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April 2016

# Wingara Mura design principles



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# Wingara Mura design principles

## 1.0 Introduction

Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu – The University of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Integrated Strategy defined the University’s strategic commitment to building opportunity, capability and rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for valuing its Indigenous culture.

“This ‘Thinking Path to make Tomorrow’ establishes a vision for the University of Sydney as a uniquely Australian institution, one that is shaped by and helps shape our national story and identity. It creates an opportunity for us to appreciate the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture as a part of that story and identity.”

**Dr Michael Spence**  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal  
Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu

As Universities are fundamentally place-based institutions, strongly associated and sharing a deep connection to the places they inhabit, there is the opportunity to improve the lived experience of the University’s cultures by shaping the physical environment to reflect, be responsive to, and respect this vision.

## 2.0 Objectives of the Wingara Mura design principles

The Wingara Mura design principles advance the objectives and ideas presented in Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu – The University of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Integrated Strategy. Translating these objectives and ideas into design principles will ensure that a vibrant and deep cultural narrative becomes an integral part of the campus experience.

The successful translation of these principles seeks to:

1. improve the lived experience of the University’s cultures and build a strong and distinctive sense of belonging between the place and its people
2. create an environment that deeply resonates with the narratives of the University’s rich and diverse cultures and history
3. ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and its representation is a priority for the University and acknowledged in policy
4. ensure Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives are meaningfully taken into account in the planning and decision making process of the University’s capital works program and in particular that this engagement is used to inform the briefing and development of projects.
5. ensure more students who graduate from the University do so with a deeper knowledge and understanding of ancestral and contemporary Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture
6. foster stronger relationships based on mutual respect with local, regional and national Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.

(Bullet points 5 to 6 refer directly to actions detailed in The University of Sydney 2011–2015 White Paper Strategy Ten – Promote Indigenous Participation, Engagement, Education and Research.)

## 3.0 Vision

The University of Sydney will be known for its integration and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in its physical experience.

The experience of being at the University will contribute to students and staff understanding and appreciation, knowledge and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledge systems, and foster a deeper understanding of the historic significance of the land the University inhabits.

## 4.0 Wingara Mura – design principles

**Introduction**  
The University of Sydney 2016–20 Strategic Plan defines the direction for the University for the next five years. The plan defines a continuation and deeper commitment to the vision and direction established in the University of Sydney 2011–2015 White Paper and Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu – The University of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Integrated Strategy.

These documents have determined a set of core values and focus for action that will shape the University’s future, and as such offer a robust starting point for the definition of a set of design principles that reflect the aspirations of the University community, to enhance the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and to successfully deliver its meaningful representation in its built environment.

In the 2011–2015 White Paper the University defined two core values as encapsulating both the vision of the founders of the University and the aspirations of its academic and student communities for its future. These values have been embraced and advanced in the University’s Strategic Plan 2016–20.

These two values of ‘Engaged Enquiry’ and ‘Mutual Accountability’ have provided the foundations and focus for the development of a concise set of design principles, to guide the development of projects across its campuses.

4.1 Core value – Engaged Enquiry (EE)

Design approach

In the context of evolving the physical environment of the University this value sets in place the requirement for an approach to projects that:

- pursues a process of **comprehensive interrogation and exploration of place and people, past, present and future**
- engages fully with the idea of **cross-disciplinary dialogue and practice** to foster respect, dignity, equality and engagement and unlock deeper design potential
- pursues outcomes that are responsive to the **contemporary concerns of the diverse University community, its staff, students and visitors.**

Ref.	Design principle
EE 1.1	<p><b>Imagine a uniquely Australian university</b></p> <p>“The principle rests on an Australian and a University vision that values the complex range of Australian relationships, histories, cultures and aspirations and through education, research and engagement, and weaves them respectfully into a richer, complex but coherent Australian narrative and identity.”</p> <p>Ref. Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Projects should be firmly grounded in a response to place – they should be climatically and culturally responsive, and explore opportunities to work with a locally informed vernacular of language, materials and craft.</li><li>- Projects should express and convey meanings legible to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups in the treatment of buildings and spaces</li><li>- Projects should explore initiatives to rethink sharing country and develop spaces that seek to recognise shared history and co-existence.</li><li>- The siting and orientation of buildings, activities and spaces should be considered within the context of a larger landscape of Indigenous narratives.</li></ul>
EE 1.2	<p><b>Explore and advance ‘Storylines’ as design narratives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- At its earliest conception design ideas should seek to understand and explore relationships with ‘country’ and community; their ‘Storylines’ past and present.</li><li>- The relevant past, deeper and diverse layers of history and connections to place</li><li>- Relationships with the cultural present and future across all age demographics of Indigenous people.</li></ul>

Ref.	Design principle
EE1.3	<p><b>Deliver cultural experiences that are physically and visually tangible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Projects should explore an appropriate translation of ‘intercultural space’<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- spaces for ‘deep listening’, sharing, learning and attempting to understand a different worldview.</li></ul></li><li>- Explore the physical, emotive and spiritual symbolism of relevant ‘storylines’ and the materiality of the contextual natural world to develop meaningful interpretation in the physical forms of the University. For example, explore the seasonal significance of different species of plant and connect this with the history of the landscape and its people.</li></ul>
EE1.4	<p><b>Create an environment that supports and clearly reflects core Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander values</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Designs should validate Indigenous knowledge and values – community, kinship, social responsibility, social interaction and the importance of place.</li><li>- Projects should explore the creation of spaces that strengthen community ties and facilitate community obligations and requirements, to create spaces that are designed to fit the community’s requirements, both now and into the future.</li><li>- Projects should consider the implication of ‘avoidance relationships’ and the requirements to meaningfully interpret and respect this need in the contemporary spaces of the University. Porosity within building and open space environment that allows for multiple entries and ways of occupying space should be considered. Traditional social, kinship and gender relationships/ protocols are still commonly practised. Consider provision of discrete spaces where groups can meet separately from one another and allow for free movement around and past these spaces.</li></ul>

Ref.	Design principle
EE1.5	<p><b>Create an environment that deeply resonates with the narratives of the University’s Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities – to create a living language of the land and its peoples.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sensitively explore opportunities to employ ‘naming’ in projects. Naming brings into being. It implies a notion of belonging to group or country. When a building or a place is named by a traditional owner it is a recalling of ownership and connection to an existing ancestral history and place.</li><li>- Explore opportunities to use the environment to educate and reveal the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander vocabulary of place. At a simple level way-finding could be explored through the language and symbolism of the Eora peoples.</li><li>- Where relevant the achievements and contribution of significant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates should be considered as opportunities for acknowledgment and celebration in the design of spaces and places.</li></ul>

4.2 Value – Mutual Accountability (MA)

In the context of evolving the physical environment of the University this value sets in place the requirement for an approach to projects that:

- engages meaningfully with the needs and values of the community they support and serve, both now and into the future
- explores fully a projects contribution to a wider landscape and cultural experience
- supports the strengthening of a ‘community of scholars’ – recognising the powerful role of the University’s physical environment as collective space, where relationships between different academic communities that constitute the University can be part of a network of collaboration and accountability for the good of the institution.

Ref.	Design principle
MA1.1	<p><b>Adopt a process of ‘dynamic engagement’ with relevant stakeholders throughout the life of the project</b></p> <p>The University is committed to the idea that Indigenous participation should be embedded as an essential and prominent part of its overall mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- that the voice of our Indigenous staff and students is heard at all levels of University decision-making;</li><li>- that we enjoy strong relationships with local and regional Indigenous communities</li><li>- that we actively promote reconciliation</li><li>- that we are the university of choice for both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students and researchers.</li></ul> <p>Strategy Ten, the University of Sydney 2011–2015 White Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A key strategy for the translation and application of the Wingara Mura design principles is one of embedded engagement. The Wingara Mura project partnership, a selected custodian group of informed University and community representatives, provides a focused project resource to support project teams and enable the informed exploration and testing of ideas and project direction.</li><li>- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in design processes is more important than embedding Indigenous imagery in built form. Art, ritual and life is ‘the doing’, the process being as important as the outcome. Through the design process the opportunity to engage fully and facilitate participation with each key relevant stakeholder should be pursued.</li><li>- Through project engagement, teams should seek to create responses that avoid perpetuating stereotypes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia for non-Indigenous audiences.</li><li>- Where possible the project team and client should seek to form Indigenous consultative groups to work with built environment professionals/designers to establish common creative ground and generate a dialogue about the physical manifestation of ‘Aboriginality’ relevant to each project.</li></ul>

Ref.	Design principle
MA1.2	<p><b>Understand the contemporary indigenous relevance of the ‘client faculty’/University activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Develop scholarly connections to contemporary Indigenous learning of the relevant faculty/University activity and incorporate in the built environment.</li><li>- Adopt an ‘intercultural’ approach to design and facilitate a shared journey in which solutions are developed with the end users rather than imposed.</li></ul>
MA1.3	<p><b>Engage in a creative process that respects ceremony as a significant aspect of place</b></p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience or expression is not distinguished from cultural practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Draw a connection to country and explore opportunities to establish spaces and introduce a design language that supports a cultural program and contemporary community practices.</li><li>- Consider deliberate landscape interventions that signal and highlight the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and practices of country.</li></ul>



5.0 Making it happen

The Wingara Mura project partnership

A simple approach

The diagram below sets out a simple road map to guide the development of project opportunities, in line with the Wingara Mura design principles.

A key element of this road map, and embedded at its centre is a process of ‘engagement and review’, which utilises two key tools:

1. The Wingara Mura project partnership

Meaningful engagement will be a critical element to ensure outcomes are progressive, embedded within the community and avoid tokenism. The Wingara Mura project partnership consists of a diverse elected group of project custodians. This group has a collective working knowledge of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and community and acts as an informed partner and guide for teams/consultants developing projects as part of the capital works program.

