

Project Number: HN001183-B



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY – BERRIMA GAOL – PHASES 1 & 2

Draft 28/7/2025

REPORT TO THE BLUE SOX GROUP

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Executive Summary

Heritage Now Pty Ltd (Heritage Now) was engaged by the Blue Sox Group to manage and oversee the integration of the NSW governments Connecting with Country requirements for State Significant Developments as outlined in the Government Architect NSW Connecting with Country (good practice guide) publication into the proposed adaptive re-use development of the historical Berrima Gaol (former Berrima Correctional Centre) located at 2-4 Argyle Street, Berrima NSW. As part of this Heritage Now will prepare a final report into the outcomes of the Connecting with Country process followed. The property is in the Berrima Heritage Conservation Area (Wingecarribee Council Local Environmental Plan 2010, Item Nos I-109, I-110, I-484) and on the State Heritage Register (Listing #00807, 02/04/1999).

The aim of the Connecting with Country process is to identify opportunities for Indigenous input into the overall design. It is separate to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment which responds to the impact assessment requirements of the planning process. The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment is being prepared by Austral Archaeology.

This Connecting with Country consultation will be completed as a four-phase process (Phase 1 and 2 prior to development consent and Phases 3 and 4 to be done post development consent. Phases 1 and 2 have been completed and are documented in this report.

Key Messages

Key messages from the consultation include:

- History of Aboriginal incarceration to be installed INSIDE the gaol
- Aboriginal public art, interpretation and traditional motifs to be placed/installed OUTSIDE the gaol
- Aboriginal healthy country principles incorporated within natural landscaping outside the gaol, in the sustainability plan, in the building design and water management on the site.
- Aboriginal healthy country principles of seasonality within the gaol gardens
- Connection with Wingecarribee maintained through public viewing platform.
- Indigenous procurement policy has been developed for the project

Recommendations

The below recommendations are made in relation to the project.

Recommendation 1 – Artwork and Architectural Elements

Post approval, Indigenous Art procurement is to be undertaken by the client in accordance with the Indigenous procurement policy outlined in this Connecting with Country report and in consultation with the Aboriginal community members to contributed to the report. This is to include development of the artist brief, public art strategy, selection of artist/s and a public art plan of management. The Indigenous procurement policy also applies to Aboriginal designs for the architectural elements.

Recommendation 2 – Interpretation Panels

Post approval, content for interpretation panels is to be developed with the Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report. This is to include further research into the history of Aboriginal incarceration in the gaol.

Recommendation 3 - Landscaping

Post approval, landscaping in the native gardens and finalising plant species is to be undertaken in consultation with the Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report.

Implementation Plan

Artwork and Architectural Elements (Recommendation 1)

The client is to implement the Indigenous procurement policy post approval. The client is to engage Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report for consultation on the artwork and architectural elements, but may also do so for other aspects of the project as needed. A heritage/public art specialist is also to be engaged to undertake consultation and documentation for the installations and allowances are to be made within the architectural and landscape architect team for the integration of these elements into the overall site program.

Interpretation Panels (Recommendation 2)

The client is to engage Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report for consultation on the content of the interpretation panels, along with a heritage/interpretation consultant.

Landscaping (Recommendation 3)

The client is to engage Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report for consultation on the selection of plant species for native gardens, in collaboration with the landscaping team and the client.

Outcomes – Improving Health and Wellbeing of Country

As outlined in Section 2.1 a key outcome of Connecting with Country includes Healthy Country - healthy interconnected natural ecosystems, supported by regenerative and sustainable practices. This has been achieved by incorporating:

- Aboriginal healthy country principles incorporated within natural landscaping outside the gaol, in the sustainability plan, in the building design and water management on the site, and
- Aboriginal healthy country principles of seasonality within the gaol gardens.

Healthy community has been addressed by acknowledging the past Aboriginal incarceration inside the gaol, but also public art dedicated to reconciliation. No physical evidence for traditional Aboriginal occupation was identified in the Project Area, however, traditional cultural heritage connections to the Wingecarribee have been maintained through the viewing platform, providing public views from the Project Area to the Wingecarribee. Cultural competency and better places will be achieved through the Indigenous Procurement Policy.

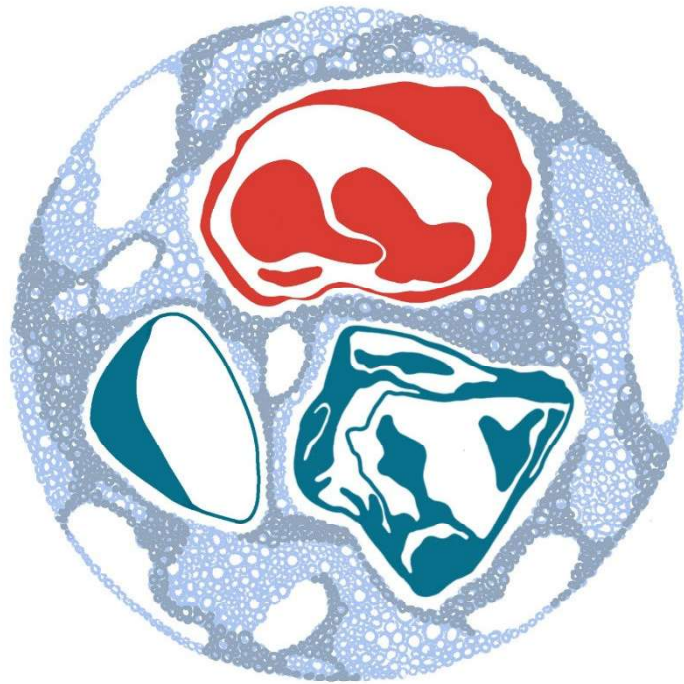
Acronyms and Definitions

Acronym/Term	Definition
CWC	Connecting with Country
DCS	NSW Department of Customer Service
DWC	Designing with Country
ILALC	Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council (Land Council under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983)
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
SCP	Spatial Collaboration Portal - Government platform for delivery of NSW spatial datasets provided by DCS Spatial Services.

Version Control

Version	Revision Description	Reviewed by	Date	Approved by	Date Approved
Draft	Draft for Client	Tessa Boer-Mah, Principal Heritage Consultant, Heritage Now	8/4/2025	Tessa Boer-Mah, Principal Heritage Consultant, Heritage Now	8/4/2025
Draft v3	Draft for Client	Tessa Boer-Mah, Principal Heritage Consultant, Heritage Now	28/7/2025	Tessa Boer-Mah, Principal Heritage Consultant, Heritage Now	28/7/2025
Final	Final for SSD Submission	Crystal Phillips Senior Projects Heritage Consultant	29/08/2025	Tessa Boer-Mah, Principal Heritage Consultant, Heritage Now	29/08/2025

Heritage Now acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Aboriginal Lands on which we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



Acknowledgement of Country Artwork created by Barkinji and Malyangapa Artist Jasmine Craciun.

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1 Introduction

Heritage Now Pty Ltd (Heritage Now) was engaged by the Blue Sox Group to manage and oversee the integration of the NSW governments Connecting with Country requirements for State Significant Developments as outlined in the Government Architect NSW Connecting with Country (good practice guide) publication into the proposed adaptive re-use development of the historical Berrima Gaol (former Berrima Correctional Centre) located at 2-4 Argyle Street, Berrima NSW. As part of this Heritage Now will prepare a final report into the outcomes of the Connecting with Country process followed.

The property is in the Berrima Heritage Conservation Area (Wingecarribee Council LEP 2010, Item Nos I-109, I-110, I-484) and on the State Heritage Register (Listing #00807, 02/04/1999).

1.1 Project Area

The Project Area is located at 2-4 Argyle and 30 Wingecarribee Streets, Berrima NSW (Lot 102, DP 1283819) (Figure 1). It is seven kilometres west of Bowral and 100 kilometres southwest of Sydney in the Wingecarribee Shire Local Government Area (LGA) and Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council (ILALC) statutory boundaries. The property is in the Berrima Heritage Conservation Area (Wingecarribee Council LEP 2010, Item Nos I-109, I-110, I-484) and on the State Heritage Register (Listing #00807, 02/04/1999). Berrima is included in the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement Area.



Figure 1. Project Area. (Source: SCP Aerial and Heritage Now additions)



Figure 2. The Project Area in a regional context. (Source: Open Street Maps with Heritage Now additions)

1.2 Authorship and Copyright

This report was produced by the Heritage Now team. The report was written by Crystal Phillips (Heritage Consultant) and Tiffany Jones (Heritage Consultant) with input from Kirrily White (Heritage Consultant). The Aboriginal consultation and workshops were undertaken by Crystal Phillips and Tiffany Jones. Technical input and quality review was provided by Tessa Boer-Mah (Principal Heritage Consultant).

Heritage Now Pty. Ltd. retains the copyright of this report.

2 Methodology & Cultural Program

The NSW Government Architect has created a Connecting with Country Framework (Government Architect New South Wales 2023) and defines Country as:

Country encompasses everything. It includes both living and non-living elements. It holds everything within the landscape, including Earth, Water and Sky Country, as well as people, animals, plants, and the stories that connect them...

Aboriginal peoples' deep and personal, relationships with Country are expressed in multiple ways. The lore of Country is expressed through songlines, stories, art and ceremony. Language, including the names of Aboriginal groups and placenames, are another means of expressing relationships with Country.

(Government Architect New South Wales 2023, 20)

The purpose of the framework is to ‘better support a strong and vibrant Aboriginal culture in our built environment’ (Government Architect New South Wales 2023, 14). To achieve Connection with Country for this project, a Designing with Country approach has been taken.

2.1 Healthy Country

The outcome of Connecting with Country process includes the principle of Healthy Country: “healthy interconnected natural ecosystems, supported by regenerative and sustainable practices. Western and Aboriginal concepts of sustainability are largely shared including the crucial need to reduce the impact of building development on the environment” (Government Architect New South Wales 2023, 48). The overarching principle of Healthy Country feeds into the principles of healthy community, projection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, cultural competency and better places (Government Architect New South Wales 2023, 50-51).

2.2 Cultural Program Phasing

The Connecting with Country consultation will be completed as a phased process. This methodological approach has been developed over several projects (Boer-Mah 2022) in accordance with the Government Architect NSW documents including (Government Architect New South Wales 2020; 2023).

The Designing/Connecting with Country consultation and cultural program will be undertaken as a four-phase process (Figure 3). The cultural program will be an iterative process with each phase having direct input into the design process.

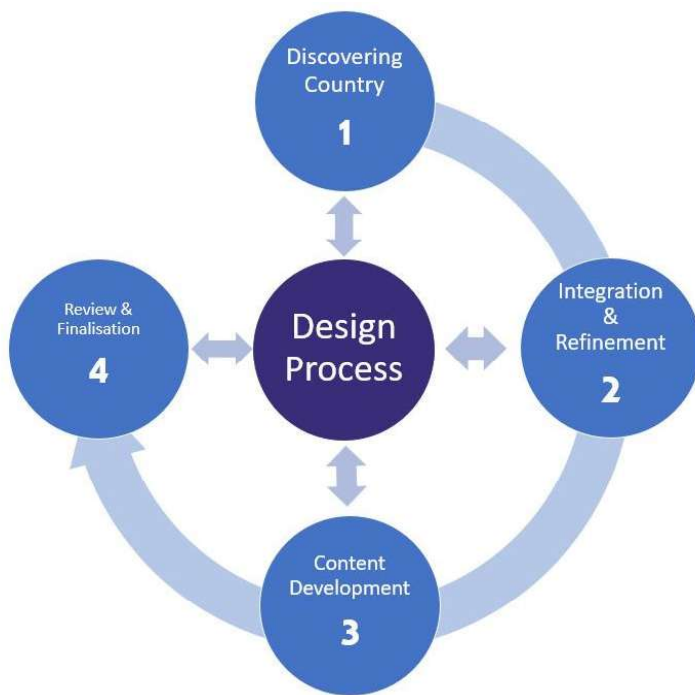


Figure 3 Designing/Connecting with Country Phases

Within each phase there will be direct input from the Aboriginal stakeholders into the Design Process. The overall process will involve the following parties with the below roles:

- **Aboriginal stakeholders** will include local knowledge holders and representatives of other relevant Aboriginal organisations and will provide input into the design process.
- **The Design Team** comprises the client, the planners, the architects and landscape architects and will provide project overviews as well as present designs based on feedback from the Aboriginal stakeholders.
- **Heritage Now** will act as a facilitator within the Connecting with Country meetings and will provide the documentation of the overall process.

