



164 -172 AND 174-194 WILLIAM ST

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY DESIGN REPORT

Prepared by:

bangawarra

August 2025

The proposed Connecting with Country concepts and principles for the 164-172 and 174-194 William Street redevelopment project are iterative and recursive.

The stories and themes identified at this stage of the project documentation are provided as a starting point to understand Country in cultural, social and spatial terms through the much overdue practice of Connecting with Country.

As each phase of the project progresses, the knowledges of Country will continue to evolve and will be embedded into the project with increasing specificity, architectonic relevance and spatial impact.

They may also grow to incorporate other stories and knowledges as engagement with Indigenous communities and cultures continually broadens.

There are many more stories connected to this place that others may bring forward over time to inform this stage, as well as any future work for Willaim Street. At Bangawarra, we welcome and celebrate that this is part of Connecting with Country inclusively, and broadly, for today, tomorrow and long into the future.

This document has been compiled from a series of design workshops, engagement opportunities and feedback sessions by Bangawarra. Bangawarra is an Aboriginal owned and operated Connecting with Country Consultancy led by Dr Shannon Foster (D’harawal), an ORALRA registered Traditional Owner across the Sydney Basin and Joanne Paterson Kinniburgh (Karyouakou), Dana Marjan, Rhiannon Brownbill and Jay Guadalupe (Dharawal eora and Guaraní).

Mo-on mana bangawarra’o’nya; waduguda w; bayaba’o’nya...naba guwanyí’o’nya!

Every time we draw together any assemblage of people, materials or Country, we design and make with and in language together; we remember the ancient stories; we publicly acknowledge the Ancestors and speak language as we work on Country.

The word ‘bangawarra’ is a Dharawal word, as well as a shared word from the local Sydney languages and means to make, to design and to bring about through sustained effort.

At Bangawarra, our shared praxes revolve around the central belief that only when we acknowledge overlooked spatial histories of place and Country can we speculate on more inclusive, culturally rich and sustainable future spaces and places, challenging the erasure of Country and culture from our built environment.

The authors of this document are a team of Indigenous spatial design consultants who have worked together to embed on-Country Aboriginal knowledges into the project. Bangawarra have worked closely with fjstudio, Studio Bright and Tribe Studio Architects to co-design William Street], ensuring it is embedded within local Aboriginal knowledges of Country.

We draw on the cultural and intellectual leadership of ORALRA Registered Traditional Owner of Sydney Dr Shannon Foster, whose family has shared the land now known as the Sydney Basin with the other Aboriginal people of the region since time began. Shannon is a D’harawal Knowledge Keeper, artist and interdisciplinary creative practitioner with over twenty years of experience in designing

education programs and spaces in prominent Sydney institutions. Shannon’s doctoral research with the Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges (UTS) addresses a large gap in site-specific, Sydney-based Aboriginal knowledge, as she documents the stories and knowledges of her family. Shannon has recently been recognized for her work through her appointment to the Government Architect NSW Aboriginal Expert Advisory Panel consulting on the GA NSW Designing with Country Framework document.

With a passion for design practices that counter colonised accounts of place, Jo Paterson Kinniburgh is committed to educating and practicing in a way that is respectful of the Aboriginal (hi)stories, cultures, languages and knowledges of Country. Jo’s family were enslaved under British and French colonisation, and she has brought this standpoint to her experience in architectural practice since 1991 in Aotearoa New Zealand and Sydney. Jo has been the Director of Education for architecture, landscape architecture and interior architecture in the School of Architecture at UTS, where she has been a member of Faculty since 2007. She is currently writing a Ph.D. on the complex, overlooked and overlapping Sydney-specific Aboriginal spatial relations with Country at the Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges (UTS).

Bangawarra are uniquely positioned to realise connecting with Country approaches for architecture and urban planning. We bring together on-Country, Aboriginal knowledges, with spatial design expertise in the built environment. We are positive, productive and creative when we work to support our collaborators to achieve their design visions through stories of Country.

Creative Directors



Dr Shannon Foster, Dharawal Knowledge Keeper & ORALRA Registered Traditional Owner across the Sydney Basin.



Jo Paterson Kinniburgh, Karyouakou.

Connecting with Country Spatial Design Consultants



Rhiannon Brownbill



Dana Marjan

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS



Australia is a signatory to the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. This declaration asserts the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to sovereignty over their own cultural knowledges, which is also known as ‘Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property’ (ICIP).

Content of the UN Declaration

Articles 12 & 13 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples include, but are not limited to:

- The right to protect traditional knowledge and sacred cultural material.
- The right to ensure traditional laws and customary obligations are respected.
- The right to control the recording of (including writing about) customs and expressions and language which may be essential to cultural identity, knowledge, skill and teaching Indigenous culture.
- The right to prevent insulting, offensive and misleading uses of knowledges, art and all forms of culture.

Articles 12 & 13 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also include, but are again not limited to:

- The right to privacy in relation to cultural, religious and spiritual activities.
- “Privacy means controlling access and being able to undertake activities such as our ceremonies without interference. As [Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander] people we can decide who to share our religions and spirituality with.”

Australian Human Rights Commission Community Guide to the UN Declaration.

This 164-172 and 174-194 William St Connecting with Country SDDA Design Report positions the UN Declaration as fundamental to respectful engagement with Country and immutable for respectful engagement with Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Which Stories Belong Here?

This document upholds these stated rights for all the peoples of this Country. Each group has the right to express their stories, culture, language and knowledges, and no one group may erase that right for any other group. While City of Sydney currently acknowledges Eora Nation only, the Office of the Registrar. Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1983) (ORALRA) acknowledges all Aboriginal people who have proven their Traditional Ownership through documented ancestry all the way back to pre, and early, colonisation. In keeping with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ORALRA does not limit Traditional Ownership to only the one group currently acknowledged by council. One of those ORALRA registered Traditional Owners is an author of this document.

Across the process of developing William Street you will encounter stories that share knowledges of Country associated with Woolloomooloo and surrounding Country. They include a selection of the stories of this place that are openly shared by one of the authors of this document, D’harawal eora Knowledge Keeper and ORALRA registered Traditional Owner, Dr Shannon Foster, whose family include Sydney D’harawal, Eora, Dharug and Gundungurra people. Her Ancestors have kept these knowledges alive across millennia through oral traditions and storytelling. The stories shared are just the starting point. There are other stories, and there are many layers of these stories that have not yet been unpacked in this project.

In keeping with our responsibilities under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we also acknowledge that there are also other local peoples with knowledges, access and cultural responsibilities here. Each of the Aboriginal groups with connection to this place are guaranteed under the UN Declaration that they have a right to their stories, culture and language, and that right is not removable.

Each ground is to be respected for their connection to place and knowledge. **Working with Aboriginal people and stories requires a “Yes, and ...” approach, whereby no one group can ever erase the stories of another group. If a group of Traditional Owners insist on one version and another group of Traditional Owners have a different story, the UN Declaration requires that the multiple versions be held with care together.** The authors of this document uphold these rights, and commit to holding multiple stories, and multiple versions of each story, when those are contributed to the project development. This is fundamental to satisfying the intent of the UN Declaration.

Permission to Use Cultural Information

As D’harawal Elder Aunty (Frances) Fran Bodkin Explains:

“... [our] culture is not based on the ownership of tangible things like land and dwellings and possessions, but it does have a very strong sense of ownership of information. That information, particularly in story form, was not traded, but could be given, and given freely, but its ownership [has always been] respected ...”

ICIP In this document or project has not been, and can not ever be, vested or assigned, meaning that what you will read in this document is protected, and does not belong to the client, the council, any government authority, or any consultant, designer, artist or reader. To ensure that future uses of this cultural information supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ways of being and knowing, if you wish to include ANY aspect of the ICIP from this project or document for other documents, websites, reports, plans, presentations or publications, you must first gain specific approval for that use from the people who shared the knowledge, and once that approval is given, you must always acknowledge where the information belongs or who shared it.



Detail image of sandstone textures and colour at level of escarpment

UNDERSTANDING COUNTRY

Knowledges, Culture, Stories



***“This is not a site. It is a Songline ...
I do not see a “site”. I feel Country and it
welcomes me home.”***

D’harawal eora Knowledge Keeper Shannon Foster in There’s No Place Like (Without) Country.

Across this document, when we speak of Country, we are referring to the incredibly nuanced knowledge system connected to what is now known as William Street. It is not abstracted or generalised, but grounded within a continuing custodianship that spans thousands of generations.

For local Aboriginal people, knowledge and Country are not separate. Knowledge is not written down in books and kept away from its source, rather, it is stored within Country. Elements of topography, geology, hydrology, astronomy and ecology are all imprinted with stories, songs, language and culture. Within this knowledge system the tangible and intangible elements of place are intimately intertwined ensuring that all of the knowledge required to survive sustainably on Country is embedded and accessible where and when needed.

Due to this intertwined connection, when Country changes, so does knowledge. The locality and accuracy of knowledge matters. Who is sharing this knowledge, and how it is shared is also important.

The 164-172 and 174-194 William Street redevelopment project will become a part of this Country and must contribute to the protection and extension of this knowledge system. To work with this knowledge system, the project team must understand the needs of Country and articulate how the project is helping to play its role on Country.

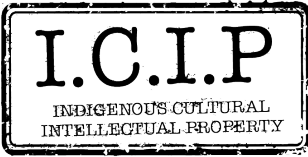
The following pages of this document are dedicated to understanding some of the nuanced tangible, and intangible, connections across Country.



View of the Sydney city from North Head look outs

ESCARPMENT ECOLOGIES

Understanding the local ecologies



The high Country that is now home to the 164-172 and 174-194 William Street redevelopment project, has been known for millennia for its Nattai Daragun (freshwater streams), and its connections to Garigalo (saltwater Country). This redevelopment sits within a nexus of ancient travel, trade and ceremonial routes on the Yiningma (sandstone peaks and steep cliffs) of high Country here. The ridgeline pathways connect two major bodies of saltwater Country, Warrane (Sydney Cove) and Gamay (Botany Bay) creating a journey that is more safely and swiftly completed than the paths that follow the rocky saltwater coastline below.

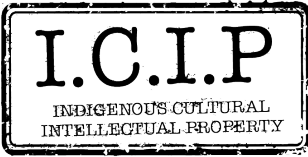
Streams of freshwater pool on Yiningma and flow down the escarpment to sculpt the Yaranabee (small valleys) and gullies of sandstone Country. Ceremony here honours the spirits of Wallume (Snapper Country Woolloomooloo), Diruwan (Magpie Country Potts Point) and Goggerah (Freshwater Reed Country Rushcutters Bay). The vibrant red blooms of the Gynea Lily and Currujin (kurrajong tree) mark out the east west Songlines and the ancient Gibba (stone) trade routes while the Seven Peacekeepers (gum species) oversee the keeping of lore and the health of Country and community.

Today, we honour the enduring spirit of Country by creating space, once again, for people to come together for celebration, healing and rest. We draw on the stories and knowledges of this ancient Country to guide our work as we tell the stories that always have been, and always will be, embedded in the earth here.



Figure 01. Mapping escarpment and water surrounding William St.

- Legend**
- Indicative Sandstone Escarpments
 - 01 Bitterwater Swamps & Mud Flats
 - 02 Freshwater Springs
 - Contemporary Shoreline



Bangawarra	4
Indigenous Cultural & Intellectual Property Rights	6
Contents Page	8

Understanding Country10

Understanding Country	12
Escarpment Ecologies	14
continuous Culture	18
Snapper Country	20
Connecting to Country	22

Spatialising Cultural Values24

Overarching site strategies responding to key cultural values	24
Site Strategies	26

Spatial Implications34

Architectural spatial and material strategies across project	34
Scales of Country	36
Designing around Country	38
Materiality and textures	40
Inhabiting the undercroft	42

Public Art Strategy46

Indicative public art strategies and concepts	46
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Connecting with Country Outcomes48

Relationship to Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework	48
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CULTURAL VALUES



**ESCARPMENT
& STONES**



**WOOLLOOMOOLOO
(SNAPPER COUNTRY)**



**SALTWATER
& SHELLS**

Designing with Country Outcomes

SALTWATER AND SEA SHELLS

Connecting with Country for continuing cultural practice



All cycles of Country are interconnected - ecological, material and cultural.

Through a meaningful engagement with Country across the William Street redevelopment, countless opportunities arise to continue cultural practice through the telling of stories and the sharing of cultural knowledges.

A significant aspect of culture and Country here are the cultural practices of the local Malgun or fisherwomen. The stories and knowledges of the fisherwomen are intrinsically intertwined with the local species of turbo snails and the shells they create and leave behind on Country here. Turbo snails are found within the intertidal zones of Saltwater Country. They often feed on endangered seagrass meadows and when they die, their shells wash up on shore and are used particularly by local women in their fishing practices.

Figure 3, depicts the interconnected cycles of local turbo shells and local women’s fishing practices

①The turbo shells are important cultural resources and can be used to create a range of items including fish hooks ③, medicines and binders for tool making.

As fish hooks, the shells are important daily items, enabling women to catch fish and sustain their communities. ②

Engaging with the stories and knowledges of the turbo shells and the subsequent process of creating a shell fishhook, enriches the project by embodying just some of the responsibilities of caring for Country.

The William Street redevelopment project has the potential to contribute to the continuation of sacred cultural practices by embedding meaningful references to them throughout the development spatially, visually, and metaphorically. This report highlights many ways in which the process of fishhook making is honoured through the landscape, architecture, and public art strategies.

