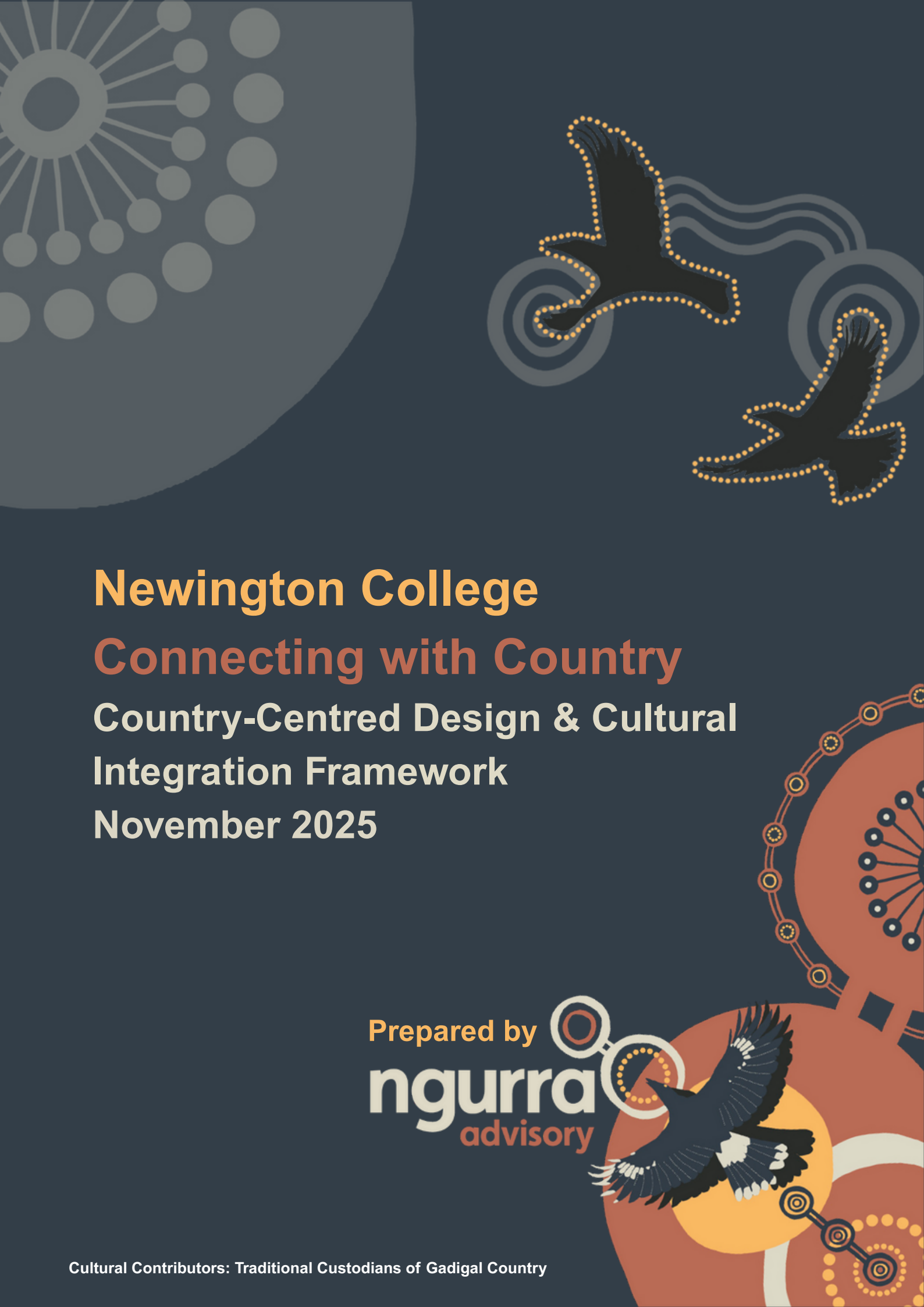




Newington College

Connecting with Country

Country-Centred Design & Cultural Integration Framework

November 2025

Prepared by 
ngurra
advisory 

Cultural Contributors: Traditional Custodians of Gadigal Country



Acknowledgement of Country

Ngurra Advisory and the project team acknowledge the Gadigal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Newington College Masterplan is being developed, and recognise the close cultural boundaries and connections of the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation.

We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples who walk on, care for, and remain connected to this Country.

We honour the stories, knowledge and cultural practices generously shared through engagement, and commit to embedding these values into the planning, design, delivery and long-term stewardship of the Newington College Masterplan

Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property Rights

We aim to work respectfully with First Nations people and communities to protect the rights of Culture and Country.

This framework has been informed by engagement through discussions with selected stakeholders.

While this work is the copyright of Ngurra Advisory, it is important to note that any Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights remain with those Indigenous peoples or groups from whom it originates.

ICIP refers to the rights that Indigenous people's have, and want to have, to protect their traditional knowledge, resources, knowledge systems, arts and culture

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Project Overview

- i. Project Team
- ii. Project Vision
- iii. About this Country

3. Community Engagement

4. Design Principles

- i. Architecture & Built Form
- ii. Landscape & Open Space

5. Opportunities

- i. Employment & Skills Development
- ii. Procurement
- iii. Caring for Country
- iv. Community Benefits

6. Implementation & Action Plan

7. Ongoing Evaluation and Accountability

Disclaimer: The information contained in this report is specific to the property located at Newington College, 200 Stanmore Road, Stanmore NSW 2048.

It has been prepared based on the unique characteristics, context, and circumstances of this site.

This report must not be relied upon or applied to any other projects or locations without appropriate review and adaptation by Ngurra Advisory and the Traditional Custodians, Elders and Knowledge Holders who have been involved in the consultation of this report.

