

# Project Mars Data Centre - 12 Mars Road, Lane Cove West

## Connecting With Country Report

Goodman Property Services (Aust) Pty Ltd

April 2025



This report was produced by Tika EQ, a First Nations, LGBTQ+ and Veteran owned consulting practice operating at the intersection of policy, place and equity.

© 2025 Tika EQ Pty Ltd (Tika EQ). All rights reserved.

This report is protected by the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) and contains material that is subject to copyright owned by Tika EQ and, where applicable, the Traditional Custodians and Knowledge Holders who have contributed to or informed the content.

This publication may include Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), including but not limited to stories, artworks, knowledge, cultural expressions, and practices. All ICIP is held by the respective Traditional Custodians and Knowledge Holders and is included here with permission. Reproduction, adaptation, or use of ICIP beyond the scope of this report is not permitted without the prior informed consent of the relevant Indigenous communities or individuals.

No part of this report may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of Tika EQ, except where permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).

Use of this report must acknowledge the cultural rights of First Nations Peoples and respect the living cultures, connections to Country, and the ongoing custodianship of Traditional Owners. For enquiries regarding permissions, reproduction, or cultural use, please call: 1300 932 820 or email: [connect@tikaeq.com](mailto:connect@tikaeq.com)

#### **Please Note**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may contain references to, or images of, people who have passed away.

Additionally, to respectfully illustrate the application of Indigenous Design Principles, this document may include examples from a range of Indigenous Countries beyond the specific project location. These references are provided to demonstrate broader cultural approaches and are not intended to imply cultural authority or custodianship over any Country other than that of the recognised Traditional Custodians.

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Tika EQ acknowledges the Cammeraygal People, as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this project is based, known today as Lane Cove, NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and honour the enduring connection First Nations peoples have to land, waters, skies, and all living things.

We also recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia where we live and work. Our respect extends to First Peoples globally, in recognition of their deep cultural knowledges, sovereignties, and relationships with Country.

# Contents

Executive Summary	5
Purpose of Report	6
Methodology	7
Project Representative Consultation	8
<b>Response to Place</b>	
History of Place	10
Cultural Landscape Overview	11
Local Flora	12
Local Fauna	13
<b>Design Narrative</b>	
Consultation Insights	15
Indigenous Design Considerations	16
Design Implementation Recommendations	17
<b>Case Studies &amp; Informing Documents</b>	
Case Study 1: Integrating Tidal Fish Trap Principles	20
Case Study 2: Stories of Place, Waterloo Metro Station	21
Case Study 3: Cultural Landscape Garden, South Eveleigh	22
Informing Documents	23