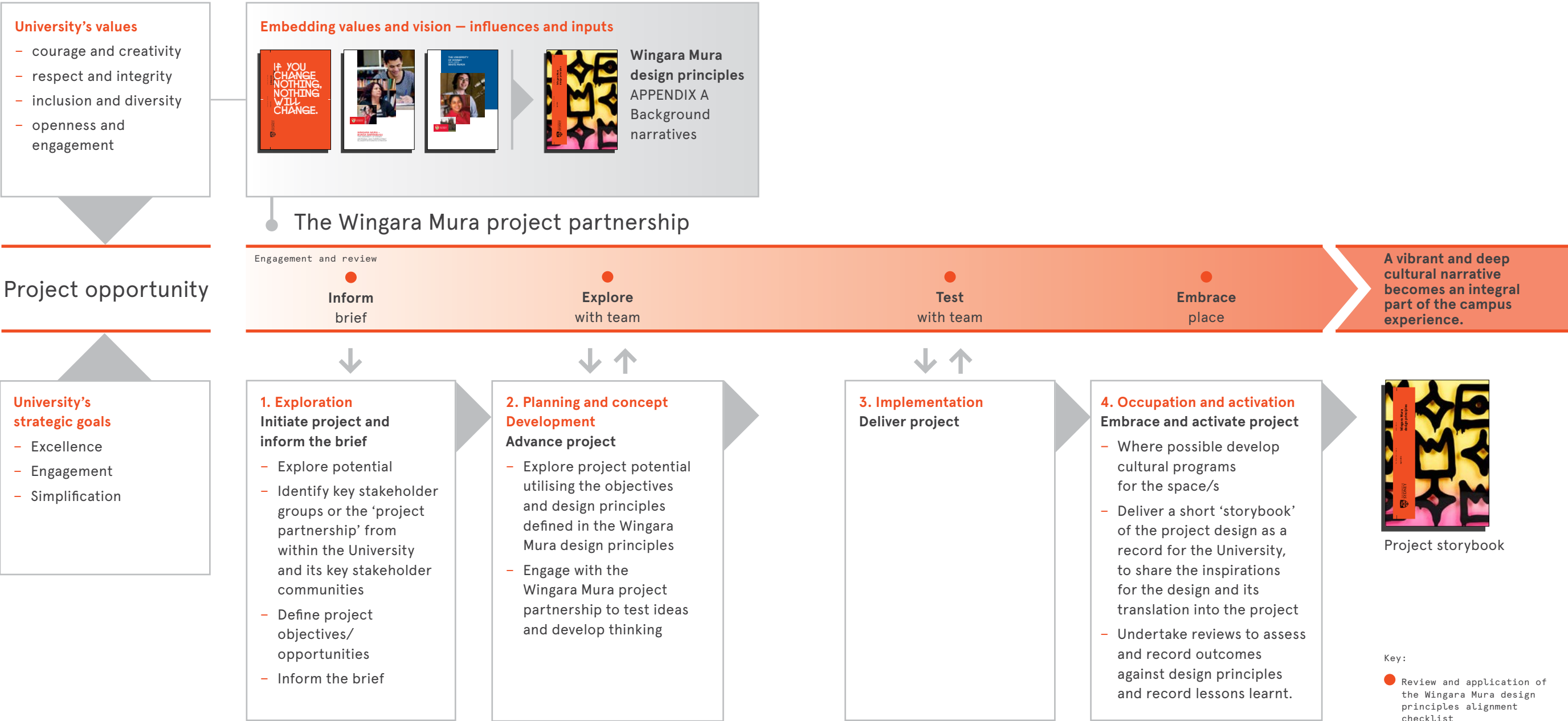
2. Wingara Mura design principles alignment checklist

The Wingara Mura design principles have been carefully defined to simply state the most important outcomes collectively required of each project. This approach recognises the diversity of opportunity and a culturally rich context for projects.

The consistent application of the principles should assist in aligning the physical evolution of the University’s environment to support the delivery of ‘a vibrant and deep cultural narrative as an integral part of its campus experience’.

For the design principles to be effective they need to be:

- quickly and easily understood
- have the flexibility to be applied across a diverse scale of projects
- be embedded in the design process
- be utilised as a ‘checklist’ against which decisions and ideas can be tested quickly and easily.



Project development

5.0 Making it happen

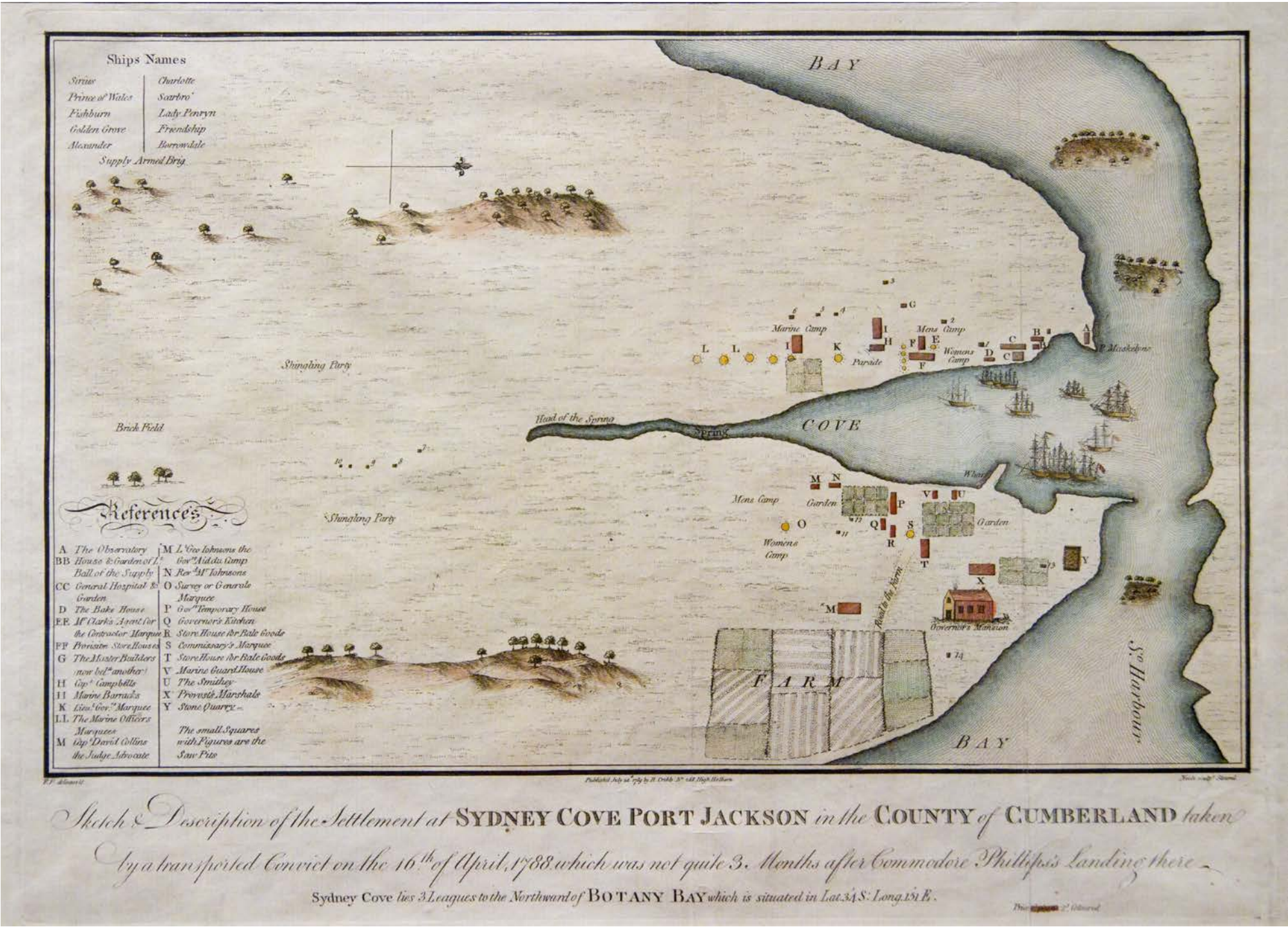
Wingara Mura design principles alignment checklist

The below checklist or ‘project alignment’ table has been created to provide teams, stakeholders and reviewers with a simple and easy reference against which the successful adoption of the Wingara Mura design principles can be explored, and ideas and proposals can be assessed. From the development of project briefs, through design development and completion, the table provides an quick reference to the critical considerations.

