

12-16 BENT STREET, LINDFIELD

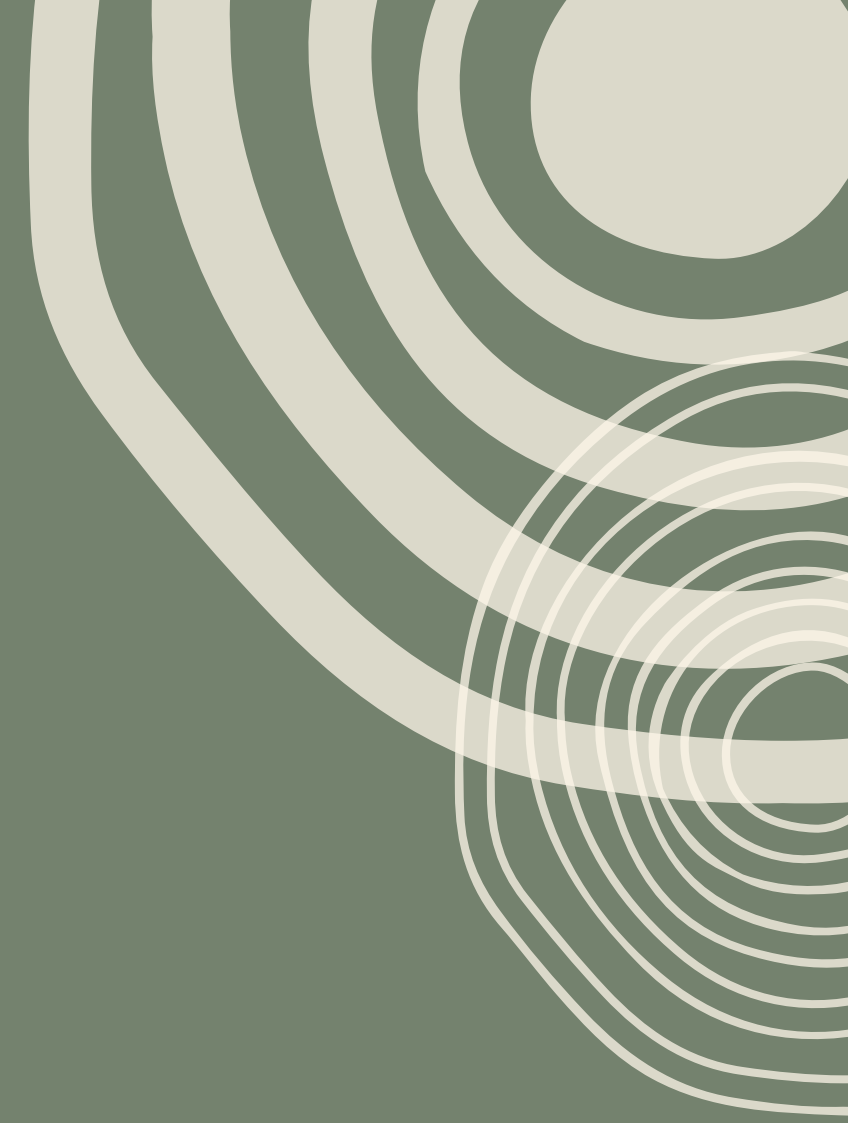
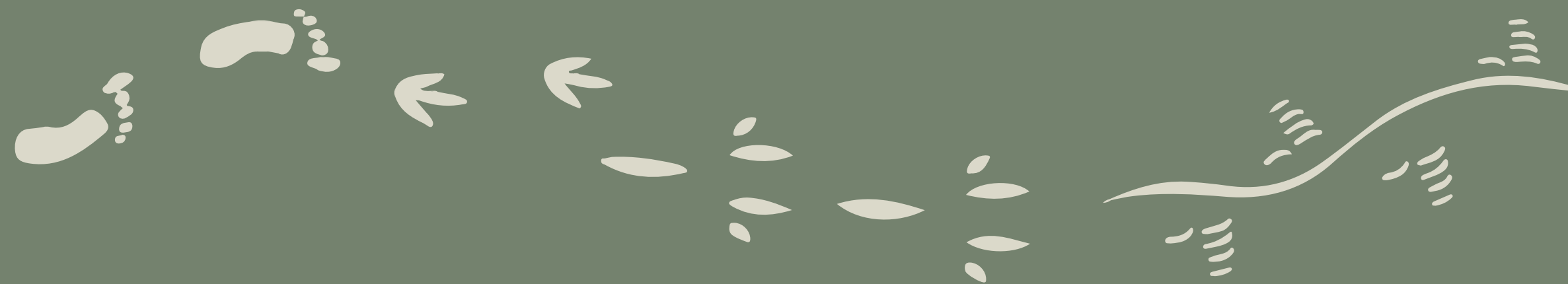
CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY
CWC DESIGN REPORT | FEBRUARY 2025



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this document may contain voices/images, names of people who have passed away.

We acknowledge the Cultural Landscape that we are working upon, and the Garigal and Guringai peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Country where the 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield project is located.

We acknowledge all First Nations people and their ongoing connection to culture, lands and waters and their valuable contribution to the community. We recognise, acknowledge, and extend our respects to many others who have custodial obligations for Country who have been connected to Garigal and Guringai Country for many generations, including their Elders past, present and emerging.



Yerrabingin is an Aboriginal owned design studio. At the core of our work is custodianship and care for Country. Our expertise encompasses Designing with Country, landscape architecture and urban design. We are recognised for our collaborative design approach, bringing together cultural knowledge and sustainable design solutions. We walk together to amplify the powerful language of Country for the betterment of our collective future.

We are guided by the inspiration of Country, the stories and knowledge a place contains and gifts us. We acknowledge its contribution to wellbeing both mental and physical, providing a refuge and safe place to learn and share.

Our Vision is that sensing and caring for Country is something that transcends cultural differences and highlights the many values that are similar across the cultures of our contemporary communities, supporting a socially inclusive, resilient, and innovative community based on, and honouring the wisdom and kinship of all cultures, captured through the lens of custodianship.



Figure.1 - Aerial photo of site location | Nearmap

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

7 **COLLECT / EMPATHISE**

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY DESIGN

Introduction to CwC Design

Beginning with Country

9 **Garigal and Guringai Country**

Place in Country

GANSW Connecting with Country Framework

Policy Context

10 **Yerrabingin Pillar**

Site Specific Opportunities

Yerrabingin Pillars

What guides our work

11 **PLANT / COLLABORATE**

Collaborative Design Methodology

Process and Progress

Yerrabingin Collaborative Design Methodology

Our Design Process

12

How Might We?

Our Design Challenge

Walk on Country

Listening to Country

Collaborative Design Workshop

Discussion and Findings

Workshop Outcomes

NOURISH / ITERATE

14 **Ideation Development Workshop** **24**

Discussion and Findings

15

TEND / SUSTAIN

16 **Community Feedback Session** **26**

Discussion and Findings

Connecting with Country Opportunities **28**

12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield

18

Connecting with Country Design **35**

Answering the How Might We Question

19

GANSW Connecting with Country Framework Outcomes **36**

Outcomes for Country

20

Project Legacy **37**

Future of Connecting with Country at 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield

21

Figures List **38**

References **39**

DOCUMENT NAME	REV	DATE
YB_CWC_DES_0179	REV A	2025 02 26

AUTHORSHIP

At Yerrabingin, we acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians and ancestors of the lands we walk across.

The terms First Nations, Indigenous and Aboriginal are used interchangeably throughout this report. When referring to a specific group or individual, nation or language group names are used.

This report includes reproduction of words and descriptions in historic quotes written in the past that may be confronting and would be considered inappropriate today.

Permission to publish the graphic materials from archival collections and previous publications has not been obtained as part of this study. Permission should be sought from copyright holders if the report is published with the graphic material or the graphic material is used for other purposes.

Cover Image - Basket Grass in Lindfield | Yerrabingin



Figure.2 - Site within its context | Savills

GLOSSARY

Key Words and Terms

To better understand key terms referenced throughout the report, please consult the glossary.

The following terms derive from the GANSW (2023) Connecting with Country Framework.

- **Aboriginal Community:** Within the context of Sydney, the Aboriginal Community refers to a range of peoples that often include Traditional Custodians, Knowledge Holders, Elders, RAPS (Registered Aboriginal Parties), LALC (Land Councils), and local Aboriginal members of the community.
- **Built Environment:** Understood as distinct from the natural environment. It includes all aspects of our surroundings made by people. The built environment encompasses cities and towns, neighbourhoods, parks, roads, buildings, infrastructure, and utilities like water and electricity.
- **Country:** Country includes Earth, Waters, Sky and our Non-human Kin. It encompasses tangible and intangible aspects, knowledge and cultural practices, belonging and identity, well-being and relationships. People are inhabited by Country and Country inhabits us.
- **Design:** Design is both a process and an outcome - a way of thinking and a result of making. It involves a combination of creativity and problem-solving skills to generate ideas and concepts, followed by a systematic and often iterative process to develop those ideas into a tangible form.
- **Engagement:** A process whereby a particular group is engaged to gather their input in relation to a proposal, challenge, or outcome.
- **First Nations:** Is an encompassing term that acknowledges the diversity of Aboriginal Communities, while also communicating that sovereignty was never ceded. This term is growing in preference for First Nations Australians but may also be interchanged with Aboriginal and Indigenous in this report.
- **Knowledge:** Aboriginal knowledge comes from different nations and family groups. Knowledge is multifaceted and may incorporate many different views. It encompasses the information and skills that people accumulate over time, enabling them to comprehend the world, make informed decisions, and solve problems.
- **Peoples:** Peoples is used in plural to reference First Nations peoples, recognising that there are many nations and family groups.
- **Place:** A social and physical concept, a physical setting, point, or area in space conceived and designated by people and communities. In this sense, place can describe different scales of the built environment; for example, a town is a place, and a building can be a place.
- **Practices:** Practice or cultural practice refers to the various customs, traditions, rituals, behaviours, and activities that are collectively shared and passed down within a specific cultural group, serving as a means of expressing identity, values, beliefs, and social cohesion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The document has been developed by Yerrabingin following our Collaborative Design process, in partnership with Sundale Developments, Willowtree, Hatch, PTW Architects, Clouston Associates and Aboriginal Community members through the Walk on Country and Collaborative Workshops and meetings. The purpose of this document is to share the findings and design recommendations from our collaborative design process.