At each phase a workshop or a series of workshops will be undertaken as necessary with the Aboriginal stakeholders, the Design Team and Heritage Now. The workshop is the preferred method of input into this process, however one-on-one consultation/s can be offered to those unable to attend or uncomfortable attending the workshop.

The timeline for the phases will include Phase 1 and 2 to be undertaken pre-approval with phases 3 and 4 to be developed post-approval alongside the detailed design.

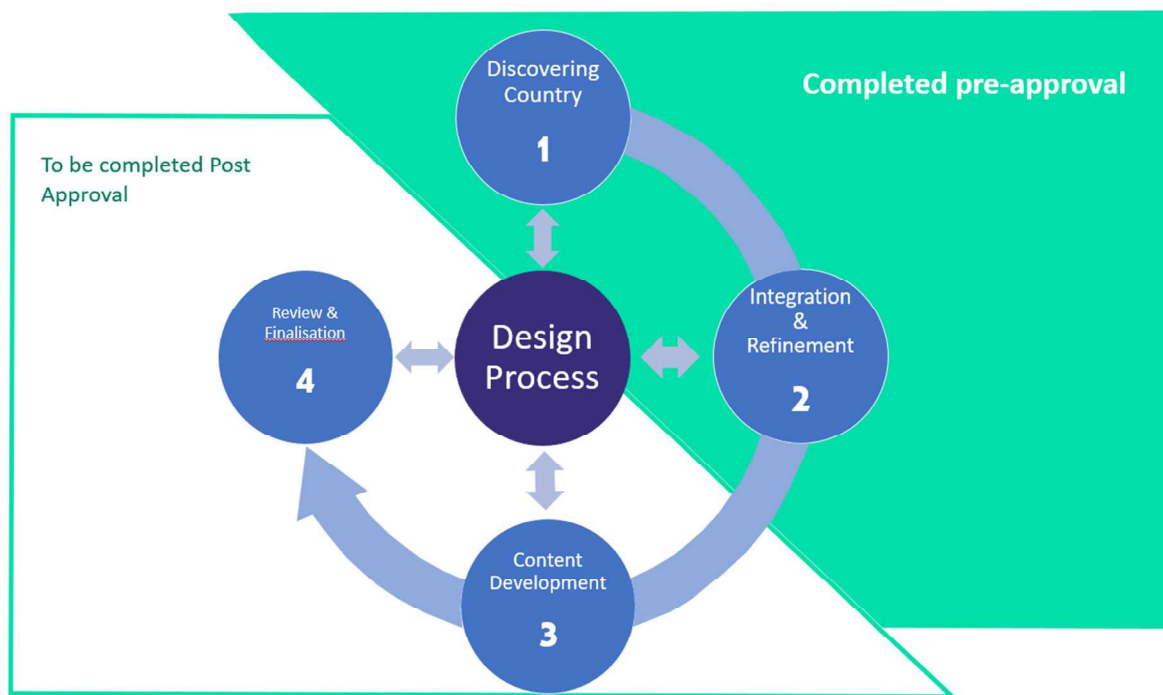


Figure 4 Phases 1 and 2 have been completed for the pre-approval stage, Phases 3 and 4 will be undertaken post-approval alongside the detailed design.

2.2.1 Phase 1 – Discovering Country – Outline

The aim of this phase was to identify themes and stories associated with the Project Area. This phase was undertaken as a workshop involving the Aboriginal stakeholders, the Design Team and Heritage Now. This included providing an overview of the project, as well as an opportunity for Aboriginal stakeholders to present a cultural awareness/material familiarisation session.

The deliverable of this phase is the distribution of minutes and a report documenting the session along with necessary ancillary material. The Design Team incorporates the ideas, themes, stories and materials captured in the workshop into the design. The design is then revised so that a workshop for Phase 2 can be undertaken.

2.2.2 Phase 2 – Integration and Refinement – Outline

The purpose of this phase is for the Aboriginal stakeholders to review how the themes and stories have been incorporated into the design and to provide feedback. This is an opportunity to further refine concepts and content. It may also include identifying information, text or images to be included in specific areas of the design or in specific formats, such as interpretation boards, sound spaces, and other forms of interpretation.

2.2.3 Phase 3 – Content Development – Outline

This phase develops the specific content as part of the detailed design, always undertaken in consultation with the Aboriginal Community. It includes the review and incorporation of consolidated comments on the preliminary report, then the issuance of a final consultation and design report.

2.2.4 Phase 4 – Review and Implementation – Outline

This involves the final phases of consultation in which the Aboriginal community are given the opportunity to make final changes to the design.

2.3 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) is recognised by the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for which Australia is a signatory. ICIP is the tacit acknowledgement that Aboriginal knowledge represents *“generations of accumulated knowledge and creative expression, and reflects the unique history, values, and traditions of Aboriginal people.”* (Government Architect New South Wales 2023b, 23). The client and design team have committed to respecting ICIP and this is reflected in the Statement of Commitments (Appendix 2). ICIP is also addressed in the permissions form for the workshops (Appendix 2). No confidential ICIP has been communicated by the Aboriginal stakeholders.

3 Aboriginal Consultation

This section of the report outlines the Aboriginal consultation that was undertaken for this part of the Connecting with Country process.

3.1 Identifying local Aboriginal knowledge holders

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment report has been prepared separately (Austral Archaeology 2025). This involved identification of local Aboriginal knowledge holders through a public notice, contacting government agencies, searching the registered Aboriginal owners list, Register of Native Title Claims, National Native Title Register and the Register of Indigenous Land Use Agreements. These local Aboriginal knowledge holders became registered Aboriginal parties for the project and were thus contacted to participate in the Connecting with Country. Additional Aboriginal stakeholders were also contacted based on their local knowledge and connections to the area.

3.2 Aboriginal Statements of Connection to Country

The following statements of Connection to Country were provided by the Aboriginal stakeholders.

We are [REDACTED] We go down from Yass up to south of Bathurst. My grandfather's grandfather was born in [REDACTED] so was his father and all the kids were born in Wingecarribee Shire. There was [REDACTED] them. They were all born there before they moved up to [REDACTED]..

We've always has a connection. We visit the property down there on the Wollondilly where we camp and swim...

[REDACTED] is related to us. He was at [REDACTED] and he met [REDACTED] came down into the Southern Highlands to explore. Cookagong, Balyin, Ngarre, Moyengully and Murrandah. They were all my family, and they were guides for English explorers. They guided them down from Campbelltown to the Southern Highlands and on another expedition, they went down to Goulburn. We have a strong connection to the area.

Caring for Country is an important thing. Its not just a tick a box exercise it's about indigenous people looking after country. Not just culture but all of country. The Wingecarribee runs into the Wollondilly and into The Sydney Catchment drinking water and its part of a world heritage area. Its not just about looking good and being aesthetically pleasing. It's about having responsibility for country.

[REDACTED] Traditional Owner

I am a [REDACTED] woman, born on Country and have lived on Country all of my life as did countless generations before me.

Berrima is very close to both [REDACTED] Country and therefore have a connection through my ancestors.

I have worked on many projects with the Connecting to Country strategy, which has given Aboriginal people a voice that we have not had before. It gives us the opportunity to help heal Country by providing Cultural knowledge not only of the place but surrounding areas.

In more recent times, my non-Aboriginal side of my family was a German immigrant in the early 1800's who was a stone mason in Berrima. He may or may not have worked on the goal, I am not aware if that is the case, but would like to know. He is buried along with many family members in Berrima cemetery. Another branch of the family also lived in the Moss Vale Berrima area before coming to Camden in the early 1900's, and many of that family are also buried in the Moss Vale and Berrima cemeteries

My bloodline incorporates [REDACTED]

My great great grandmother, [REDACTED] woman. We are aware of her having a tribal name.

There is a story of how [REDACTED] and another child, who were both very young, became lost in the [REDACTED] bushland. Amazingly, the children survived on bush tucker and were eventually found fit and healthy, some two weeks later, by their family.

I have fond memories of camping and fishing in and around the Wollondilly/Wingecarribee areas, particularly the Blue Mountains and Wombeyan Caves which provided shelter during the wet.

I also recall stories of the dooligahs (yowie/hairy men) who would eat children. These stories encouraged us to remain close to our parents and camp, particularly around the campfires that provided light during the night.

3.3 Phase 1 Workshop – On site Meeting

The Phase 1 workshop was undertaken on the 11 September 2024 on site at Berrima Gaol. An additional online meeting was held on 19 September for those who were unable to attend the in-person meeting. There were 14 attendees in total, including five Aboriginal stakeholders (Table 1 and Table 2). Minutes for the workshop are presented in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Attendees from the Phase 1 Workshop

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Jonathan Thompson	JT	The Blue Sox Group	Project Manager
Dan Szwaj	DS	Turner Studio	Architect
Ingrid Mather	IM	JMD Design	Landscape Architect
Arlyn Romero	AR	JMD Design	Landscape Architect
Chris Downy	CD	Primary Engage	Community Engagement

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Connecting with Country Consultant
Tiffany Jones	TJ	Heritage Now	Connecting with Country Consultant
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder

Table 2. Attendees from the Phase 1 Online meeting

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Connecting with Country Consultant
Tiffany Jones	TJ	Heritage Now	Connecting with Country Consultant
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder

The agenda for the meetings was:

Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement (Aboriginal Stakeholders), workshop purpose outline (Heritage Now), participant introductions and meeting participant apologies

1. Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement (Aboriginal Stakeholder), Workshop purpose outline (Heritage Now), Participant Introductions and meeting participant apologies
2. Tour of the Gaol (in person meeting only)
3. Interpretation in Context (Heritage Now)
4. Presentation of project by client representative/Design Team (images from the on-site meeting presented during online meeting)
5. Open discussion on themes and stories relevant to the Project Area (Aboriginal stakeholders)
6. Closing comments and summary (Heritage Now)

The tour of the Gaol provided understanding of the space, its varied history, and context. (Figure 5).

Figure 5. On site meeting, looking out over site of proposed carpark and former gardens. Pictured Left to Right: Ingrid Mather, Dan Szwaj, Crystal Phillips, [REDACTED] Jonothan Thompson, [REDACTED] (Source: Heritage Now 2024)



Figure 6. Onsite meeting in eastern courtyard (Source: Heritage Now 2024)

3.4 Phase 2 Workshop

The Phase 2 workshop was undertaken on the 7 April 2025 in an online meeting. There was a total of 11 attendees, including 3 Aboriginal stakeholders (Table 2). Minutes for the workshop are presented in Appendix 1.

Table 3. Attendees from the Phase 2 Workshop

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Tessa Boer-Mah	TBM	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Tiffany Jones	TJ	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Jonathan Thompson	JT	The Blue Sox Group	Project Manager
Dan Szwaj	DS	Turner Studio	Architect

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Clarie Mallin	CM	Turner Studio	Architect
Angela Yoo	AY	Turner Studio	Architect
Arlyn Romero	AR	JMD Design	Landscape Architect
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder

3.5 Phase 2 Workshop – follow up

Additional meetings were held on the 3 and 5th of June in response to the SRDP comments. Minutes for the workshop are presented in Appendix 1.

Table 4. Attendees for the meeting on the 3rd June 2025

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Jonathan Thompson	JT	Bluesox Group	Project Manager
Ingrid Mather	IM	JMD Design	Landscape Architect
Victor Torroglosa	VT	Turner Studio	Architect
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholders
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Tessa Boer-Mah	TBM	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant

Table 5. Attendees for the meeting on the 5th June 2025

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Tessa Boer-Mah	TBM	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant

4 Phase 1 Discovering Country – Themes and Stories

This section draws upon the themes discussed in the workshop and provides additional ancillary information for input into the design.

4.1 Background – Aboriginal use of the land prior to colonial settlement

The western boundary of the Project Area overlooks the Wingecarribee River. The Wingecarribee is a major water body which would have provided a source of drinking water and location of suitable campsites, and attractor of animal species, a transport route as well as being part of the cultural landscape of the Gundungurra people.

Camping

Campsites of the Gundungurra people, generally consisted of lean-to shelters of bark and bush (Bowern 2019, 36). Major Mitchell, one of the early visitors to the Southern Highlands, described a some of the shelters he saw near Bong Bong in 1828:

“they consisted of pieces of bark flattened & joined like the roof of a house so as to cover about a square yard ...Is about a yard high - a native contrives to sit & sleep before a small fire. The married people (or a family) continue to join a few bows of trees, which they cover with bark or branches, thus making a hut something like a soldier's bivouac, only lower. They have always a small fire quite close to each hut.” (Mitchell 2017, 6).