- ① Young girl collecting turbo shells and grinding down into fish hooks on the rocks at shoreline
- ② Local women with children teaching them fishing practices.
Turbo shell returns to water as a fish hook to catch local
- ③ fish and sustain communities

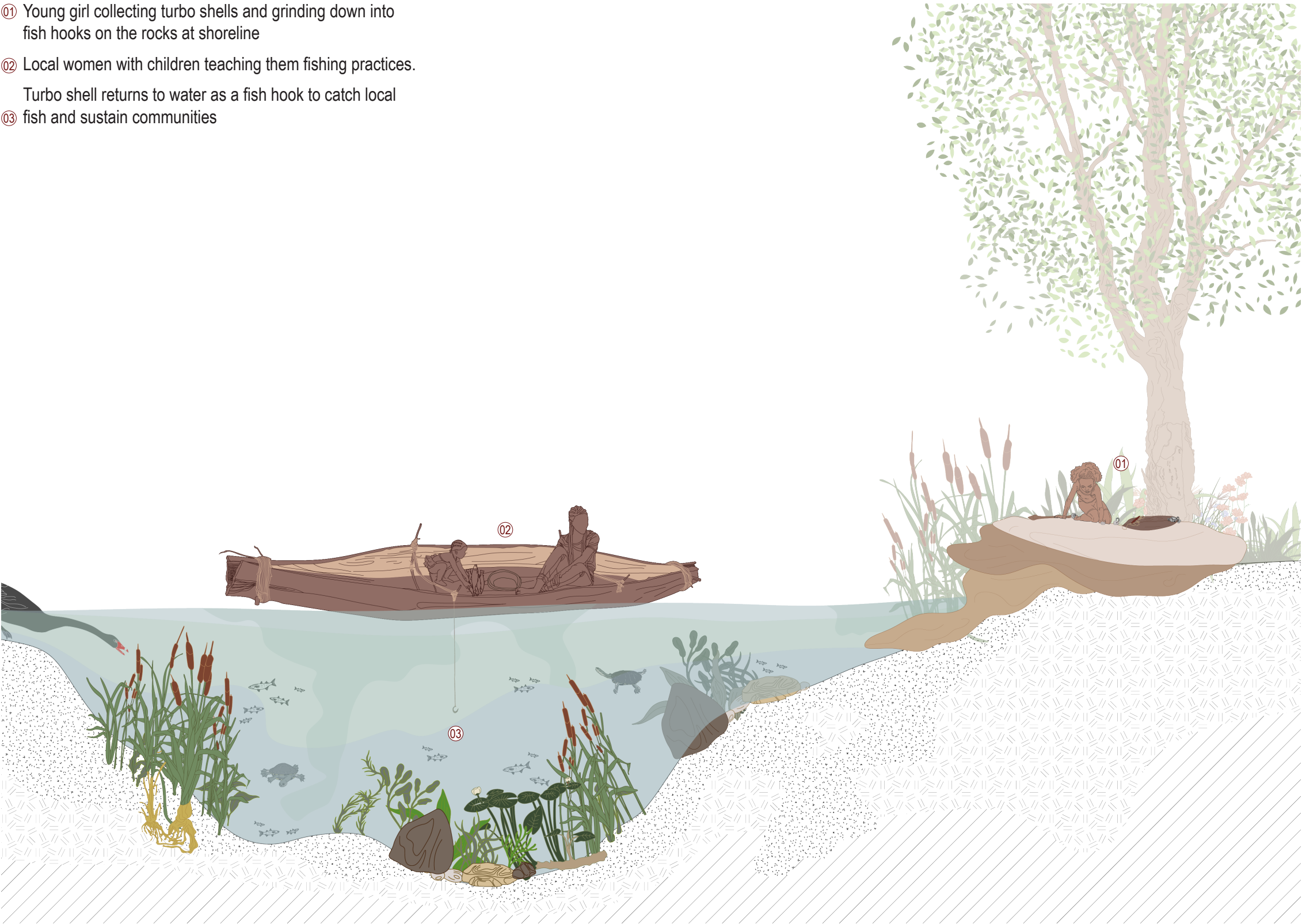


Figure 03. Diagraming the process of women fishing in valley

WOOLOOMOOLOO SNAPPER COUNTRY

Understanding local ecologies

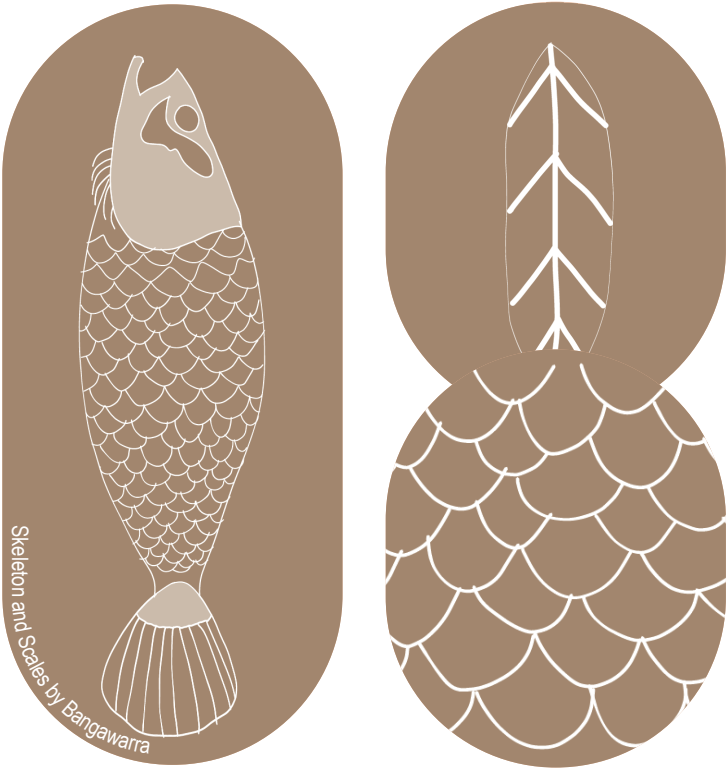
In local languages, the name Woolloomooloo derives from a combination of words meaning Snapper Country (Wulumay - the snapper fish and Dool - place of) Wulumay or snapper is an important animal for local peoples, and this Country is deeply connected to this cultural knowledge. Language here is an important device in reading Country, revealing many diverse and complex aspects of culture and lore. Language also plays a vital role in how local Aboriginal peoples see themselves, and their cultures, reflected in space. For local Aboriginal peoples, Country is named after what it is known for. Often misattributed as the name of a people, Wulumay is instead the name of Country, from which people residing in that place then derive their name (a subtle but crucial difference). To celebrate Wulumay across the William St redevelopment project we remember the life-sustaining resources this Country provides, and we honour its enduring spirit and continued connection here.

Across the William Street redevelopment project countless opportunities arise to honour and celebrate Wulumay the snapper fish.

Stories and knowledges can be shared throughout the public domain, increasing awareness and understanding of local Country, people and culture.

The scales, colours and form of Wulumay can inform a range of elements in the overall design of the site and its architecture including colour schemes, textures and design icons.

Spaces can be designed to encourage gathering and the sharing of cultural practice and performance across the site and beyond



Images of snapper fish and detail image of scales of snapper.

THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF COUNTRY

Stringing together people, place and culture

Here on Country, string is formed using the dried and soaked strands of inner bark most commonly harvested from the currunj (kurrajong tree). Prepared strands of the inner bark are rolled and twisted, back and forth, until the snakes of string grow long enough to loop in and around each other to form a djuguma or dilly bag.

The line of string is kept attached to the djuguma like an umbilical cord and new string is constantly twisted into the ever-growing form. Embedded in the twisted strings are the words and memories of the stories told by our women as they teach the young ones. In many ways, the djuguma continues the work of being Country: gathering, collecting and archiving, holding stories and knowledge for the people now, and long into the future.

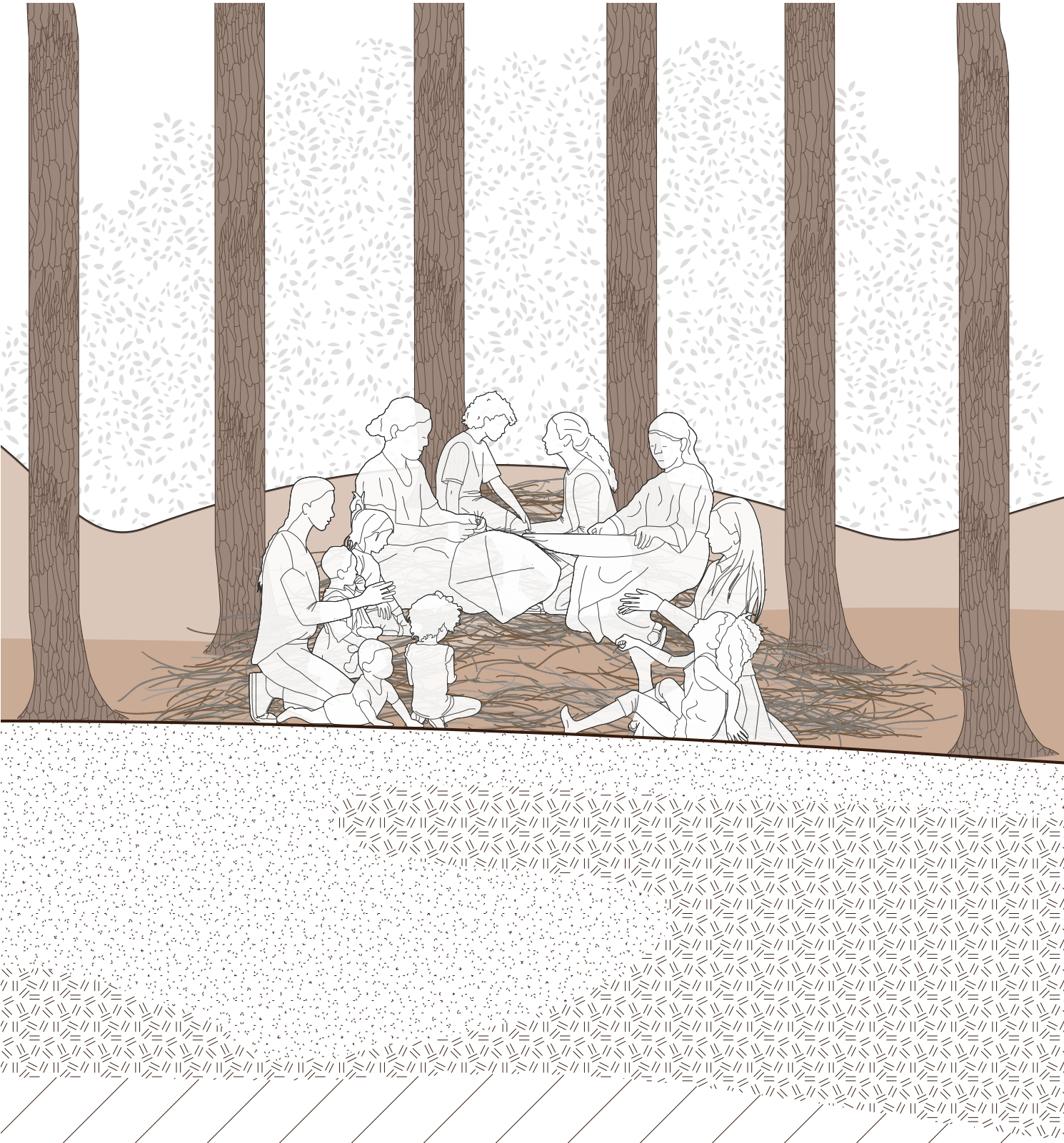


Figure 04. Women and children stringing together under the Casuarina trees.

CONNECTING TO THE WIDER PRECINCT

Pollinating corridors and creating habitat



Connecting with Country methodologies ensure that all living things are cared for and considered within the built environment. In urban areas in particular, our responsibility to Country means that projects can connect nearby ecologies and provide habitat and resources for all aspects of Country - more than just humans.

164 - 172 & 174 - 194 William St is located within close proximity to established B&B locations across the City of Sydney. The project can meaningfully contribute to this developing pollinator corridor.

‘B&B’ stands for bed and breakfast for native bees, bugs, birds and biodiversity. The B&B Highway project, by Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre and Planting Seeds, is an educational and research project dedicated to creating pollinating ecological corridors across urban environments.

Many micro pollinators - insects and small birds - have unique habitat and nutritional needs that have been overlooked in urban environments. Reduction in planting diversity (that produces nectar, fruit and seeds year-round), and dense middle and lower storey planting has declined - significantly reducing the overall biodiversity of urban Country.

Due to the small size of these creatures, they cannot traverse long distances without resting. Moving through cities they need places to stop, rest, pollinate and care for Country. To work effectively B&Bs need to be integrated at an urban scale, creating a highway of habitat and rest.

Embedding native planting and rich, dense and diverse under canopy planting the project can provide the resources and shelter these pollinators need to survive. Across the site planting will be specified to ensure the gardens flower, seed, and provide fruit year-round, ensuring that these resources are always available.

NOTE: Native bees and insects are stingless and do not present the same risks to human health as introduced species of stinging bee.

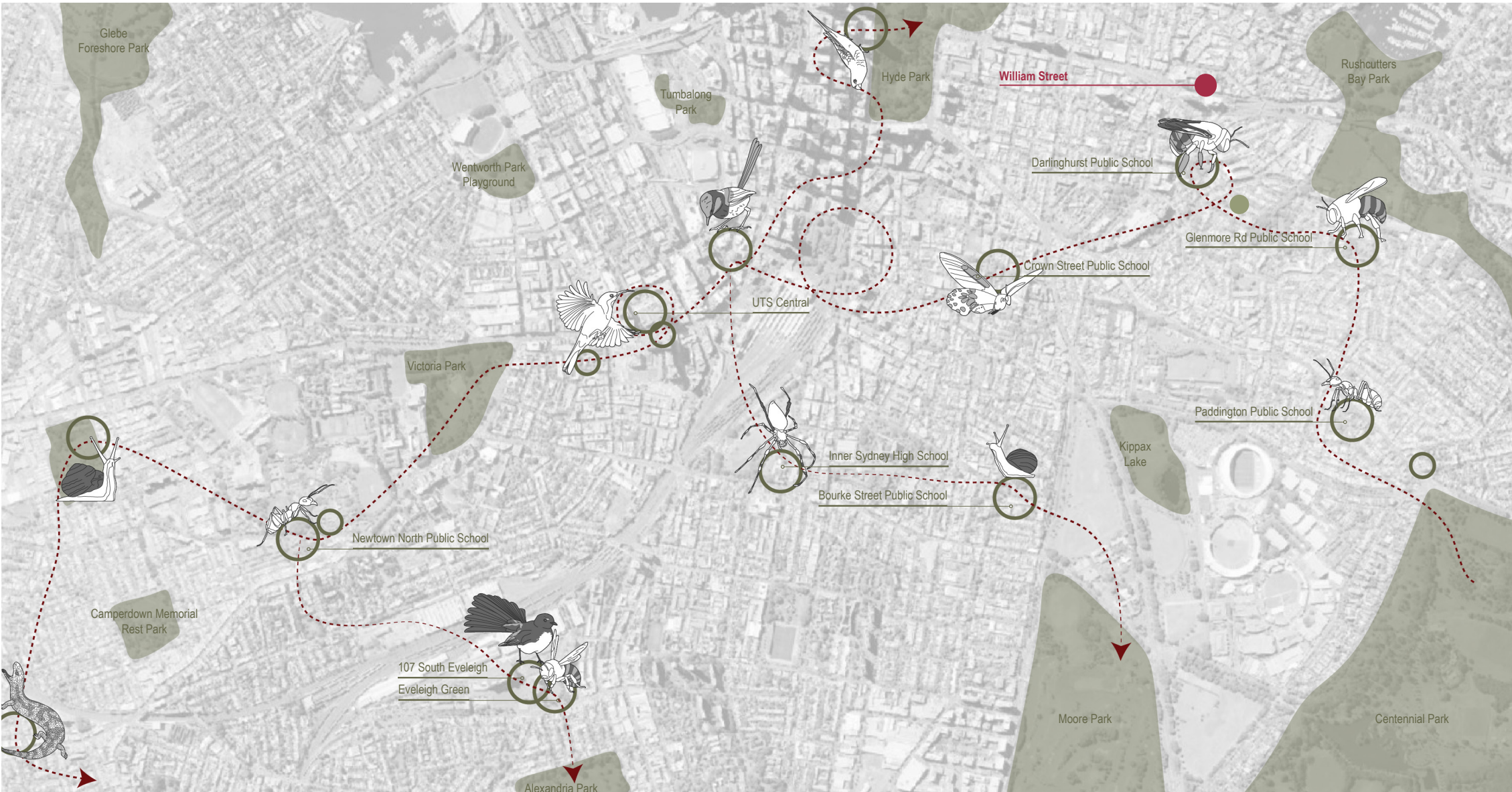


Figure 24. 201-217 Elizabeth Streets potential to contribute to developing pollinating corridors across the City of Sydney.