The opening section - Connecting with Country Design - provides an introduction to how we understand Country and what Country means to us. We then introduce the Connecting with Country Framework created by the Government Architect New South Wales and the outcomes that can be used to guide this project.

The second section - Contextual Analysis - provides a recap of the scope and intent of 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield. We then introduce the site's Place in Country, and explore the context of the site within the wider North Sydney region.

The third section - Collaborative Design - firstly recounts our design methodology and then shares a summary of each step in the process, including the How Might We Session, Walk on Country and the Collaborative Workshop. For each engagement, we include a description of the engagement and a summary of the findings.

The fourth section - Ideation Development - recounts the targeted design team workshop and captures the tangible design outcomes created based on the activities of the Collaborative Workshop.

The final section recounts the Community Feedback Session discussions and findings, and explores the community driven Connecting with Country opportunities for the multi-residential development. The opportunities of *Wise Country*, *Sensory Experiences*, and *Health Country*, *Healthy Community* are also explored through conceptual graphics for how they apply to the project. Lastly, we highlight how Yerrabingin's methodology relates to the How Might We question and Government Architect NSW's Outcomes for Country in respect to the 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield project.



Figure.3 - Walk on Country | Yerrabingin



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY DESIGN

INTRODUCTION TO CWC DESIGN

Beginning with Country

Country is our mother, our teacher, our library and our kin; it sustains us, inspires us and surrounds us. The experience of Country is both individual and collective, both new and familiar. From her we learn, share and flourish. Continuing to care for Country is central to our being and our identity.

Christian Hampson, Yerrabingin

Country reaches into and across the earth and into the sky. The unique and distinctive elements of Country are connected, and open to everyone. They are the connective tissue, the interstices, the flow between Water, Earth, Sky, our Non-Human Kin, and ourselves. In this way, we are part of the system of Country and have a responsibility to future generations. Our actions must always be Country positive.

Country-centric

We inhabit and are inhabited by Country. To inhabit Country and connect with Country is to be grounded in the landscape and to practice the cultural knowledge stored within it. This encourages physical and emotional wellbeing for people and Country.

The innate symbiosis of being connected to Country moves us into being Eco or Country centric, rather than being Human centric. This connection and position in relation to Country is a central component of Aboriginal people's ideology. It is a cultural value that places humans within the ecological and landscape system, not as dominators but as caretakers and custodians. This function requires constant interaction and observation, being tuned in to reactive requirements and response.

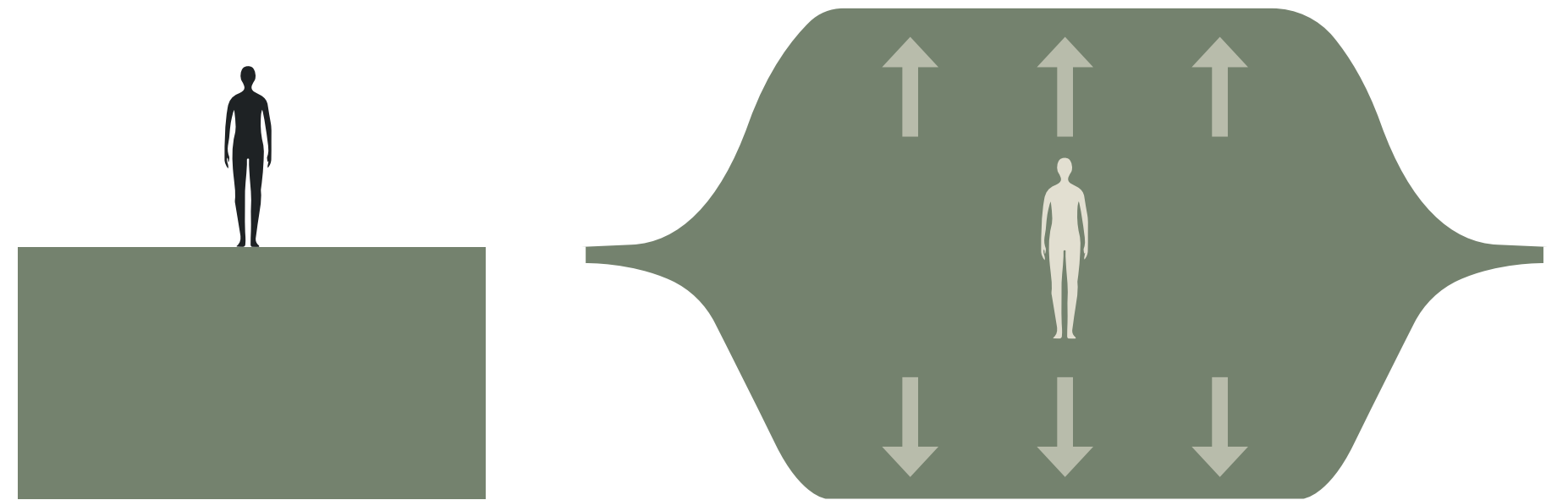


Figure.4 - We inhabit and are inhabited by Country | Yerrabingin

GANSW CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK

Policy Context

In 2023 the Government Architect New South Wales released the Connecting with Country Framework to guide Designing with Country projects in NSW. The Framework covers several areas of Designing with Country work, including:

Practices for taking a Country-focused approach

Combining traditional cultural knowledge and practices with a behavioural science approach to create a system of *Communing with Country / Thinking*, *Sensing Country / Feeling*, and *Being on Country / Behaving* to guide projects. The image to the right illustrates this relationship.

Guidance on design considerations

Considering the project scale to determine what design considerations should be factored into decision making and design. This project is building scale, therefore we are taking a contextual and site specific perspective.

Outcomes for Country

The Framework describes five Outcomes for Country to help project teams focus on their commitment to Country. The outcomes are: Healthy Country, Healthy Community, Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage, Cultural Competency and Better Places. A summary of how this project addresses these outcomes is included in the final section of this report.

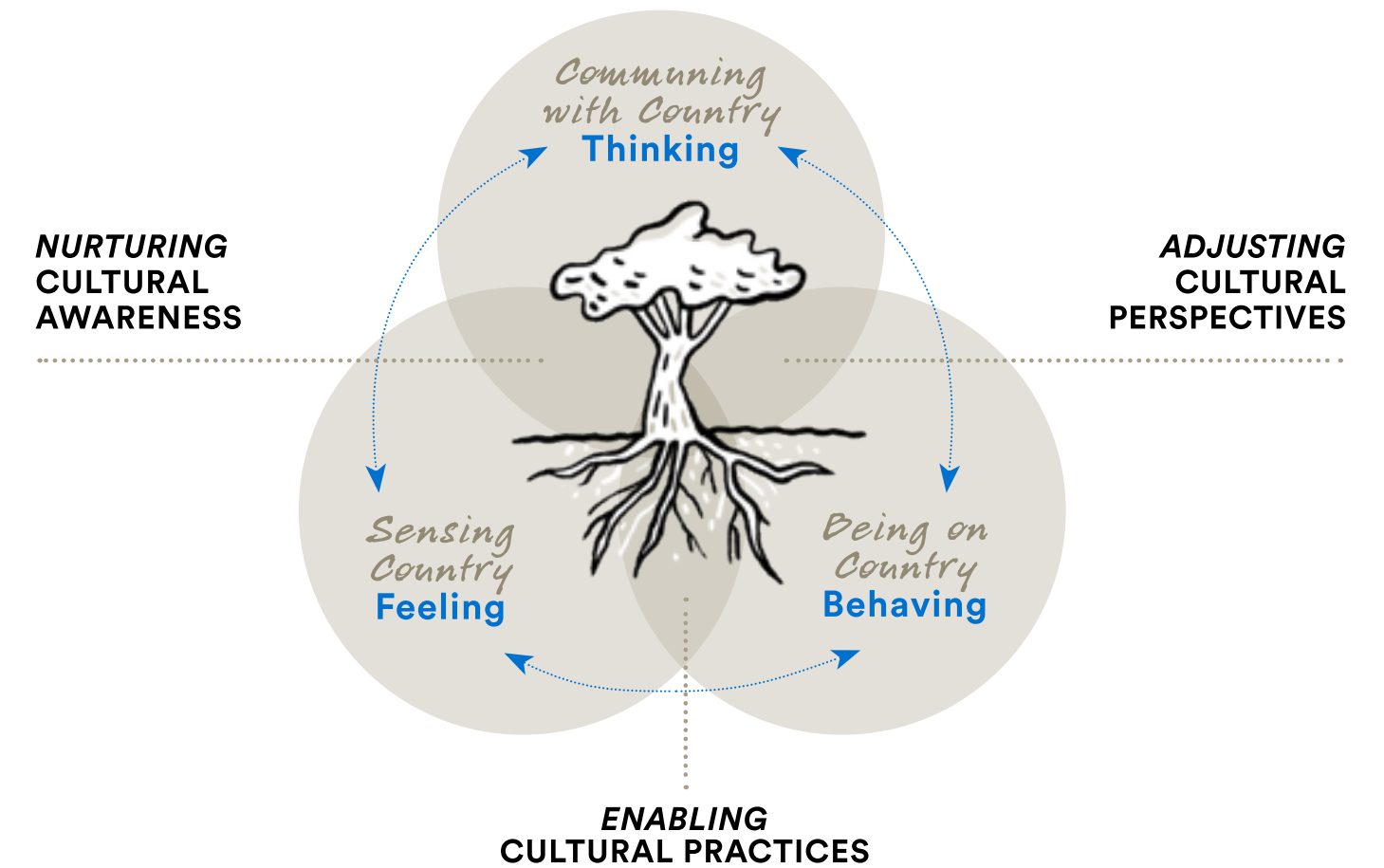


Figure.5 - Combining cultural practice and behavioural change systems | GANSW

YERRABINGIN PILLARS

What guides our work

Yerrabingin has four pillars that guide our work. The pillars link together our values, Country, culture, professional practice, and cultural practice.

Each pillar is one part of the larger task of caring for Country. Together they contribute to a holistic commitment to care and design for Country. The pillars are Custodianship, Innovation, Legacy and Regeneration. The 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield project offers an opportunity to work with the pillars and this is explored within this report.



Innovation



Custodianship



Regeneration



Legacy

Innovation

We are a transformative force for change. We draw on ancient wisdom, guided by ecological kinship, to share the powerful voice of Country and disrupt conventional systems and perceptions. Inspired by Country, we take a holistic view, centring creativity, adaptation and reciprocity. Our work propels us towards a collective future that considers the life of all kin.