As these shelters were created for temporary use, they generally do not survive within the archaeological record. Evidence of Aboriginal occupation is generally reflected in the archaeological record as artefact and/or rockshelter sites. There are two artefact sites close to Berrima Gaol (Figure 7). One site (AHIMS 52-2-1216) is a low-density artefact scatter of chert, silcrete and quartz artefacts. The other site (AHIMS 52-1-0389) is an artefact of bottle glass, indicating it was knapped in the post-contact period. An analysis of archaeological excavations within a 15km area around Berrima Gaol, identified 6 sites with artefact densities ranging from between 0.75-40.08/m², with higher densities recovered near watercourses, particularly swamps (Austral Archaeology 2025, 55). Results from these excavations also identified quartzite as the most common raw material type, with debitage the most prevalent artefact type.

Rockshelters would have also been used as a camping area by the Gundungurra people. There are several registered rockshelters in the general Berrima, all of which have been registered with the presence of artefacts, indicating knapping activities took place there.

Flora and Fauna Resources

The river provided Aboriginal people with freshwater and a variety of floral and faunal resources. Miss Loseby recounts seeing Aboriginal men in the Bowral area, using stringy-bark to manufacture torches for night fishing in the river and “when they caught eels they ran a pole through their gills and took them to the surrounding farms, where they sold them for food and money” (*The Southern Mail* 1947, 4). She also describes how possums, a food staple for the local Aboriginal people, were

caught “they used stone axes and later metal tomahawks to make steps in trees which they climbed in search of these animals” (*The Southern Mail* 1947, 4). Journals of early expeditions into the area also note the presence of kangaroos, pheasants, and lyre-birds (Jervis 1973, 1).

The furs of possums and kangaroos were worn as clothing (Bower 2019, 36). In an area around Mittagong, Cabbage describes an encounter in 1798 with the Aboriginal people of the area, describing them as “covered with large skins, which reach down to their heels” (Cabbage 1920, 9)

River as a Transport Route

There are very few registered culturally modified trees in the area around Berrima (Figure 8). Two of these modified trees, are located within 300m of the Wingecarribee River, and another is near Oldbury Creek. The presences of modified trees next to waterways, suggests the Gundungurra people likely harvested bark from these trees to create canoes.



Figure 7. Archaeological sites in the vicinity of the Project Area

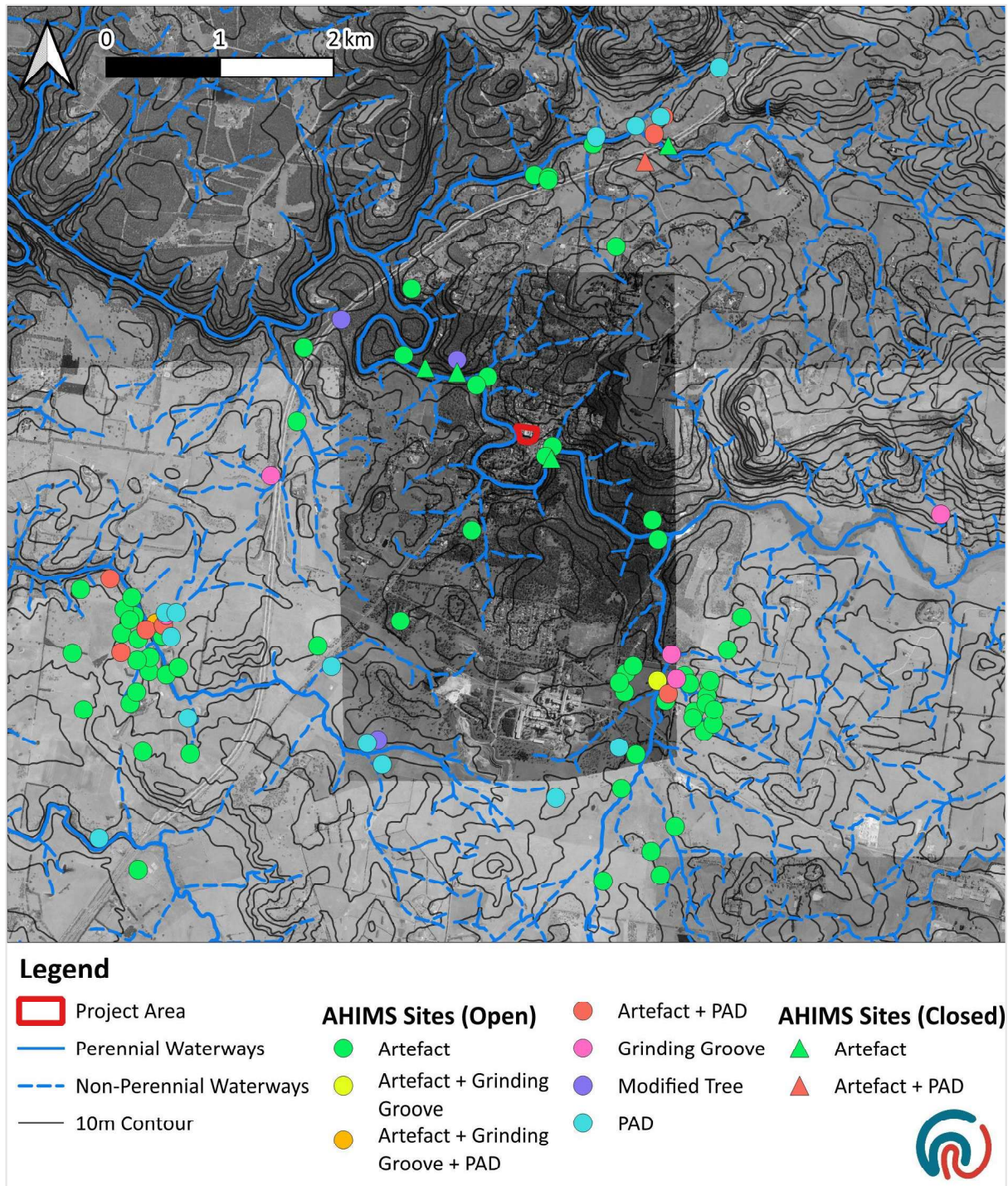


Figure 8. Archaeological sites in the locality of the Project Area

4.2 Wingecarribee River

The Wingecarribee is part of a culturally significant landscape for the Gundugurra People.

The Wingecarribee is associated with a dreaming Story of Gurangatch and Mirrigan recorded by ethnographer and surveyor RH Matthews in 1901. The story tells of the formation of the

Wingecarribee, Wollondilly, and Cox's Rivers (Mathews 1908). While this story was discussed during the on-site meeting it was later raised during the online meeting that it is specifically connected to the confluence of the Wingecarribee and Wollondilly Rivers, some 30 km from Berrima and was not an appropriate story to interpret at the site.

4.3 Caring for Country - Flora and Fauna

The Gundugurra people have occupied the Southern Highlands region for thousands of years, living in harmony with the environment. Caring for Country embodies maintaining a balance between people, the land, and its animals and flora. Often Caring for Country involves travel through country to maintain connection and cultural teachings, as well as ensuring the animals and plants have optimal environmental and spiritual conditions to thrive.

While Caring for Country embraces a much wider knowledge system, the modern term 'sustainability' or 'environmentally sustainable design' reflects part of the traditional Aboriginal knowledge system and thus is to be considered as part of the design. In particular, Aboriginal stakeholders in the workshop identified that the regeneration of the natural landscape in the proposed carpark area and river walk, and the introduction of local endemic floral species is to be incorporated into the development as well as reference specific animals including platypus and eels (connected to the river) and dingoes (connected to the ranges).

The Southern Highlands were also known as the Mittagong Ranges. Mittagong, is believed to be a corruption of 'Marragon' meaning 'plenty of wild dogs' referring to dingoes and the high population of dingoes in the area (Ngununggula Regional Art Gallery 2022).

The Aboriginal representatives emphasised they would like not just native, but endemic plant species to be incorporated into the design. In the meetings potential tree species discussed included the Camden white gum (*Eucalyptus benthamii*) and southern blue gum (*Eucalyptus bicostata*). The Southern Highlands also contains one of the only known depictions in rock art of a waratah. The significance of this plant could be incorporated into actual plantings itself or public art/interpretative elements of the design.

The Gaol contained a working garden for many years. This food helped to feed the inmates as well as the local population by selling the food. Before this Aboriginal people would have gathered a variety of plants in the area. The stakeholders would like to see bush tucker foods incorporated in the restored garden, with the opportunity to educate the public on local bush foods and caring for country.

4.4 Reconciliation

The history of the incarceration of Aboriginal peoples and the current statistics of Aboriginal people being the most incarcerated people were raised and discussed during the meetings. In 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners accounted for 33% of all prisoners despite being only approximately 2% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024). Due to this history, it was deemed inappropriate to use the space inside the Gaol walls as a place to celebrate Aboriginal culture. Rather, the Gaol could be used as an opportunity to acknowledge the hardships faced by Aboriginal people at the time of the colonisation of the Southern Highlands and establishment of the Gaol and the resilience of the Gundugurra and Dharawal peoples.

An acknowledgement of country was also agreed upon by all parties as something that could be incorporated into the design. However, it was raised that again the most appropriate space for this acknowledgement was outside of the Gaol; potentially in the gardens or at the rear, overlooking the Wingecaribee.

The outdoor areas which retain connection to nature and country outside of the context of the Gaol were deemed the most appropriate spaces for any kind of heritage interpretation. These spaces also present opportunity for planting of endemic species and reconnecting the site with country. They were supportive of a place of reflection in one of the proposed courtyard spaces, and that these courtyards provide the opportunity to bring some of the outside world into the space of the Gaol.

During the meeting it was raised that the Gaol has the opportunity to include heritage interpretation that showcases the varied history of the Gaol. A website is proposed to be established for people to be able to submit their stories and experiences.

5 Phase 2 Integration and Refinement

The Phase 2 Integration and refinement has involved the landscape and architectural design to be refined according to feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders in Phase 1, along with additional feedback from the Phase 2 workshop. In addition, changes have been made to the designs and/or clarifications made in respect to comments made by the Government Architect NSW via the State Design Review Panel (SDRP).

The design team have developed guiding landscape design principles: remember, heal, renew. The design has incorporated the themes of connections to the Wingecarribee River, Caring for Country (flora and fauna), as well as Reflection and Reconciliation into the design. These were presented to the Aboriginal stakeholders as part of the Phase 2 workshop and have been further refined as a result of the workshop and subsequent consultation.

5.1 Integration of Cultural Connections to the Wingecarribee River

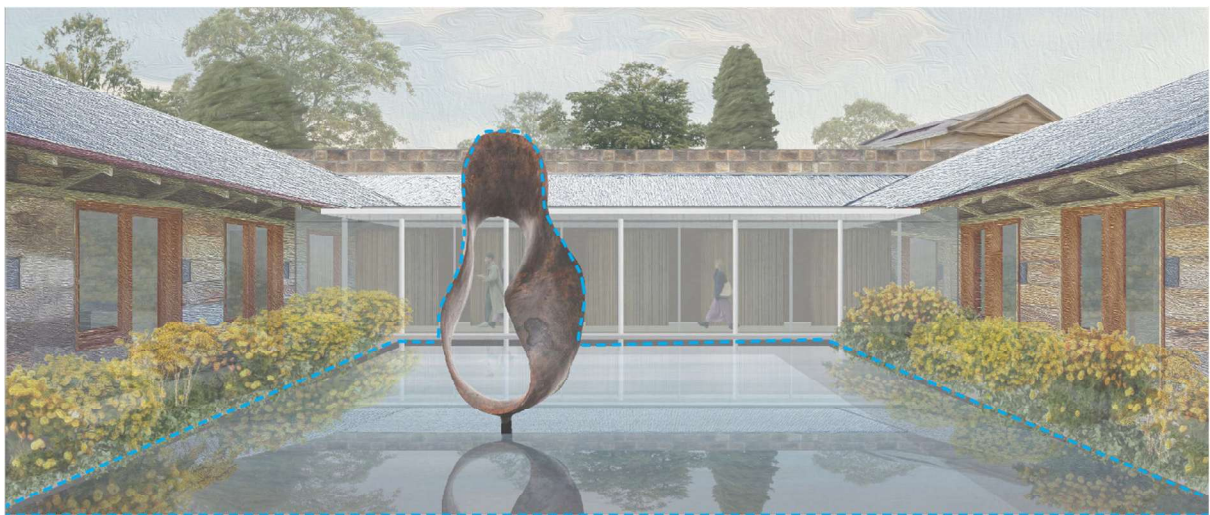
Aboriginal consultation identified the cultural importance of the Wingecarribee River, including interpretative elements of incorporating water references to the Wingecarribee River, connections to the sky, uses of the river canoes and scarred trees, as well as fauna including eels and platypus.