EE – Engaged Enquiry	Question	Feedback loop
EE 1.1 Imagine a uniquely Australian university.	Is the project firmly grounded in a response to place – climatically and culturally – including opportunities to work with a locally informed vernacular of language, materials and craft?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>
EE 1.2 Explore and advance ‘storylines’ as design narratives.	Has the project group made contact with any potential research partners across the University who may be able to contribute to the development of design narratives around storylines, layers of history and Aboriginal youth?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>
EE 1.3 Deliver cultural experiences that are physically and visually tangible.	Does the project explore opportunities to translate ‘intercultural space’ and demonstrate research into the physical, emotive and spiritual symbolism of relevant ‘storylines’?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>
EE 1.4 Create an environment that supports and clearly reflects core Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander values.	Does the proposal explore the creation of spaces which strengthen community ties and facilitate community cultural obligations, to create places that are designed to fit the community’s requirements?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>

EE 1.5 Create an environment that deeply resonates with the narratives of the University’s Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander communities – to create a living language of the land and its peoples.	Does the project explore opportunities to use the environment to educate and to reveal the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander vocabulary of place?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>
MA – Mutual Accountability	Question	Feedback loop
MA 1.1 Adopt a process of ‘dynamic engagement’ with relevant stakeholders throughout the life of the project.	Are representatives of the Wingara Mura Project Partnership being consulted and engaged in the project development?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>
MA 1.2 Understand the contemporary Indigenous relevance of the ‘client faculty’/ University activity.	Does the proposal reflect the contribution and translation of the relevant faculty activity within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture both past and present?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>
MA 1.3 Engage in a creative process that respects ceremony as a significant aspect of place.	Does the proposal provide opportunities to develop spaces and introduce a design language that supports a cultural program and contemporary community practice?	<div>Explore further</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div>





Detailed map of Sydney Cove, 1788

# Appendix

## Background narratives – a design resource

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## Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu Strategy

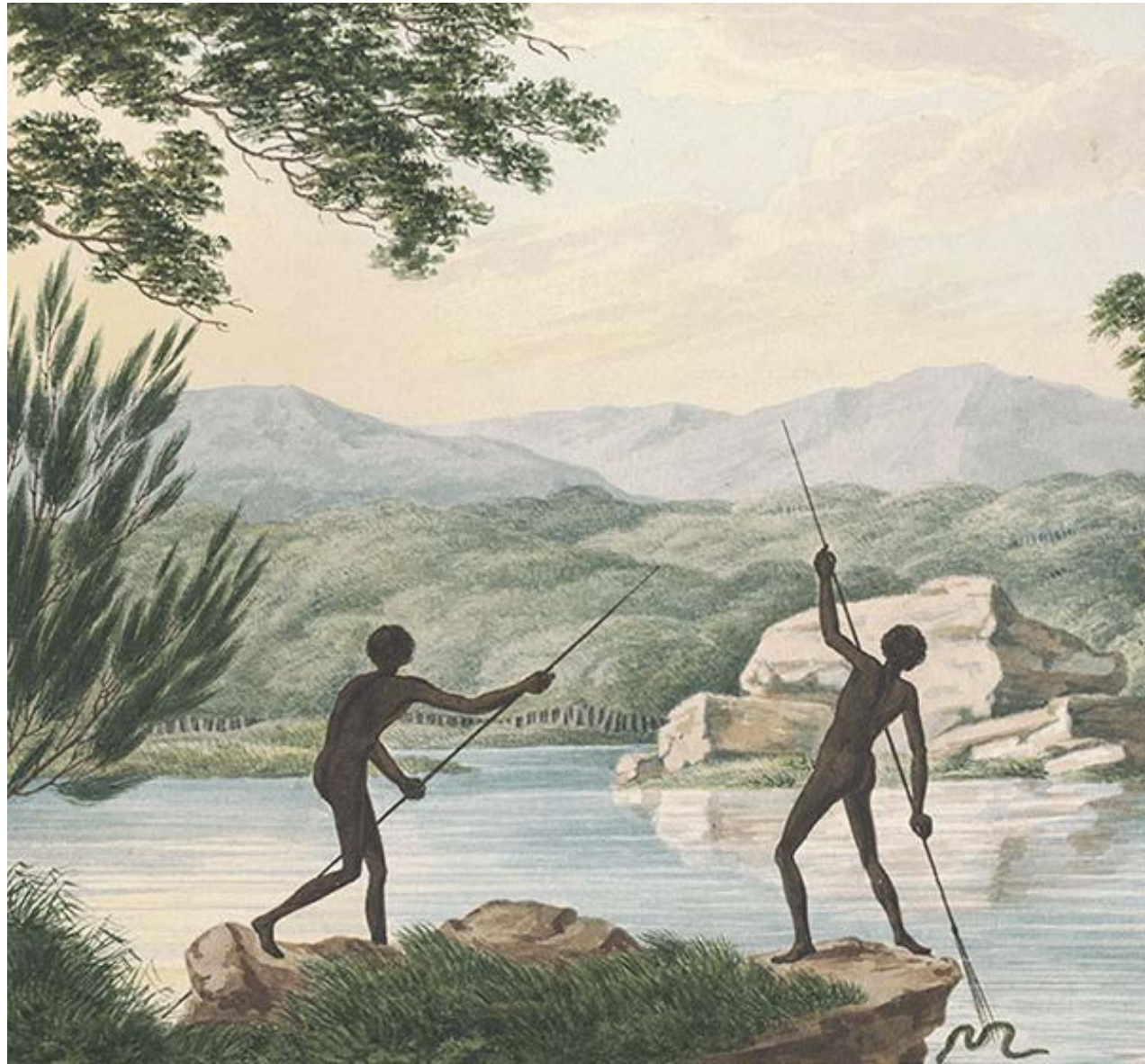
Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu outlines the University's commitment to building opportunity, capability and rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and for valuing Indigenous culture at the University. Implementation of the objectives outlined in Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu will see the built environment become the ground for progressing reconciliation, and for creating an opportunity to explore not only the distinctions or differences, but also the elements that bind and connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

In the last decade, taking into account our colonial legacy, we have laid the groundwork for the implementation of the strategy, in the formation of the built environment at the University and in the hierarchy that has been assigned to the knowledge systems being interrogated. The University's original Gothic revival architecture, for example, its commanding positioning on a ridge and plantings (added in the late 19th century), marked European cultural dominance upon the landscape. Imperialism is a fundamentally spatial construct – it creates the spatial infrastructure for the distinction between the colonial self and the colonised other (Watson-Verron, H., Turnbull, D. 2005). Awareness of this offers an opportunity for decolonising design in all future built-environment undertakings.

Simultaneously, Western 'rationality' and 'scientificity' (Watson-Verron, H., Turnbull, D. 2005), the benchmark criteria against which the knowledge systems of Indigenous Australians were evaluated, and found wanting, is being repositioned from being definitional to being simply another knowledge system on equal footing with all other ways of understanding the natural world (Watson-Verron, H., Turnbull, D. 2005). This opens a path to valuing and integrating the knowledge systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, an essential element of achieving the goals of Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu.

Note: within this document the terms 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal' should be understood as inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.





Two Indigenous people spearing eels [ca. 1826] Lycett, Joseph National Library of Australia, Canberra

## Pre-colonial Sydney

Prior to colonisation, up to 30 different clan groups occupied the Sydney region (an estimated 600 different groups existed across the continent). The Sydney clans, belonging to three major language groups (Darug, Guringai and Dharawal), had distinctive dialects and cultural practices but after contact they became referred to collectively as 'Eora'. Derived from Ee (yes) and ora (here, or this place), this was the term that the Aboriginal people had first used to describe themselves to the British. It was indicative of a deep connection to the land, forged over 40,000 to 60,000 years of continuous occupation.

The Eora lived in groups along the coast from the Georges River and Botany Bay in the south to Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour), north to Pittwater at the mouth of the Hawkesbury River and west along the river to Parramatta (Heiss, A 2002). The Cadigal (Gadigal) were the traditional custodians of the territory including the land the University of Sydney main campus now occupies, and areas now known as Redfern, Erskineville, Surry Hills and Paddington ([redfernoralhistory.org](http://redfernoralhistory.org)).

The entire region was, and continues to be, an area of profound importance for Indigenous people. The Eora had integrated their spiritual beliefs, laws, arts and industries so thoroughly with the land that they were indivisible (Karskens, G. 2012). The landscape was totemic and invested with metaphysical meaning. Natural features were named and their origins ascribed to ancestral beings. The abundance of sandstone in the region provided an opportunity to express and illustrate complex cultural beliefs and over 10,000 artworks – sky heroes, totemic figures, clubs, shields, wildlife – carved or painted onto the stone are evident throughout the region.

## Traditional ownership

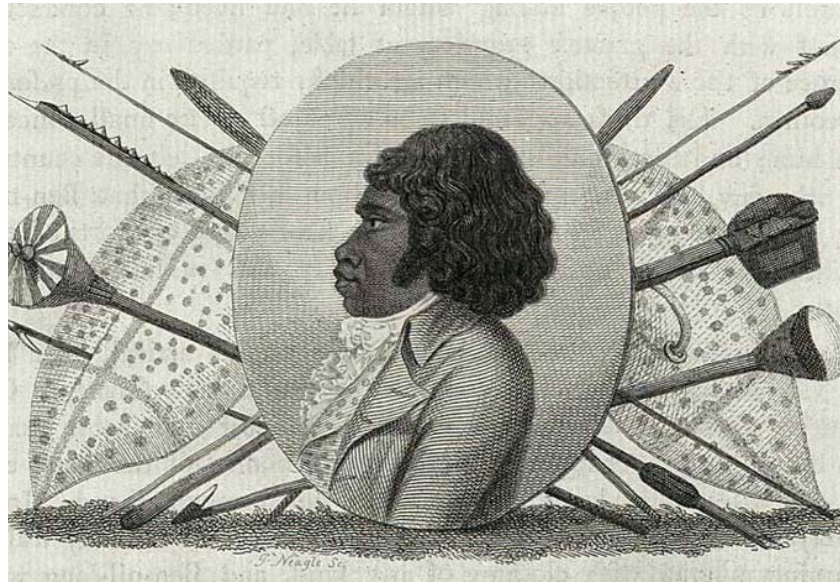
In the beginning of the 19th century the land between Parramatta Road and the Cooks River was known as the District of Bullanaming (Bulanaming). Many of Sydney's main thoroughfares, such as King Street (originally known as the Bullanaming (Bulanaming) Road in Newtown, which extended from Forbes Street near the University of Sydney to St Peters where it joins the Princes Highway, followed Aboriginal tracks that had served as trading routes between farmed grasslands or bountiful fishing areas. The area was also referred to as the 'Kangaroo Ground' as the Gadigal (Cadigal) and Wangal, hunted kangaroo on the grasslands, and fished and camped at the swamps, creeks and rivers that crisscrossed the area.

The Sydney Conservatorium of Music (built in 1817 by Francis Greenway as Government stables, also stands on Cadigal land in the Botanic Gardens close to the area along Woccamagully (Farm Cove) which was used as an initiation ground and for the 'Kangaroo and Dog Dance'. The Conservatorium is also near the camping and trading grounds of renowned Aboriginal explorer Bungaree.