Regeneration

We deeply understand the connections between all things and work towards balance. We overcome limitations in conventional design thinking by centring the needs of Country and all kin. We create places for people to experience the many ways Country sustains and holds them, to connect them with their role in the system of their place. Learning from Country, we take a long-term view, with the knowledge that health and healing will come, given the right conditions of care.

Custodianship

We are custodians of Country. We draw on cultural knowledge to advocate and care for Country. It is our responsibility to improve the health of Country and our diverse communities through our work. In our role as designers, we listen deeply to the needs of Country and walk together with our partners to foster connection. Country benefits and grows in our care.

Legacy

Our works sits at the intersection of culture and design. We are industry leaders in collaborative design, bringing together First Nations communities and built environment professionals for an enduring conversation. By introducing people to Country, we transform the experience of belonging and connection to place in Australia. We show people that if we care for Country, she will care for us in return. Healthy Country and connected communities are our legacy.

YERRABINGIN COLLABORATIVE DESIGN METHODOLOGY

Our Design Process

Our design methodology is informed by components of design thinking, user-centred design and Connecting with Country design disciplines to create our Country-focused, collaborative design approach.

Country-focused

What sets us apart from conventional built environment design is our recognition of the interconnection of Country with human activity and our imperative to consider the needs of Country in the design solution. Empathetic observation and consideration of Country is central to our approach.

The outcome of our Country-focused approach is that Country is designed for and cared for, allowing Country to care and provide for future generations.

Collaborative

Inspired by the natural processes of fostering and sustaining life on Country, our design methodology follows a cyclical, collaborative process: we collect, plant, nourish and tend.

The Connecting with Country Design Report – Final contributes to the Tend / Sustain stage in our methodology. In this stage, we tend our project by ensuring that the partnerships and outcomes created are sustainable and have ongoing positive outcomes for Country and communities. A key part of tending is

empathising, which keeps the cycle moving. We tend in feedback sessions with the community and our ongoing partnerships and new custodial relations created through our project. Our output of this stage is this Connecting with Country Design Report - Final.

Design Methodology Stages

Collect - First, we collect by empathising with our project partners and with Country. We gather ideas, inspiration, facts, desires, research and limitations. This occurs in the discovery and 'How Might We' session.

Plant - After understanding the design challenge, we plant. Collaborative design workshops involve First Nations peoples and the wider team involved to generate diverse and innovative design solutions.

Nourish - Following the collaborative design sessions, we nourish through iteration. We share the collaborative outcomes to develop design solutions and concepts further based on feedback.

Tend - Finally, we tend to our creation. We tend by ensuring that the partnerships and outcomes created are sustainable and have ongoing positive outcomes for Country and communities.

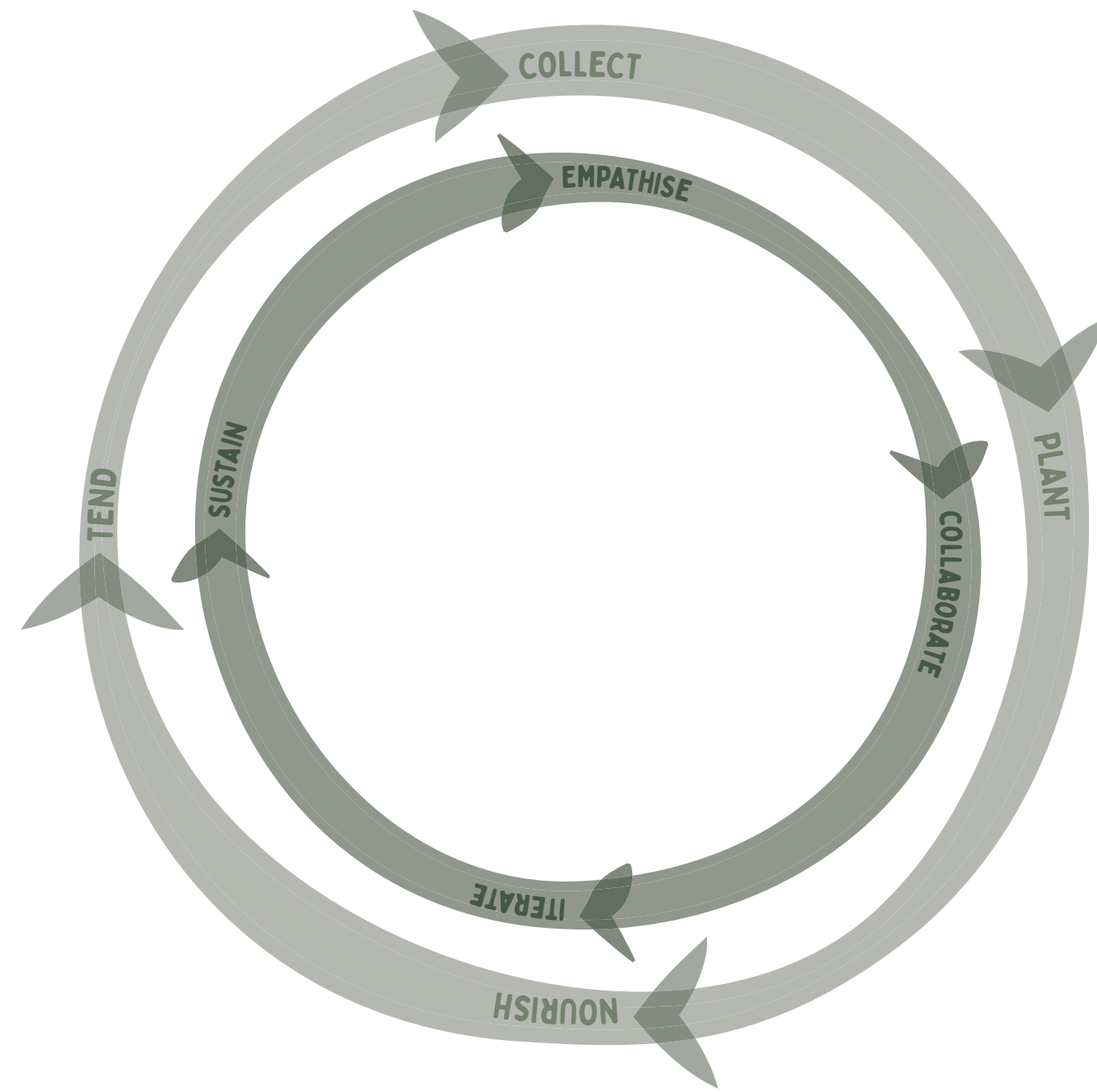


Figure.6 - Methodology Process | Yerrabingin



COLLECT / EMPATHISE
CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Project Overview

Sundale Northland Development Pty Ltd is proposing a multi-story residential development at 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield NSW. The project will involve demolition of the existing buildings and structures, followed by construction of two six-storey residential flat buildings over two levels of basement parking. The proposed development will provide 37 apartments, landscaped areas and associated resident amenities.

As part of the project, Sundale Northland Development have engaged Yerrabingin to undertake the Designing with Country scope. This will involve Yerrabingin working collaboratively with the project team to incorporate Indigenous knowledge, culture and traditional practices into the design, planning and delivery of the development. The aim is to create a residential development that is sensitive to and honours the cultural landscape of Lindfield.

The site at 12-16 Bent Street currently comprises two single-story residential dwellings on a combined site area of approximately 3,800m². The site has historically been used for residential purposes since the 1940s, with some potential for small-scale agricultural uses in the mid-20th century.

A Preliminary Site Investigation undertaken by JKE identified fill soils with elevated zinc concentrations and potential for asbestos contamination associated with the site's history. The proposed development will need to carefully manage these contamination issues through further investigation, remediation and implementation of unexpected finds protocols during construction (JKE, 2022).

The site is located within the traditional lands of the Garigal and Guringai peoples, and the project presents an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate their enduring connection to Country. Yerrabingin's involvement will help ensure that the rich Aboriginal heritage and living culture of the area is respected and reflected in the design of the project.



Figure.7 - Lindfield | Atlas

GARIGAL AND GURINGAI COUNTRY

Place in Country

The site at 12-16 Bent Street in Lindfield carries within it layers of deep history and cultural significance, shaped by both natural forces and human interaction over millennia. Situated on the traditional lands of the Guringai and Garigal peoples, this site offers a unique vantage point from which to understand the intricate connections between geology, water, flora, fauna, and the sky that have defined this country for countless generations (Attenbrow, 2010).

The underlying bedrock of Ashfield Shale, part of the Wianamatta Group, speaks to the ancient geological processes that formed this landscape. This dark shale, typically black to grey in colour, sits atop the iconic Hawkesbury Sandstone, with the interface occurring some 10-20 meters below the surface (Herbert, 1983). Over time, the weathering of this shale has given rise to the characteristic silty to peaty loams and clays that define the local soil profile (Chapman & Murphy, 1989).

The site's position on a west-facing slope, with a gentle gradient of 4-5 degrees, provides a natural amphitheatre for observing the rhythms of the land and sky.

The Guringai and Garigal peoples hold a strong connection to Sky Country, as their dreaming stories have been passed on orally for thousands of years through many generations. Moon Rock Aboriginal Place, within nearby Garigal National Park, has many engravings that give reference to Aboriginal astronomical knowledge, Baiame the creator-spirit and moon phases (Northern Beaches Council History Hub, 2020) It is one of the only Aboriginal sites in the area which depicts a reference to astronomy.

Water, the lifeblood of the land, flows through this story in seen and unseen ways. While no major waterways cross the site, the presence of Little Blue Gum Creek approximately one kilometre to the southwest speaks to the broader hydrological network that sustains this country (JK Environments, 2022). This creek, a tributary of the Lane Cove River, is part of a complex system of waterways that have shaped the landscape and supported life for thousands of years. The Guringai and Garigal peoples intimately know these waters, understanding them not just as resources, but as sacred lifeways intricately connected to their cultural and spiritual practices (McDonald, 2008).

The flora and fauna of the area tell a story of both continuity and change. Once dominated by the critically endangered Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest, the site now bears the marks of human habitation and introduced species (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 2021). The environmental report notes the presence of "several large exotic trees of up to 15m in height" and "exotic lawn grass and shrubbery," a testament to the transformations wrought by European settlement and urbanisation (JK Environments, 2022). Yet, one can still imagine the original ecosystem that thrived here, with Sydney Blue Gums, Blackbutts, and Sydney Peppermints creating a canopy that reached towards the sky, providing habitat for a diverse array of wildlife (Fuller, 2011).

