feedback on recommendations.
Respect ICIP	Establish ICIP protocols that will ensure knowledge and other intellectual property (e.g. Artwork) is protected and appropriately credited	Outcome An IP statement has been included at the beginning of this document.
		Recommendations Prepare ICIP protocols/contracts which empower and protect knowledge holders/artists.
	Keep confidential records of all engagement sessions. Report back to community on how ICIP is being used and seek permission before sharing information	Outcomes Sensitive information in this report will be redacted when made publicly available.
		Recommendations - Redact sensitive information when reports are made publicly available. - Establish protocols to ensure communication is maintained with community.
Create Employment Opportunities	Consider engaging an Aboriginal cultural advisor who has spatial design skills	Recommendations Consider engaging Aboriginal advisor as co-manager/co-designer.

10.2 Design – Imagining with Country

Activity	Action	Outcomes and recommendations
Design basics	Use first place names	Recommendations: - Start incorporating first place names into reports - Incorporate place names into design concepts.
	Connect to broader landscape settings	Recommendations Consult with Aboriginal knowledge holders when conducting and developing environmental management recommendations to encourage the maintenance of this knowledge and improve the health of ecosystems.
	Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage Acknowledge shared history	Outcomes - See consultation in Section 7.0 to identify Aboriginal cultural values of the area. - Preparation of ACHAR (Artefact 2024). Recommendations - The client could consider preparation of a Heritage Interpretation and Art Plan to identify ways of celebrating Aboriginal cultural heritage values at the site.
Design opportunities	Learning from traditional Aboriginal architecture	Outcomes: - See Section 11.7 design realisations for examples. Recommendations - Engage Aboriginal community members as co-designers/managers, with spatial design training to develop design concepts based on traditional Aboriginal design forms. - Further consultation could be organised to ensure the Aboriginal community approves of design concepts.

Activity	Action	Outcomes and recommendations
	Supporting living systems: Earth, Water and sky	Recommendations - Environmental assessment recommendations and design concepts should be prepared in light of knowledge shared by community that promote healthy Country. - Refer to native species list in 15.0 when designing landscaping.
	Reawakening memory	Recommendations The client could consider preparation of a Heritage Interpretation and Art Plan to identify ways of celebrating Aboriginal cultural heritage values at the site.
	Indirect connections	Recommendations Respect important view lines when preparing design concepts as these may have an impact on building height and location.

10.3 Delivery – Shaping Country

Activity	Action	Outcomes and recommendations
Construct with Country	Consider how the building of the place will become part of Country once completed	Outcomes: Preparation of an ACHAR (Artefact 2024).
	When significant items are discovered during subsoil investigations, collaborate with local Aboriginal community to determine culturally appropriate handling, repatriation and reburial of any ancestral remains or artefacts	Recommendations - Prepare and follow an Unexpected Finds Protocol as per recommendations in the ACHAR (Artefact 2024). - Consider how the project can design with Country, see recommendations in 11.7.
	Undertake a skills audit of the community before construction	Recommendations Provide training and employment opportunities for community.

Activity	Action	Outcomes and recommendations
Celebrate	Plan for ceremony. Look for opportunities to involve the community throughout the development process, such as -Invitations to perform a Welcome to Country ceremony at important milestone events, noting that a Welcome to Country needs to be done by Traditional Custodians -Invitation to attend official openings	Recommendations • Develop an engagement plan to be implemented by developers/the local LGA to facilitate ongoing communication and involvement opportunities with the community.

10.4 Maintain – Caring for Country

Activity	Action from framework	Outcomes and recommendations
Provide access to Country	Support the return of community to Country by providing access to sites where projects are being developed and delivered	Recommendations • Ensure the design concept includes a culturally safe space where First Nations members and families can meet and socialize.
Monitor and evaluate	Undertake post-occupancy evaluations to establish project success and areas for improvement	Recommendations: • Undertake post-occupancy evaluations.
	Maintain ongoing relationships with community	Recommendations: • Continue First Nations engagement.
	Continue to develop and strengthen cultural awareness	Recommendations: • Develop cultural awareness projects which can be implemented throughout the development to the non-Aboriginal community.

11.0 OUTCOMES FOR COUNTRY

The outcomes of a Country-centred approach are presented in this section as practical indicators of success, using the categories described in the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework.