Inside the Gaol – Referencing the Wingecarribee

Connections to the Wingecarribee River are emphasised within the water features within the gaol. The design team has responded by incorporating water features along the northern boundary of the site to reference the Wingecarribee River and within the pools of the courtyards (Figure 9, Figure 10). Connections to the sky are reflected in the northern courtyards which are open to the sky (Figure 10). The Aboriginal representatives involved in the project indicated that they did not want traditional Aboriginal motifs within the gaol walls because of the negative associations with incarceration.



Figure 9 Water themes incorporated within Gaol walls – natural water features along northern wall, and pools in courtyards and landscaping outside the walls. (Source: Turner 2025, with Heritage Now additions)



East 'Double Bay' Courtyard
The Reflective Pool & Public Art Opportunity



Figure 10 Water themes within the Gaol

Outside the Gaol – Referencing the Wingecarribee

The Aboriginal representatives have emphasised that they do not want Gundungurra motifs within the gaol because of the negative associations with incarceration. As such Gundungurra public art is

to be incorporated in the grounds and landscaping outside the walls of the gaol with references to the Wingecarribbee which may include designs associated with canoes, scarred trees, eels and platypus, amongst other themes. Indicative locations for public art locations associated with the Wingecarribbee have been marked out in

Design Response and Integration Opportunities Across the Site

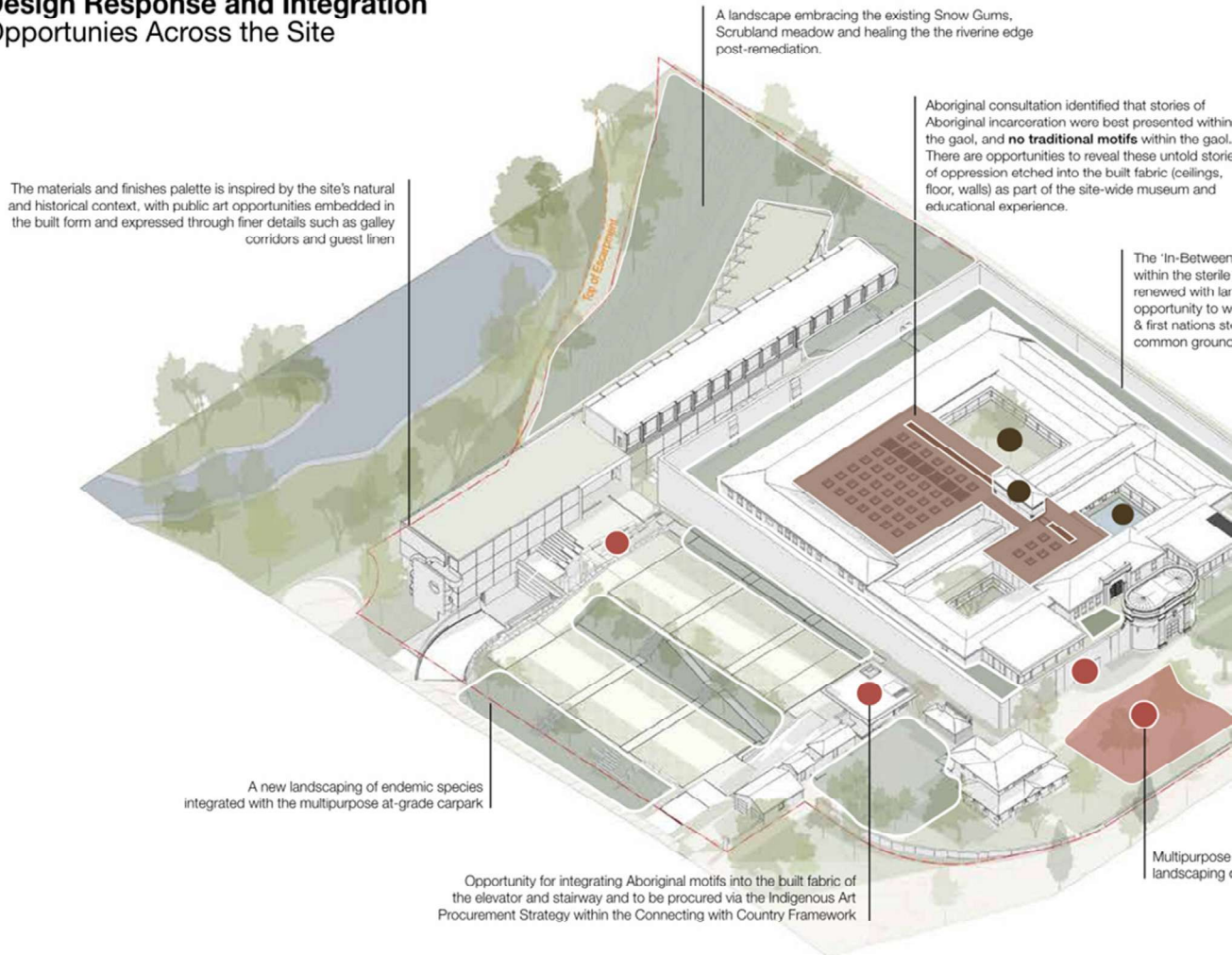


Figure 11. In addition, there is the opportunity to incorporate Gundugurra designs into some of the external architectural elements such as the stairway and elevator from the basement to at grade carpark (

Design Response and Integration Opportunities Across the Site

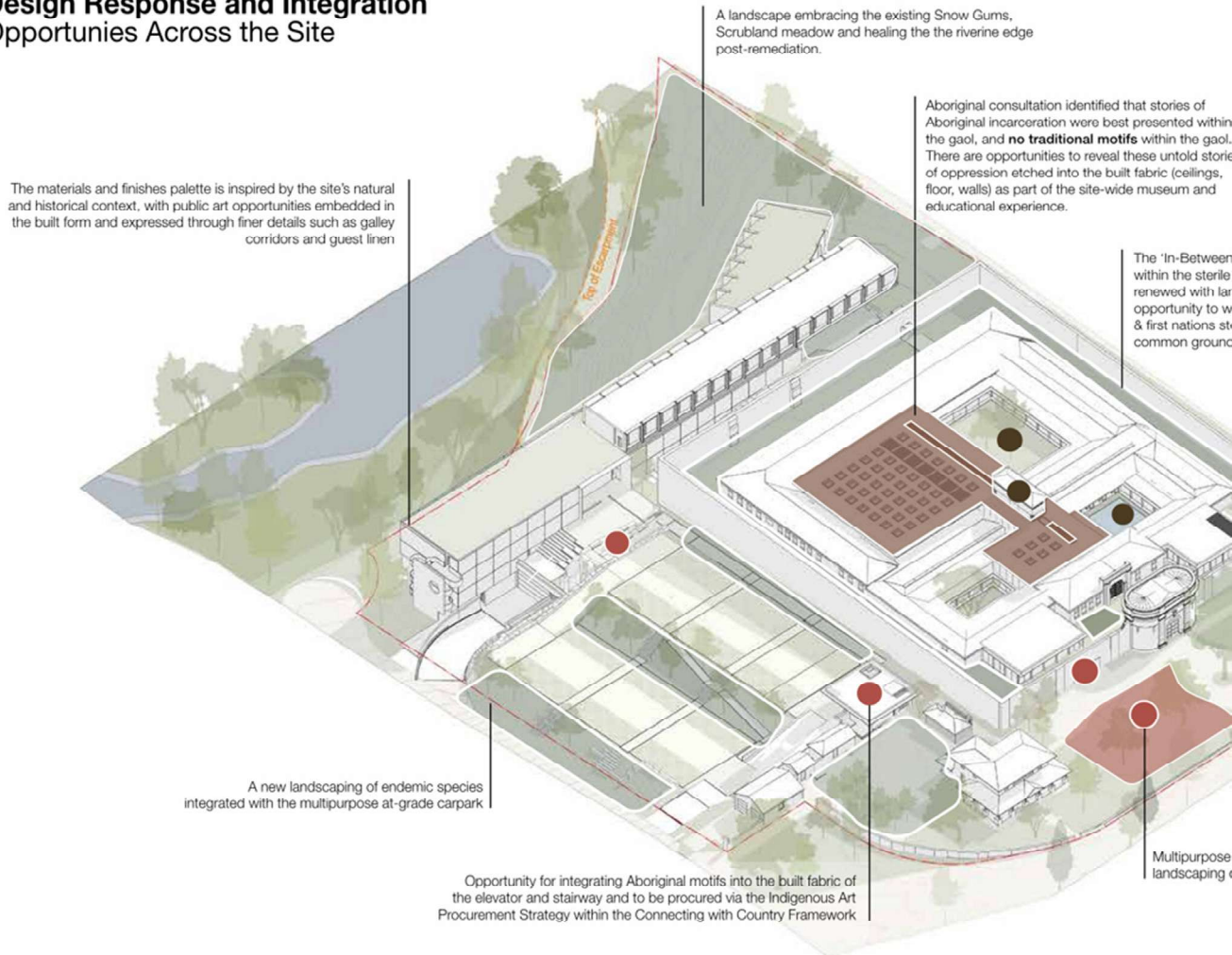
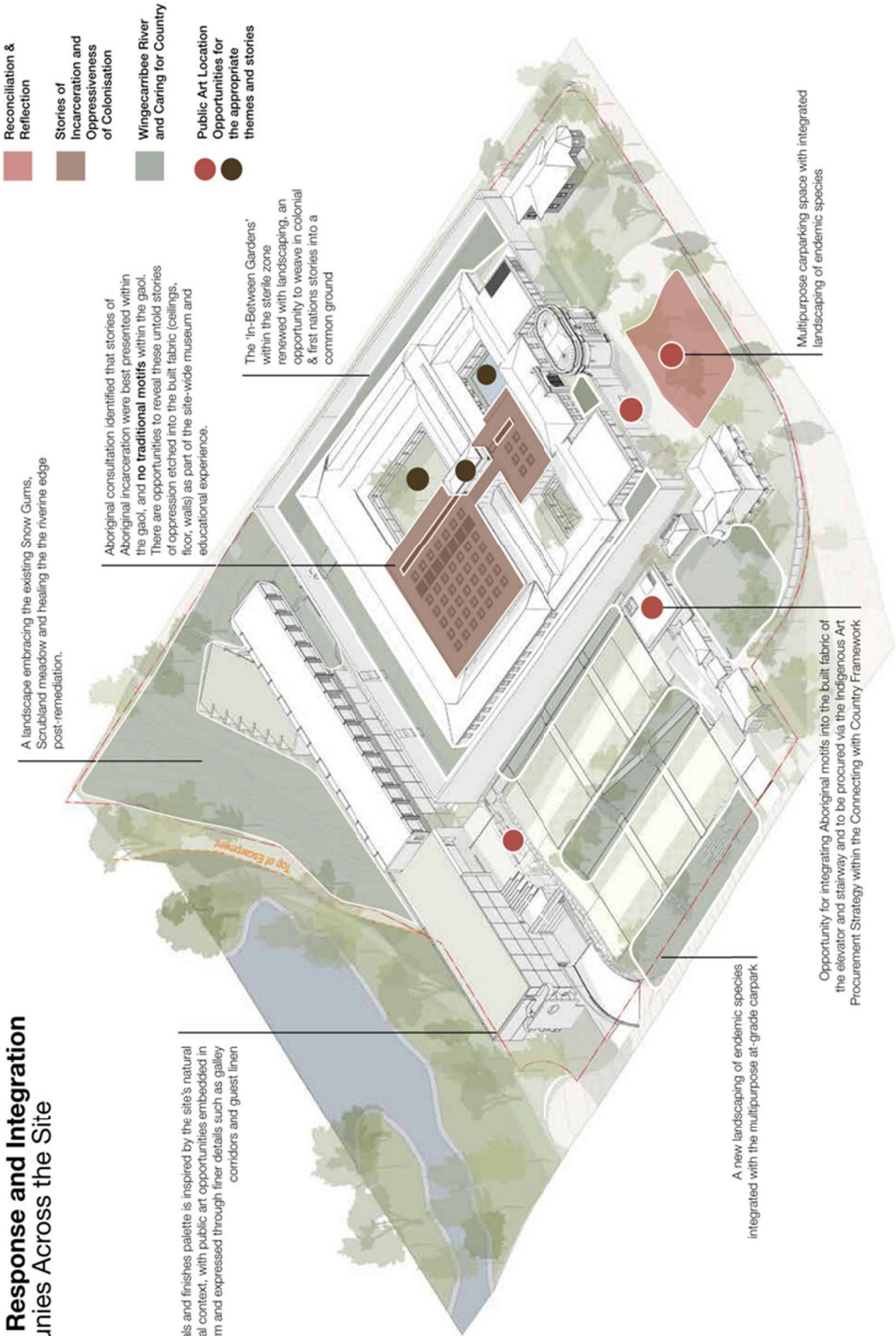


Figure 11).