While the site itself may no longer support the rich biodiversity it once did, the nearby Garigal National Park serves as a refuge for many of the species that would have once called this area home. Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Koalas, Brushtail Possums, Rainbow Lorikeets, and Australian Magpies are just a few of the creatures that maintain a presence in the broader landscape (Burgin & Saunders, 2007).

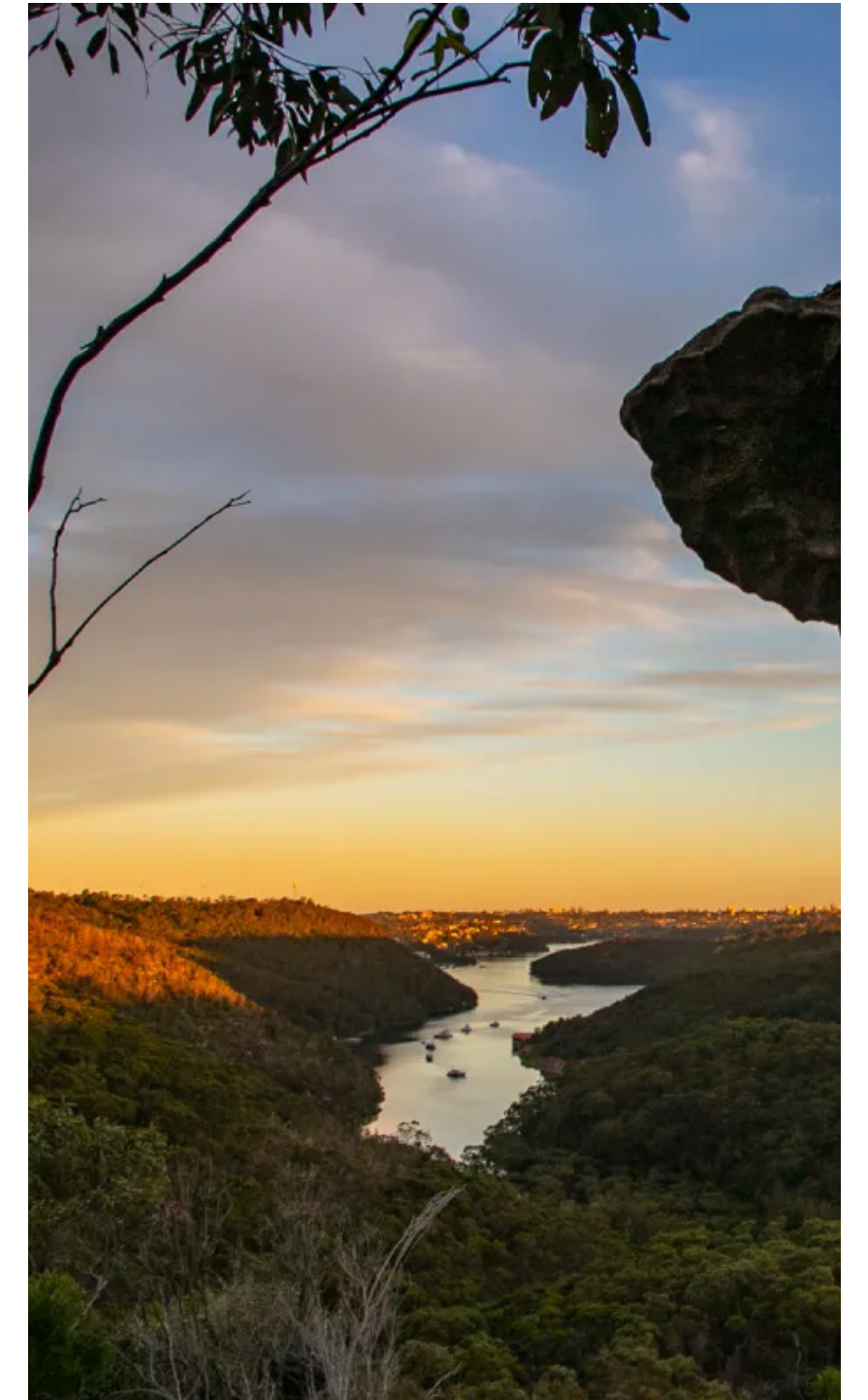


Figure.8 - Garigal National Park | *Hiking the World*

CUSTODIANSHIP

Site Specific Opportunities

Custodianship emerges as the pillar with strong opportunities for the project at 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield, given the site's rich history and the significant modifications it has undergone following colonisation. This pillar emphasises the responsibility to care for and maintain the land, recognising its deep cultural significance and the enduring connection of Indigenous peoples to Country.

The concept of custodianship is particularly pertinent to this site because of its location on the traditional lands of the Guringai and Garigal peoples, who have been stewards of this Country for tens of thousands of years.

However, as noted in the environmental report by JK Environments (2022), the site has been significantly altered since European colonisation. The report indicates that the area has been used for residential purposes since at least the 1930s, with some historical agricultural use. This transformation from its natural state to an urban residential area represents a profound disruption of traditional custodianship practices and highlights the urgent need to recognise and reinstate stewardship of the land.

The question of how to bring the pillar of custodianship to life at 12-16 Bent Street is multifaceted and requires careful consideration of various components:

Ecological Restoration

Given the site's history of modification, there's an opportunity to incorporate elements of ecological restoration into the project. This could involve reintroducing endemic plant species that were once common in the Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest ecosystem, creating habitats for local fauna, and implementing water-sensitive urban design principles that reflect traditional water management practices (Norman, 2018).

Cultural Landscape Design

The landscape design of the project could draw inspiration from Indigenous concepts of Country, incorporating elements that reflect the changing seasons of Country. This could include selecting plants that flower or fruit at specific times of the year, aligning with traditional seasonal indicators (Bodkin & Robertson, 2013).

Educational Opportunities

The development could incorporate spaces for cultural education, such as a community garden where traditional plant uses are explained, or interpretive walking trails that highlight the site's geological and ecological features from an Indigenous perspective (Kingsley et al., 2019).

Sustainable Design Practices

Incorporating sustainable design principles that align with traditional custodianship practices could be a key feature of the project. This might include passive solar design, rainwater harvesting, and the use of locally sourced, sustainable materials (Revell & Burton, 2016).

By focusing on these components, the project at 12-16 Bent Street has the opportunity to become a model for how urban development can respect and reinvigorate traditional custodianship practices. This approach recognises that while the physical landscape has been altered by colonisation and urbanisation, the cultural and spiritual connections to Country remain strong and vital.



Figure.9 - Eucalyptus piperita | IndigiGrow



PLANT / COLLABORATE
COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN METHODOLOGY

Process and Progress

As described above in the introduction to Yerrabingin's Collaborative Design Methodology, our design process is made up of four stages, Collect / Empathise, Plant / Collaborate, Nourish / Iterate and Tend / Sustain. Each project is unique, and we tailor our design approach within each of the four stages for each project.

Our Progress

We have completed the Collect / Empathise, Plant / Collaborate, Nourish / Iterate and Tend / Sustain stages and this report summarises our findings across each stage and our final design recommendations to answer our design challenge, the How Might We statement.

The graphic to the right shows the Collaborative Design Methodology for this project and where we are up to in the process.

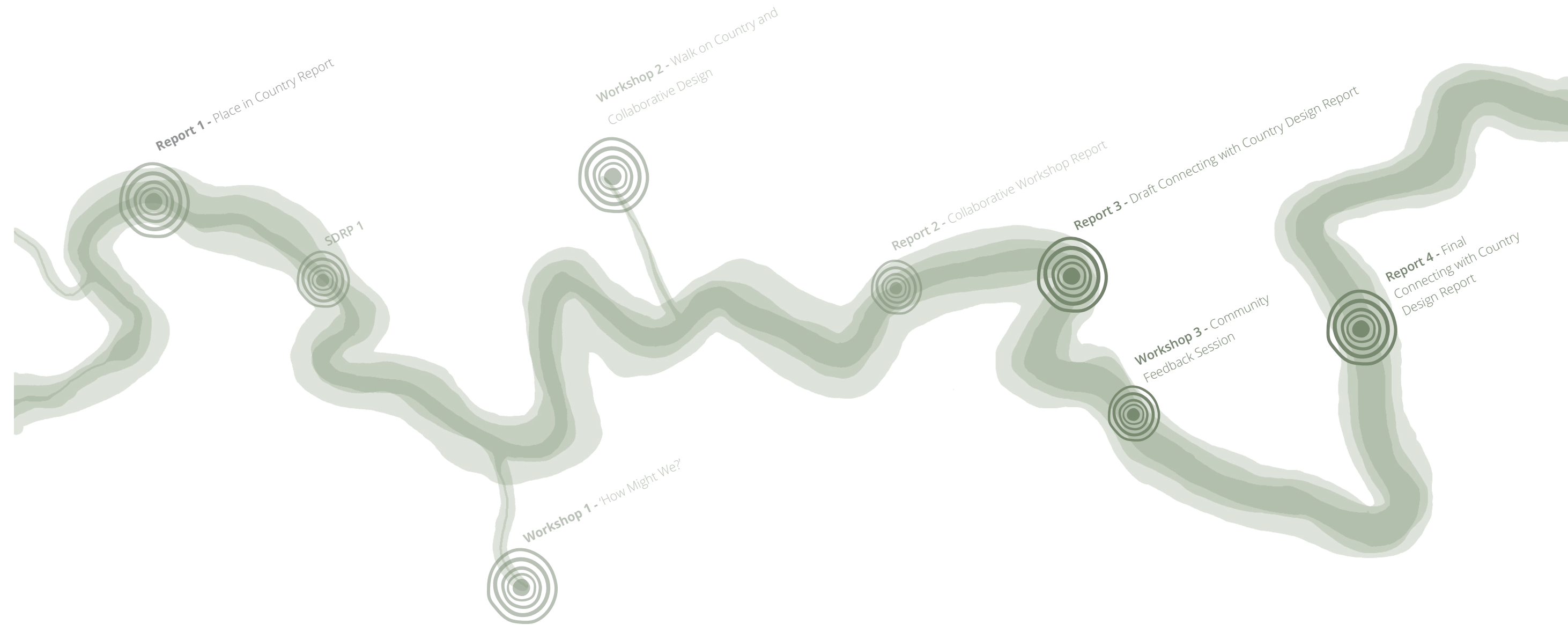


Figure.10 - Project timeline graphic | Yerrabingin

HOW MIGHT WE?