11.1 Healthy Country

Healthy Country describes healthy, interconnected natural ecosystems, supported by regenerative practices based on Aboriginal knowledge.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Recommendations
Healthy Ecology	High biodiversity is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, including those that are rare or endangered	Landscape plans should be developed which incorporate native flora and encourage the regeneration of endangered species.
	Clean air and water are free of pollutants	Develop clean energy plans/conditions for development.
	Porous developments allow rainwater to soak the ground as well as flow freely across the land into original waterways	Conduct a Hydrology study and implement designs which seek to manage water through the development and provide access to waterways in open space areas.
	Ecological systems are resilient to impacts from drought, floods and fires, as well as human-induced disturbances such as habitat destruction and pollution	Implement native planting schemes that are resilient or thrive in the environmental conditions, based on advice from Aboriginal community members (see native plant list provided by Tracy Howie in Appendix 2).
The physical form of Country remains recognisable and restored where possible	Alternative solutions are found to excavating, cutting into and reshaping the ground	Consider using colour schemes that reference the surrounding environment, including the colours of the surrounding geology, plants and wildlife.
	Interference with natural water systems is minimal	Conduct a Hydrology study with the assistance of community.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Recommendations
	Original landscapes are restored and protected, and isolated pockets are reconnected	Landscape plans should be developed which incorporate native flora which encourage the regeneration of endangered species.

11.2 Healthy community

Built environment projects can provide opportunities for employment and capacity building within the Aboriginal community, and support Aboriginal communities' connection to their cultural identity, which supports positive health and wellbeing.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Recommendations
Strong cultural identity, connected to place and community	Aboriginal community sees their cultural heritage appropriately reflected in the design of places where they live and work	- Develop a Heritage Interpretation and Art Plan. - Engage local aboriginal artists and designers.

Cultural safety	Aboriginal people feel safe, respected, and supported in how they express their cultural identity	- Continue to consult with local Aboriginal people to avoid projects being 'tokenistic' - Consider how the project design can use Aboriginal designs to welcome First Nations basketball players from across NSW: "Whose is going to be playing in the Basketball stadiums? All the mob from around here and to have them walk in there, how welcoming for them...that's my family or my families line, my totem and my dad talked to these people about that" – Matt Syron. - Ensure Aboriginal consultation is conducted throughout the design process to provide advice on creating culturally safe spaces.
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Aboriginal consultants with spatial designs expertise aren't burdened by the expectation to represent the voice of many within Aboriginal communities

- Ensure consultation is ongoing.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Recommendations
Relief for Aboriginal communities who are fatigued by the workload imposed on them by project teams seeking their advice on Country	A strategic plan or register is established to identify technical and cultural skills of Aboriginal community	- Engage local Aboriginal artists – Kumarah Kelly. - Develop employment strategies and policies for local Aboriginal people
	Community is involved early in the decision-making about which projects they are best placed to work on	Ensure consultation is ongoing.
	Availability and choice of Aboriginal consultants with cultural and spatial design expertise is increased	Employ Aboriginal specialists when required e.g. see Supply Nation.
Training	Training is provided to develop communities' spatial design skills and understanding of planning and design processes	Identify opportunities for training.
Employment opportunities	Jobs are created that allow people to stay connected to community and Country	Develop employment strategies and policies for local Aboriginal people
	Employment opportunities are provided throughout all stages of project lifecycles	
	Aboriginal businesses are supported in the project procurement strategy	Prioritize Aboriginal owned businesses where available.

11.3 Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage

It is critical that Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected in the built environment, both through the design and development of projects, and by acknowledging and respecting the rights of Aboriginal people and community over their cultural intellectual property.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Outcomes and recommendations
Aboriginal cultural advisers guiding project teams and clients to better connect with Aboriginal community	Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected and celebrated within planning and design outcomes.	Continue to implement the Connecting with Country framework. "Throughout the project "[connecting with Country] serves a purpose, paying the respects back to the earth.... We know we need to develop, we need infrastructure but we need to pay respect to the land first and foremost" – Kumarah Kelly.
	Aboriginal community actively participate in shared decision-making processes related to precinct/regional planning or program workstreams, particularly those that significantly impact Country they are responsible to care for.	

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Outcomes and recommendations
Project teams and processes for project delivery respect ICIP	Aboriginal community endorses the project outcomes and behaviour of the project team.	Ensure Aboriginal stakeholders endorse the ICIP in this Connecting with Country framework through ongoing consultation.
Aboriginal language placenames are used	Aboriginal placenames are used for parks and streets. Dual naming, or returning the original name, is used for natural features	Consider the usage of the Wedge Tailed Eagle in designs, in discussion with stakeholders - "The eagle is the totem of the Awabakal people, so you will see it everywhere, the University of Newcastle Wollotuka Building from aerial view is an eagle" Kumarah Kelly.
Access to Country is provided	Access to Country enables community to practice ceremony and undertake obligations to care for Country.	- Design places to allow players and families to have a chat or a yarn - these could be a gathering space or yarnning circle. - Ensure there are opportunities to include Aboriginal ceremonies such as Welcome to Country ceremonies, and spaces developed where community can conduct cultural practices.