This document is considered ICIP and should not be shared without the permission of Ngurra Advisory.

A Message from Ngurra Advisory

At Ngurra Advisory, designing with Country is grounded in respect for Aboriginal peoples' deep and enduring knowledge systems, ways of being, knowing and doing that have guided sustainable relationships with land and water for thousands of generations. For us, this is more than a design approach or methodology. It is a commitment to truth, understanding and education, ensuring cultural heritage is recognised, valued and meaningfully embedded in the places where people learn, gather and grow.

In the context of the Newington College Masterplan, this approach presents an important opportunity to create a campus that supports cultural safety, visibility and belonging for First Nations students, staff and visitors, while also strengthening the cultural awareness and capability of non-First Nations students, educators and the broader community. Educational precincts and learning environments play a powerful role in shaping understanding, and the physical environment can be a quiet but enduring teacher, sparking curiosity, encouraging respect for First Nations cultures, and creating opportunities for learning and reflection that extend beyond the campus, into homes, families and communities, contributing to a more respectful and united Australia.

A genuine connection with Country goes beyond consultation. It requires relationships built over time, reciprocity and shared responsibility. This Framework is not only about how spaces are planned and designed, but about how respect, trust and stewardship are embedded through education, everyday practice and ongoing engagement with Traditional Custodians.

For the Newington College Masterplan on Gadigal Country, with close cultural boundaries and connections to the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation, this work reflects a collective commitment to creating culturally safe learning environments and meaningful places of education. By grounding decision-making in the wisdom of Country, the Masterplan seeks to support environments that are functional and sustainable, while also honouring a shared responsibility to care for Country and ensure it is left healthier than when we found her.



Amy Barnes
Managing Director



Mat Cornwell
Managing Director

Introduction

This Connecting with Country Framework has been developed to guide the design, delivery and long-term operation of the Newington College Masterplan. Located on Gadigal Country, with close cultural boundaries and connections to the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation, the Framework ensures that Aboriginal knowledge systems, cultural values and community aspirations are meaningfully embedded across all stages of the masterplanning process.

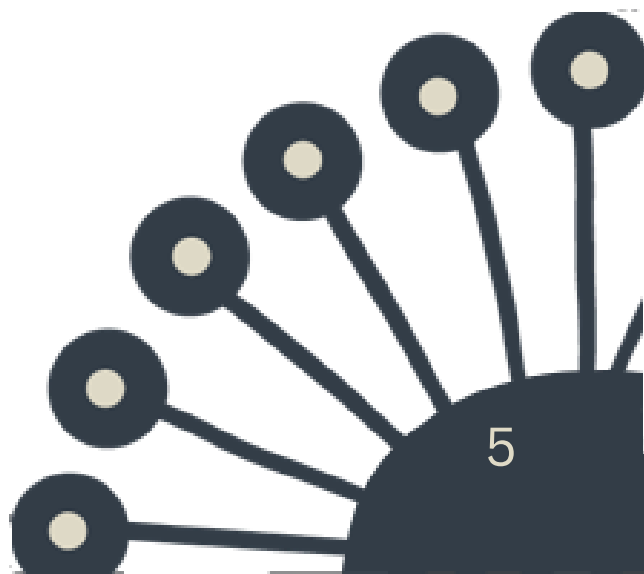
The Framework recognises Country as a living system, encompassing land, waterways, people, culture and responsibility and positions cultural knowledge as foundational to decision-making. It provides a structured yet responsive approach to ensure cultural integrity, learning outcomes, environmental stewardship and respectful engagement are upheld throughout planning, design, construction and ongoing campus operations.

Newington College holds a significant role as an educational precinct with a strong community presence. The Masterplan presents an important opportunity to create learning environments that are culturally safe, inclusive and reflective of the deep histories and living cultures of First Nations peoples. Through the integration of cultural narratives, design principles and place-based learning opportunities, the campus can actively support cultural visibility, understanding and respect.

The Framework aligns with local and state planning objectives, including expectations for design excellence, sustainability, place-making and community benefit. By starting with Country as the foundation for the Masterplan, it strengthens these outcomes by embedding Aboriginal perspectives within the spatial, architectural and landscape responses across the campus, ensuring cultural values are integral to the identity, function and long-term performance of the place, rather than applied as an overlay.

Ngurra Advisory has been engaged to lead and support the Connecting with Country process for the Newington College Masterplan, working closely with Traditional Custodians, Elders and Knowledge Holders. Through Reconnection to Country sessions, Visioning Workshops, Walks on Country, cultural immersion activities and validation processes, cultural authority, lived experience and community aspirations are being embedded into the evolving design framework and will continue to guide decisions through delivery and long-term stewardship.

Importantly, this Masterplan presents an opportunity for Newington College to lead by example, embedding respect for Country, strengthening cultural safety for First Nations students, staff and visitors, and building the cultural awareness and capability of non-First Nations members of the College community. In doing so, the Framework aligns with broader reconciliation commitments and establishes a foundation for ongoing learning, partnership and care for Country.



Project Overview

Site Background

The Newington College campus is located on Gadigal Country, with close cultural boundaries and connections to the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation. This area forms part of a broader cultural landscape shaped by waterways, ridgelines, sandstone geology and ecological corridors that have supported Aboriginal life, learning and movement for tens of thousands of years.

Prior to colonisation, this Country was characterised by open woodlands, native grasslands and interconnected water systems that supported seasonal gathering, ceremony, teaching and travel. These landscapes were not only places of sustenance, but also sites of knowledge transmission, cultural practice and responsibility to care for land and water.