Our Design Challenge

In the How Might We Session, we worked with the project team to learn as much as we could about the aims of the project and to introduce the design team to our process. We created the following How Might We statement for the project:

How might we reimagine residential spaces to honour and foster meaningful connections with Water Country, Deep Country & Sky Country?

We use the How Might We statement to understand the design team's thoughts on the project users, impact, connection and value. By gaining as much information as we can from the beginning, we aim to ensure that we can direct the project more accurately and generate more impact. We use the How Might We statement to define our design challenge.

Across all three activities, responses varied between catering for Human and Non-Human Kin within the new development.

The overarching themes of innovation and regeneration were evident.

Participants wanted to create an exemplar precinct that is landscape led, and allows future residents and visitors to foster a sense of community and custodian for cultivating relationships with each other, and Country.

However, strong consideration was also given to our Non-Human Kin users of the space - and the project's ability to regenerative locally native flora and fauna species, as well as embrace the unique topographic and hydrological systems that exist within the site and its surrounding context.

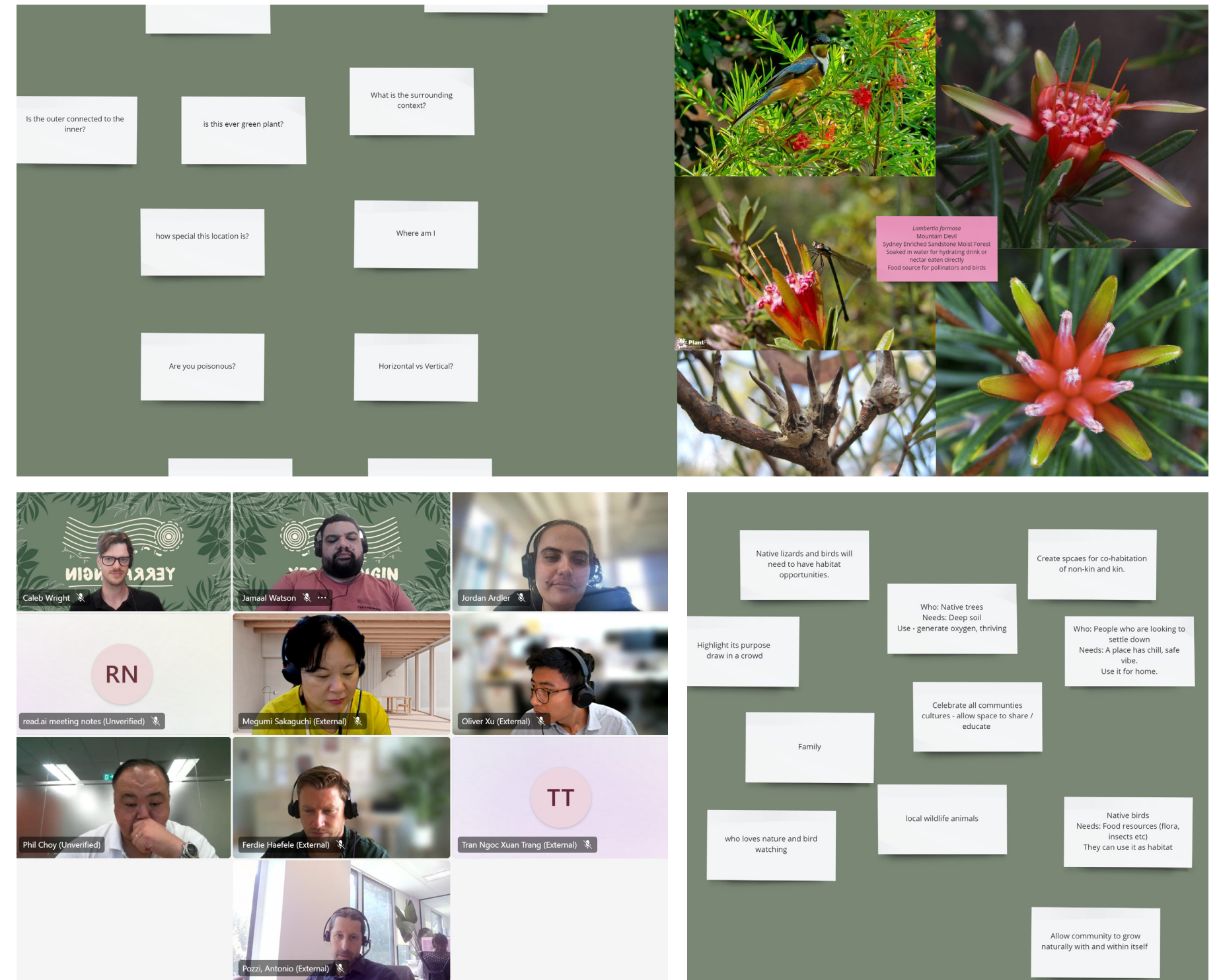


Figure.11 - Images from the How Might We Session | Yerrabingin

WALK ON COUNTRY

Listening to Country

The Walk on Country was completed as part of our Collect stage. We visited a bush walk close to the site locations, as well as drove past the site of the project with the project team and community members to understand the context of the site, the needs of Country in this place, and to get to know each other.

When: Monday 3rd February, 2025

Where: Two Creeks Track (Ulmarra Place Entry)

Who:

- 13 x First Nations community members
- 1 x Sundale Developments (Phil Choy)
- 1 x Willowtree Planning (Cameron Gray)
- 1 x Hatch (Antonio Pozzi)
- 3 x PTW Architects (Simon Parsons, Megumi Sakaguchi, Trang Tran)
- 1 x Clouston Associates (Oliver Xu)
- 4 x Yerrabingin staff (Christian Hampson, Jordan Ardler, Rasheen Lee, Caleb Wright)



Figure.12 - Images from the Walk on Country | Yerrabingin

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN WORKSHOP

Discussion and Findings

The Collaborative Design Workshop was broken up into five activities, and was held at Blair Wark VC Community Centre, following the Walk on Country.

Activity 01 : Brainstorming

Participants were given a short amount of time to begin brainstorming and generating imaginative, creative ideas for their table's element of Country. This activity encouraged exploratory and divergent thinking.

Activity 02: Sharing Ideas

Participants shared their ideas with their table, expressing the thoughts behind the concepts they had generated. They then worked collectively to group these ideas under similar themes, identifying similarities and differences.

Activity 03: Team Sketches

Tables carried forward their strongest ideas, exploring them visually. They were encouraged to think about how to convey these ideas to an audience through mapping, visuals, and diagrams using the site plan or blank large sheets of paper.

Activity 04: Flowers and Flamethrowers

This activity centred around collective feedback and testing. Two people remained at their table to 'host', while the rest of the team swapped tables as 'visitors'. The hosts' role was to effectively convey the logic and narrative behind their design, while the visitors' role was to identify gaps, highlight strengths, and ask questions.

Activity 05: Reflection & Redesign

With the feedback and questions gathered, teams had the opportunity to enhance their design and ideas, incorporating the 'visitors' input into their work. They then prepared their 'pitch' to present their final design to the group.

Activity 06: The Pitch

Each team had five minutes to collectively pitch their idea to the whole group, conveying their thought process behind the direction they took and highlighting the opportunities and strengths that supported their ideas. Their final pitch centred around their tables element of Country.



Figure.13 - Images from Collaborative Workshop | Yerrabingin

Workshop Outcomes



Sky Country

The group identified the opportunity of the rooftop garden as a key location for celebrating Sky Country. The constellations, moon and sun movements are key for navigation and cultural storytelling. Sky Country and Wind Country assist in prompting seasonal flourishes within Garigal and Guringai Country. The key indicator species can be integrated into the developments design so that residents can experience and appreciate the seasonal cycles.

Figure.14 - Lindfield Sky Country | Yerrabingin



Deep Country

The proposed residential development has the opportunity to reflect the rich hues, colours, textures and palettes of this Country's geology and soils. There is also the opportunity to recycle geological material from the existing structures on site, such as sandstone and bricks into the design. Furthermore, the cultural significance of ochre as a material for ceremony was noted as a key resource of Deep Country that is utilised. Lastly, motifs of Country can be etched into the proposed design.

Figure.15 - Geology of Deep Country | Yerrabingin



Water Country

Water offers the ability to calm, relax and heal the users of the site. The development has the potential to engage with the senses to promote biophilia. Pooling and cascading water provides not only visual amenity, but cools the environment and can create auditory tranquillity. Species selection which reflect the gullies of this Country can highlight the existing overland flow path, and remove toxins from any run-off before it joins the broader hydrological system.

Figure.16 - Middle Harbour Creek Water Country | Yerrabingin



NOURISH / ITERATE

IDEATION DEVELOPMENT

IDEATION DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Discussion and Findings

Following the Collaborative Design Workshop with Aboriginal community members and the project team, we held an Ideation Development Workshop with the project team to review the summary of outcomes of the Collaborative Design Workshop and investigate ideation opportunities, expand thinking, understand constraints and limitations and together develop the next stages of the Connecting with Country design work.