11.4 Cultural competency

Implementing the Connecting with Country Framework through built environment projects provides educational opportunities for project teams, clients, and the public, to develop a deeper cultural awareness and respect for Aboriginal people and culture.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Outcomes and recommendations
Cultural competency Ongoing cultural awareness training develops skills and competency in delivering Country centred design projects	Workplace culture supports training, immersion and learning for built environment professionals, including individuals, project teams and across agencies.	Project team members participate in walks on Country and workshops with stakeholders.
	Cultural awareness training is embedded into continuing professional development. Requirements (e.g. NSCA)	All project team members undertake cultural awareness training.
	Proof of cultural awareness training is required in procurement contracts	Specify this condition in contracts.

11.5 Better places

Adopting a Country-centred approach creates better places, informs sustainable designs, integrates with the broader landscape to form place-based design responses, and promotes strong community engagement to create welcoming and accessible places.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Outcomes and recommendations
Planning and design projects create places that are connected with Country	Project sites are connected to broader landscapes beyond property or project boundaries Where possible, locally sourced, sustainable building materials are used; they have a relationship with and belong to the Country they come from.	Project teams should consider how their work can respond to Connecting with Country recommendations in this report. "Even though country doesn't necessarily look like it used to, it's still an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration in infrastructure and architecture and how we do things" – Kumarah Kelly.

What it looks like	Indicators for success	Outcomes and recommendations
	First placenames guide design and planning outcomes: placemaking, dual naming and wayfinding.	Consider the usage of First placenames within the Sports Centre
	The memory of significant cultural, historic and natural events can be read and traced within Country's landscape	Follow the heritage and archaeological recommendations in the ACHAR (Artefact 2024)
Planning and design outcomes support living cultural practices	Projects support ongoing opportunities for on-Country tours, ceremony, and sourcing Indigenous food and materials.	- Opportunities to develop education programs around Aboriginal cultural values that could be incorporated into the Basketball centre programs. - Continue to develop First Nations rounds and events.
Original landscapes are repaired or restored	Landscapes are regenerated.	Consider how habitats can be revitalised through landscaping around the Sports Centre. 'So much of the natural environment is overrun by invasive species' – Matt Syron.

2. DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY

11.6 Design principles

This section introduces the Designing with Country design principles identified during consultation with First Nations knowledge holders. Six general design principles have been synthesized, and these design principles should be considered at an early stage in the project's development. The icon artwork was designed by Saretta Fielding, Wonnarua woman of the Hunter Valley.



1. Acknowledge Awaba/Awabakal Country

Acknowledge Awaba Country –the location of the study area used to be a swamp, and part of a wide flat area of kangaroo and wallaby hunting grounds.



2. Acknowledge the Awaba/Awabakal people

Provide acknowledgement, interpretation and resources about the Awaba people. Learning about and having access to Awabakal cultural heritage is important for Awabakal people, as well as First Nations people visiting from other Countries and non-Aboriginal people.



3. Use Awabakal language

Use Awabakal Language - for example in reports, documentation and discussions, and by naming key spaces and places in Awabakal Language. Translate wayfinding and interpretive signage into Awabakal Language with Awabakal text prioritised. Use of language should be carried out in consultation with Awabakal language knowledge holders.



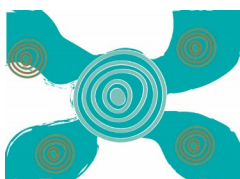
4. Acknowledge other First Nations peoples

Create culturally safe spaces that acknowledge and welcome other First Nations peoples that will come to the Sports Stadium, especially First Nations basketball players and teams from across NSW.



5. Heal the living landscape

Reconnect site users and local communities to Country through initiatives like access to natural light, inclusion of bush regeneration, native plantings, bushtucker plants or community gardens in proposed landscaping. A list of plant species native to the area is included in Appendix B.



6. Create gathering spaces

Create indoor and outdoor spaces for players, friends and families to gather, connect and socialise. Consider creating natural, calm and reflective places for relaxation.

11.7 Examples of Design/Interpretation Realisations

11.7.1 Introduction

This section showcases some possible ways that the Outcomes could be realised in the architecture, landscaping and interpretation of the site.

11.7.2 Acknowledgement of/Welcome to Country

A key method of communicating the importance of Country to audiences at the site is by providing a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country message. A Welcome to Country is given by the traditional custodians/knowledge holders of the area welcoming people to their land, while an Acknowledgement of Country is a sign of respect to the traditional owners of the land stated by the asset holder. The examples below demonstrate a successful and eye-catching way to Acknowledge Country through graphics, language, light and sculpture.