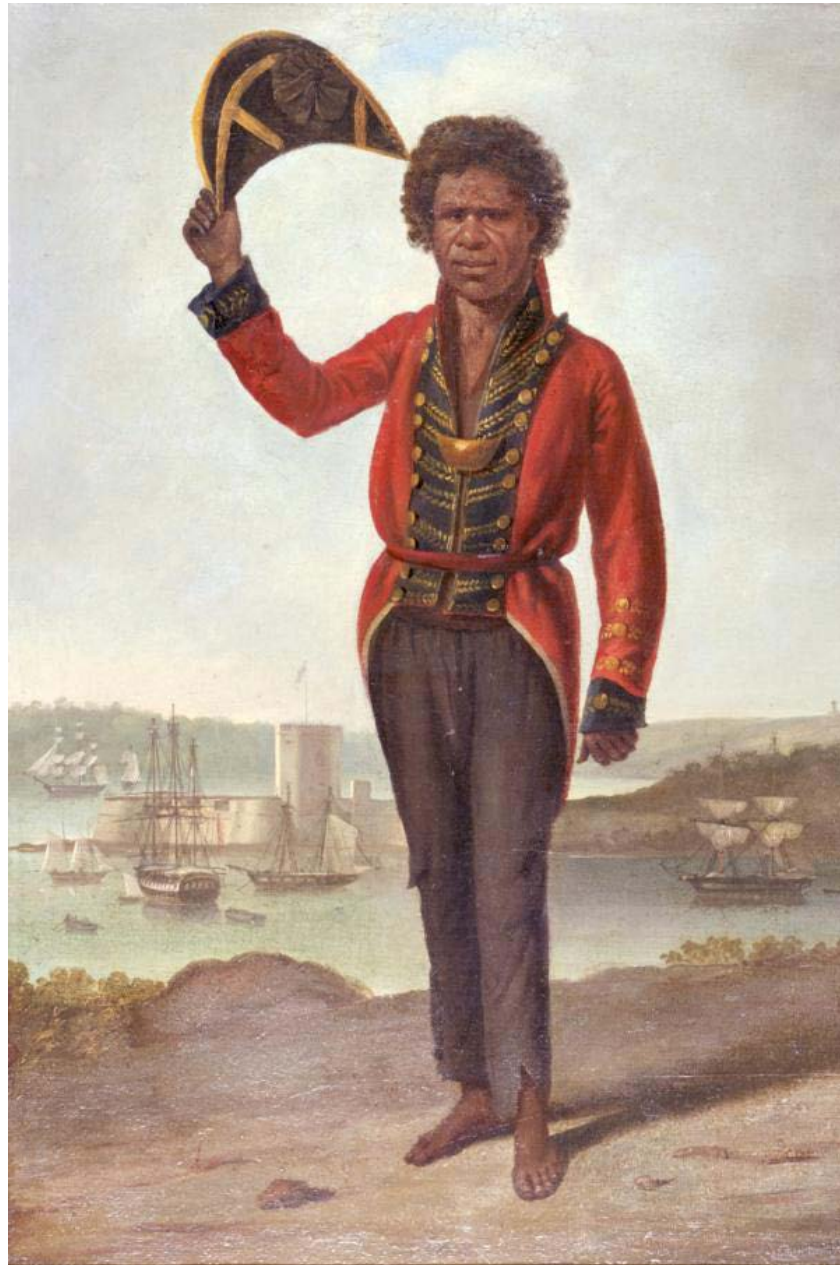
The University of Sydney campuses are now acknowledged as being located on the lands of many Aboriginal peoples.

- Cadigal and Wangal of the Eora nation (Camperdown and Darlington campuses, Burren and Mallett Streets, Sydney College of the Arts, Rozelle, and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music)
- Wangal and Deerubbin (Lidcombe Campus)
- Tharawal (Camden and Cobbitty campuses)
- Ngunnawal (Canberra Campus)
- Wiradjuri (Dubbo Clinical School)
- Gamilaroi (Moree and Narrabri campuses)
- Bundjulong (Lismore Campus)
- Wiljali (Broken Hill Campus)
- Gureng Gureng (One Tree Island Research Station)





State Library of Victoria, 30328102131629/11, engraving by James Neagle



Portrait of Bungaree, a native of New South Wales, with Fort Macquarie, Sydney Harbour, in the background c.1826  
Augustus Earle (1793–1838); oil on canvas; 68.5 x 50.5cm; nla.pic-an2256865

### Contact history and key Indigenous people

Although colonisation was to prove devastating for the Eora peoples, initial contact with the British was cordial. Governor Phillip, tasked with establishing good relations, looked to the Eora people for the supply of foods, as guides for exploration (they took colonists over established Aboriginal tracks), and also to act as interpreters for other Aboriginal groups in the region. In an attempt to learn the language and customs of the local people, Phillip ordered the capture of several leading Eora men, including Bennelong and Colebee.

- *Bennelong* (born c1764), a Wangal man, was one of the most notable Aboriginal people in the early history of Australia. He was captured in 1789, escaped, but subsequently maintained cordial ties with Phillip, often dining at Government House with his wife Barangaroo. Bennelong attempted to aid relations between the two groups by teaching the British about Aboriginal customs and language. Phillip later built him a hut on what became known as Bennelong Point (site of the Sydney Opera House).  
*University of Sydney/Sydney College of the Arts in Rozelle stands on the land of Bennelong and the Wangal people.*

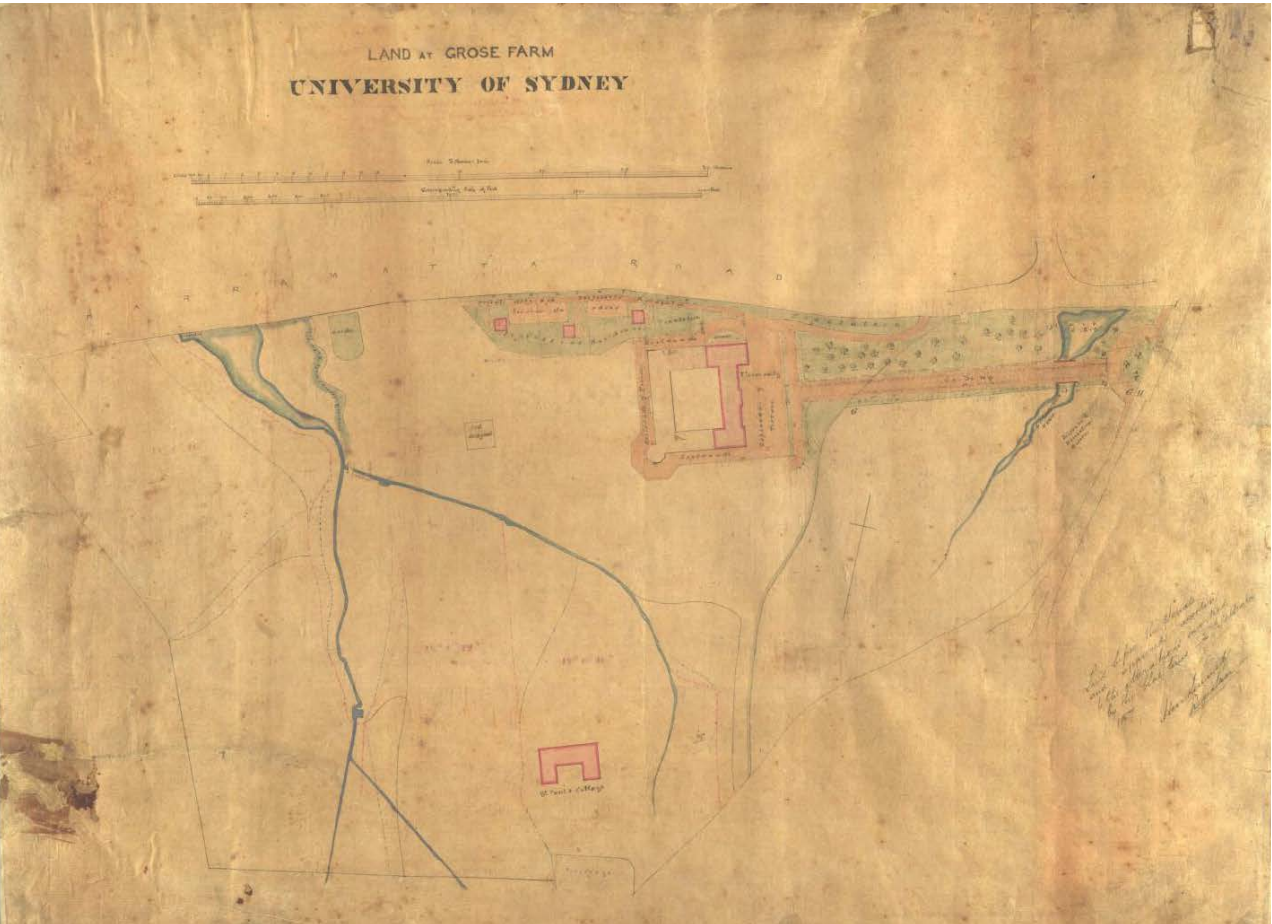
- *Barangaroo*, Bennelong's second wife, was a member of the Cammeray clan and a powerful figure in Sydney's early history. Having survived the smallpox epidemic of 1789, Barangaroo was one of a reduced number of women who had knowledge of laws and women's rituals. She had presence and authority. She refused to wear clothes and disapproved of Bennelong consorting with the colonists.
- *Bungaree* — was one of the most discussed Aboriginal people of the early 19th century. A diplomat who often mediated between Aboriginal people and the government, he sailed with Matthew Flinders, becoming the first Australian to circumnavigate the continent. Bungaree was appointed a 'chief' by Governor Macquarie and was often referred to as the 'King of Port Jackson'. One of his wives, 'Queen Cora (Baringan Carra) Gooseberry', was an identity in Sydney for 20 years after his death.