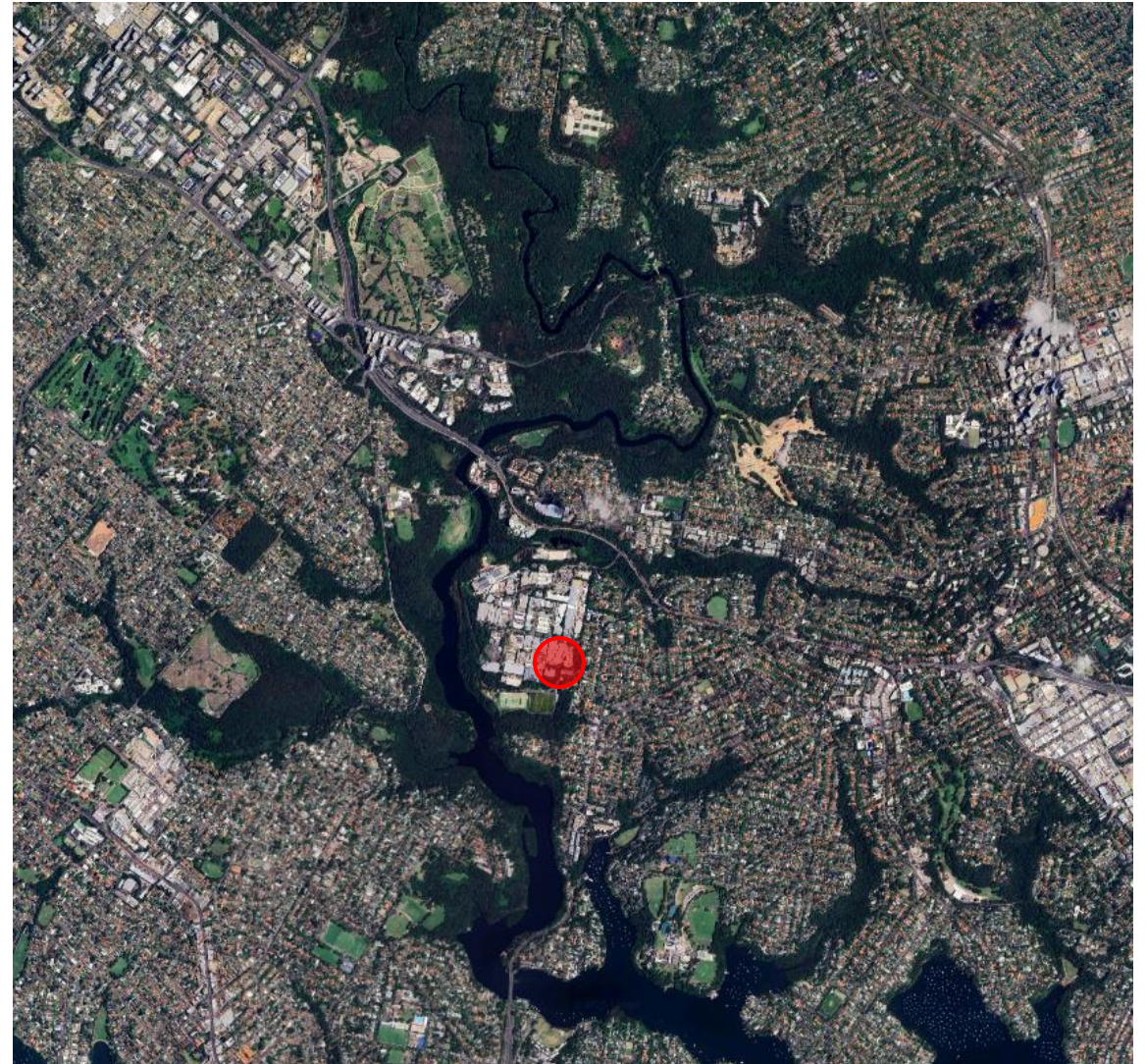
# Executive Summary

The Project Mars Data Centre development at 12 Mars Road, Lane Cove West, stands on Cammeraygal Country, ancestral lands shaped by knowledge systems and traditional practices that span thousands of years. This *Connecting with Country* report honours those systems, grounding the design and delivery of this project in the cultural values, seasonal rhythms and living memory of place known as Turrumburra.

Turrumburra is not only a geographical location but a storied cultural landscape of sustenance and knowledge. During mullet season, when schools of fish surged upriver, the Cammeraygal people constructed intricate stone fish traps, synchronised with ecological indicators like the bloom of the Golden Wattle. These seasonal events were not only markers of time but were deeply embedded in community life, governing when and how people gathered, shared, and cared for Country. Evidence of these practices remains today in the form of riverbank middens composed of shell, bone and charcoal; material archives of enduring relationships with place.

In conceptualising the Mars Data Centre, we draw a purposeful parallel. Like those stone fish traps, the data centre is a structure of function and flow: gathering, storing, and directing streams, not of fish, but of digital information. This analogy serves not only as a design metaphor but as an invitation: to embed respect, responsiveness, and cultural intelligence into the infrastructure of our future.

Guided by Tika EQ's First Nations-led approach and aligned with the *Government Architect NSW Connecting with Country Framework*, this report sets out First Nations design principles, cultural insights, and opportunities for ecological reciprocity. These principles encourage us to consider cues from nature, honour the knowledge held by Traditional Custodians, and ensure that developments like this, are more than just technological, they are relational, place-based and culturally respectful.



# Purpose of Report

The *Connecting with Country* Report for the Project Mars Data Centre in Lane Cove West has been developed to inform project planning, design and delivery by embedding Indigenous cultural knowledge, values, and principles into the development process. The report provides a foundation for integrating First Nations perspectives into place-based design that reflects the significance of Country and the enduring connection of the Cammeraygal people to this landscape.

## The scope of this report covers several key areas:

- Identification of cultural values and insights shared through consultation with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and incorporate them into the project design process.
- Strengthening the recognition of Cammeraygal Country by embedding ecological and cultural narratives into design elements.
- Promotion of sustainability and inclusive development by aligning the project with Caring for Country principles.
- Supporting of opportunities to reflect Country through native plantings, interpretive design, and use of First Nations language and storytelling.
- Development of preliminary design principles informed by Knowledge Holders, while recognising the need for ongoing engagement.

## Limitations

This report offers an initial cultural and conceptual framework for embedding Indigenous values into the Mars Project. It introduces a set of early design principles shaped through one-on-one consultation with Indigenous Knowledge Holders, reflecting Cammeraygal perspectives on land, water, and place.

This engagement aligns with the *Connecting with Country Framework* by adopting a medium-level approach to community involvement, where targeted advice from cultural advisors was sought and community consultations were conducted at major project milestones. This ensures that the work is strategically focused to make best use of community time and resources, while still respecting and responding to the cultural significance of Country.

# Methodology

This *Connecting with Country* Report was developed using a respectful and place-based engagement approach, led by First Nations consultants and informed by individual conversations with Indigenous Knowledge Holders connected to the local area. These discussions provided valuable insights into the cultural values, historical relationships, and living knowledge associated with Turrumburra (the Lane Cove River) and surrounding landscapes.

## Engagement and Cultural Input:

- One-on-one cultural consultations were conducted to understand Country-specific values, seasonal patterns, and connections to the site.
- Cultural insights were synthesised into emerging design principles focused on ecological, spiritual, and relational dimensions of place.

## Research and Background Analysis:

- Review of existing *Connecting with Country* frameworks, including the Government Architect NSW guidelines, and informed by documents such as the *First Nations Peoples of the Parramatta River and Surrounding Region*.
- Desktop research to understand the archaeological, historical and cultural significance of the Lane Cove area and the Cammeraygal people.