Despite significant urban development and change over time, this Country continues to hold cultural memory and meaning. Subtle markers within the landscape, changes in topography, remnant vegetation, soil types and water flow, continue to reflect the underlying structure and story of Country. For Traditional Custodians, these elements remain important anchors of connection and identity.

The Newington College Masterplan site sits within an established urban and educational context, yet retains the potential to re-express cultural presence through thoughtful design, landscape intervention and storytelling.

As the campus evolves, it carries a responsibility to respect the Country on which it stands and to contribute positively to its long-term care.

The redevelopment of the campus provides an opportunity to strengthen cultural visibility, embed Aboriginal perspectives into everyday learning environments, and ensure that Country is acknowledged not only in words, but through design, materiality, movement and use of space



Project Team

This project is a collaborative effort that brings together a diverse team of professionals and cultural advisors, each contributing specialist expertise to ensure the Newington College Masterplan reflects the values of respect, reconciliation and connection to Country.

Client

Newington College is the client and custodian of the campus, leading the vision for the Masterplan and its long-term role as an educational precinct grounded in respect for Country, cultural learning and community benefit.



Architect

AJC Architects are leading the masterplanning and architectural coordination for the project, ensuring the built form, spatial organisation and public realm respond to Country, community and environmental context.



Landscape Architecture & Urban Design

OCULUS is responsible for the landscape architecture and urban design components of the Masterplan, shaping open spaces, campus connections and public realm outcomes that respond to Country, support movement and gathering, and reinforce cultural visibility and environmental performance.



Connecting with Country and Community Engagement Consultants

Ngurra Advisory is a 100% Aboriginal-owned consultancy engaged to lead the Connecting with Country process for the Newington College Masterplan. Working closely with Traditional Custodians, Elders, Knowledge Holders, students and staff, Ngurra Advisory is responsible for guiding culturally responsive design, embedding Aboriginal knowledge systems into the Masterplan, and ensuring cultural values inform decision-making across planning, design, delivery and long-term operations.



Cultural Advisor

Uncle Charles Davison, Gadigal Elder and Traditional Custodian is a respected Gadigal Elder and Traditional Custodian who has generously shared his cultural knowledge, lived experience and guidance throughout the project. His leadership continues to ground the Masterplan in the values of Gadigal Country, ensuring cultural integrity, respect and responsibility inform decision-making across all stages of the project.

Together, this diverse team is committed to delivering a Masterplan that meets architectural and environmental benchmarks while honouring Country, strengthening cultural understanding and fostering a strong sense of belonging for all who engage with the campus.

Project Vision

The Newington College Masterplan sits on Gadigal Country, with close cultural connections to the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation, a place rich in cultural knowledge, history and deep-time connection. The vision for this project is to honour the enduring relationships Aboriginal people hold with this Country, and to ensure those relationships meaningfully inform the way the campus is planned, designed and experienced.

This Masterplan is more than a physical redevelopment. It is an opportunity to create a learning environment where cultural values shape how people move through the campus, gather, reflect and learn. Through culturally responsive design, the campus will become a place where Country itself supports education, quietly teaching through landscape, spatial organisation, materials and stories.

Pathways across the campus will respond to natural movement and connection, reflecting patterns of travel and gathering. Landscape design will draw from seasonal rhythms and local ecologies, reinforcing cycles of growth, rest and renewal. Spaces for gathering will encourage reflection, dialogue and shared experience, supporting both formal and informal learning.

The colours and textures of Country will inform the character of the campus, drawing from the tones of sandstone, the greens of native vegetation, and the subtle shifts of light and shadow across the day. These elements ground the campus in place and reinforce a sense of belonging and continuity.

Language and naming will play an important role in returning cultural visibility to the site. Where appropriate, Aboriginal language will be incorporated into place names, wayfinding and interpretive elements, acting as a living presence across the campus and encouraging everyday learning and recognition of Country.

Students, staff and visitors will experience Country through all five senses, through the feel of materials underfoot, the sound of wind and water, the scent of planting, and the changing colours of the landscape across seasons. Cultural markers, interpretive elements and opportunities for storytelling will support learning and engagement, while spaces for rest, yarning and reflection will contribute to cultural safety and wellbeing.

This Masterplan seeks to reflect the strength, resilience and ongoing custodianship of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples, while supporting a shared future built on respect, understanding and responsibility. Through ongoing collaboration and care, the campus will grow as a place of learning, pride and connection.

This vision has been shaped through the cultural insight and lived experience generously shared by Uncle Charles Davison, a respected Gadigal Traditional Custodian and Elder, whose guidance continues to ground the project in the values of Gadigal Country.



About this Country

The lands on which Newington College stands are part of Gadigal Country, with close cultural boundaries and connections to the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation. For tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal people have lived in relationship with this Country, guided by knowledge systems that understand land, water, sky and people as interconnected.

Country in this area supported movement, teaching and exchange between communities. Knowledge was passed through story, practice and observation, with learning embedded in the landscape itself. Seasonal change, plant behaviour, animal movement and sky patterns informed daily life and cultural responsibilities. Waterways and drainage lines, even where no longer visible, continue to shape the land and hold cultural memory. These systems remain important to understanding the health and structure of Country and reinforce the responsibility to care for land beyond its immediate, visible form.

Despite the impacts of colonisation and urban development, Aboriginal people maintain enduring connections to this place. Cultural knowledge continues to be shared, renewed and upheld through community, family and ongoing engagement with Country.

Today, the surrounding area supports a strong and diverse Aboriginal community. According to the 2021 ABS Census, the Inner West and surrounding local government areas are home to a growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, reflecting the ongoing presence of First Nations families connected to this Country.