UTS Central B&B Highway Garden Bed. Image from fjc.



Native bee hotels within colourful wildflower gardens.



Native Bee hotel materiality.



Sweat Bees (Tetragonula) brood spiral. Image from Tobias Smith, via Sci News.



Sweat Bees (Tetragonula) covered in pollen, image from Duttons Native Bees.

ESCARPMENT AND STONE

Reading Country



- 01 Saltwater moves in and out on the tides and through the headlands, connecting the escarpment to the vast expanses of Saltwater Country below.
- 02 Freshwater falls from the sky and rises from underground springs to form pools, puddles and ephemeral ponds. As it flows down the sandstone escarpment, it carves and sculpts the stone to create a complex network of rivers, creeks and streams.
- 03 On the face of the escarpment, countless layers of Country are revealed, including mud, sand and stone.
- 04 The sandstone escarpment has been eroded by the movement of water and wind over millions of years, creating overhangs and stone shelters.
- 05 Many plateaus are formed on the escarpment allowing space for a colourful carpet of wildflowers and dancing grasses to thrive.

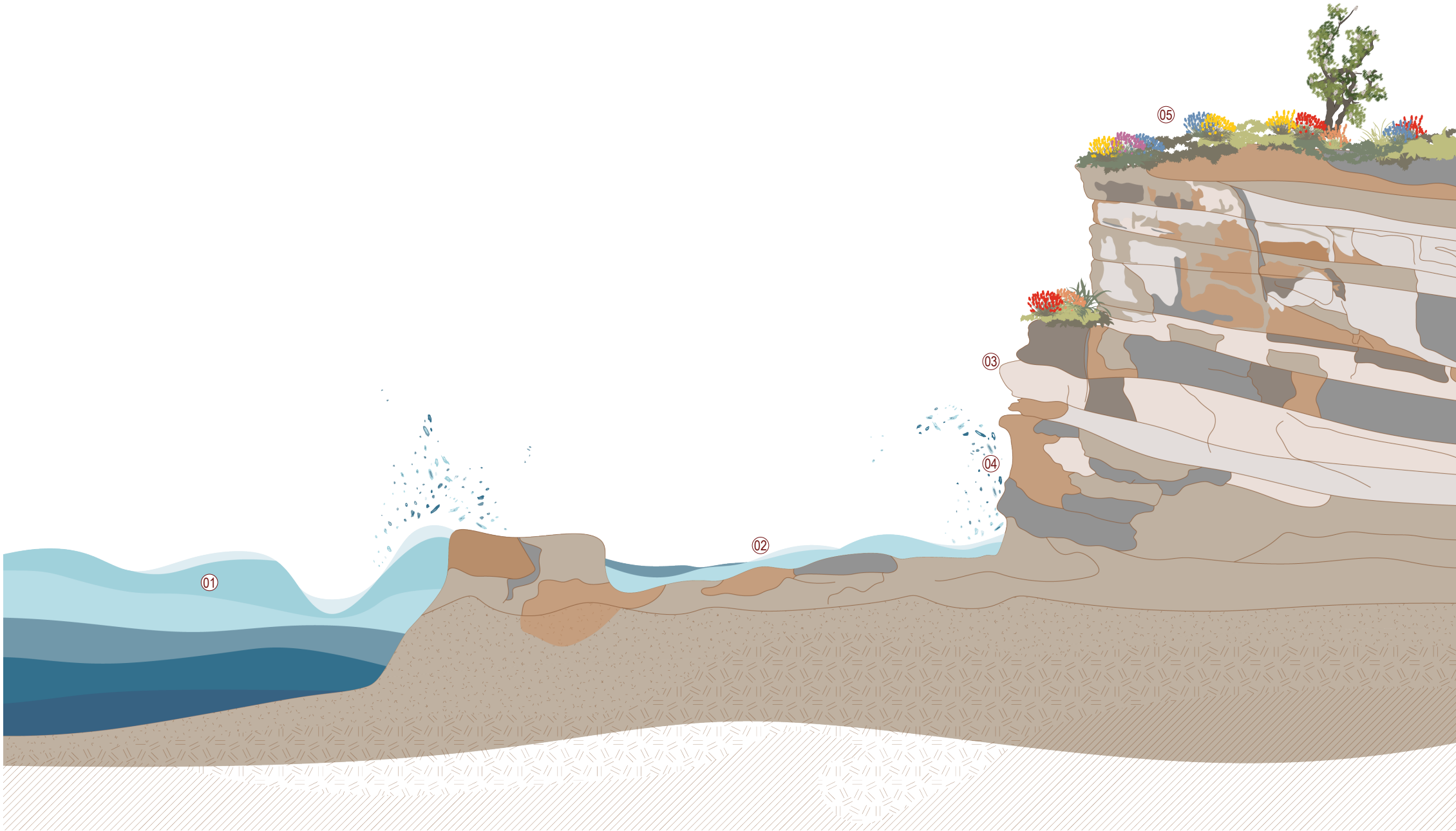
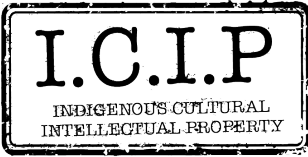


Figure 02. Diagraming escaprment ecologies

LANDSCAPE STRATEGIES

The Seven Peacekeepers



For some local D’harawal people, there are eight different types of gum trees that represent what is culturally known as the Seven Peacekeepers and the Peacemaker. They are incredibly important cultural, ecological and ceremonial trees that can be distinguished by their different bark types. Wherever the trees are all represented in a space, it is believed that the place has healing qualities and the ecologies and plant species present are healthier and have more effective active ingredients.



Through their different colours, and bark, leaf and flower patterns, they create a diverse range of opportunities for materiality and textural conditions across the site.



Stringy Bark Rough Bark Ribbon Bark Spotted Bark Scaly Bark Smooth Bark Iron Bark

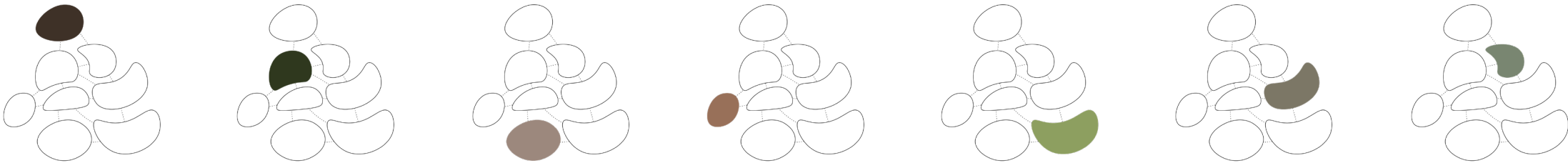


Figure 06. Eucalyptus mosaic sustaining healthy ecosystems through diverse planting by creating biodiverse environments.

SPATIALISING CULTURAL VALUES

Overarching site strategies responding to key cultural values

SITE STRATEGIES

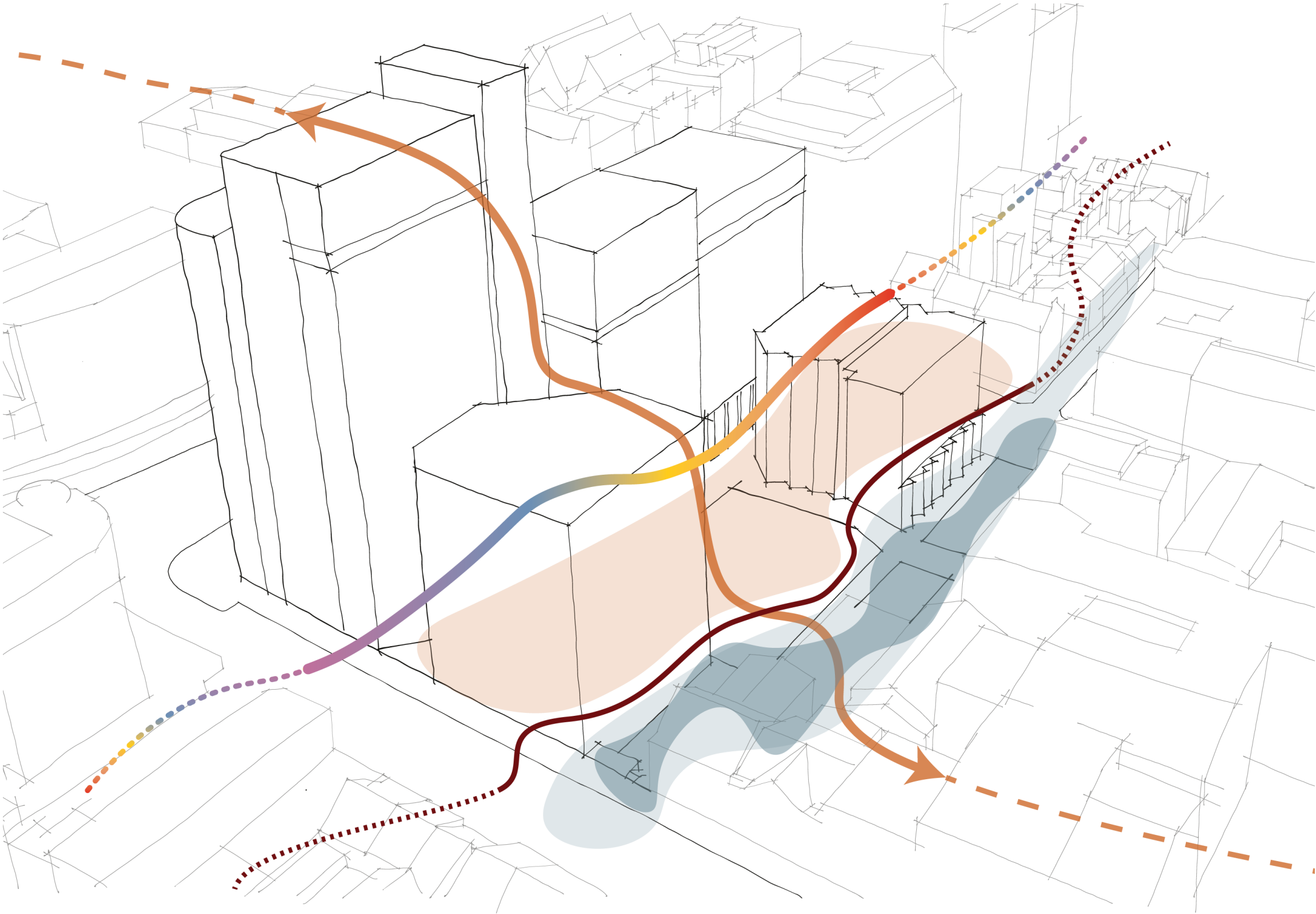
Understanding the site as a microcosm of Country



The William Street development site can be spatially understood as its own sandstone escarpment transect with a ridge line and high points, plateaus, overhangs and freshwater gullies.

The site can articulate a transect that moves from freshwater to saltwater Country with plateaus for places of rest and connecting laneways that reflect the freshwater valleys etched into the stone by the movement of water across the escarpment. This expression of Country can inform the public domain and ground plane zones as well as the fenestrations of the building facades.

Across the site, the Connecting with Country strategy will be expressed through the concept of an excavation on the escarpment whereby elements of culture will be revealed across the public domain while the architecture will rise up out of Country. Hard lined built forms will dissolve into the landscaping with green spaces softening the edges.

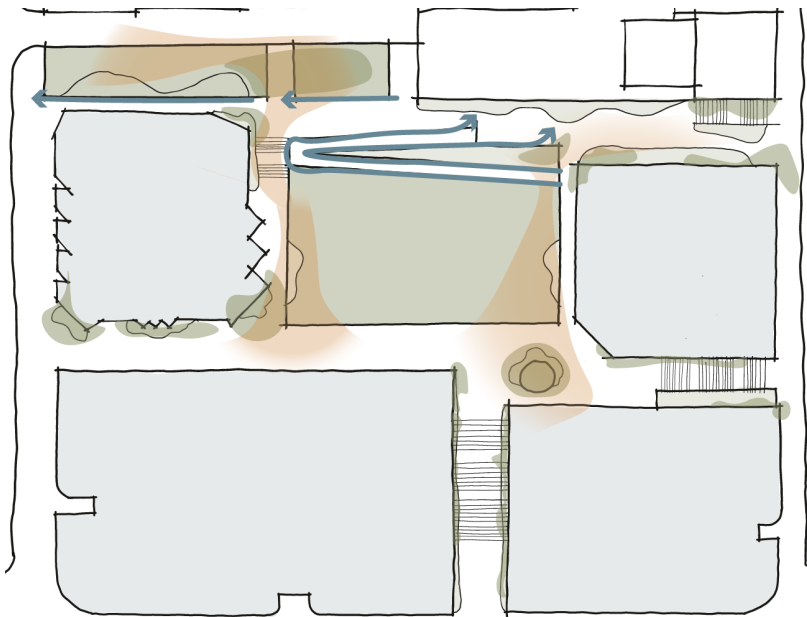


- Legend Heading**
- Escarpment
 - Indicative Ridgeline
 - Ephemeral Water
 - Protective Layers
 - Colourful Ecologies

Figure 05. Perspective view spatialising and understanding Country through the project proposal