## Cultural Design Approach:

- Project cross-disciplinary design team Walk on Country and series of ideation sessions.
- Application of First Nations design thinking through the lens of sustainability, cultural continuity and Country-led principles.
- Consideration of how data infrastructure can metaphorically and practically reflect the flows, rhythms and interconnectivity of Country.

## ICIP and Cultural Protocols:

- All contributions have been documented with care and integrity, and ICIP has been protected according to ethical best practice.
- Information shared by knowledge holders has been used solely for the purpose of this project and remains the property of those who shared it.

This methodology reflects a culturally responsive and adaptable approach that respects community timeframes, cultural governance, and the right of Indigenous peoples to control how their knowledge is shared and used.

# Project Representative Consultation

A Walk on Country and *Connecting with Country* workshop were facilitated by Tika EQ to support culturally-informed engagement for the Project Mars Data Centre. This process was designed to honour Cammeraygal Country and ensure that Indigenous values and perspectives were meaningfully integrated into the project's direction.

The consultation involved a project-wide session with key representatives from the project team, including the client, architects, and landscape architects. The session took place at site, on Country, and was structured to deepen the project team's connection to place and to the cultural and ecological significance of the surrounding landscape.

The Walk on Country provided an immersive opportunity for project stakeholders to experience Turrumburra (Lane Cove River) and its surrounds through a cultural lens. The walk allowed participants to engage with the site's layered histories, observe key ecological features, and reflect on the enduring presence of the Cammeraygal people.

During the walk, insights were shared around traditional practices, seasonal cycles, and the spiritual and cultural connections to water Country. Participants were encouraged to listen deeply and consider how cultural knowledge could guide design and planning decisions moving forward. The route included key vantage points to discuss both technical elements and broader cultural considerations.

Structured as an interactive session, the workshop provided space for shared learning and co-reflection across four key areas:

## 1. Reflecting on Country

Participants were invited to reflect on the living systems of Country; land, water, sky, flora and fauna, and the responsibility to design with respect, reciprocity, and sustainability.

## 2. Design Opportunities

The team identified design elements where Indigenous cultural values and stories could be embedded meaningfully. This included consideration of built form, materiality, spatial layout, landscape treatment, and interpretive design.

## 3. Construction Practices

Emphasis was placed on construction methods that protect both tangible and intangible cultural values. Participants discussed how procurement, materials and local inclusion could reflect commitments to cultural integrity and ecological care.

## 4. Legacy and Stewardship

The session concluded with a focus on long-term cultural and environmental stewardship. Ideas were shared on how the project could leave a lasting legacy, uphold relationships with Country, and support ongoing connections with the Cammeraygal community.

This session provided a valuable platform for cross-disciplinary collaboration and reinforced the importance of cultural leadership in shaping project outcomes. It also laid the groundwork for future co-design activities and ongoing engagement with First Nations stakeholders.



# Response to Place

# History of Place

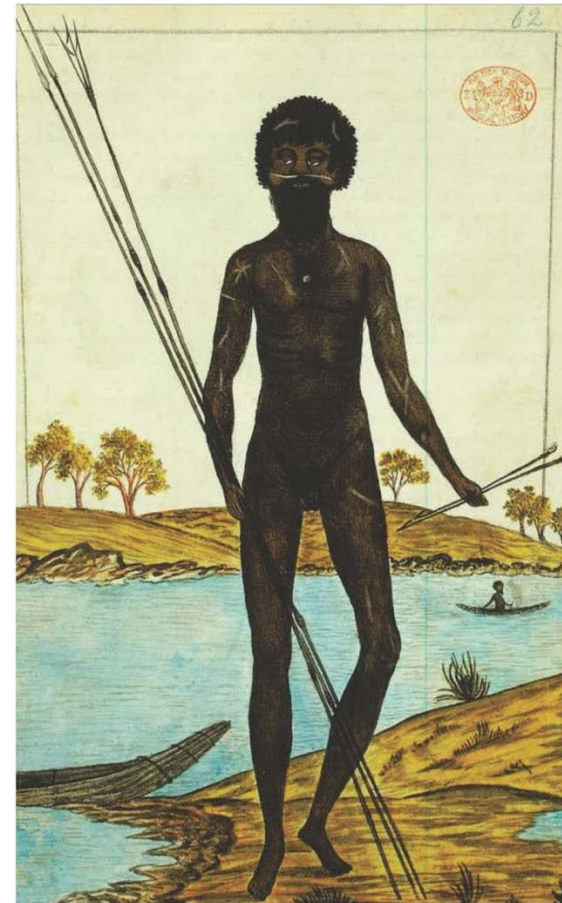
The area now known as Lane Cove lies within the traditional lands of the Cammeraygal people, one of the 29 recognised clans of the Dharug Nation. These lands are part of a rich and cultural landscape, sustained by enduring relationships with Country.

The Cammeraygal are known historically as fierce protectors of their lands and waters, with a strong reputation as warriors, diplomats, and knowledge-holders. Their cultural authority was grounded in generations of environmental stewardship, where Country was, and remains, a living, breathing system encompassing land, water, sky, people, plants and animals. For the Cammeraygal, Country is not a passive backdrop, but an active participant in life, lore, story, and identity.