The discussion and findings under the topic areas explored is as follows:

Sky Country

- Design for opportunities to view and learn about sky Country, interpretation of stars and constellations in the design, lighting that considers dark sky principles and furniture that allows users to lie and view the sky
- Gardens with edible species and seasonal marker plants
- Water elements that reflect the sky, moon and sun
- Bring the sky to ground floor lobby, potentially through double/triple height voids to have more lighting for the main lobby

- Create vertical flow of materiality and features such as art and patternation to draw views up towards the sky

Deep Country

- Use of natural stone, including existing sandstone in the facade and/or as landscape features
- Use colours of Country in the interior colour schemes
- Express geological strata in interior and exterior building design and furniture
- Habitat creation

Water Country

- Create the sensation of water in the interiors and landscape, through movement, quality of light, textures and sound
- Integrate sustainable systems such as water recycling, aquaponics, water capture and storage
- Integration of overland flow path as a high quality landscape that creates a unique 'edge gully' experience
- Use of landscape topography to create cascading water feature and draw people through the site

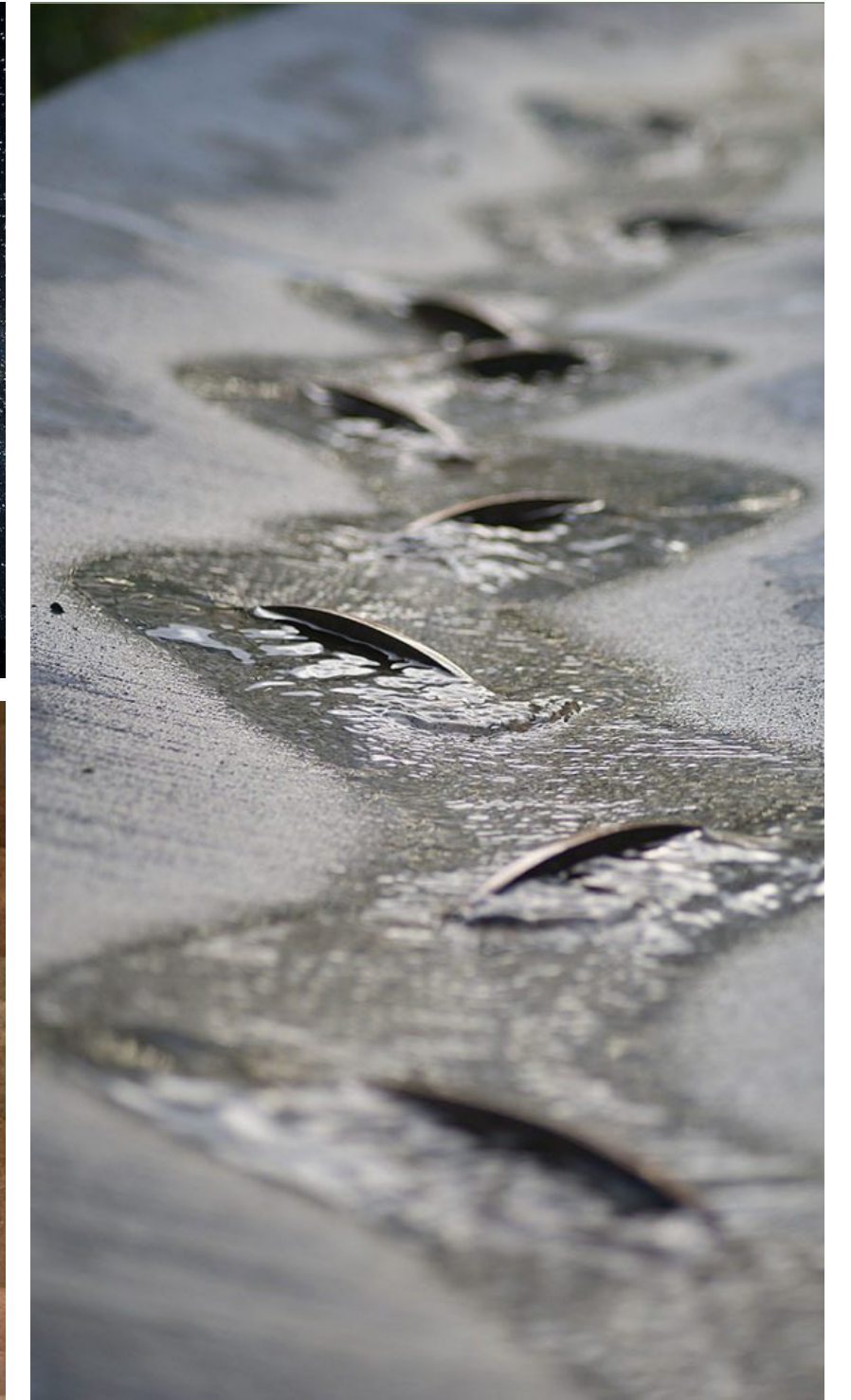


Figure.17 - Sky Country | Jason Schmidt Figure.18 - Water Country tactile rain garden | Berger Partnership
Figure.19 - Deep Country rammed earth walling | Casey Woods



TEND / SUSTAIN

TOWARD FINAL DESIGN - 12-16 BENT STREET, LINDFIELD

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SESSION

Discussion and Findings

The design development progress was shared with community at our Community Feedback session. In the session, we presented the Connecting with Country Opportunities for the site based on the Collaborative Workshop data, and sought feedback on how the Architecture and Landscape Architecture teams had begun integrating and exploring these opportunities in the design.

When: Monday 24th February, 2025

Where: Blair Wark VC Community Centre

Who:

- 8 x First Nations community members
- 1 x Sundale Developments (Phil Choy)
- 3 x PTW Architects (Simon Parsons, Megumi Sakaguchi, Trang Tran)
- 1 x Clouston Associates (Oliver Xu)
- 2 x Yerrabingin staff (Caleb Wright and Rasheen Lee)

Feedback captured in the session included:

Guiding Principles

- Community all seemed to agree with the three principles. No objections raised
- 'Wise Country' as the driving principle

Architecture

- I love all the curves
- I like that the bottom floors don't feel separated because of the colour. Could use a richer earth colour palette in the slab edge. Gradation, no separation
- "Architecture is all about creating a feeling for people"
- Important to have warm lighting inside

General Landscape

- Be in and with the green spaces
- "You are separating sitting places from greenery. I want to sit in the garden"
- "Where you place gathering created the opportunity and invitation to be present with Country"

- No backyard, but we have the garden on the roof and the side.
- Shelter for seating areas
- "Less separation between the green and not green"
- Hanging gardens
- Request the use of common names on plants as well as botanical, it's not an art museum
- Sandstone: no blocks – roughen the harsh corners to it is like it has been there forever

Elevator

- Authenticating that star constellation. Want to see real ones, not just a random pattern
- Emu constellation is a big one for Sydney, or Southern Cross. Each lift could be different
- "Love the lifts and the dome – it changes everything"

Rooftop

- "Take your coffee up there and sit in the green"
- "The rooftop works really well, not just a view"
- BBQ and fridge available, the amenities are really great



Figure.20 - Images from Community Feedback session | Yerrabingin

Culture

- “It’s always been multi-cultural. We are human, we are from Country”
- “Can see there are lots of different types of thinking (within this group)”
- “It’s not then and now, it’s continuous. It’s forever and infinite. Dreaming and Dreamtime are still present”

Design Approach

- “How do you want people to feel when they are here”
- Discussion around hard edges and geometric design. Even circles can be too perfect
- Plants can create that imperfection. Growing over walls and weathering surfaces
- Don’t separate things out, never too precise
- Beautiful, simple, integrated with the landscape
- “Come live in this”
- Not too many heavily organized things. Not precise shapes, we want imperfection

- Outside you rush, here you are home
- Keep it simple, don’t over-complicate things
- To be there, not for any great purpose
- We do have to make compartments, but you are connected up all together
- Small details in the paving are going to make a big difference
- “Thank you for taking on board what we said”

Interpretation and Signage

- “People don’t have to know all the stuff; it just seeps in”
- “Feel the concept that there are stories around us”
- “It’s sometimes good to have silence, and reflection”
- The design should make people feel like they belong. Let it grow on them. To create this, keep it simple. Don’t overwhelm, complicate or rush people moving through. It should be cleansing
- Any signs we put up need to make people think. Encourage them to learn more
- Subtle opportunities for learning. When people

become aware of them, it encourages people to be present

- Make it a story or invitation. Encourage reflection and intention

Other ideas

- Could be a coffee shop within the foyer that contributes to body corporate? *Strictly residential development. Up the road there are some coffee shops, and adjacent land could have cafes in the future*
- Future owners should have knowledge of the design process, having a positive impact other parts of their lives
- Legacy of the building: Sponsor an Aboriginal project or space. Example – Indigenous chef that comes in for an annual BBQ to use the bush foods
- Something that contributes to the future function, not just the design process
- Foresight of funding to make sure it gets to Aboriginal people, such as local organisations

Based on this feedback, we have re-considered the Connecting with Country Opportunities for the project.



Figure.21 - Images from Community Feedback session | Yerrabingin

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES

12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield

This section presents our finalised Connecting with Country Opportunities / Actions, incorporating all feedback discussed in the above two sections and following further development on the ideas presented in the draft report to elaborate on the design opportunities.

The finalised Connecting with Country Opportunities / Actions include:

- Wise Country
- Sensory Experiences
- Healthy Country, Healthy Community



Wise Country

This opportunity turns to Mother Country and the web of knowledge engrained within her elements. Rather than forcing Country to respond to the development, the development should respond to Country and the practices of knowing, doing and being practiced within the Lindfield area for millennia.

Figure.22 - Learning from the layers of Country | Yerrabingin



Sensory Experiences

This opportunity looks at the ability for our human kin to engage and interact with Country through sensory activation. Touch, taste, smell, see and hear are each methods to immerse the future residents and visitors within this unique Country.

Figure.23 - Connecting with Country | Yerrabingin



Healthy Country, Healthy Community

This opportunity acknowledges the interconnected relationship between the health of Country, and the health of human kin who dwell within Country. The opportunity reflects the capacity the design has to strengthen biophilic relationships within the development.

Figure.24 - Lindfield ecosystems | Yerrabingin

Wise Country

This opportunity is the overarching principles or foundation for the Connecting with Country process for 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield. The layered knowledge and wisdom embedded in the physical and cultural landscape has the power to guide and inform the design and activation of this development.

Opportunity

The physical stratum layers can be revealed and integrated into the design through physical rock materials, as well as through a rich colour palette of ochres and earthy tones.

Designing spaces for knowledge sharing, connection and education is another key aspect of this principle. The development can offer a variety of scales and locations for intimate conversation, as well as larger group and community gatherings. These spaces should be integrated within endemic planting species, allowing for subtle moments of education and an invitation to learn more about this unique Country.

First Nations community attendees were passionate about ensuring the activation and custodianship of this design through allowing for identified accommodation to

First Nations identifying residents, as well as employing local First Nations organisations to care for and utilise the resources within the design. This would ensure the design is not just physically connecting with Country, but is also actively reconciling relationships with the local First Nations community to perpetuate a legacy of custodianship and community within the project.

Answering the How Might We

The future development should not be a space which forces Country to adapt to the design, rather it should respond to and learn from the existing systems and elements of Country. Through highlighting the wisdom and knowledge of Country, we honour her and her interconnected systems.