*The University of Sydney Conservatorium of Music is near the camping and trading grounds of Bungaree.*

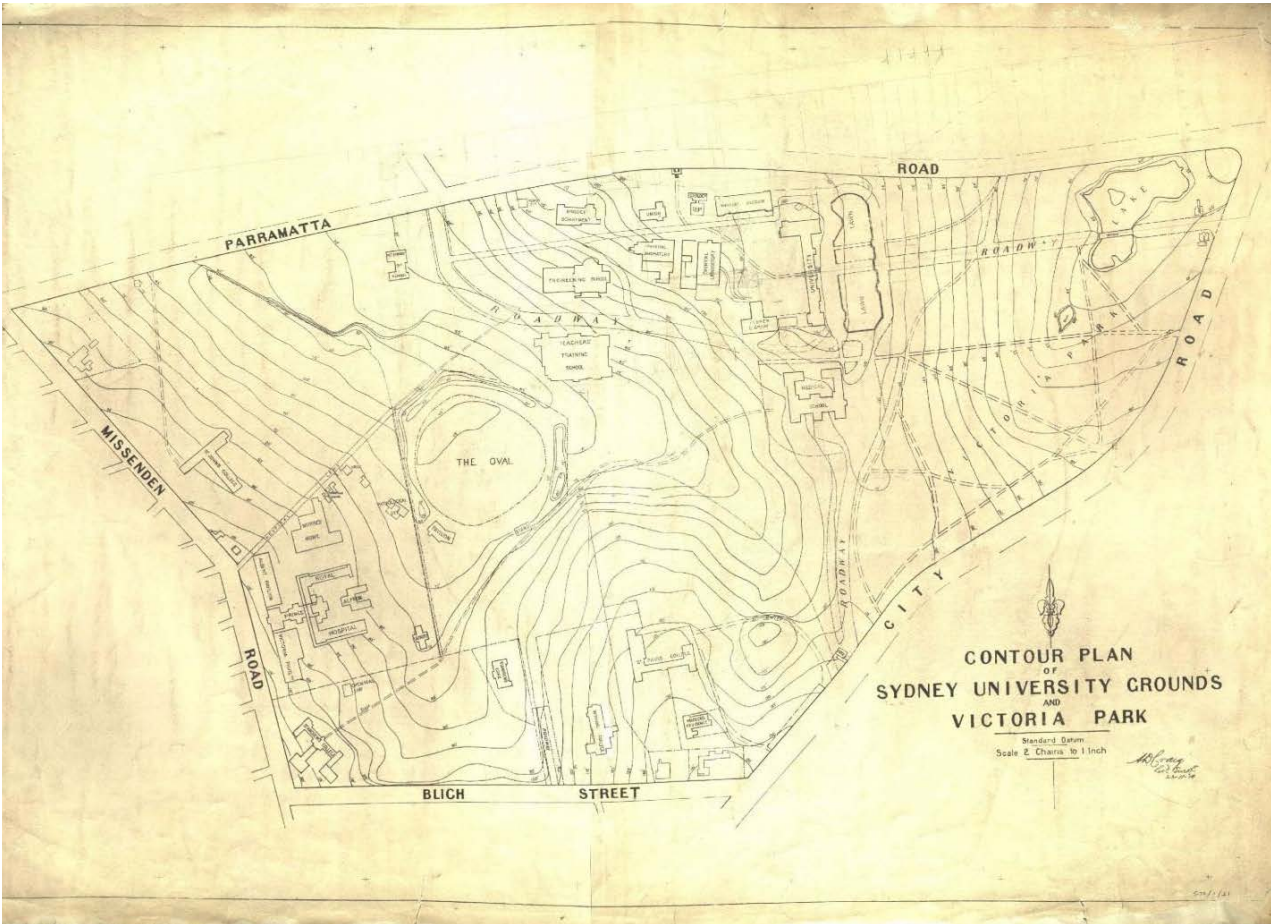
- *Colebee* was a Cadigal leader. Along with Bennelong he was one of the leading Aboriginal men in Sydney at that time. Captured with Bennelong by Governor Phillip, he also escaped. Colebee was one of the three Cadigal to survive the smallpox epidemic (Attenbrow 2010).  
*The University's Camperdown/Darlington Campus is on Cadigal lands.*
- *Pemulwuy* — a Bidjigal man from the Botany Bay area, he was a renowned resistance leader. He led multiple attacks on the settlement from Botany Bay to the Parramatta area. In 1790 he speared a convict gamekeeper, and was then wanted for murder. He was shot in 1797 during a battle at Parramatta and hospitalised but escaped. Pemulwuy was later fatally shot in 1802 and his head was pickled and sent to England.
- *Patyegarang* (Grey Kangaroo), a girl aged 15, assisted Marine Lieutenant William Dawes in 1791 with translations of the Eora language, consequently enabling some of the language to be preserved.

Relations between the settlers and the Eora disintegrated due to the persecution of the Aboriginal people by the convicts, depredations by the settlers on Aboriginal food resources, tree-felling and contamination of the waterways, and the devastating 1789 smallpox epidemic. (Recent research by Dr Boyd Hunter, Australian National University, and Professor John Carmody, University of Sydney, suggests this may have been chickenpox). The Cadigal were reduced in number from about 60 in 1788 to just three in 1791 (Hinkson, M 2010). Following the epidemic, members of surrounding clans joined together for survival. Archaeological evidence (shell middens) indicates that the Cadigal presence in the area extended back at least 14,000 years prior to colonisation (Lennon, 2015 p94), and archaeological and anthropological investigations suggest the Cadigal moved towards Concord to escape the smallpox (Heiss, A. 2002).





Drawing by unknown showing buildings in 1857 (Source: University of Sydney Archives, G74/1/)



Natural landscape features topographic plan based on 1914 Contours Plan, Sydney University grounds and Victoria Park. (Source: Sydney University Archives: 1914 Contours Plan, Sydney University grounds and Victoria Park, Archives identifier G74/1/21 ID 65082)

University history and dispossession

The University of Sydney site (main campus) is considered significant as a precedent for terra nullius as the traditional owners (the Cadigal) were driven from their lands very early in the history of colonisation. The Eora had integrated their spiritual beliefs, social structures, laws, arts and industries so thoroughly with the land that they were indivisible (Karskens, G. 2012). The holistic structure of Indigenous society was incomprehensible to the colonists. As there was no readily identifiable hierarchy or political order that the British Government could recognise or negotiate with, and no evidence of sovereignty, colonial land claims were justified, as was the dispossession of the Eora.

The University, Australia’s first, was established on 1 October 1850 and built on the reserve lands that Governor Phillip had secured in 1789 for ‘school, Crown and church purposes’. In colonial times the land had been used for purposes including farming (hence the site became known as Grose Farm), and pre-existing Eora narratives of occupation were not acknowledged. Dispossession was reinforced visually by the University’s original grand Gothic revival architecture, which reinforced European domination. Subsequent built environment developments continued to erase Aboriginal culture and identity. The University’s commanding positioning on a ridge, ongoing expansion of the built environment, and the European plantings (added in the late 19th century) stamped the dominant culture firmly upon the landscape.

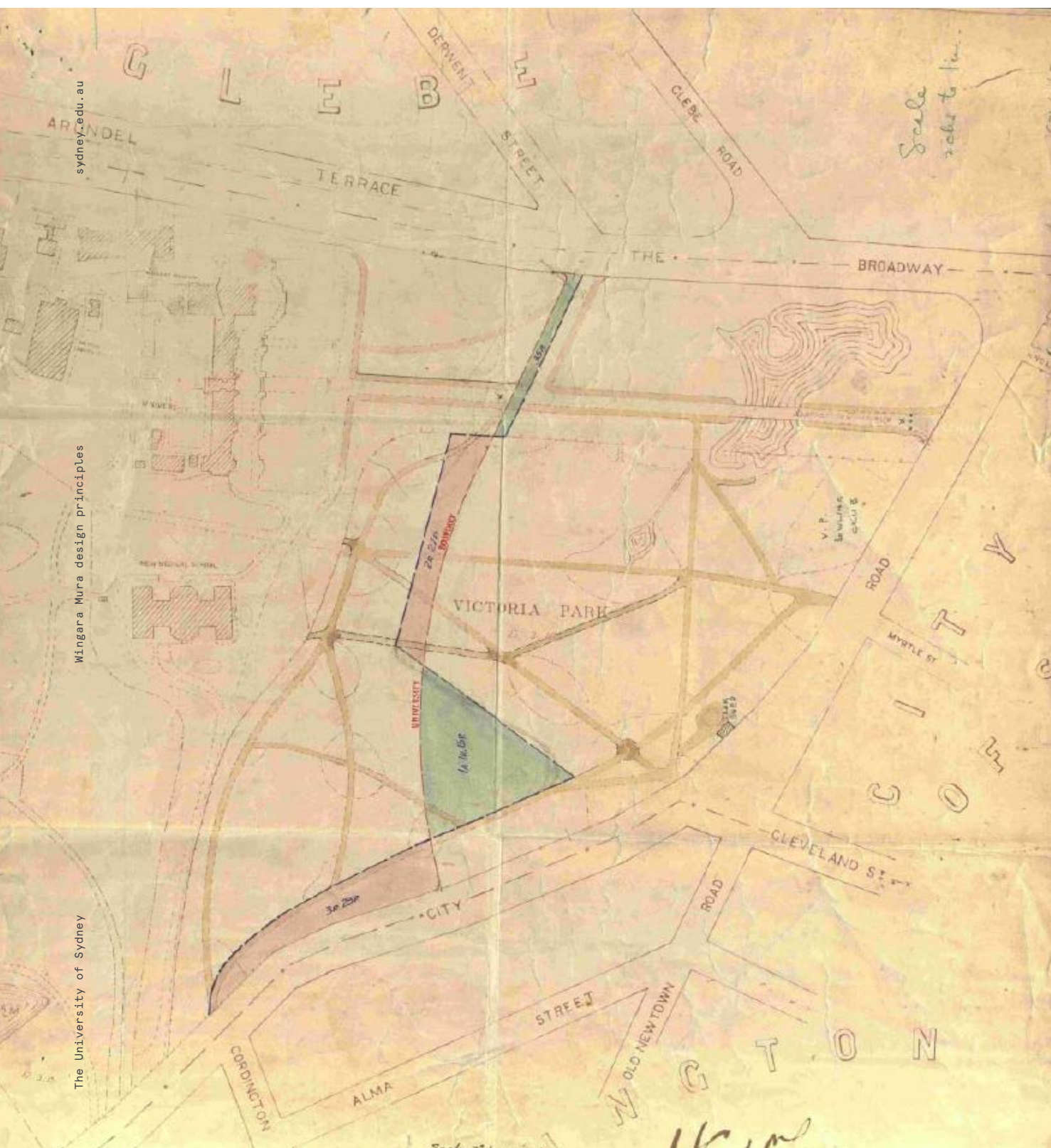
Site archaeology main campus

Archaeological reports suggest a paucity of finds on the University main campus site. Although more than 5000 archaeological sites evidencing Aboriginal occupation have been recorded to date in the Sydney region (Attenbrow, V. 2010), there have been two finds in the University main campus grounds.