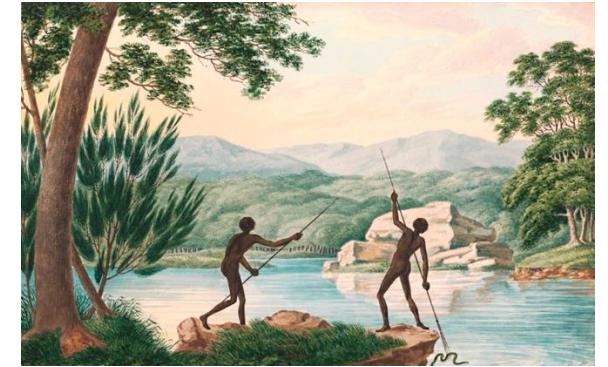
Evidence of Indigenous occupation in the region is both widespread and resilient. Radiometric dating of a site in nearby Cammeray confirms continuous presence from at least 5,800 years before present (BP), well before the arrival of British settlers in 1788. At the time of colonisation, the Cammeraygal had a firm foundation on Country, with a thriving system of governance, knowledge sharing, and custodianship already in place.

The Lane Cove River, once known as Turrumburra, was a vital artery in the lives of the Cammeraygal. The river not only offered abundant food sources, including fish, shellfish and edible plants, but also served as a travel corridor and a space for ceremony, trade, and community gathering. Seasonal patterns, such as the flowering of the golden wattle signalling the arrival of mullet, guided fishing practices and reinforced the Cammeraygal's sophisticated ecological intelligence.

Across this landscape, one still finds tangible markers of this continuous cultural presence. Rock engravings, shell middens, grinding grooves, scarred trees and stone tools remain embedded in the sandstone and soils of the Lane Cove area.



Thomas Watling's depiction of 'Cammeraygal'.



Two Aboriginal People Spearing Eels, by Joseph Lycett, 1817. National Library of Australia.



Aboriginal People Night Fishing by Fire Torches, by Joseph Lycett, 1817. National Library of Australia.

# Cultural Landscape Overview

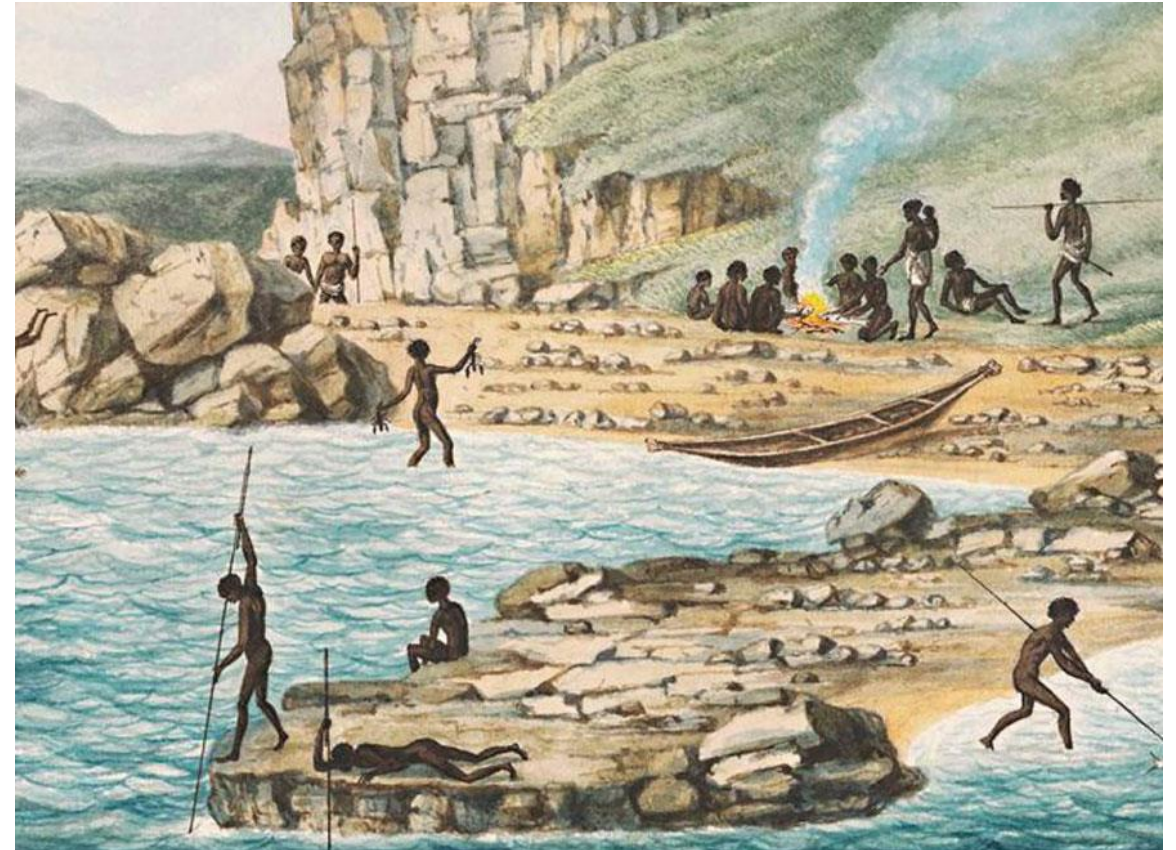
Building upon this deep history, the cultural landscape surrounding the Project Mars Data Centre site is one of ongoing significance, not only as a record of past occupation, but as a living, dynamic system that continues to shape how people relate to place.