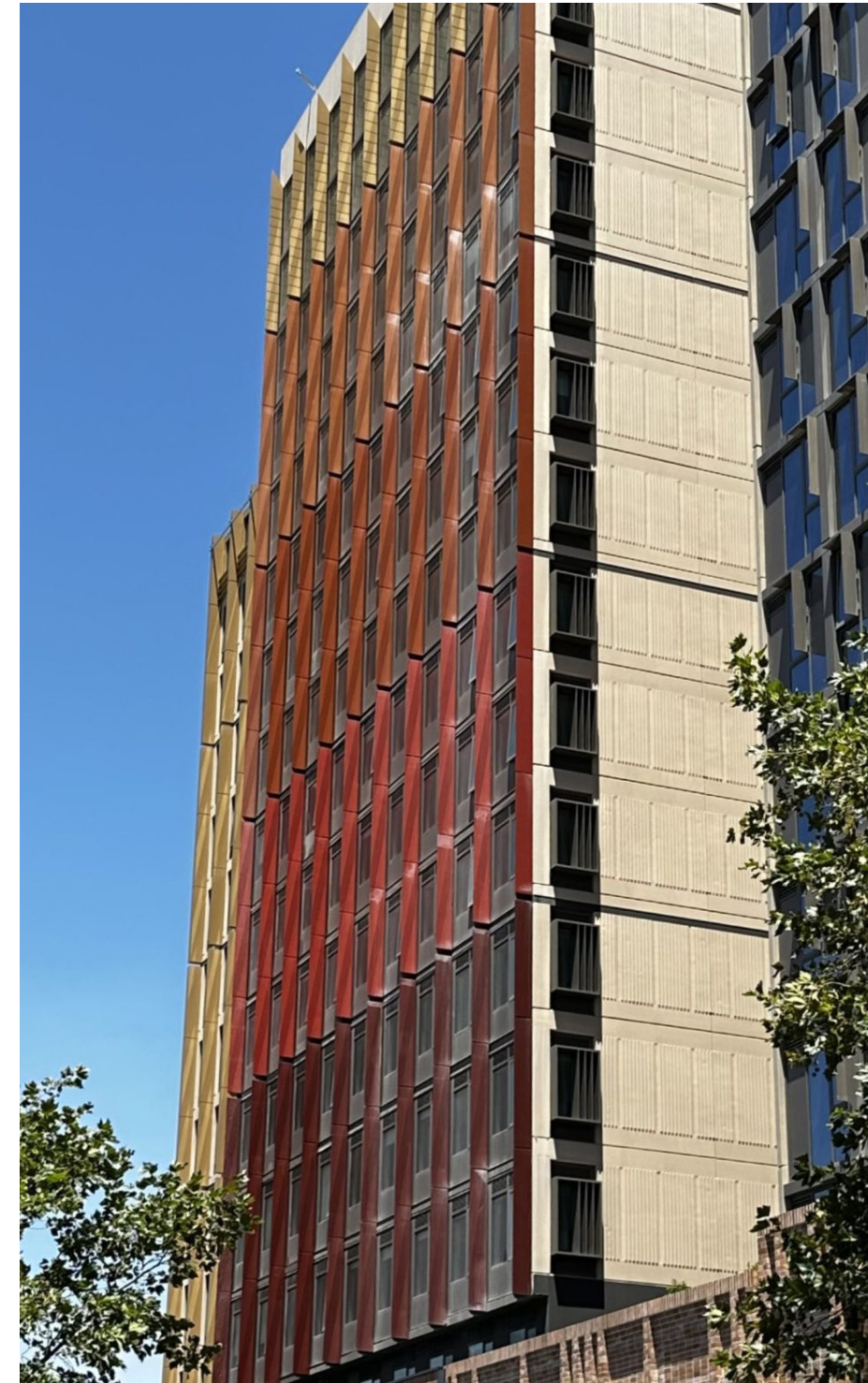


Figure.25 - Facade gradient | Antoniades Architects



Figure.26 - Indigenous Learning Circle | Landezine



Figure.27 - Employment and activation | Yerrabingin

Wise Country



Figure.28 - Wise Country visual exploration | Yerrabingin

Sensory Experiences

This opportunity explores the ability for our human kin's experience of the spaces to be based on intuitive wayfinding and sensory mapping, as we create our own songlines and anchor points within Country.

Opportunity

The element of Water Country is significant with all First Nations peoples across Australia, the resource not only provides sustenance and transport - it also holds strong cultural significance for many First Nations mobs. The healing, calming and tranquillity of water should be celebrated and enhanced within the development. The overland flow path can be designed to guide water past areas of seating and gather, providing an audio and visual performance in times of heavy downfall. Furthermore, the integration of water elements within the design such as water features or fountains assist in cooling the space and extending the tranquil qualities of water beyond the existing overland flow path.

Another element of Country which can be celebrated is wind Country. Designing enclosed and protected spaces, as well as exposed and open spaces allow visitors and residents to activate various areas of the design based on weather patterns. Allowing the breeze to cool on warm

days, and a space for external refuge during gusty winds. Touch is another key sense used for mapping and engaging with Country. The integration of tactile materials and surfaces that invite our human kin to slow down and engage with the elements around them. This could include a rough, exposed aggregate or a smooth, polished finish. The variation in textures invite passers-by to slow down and engage with Country.

The visual connection to Sky Country is essential when it comes to witnessing seasonal flourishes and weather patterns. The constellations assist in mapping the time of year, and hold cultural stories for many communities. The sky also indicates the time of day, and reveals incoming weather changes. Visual links to Sky Country on both the ground floor and rooftop is essential - with the lighting scheme considerate of retaining dark sky where possible.

Answering the How Might We

The integration of endemic planting species which hold cultural significance to the local First Nations community, as well as habitat and resources for Non-Human Kin is another key opportunity to allow residents to witness the seasonal flourishes of Garigal / Guringai Country and utilise the edible, medicinal and resource species from their local landscape.



Figure.29 - Dark sky lighting | Yerrabingin



Figure.30 - Water feature integration | Landshaft

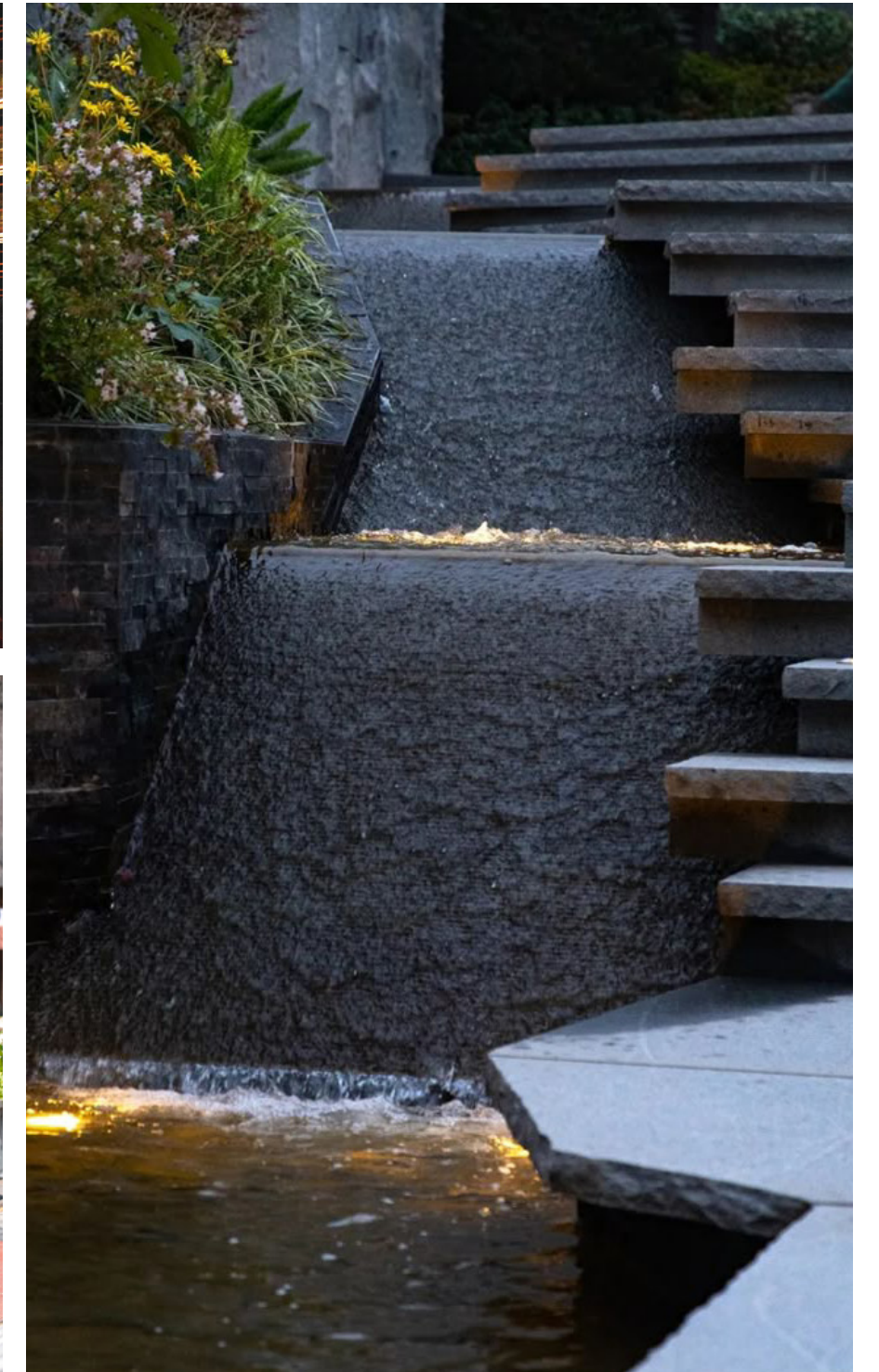


Figure.31 - Foraging species | Faithlead

Sensory Experiences



Figure.32 - Sensory Experiences visual exploration | Yerrabingin

Healthy Country, Healthy Community

This opportunity acknowledges the interconnected relationship between the health of Country, and the health of human kin who dwell within Country. The opportunity reflects the capacity the design has to strengthen biophilic relationships within the development.

Opportunity

The previous opportunity looks at the benefits Water Country bring to humans. However, the landscape plays a key role in guiding, capturing, storing, treating, re-using and discharging water which passes through the site before it makes its way into the wider catchment. Water Sensitive Urban Design elements across the project will ensure the health of Water Country within the site, and toward Lane Cove River.

The re-introduction of local flora communities will strengthen biodiversity across the development, and the broader habitat network of Lindfield. Due to the site's slope and aspect, three key vegetation typologies of gully rainforest, sandstone walls and ridge top forest have been identified. Each of these typologies offer a unique microclimate in which the locally native ecology species can thrive and co-exist with the residents and visitors of the future development.