Both were at locations in the area that would have originally been the swampy headwaters of Blackwattle Creek; a tidal watercourse which, prior to colonisation, was a source of fresh water for Aboriginal people, and a place for fishing and other activities. The first artefact was unearthed near the Fisher Library. The second was found in 2005 near Maze Crescent, although it may have come from elsewhere.

Goward, T and Irish P. 2013, Blackwattle Creek, City of Sydney, Sydney Barani, accessed November 2015, [www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/blackwattle-creek/](http://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/blackwattle-creek/)





### Indigenous oral histories

There may be a paucity of archaeological finds from the University site, but oral histories reveal the historical significance of the area to Indigenous people.

Oral histories better indicate the significance of the area to Indigenous people as the following, collected by Dennis Foley, lecturer at the Koori Centre in 2005 (Cleverley and Mooney p3), reveal:

- East of the Great Court, down the hill (near current swimming pool) there was a marsh area where a spring was located. This was an important site for womenfolk as two Koori roads joined near where City and Parramatta roads meet. This was a sit-down spot where the southern clans would come and do business with the Cadigal.
- Where the east wing of the Great Court stands was a paint-up spot. A sorry site as after cremation, wrapped bones were placed in some of the trees, not all the trees as this was also a possum area and important to the Cadigal. It is said the Great Hall and the Macleay Museum stand on part of the Cadigal cemetery.
- Another important freshwater site was located where the tennis courts are off Physics Rd which also fed a small marsh. There were two more sit-down sites, one on the western side of St John's oval, where the western clans would trade and meet the Cadigal.
- The ridge that Missenden Road follows is the divide between Cadigal and Wongal lands and has a story that is based on the spine of a giant monitor lizard who once lay there.
- The other important site was on the hilltop, at the highest point near St Andrew's College – this was a men's sit down site. The hilltop was kept cleared to preserve the view of surrounding country.
- There used to be two scar trees on the University.

Cleverly, C. And Mooney, J. Taking our Place: Aboriginal Education and the Story of the Koori Centre at the University of Sydney: Sydney University Press 2010

c.1930: Plan showing a land swap between University and Victoria Park. (Source: University of Sydney Archives G74/1/37)



## Summary of Indigenous education

Cleverley and Mooney (2010) report that in the 19th century the idea of an Indigenous person becoming a University student was unimaginable. The academic perspective, generally speaking, was of a race frozen in time and rapidly diminishing in number. William Charles Wentworth, a founder of the University, had supported a charter of providing education for all (and the University of Sydney was one of the first in the world to allow women to study) but to Wentworth, 'for all' meant Europeans, who he described as the 'true natives' of Australia. Wentworth viewed the Aboriginal people as 'barbarous'.

Charles Marsden, a colonial chaplain and missionary (who had devoted much time to unsuccessfully attempting to convert Aboriginal people) believed that they were not educable for anything other than physical labour. The colonial perception was that there was a level beyond which Aboriginal children could not be educated. As early as 1819, this had been disproved when 20 Aboriginal children competed in a school examination against 100 European students. An Aboriginal girl, Maria Lock, who was around 14 years of age and had completed 3–4 years of schooling, took the chief prize. She later married an ex-convict (Robert Lock) and, 130 years after her death in 1878, a descendant of hers, Richard Green, was enrolled at the University of Sydney.

University education was also unimaginable for Indigenous people due to the lack of equity in access to schooling. The first schools in the colony were for white children. Some Indigenous children were educated by the unqualified wives of prominent colonists or placed in segregated schools, such as the Black Native Institute, to be trained as servants or farmhands. Segregated schooling continued until nearly the mid 20th century in NSW. After

this Aboriginal children were allowed to attend integrated schools – a development that met resistance from many teachers. No allowances were made for cultural differences in Indigenous learning, and the schooling experience was generally negative and shortlived for many Indigenous students.

Attitudes towards Indigenous education shifted in the second half of the 20th century, with the rise of the many social rights movements, and in the following decades fairer access to education for Indigenous students was actively pursued by the University.

- 1963 Charles Perkins and Peter Williams were the first identified Aboriginal students to enter an Australian university.
- 1966 Perkins was the first Aboriginal man to graduate from an Australian university.
- 1975 a group of 25 Aboriginal students enrolled in a training course for Aboriginal teachers' aides.
- 1980–81 two Aboriginal staff members were appointed
- 1988 six Indigenous students were enrolled in a degree course
- 1989–90 the Aboriginal Education Centre (AEC) was founded
- 1990, a student, Bill Elwood, planted an Aboriginal flag on the lawn in front of the University quadrangle declaring it 'Aboriginal land'.
- 1990, Dillon Kombumerri graduates from the University of Sydney as the first Indigenous architect graduate and the first Australia wide.
- 1992 the University used the name 'Cadigal' for one of its admissions programs for Indigenous people



Eora: mapping Aboriginal Sydney, 1770-1850

- 1992 AEC renamed as the Koori Centre – the first Aboriginal program to be run at an Australian university. It opened up universities for Aboriginal people. It also signified a shift from the University researching and teaching about Indigenous cultures to this education being delivered in partnership with, and then led by, Indigenous people.
- 1993 Veronica Arbon, the first Indigenous director of the Koori Centre, dedicated her graduation address to the Cadigal people.
- 2000 the 'Aboriginal Embassy' occupied Victoria Park (originally part of the University) and asserted Aboriginal sovereignty.
- 2001–2014 39 percent increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff doubled
- 2008 Indigenous education report commissioned, leading to Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu, which outlined the strategic commitment to building opportunity, capability and rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for valuing Indigenous culture at the University.



## Redfern

### Redfern, activism and community interaction

The rights movements had an impact on the University of Sydney student body as well and in 1965 a group of 30 non-Indigenous students, led by Charles Perkins (then a third-year student) organised a 'Freedom Ride'. This became a turning point for increasing awareness of the racist foundation of the country among the general population. The bus tour drew national and international attention to the poor living conditions of Aboriginal people and the discrimination and segregation that was rife in New South Wales country towns. The ensuing national and international media coverage caused a furore.

Foley (2001) reports that the Freedom Ride also inspired a generation of young Indigenous activists to stand up for their rights and help launch an era of protest.

Many were drawn to nearby Redfern, a centre of resistance since the mid 19th century. Here, what Dr Coombs later described as an 'Aboriginal intelligentsia', was emerging. Activists from across the country, informed by the Black Power movement in the United States and the literature of liberation, were formulating ways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to "define the world in their own terms and to seek self-determination without white interference" (Foley 2001 p.3).

The majority of the trail-blazing senior activists were self-educated, due to lack of access to tertiary education. However, many of the younger people deliberately rejected an education system which – employing didactic material that represented Aboriginal people as primitive and passive – was perceived as a being part of the system that oppressed Aboriginal people.

The Redfern area had been a meeting place for Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years prior to colonisation. The Eora nation had no intention of relinquishing their lands and maintained a strong presence throughout the colonial period. In the 20th century, as Redfern became a centre of industry, employment opportunities drew increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from across the country. In 1972 Redfern saw the first major Aboriginal land rights victory in urban Australia when a government grant enabled the Aboriginal Housing Committee to purchase terrace houses in the block bordered by Eveleigh, Louis, Caroline and Vine streets. Henceforth known as 'The Block' it became the focal point for the reconciliation movement.

Redfern is now a thriving and dynamic community. Like the University community, Redfern is a repository of culture and knowledge. Making the boundaries of these communities creatively, intellectually and physically permeable will enable mutually beneficial outcomes and help to shape a more equitable future.



Professor Paul Carter developed the *Golden Grove* project as part of the Maze Green redevelopment project at the University of Sydney, in collaboration with landscape architects Taylor, Cullity and Lethlean. Golden Grove is located on the boardwalk at the western exit of Maze Green. It uses a combination of ground patterning, dispersed and embedded lighting and stencilled poetic texts to create a sense of animation and interconnectivity across place and time

"Developed as an integral part of the public domain redevelopment at the Darlington Campus, University of Sydney, Golden Grove is a collaboration with landscape architects Taylor, Cullity and Lethlean (Melbourne).