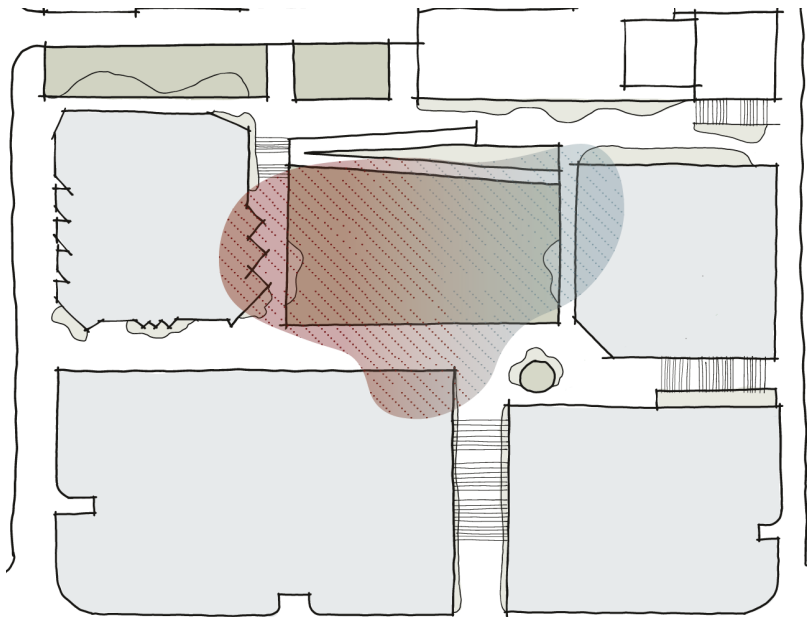
SITE STRATEGIES

Influenced by Country



Landscape Strategies

- Using green to soften the boundaries
- Dissolving the edges
- Natural Water Flows
- Bioswales & Gullies



Ecological Conditions

- Gymea Lily plantings to represent local D'harawal east west Songline
- Colourful Ecologies, Escarpment Platues
- Seven Peace Keeper Gum species
- Excavation and Escapments



Material Strategy

- Blending Materials
- Sandstone, warm tones and colours
- Concrete, cool tones and colours
- Dissolving between ecologies & conditions

Figure 06.Landscape - Overall site strategies landscape, ecologies, materials and cultural values

LANDSCAPE STRATEGIES

Snapper Country - Public Domain



Figure 09.Landscape - Central park Connecting with Country overarching themes and strategies

LANDSCAPE STRATEGIES

Fish Hook Process - Seating

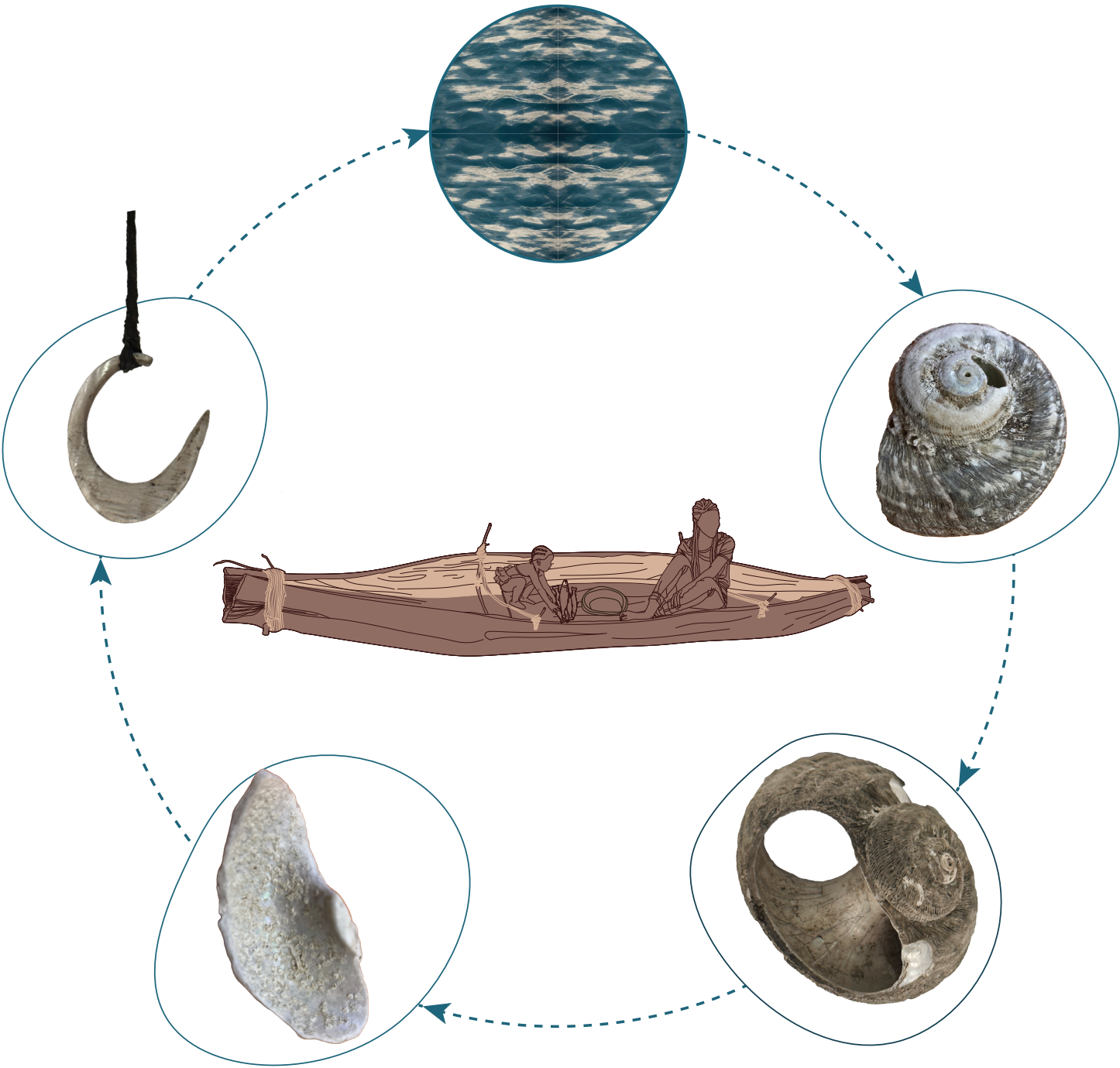


Figure 07. Cyclical nature of the turbo shell's relationship to water

LANDSCAPE STRATEGIES

Moments of pause - Seating



Figure 10.Landscape - Public park seating design concepts diagram by Bangawarra, underlay of landscape plan provided by fjcstudio.

SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS

Architectural spatial and material strategies across project

CONNECTING TO COUNTRY

Macro and micro moments



- 01 The blossoming of the Gymea Lily holds significant local cultural knowledge. Changes in the plant indicate changes in the climate and seasons of Country.
- 02 The large size of the Gymea Lily has an impactful landscaping presence without the need for deep soil
- 03 The leafy green base of Gymea Lillies act as a soft buffer between private residential spaces, public pathways and seating areas.
- 04 Residents have an intimate physical and visual connection to Country as they connect with, and learn from the Gymea Lily.
- 05 The Gymea Lily, with its long, tall flower spike, has been deliberately located in positions where the nectar can be accessed from higher levels of the built form such as balconies, stairwells and platforms. This allows for continued cultural practice long into the future.

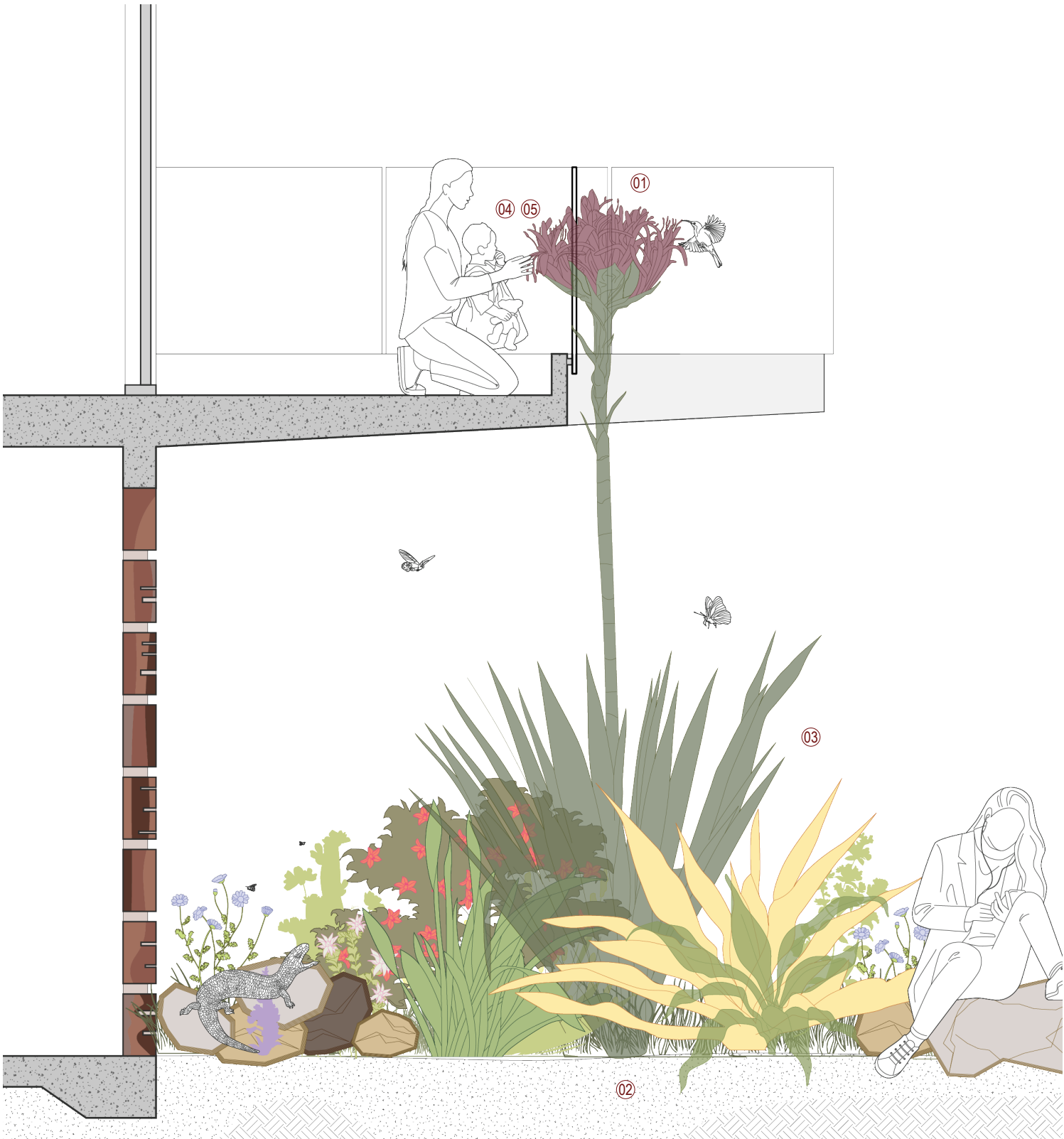


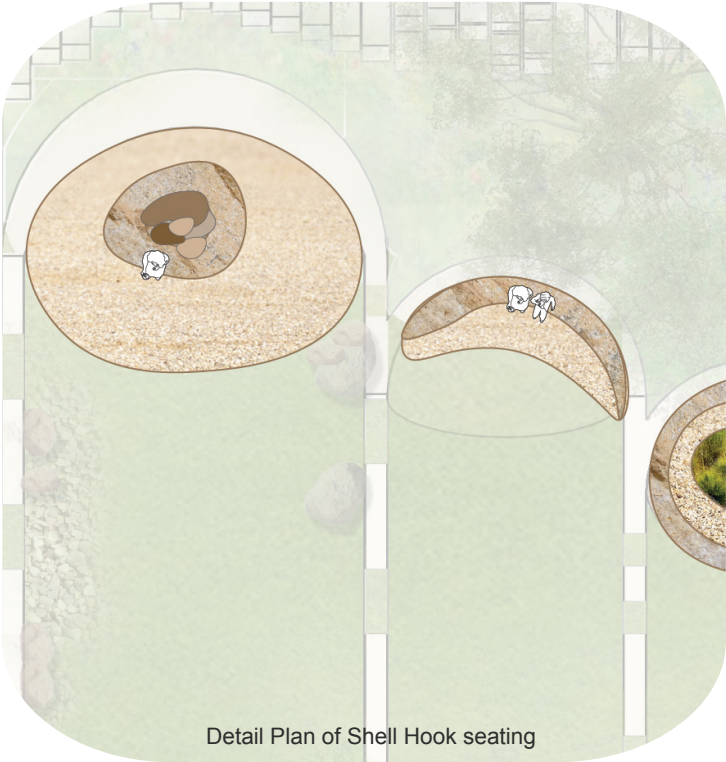
Figure 11. Gymea Lily to residential balcony

DESIGNING AROUND COUNTRY

Opportunities for diverse seating and gathering



- 01 Indicative section through pedestrian through site link at the base of ramp running through escarpment to park above.
- 02 Celebrating the escarpment typology through sandstone blocks, emphasising the stepping, colours, layers and textures of sandstone.
- 03 Strategic native planting that is reflective of the local ecologies and overarching Connecting with Country values, such as the gadi (grass tree), which has a connection to local land and saltwater Country.
- 04 The planting of dancing grasses symbolises the flow of water as well as cultural connections to stringing practices (these grasses can be used as a material once dried and prepared). These garden spaces can celebrate movement and flow, as well as the need for rest and pause in the same ways that similar places might have once supported cultural practice such as gathering and stringing.
- 05 Seating designs should be accessible and allow for intimate moments of gathering as well as larger groups.
- 06 Materials should reflect the local sandstone escarpment and its ecologies.
- 07 Co-locating seating and gathering spaces with the planting of the Seven Peacekeeper gum species for intimate spaces and story-sharing opportunities.



DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY

Embracing the natural elements of Country



“Paperbarks don’t mind having wet feet.”
D’harawal eora Knowledge Keeper Dr Shannon Foster.

- 01 Work with the natural flows and movements of Country to reflect ancient gullies and cultural practices.
- 02 Small to medium sandstone and Nepean River stones inform ephemeral water paths and ponding to hold and care for water across the site.
- 03 Dancing grasses and wildflowers create bioswale conditions that slow down and filter water safely and naturally.
- 04 Prioritising public access to cultural resources within the landscape strategy can support local Aboriginal peoples storytelling and cultural practice.
- 05 Integrating stepping stones and/or small, simple bridges connected to bioswales can support ephemeral tactile connections to Country and fresh water.
- 06 Potential to integrate species such as Casuarinas and/or Paperbarks to support complete ecologies and urban habitats.