The Proposal has been specifically designed to incorporate views to and from the Wingecaribee River, so as to maintain a connection to this important Gundungurra element. A cut-out in the new build provides views from the front of the gaol, right through to the river (Figure 12 and Figure 13). There is an opportunity at this locale for interpretive panels and public art to be installed to emphasise Gundungurra connections to county.

Design Response and Integration Opportunities Across the Site



The Berrima Quarter • 53

Figure 11 Public art opportunities these would be developed as part of the public art procurement and design process outlined in Section 6. (Source: Turner 2025, with Heritage Now additions)



Figure 12 A cut-out in the building will be used to maintain views from and to the Wingecaribee, this view is towards the gaol from the Wingecaribee, the former (ex.) holding can be seen in the distance through the cut-out (Source: Turner 2025)



Figure 13 Left- View to the cut-out in the new building from the former (ex.) holding cell towards the Wingecaribee River, Right – close up of view from the cut-out over the Wingecaribee River (Source: Turner 2025)

5.2 Integration of Gundungurra Caring for Country principles – Flora and Fauna

As part of the concept of Healthy Country – “*interconnected natural ecosystems, supported by regenerative and sustainable practices*” (Government Architect New South Wales 2023, 48) are important.

Consultation with the Aboriginal representatives identified that integrating native vegetation plantings was important and particularly endemic species. The integration of native vegetation has been included in the at grade car park (Figure 14). Aboriginal stakeholders broadly agree with this approach. However, they would like further input into the selection of species in the post-approval phase.

As such Gundungurra public art is to be incorporated into this area to reflect local land fauna including dingos and cultural elements such as sandstone engravings. This is to be undertaken in accordance with the procurement strategy outlined in Section 6.



Figure 14. Above – Informal at grade carpark, Below - Native garden integrated into at grade car park (Source: Turner 2025)

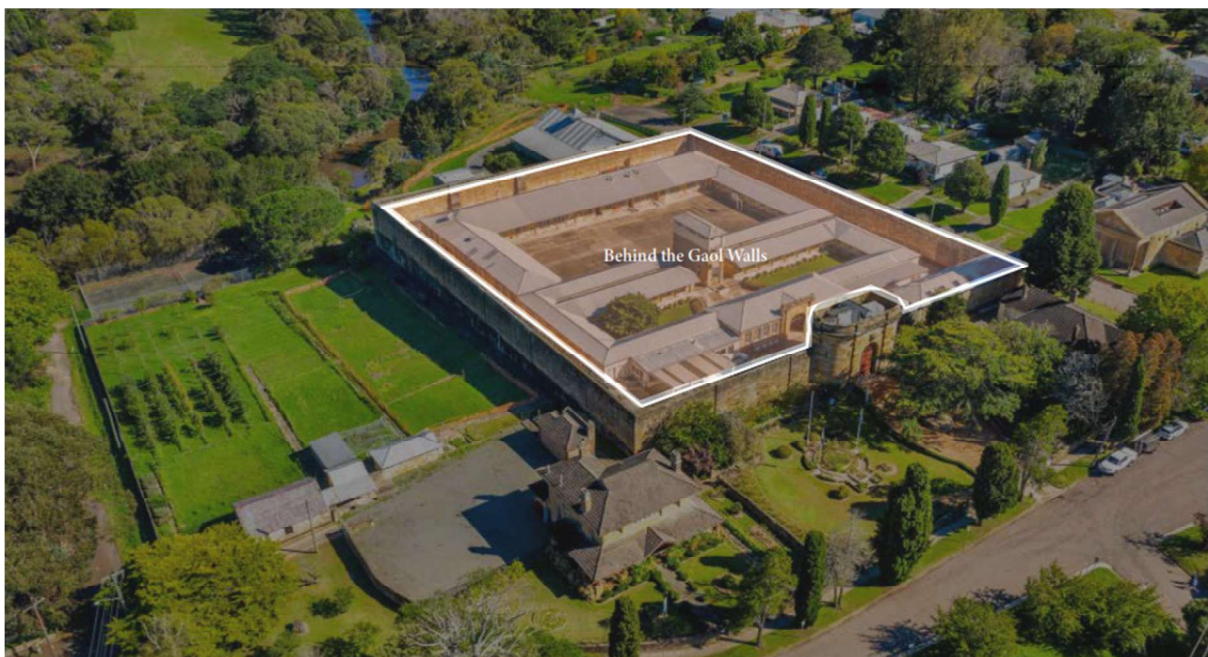
5.3 Integration of Places for Reflection and Reconciliation

Phase 1 Aboriginal consultation identified that there needed to be places for reflection of Aboriginal dispossession and oppression from colonisation as well as historical incarceration in Berrima gaol, but also there needed to be interpretation of reconciliation within the project. The below documents the design response to these themes.

5.3.1 Reflection and Acknowledgement of Aboriginal dispossession and incarceration

Following on from the Phase 1 consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders, the design team had included provision for the stories of dispossession, oppressiveness of colonisation and incarceration to be presented within the gaol (Figure 15). It was also acknowledged that there was shared history in that the brutal incarceration of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people was an oppressive colonial practice. A place of reflection was identified as being needed in the Phase 1 Aboriginal consultation, the design team has responded by designating such a space in the East double bay courtyard (Figure 10).

By presenting the themes of Aboriginal oppression, dispossession and incarceration within the gaol walls physically separates them from the external spaces of the project and the physical space of the gaol reflects the oppressive nature of colonisation. It was agreed that further research would be needed to address the Aboriginal history of incarceration within the gaol to ensure the interpretative content was specific and not generic in nature.

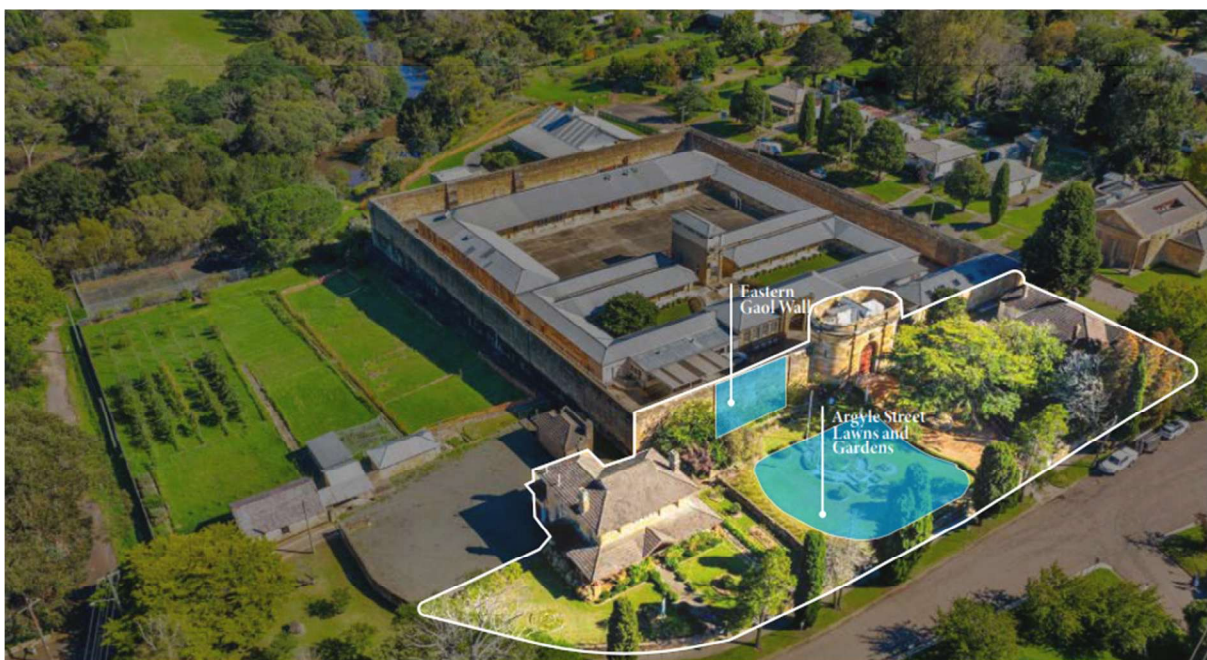


Behind the Gaol Walls
Stories of Incarceration and Oppressiveness of Colonisation

Figure 15 Behind the Gaol Walls – to be used for Stories of Incarceration and the Oppressiveness of Colonisation

5.3.2 Reconciliation

As per the Phase 1 Consultation, it was agreed that themes of reconciliation should be outside the gaol. The front lawn being a very public space has been nominated for incorporation of this theme (Figure 16). In addition, a perforation of the wall is proposed to open up the space and provide a welcoming entry (Figure 17), in contrast to the current imposing entrance designed to reinforce the gravitas of the gaol in its traditional use. The breaking down of this external wall serves to provide a physical and metaphorical transition of history from one of oppression of Aboriginal people (and other Australians in the gaol context) through to a brighter future of openness and reconciliation. Some Aboriginal stakeholders welcomed the opening and other did not. This front lawn and entry area provides opportunities for public art to incorporate Aboriginal reconciliation themes. The Aboriginal stakeholders were in support of using the lawn area for public art relating to reconciliation and were in support of following the Indigenous procurement strategy in Section 6.



Argyle Street Frontage
Reconciliation & Reflection Opportunity Areas

Figure 16 Argyle Street Frontage Reconciliation and Reflection Opportunity Areas



The Front Opening



Figure 17 Perforation of the front wall and opening up of the space

5.4 Interlinkages

The outcome of Connecting with Country process includes the principle of Healthy Country – “Western and Aboriginal concepts of sustainability are largely shared including the crucial need to reduce the impact of building development on the environment” (Government Architect New South Wales 2023, 48).

This section outlines the interlinkages with the sustainability report and including the water sensitivity urban design.

5.4.1 Interlinkages with Sustainability

The Connecting with Country and sustainability plan have been integrated to allow for a health and connected country principles to integrate into the sustainability plan (Figure 18).

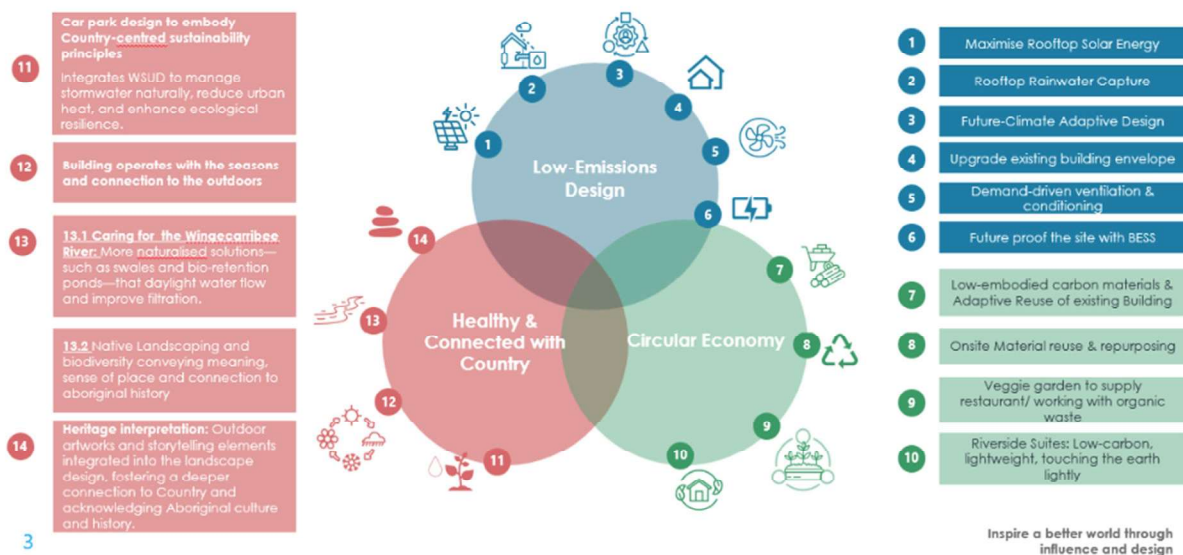


Figure 18 Interlinkages with Sustainability

Water Sensitive Urban Design has been implemented for the project. Martens (2025) has provided engineering guidance in relation to Water Sensitive Urban Design and has referenced the relevant guidelines. Proposed methods of water management include rainwater re-use, bioretention and spreaders. The water management has been designed to ensure water quality is maintained and that contaminated water does not enter the Wingecarribee River. Naturalised methods of water retention are proposed including swales and bioretention ponds to improve filtration. This water engineering design aligns with the Caring for Country principles put forward by the Aboriginal stakeholders as part of the Connecting with Country process.