The site's proximity to Turrumburra (Lane Cove River) situates it within a network of interconnected Country that is both ecological and cultural in nature. This is a landscape where movement, seasonality and stewardship converge. The river's tidal rhythms and the surrounding sandstone ridgelines are more than geographic features, they are part of a relational system that has long supported the transmission of knowledge, values and lore.

The Cammeraygal's ways of knowing and living with this Country are embedded in the land itself. Natural features, such as water flows, vegetation patterns, and topographic forms are interpreted as part of a broader cultural logic. These elements guide decisions about when to gather, where to meet, and how to care. In this way, Country is both teacher and kin.

Within this landscape, cultural continuity is maintained not only through physical sites such as middens and fish traps, but through the ongoing recognition of place as a source of cultural responsibility. The relationships between people and place are reciprocal, care for Country ensures Country continues to provide. This ethic underpins the Cammeraygal worldview, where custodianship is a practice enacted daily through listening, observing, and responding.

As this project progresses, understanding and respecting this cultural landscape means engaging with its living systems, not just its heritage. It means designing with a sensitivity to the rhythms and stories of the land, allowing ecological features, historical memory and cultural values to inform built outcomes.



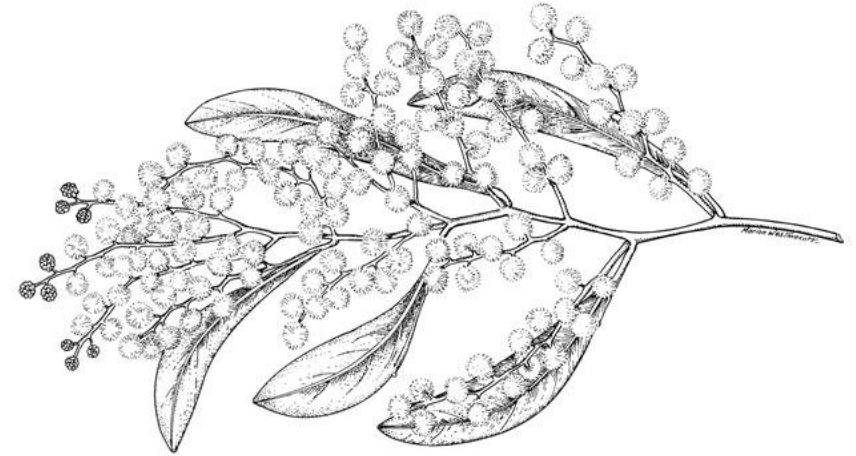
Aboriginal Australians Spearing Fish and Diving for Shellfish, by Joseph Lycett, 1817. National Library of Australia.

# Local Flora

The Lane Cove River area is part of the Sydney Sandstone Gully Forest, Coastal Warm Temperate Rainforest, and Dry Sclerophyll Forest ecosystems. Endemic flora played a vital role in traditional life and continue to hold ecological and cultural significance today.

## Recognised Flora

- *Angophora costata* (Sydney Red Gum) - used for tools and shelter; provides sap for medicinal use.
- *Eucalyptus pilularis* (Blackbutt) - valued for strong timber and shelter.
- *Eucalyptus piperita* (Sydney Peppermint) - leaves used for medicinal steam inhalation.
- *Banksia* spp. - nectar was extracted and mixed with water for a sweet drink; cones used as fire-starters.
- *Xanthorrhoea* spp. (Grass Tree) - resin used as glue; flower stalks used as spear shafts and fire drills.
- *Lomandra longifolia* - leaves woven into baskets and mats; seeds ground for flour.
- *Doryanthes excelsa* (GyMEA Lily) - flower stalks eaten; leaves used for weaving and fibre.
- *Telopea speciosissima* (Waratah) - flowers produced nectar for drinking; symbolically significant and often featured in Indigenous stories.
- *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle) - bark and leaves used for medicinal purposes; flowers signal seasonal change and cultural events.