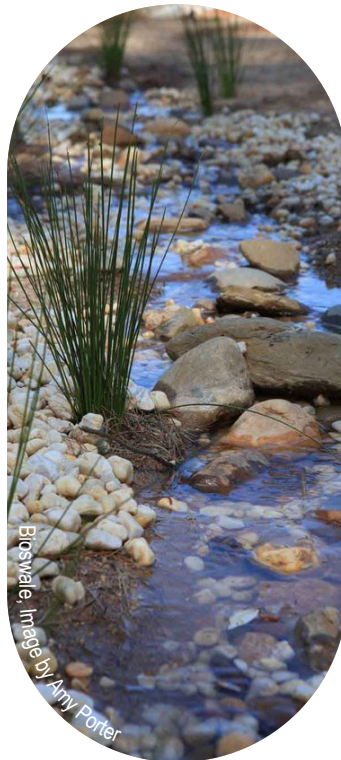
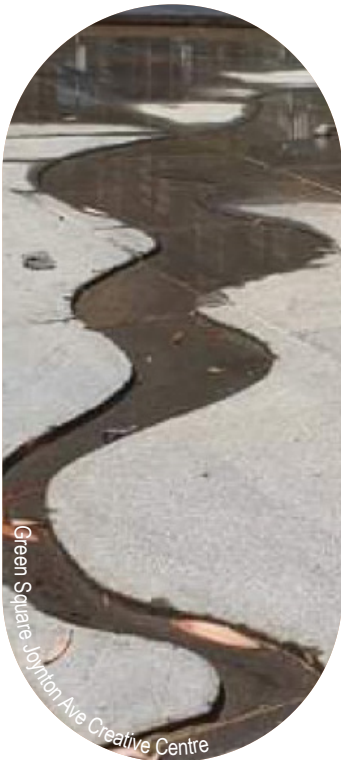


Figure 13. Oppourunity to interact with water in safe and playful ways.

SHELTERED BY THE OVERHANG

Protective spaces inspired by sandstone Country



- ① Drip line of the sandstone overhang can define internal and external spaces.
- ② Celebrates the layers or strata of sandstone Country.
- ③ Alcoves create more intimate, sheltered spaces for gathering and rest.
- ④ Soft sand floor plate.
- ⑤ Heath gardens naturally overlook rainforest spaces.
- ⑥ Gathering on higher ground provides diverse visual and cultural experiences.

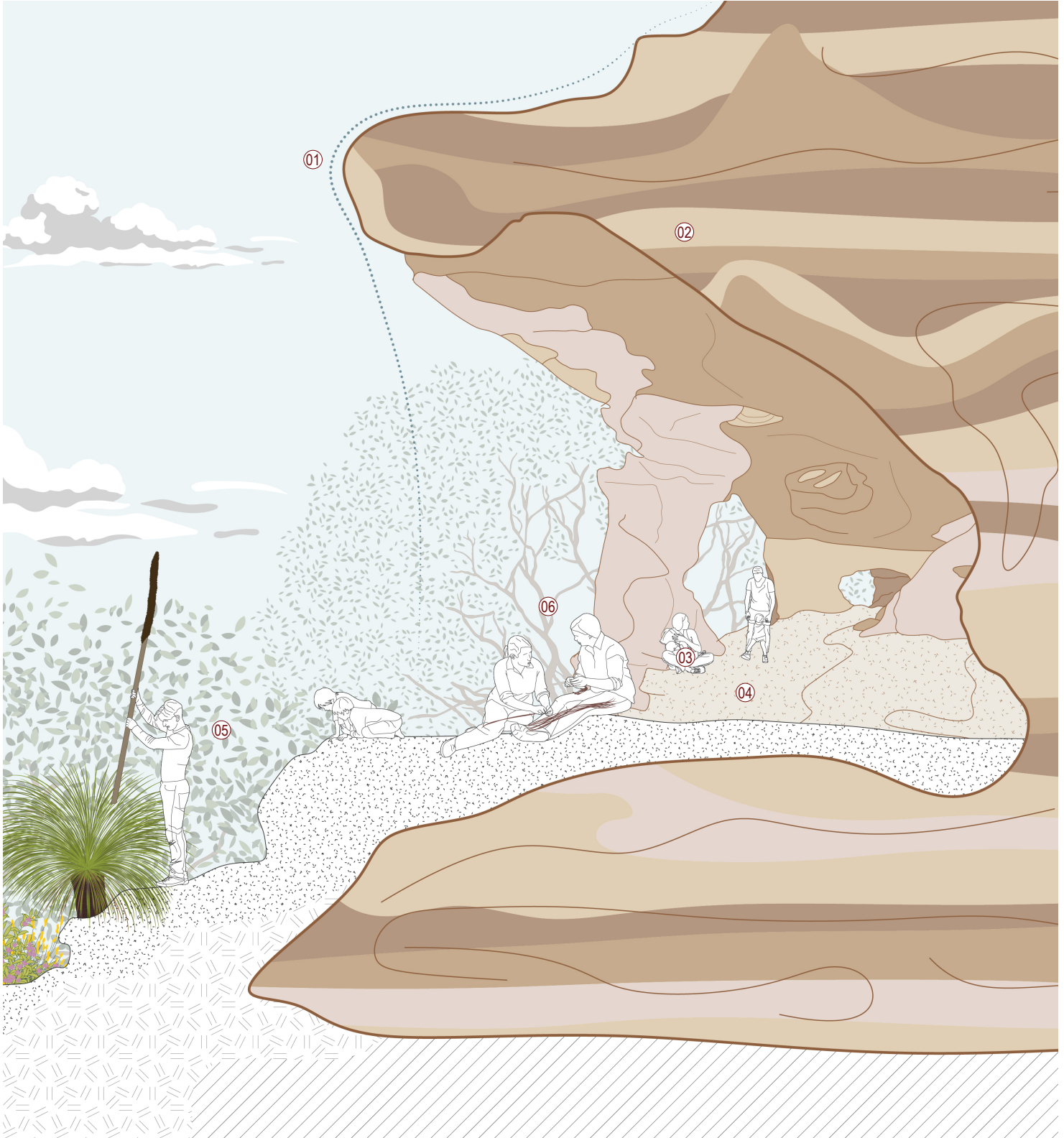
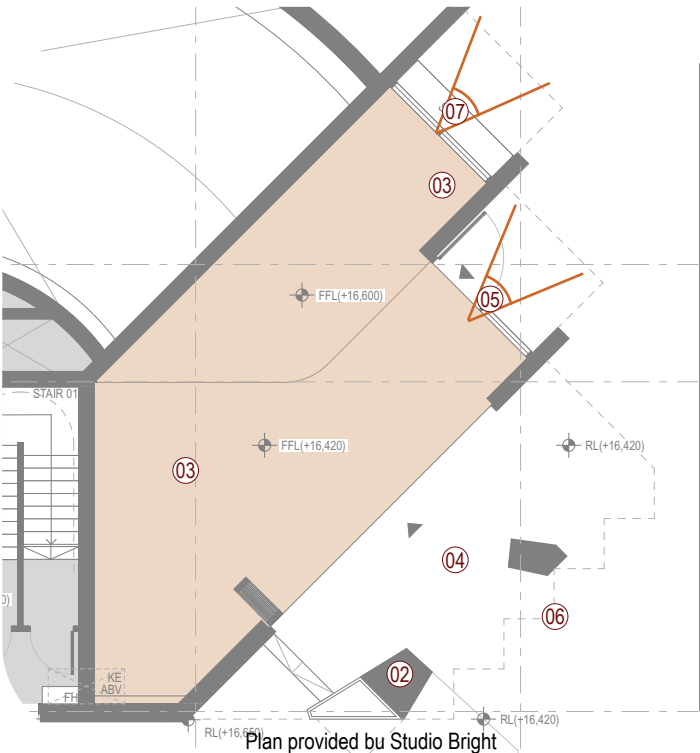
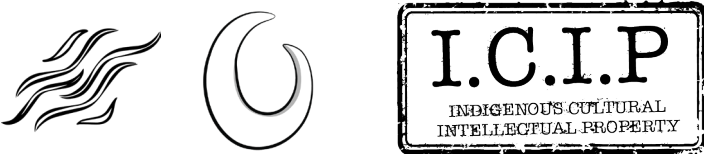


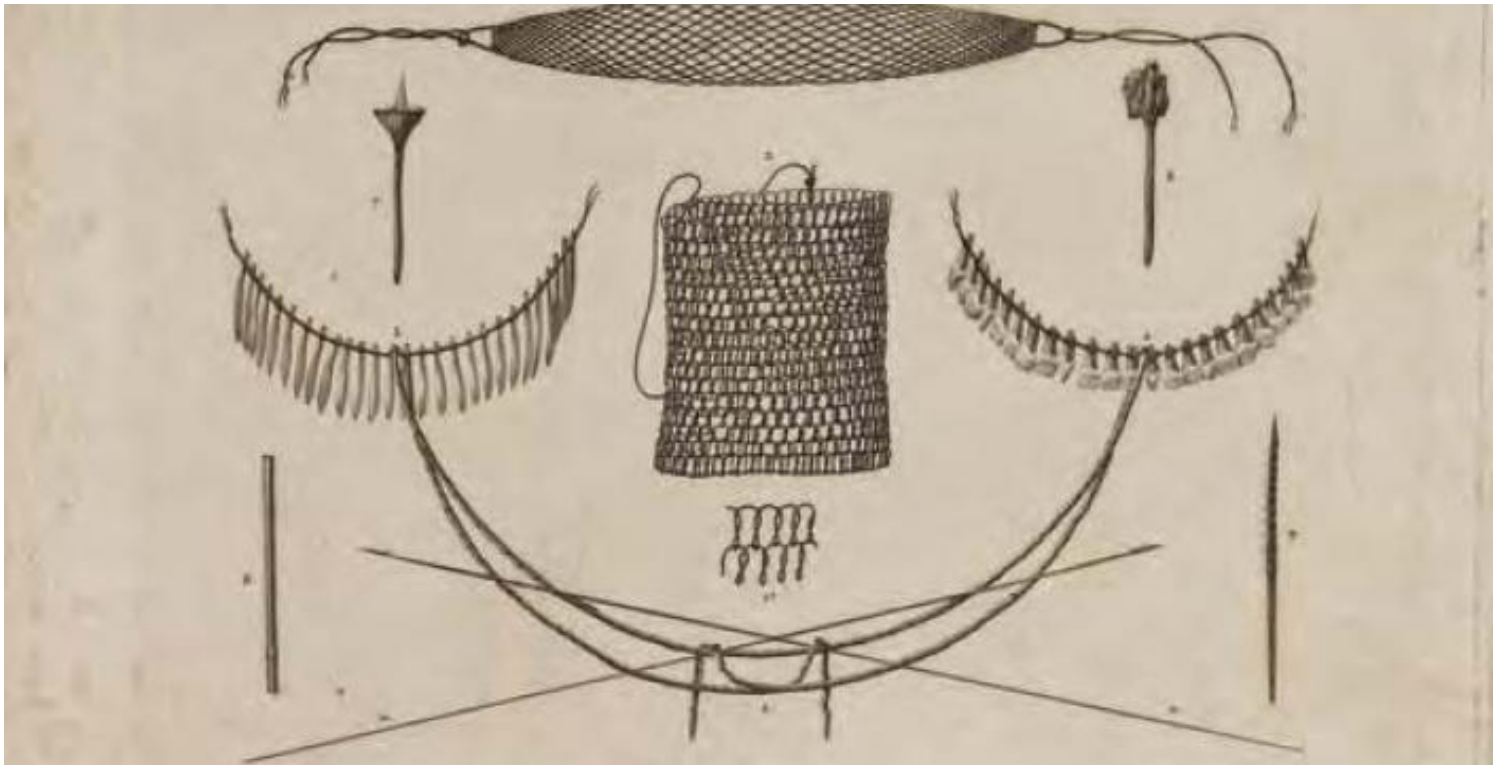
Figure 14. Protected spaces within the escarpment undercroft

PATTERNS AND CULTURE

Embedding cultural references in the architecture



- ① Identifying opportunities throughout the site to celebrate the local djuguma (dilly bag) stitch creates connections to culture and stories.
- ② Stitches can be inverted to create stepping stones and ground plane treatments that provide opportunities for connection and play spaces for children.
- ③ Expressing Country through architectural forms and patterns: Tribe Studio Architects embraced the dilly bag stitch concept expressing this form through tile patterns.
- ④ Studio Bright created a dilly bag stitch inspired residential balustrade for their balcony spaces.



Line-drawings of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur (1802) of the Port Jackson dilly bag stitch, Image via Museum of Sydney

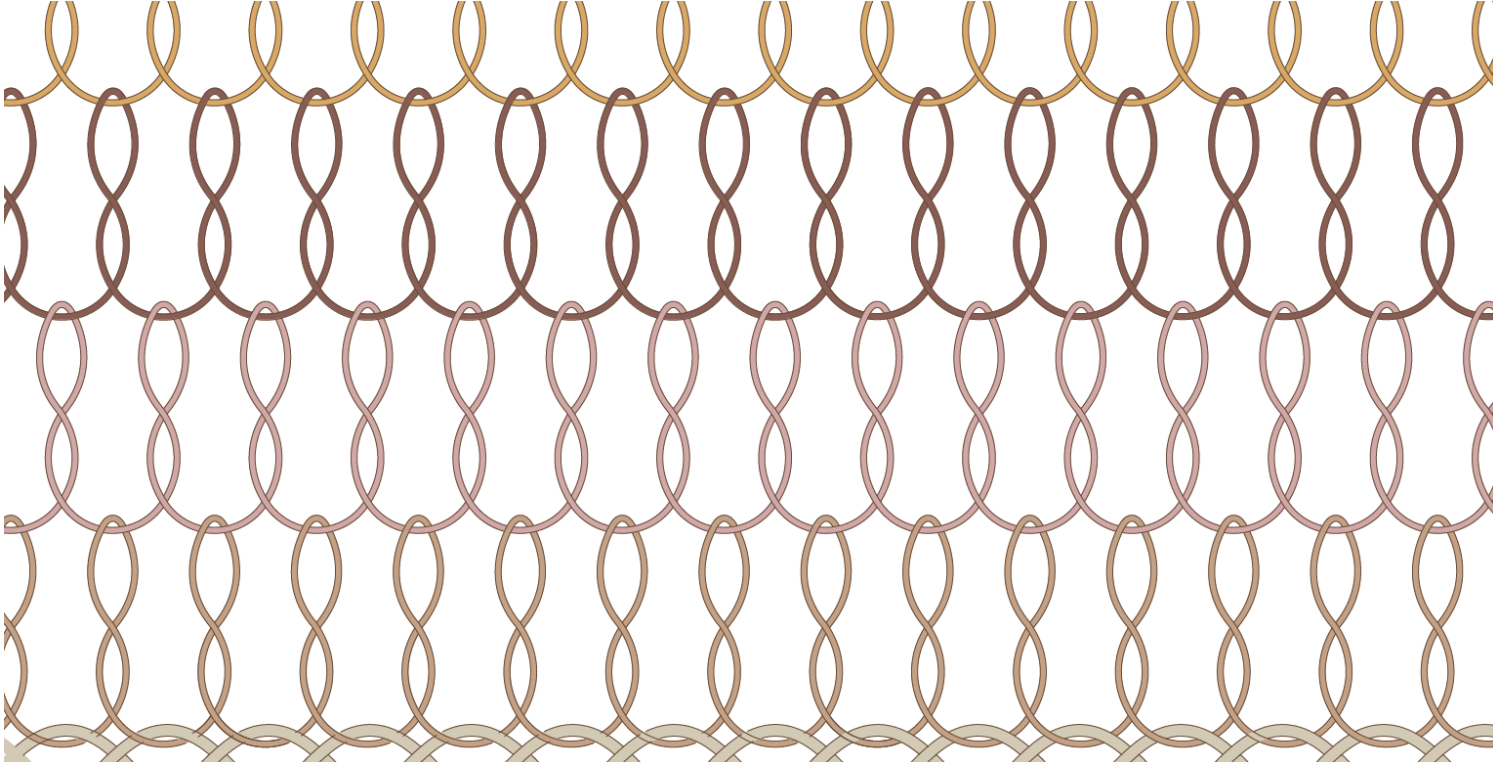


Figure 15. Detail of local dilly bag stitch

MATERIALITY AND TEXTURES

Reflecting Snapper Country and escarpment ecologies



- ① The through-site link celebrates the rise and fall of the freshwater gullies across the escarpment.
- ② Planted edges are designed to dissolve and soften the staircase, blurring the boundaries between Country and architecture
- ③ The tiled pearlescent feature wall celebrates the relationship between Snapper Country, Turbo Shell fish hooks, and water.
- ④ Strategically planting native species that relate back to the Connecting with Country cultural values.