Native flora would be selected to emphasise the different seasons (presented in the western sense of season) within the gaol to interconnect it with the outdoors (Figure 19). Aboriginal stakeholders were broadly in favour of this initiative and that they would like Aboriginal seasonal concepts to be included. Additional Aboriginal consultation will be undertaken post-approval to develop specific content of signage and information in relation to Aboriginal seasons. Native landscaping such as that proposed for the at grade carpark and within the gaol will be implemented as covered in previous sections of this report. The proposed public artworks, architectural elements, interpretation and storytelling will be integrated into areas outside of the gaol for traditional stories and motifs. The

inside of the gaol, as requested by the Aboriginal community will be reserved for stories of incarceration and dispossession and is not to include any traditional motifs (due to the negative historical associations with spaces within the buildings).



The Main Entrance

The Changing Seasons in the 'Sterile Zone'



Figure 19 Interlinkages with sustainability - Native flora reflecting seasonal change

6 Indigenous Procurement Policy & Process

This procurement policy will be used to provide opportunities to Supply Nation registered businesses and other Aboriginal people providing services or products for the post-Approval stage of the project. Within this there is also a specific public art policy as this Connecting with Country process has identified multiple opportunities for public artworks.

6.1 Indigenous Procurement Policy General

Objective: This policy is to promote the engagement of Supply Nation registered businesses and other Aboriginal people providing services or products for all aspects of the development, as well as acknowledgement of Aboriginal peoples.

Policy: Request for tenders for services or supply of products is to request information on Indigenous employment policies, as well as information on Aboriginal reconciliation, for instance, Reconciliation Action Plans. Indigenous employment is to be promoted within the client organisation and contractors.

Process: Information provided by tenders on Indigenous employment and reconciliation is to be considered in the selection of the service or product. Recruitment processes within the client organisation and contractors are to consider candidates identifying as Indigenous Australians.

6.2 Indigenous Art Procurement & Art Management Policy

Objective: This policy is to promote the engagement of Supply Nation registered businesses and other Aboriginal people providing art and design services and public artwork for the implementation of the Connecting with Country.

Policy: Aboriginal artists and designers are to be identified for the supply of artwork and designs for the Connecting with Country implementation and the below process followed for engagement.

Process:

1. Post approval, Aboriginal stakeholders and client to sit down and create artist brief including the cultural values it is to encapsulate, such as, cultural landscape values eg river, platypus, dingo, endemic plants. A public artwork strategy is to be developed.
2. Invite Aboriginal artists to provide expressions of interest/initial concept designs, this may involve a site visit to
3. The list is to be supplied to the Aboriginal stakeholders as part of the consultation process for selection, selection criteria may include:
 - Appropriateness of the artwork
 - Ability to satisfy themes identified by the Aboriginal community
 - Location of artist (local Aboriginal artists preferred)
 - Longevity of materials
 - Safety
 - Skills of the artist in the selected art typology.

- Extent of upskilling required for the art typology or procurement process.

The selection of artist/s and/or designer/s is to be undertaken in consultation with the Aboriginal stakeholders, noting that input from the wider design team will be needed and ultimately the client will be responsible for the engagement. A public art plan of management is to be developed for any artworks installed.

7 Key Messages, Recommendations & Implementation Plan

This section outlines the key message, recommendations, implementation plan and the summarised the outcomes of the Connecting with Country process in improving health and wellbeing of country.

7.1 Key Messages

Key messages from the consultation include:

- History of Aboriginal incarceration to be installed INSIDE the gaol
- Aboriginal public art, interpretation and traditional motifs to be placed/installed OUTSIDE the gaol
- Aboriginal healthy country principles incorporated within natural landscaping outside the gaol, in the sustainability plan, in the building design and water management on the site.
- Aboriginal healthy country principles of seasonality within the gaol gardens
- Connection with Wingecarribee maintained through public viewing platform.
- Indigenous procurement policy has been developed for the project

7.2 Recommendations

The below recommendations are made in relation to the project.

Recommendation 1 – Artwork and Architectural Elements

Post approval, Indigenous Art procurement is to be undertaken by the client in accordance with the Indigenous procurement policy outlined in this Connecting with Country report and in consultation with the Aboriginal community members to contributed to the report. This is to include development of the artist brief, public art strategy, selection of artist/s and a public art plan of management. The Indigenous procurement policy also applies to Aboriginal designs for the architectural elements.

Recommendation 2 – Interpretation Panels

Post approval, content for interpretation panels is to be developed with the Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report. This is to include further research into the history of Aboriginal incarceration in the gaol.

Recommendation 3 - Landscaping

Post approval, landscaping in the native gardens and finalising plant species is to be undertaken in consultation with the Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report.

7.3 Implementation Plan

Artwork and Architectural Elements (Recommendation 1)

The client is to implement the Indigenous procurement policy post approval. The client is to engage Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report for consultation on the artwork and architectural elements, but may also do so for other aspects of the project as needed. A heritage/public art specialist is also to be engaged to undertake consultation and documentation for the installations and allowances are to be made within the architectural and landscape architect team for the integration of these elements into the overall site program.

Interpretation Panels (Recommendation 2)

The client is to engage Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report for consultation on the content of the interpretation panels, along with a heritage/interpretation consultant.

Landscaping (Recommendation 3)

The client is to engage Aboriginal community members involved in the Connecting with Country report for consultation on the selection of plant species for native gardens, in collaboration with the landscaping team and the client.

7.4 Outcomes - Improving Health and Wellbeing of Country

As outlined in Section 2.1 a key outcome of Connecting with Country includes Healthy Country - healthy interconnected natural ecosystems, supported by regenerative and sustainable practices. This has been achieved by incorporating:

- Aboriginal healthy country principles incorporated within natural landscaping outside the gaol, in the sustainability plan, in the building design and water management on the site, and
- Aboriginal healthy country principles of seasonality within the gaol gardens.

Healthy community has been addressed by acknowledging the past Aboriginal incarceration inside the gaol, but also public art dedicated to reconciliation. No physical evidence for traditional Aboriginal occupation was identified in the Project Area, however, traditional cultural heritage connections to the Wingecarribee have been maintained through the viewing platform, providing public views from the Project Area to the Wingecarribee. Cultural competency and better places will be achieved through the Indigenous Procurement Policy.

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Appendix 1 Aboriginal Consultation Minutes

Meeting Minutes

Connecting with Country (CWC) Phase 1

Berrima Gaol, Berrima

Date and Time: Wednesday 11th September 2024, 10pm – 3pm

Location: Berrima Gaol, 2-4 Argyle St, Berrima

Attendees: 10

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Jonathan Thompson	JT	The Blue Sox Group	Project Manager
Dan Szwaj	DS	Turner Studio	Architect
Ingrid Mather	IM	JMD Design	Landscape Architect
Arlyn Romero	AR	JMD Design	Landscape Architect
Chris Downy	CD	Primary Engage	Communications Consultant
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Connecting with Country Consultant
Tiffany Jones	TJ	Heritage Now	Connecting with Country Consultant
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder

Minutes

Acronyms Used:

CWC = Connecting with Country

LALC – Local Aboriginal Land Council

PA = Project Area

Discussion
Topic - Introduction • Introductions • Welcome to Country – [REDACTED]
Topic - Tour around Gaol • Tour led by JT and DS Governor's House • JT mentions this is one of the first buildings visitors see when they walk up to the Gaol. He is unsure what the house will be used for in the current designs, but potential uses include: ○ Art Gallery/exhibition space ○ Retail Current Carpark Area • This space will be converted into a market garden or community garden. He mentioned how the garden may be used to supply the planned restaurant within the Gaol Old Garden • JT remarks this area is within a depression and will be turned into a carpark with at least two basement levels and will have at least two entrances. • All old buildings will be kept, but the timber structures will be removed. • [REDACTED] asks if the garden was in used in the last phase of the Gaol, when it housed women. JT replied that either the Garden stopped supplying the Gaol or its goods were rationed, as the prisoners were fermenting the fruit. Behind the Gaol • The PA shares a boundary with the Wingecarribee River corridor. There is a walking track which winds behind the Gaol down to the River. Hall of Industries • This building is not being kept, as it is not a contributory item to the heritage listing of the Gaol • The building will be replaced by landscaping and accommodation • Wooden toys and the refurbishment of headsets for Qantas, are just some of the things manufactured within the building, by prisoners. Deputy Governors House • Is located across the street from the Courthouse. Inside the Gaol Walls

Discussion

- JT says most of the buildings within the Gaol are not heritage listed, but the sandstone is. The Gaol was used as a training centre before becoming a Gaol again. Sandstone will be reused in the new design wherever possible.
- The original Gaol buildings either burnt down in a 1940s fire or became delapidated overtime that they were torn down. The current form of the Gaol reflects a modern penitentiary building style.
- The new design intends to keep some of the fabric (i.e reuse some of the gaol cells), to keep the feel of an old gaol.
- Some of the Gaol's cells will be retained and turned into guest accommodation, so that visitors can experience staying in a gaol cell, if they wish.
- A conference centre, restaurant, and wellness centre are planned to be inside the Gaol walls

Topic – Project and CWC Introduction

CWC Process Outline: (Presenter: CP)

- CP provided an overview of the CWC Process, explaining the NSW government guidelines. She further noted that this first Discovery Phase 1 meeting was to identify Themes and Stories relevant to country and the project.
- The Themes and Stories identified, will be integrated into the project design that will be evaluated in a Phase 2 meeting, to see if it aligns with cultural values. Phase 3 is content development, and Phase 4 is review and finalisation.
- CP emphasises the CWC process is separate to the archaeological assessment, which is being completed by Austral Archaeology.
- Many different types of interpretation. Examples provided

History of the PA:

- CP remarks that the history of the Gaol was discussed during the tour.
- JT noted that for further history on the Gaol, there is a lot of information online and there are books to purchase at the courthouse

Heritage Interpretation in Context:

- CP showed examples that used the principles of the CWC process and discussed how these tied Aboriginal culture and heritage into their design and embed Aboriginal concepts into places on Country.
- Example provided:
 - Belmont Lagoon interpretation boards at Belmont
 - 'Maya' Fish Trap sculpture in Albury
 - 'The Great Rescue of 1852' sculpture in Gundagai
 - Painted footpaths at Murray's Beach

Topic – Presentation of Project

Project Introduction: (Presenter JT)

- JT provides a brief introduction of the Design Team (Turner Studio the architects and JMD Design the landscape architects), and that DS will talk about how the early concept design was reached.
- The design will build visitor facilities within the Gaol, but there are space restrictions. There is more flexibility outside the Gaol walls. The front of the Gaol and some view of the Gaol from the street will not be changed and remain as is.

Discussion

- Aim of the design is to keep the feel of the PA as an old heritage prison but convert it into usable space.