The Newington College Masterplan provides an opportunity to honour this living presence, embedding recognition, cultural safety and learning into the everyday life of the campus, and ensuring that Country is respected, cared for and left healthier than when we found her.



Community Engagement Summary

Who we engaged

Ngurra Advisory worked closely with Gadigal Traditional Custodian, Uncle Charles Davison, whose cultural knowledge, lived experience and guidance have informed the development of the Connecting with Country Framework and the emerging Masterplan vision.

Engagement has also included participation from Newington College staff and students, recognising the importance of learning environments as spaces for shared understanding, cultural visibility and capability-building.

When & Where

Engagement was undertaken across 2024 and 2025 and included Walks on Country, site visits, on-site yarning, and collaborative visioning and validation workshops. These engagements provided culturally safe spaces for Custodians to share knowledge, stories and lived experience, identify key cultural values, and guide meaningful and respectful ways of connecting with Country across the Newington College campus.

How we engaged

Engagement included on-site workshops, a Cultural Opportunities and Validation Workshop, and a Walk on Country. These sessions provided cultural insight, identified key values and priorities, and supported the integration of Gadigal perspectives, with Wangal connections, into the Masterplan's emerging design direction.

Engagement & Consultation

Our Engagement Approach

The engagement approach for the Newington College Masterplan moves beyond consultation and is based on genuine partnership, respect and shared responsibility. First Nations voices have guided the project's vision, cultural themes, design priorities and future stewardship.

Through on-Country experiences and culturally grounded dialogue, the project team deepened their understanding of Gadigal Country and Wangal connections, including the significance of landform, waterways, vegetation, movement and learning on Country. These engagements have strengthened cultural capability across the project team and reinforced a commitment to Country-led design and decision-making.

Insights shared through engagement have directly informed the cultural narrative, spatial logic and material responses proposed across the campus, ensuring cultural values are embedded as a foundational element of the Masterplan rather than applied as an overlay.

Outcome of Engagement

Engagement with Gadigal Traditional Custodian, Uncle Charles Davison, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections, has been central to shaping the Connecting with Country approach for the Newington College Masterplan. Through on-site workshops, a Cultural Opportunities and Validation Workshop, and a Walk on Country, the following key outcomes have been identified to inform the architectural design of the campus.

Cultural Themes Confirmed

Key cultural themes identified through engagement include:

- Country as Structure and Movement
- Materiality Grounded in Country
- Cultural Expression Through Form and Pattern
- Storytelling as a Daily Experience
- Learning, Visibility and Cultural Continuity

Engagement & Consultation

Integration Into Design

Custodian insights have informed design outcomes across the Newington College Masterplan, including:

- Use of Country-informed colour palettes, drawing from local sandstone tones, native vegetation greens and the shifting hues of sunrise and sunset.
- Landscape forms and textures that reflect the structure of Country, including landform, vegetation patterns and movement across the campus.
- Architectural elements and wayfinding that support storytelling and cultural visibility through thresholds, bridges, forecourts and key campus connections.
- Multi-sensory design responses, incorporating material warmth, texture, light and seasonal change to strengthen lived connection to Country.
- Aboriginal language embedded across the campus, with opportunities to support language revitalisation through dedicated learning environments, reinforcing Country as a living presence.

Traditional Custodian and Aboriginal Community Involvement

Traditional Custodian engagement has played a central role in shaping the Connecting with Country Framework, ensuring cultural integrity, respect and authenticity throughout the Masterplan process. Guidance from Gadigal Traditional Custodian, Uncle Charles Davison, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections, has informed cultural themes, design priorities and appropriate pathways for cultural inclusion within the College context.

Engagement has also identified opportunities to support:

- Ongoing cultural governance and guidance throughout design development and delivery
- Cultural visibility and recognition initiatives embedded within the campus environment
- Aboriginal employment, training and economic participation, where appropriate
- Community partnerships and long-term cultural programs aligned with the educational role of the College

Engagement & Consultation

Strengthened Cultural Capability

Walks on Country, workshops and culturally grounded dialogue have strengthened the cultural capability of the broader project team. These engagements have supported a shared understanding of Country across architecture, landscape, planning disciplines, ensuring cultural considerations are embedded into decision-making rather than treated as an add-on.

Design Principles

The draft Connecting with Country Design Principles have been shared with Traditional Custodian guidance to confirm alignment with cultural values, stories and aspirations. This validation process ensures the Framework reflects lived experience and provides a culturally grounded reference to guide the Newington College Masterplan through detailed design, delivery and long-term operation.

It is acknowledged that, as the Masterplan is finalised and design develops, minor refinements to the Framework may be required. Any updates to the Design Principles and the design outcomes achieved will be communicated back to the First Nations community to ensure ongoing transparency, cultural integrity and shared understanding.

Commitment to Ongoing Partnership

There is a shared commitment to ongoing The Newington College Masterplan reflects a shared commitment to ongoing partnership and learning. Mechanisms for continued collaboration, cultural guidance and accountability will support the long-term care of Country and ensure that cultural values remain embedded as the campus evolves over time.

Future Engagement

As the Newington College Masterplan progresses, engagement will continue with Gadigal Traditional Custodians, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections, and the broader local Aboriginal community. Ongoing engagement will support the refinement of cultural design responses and ensure that cultural guidance remains embedded through detailed design, delivery and long-term campus operations.

Future engagement will include:

- Additional workshops to further integrate and refine cultural themes and design responses as the Masterplan evolves.
- Engagement with specialist Aboriginal consultants, including language specialists, artists and Knowledge Holders, to support areas such as cultural interpretation, landscape, storytelling, healing and place-based learning.