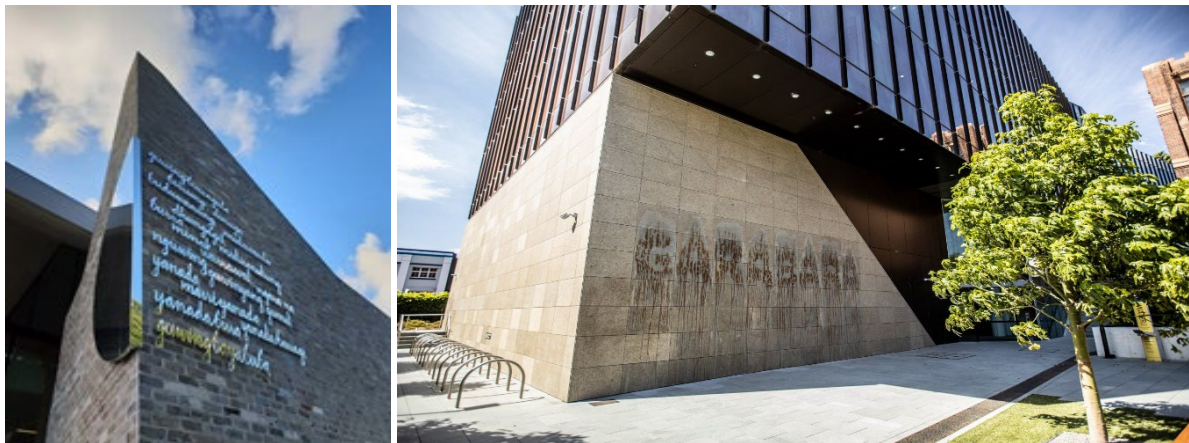


Figure 32: Left: Marrickville Library Acknowledgement of Country; Right: University of Sydney Acknowledgement of Country



Figure 33: Left: Heart of Country by Damian Vick, Sculpture Down the Lachlan; Right: Bendigo AoC sculpture

11.7.3 Integration of Indigenous designs and forms into built environment

Creative practices relating to place-making and the built form are powerful devices to incorporate and reflect the heritage values and stories of a site in a new development. Heritage values embedded within the site can be expressed through innovative architectural design responses for new developments, providing a visual exploration of the history of each site. This can be realised through the form of new buildings, integrated applications within new developments and the shaping of the landscape's geometry.

This interpretive media option is an effective approach to integrating Aboriginal cultural values into the built form. Designs that echo traditional forms, spaces and narratives and their contemporary interpretations are increasingly being integrated within new developments worldwide, sending strong, respectful messages about the timeless links between Aboriginal people and the landscape, and allowing for reflection of contemporary connections to the land. The examples below demonstrate the way design and form can be used to represent Country.



Figure 34: Left: Dixon Library, Armidale (Warwick Keen); Right: Lake Condah Mission Keeping Place



Figure 35: Left: Bendigo TAFE (Mandy Nicolson); Right: Blacktown Community Hub (Robyn Coughlan)



Figure 36: Left: Lily pily and footprints, Redfern (Blak Douglas); Right: Westconnex ventilation facility, St Peters (Esme Timbery and Marilyn Russell)

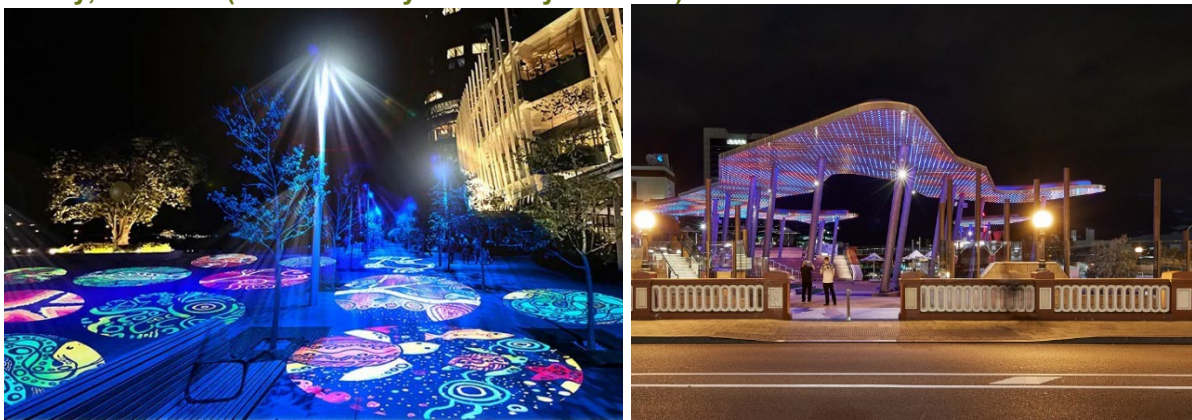


Figure 37: Left: 'The Gallery,' Vivid Sydney (Mandylights with Aboriginal community groups); Yagan Square, Perth (IRedale Peterson Hook Architects)



Figure 38: City Rail Link Auckland: plans for new stations and plazas developed with Maori Mana Whenua (tribal groups), Basalt stone cladding floor to ceiling representing the earth and the nearby volcano terraces

11.7.4 Landscape geometry and plantings

Interpretive landscaping is an effective approach to evoke past structures, gardens and landscapes within public and private developments. Landscaping devices, including use of turf and hardstand, geometry and shapes, use of water and planting certain species, can create an immersive space for site users that gives a feeling of being surrounded by heritage.