Staircase escarpment typology by Bangawarra

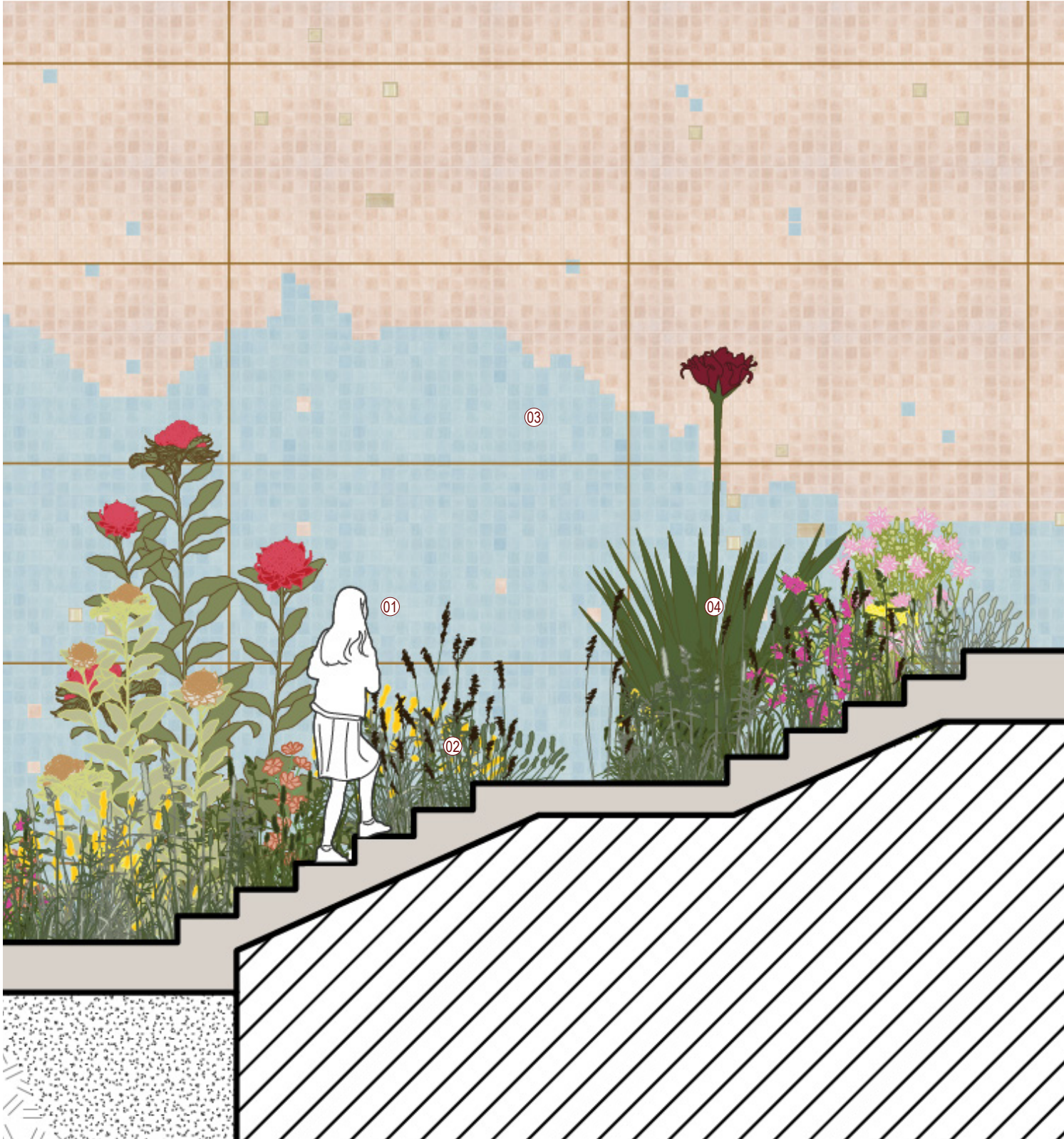


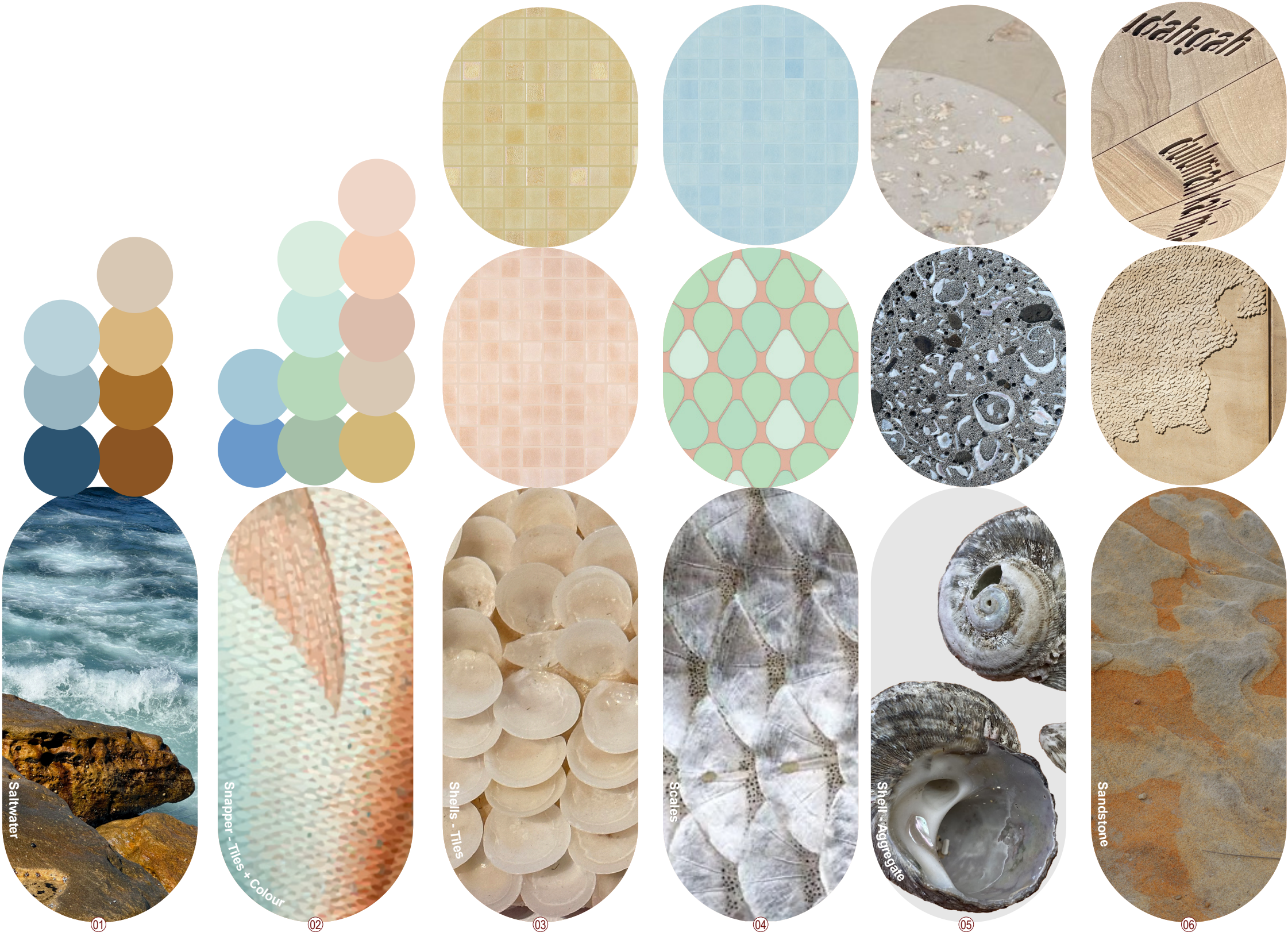
Figure 16. Cross section through site staircase with planted edges and tiled pearlescent wall

MATERIAL PALETTE

Expressing Country through material, colour & texture



- 01 Celebrating the colours of the saltwater sandstone escarpment from the cooler colours of the water and shells to the warmer colours of the shoreline and stone.
- 02 Softer colour palette refers to the colours of the snapper fish scales including pinks and pastel blues and greens.
- 03 The glimmer of the shells, fish scales and water can be captured through the use of pearlescent tiles and reflective materials.
- 04 A range of patterns and shapes can be developed to speak to the patterns and textures of Country.
- 05 Engaging with the materials of Country to tell the stories of this place can include the use of aggregates across the site (including shell and stone for example).
- 06 Sandstone can be expressed through material selection but also in textures, colours and patterns across the public domain and built forms.

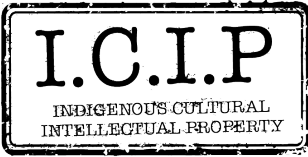


PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

Indicative public art strategies and concepts

PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

Embedding art, culture and stories



The public art strategy will respond directly to the Connecting Country cultural values that are embedded across the William St development.

The strategy will be critical to the compliance of the Connecting with Country Assessment defined by the Government Architects NSW. As indicated on pages 66-67, this framework will be used to assess the William St Development.

The public art strategy, if developed with care, has the potential to partially satisfy the following items indicated in the assessment:

- 2.1a Aboriginal community see their cultural heritage appropriately reflected in the design of places where they live and work
- 2.2a Aboriginal people feel safe, respected, and supported in how they express their cultural identity
- 2.3a A strategic plan or register is established to identify technical and cultural skills of Aboriginal community
- 2.3b Community is involved early in the decision-making about which projects they are best placed to work on
- 2.4a Training is provided to develop communities' spatial design skills and understanding of planning and design processes.
- 2.5a Jobs are created that allow people to stay connected to community and Country, for example, the Camooweal spinifex project
- 2.5b Employment opportunities are provided throughout all stages of project life cycles.

Legend

- Indicative Sandstone Escarpments
- Bitterwater Swamps & Mud Flats
- Freshwater Springs
- Contemporary Shoreline

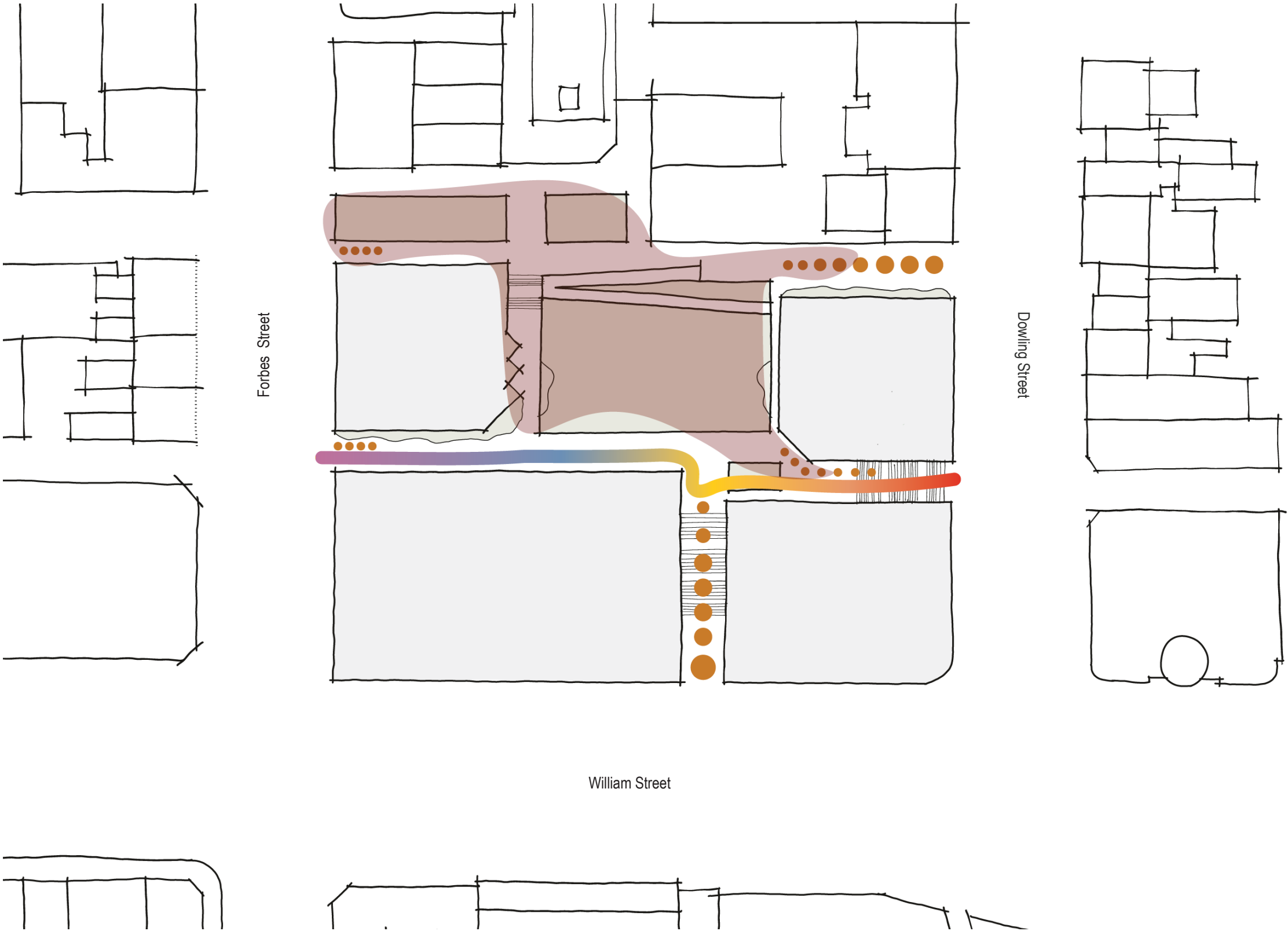


Figure 17. Mapping escarpment and water surrounding William St.