# Local Fauna

## Aquatic and Riverine Species:

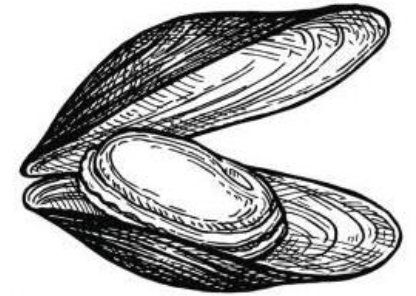
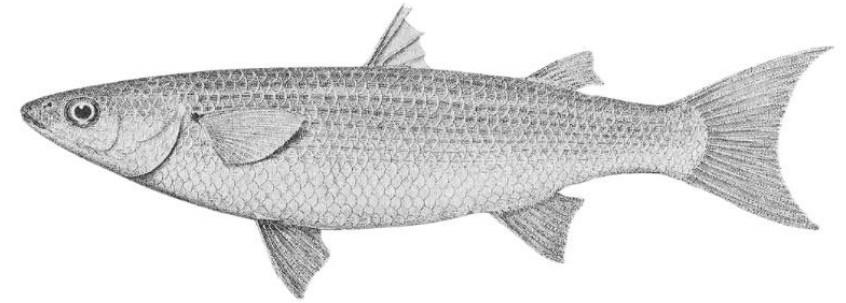
- Mullet - an abundant and highly valued food source; caught using spears, woven traps, and cooperative fishing techniques.
- Longfin Eel (*Anguilla reinhardtii*) - caught during seasonal migrations; considered a delicacy and important seasonal indicator.
- Freshwater Mussels - collected from riverbeds and middens still found along the banks.
- Bream and other estuarine fish species - part of the regular diet sourced from tidal sections of the river.
- Freshwater Crayfish (Yabby) - caught in creeks and wetlands connected to the river system.

## Terrestrial and Arboreal Fauna:

- Eastern Grey Kangaroo and Swamp Wallaby - hunted for meat, hides, and sinew.
- Common Brushtail Possum and Sugar Glider - valued as food and for fur; gliders also held totemic significance.
- Bandicoots and Echidnas - foraged in forested areas and occasionally hunted.
- Flying Foxes (Grey-headed) - seasonally harvested; also important for pollination.
- Goannas - provided meat and fat, and featured in Dreaming stories.

## Birdlife:

- Australian Wood Duck, Black Swan, and Herons - hunted using throwing sticks or traps; feathers sometimes used in ceremonial dress.
- Lyrebird - not typically hunted, but known for its mimicry and significance in cultural stories.



# Design Narrative

# Consultation Insights

During ongoing conversations with local Knowledge Holders and key members of the project team, there have been five emerging key themes in relation to this place, and specifically this site's proximity to the Lane Cove River - known as Turrumburra.



## Turrumburra

The Lane Cove River has been central to Cammeraygal life. Its tidal flows and rippling waters carried food, stories and people, shaping seasonal rhythms and guiding cultural practices. Evidence of food cultivation along its banks reflect generations of ecological knowledge and enduring connection to water Country.



## Middens

Piles of shells and other remains are found along the Lane Cove River and mark places where the Cammeraygal gathered, shared food, and passed on knowledge. They are living cultural sites that speak to a continuous presence and relationship with this land.



## Stone Fish Traps

Stone fish traps along Turrumburra reflect the Cammeraygal people's deep understanding of tidal patterns and fish behaviour. These carefully placed rock structures allowed for sustainable harvesting and are enduring symbols of Indigenous innovation and connection to water Country.



## Mullet

Mullet were a vital seasonal food source for the Cammeraygal people, travelling in large schools through the Turrumburra. Their arrival marked a time of abundance and gathering, forming part of broader cultural practices tied to seasonal rhythms, community, and Country.



## Golden Wattle

The flowering of the Golden Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*) signalled to the Cammeraygal people that it was time to fish for mullet. This native plant served as a seasonal marker, linking ecological change to cultural practice and sustaining life along the Turrumburra.

# Indigenous Design Considerations

Although the Project Mars Data Centre is a secure facility with restricted access and low on-site personnel, opportunities exist to embed Indigenous cultural values and consultation insights into its design. Doing so acknowledges the cultural significance of Cammeraygal Country and ensures that the site reflects principles of respect, reciprocity and sustainability, regardless of its visibility to the broader public.

## Landscaping and Site Interface

- While the site is not open to the public, external landscaping can still reflect the cultural and ecological identity of Cammeraygal Country.
- Plantings should feature locally native and culturally significant species, enhancing the ecological health of the site and aligning with Caring for Country principles.
- Landforms, garden beds and vegetative edges can be shaped to mirror the flowing nature of Turrumburra (Lane Cove River), supporting a design language that honours the movement of water and life.
- The inclusion of quiet reflection zones for staff or maintenance personnel can offer a moment of connection with Country, even in a limited-access context.

## Interpretive Elements (Internal or Digital)

- Though access is restricted, subtle interpretive gestures can be woven into the internal and external design for the benefit of staff and project partners.
- Discreet signage or digital storytelling features within staff-only areas can share cultural narratives, highlight significant species, or reintroduce language.
- Entry zones or staff facilities could incorporate artworks, inscriptions, or visual motifs developed in consultation with Cammeraygal Knowledge Holders, offering cultural context and continuity for those working on site.

- Site orientation or induction materials may include a Country acknowledgment video or narrative, fostering cultural awareness for all personnel and visitors.

## Materiality and Form

- Even within a highly functional, secure facility, material and design choices can reflect values of place and cultural continuity.
- Use of natural, low-reflective and tactile materials such as sandstone, uncoated timber, or textured concrete can draw visual and sensory connections to the local environment.
- Where feasible, built forms can respond to the natural contours and textures of the landscape, with soft edges and transitions that are mindful of Country.
- The approach to thresholds, entries and interfaces should be understated and respectful, with design language that evokes care for place rather than dominance over it.