Project Design – Site attributes: (Presenter DS)

- The PA is bigger than the Gaol walls. The experience of being at the site (arrival, as well as inside and outside the Gaol) are all important. It is noted that the view of Gaol from river provided a more landscape and natural setting.
- DS interprets the site attributes of the PA as being set in Berrima, which is likened to a colonial or English setting, that is reflected in the front of the Gaol. The Deputy and Governor's residences flanking the front of the Gaol are in a Victorian or Edwardian style. The Gaol itself is enclosed but also has been kept closed off to the public for a very long time, which has created curiosity amongst the public. At the rear of the Gaol, the door leading to the Hall of Industries is described as an 'Alice in Wonderland Door', as it instantly changes the setting. This door is representative of how in its new form, the Gaol can change the perception of what the site is about.
- Key elements of the Gaol:
 - The site has a very formal arrival, with procession and formality reflected by the main door, which has small door within a larger door. This intends to be kept in the proposed design.
 - Thresholds within the site were considered. There are two coloured lines within the Gaol: red exclusion zones that visitors could not cross, and yellow that needed to be kept within. There is a similar situation with the walls, as there is an outside wall and an inner courtyard wall, which are compared to the layers of an onion.
 - There are lots of arches in the Gaol, which contributes to the sense of procession and arrival. A series of arches within the Gaol define where you walk through.
 - The cells are set around courtyards, which makes these spaces special. There is an eastern courtyard that is vegetated and a concreted western courtyard, which is a more traditional Gaol courtyard. Each courtyard had a different feel and scale and are both enclosed and accessed by different thresholds.
 - The walls of the Gaol represent the most significant heritage item of the PA. It tells the history of the site via crosses in the internal wall, an animal trough on the exterior wall, and through the different textures of the stonework.
 - The two residences represent a connection to the community, as they are not hidden behind the Gaol walls but are in plain sight. They are inviting.
 - Textures of the Gaol are of interest, particularly the sandstone. It represents how one material can be treated very differently indicating its use and reused within the Gaol. The textures of the sandstone also show the different phases of the Gaol.
 - JT clarifies, the inner wall of the Gaol was the original 1839 Gaol wall and entryway, with the outer wall and entry built later in 1866 when the Gaol was expanded. Both walls and entry ways (not gates) are of heritage significance. He has not yet been able to find any drawings or photos of the 1839 entry way
 - IM suggested looking for drawings done at an elevation from the State Archives, as they can be very meticulous.
 - JT notes that Ros (Rosalind) Dale is the Gaol Historian
 - DS talks about how the Gaol is connected to nature. There are walking trails behind the Gaol that lead to the Wingecarribee River. The Gaol is not visible from

Discussion

the River due to a rock escarpment. While the walls of the Gaol dominate the whole site, there is a real natural treasure behind it.

Project Design – Early concept design (DS)

- DS addresses how to make the site more inviting, so that the Gaol is no longer keeping people in but inviting people in. This is more than just the front gate and managing the threshold of the site, but how can the Gaol connect with the Berrima community.
 - This could be achieved via an English style rose garden – examples given include Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney, and a garden from Italy and Spain. The examples chosen show consideration of new openings or new ways to celebrating passing through a threshold
- Gaol will be adaptively reused, with the intention to celebrate the history of the site but in a functional practical way.
 - How can the fabric be modified? For example, how to make prison cells more functional as a hotel room, but also keep them as a prison cell.
 - How to work with courtyards and the types of courtyards (occupied, contemplative or reflective, have an outlook).
 - When installing new construction, how do you work with the existing fabric (i.e. stonework, courtyards, existing arches and vaults). It's intended to install a series of lightweight pavilions that occupy the spaces defined by the stone walls.
 - The back of site will be used as hotel guest accommodation, as it provides a serene contemplative setting, with an outlook over the River.
- DS talks through the early concept design and the planned locations of guest rooms, facilities, amenities, and parking. This includes the possibility of potentially creating an additional entrance into the Gaol and the rose garden outside the Governor's house. The new buildings and amenities have been designed to look natural and are low, so as not to compete with the Gaol walls. digital rendered images of what the design may look like where shown.
 - ■ asks if the hotel rooms at the rear of the Gaol are 2 stories. DS replies they will be 2-3 stories depending on the slope, as the intent is for the buildings to follow the landscape.
- JT reiterates, the heritage significance is the fabric (sandstone) not the built form of the Gaol.
- DS stated the current early concept design differs from the original client brief, which wanted hotel rooms and a restaurant inside the Gaol. However, this would involve destroying some of the fabric of the Gaol.
- JT said designs still need to be approved and are not concrete. There are areas and spaces where there are potential for community engagement (e.g. pop up market in carpark, community garden). This current conception of the site is a good long-term solution for the Gaol and the Berrima community.
- The designs have been presented to the Heritage Council, who are on board with this early concept design. However, the potential new entry way has not been given approval yet.
- Concept design still needs additional input for other industries (for example engineers and ecologists), and landscape designs are about to begin.

Discussion

Topic – Discussion of Themes and Stories

Importance of the Sky:

- IM talks about the sky. When you are in the courtyards of the Gaol there is a lot of sky visible and you cannot really see past it. Putting roofs and ceiling in the new designs will change that aspect. You could be anywhere in the Gaol and you will feel disconnected. Should this be kept? How important is the sky and is it critical to perceptions in the space.
- DS mentions perceptions of the space within the gaol is related to the sightlines, which are the tall Gaol walls. It is important that the Gaol walls are easily identifiable and recognisable and remains so in the new design.
- [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were not sure of any sky stories for this area
- DS talks about how the connection to the sky and stars may have been important to the prisoners of the Gaol. He provides an example of how stars were incorporated into a previous project he was involved with – the Galaxy ceiling from the Pemulwuy Project.
- [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] agree that the Dark Emu constellation may be appropriate to be incorporated but would need to check with the LALC first.

Dreaming Story: Gurangatch and Mirragan

- MP mentions the big story about the Wingecarribee River is the story of the Rainbow serpent and the quoll. He suggests that there could be interpretive signage by the river telling this story.
- It was agreed that this story could be incorporated into the Gaol design in some way.

Sandstone

- [REDACTED] talks about how sandstone was used by past Aboriginal people and is also a prominent building material in the Gaol. She asks if it is appropriate to discuss or reflect on the sandstone within or outside the Gaol, or if sandstone is a relevant theme to incorporate.
- MP and BL were not sure if it is relevant.

Plants and Vegetation

- MP would like native plants, with some bush tucker plants.
 - CP this could be incorporated into the planned working garden
 - DS mentions that there is an intention to remove concrete within the Gaol, particularly between the Gaol buildings and the Gaol wall. This could be landscaped and turned into a walking path or journey around the site. He also talks about how plants are healing and can assist in changing the vibe of the Gaol, which has a lot of healing to do.
- IM notes that there are grand native trees (*Eucalyptus bicostata*) in the area mixed in with exotic conifers. These native trees could be used as a transition to represent heading back to country, as a visitor goes towards the River.

Acknowledgement of Country

- MP suggests having an acknowledgement of country on the Gaol building. He provides an example of the one used at the University of Wollongong on all their buildings.
- CP suggests this could be an opportunity to collaborate with local Aboriginal artists.

Fauna

- MP, BL and JT list some fauna and birds that can be found in the area: crows, black cockatoos, Kookaburra, platypus, rakali
- BL suggests speaking to the LALC

Journeys

Discussion

- IM mentions one of the ways different Aboriginal mobs communicated with each other was through gathering spots. The idea of how a journey was undertaken between various meeting spots could be incorporated into the design.

Individual Stories of Prisoners

- DS there are a lot of individual stories within the Gaol, some possibly written on the Gaol walls. There could be opportunity to incorporate individual experiences into the design.
- JT mentioned that they have spoken to some of the prison guards.
- BL suggests that the engagement team get in contact with the people who were incarcerated in the Gaol, as they lived there. Could contact Aboriginal workers inside gaols, to ask incarcerated Aboriginal prisoners if they know of anyone or any stories of the Gaol.
- CP raises Port Arthur as an example of how individual experiences have been incorporated into a historical site.
- CD the Gaol was used as a training centre for underage boys who had committed crimes, for a period of time after World War II. It's possible that some of the boys who attended the training centre may still be alive and could provide their stories.
- JT said they can put a call out for stories on the Project's website.

Closing Comments

Summary: CP provided an overview of the day and thanked all participants for their contributions and time. Will have another meeting later down the line to discuss how the ideas will be incorporated and if there are any updates to the designs.

Actions:

- Heritage Now to circulate minutes



Meeting Minutes

Designing with Country (DWC) Phase 1

Berrima Gaol, Berrima

Date and Time: Thursday 19th September 2024, 11:30 am – 12:30pm

Location: Online

Attendees: 4

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Tiffany Jones	TJ	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant

Minutes

Acronyms Used:

DWC = Designing with Country

LALC – Local Aboriginal Land Council

PA = Project Area

Discussion
Topic - Introduction • Introductions • Welcome to Country – CP • Apologies - [REDACTED]
Topic – Project and DWC Introduction DWC Process Outline: (Presenter: CP) • CP provided an overview of the DWC Process, explaining the NSW government guidelines. She further noted that this first Discovery phase meeting was to identify Themes and Stories relevant to country and the project. • The Themes and Stories identified, will be integrated into the project design that will be evaluated in a Phase 2 meeting, to see if it aligns with cultural values. Phase 3 is content development, and Phase 4 is review and finalisation. • CP emphasises the DWC process is separate to the archaeological assessment, which is being completed by Austral Archaeology. • Many different types of interpretation. Examples provided History of the PA: • CP provides a brief history of the Gaol Heritage Interpretation in Context: • CP showed examples that used the principles of the DWC process and discussed how these tied Aboriginal culture and heritage into their design and embed Aboriginal concepts into places on Country. • Example provided: ○ Belmont Lagoon interpretation boards at Belmont ○ ‘Maya’ Fish Trap sculpture in Albury ○ ‘The Great Rescue of 1852’ sculpture in Gundagai ○ Painted footpaths at Murray’s Beach

Discussion

Topic – Presentation of Project

Summary of Project Design: (Presenter CP)

- CP provides a brief summary of some of the site attributes of the Gaol and highlights the key aspects of the proposed concept design.

Topic – Discussion of Themes and Stories

Dreaming Story: Gurangatch and Mirragan

- ■■■ says this story is not relevant to this part of the Wingecarribee River. It's a highlands story that starts at the junction of the Wingecarribee and Wollondilly Rivers. She also notes that using dreaming stories for the Gaol is not appropriate. ■■■ agrees with her.
- ■■■ does note that she would like to see River incorporated into the design in other ways (e.g. through water features).

Plants and Vegetation

- ■■■ would like to see native plants that are endemic to the area used. She also agrees with bring nature inside the Gaol through gardens and water features.
- ■■■ suggests possible plants to include Camden White Gums in the plantings and waratahs. She notes that the only rock engraving of a waratah in the Sydney area is in Wingecarribee.

Fauna

- ■■■ shares that the southern highlands used to be referred to as the mirragan ranges, due to the number of dingos that lived here. She would like dingos incorporated into the design.

The Impact of Incarceration on Aboriginal People

- ■■■ shared Aboriginal people used to be hung out the front of the Gaol. She would like the impact of incarceration on Aboriginal people (both in the past and the present) to be addressed in some way, as incarceration rates of Aboriginal people are high both now and historically. These are the reasons why she feels it's not appropriate to have specific culturally relevant motifs within and out the front of the Gaol. Interpretations of the River appropriate for inside the Gaol.
- ■■■ would prefer Aboriginal art to be outside the Gaol.

The Impact of European Arrival to the Southern Highlands

- ■■■ would like the broader process of the impact of European settlement and occupation on Aboriginal people. She speaks about how early interactions between Europeans and Aboriginal people were negative, providing the example of an early expedition into the Wingecarribee District by John Wilson, where an Aboriginal girl was caught and assaulted. She emphasises truth telling is an important part of this process, and this also applies to the incarceration of Aboriginal people.
- ■■■ would also like the design to reflect on the impact of Europeans and incarceration of Aboriginal people, rather than just being a celebration of Aboriginal culture.
- CP suggests that the design is an opportunity to acknowledge the atrocities, reflect on it, and then used to show who resilient the both the Gundungurra ancestors and descents are.

Acknowledgement of Country

- ■■■ would not like an acknowledgement of Country to be inside the Gaol. A more appropriate place would outside, possibly overlooking the River.

Placement of Aboriginal motifs

Discussion

- It was discussed that any design elements that celebrate Aboriginal culture should be located at the back of the Gaol, overlooking the River, or in the planned Gardens at the back. This is the optimal place to connect with Country to the River. The front of the Gaol is not an appropriate place for Aboriginal cultural to be celebrated.

Closing Comments

Summary: CP provided an overview of the meeting and thanked all participants for their contributions and time. Will have another meeting later down the line to discuss how the ideas will be incorporated and if there are any updates to the designs.