Engagement & Consultation

- Cultural immersion activities to deepen the project team's understanding of Country, native vegetation, ecosystems and cultural practices relevant to the campus.
- Finalisation of the Country-Centred Design & Cultural Integration Framework, informed by ongoing cultural guidance and validation.
- Development of a detailed Action Plan to embed Connecting with Country principles across design development, construction and long-term campus operations.

This ongoing engagement approach recognises that connection to Country is not a one-off activity, but a relationship that continues and adapts over time.

Cultural Protocols and Knowledge Sharing

All engagement has been, and will continue to be, conducted respectfully and in alignment with Gadigal cultural protocols, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections. Cultural knowledge shared by Custodians has been provided with permission and is treated with care, respect and confidentiality.

Consideration will be given to the inclusion of a Smoking Ceremony at an appropriate stage, such as the commencement of construction, subject to Custodian guidance, to honour Country and support a safe and respectful progression of works.

The project team is committed to upholding Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protections. Stories, language, symbols and cultural knowledge remain the property of the relevant Aboriginal people and will only be used with informed consent, for agreed purposes, and specifically in relation to the Newington College Masterplan. This approach safeguards cultural integrity and ensures community ownership and authority are respected.

First Nations Working Group

As the project progresses into detailed design, a First Nations Working Group will be established to ensure cultural knowledge and community voices remain central through delivery and ongoing operation of the Newington College Masterplan.

The Working Group will include Gadigal Traditional Custodians, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections, and will provide ongoing cultural guidance to support culturally informed decision-making, strengthen cultural integrity and accountability, and build long-term relationships with local Aboriginal communities.



Design Principles

Architecture & Built Form

Landscape & Open Space



Architecture & Built Form

This section explores how buildings within the Newington College Masterplan respond to Country through their form, materiality and relationship to the campus setting. It considers how architecture can support learning, movement and connection to Country, while integrating sustainable and enduring design principles appropriate to an educational environment.

Response to Country

The architectural approach for the Newington College Masterplan is grounded in respect for Gadigal Country, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections, recognising the cultural significance of this place within a highly urbanised context.

Design narratives are shaped by an understanding of Country as a living system, where land, people, learning and movement are interconnected. Architecture responds to the existing campus structure and hierarchy, reinforcing intuitive movement, moments of pause and opportunities for reflection.

Buildings and shared spaces are conceived as extensions of Country within the campus, supporting cultural visibility, learning and wellbeing. Design responses draw from local tones, textures and material qualities identified through cultural guidance, ensuring new development feels grounded, respectful and enduring.

Key cultural design responses include:

Acknowledgement of Country

Design elements support recognition of Country, cultural presence and ongoing connection.

Examples of integration may include:

- Cultural acknowledgement statements located at key arrival points and shared campus spaces.
- Subtle incorporation of cultural narratives through material choices, patterning and spatial organisation.
- Storytelling opportunities positioned along primary movement routes and at thresholds between key campus zones.

Cultural Safety and Inclusivity

Buildings and public spaces are designed to welcome, gather and support ongoing connection to Country within an educational setting.

Examples of integration may include:

- A dedicated First Nations learning space providing a culturally safe environment for learning, reflection and acknowledgement.
- Shared campus spaces and forecourts designed to support gathering, pause and transition.
- Clear, accessible circulation that supports inclusive movement across the campus.

Reading Country, Movement and Campus Structure

Built form responds to the existing campus landscape, movement patterns and hierarchy.

Examples of integration may include:

- Building placement and massing aligned with established campus movement and learning zones.
- Pathways and connections that reinforce intuitive wayfinding and arrival.
- Thresholds and bridges used as moments of transition, orientation and storytelling.

Language, Learning and Cultural Visibility

Architecture supports cultural visibility and learning through the considered integration of language.

Examples of integration may include:

- Aboriginal language embedded across the campus, with opportunities to support language revitalisation through learning environments.
- Naming opportunities for spaces and connections that reinforce recognition of Country as a living presence.
- Interpretive elements that support everyday learning and cultural awareness.

Materiality and Architectural Expression

Material selection and architectural expression are informed by Country and campus context.

Examples of integration may include:

- Colour palettes and finishes drawn from local tones and textures identified through cultural guidance.
- Natural, durable materials selected for warmth, longevity and tactility.
- Subtle façade articulation that references place without applied or symbolic treatments.



Landscape & Open Space

This section outlines how landscape and open space within the Newington College Masterplan support connection to Country through planting, materiality, movement and shared outdoor spaces.

It considers how cultural values, learning and wellbeing can be embedded into the campus landscape to create places that are welcoming, legible and enduring.

Response to Country

The landscape approach for the Newington College Masterplan is grounded in respect for Gadigal Country, with acknowledgement of Wanggal connections, recognising the layered cultural history of the site within a highly urban context.

Landscape design responds to Country as a living system, supporting relationships between people, place and environment. Outdoor spaces are conceived as extensions of learning environments, providing opportunities for gathering, movement, reflection and connection.

The approach prioritises cultural visibility, comfort and ecological responsiveness, ensuring landscape and open spaces support everyday use while reinforcing Country as a living presence across the campus.

Key cultural design responses include:

Cultural Safety and Gathering

Landscape spaces support welcome, gathering and shared use within the campus.

Examples of integration may include:

- Outdoor spaces designed to support gathering, pause and informal learning.
- Shaded seating and comfortable areas that encourage rest and reflection.
- Clear connections between indoor learning spaces and outdoor environments.

Reading Country, Movement and Campus Structure

Landscape design reinforces legibility, movement and connection across the campus.

Examples of integration may include:

- Pathways and open spaces informed by primary movement routes and the flow and structure of Country.
- Thresholds and landscape transitions that support arrival, orientation and pause.
- Open space connections that link key campus destinations.