## Naming, Wayfinding and Internal Storytelling

- While the site is not public-facing, naming and language inclusion within internal spaces still holds cultural and ethical value.
- Wayfinding systems for staff could incorporate subtle visual cues derived from local motifs such as ripple lines, shell forms or seasonal indicators, referencing Cammeraygal connection to water Country.
- Internal documents, signage, or fit out materials may include dual language phrases or place-based acknowledgements, reinforcing cultural respect in everyday use.

# Design Implementation Recommendations

The Mars Project offers an opportunity to respectfully embed cultural themes and ecological narratives into both the landscape and architectural expression of the site. While the facility itself is secure and not open to the public, its form and footprint sit within a significant cultural landscape. The following recommendations outline opportunities to honour Cammeraygal Country through carefully considered design gestures.

## Landscape Design

The cultural and ecological relationship between the stone fish traps, mullet, middens and golden wattle is a powerful narrative that can inform the site's landscape strategy. These elements reflect deep time practices of seasonal observation, sustainable harvesting, and the reciprocal relationship between people and Country.

- Planting design should reference the flowering of the Golden Wattle (*Acacia* spp.), which traditionally signalled the arrival of mullet in the Lane Cove River. These species can be planted along key movement edges or thresholds, marking seasonal change and reinforcing this natural timekeeping system.
- The layout and form of pathways, swales or retention features may draw inspiration from the shapes and functions of traditional stone fish traps, echoing their looping forms and layered logic of flow and containment.
- Select landscape areas could incorporate midden-inspired materials, such as shell mulch or textural contrasts in stone and gravel, evoking both the physical and symbolic memory of gathering and knowledge-sharing places.

These gestures will not serve as replicas, but as respectful acknowledgements, subtle reminders of Country's rhythms and intelligence, carefully embedded into the site's material language.



## Facade and Architectural Expression

While the facility's form is driven by functionality and security, the building envelope still provides an opportunity to reflect the ripple, tide and flow of the nearby Turrumburra (Lane Cove River), one of the most enduring features of Cammeraygal Country.

- The facade articulation should explore soft, undulating patterns that reflect the movement of water, not only its physical motion, but its metaphorical role in connection, knowledge-sharing and nourishment. This could be achieved through rhythmic cladding elements, textural layering, or shadow-casting fins that subtly shift across the day.
- Ideally horizontal banding, perforated panels or surface modulation could suggest the ebb and flow of tidal water, visually connecting the built form to its estuarine context.
- Colour palettes drawn from the river edge ecology, such as sandstone, pale eucalyptus, and aquatic grey-greens, can ground the structure within the site and visually soften its presence in the landscape.

In combining these elements, the architecture and landscape should aim not to represent Country, but to listen to it, allowing natural and cultural systems to shape form, rhythm and materiality in ways that are contextually grounded and culturally respectful.



# Case Studies & References

# Case Study 1: Integrating Tidal Fish Trap Principles

Tidal fish traps, a sophisticated and sustainable form of Aboriginal aquaculture, have long been used within Australian river systems to harvest fish in harmony with tidal flows. These structures, often made from stone or brush, worked by allowing fish to swim into a constructed enclosure during high tide, only to become trapped as the tide receded. Evidence of such traps, including those found in the Lane Cove River and Middle Harbour in Sydney, demonstrates a deep understanding of river dynamics, seasonal behaviour, and ecological balance. These systems not only sustained communities for thousands of years but also embodied cultural practices, social cooperation, and custodianship of Country.

Incorporating the principles of tidal fish traps into contemporary riverine landscape design offers a meaningful opportunity to honour Aboriginal knowledge while promoting ecological resilience. For instance, landscape architects and environmental planners might draw inspiration from the semi-permeable nature of fish traps, designing rock weirs or constructed wetlands that slow water flow, capture sediment, and enhance fish passage in urban waterways. Such designs can also create refuge areas for native aquatic species, mimic natural tidal cycles, and provide interpretive spaces that educate the public about Indigenous technologies and their relevance in today's environmental context.

By grounding landscape design in the cultural and ecological logic of traditional tidal fish traps, projects can move beyond aesthetics to embed values of sustainability, knowledge sharing, and connection to place. In partnership with Traditional Owners, designers can ensure these features acknowledge local Aboriginal narratives, incorporate interpretive signage, and reflect the form and function of historic fish traps in a respectful and adaptive way. This approach not only celebrates Australia's First Nations engineering ingenuity but also contributes to river health and cultural visibility in the built environment.



Ronnie Jupiter spearing a crab, Bayley Point, on a falling tide, September 1983.



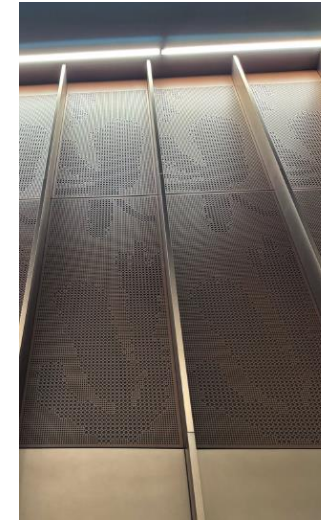
Baiame's Ngunnhu, also known as the Brewarrina Fish Traps.