- [REDACTED] asked for [REDACTED] representation in future meetings

Actions:

- Heritage Now to circulate minutes

Meeting Minutes

Designing with Country (DWC) Ongoing Consultation

Berrima Gaol, Berrima

Date and Time: Tuesday 3 June 2025 3pm – 4:15pm

Location: Online – video call

Attendees: 9

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Tessa Boer-Mah	TBM	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Jonathan Thompson	JT	Bluesox	Client
Claire Mallin	CT	Turner	Architect
Victor Torroglosa	VT	Turner	Architect
Angela Yoo	AY	Turner	Architect

Introduction

TBM provided welcome and context

The client has received a second set of comments from the State Design Review Panel – outlined of the overall process in relation to State Significant Developments

Purpose of panel (SDRP) is to make sure the design meets the design excellence requirements

- Needs to include Connecting with Country (and in this instance also needs to address the heritage requirements of the State Heritage Register listing of the gaol, which is outside the Connecting with Country process)

Agenda

1. Overview of Connecting with Country goals and process to date & SRDP had requested– Connections to Country Statements
2. Interpretation rationale and locations
3. Entry -Opening of wall
4. Proposed Indigenous procurement policy
5. Welcome to Country signage
6. River suites and connections to Wingecarribee River

Meeting Minutes

1. CWC Overview of Connecting with Country

- Developments are supposed to heal and protect country
- Continued living cultural practices
- No specific Aboriginal sites identified in ACHA
- Any additional info you feel appropriate for health and wellbeing of country TBM to stakeholders
- SDRP Want more clear statements of connection to country
 - CP to follow up

2. Interpretation rationale and locations

- TBM provided an overview for having the public art, architectural elements and native gardens with reference to traditional Aboriginal motifs outside the gaol. Native gardens would also reflect seasonality. Stories of incarceration would be within the gaol walls.
- [REDACTED] was in agreement of previous points raised by [REDACTED] that Aboriginal seasonality should be included in the interpretation, but that additional consultation would need to be undertaken post approval
- [REDACTED] highlighted it was important for telling the specific story of the site, rather than generic history and also highlighted that the incarceration history was important.
- TBM acknowledged that further research would need to be undertaken post-approval to ensure historical accuracy of information as well as development of site specific information. TBM also emphasised that the previous consultation sessions had indicated that the outside of the buildings were preferred for

traditional motifs and interpretations of Aboriginal culture, while the inside of the buildings would have specific information about the incarceration of Aboriginal people alongside the incarceration of non-Aboriginal people.

- [REDACTED] - would be good to have a large scale interpretation of the traditional use of the Wingecarribee River, eg People camping on the river, Gunyahs, hunting gathering fishing, suggested could be done through mural, or signage. Also wanted to nominate Aboriginal artist [REDACTED] for the Aboriginal art procurement down the track.

3. Entry – opening of the wall

- TBM Explained secondary entry
- CM explained the rationale
 - Definitely secondary entrance
 - Activation of café and streetscape
 - Gaol is now open for business no longer a gaol and a welcoming space
 - Alternate of the other wall considered but slope too different
 - Pivot to close after hours
 - Needs to be sensitive to sandstone fabric
 - Not to replicate – simple opening
 - Manual operation – symbolic gesture of physically opening the door
 - Opportunity to integrate public art – possibly theme of reconciliation
 - Door may be dual faced
- TBM – asked for input from Aboriginal stakeholders on the door
 - [REDACTED] - how does it move? And as asked about safety and security
 - CM would need to be mechanised with appropriate safety and security protocols
 - [REDACTED] was supportive of secondary opening, but wonders if a less gaol-like opening could be introduced eg curved/arched forms
 - JT – are you supportive of the opening as a concept first and foremost
 - JT – door also needed for safe exits for fire and emergency egress
 - [REDACTED] – asked why the Aboriginal community was being asked to comment on a door in the European heritage fabric.
 - TBM – said that it was to address the SDRP panel comments and read them verbatim
 - [REDACTED] ILALC we can speak to health and wellbeing but not specifics about the opening

4. Proposed Indigenous Procurement Policy & Procurement of public art

- TBM outlined the proposed Indigenous procurement and public art policy
 - Post approval consultation session to go through all of the cultural landscape values eg river, platypus, dingo, endemic plants,
 - Put together an artist brief
 - Invite local artists/EOI
 - What can be done at each location

- Submit conceptual responses
- Consult with stakeholders and Bluesox
- Public Art Management strategy
- Feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders:
 - Aboriginal stakeholders were supportive of the approach
 - [REDACTED] was nominated as an artist to invite
 - ILALC - Can distribute an EOI flyers to members to source artists
 - As part of the criteria for selection consider the specific connections that the artists have to the highlands
 - [REDACTED] - ILALC has a ranger and green team can assist in the installation of landscaping and planting as well as native species selection – [REDACTED] is the LALC environmental manager who is best contacted

5. Acknowledgement of Country/Welcome locations

- TBM outlined suggested locations near the main pedestrian entrance to the building and one along pedestrian access from car park
- Feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders
 - [REDACTED] - If two locations are selected it should be two different welcome to country text

6. River suites and connections to Wingecarribee River

- CM and VT outlined that a cut out would be used to provide views two and from the Wingecarribee River and that the bar form of the buildings had been specified by Heritage NSW with respect to the heritage listing of the gaol. The materiality of the building would be responsive to place and the natural bush setting, including sandstone and gums.
- Feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders
 - [REDACTED] - respecting view to the river and the cultural landscape is important
 - All stakeholders were supportive of the siting, massing and form of the hotel suites provided views to the Wingecarribee River were respected.

Key comments from Stakeholders

[REDACTED] – would be good to have a large scale interpretation of the traditional use of the Wingecarribee River, eg People camping on the river, Gunyahs, hunting gathering fishing, suggested could be done through mural, or signage. Also wanted to nominate Aboriginal artist [REDACTED], for the Aboriginal art procurement down the track.

[REDACTED] LALC has a ranger and green team can assist in the installation of landscaping and planting as well as native species selection – [REDACTED] is the LALC environmental manager who is best contacted and ILALC can also assist in the procurement of Indigenous art

Meeting Minutes

Designing with Country (DWC) Ongoing Consultation

Berrima Gaol, Berrima

Date and Time: Thursday 5 June 2025 3pm – 4:15pm

Location: Online – video call

Attendees: 7

Name	Abbreviation	Organisation	Role
Jonothan Thompson	JT	Bluesox Group	Project Manager
Ingrid Mather	IM	JMD Design	Landscape Architect
Victor Torroglosa	VT	Turner Studio	Architect
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholder
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Aboriginal Stakeholders
Crystal Phillips	CP	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant
Tessa Boer-Mah	TBM	Heritage Now	Designing with Country consultant

Introductions

- [REDACTED] – strong connection to the Southern Highlands including Berrima
- [REDACTED] woman born on country in [REDACTED] also connected to the Southern Highlands including non-indigenous heritage with an ancestor who was a [REDACTED] in Berrima

Introduction

TBM provided welcome and context

The client has received a second set of comments from the State Design Review Panel – outlined of the overall process in relation to State Significant Developments

Purpose of panel (SDRP) is to make sure the design meets the design excellence requirements

- Needs to include Connecting with Country (and in this instance also needs to address the heritage requirements of the State Heritage Register listing of the gaol, which is outside the Connecting with Country process)

Agenda

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Meeting Minutes

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 - Any additional info you feel appropriate for health and wellbeing of country TBM to stakeholders
 - SDRP Want more clear statements of connection to country
 - CP to follow up

2. Interpretation rationale and locations

- TBM provided an overview for having the public art, architectural elements and native gardens with reference to traditional Aboriginal motifs outside the gaol. Native gardens would also reflect seasonality. Stories of incarceration would be within the gaol walls.
- Aboriginal Stakeholder feedback
 - ■■■ states that all rivers are important – important as any other river
 - ■■■ - Rivers are the lifeblood of country, without them nothing is possible
 - ■■■ and ■■■ emphasised that natural habitats are very important
 - Need the right plants in right place to attract to the right animals
 - Medicines, cultural practices, food
 - Different in different country so need to get in right
 - Keep country in balance

3. Entry – opening of the wall

- TBM Explained secondary entry
- Feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders
 - [REDACTED] - Something suggested to us, not our idea so why are we being asked
 - TBM-Door is to improve access and egress, and activation of café area, preferred option is the pivot door capable of opening and closing, opportunities for temporary art and reconciliation art as well as permanent art/acknowledgement
 - [REDACTED] does not think that there should be an opening
 - [REDACTED] states - If they were affecting our heritage we wouldn't want people cutting a whole in it if it makes things easier
 - TBM – opportunity to keep the building and use and active to allow continued care and funds to maintain the building for the future
 - [REDACTED] understands is reuse is important – but shouldn't take away from its context

4. Proposed Indigenous Procurement Policy & Procurement of public art

- TBM outlined the proposed Indigenous procurement and public art policy
 - Post approval consultation session to go through all of the cultural landscape values eg river, platypus, dingo, endemic plants,
 - Put together an artist brief
 - Invite local artists/EOI
 - What can be done at each location
 - Submit conceptual responses
 - Consult with stakeholders and Bluesox
 - Public Art Management strategy
- Feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders:
 - In support of the procurement policy
 - [REDACTED] – artist - suggested by stakeholders

5. Acknowledgement of Country/Welcome locations

- TBM outlined suggested locations near the main pedestrian entrance to the building and one along pedestrian access from car park
- Feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders
 - In agreement welcome to country at pedestrian entrances was beneficial

6. River suites and connections to Wingecarribee River

- TBM outlined that a cut out would be used to provide views two and from the Wingecarribee River and that the bar form of the buildings had been specified by Heritage NSW with respect to the heritage listing of the gaol. The materiality of the building would be responsive to place and the natural bush setting, including sandstone and gums.
- Feedback from Aboriginal stakeholders
 - [REDACTED] asks if the trees be maintained?
 - IM – some exotic trees to be removed, riparian zone trees will be retained including snow gums and casuarinas, In talks with council about revegetation
 - [REDACTED] – has the escarpment been archaeologically surveyed?
 - TBM has been surveyed as part of a separate Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment

Additional discussion on plan selection

- [REDACTED] – to go through each area for the right species for the right places
- Design team to where possible include endemic species
- Indigenous people to be involved in the procurement of plants
- To comment on plant list if anything is missing
- ACHA to be supplied to [REDACTED]

Appendix 2 Statement of Commitments & Permissions Form

Statement of Commitment by Client and Design Team to Connecting with Country Process

‘Country’ has a specific significant meaning to Aboriginal peoples. Country relates to the land that Aboriginal people belong to in a physical, spiritual and cultural sense. Connecting with Country acknowledges the importance of Country to Aboriginal people, but also the need to foster reconciliation of the land and people with the non-Aboriginal community.

The Connecting with Country process which will be undertaken for the project will involve the sharing of Aboriginal knowledge with the Client and the Design Team and that the process needs to respect Aboriginal community and acknowledge their Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP).

To respect the Connecting with Country process, the Client and Design Team commit to:

- Developing personal cultural competency
- Be humble and respectful when approaching conversations with Aboriginal people.
- Look for opportunities in all stages of the project life cycle for Aboriginal people to provide project leadership and guidance.
- Learn from experiences even if there is a mixed degree of success. The learning can be applied to future projects.
- Respect and protect Indigenous cultural and intellectual property.

The below form was used for the workshop session/s

IMAGE AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM

Description: Berrima Gaol Designing with Country Phase 1 Meeting

Location: Berrima Gaol, 2-4 Argyle Street, Berrima

Date: Wednesday 11 September, 2024 (as well as any future meetings for this project)

Photographs are intended to be taken to document the session.

I, the undersigned being over the age of 18, consent to my image being taken and used and reproduced in any format by Heritage Now Pty Ltd. For the following:

☐ Consent for photo to be taken and reproduced for this project only

or

☐ Consent for photo to be taken and reproduced for the project and other uses for instance, promotional materials

or

☐ Consent for photo to be taken for the project, but reproduction for other purposes to be subject to review by you before being reproduced

or

☐ I do not consent to my photo being taken

I understand that any intellectual property arising from the reproduction of photographs, including copyright and image rights, which arises in the visual image(s) belongs to Heritage Now Pty Ltd.

FOR INDIGENOUS STAKEHOLDERS ONLY

Heritage Now respects Aboriginal Australians and their Indigenous knowledge, cultural and intellectual property. We abide by the Ask First (Australian Heritage Commission 2002) guideline and the Connecting with Country Framework (Government Architect New South Wales 2023a).

Australian Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) refers to the Rights that Aboriginal people have to protect their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and cultural expression.

☐ I consent for any cultural knowledge I provide to be used for the Designing with Country process for the Berrima Gaol Project. This includes reproduction in associated reports and in physical heritage interpretative displays, noting that I will have the opportunity to review any cultural knowledge proposed for public display.

☐ I would like my name included on signage associated with physical heritage interpretative displays.

Completion of this form is accepted as consent to use the images and cultural knowledge of the persons described below.

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____