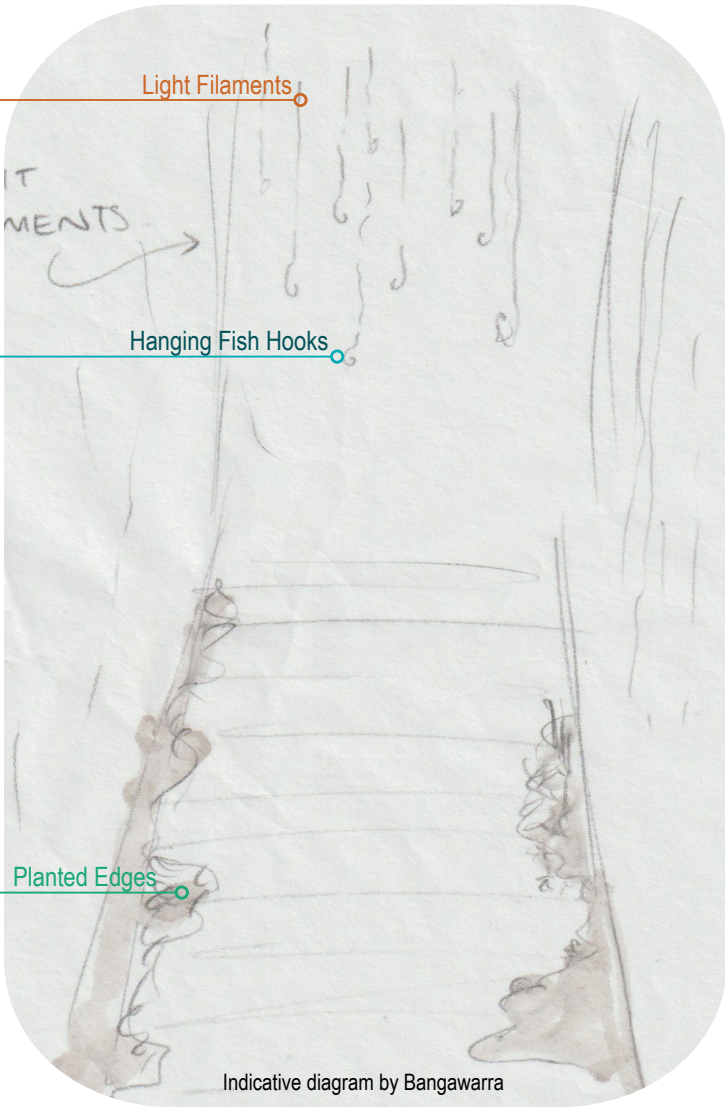
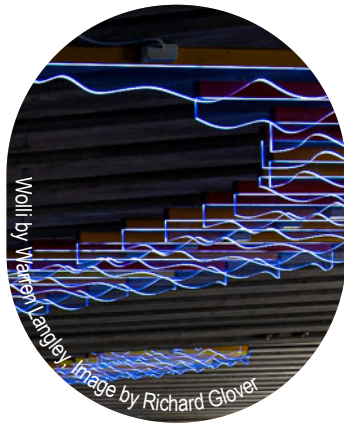
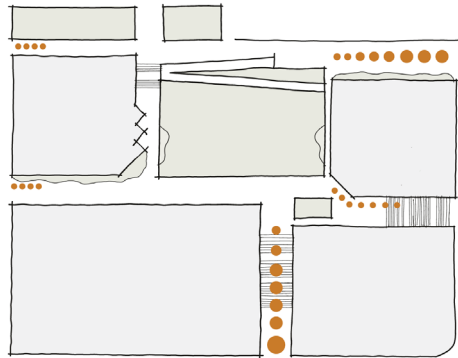
PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

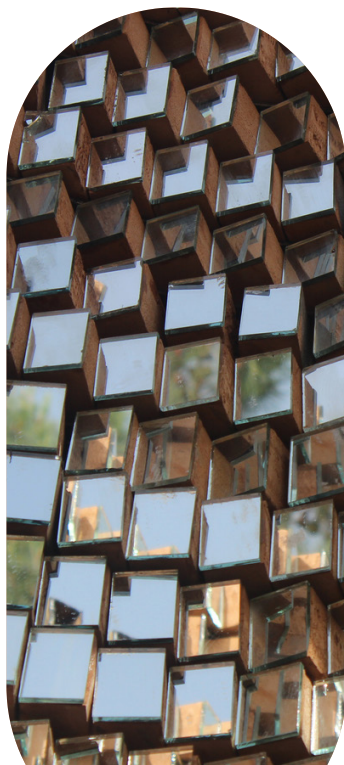
Light & Shadow



The indicative locations of the light and shadow art pieces will be positioned as identifiers of the site, predominantly located in areas of movement and transition to draw residents and visitors into the site and beyond. The visual impact of light will highlight access to the site, relating to Indigenous modes of visual wayfinding and Sky Country. At the same time, the potential artworks will capture the concept of flow and movement.

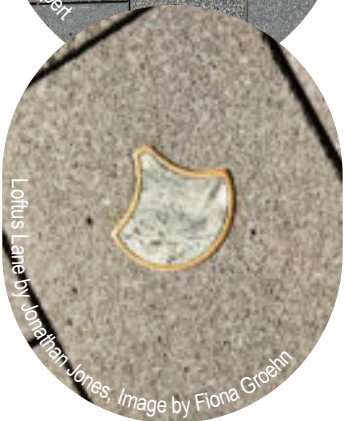
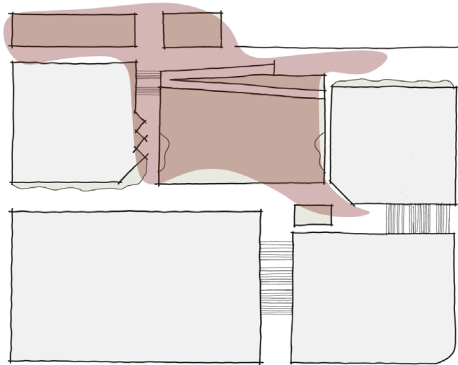
Key Plan





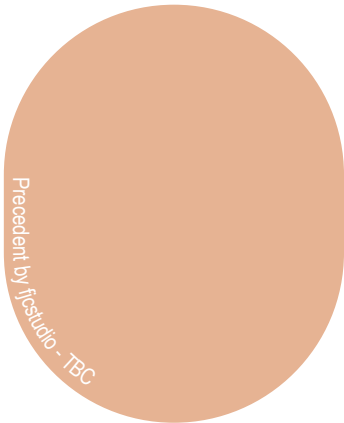
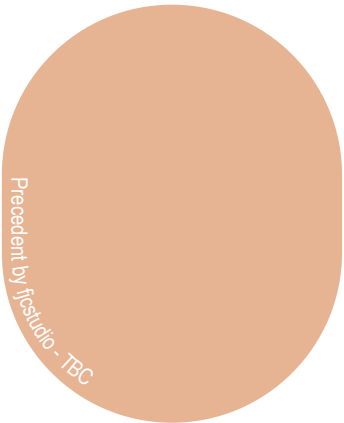
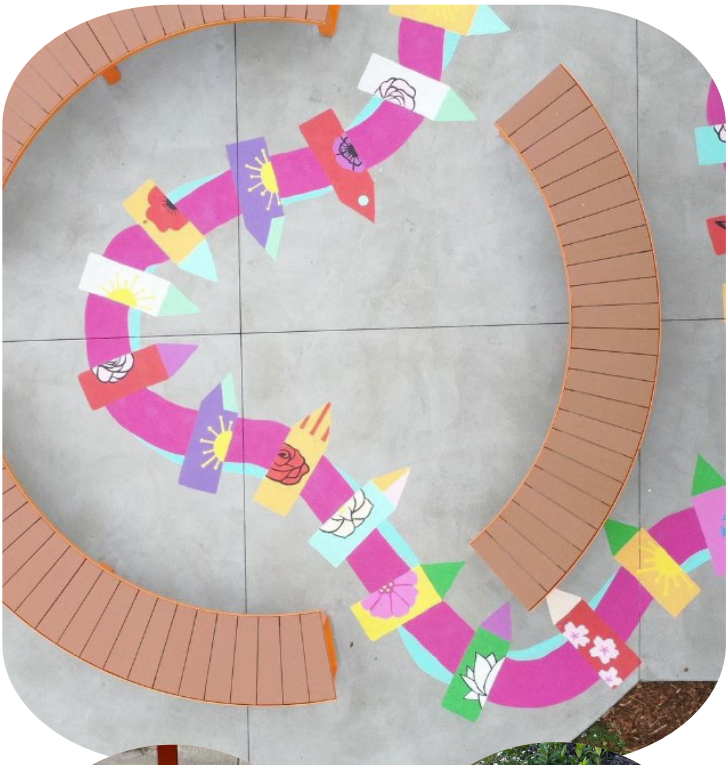
The art and culture strategy will draw on the local cultural expression of mounded ground sculptures to celebrate elements of Country and local ecologies. Allowing for moments of discovery and play throughout William St, carefully placing artworks that shine, glimmer and speak to the local stories of the place for people to learn and discover.

Key Plan



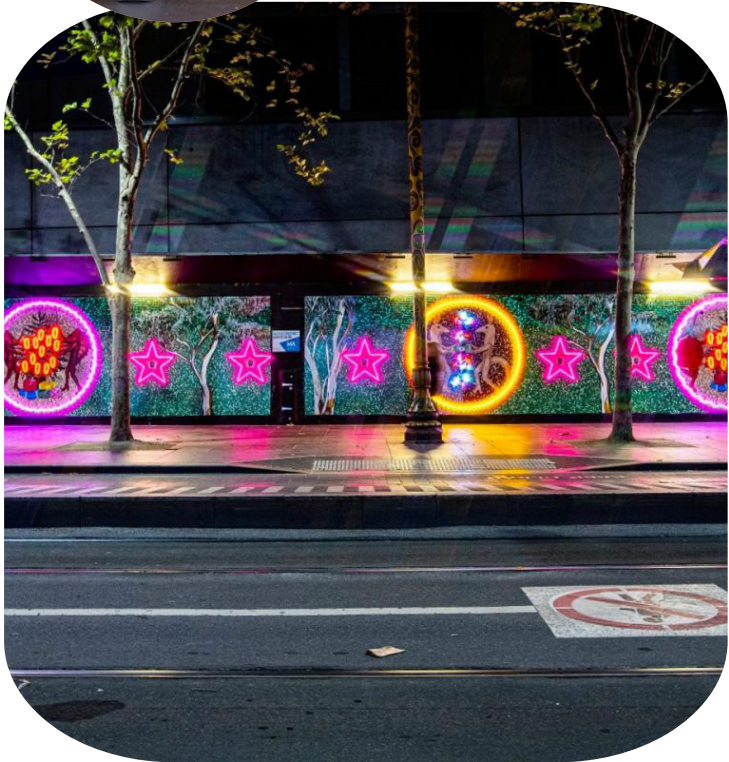
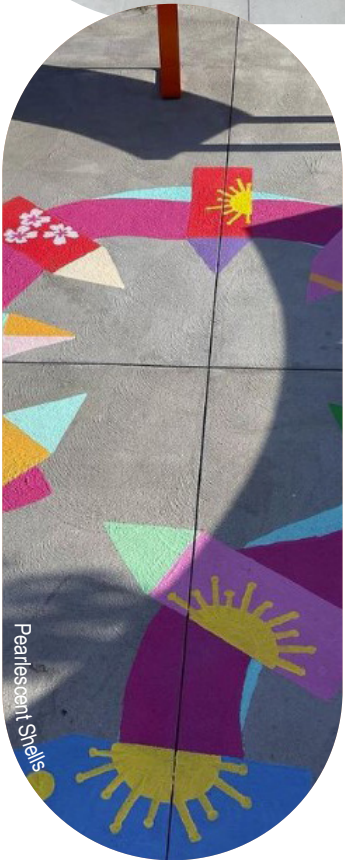
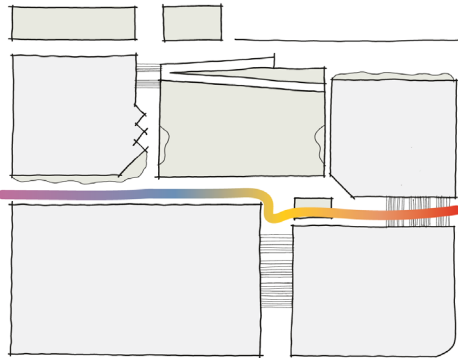
PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

Colour & community



The Public Art Strategy proposes collaborating with local community groups to provide an opportunity for their unique cultural expression to be shared with the wider community. Located along the through site links, the artworks will signify the colourful ecologies that typically grow on the escarpment plateaus.

Key Plan



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY OUTCOMES

**Relationship to Government Architect NSW Better Placed
Connecting with Country Framework**



Issue 03 - 2023, Government Architect New South Wales, Connecting with Country Framework, front cover .

What is this document?

The GANSW Connecting with Country document is a guide to aid the legislative requirements of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act), specifically:

- Item 1.3 (f): ‘to promote the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage)’; and
- Item 1.3 (g): ‘to promote good design and amenity of the built environment’.

The framework is also integrated into the GANSW ‘Better Placed: An Integrated Design Policy for the Built Environment of NSW4’ document.

In submitting this State Significant Development Application (SSDA), William St committed to achieve these requirements through Design with Country.

To demonstrate alignment with the framework, William St must align with the GANSW’s Connecting with Country section ‘3.5 Outcomes for Country’.

Section 3.5 outlines 5 key ‘Outcomes for Country’. These outcomes inform Bangawarra’s Connecting with Country Checklist.

How to Navigate this Checklist

The completion of SSDA for William St offers opportunities to assess the projects development against the GANSW’s Connecting with Country Framework.

The following checklist provides assessment against the SSDA Architectural Package provided by fjcstudio, Studio Bright and Tribe Studio.

This is not a final compliance checklist, this is an assessment of intent at DA. Compliance or non-compliance in this phase does not guarantee compliance or non-compliance in future stages. Commentary provided in this assessment identifies next steps that will support success in future stages.

William St is a project of sufficient size and scale where compliance against all objectives of the GANSW Connecting with Country is possible with committed design development, realisation and management strategies.