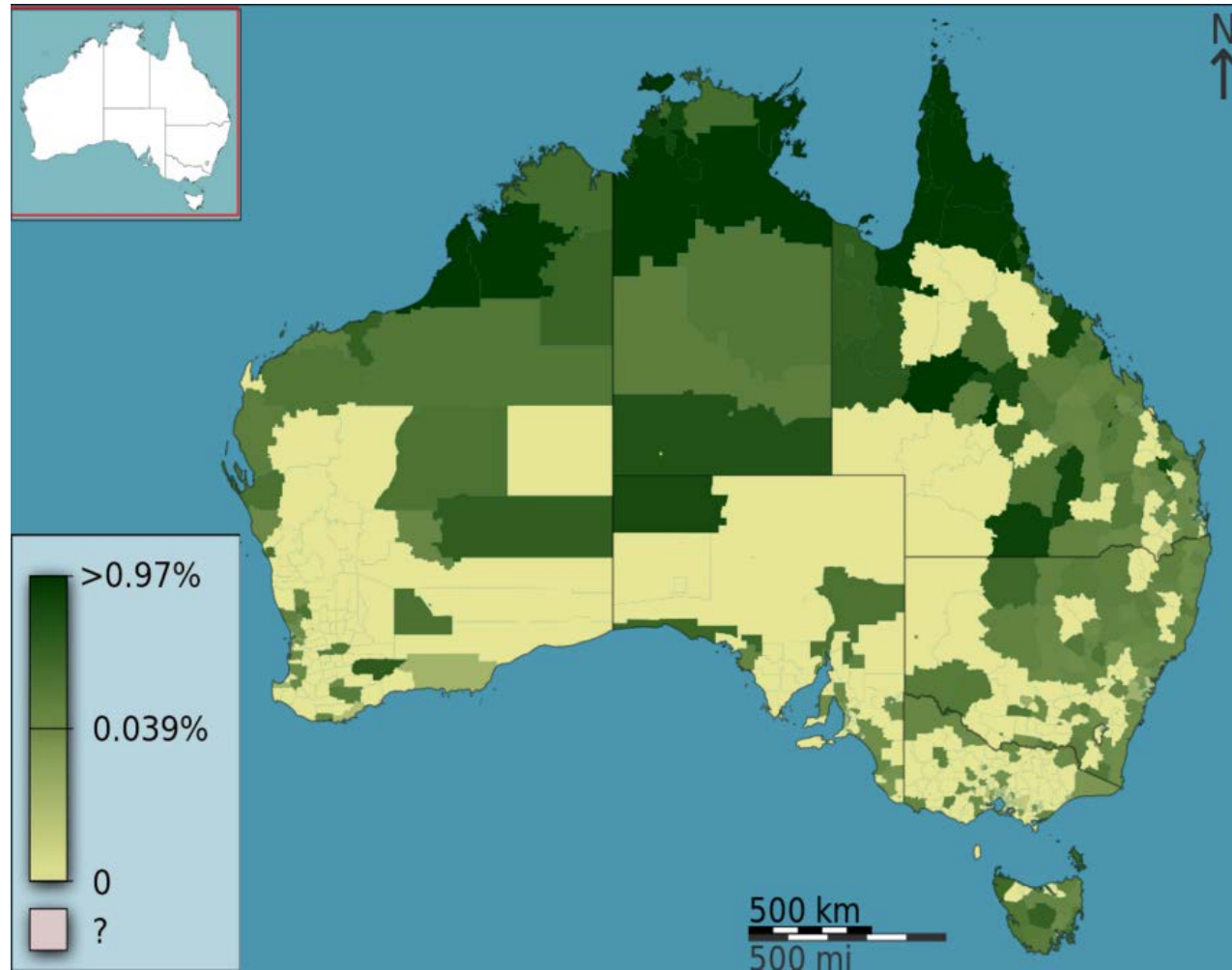
Responding to the perception that the University's public spaces were unsafe and unfriendly, especially at night, Golden Grove adopts a different approach to creating sustainable meeting places. Instead of over-regulating and over-lighting, it uses a combination of ground patterning, dispersed and embedded lighting and stencilled poetic texts to create a sense of animation, of rhythmic interconnectivity across place and time.

Golden Grove uses the cultural, poetic and material aspects of the site to renew its sense of place. The design draws on the many stories associated with the site's name – 'golden grove'. These stories include

the earliest white farm, a late 19th century Redfern hotel, Indigenous links to Black Wattle Creek, the site's feminine associations, and the University's astronomical research connections. All these stories are told through the Pleiades star constellation, also known as Golden Grove, and its nine star points located across the site.

Places are made after their stories and Golden Grove references the University of Sydney's motto: "The stars may change, the spirit remains the same." As the University's Vice-Chancellor has pointed out, in the new educational environment of the 21st Century, the 'spirit' must also change, embracing new technologies, broadened communities and contested environments. Celebrating the University's tradition of invention, Golden Grove symbolises an institution's capacity to respond to change.

[www.materialthinking.com.au/portfolio/golden-grove/](http://www.materialthinking.com.au/portfolio/golden-grove/)  
retrieved 29/04/2016



Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as a percentage of the population, 2011

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ABS population statistics

The estimated resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia as at 30 June 2011 was 669,900 people, or three percent of the total Australian population.

Around one-third of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived in major cities of Australia (233,100 people). A further 147,700 people lived in inner regional Australia and 146,100 people in outer regional Australia. The remainder lived in Remote Australia (51,300 people) or very remote Australia (91,600 people).

Among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in 2011, 90 percent of people (606,200 people) identified as being of Aboriginal origin only, six percent (38,100) were of Torres Strait Islander origin only, and four percent (25,600) were of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Of the states and territories, the largest populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians lived in New South Wales (208,500 people) and Queensland (189,000 people). The smallest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians lived in the Australian Capital Territory (6200 people).



## Indigenous placemaking

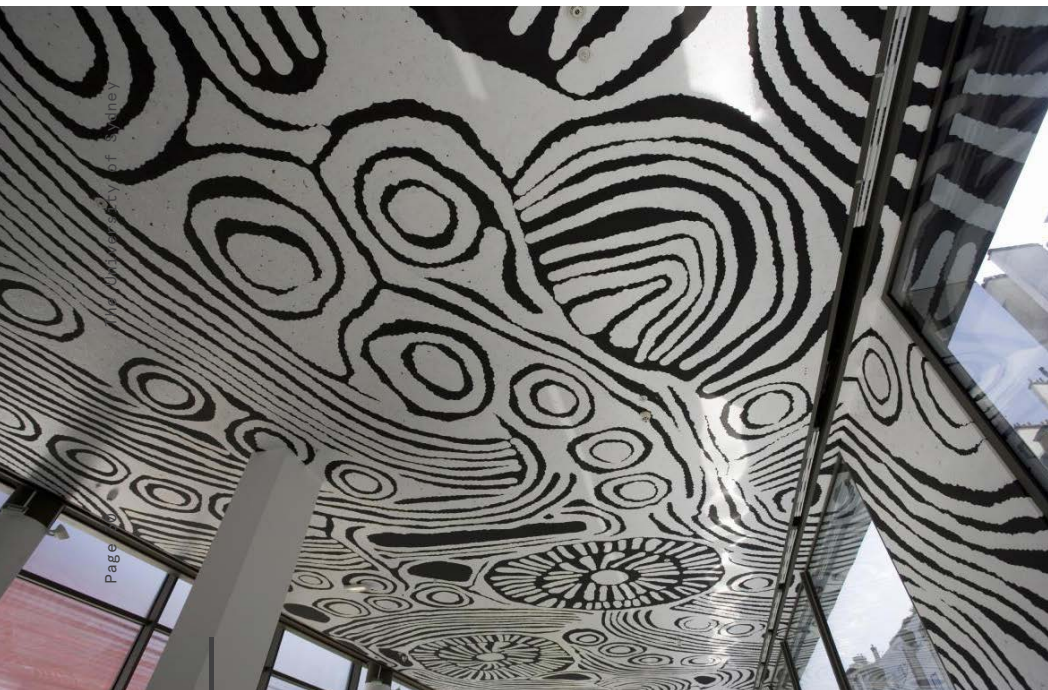
With the increase in access to tertiary education, Indigenous people have recently begun to enter the built environment professions (there are 10–12 Indigenous architects in Australia). The growing Indigenous voice in placemaking is repositioning the built environment as the grounds to express and explore alternative worldviews, but also to progress reconciliation.

The current framework for urban design is non-Indigenous, thus not an equitable starting point, but Indigenous participation in design processes and placemaking can redress this cultural imbalance and create an opportunity to explore not only the distinctions or differences but also the elements that bind and connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Indigenous participation in design processes and placemaking is more important than embedding Indigenous imagery in built form. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, participation, ‘the doing’, is what is most important about art, ritual and life. Indigenous input in placemaking will:

- enable the ‘decolonisation’ of design (reduce the imprint of the dominant culture on the landscape)
- avoid perpetuating stereotypes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia for non-Indigenous audiences
- rectify the assumption that Aboriginal cultures are only relevant to Aboriginal peoples, which perpetuates segregation (Aboriginal cultures are relevant to all people as Australia is Aboriginal land)
- validate Indigenous knowledge and values (community, kinship, social responsibility, social interaction and the importance of place are inherent in, but not unique to, Aboriginal cultures)
- deliver cross-cultural respect, dignity, equality and engagement and provide opportunities for unlocking a rich store of urban design potential.



Wilcannia Health Service, designed by the NSW Government Architects Office. Images by Brett Boardman.



Ningura Napurrula, 2006, *untitled (wirrunnga)*, Musée du Quai Branly



## Objectives of Indigenous placemaking

A summary of comments on Indigenous placemaking from the writings of Jefa Greenaway, Indigenous Architect, lecturer Melbourne School of Design, founder Indigenous Architecture Victoria (IAV); Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law, Director of Research Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning University of Technology Sydney; Professor Paul Memmott, anthropologist/architect and Director of the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre (AERC), University of Queensland; Dr Shaneen Fantin, architect and Adjunct Associate Professor James Cook University, and Linda Kennedy, Future Black blog – decolonising design in Australia's built environment.

The Wingara Mura design principles have been drawn from these objectives.