Plantings of species that were in the area prior to European arrival, and therefore part of the Indigenous landscape experienced by the local Aboriginal community, is a powerful interpretive approach for landscaping. Planting patterns, where trees and understory plants were clumped rather than planted in lines, are preferred to enhance the naturalistic feel and to echo Country. The examples below were developed in consultation with Aboriginal landscapers and green teams.

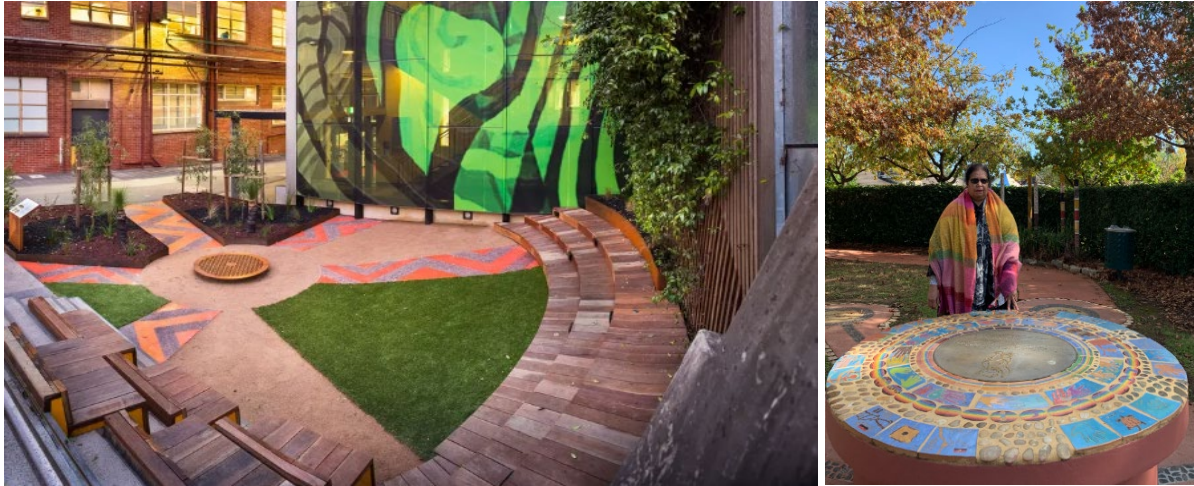


Figure 39: Left: Ngarara Place, RMIT University (Charles Solomon and Greenaway Architects); Right: Aboriginal Children's Memorial Garden, Westmead, (Bronwyn Bancroft and Rita Williams)



Figure 40: Left: Community Native Garden, Redfern (Yerrabingin); Right: Yarning Circle, Curtin University (Noel Nannup and Simon Forrest)

11.7.5 Ground plane elements

Ground plane elements embedded in public domain areas are a subtly effective heritage interpretation medium. Paving colours, metal inlays or sandblasted patterns may be installed into ground planes, forming artworks, tracing the footprints of former structures or containing small 'bites' of textual information, quotes or dates creating a narrative as paths are traversed.

Embedding Aboriginal design elements into the ground plane of a site can connect a new development directly to Country, providing a tangible aesthetic reference to significant physical, social, or spiritual features of the land. By installing such ground plane elements into outdoor spaces, a strong visual message about the Aboriginal heritage of the site can be created.

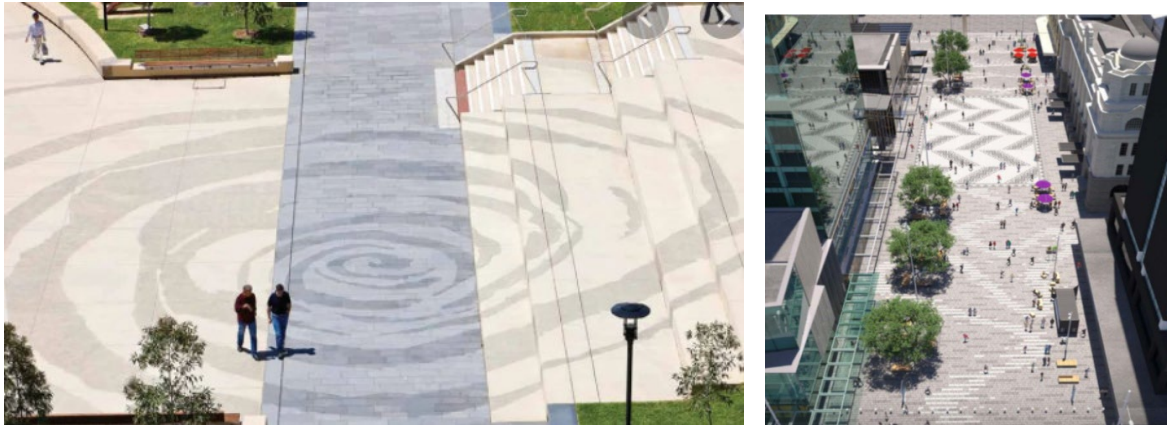


Figure 41: Left: Wingarra-Murra, sandblasted paving design, University of Sydney; right: Auckland Metro