Landscape and Planting

Planting supports comfort, seasonal change and connection to place.

Examples of integration may include:

- Planting selections informed by local context and campus character.
- Use of vegetation to provide shade, comfort and visual softness within built areas.

Materiality and Sensory Experience

Landscape materials support tactility, durability and a sense of place.

Examples of integration may include:

- Natural finishes and textures that feel warm, robust and welcoming.
- Landscape elements that support sensory experience through touch, light and shade.
- Materials selected to complement architectural palettes and reinforce cohesion.

Learning, Visibility and Cultural Awareness

Landscape spaces support everyday learning and cultural awareness.

Examples of integration may include:

- Outdoor areas that support cultural learning and informal gathering.
- Opportunities for interpretation and storytelling along key movement routes.
- Spaces that reinforce Country as a living presence within the campus environment.



Aerial shot of the Bonye Bush University site.
Source: Photo credit: Terry Royan



Opportunities

- Employment
- Skills Development
- Procurement
- Caring for Country
- Community Benefits

Opportunities



Opportunities for Aboriginal Participation and Community Benefits

The Newington College Masterplan presents an opportunity to support positive social, cultural and economic outcomes for local Aboriginal communities, guided by engagement with Gadigal Traditional Custodians, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections. Through partnership-led approaches, the project can embed meaningful opportunities that support cultural learning, participation and long-term community benefit.

These opportunities align with the College's broader commitments to reconciliation, education and cultural capability, and can be realised across design development, delivery and ongoing campus operations.

Employment and Skills Development

There is opportunity to support Aboriginal participation through employment and skills development during design, construction and delivery phases. This may include roles within construction, landscaping, specialist cultural services, and associated project support functions, supported by culturally appropriate procurement and engagement practices.

Ongoing Participation and Partnerships

Beyond construction, opportunities exist to support continued Aboriginal participation through partnerships, learning initiatives and engagement with service providers and operators associated with the campus. This may include collaboration with Aboriginal organisations, cultural practitioners and educators to support cultural learning, mentoring and visibility over time.

By embedding these considerations early, the Masterplan supports a pathway for ongoing contribution, shared responsibility and community benefit that extends beyond the delivery of physical infrastructure.

Employment & Skills Development



Aboriginal Employment and Participation

Employment is a key pathway for creating meaningful, long-term benefits for Aboriginal people and supporting self-determination, skills development and economic participation. The Newington College Masterplan presents an opportunity to embed Aboriginal employment and participation in a way that aligns with the College's educational purpose, values and commitment to reconciliation.

Guided by engagement with Gadigal Traditional Custodians, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections, employment opportunities will be considered across the life of the project, from design and delivery through to ongoing campus operations.

Employment During Design and Delivery

As the project progresses into detailed design and construction, opportunities may exist to support Aboriginal participation through:

- Engagement of Aboriginal consultants and specialists, including cultural advisors, artists and educators
- Aboriginal employment opportunities within construction, landscaping and associated project services
- Inclusion of Aboriginal workers through subcontractors and supply chains
- Culturally informed recruitment and workplace practices that support safety, respect and retention

Where appropriate, employment opportunities may be supported through partnerships with Aboriginal employment organisations, training providers and NSW-based Aboriginal businesses.

Employment



Skills Development and Pathways

The project provides opportunities to support skills development and pathways for Aboriginal people, particularly young people, through:

- Work-readiness and exposure opportunities linked to construction, environment, facilities and campus operations
- Mentoring and on-the-job learning supported by Aboriginal organisations and education partners
- Pathways into longer-term roles associated with campus maintenance, facilities management, administration and support services

These pathways align with the College's broader role as a learning environment and support education-to-employment transitions.

Ongoing Employment and Campus Operations

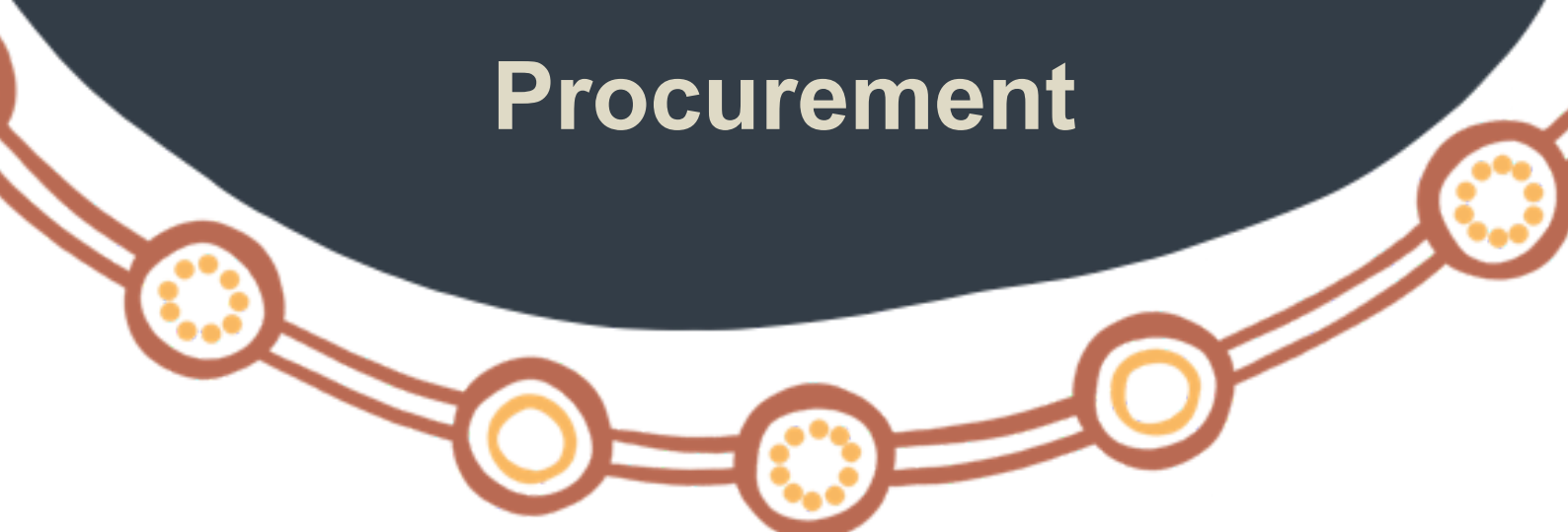
Beyond delivery, there is opportunity to support continued Aboriginal participation through ongoing roles and service provision across the campus, including:

- Facilities and asset management
- Grounds and landscape maintenance
- Cultural learning, interpretation and program support
- Professional services delivered by Aboriginal-owned businesses

Exploring longer-term service and maintenance arrangements supports continuity of employment and Caring for Country outcomes.

It is recommended that employment outcomes will be monitored through the project's Implementation & Action Plan and reviewed in collaboration with the First Nations Working Group, supporting transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

Procurement



Community Aspirations

Engagement with Traditional Custodians highlighted a strong aspiration for Aboriginal-owned and Aboriginal-led businesses to be meaningfully engaged throughout the delivery and ongoing operation of the Newington College Masterplan. Social procurement presents a tangible opportunity to reflect community values, support Aboriginal economic participation, and contribute to long-term community benefit.

Where appropriate, project partners are encouraged to identify Aboriginal suppliers through recognised directories such as Supply Nation, YARPA NSW Indigenous Business & Employment Hub, and the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce.

Priority should be given to local and NSW-based Aboriginal businesses, where opportunities align with project scope and delivery, before engaging suppliers at a national level.

Examples of Implementation

- Engagement of Aboriginal-owned suppliers and service providers across construction, landscaping, specialist cultural services and project support functions.
- Procurement of goods and services that support cultural learning, environmental stewardship and campus operations, where Aboriginal businesses are well positioned to lead.
- Exploration of ongoing procurement opportunities post-completion, such as landscape maintenance, cultural interpretation support and environmental monitoring, aligned with campus needs.

Specialist Procurement Support

The project team may benefit from engaging a specialist Aboriginal procurement advisor to support supplier identification, matching opportunities to scope, and ensuring culturally informed and ethical procurement practices.

This approach supports intentional, transparent procurement that aligns with cultural values, strengthens Aboriginal economic participation, and contributes to the College's broader reconciliation, sustainability and community aspirations.

Caring for Country

Caring for Country

Caring for Country reflects the deep cultural responsibility Aboriginal peoples hold to land, waterways, sky and all living beings. Country is understood as a living system that includes people, plants, animals, seasons, stories and knowledge, all interconnected and sustained through ongoing care and respect.

When Country is cared for, it supports wellbeing, learning and connection. When Country is damaged or disconnected, these relationships are disrupted. Caring for Country therefore requires approaches that respect cultural knowledge, enable access, and embed Country-led principles into planning, design and ongoing management.

Caring for Country may include:

- Respecting cultural knowledge and custodial responsibility
- Protecting and enhancing native vegetation and habitat
- Integrating cultural and environmental knowledge in land management
- Supporting spaces for reflection, learning and connection
- Passing knowledge through education and lived experience

Caring for Country in This Project

The Masterplan recognises that, despite significant modification over time, Country remains present and continues to hold cultural meaning and responsibility.

Caring for Country may be supported by:

- strengthening connections between people and place through campus design
- incorporating native planting, shade and water-sensitive design where appropriate
- creating culturally safe outdoor spaces for learning, gathering and reflection
- exploring opportunities for Aboriginal community and Aboriginal-owned businesses to support ongoing landscape maintenance and stewardship.

All approaches should be guided by Traditional Custodian input, ensuring cultural and environmental considerations are integrated respectfully as the campus evolves.

Community Benefits



Community Give-Back Package

To acknowledge cultural and environmental impacts, the Masterplan may consider the establishment of a Community Give-Back Package, co-designed with Gadigal Traditional Custodians, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections. The package would be guided by cultural priorities and shaped to deliver meaningful, long-term community benefit.

Potential components may include:

Cultural Contribution

- Commissioning an Aboriginal artist to develop public art or interpretive elements that reflect local cultural narratives.
- Integrating artworks within campus spaces, pathways and shared areas to support everyday cultural visibility and learning.
- Ensuring artists and cultural contributors are appropriately acknowledged and protected through Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols.