The following icons are used across the table for assessment:

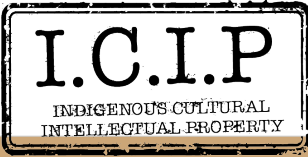
Assessment Against the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework

- Complies
- Partially complies
- Non-compliant
- Relevant in future project stages
- Not applicable at this stage

Criticality of this Objective to success against the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework

- Required and essential for compliance.
- Highly recommended for compliance.
- Optional but beneficial for compliance.
- Not required for compliance under the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework.
- Beyond the scope & scale of project.

Relationship to Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework



Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework			William St Compliance					Criticality to Compliance	Bangawarra Comments	Future Compliance Comments
Principle	Objectives		COMP	SSDA						
01 Healthy Country Healthy Country describes healthy, interconnected natural ecosystems, supported by regenerative practices based on Aboriginal knowledge.	1.1 Healthy Ecology.	1.1a High biodiversity is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, including those that are rare or endangered.	✓	✓				CRITICAL	The proposal reflects landscape design strategies that include biodiversity. The level of detail provided indicates that the project intends to satisfy this item.	These interventions are critical and if realised in the final proposal they would provide healthy habitat and nourishment for birds, insects and local animals feeding into existing networks and extending to ecologies beyond the site boundary. This objective requires a thorough assessment during the tender and construction stages to ensure successful compliance.
		1.1b Clean air and water are free of pollutants.	✓	✓				CRITICAL		
		1.1c Porous development allows rainwater to soak the ground as well as flow freely across land into original waterways.	Future Stage	Partially Satisfied				RECOMMENDED	At this stage, the project intends to include bioswales, porous soft landscape areas, and pathways that respond to natural water flows. This item needs to be developed alongside specialised consultation to ensure it is achievable within the project scope.	This objective requires a thorough assessment during the tender and construction stages to ensure successful compliance.
		1.1d Stormwater infrastructure that has replaced original water systems is naturalised and opened up to daylight.	Future Stage	Partially Satisfied				RECOMMENDED	At this stage, the project intends to include bioswales, porous soft landscape areas, and pathways that respond to natural water flows. This item needs to be developed alongside specialised consultation to ensure it is achievable within the project scope.	This objective requires a thorough assessment during the tender and construction stages to ensure successful compliance
		1.1e Ecological systems are resilient to impacts from drought, floods and fires, as well as human-induced disturbances such as habitat destruction and pollution.	✓	✓				CRITICAL	The landscape design intent is to embed a fully locally endemic planting strategy that provides habitat and other resources. The project works deliberately with planting that is resilient and hardy.	For full compliance within this objective a final Connecting with Country Compliance checklist will be required at tender and construction. Developing a management strategy to ensure the long-term survival and replacement process of these locally endemic species.
	1.2 The physical form of Country remains recognisable and restored where possible.	1.2a Alternative solutions are found to excavating, cutting into and reshaping the ground.	✗	✗				CRITICAL	The project proposal requires some excavation. This item will not be completely satisfactory. However, the project has allowed for at least 826m2 of deep soil to offset some of the implications of excavation.	Through a collaborative workshop with the design team and client identify if any alternative design solutions can be implemented to compensate for the excavation on site.
		1.2b Interference with natural water systems is minimal.	Future Stage	✓				CRITICAL		
		1.2c Original landscapes are restored and protected, and isolated pockets are reconnected.	Partially Satisfied	Partially Satisfied				CRITICAL	This project does not have the capacity to fully restore original landscapes that have been disturbed through heavy urban development. The project does however work to re-establish pollinating corridors by connecting with surrounding and developing ecological infrastructure. Over time this will support reconnecting isolated green spaces across the city.	Ongoing collaborative Designing with Country co-design methodologies can support this success through culturally and ecologically responsive design interventions.



Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework			William St Compliance							
			Compliance by Project Stage					Criticality to Compliance	Bangawarra Comments	Future Compliance Comments
Principle	Objectives		COMP	SSDA						
02 Healthy Community Built environment projects can provide opportunities for employment and capacity building within the Aboriginal community, and support Aboriginal communities’ connection to their cultural identity, which supports positive health and wellbeing.	2.1 Strong cultural identity, connected to place and community.	2.1a Aboriginal community see their cultural heritage appropriately reflected in the design of places where they live and work.	Future Stage	✓				CRITICAL	The public art strategy will directly engage with established First Nations artists, emerging artists, and local communities. Their identities and heritage will be reflected throughout the development.	Through collaboration with Aboriginal Design Consultants Bangawarra, as an integral part of the design team from the start, Aboriginal cultural heritage ideas have influenced the overall design - from the building form, planning and materiality, through to the ongoing development of detail design narratives. For full compliance within this objective a final Connecting with Country Compliance checklist will be required at tender and construction.
		2.2 Cultural safety.	2.2a Aboriginal people feel safe, respected, and supported in how they express their cultural identity.	Future Stage	✓				CRITICAL	The public art strategy will directly engage with established First Nations artists, emerging artists, and local communities. Their identities and heritage will be reflected throughout the strategy.
	2.3 Relief for Aboriginal communities who are fatigued by the workload imposed on them by project teams seeking their advice on Country.		2.2b Aboriginal consultants with spatial design expertise aren’t burdened by an expectation to represent the voice of many within Aboriginal communities.	✓	✓				CRITICAL	
		2.3a A strategic plan or register is established to identify technical and cultural skills of Aboriginal community.	Future Stage	Partially Satisfied				DESIRED	This item partially satisfies as there is an indicative public art strategy that does address some technical and cultural skills of the Aboriginal Community.	As the project develops, we encourage the design team to revisit this objective and ensure additional strategies that reflect the diverse technical and cultural skills of the Aboriginal community are reflective beyond the use of public art.
		2.3b Community is involved early in the decision-making about which projects they are best placed to work on.	Future Stage	Partially Satisfied				DESIRED	As the spatial design consultants, Bangawarra, have been available for consultation throughout the process.	As the project develops, we encourage the design team to revisit this objective
		2.3c Availability and choice of Aboriginal consultants with cultural and spatial design expertise is increased.	✓	Future Stage				CRITICAL	As the spatial design consultants, we have been available for consultation throughout the process.	For full success within this objective, continued collaborative Designing with Country co-design methodologies should be implemented. An assessment of compliance at each stage of the project will be required to asses full success within this objective.

Relationship to Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework



Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework			William St Compliance							
Principle	Objectives		Compliance by Project Stage					Criticality to Compliance	Bangawarra Comments	Future Compliance Comments
			COMP	SSDA						
02 Healthy Community Built environment projects can provide opportunities for employment and capacity building within the Aboriginal community, and support Aboriginal communities’ connection to their cultural identity, which supports positive health and wellbeing.	2.4 Training.	2.4a Training is provided to develop communities’ spatial design skills and understanding of planning and design processes.	Future Stage	✖				DESIRED	The project does not satisfy this objective at this stage.	As the project develops we encourage the client to revisit this objective.
		2.4b Financial supports including scholarships encourage community to pursue a career in built environment professions.	Future Stage	✖				DESIRED	The project does not satisfy this objective at this stage.	As the project develops we encourage the client to revisit this objective.
	2.5 Employment opportunities.	2.5a Jobs are created that allow people to stay connected to community and Country, for example, the Camooweal spinifex project.	Future Stage	✖				RECOMMENDED	The project does not satisfy this objective at this stage.	As the project develops we encourage the client to revisit this objective.
		2.5b Employment opportunities are provided throughout all stages of project life cycles.	Future Stage	✖				CRITICAL	The project does not satisfy this objective at this stage.	As the project develops we encourage the client to revisit this objective.
		2.5c Aboriginal businesses are supported in the project procurement strategy.	Future Stage	✖				CRITICAL	The project does not satisfy this objective at this stage.	As the project develops we encourage the client to revisit this objective.

Relationship to Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework



Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework			William St Compliance							
Principle	Objectives		Compliance by Project Stage					Criticality to Compliance	Bangawarra Comments	Future Compliance Comments
			COMP	SSDA						
03 Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage It is critical that Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected in the built environment, both through the design and development of projects, and by acknowledging and respecting the rights of Aboriginal people and community over their cultural intellectual property.	3.1 Aboriginal cultural advisers guiding project teams and clients to better connect with Aboriginal community.	3.1a Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected and celebrated within planning and design outcomes.		Partially Satisfied				CRITICAL	The project team have worked to embed local Aboriginal knowledges into the architectural, landscape and public art design. Reinforcing the living cultural practice and heritage of local Aboriginal peoples. If the final building includes the same level of cultural consideration as the early design stages then this project has the potential to satisfy this objective. This will be satisfied if items such as the public park with healthy habitats for non-human occupants, local art and making styles and a celebration of the Connecting with Coutry Cultural Values.	For full compliance within this objective a fi nal Connecting with Country Compliance checklist will be required at tender and construction.
		3.1b Aboriginal community actively participate in shared decision-making processes related to precinct/regional planning or program workstreams, particularly those that significantly impact Country they are responsible to care for.	N/A	N/A				BEYOND SCOPE	This is beyond the scope of this project and stage.	
	3.2 Project teams and processes for project delivery respect ICIP.	3.2a Aboriginal community endorses the project outcomes and behaviour of the project team.	Future Stage	✗				CRITICAL	The project does not satisfy this objective at this stage.	As the project develops we encourage the client to revisit this objective.
	3.3 Aboriginal language placenames are used.	3.3a Aboriginal placenames are used for suburbs, parks and streets. Dual naming, or returning the original name, is used for natural features such as mountains, waterways, beaches, forests.	Future Stage					DESIRED	Place names have been included in colsultation with Bangawarra.	To develop placename and language opportunities for this project, ongoing consultation from the Connecting with Country Spatial design consultants is required.
	3.4 Access to Country is provided.	3.4a Indigenous land-use agreements (ILUAs) or other shared land and water use agreements are established for projects that are significant to Aboriginal community. (ILUAs are recognised by the Australian Government under the Native Title Act 1993, and can be negotiated between Indigenous groups and other parties anywhere in Australia.)	N/A	N/A				BEYOND SCOPE	This is beyond the scope of this project and stage.	
		3.4b Access to Country enables community to practice ceremony and undertake obligations to care for Country.						CRITICAL	A publicly accessible park and through-site link designs provides access for Aboriginal communities to sit, enact, share and celebrate cultural knowledge.	

Relationship to Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework



Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework			William St Compliance								
			Compliance by Project Stage					Criticality to Compliance	Bangawarra Comments	Future Compliance Comments	
Principle	Objectives		COMP	SSDA							
04 Cultural competency Implementing the Connecting with Country Framework through built environment projects provides educational opportunities for project teams, clients, and the public, to develop a deeper cultural awareness and respect for Aboriginal people and culture.	4.1	Ongoing cultural awareness training develops skills and competency in delivering Country-centred design projects.									
		4.1a	Workplace culture supports training, immersion and learning for built environment professionals, including individuals, project teams and across agencies.	Future Stage	✗				RECOMMENDED	This is beyond the scope of the Connecting with Country consultants to comment on.	
		4.1b	Cultural awareness training is embedded into continuing professional development requirements (e.g. NSCA).	Future Stage	✗				RECOMMENDED	The project has been designed by registered architects who are required to undertake cultural awareness training under the NSCA.	In future stages continued engagement and procurement with companies required to undertake cultural awareness will be required for full success within this objective.
		4.1c	Proof of cultural awareness training is required in procurement contracts.	Future Stage	✗				RECOMMENDED	This is beyond the scope of the Connecting with Country consultants to comment on.	

Relationship to Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework



Government Architect NSW Better Placed Connecting with Country Framework			William St Compliance							
Principle	Objectives		Compliance by Project Stage					Criticality to Compliance	Bangawarra Comments	Future Compliance Comments
			COMP	SSDA						
05 Better Places Adopting a Country-centred approach creates better places, informs sustainable designs, integrates with the broader landscape to form place-based design responses, and promotes strong community engagement to create welcoming and accessible places.	5.1 Planning and design projects create places that are connected with Country.	5.1a Project sites are connected to broader landscapes beyond property or project boundaries.						CRITICAL	The proposal draws in several connections to sites beyond its boundaries through various through-site links and overall cultural gestures to surrounding Country. Creating ecological and cultural connections embedded with Ancestral and contemporary stories of Country.	For full compliance within this objective a final Connecting with Country Compliance checklist will be required at tender and construction.
		5.1b First placenames guide design and planning outcomes: placenaming, dual naming and wayfinding.	Future Stage					DESIRED	Placenames have been included in consultation with Bangawarra.	To develop placename and language opportunities for this project, ongoing consultation from the Connecting with Country Spatial design consultants is required.
		5.1c The memory of significant cultural, historic and natural events can be read and traced within Country's landscape.		Partially Satisfied				RECOMMENDED	This item is being addressed through the Connecting with Country strategies in this design report. The implementations of these strategies are to be further developed alongside the design team to ensure this objective fully satisfies.	For full compliance within this objective a final Connecting with Country Compliance checklist will be required at tender and construction.
		5.1d Where possible, locally sourced, sustainable building materials are used; they have a relationship with and belong to the Country they come from.		Partially Satisfied				CRITICAL	Material selections seek to minimise impacts on Country. Material selections should prioritise local materials and manufacturing, low-carbon products, and products with closed-loop/end-of-life use.	This objective is being addressed through the design development stages. For full compliance within this objective a final Connecting with Country Compliance checklist will be required at tender and construction.
	5.2 Planning and design outcomes support living cultural practices.	5.2a Cultural burning is used to maintain the health of landscapes and protect against unplanned bushfires.	N/A	N/A				BEYOND SCOPE	This is beyond the scope of this project and stage.	
		5.2b Projects support ongoing opportunities for on-Country cultural tours, ceremony, and sourcing Indigenous food and materials.						DESIRED	Providing publicly accessible spaces for Aboriginal people to sit, enact, share and celebrate cultural knowledges provides the possibility for ceremonies, cultural events, and public tours to take place.	As the project develops we encourage the client to revisit this objective and ensure this objective is intentionally included in the design proposal. Full success within this objective will need to be led by ongoing Designing with Country co-design methodologies led by expert Connecting with Country spatial design consultants.
	5.3 Original landscapes are repaired or restored.	5.3 Landscapes are regenerated from seed banks stored within the soil, activated by warming the ground through traditional cultural burning. When this is possible there may be no need to reconstruct or guess what the original Indigenous landscape was like before it was disturbed by colonisation.						CRITICAL	Providing publicly accessible spaces for Aboriginal people to sit, enact, share and celebrate cultural knowledges provides the possibility for ceremonies, cultural events, and public tours to take place. The proposal does not propose the use of local soil stores seed banks within the landscape specifications.	

**DIDJARIGURU
GUWANYI'O'MIYA
THANK YOU FOR REMEMBERING OUR
ANCESTORS**

bangawarra

August 2025