11.7.6 Naming/Use of language

For Aboriginal people, connection with Country is intrinsically connected to identity through language, cultural practices and long held relationship between people and the land. Using Aboriginal words or phrases in audio recordings, as elements in the paving, to name key features in new developments or as dual naming for streets and public spaces is an interpretive option that recognises Aboriginal cultural heritage values. All language usage should be done in consultation with Aboriginal knowledge holders.



Figure 42: Left: Awabakal language sculpture, Newcastle; Right: Awabakal Dictionary, Community Edition (Miromaa)



Figure 43: Left: Darug language incorporated into building and seating, St Leonards Health Centre Centre: Darumbal language stairs, Yeppoon' Right: Edge of Trees, Museum of Sydney, Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley

11.7.7 Gathering spaces and seating

New developments provide an opportunity to integrate heritage interpretation into buildings and public spaces, with heritage details incorporated into functional elements such as stairways, seating, shelters, balustrades and screens. As well as being essential elements of public space, these items can be canvases for heritage content.

Embedding heritage interpretation elements within the seating, ground plane, and shade structures within gathering spaces provides a rich context and points of engagement and conversation. Patterning, text, or graphic image-based seating inserts are effective forms of interpretation, strategically positioned to engage people who have some time to pause, read and reflect absorbing messages and stories about the site. Similarly, utilising overhead elements such as canopies, roofs, shopfront awnings or shade structures for portraying images or Aboriginal designs are opportunities for unique expressions of a destination's heritage.



Figure 44: Left: Aboriginal motifs in concrete seating; Right: seating elements, Champion Lakes, Perth



Figure 45: Left: Hart's Mill Mudlangga to Yertabulti Track, Port Adelaide; Right: Sea eagle shelter at Kau Ma Park overlooking Hunter Wetlands

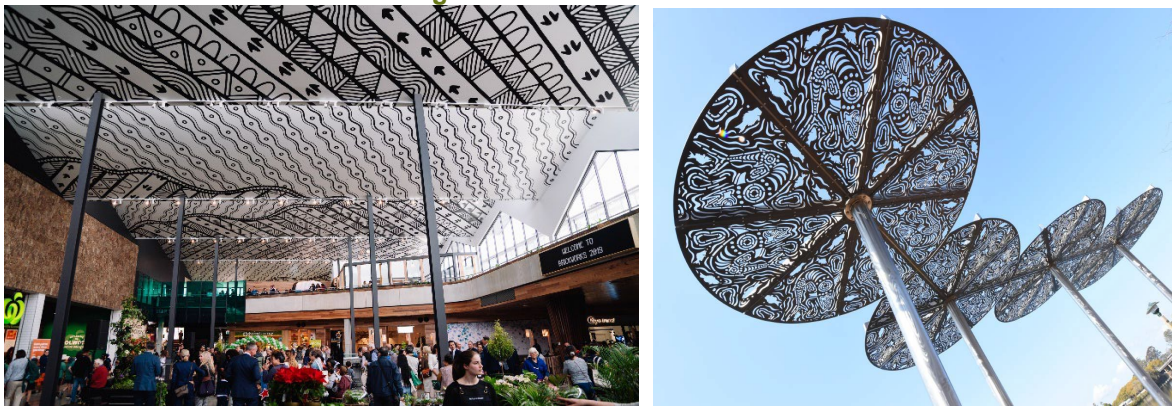


Figure 46: Left: Burwood Brickworks by Balarinji, Mandy Nicholson; Right: Shade shelters by Russell Saunders and Lee Black, Queen Elizabeth Park Taree

11.7.8 Interpretive panels

Well-designed and written interpretive panels are an excellent media for conveying key stories and rich narratives in an effective, accessible manner. If integrated into the design of a site, they can be strategically located to gain appropriate exposure. Interpretive panels, as text-based media, are ideally suited to tell more details of site-specific stories providing contextual information in a succinct and engaging manner.

Panel text can encourage visitors to look more closely at their surroundings or text can pose questions to stimulate conversations. They should be located in spaces which allow for a longer dwell time or in natural pause points such as seating areas. When used across a site, panels should have a consistent 'look and feel' so audiences know they are encountering heritage information.