Community Benefit Fund

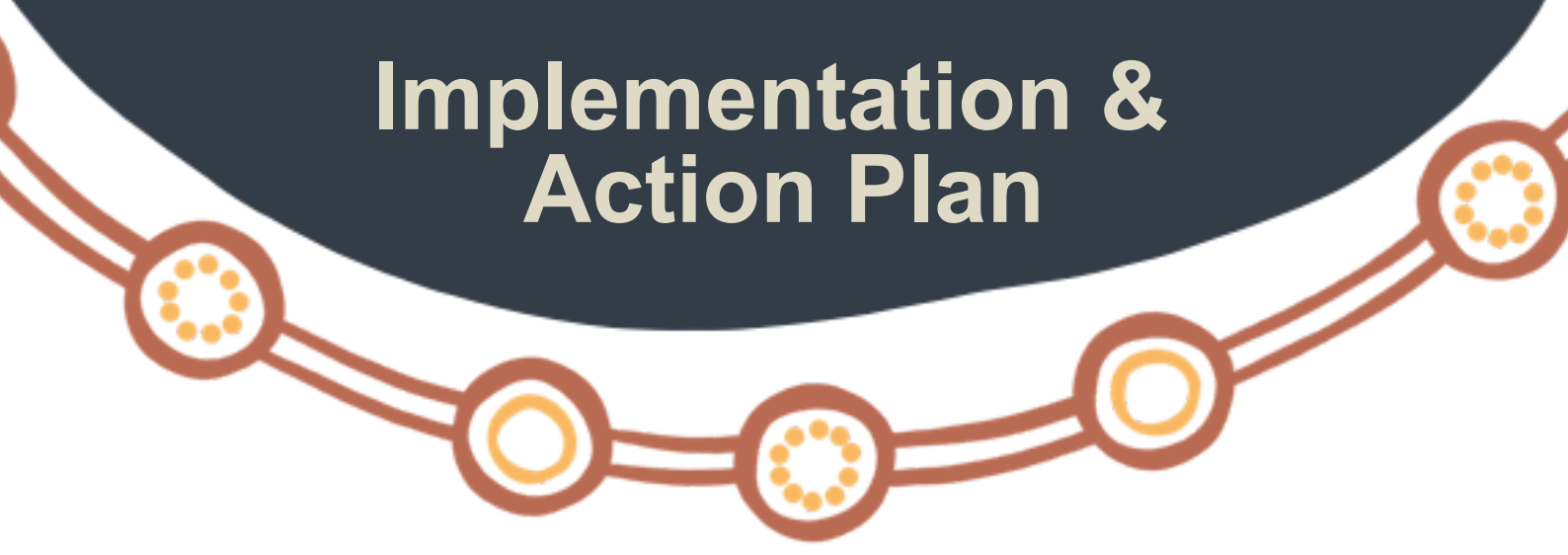
- Establishing a dedicated fund to support Aboriginal community-led initiatives, which may include:
 - cultural and language revitalisation
 - youth, education and mentoring programs
 - health, wellbeing and community connection initiatives
 - environmental stewardship and Caring for Country activities

Cultural Protocols and Visibility

- Use of Aboriginal language in naming, wayfinding and interpretation where appropriate.
- Consideration of Smoking Ceremonies at key project milestones, subject to Custodian guidance.
- Delivery of cultural inductions or awareness activities for project teams and contractors.

Any Community Give-Back Package would be developed in partnership with Traditional Custodians and relevant Aboriginal organisations, ensuring cultural integrity, transparency and alignment with community aspirations.

Implementation & Action Plan



To support the delivery of the Country-Centred Design & Cultural Integration Framework, a detailed Implementation & Action Plan will be developed as the project progresses into detailed design and delivery. The Action Plan will provide a clear and structured pathway for embedding cultural principles into decision-making, design development, construction and long-term campus operations.

The Action Plan will establish clear actions, milestones, responsibilities and timeframes, ensuring cultural values are translated into practical and measurable outcomes. It will guide how key themes, such as cultural storytelling, cultural safety, environmental responsibility, sensory connection to Country, and the respectful use of Aboriginal language, are integrated across the campus.

A core function of the Action Plan will be to support ongoing collaboration with the First Nations Working Group, comprising Gadigal Traditional Custodians, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections, alongside Elders, Knowledge Holders and local Aboriginal community representatives. The Working Group will provide cultural guidance, support accountability and help maintain cultural integrity as the project moves through detailed design, construction and operation.

Designed as a living document, the Action Plan will be reviewed and refined over time, allowing it to respond to Custodian guidance, emerging design outcomes and project learnings. In doing so, the Action Plan ensures that Connecting with Country principles are not only acknowledged, but actively embedded and sustained throughout the life of the Newington College Masterplan.



Ongoing Evaluation and Accountability

A structured evaluation process will be established to monitor the effectiveness of the Connecting with Country Framework and the supporting Implementation & Action Plan as the project moves through detailed design, delivery and long-term operation. This process will support the ongoing and meaningful integration of Connecting with Country principles and ensure cultural commitments remain central over time.

Regular monitoring and reporting will promote transparency, responsiveness and accountability, enabling the project team to adapt to feedback and emerging insights while respecting Gadigal cultural values, with acknowledgement of Wangal connections.

Project consultants will provide periodic progress updates, which will be reviewed in collaboration with the First Nations Working Group. This process ensures cultural outcomes are tracked, Custodian input remains active, and feedback directly informs ongoing decision-making.

A Connecting with Country Progress Report may be used to track key commitments, including:

- Aboriginal procurement and participation initiatives
- Delivery of agreed cultural design responses
- Integration of Aboriginal language, art and storytelling
- Cultural learning and awareness activities for project teams
- Caring for Country and environmental stewardship initiatives

The evaluation and reporting process will also provide a mechanism to identify and respond to emerging cultural, environmental or community matters in a respectful and culturally informed manner, ensuring cultural integrity is upheld as the campus evolves.



Thank you

We extend our sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the development of this document, in particular Gadigal Traditional Custodian Uncle Charles Davison, whose cultural knowledge, lived experience and guidance have been generously shared throughout the process.

We also acknowledge the broader Aboriginal community and the recognised connections of the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation, whose ongoing presence and custodianship inform this work.

These contributions have been invaluable in shaping a Framework that is grounded in respect, learning and recognition of Country as a living presence.

We look forward to seeing the Newington College Masterplan continue to evolve in a way that honours cultural values, supports learning and cultural safety, and strengthens ongoing relationships. It is our hope that this work contributes to a place of respect, connection and shared responsibility, ensuring Country is cared for and left healthier for future generations.



www.ngurraadvisory.com.au