- Engage with the past, the deeper layers of history and connections to place subsumed within the site, but also the cultural present and futures of the more than 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations in Australia.
- Reference the now, acknowledge the youthful demographic of Indigenous people, the majority of whom experience their culture within urban or regional contexts (120,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (or about 24 percent of the Indigenous population) live in remote communities (ABS 2004). More than 75 percent are urban).
- Recognise that while traditional land has fundamental importance to Indigenous people, post-invasion history and experience has created an additional layer of memory and significance for other parts of the country
- Express and convey meanings legible to both Indigenous and non-indigenous groups with differing levels of understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- Explore initiatives to rethink sharing the country and develop public spaces that seek to recognise shared history and co-existence.
- Integrate multiple Indigenous cultural assumptions, perspectives, connections, and cultural content into the public domain.
- Provide stakeholders and the design community with a model for Indigenous participation in the design and development of the built environment within their ancestral lands.

### Consultation and Communication

- Develop meaningful long-term relationships between built environment professionals and Indigenous organisations
- Form Indigenous consultative groups to work with built environment professionals/ designers to establish common creative ground and generate a dialogue about the physical manifestation of 'Aboriginality'
- Enable Indigenous people to define Indigenous identity, portrayal and engagement within the development of the built environment/public domain
- Ensure that any design process is duly authorised by community and that a tangible connection to that community is at the core of any project.
- Create 'intercultural space' – a space for 'deep listening', sharing, learning and attempting to understand a different worldview
- Employ an 'intercultural' approach to design. This necessitates the challenging of cultural and social assumptions and engagement with emotions and feelings. It facilitates a shared journey in which solutions are developed together rather than imposed.

### Application

- Acknowledge co-existence through acknowledgement of country, respecting the knowledge of elders, using Aboriginal place names and erecting monuments that acknowledge the post-invasion history of Aboriginal people.
- Indigenous experience or expression is not distinguished from cultural practice.
- Draw a connection to country and prioritise what happens within the space as well as aesthetics
- Orient or articulate buildings within the larger landscape / meaning-scape of significant natural features
- Consider avoidance relationships, spiritual symbolism and attachment to the land

- Seek permission to significantly re-form the landscape through excavation or importing 'fill' – to 'cut into' the earth
- Employ naming in projects. Naming brings into being. It implies a notion of belonging to group or country: When a building or a place is named by a traditional owner it is a recalling of ownership and connection to an existing ancestral history and place.
- Create spaces which strengthen community ties and facilitate community obligations, especially to children and to elders.

### Reconciliation considerations:

- consent was neither sought nor given at the time of colonisation
- acknowledge the history of Indigenous dispossession from land and families
- acknowledge damage to heritage, culture and language and poor treatment by institutions
- recognition of Indigenous spiritual and cultural survival
- respect for Indigenous cultural identity
- acknowledgement of the unique status of Indigenous peoples as the first Australians and their unique contribution to the cultural and spiritual identity of the nation.

### Further significant resource by Kevin O'Brien, (2015) Finding country: A strategy for the city.

An essay, succeeding the *Finding Country* exhibition, which details three teaching studios for Queensland University of Technology Architectural students; associated with the slowly developed idea about a symmetrical context between City and Country, and into another now titled 'Burning City'.



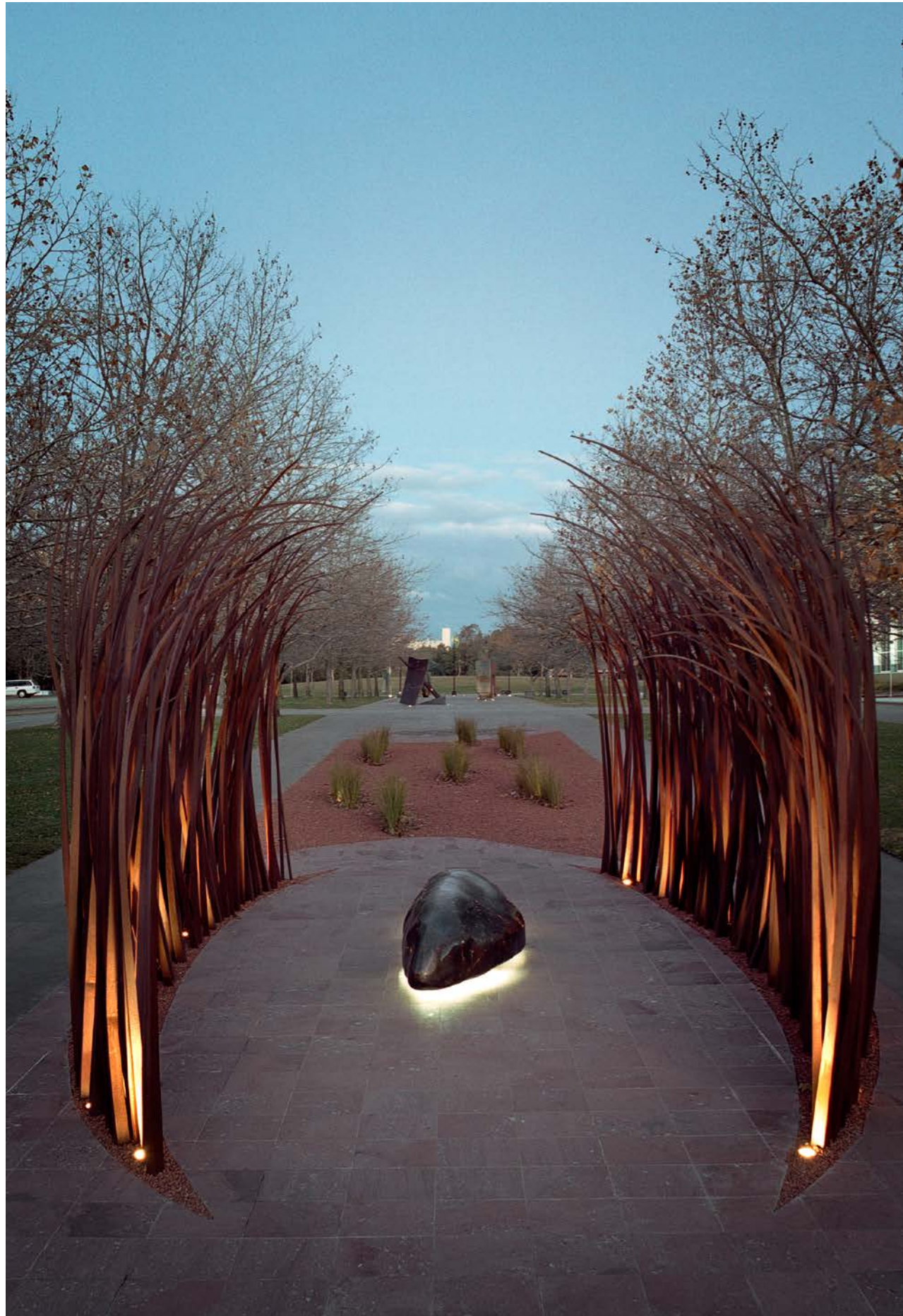
## Eora placemaking projects

- *Edge of the Trees* 1995. A Museum of Sydney installation created by Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence which evokes the cultural and physical history of the site, before and after 1788: a pivotal turning point in history, when contact and invasion/colonisation took place.
- *Wuganmagulya* 2000. An installation by Brenda Croft on the Farm Cove foreshore which honours the original Yura (Eora) clans of the site and those Indigenous people who held ceremonies there. Incorporating such elements as stained concrete, terrazzo and engravings, it uses colour and texture to acknowledge Indigenous life and natural elements of the surrounding environment.
- *Cadi Jam Ora: First Encounters* 2001. A 52-metre storyline in Royal Botanic Gardens which presents an Indigenous perspective on the history of the area from the Cadigal dreaming to the present. Plantings reflect how the original landscape would have been in pre-colonial time: rainforest species along the creek, woodland species in the open spaces. Signs explain the indigenous usage of these plants and give the Aboriginal name. On the northern entry a Cadigal dreaming tells of *Biame*, known as the Sky Hero, the spirit of an Ancestral Being, who lived in the sky. Long before there were any people, plants or animals on the land, *Biame* came down to what was a formless void, shaped the land and gave the laws of life. He returned to the sky, leaving some parts of the land unformed. This was formed by the activities of other creation spirits such as the creation serpent ([lha.uow.edu.au](http://lha.uow.edu.au)).
- *Eora Journey* 2013. An ongoing project celebrating the living culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Sydney. To increase recognition in the public domain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists will create seven major public art projects reactivating the knowledge of specific places and events in Aboriginal history at key sites within the city. Three are complete: *Welcome to Redfern* by Reko Rennie – murals of inspiring Aboriginal leaders on a Victorian-era terrace at The Block; *Born in darkness before dawn* by Nicole Foreshew – temporary projections of images of Aboriginal women on a wall of the Australian Museum, and *YININMADYEMI Thou didst let fall* – a memorial sculpture by Tony Albert acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who served in the military.



Reko Renni, 2012, *As it was, so it will always be*, Darlinghurst/Surry Hills at Taylor Square





Judy Watson with UAP STUDIO - Fire and Water

## Summary – University of Sydney Cultural Values Workshop 08/10/15

### Significant places identified include:

- Macleay Museum holds numerous items of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including secret/sacred items and ancestral remains.
- Victoria Park (water source)
- Shellshear Museum (holds Aboriginal remains)
- University entrances
- Glass House – Mr Shephard's nursery
- University Quadrangle (may have been a ceremonial ground)
- Koori Centre
- Mackie Building.

### Key issues/suggestions include:

- participation in the development of the cultural precinct
- investigate archaeological potential of University boundary areas
- recognition of the history of the land
- central point of contact for Aboriginal stakeholders
- lack of celebration of Aboriginal culture
- Eora names for University buildings.



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- [dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/bungaree](http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/bungaree)



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Brook Andrew, 2006, *You've Always Wanted To Be Black*