Figure 47: Left: Panels in the landscape, Cadi Jam Ora Garden (Royal Botanical Gardens); Right: Tiddalik story panel, West Kotara (Terri-Lee Darcy, Aunty Phyllis Darcy, Donna Gayford McLaren)



Figure 48: QR codes on panels, linking to website information



Figure 49: Koonibba Roosters wall of portraits (Source: The Age)²⁷

²⁷Flanagan, 2016, Portraits of past and present <https://www.theage.com.au/sport/afl/portraits-of-past-and-present-koonibba-roosters-players-reveals-sporting-lineage-20160728-gqfx2y.html>

12.0 CONCLUSION

This Connecting with Country Framework for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre has been prepared to align with the principles and guidelines of the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework (2023) and associated best practice documents.

This report has been prepared in consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders from the Newcastle area and provides a vision and design principles to embed Country into the future development of the site.

It is recommended that EJE consider key elements from this Connecting with Country report within the future planning for the site including:

- considering the Design Principles within the design stages for current SSDA and future development of the site.
- facilitating ongoing consultation with key First Nations stakeholders during subsequent key development stages.
- integrating meaningful, co-designed interpretation/artwork/landscape elements within the design development stages of this project, through the development of a Heritage Interpretation and Public Art Plan that requires consultation with key stakeholders
- arranging Cultural Awareness Training for current and future project team members
- updating Aboriginal stakeholders on the progress of the current SSDA and future development of the site.

The preparation of this document marks a strong commitment by Basketball Association of Newcastle Limited and EJE to meaningfully engage with local Aboriginal stakeholders on this current SSDA and future development of the site, and provides a benchmark for future projects aligned with the Connecting with Country principles.

Artefact would like to thank all stakeholders for their generosity in sharing their cultural knowledge during this project.

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14.0 APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION LOG

Stakeholder	Contacted by	Details	Date	Issues discussed	Project response
Newcastle Basketballs' First Nations Basketball Working group	Roimatta Selway (Roi) – BB, APP Group, EJ on committee, Kids play Architects Artefact BB Heritage	Online meeting	7 November 2023	Discussed project and connecting with Country.	Attendees made recommendations which have been incorporated into the framework.
	Kristy Crooks – Hunter New England LHD – on the BB board, co-chair of the WG Gerald Bradshaw – Office of Sport Aboriginal development officer				
	Gerald Bradshaw	Email	22 May 2024	Sent copy of report for review	
Awabakal LALC	Kumarah Kelly and Peter Townsend	Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow
	Kumarah Kelly		Walk on Country	18 January 2024	Cultural Heritage Values for Awabakal Land
	Matt Syron	Artefact Heritage	Phone / Email	11 January 2024	Discussion about location of Walk on Country – Hexham Swamp
			Walk on Country	18 January 2024	Cultural Heritage Values for Awabakal Land Participants carried out cultural awareness

Stakeholder	Contacted by	Details	Date	Issues discussed	Project response
	Kumarah Kelly and Matt Syron	Artefact Heritage	Email	21 May 2024	Checking draft report
	Mandy Kelly	Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow
University of Newcastle	John Maynard	Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow
Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	Kerrie Brauer	Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow
		Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Approved inclusion of Traditional Knowledges and historical information already shared Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report
Awabakal & Guringai	Tracey Howie	Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow
		Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Approved inclusion of Traditional Knowledges and historical information already shared Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report
Saretta Art & Design	Saretta Fielding	Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow
		Artefact Heritage	Email and Phone	16 November 2023 and 28 November	Approved inclusion of Traditional Knowledges and historical information already shared Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report

Stakeholder		Contacted by	Details	Date	Issues discussed	Project response
		Artefact Heritage	Email	23 April 2024	Asked if can use iconography and artwork	Saretta approved use of iconography and artwork in report
Lower Hunter	David Ahoy	Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	16 November 2023	Approved inclusion of Traditional Knowledges and historical information already shared	Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report
	Robert 'Bob' Syron	Artefact Heritage	Phone	17 November 2023	Discussed stakeholders – Matt Syron / LALC	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	1 December 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	18 December 2023	Approved inclusion of Traditional Knowledges and historical information already shared	Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report
Former-Darokinjung LALC Heritage Officer	Uncle 'Gavi' Kevin Duncan	Artefact Heritage	Email	1 December 2023	Asked if can reuse Cultural Heritage Values from project at Broadmeadow	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	12 December 2023	Approved inclusion of Traditional Knowledges and historical information already shared	Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report

Stakeholder		Contacted by	Details	Date	Issues discussed	Project response
Worimi LALC	Andrew Smith	Artefact Heritage	Email	19 December 2023	Request to see if would like to be consulted	
BANL	First Nations Members	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Request for expressions of interest	Expressions received and interested parties invited to further consultation
Karuah Kinnections	Michelle Perry	Artefact Heritage	Email and phone	December 2023	Requested information about Karuah Kinnections	Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report
BANL First Nations Members	Natilie Hickson	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	Natalie shared some ideas in her email which were incorporated into this report
BANL First Nations Members	Jason Roberts	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	
BANL First Nations Members	Malakye Blair	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	