Another aspect of ensuring the health of Country is through the adaptive re-use of materials and elements on site that are created during the demolition process. The First Nations perspective of Country is that she is a living, breathing, animate entity. For this reason, the project team should limit the import and export of materials and instead utilise and integrate the aspects of Country that are already within the site.

Answering the How Might We

Meaningful biophilic connections between human users and the elements of Country should be catalysed by the establishment of a healthy network of site systems. When Country is thriving, community will thrive. Healthy relationships can establish with a sense of care, ownership and responsibility.



Figure.33 - WSUD planting | Transport for NSW Figure.34 - East Lindfield views | Yerrabingin Figure.35 - Recycled sandstone | Outdoor Design

Healthy Country, Healthy Community



Figure.36 - Healthy Country, Healthy Community visual exploration | Yerrabingin

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY DESIGN

Answering the How Might We Question

The Connecting with Country opportunities presented in the preceding pages together form the answer to our How Might We question.

How might we reimagine residential spaces to honour and foster meaningful connections with Water Country, Deep Country & Sky Country?

Through Yerrabingin's engagement process, key opportunities for 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield to explore this question have been identified.

Within residential design, it is important to consider how the future residents and visitors of the site will feel while moving throughout the space. Emotions and sensing of Country are key interpretations of how many First Nations peoples map and place songlines throughout Country across millennia.

12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield provides the opportunity for the key elements of Water Country, Deep Country and Sky Country to mingle, overlap and be celebrated by the human kin and Non-Human Kin of the neighbourhood.

Wise Country

1. Celebrate the colours of Country in facade and walling
2. Integrated knowledge sharing spaces within landscape
3. Retain existing trees for canopy and their history
4. Lighting which considers nocturnal fauna and dark sky

Sensory Experiences

5. Integration of running water
6. Endemic planting species
7. Tactile materials
8. Exposure and protection from wind

Healthy Country, Healthy Community

9. Capture, treat and reuse water on site
10. Increased vegetation to improve soil and create habitat
11. Re-use site materials



Figure.37 - Site Master Plan | PTW Architects + Clouston Associates

GANSW CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Outcomes for Country

GANSW Outcomes for Country	12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield Opportunities
1. Healthy Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintroducing locally native ecologies onto the site through the prioritisation of Non-Human Kin. • Re-use of materials to ensure resources of Country are not removed from the site.
2. Healthy Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong cultural identity through design elements of Country. • Cultural safety and an invitation to appreciate Country. • Employment and housing opportunities for identified First Nations staff members and residents.
3. Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with First Nations community to ensure connecting with Country engagement is informed by Traditional Custodians, Registered Aboriginal Parties and First Nations community stakeholders. • Seeking information and approval from local First Nations community when integrating particular cultural stories, graphics or interpretation
4. Cultural Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural competency developed in residents and visitors through passive and active interaction with Country and culture.
5. Better Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and design teams apply the community driven opportunities in this report to ensure 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield is connected with Country. • Planning and design outcomes informed by the community driven opportunities in this report support living cultural practices. • Original landscapes are repaired and restored through the re-establishing of locally native ecologies.



Figure.38 - Garigal and Guringai Country | Yerrabingin

PROJECT LEGACY

Future of Connecting with Country at 12-16 Bent Street, Lindfield

We have followed our Collaborative Design process to first define our design challenge, and then with the project team and Aboriginal community members, worked together to develop a solution to our challenge in the form of an answer to our How Might We Question as shared above.

At the beginning of the process, Yerrabingin identified the opportunity to explore bringing the pillars of Regeneration, Innovation, Legacy and Custodianship into the design solution, and our process has focused on developing design solutions that will achieve long term outcomes for these pillars at the project site.

Together, *'Wise Country', 'Sensing Country'* and *'Healthy Country, Healthy Community'* will contribute to bringing these pillars to life at the site in the short term, and into the future.



Figure.39 - Perspective of future building | PTW Architects

FIGURES LIST

Figure.1 - Near Map. (2025). Aerial photo of site location. https://www.nearmap.com/au/en?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic

Figure.2 - Savills. (n.d.). 14-1 Bent Street, Lindfield context. <https://search.savills.com/au/en/property-detail/aus2cs040793s>

Figure.3 - Authors own image. (2025). Walk on Country.

Figure.4 - Authors own image. (2025). We inhabit and are inhabited by Country.

Figure.5 - GANSW, Connecting with Country Framework . (2023). illustration to model to consider project life cycles with an Aboriginal perspective. <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/case-studies/connecting-with-country-framework.pdf?la=en>

Figure.6 - Authors own image. (2025). Methodology Process.

Figure.7 - Atlas. (2024). Lindfield. <https://www.atlas.com.au/suburb-profiles/lindfield-nsw/>

Figure.8 - Hiking the world. (2023) Garigal National Park. https://hikingtheworld.blog/national_park/guide-to-garigal-national-park/

Figure.9 - IndigiGrow. (2024). Eucalyptus piperita. <https://indigigrow.com.au/edu/eucalyptus-piperita/>

Figure.10 -Authors own image. (2025). Project timeline graphic.

Figure.11 - Authors own image. (2025). Images from the How Might We Session.

Figure.12 - Authors own image. (2025). Images from the Walk on Country.

Figure.13 - Authors own image. (2025). Images from the Collaborative Workshop.

Figure.14 -Authors own image. (2025). Lindfield Sky Country.

Figure.15 - Authors own image. (2025). Geology of Deep Country.

Figure.16 - Authors own image. (2025). Middle Harbour Creek Water Country.

Figure.17 -Schmidt, J. (n.d.). Sky Country. <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/pm/asteroid-flies-through-solar-system-in-world-first/9123906>

Figure.18 - Berger Partnership. (2016). Adams elementary rain garden. <https://www.bergerpartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Vertical-portrait-Adams-Rain-Garden.jpg>

Figure.19 - Woods, C. (n.d.). Rammed earth wall. <https://images2.dwell.com/photos/6696836461368389632/6700126580850479104/original.jpg?auto=format&q=35&w=1920>

Figure.20 -Authors own image. (2025). Images from Community Feedback Session.

Figure.21 -Authors own image. (2025). Images from Community Feedback Session.

Figure.22 - Authors own image. (2025). Learning from the layers of Country.

Figure.23 - Authors own image. (2025). Connecting with Country.

Figure.24 -Authors own image. (2025). Lindfield ecosystems.

Figure.25 - Antoniades Architects. (n.d.). Regent Street, Redfern. <https://antoniades.com.au/projects/regent-st-syd/>

Figure.26 - Landezine. (2023). Curtin University Indigenous Learning Circle. https://landezine.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/04_UDLA_CurtinYarningCircle.jpg

Figure.27 - Yerrabingin. (n.d.). South Eveleigh Native Rooftop Farm activation. https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/5f9a5060c3ce251aae94c621/1606198534781-89QAI5YF70B54SXR4MQQ/DSC_0141.jpg?format=1500w

Figure.28 - Authors own image. (2025). Wise Country visual exploration.

Figure.29 - Yerrabingin. (n.d.). South Eveleigh Native Rooftop Farm evening. https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/5f9a5060c3ce251aae94c621/1606198604756-XG1WOR6SUKNX3L7ENNLJ/DSC_0171.jpg?format=1500w

Figure.30 - Landshaft. (2023). Landscape lighting water. <https://landshaft-ol.kiev.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/dcdc0e2479f027410459b00fd93f75cb.jpg>

Figure.31 - Faithlead. (2022). Foraging native species. <https://faithlead.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/blog-header-7.png>

Figure.32 - Authors own image. (2025). Sensory Experiences visual exploration.

Figure.33 - Transport for NSW. (2023). Swale within public open space created as part of the Westconnex Stage 1b project. <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/water-sensitive-urban-design-guideline.pdf>

Figure.34 - Authors own image. (2025). East Lindfield view.

Figure.35 - Outdoor Design. (n.d.). Recycled sandstone. https://da28rauy2a860.cloudfront.net/outdoordesign.com.au/contents/8100/20200907160734_447.jpg

Figure.36 - Authors own image. (2025). Healthy Country, Healthy Community visual exploration.

Figure.37 - PTW Architects + Clouston Associates. (2025). Site Master Plan

Figure.38 - Authors own image. (2025). Garigal and Guringai Country.

Figure.39 - PTW Architects. (2025). Perspective of future building.

REFERENCES

Attenbrow, V. (2010). *Sydney's Aboriginal past: investigating the archaeological and historical records*. UNSW Press.

Burghin, S., & Saunders, T. (2007). Parrots of the Sydney region: population changes over 100 years. In Lunney, D., Eby, P., Hutchings, P., & Burghin, S. (Eds.), *Pest or Guest: The Zoology of Overabundance* (pp. 185-194). Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales.

Chapman, G.A., & Murphy, C.L. (1989). *Soil Landscapes of the Sydney 1:100,000 Sheet report*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Sydney.

Fuller, L. (2011). *Wollemi Pine: The Incredible Discovery of a Living Fossil from the Age of the Dinosaurs*. CSIRO Publishing.

Herbert, C. (1983). *Geology of the Sydney 1:100,000 Sheet 9130*. Geological Survey of New South Wales, Sydney.

JK Environments. (2022). *Preliminary (Stage 1) Site Investigation for Proposed Residential Development at 14-16 Bent Street, Lindfield, NSW*. [Environmental Site Investigation Report].

McDonald, J. (2008). *Dreamtime Superhighway: Sydney Basin Rock Art and Prehistoric Information Exchange*. ANU E Press, Canberra.

Norris, R. P. (2016). Dawes Review 5: Australian Aboriginal Astronomy and Navigation. *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia*, 33, e039.

NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. (2021). *Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion - profile*. Retrieved from <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10789>

Northern Beaches Council History Hub. 2020. *Aboriginal Rock Carvings, Moon Rock, Garigal National Park*. [https://northernbeaches.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/49219?keywords= Sydney's Aboriginal Heritage](https://northernbeaches.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/49219?keywords=Sydney's%20Aboriginal%20Heritage). (nd.). *Aboriginal sites Northern Beaches and Pittwater*. <https://www.visitsydneyaustralia.com.au/sites-nb.html>



YERRABINGIN

WE ARE YERRABINGIN. WE WALK TOGETHER.