Stakeholder		Contacted by	Details	Date	Issues discussed	Project response
		Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	
BANL First Nations Members	Bradley Lombardi Member Worimi LALC	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	Bradley shared some ideas in his email which were incorporated into this report
BANL First Nations Members	Natasha Herron	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	
BANL First Nations Members	Ashley Williams, Both her children play basketball at the current Newcastle Basketball stadium – ex CEO of Birraban LALC mailto:ahuddo87@hotmail.com	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	
BANL First Nations Members	Kristy Crooks	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest - keen interest in environmental psychology and culture.	

Stakeholder		Contacted by	Details	Date	Issues discussed	Project response
	Newcastle Basketballs' First Nations Basketball Working group	Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited and accepted invite	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	21 May 2024	Checking draft report	
BANL First Nations Members	Gerald Bradshaw Newcastle Basketballs' First Nations Basketball Working group member	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	
		Artefact Heritage	Workshop	11 April 2024	Cultural heritage values, design of the Sports Centre	Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report
		Artefact Heritage	Email	21 May 2024	Checking draft report	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	22 May 2024	Confirmed receipt and sent report on to Newcastle Basketballs' First Nations Basketball Working group	
BANL First Nations Members	Nikki Burdack / Annika Burdack (Annika is a basketball player)	Matt Neason, BANL and Artefact Heritage	Email	31 January 2024	Expressed interest	
		Artefact Heritage	Email	1 March 2024	Discussions about engaging young Aboriginal members	

Stakeholder	Contacted by	Details	Date	Issues discussed	Project response
	Artefact Heritage	Email	2 April 2024	Invited to workshop	
	Artefact Heritage	Workshop	11 April 2024	Cultural heritage values, design of the Sports Centre	Cultural Heritage Values incorporated into report
	Artefact Heritage	Email	21 and 22 May 2024	Checking draft report	Artefact Heritage

15.0 APPENDIX B: SPECIES LIST

Species list prepared by Tracey Howie (Awabakal and GuriNgai Pty and Wannangini Pty Ltd and Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation) of plants which are native to the Newcastle area, common in swamp lands and/or are bush tucker:

Species	Category	Cultural information
Swamp mahogany	Swamp	Great timber for tool making, shade tree
Smooth barked apple (Angophora costata)	Newcastle	Resign used for glue, woman's tree
Cassuarina/She oak	Swamp	Needle foliage used as reptile repellent around camp area (snakes don't like getting the needles stuck in their scales), new foliage smoked on fire to discourage yulpin (mosquitoes)
Cabbage tree palm	Newcastle, swamp, bush tucker	Leaves used for weaving/string and shelters, edible at core of plant but extraction of edible parts will kill the plant.
Xanthorrea (grass tree)	Newcastle, bush tucker	Culturally significant -long stork used for spears, making fire sticks and womeras, grasses used for weaving/string, resign used for gluing, staining and lacquering, plant has an edible core but extracting this will kill the plant. Flowers on the stork are great for flavouring water or sucking off the nectar when in bloom.
Coachwood	Newcastle	Good tool making timber, shade tree
Banksia	Newcastle, swamp, bush tucker	Cones used as candles, nectar for flavouring water or sucking straight from the flower
Flannel flowers	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Boronias	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Coral pea	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Wax flowers	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible

Species	Category	Cultural information
Prickly shaggy pea	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Mint bush (variety of species)	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Dianella (blue flax lily) (variety of species)	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Kangaroo grass	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Native violet	Newcastle, ground flowers	Most are edible
Gynea lilly ('minmi' in Awabakal language)	Newcastle, swamp, bush tucker	Culturally significant, great source of water (catches the morning dew too), leaves used for weaving/string, edible flower, long stork used for fishing spears (it's buoyant)
Melaleuca species (paper barks)	Swamp, bush tucker	Bark sheets used fore medicinal purposes, lining bedding, wrapping foods, nectar used for flavouring water
Tea tree species	Newcastle, swamp, bush tucker	Used medicinally, used for antiseptic and anaesthetic, flavour water with flowers when in bloom (not all species are safe to consume)
Grevillia species	Newcastle, swamp, bush tucker	Nectar used for flavouring water (not all species are safe to consume)
Bottle brush	Newcastle, bush tucker	Nectar used to flavour water (not all species are safe to consume)
Corkwood	Newcastle	Culturally significant, highly toxic if not used correctly
Pine leaf Geebung	Newcastle	Mixing the red fleshy bark that's beneath the outer blackish, flaky bark, with breast milk, then applied to severe skin infections (staphylococcal), when ripe, the fruits are delicious and liken a custard apple.



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