## Case Study 2: Stories of Place, Waterloo Metro Station

The design of Sydney Metro's Waterloo Station by John McAslan + Partners exemplifies a place-responsive approach to infrastructure, embedding deep connections to local Aboriginal heritage and the environmental history of the area. The station is framed around the concept that "the past is in the earth and the future is in the sky." This guiding principle is expressed architecturally across the station's three levels, with materials, textures and imagery drawn from the landscape's historical and cultural layers.

A striking design feature is the use of bronze-coloured wall linings on the platform level. These panels reference a stone blade artefact uncovered during the station's excavation, an intentional move that links the physical act of unearthing with the uncovering of cultural memory. The warm, metallic tones and etched detail of the linings evoke a sense of reverence and permanence, subtly reminding commuters of the area's deep time history and the long-standing presence of First Nations peoples on Gadigal land.

On the concourse level, design elements turn attention above ground, drawing from the native banksia scrub that once dominated the local landscape. Perforated metal panels depict stylised banksia forms, introducing an organic rhythm and pattern that speaks to natural regeneration and resilience. The inclusion of this botanical motif not only beautifies the space but reinforces an ecological narrative, one that reasserts the living connection between Country and culture, even in the midst of urban transit infrastructure. Together, these layered references offer a station design that is not only functional, but also honouring of place, memory and ongoing cultural presence.



## Case Study 3: Cultural Landscape Garden, South Eveleigh

The Cultural Landscape Garden at South Eveleigh is a compelling example of how Country can be meaningfully re-centred within an urban environment. Co-designed with members of the local Aboriginal community, the garden emerged through a collaborative process that included on-Country field trips, species selection, and cultural consultation. The resulting landscape is one that goes far beyond aesthetics, it actively supports the reintroduction of cultural land management practices, seasonal harvesting, and ecological education. The integration of edible plants within food forests and perennial meadows invites both responsible interaction and deeper reflection on traditional relationships with land.

Winding paths are enveloped by massed plantings of regionally significant species, including vulnerable flora from the Sydney Basin. These corridors are not merely for circulation, they serve as interpretive routes for local Aboriginal tour guides to share cultural knowledge, stories, and place-based practices. Designed spaces for contemplation and small gatherings are organically embedded throughout the garden, providing quiet places of rest and learning. These spaces also double as microhabitats, reinforcing the garden's commitment to supporting both people and wildlife, and functioning as an urban seed bank that supports ongoing restoration and resilience.

A particularly powerful feature of the Cultural Landscape Garden is its seating design, which draws inspiration from shell middens; ancient deposits that record thousands of years of coastal life, ceremony and sustenance. These seating elements are not decorative, but rather sculptural reminders of cultural continuity. They symbolise the act of gathering, of listening and learning, and honour the material history of Aboriginal occupation. When paired with the scent of eucalyptus in the air and the textures of native plantings underfoot, the garden becomes not just a green space, but a living archive of cultural memory and ecological knowledge, a place where Country is not only acknowledged, but actively sustained.



# Informing Documents

- Connecting with Country, Government Architect NSW  
<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/connecting-with-country.pdf>
- Designing with Country, Government Architect New South Wales  
<https://www.aidr.org.au/media/7760/designing-with-country-discussion-paper.pdf>
- Aboriginal Cultural Values, An Approach for Engaging with Country, Dr Daniele Hromek  
[https://djinjama.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Engaging-with-Country\\_Daniele-Hromek.pdf](https://djinjama.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Engaging-with-Country_Daniele-Hromek.pdf)
- Walanga Wingara Mura Design Principles, University of Sydney  
[https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/about-us/values-and-visions/aboriginal-and-torres-straight-islander-community/wingara-mura-design-principles\\_2020\\_v9\\_web.pdf](https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/about-us/values-and-visions/aboriginal-and-torres-straight-islander-community/wingara-mura-design-principles_2020_v9_web.pdf)
- Cultural Principles and Protocols for Designers, Dr Danièle Hromek and Dr Terri Janke  
[https://djinjama.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Cultural-Design-Principles-and-Protocols\\_Hromek-and-Janke.pdf](https://djinjama.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Cultural-Design-Principles-and-Protocols_Hromek-and-Janke.pdf)
- First Nations Peoples of the Parramatta River and surrounding region  
[https://www.ourlivingriver.com.au/content/uploads/2023/12/First-Nations-Peoples-of-the-Parramatta-River-and-surrounding-region\\_lo-res.pdf](https://www.ourlivingriver.com.au/content/uploads/2023/12/First-Nations-Peoples-of-the-Parramatta-River-and-surrounding-region_lo-res.pdf)
- Aboriginal Heritage, North Sydney Council  
<https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/103/coal-loader-guide-chapter-2-aboriginal-heritage>
- Lycett Collection, National Library of Australia  
<https://www.library.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/guides-selected-collections/lycett-collection>
- Project Mars Data Centre - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report, Artefact Heritage and Environment



Proudly located on Gadigal Land, Bay 5-7 North, 2 Locomotive St, Eveleigh NSW 2015

Call 1300 932 820 | Email [connect@tikaeq.com](mailto:connect@tikaeq.com) | Visit [www.tikaeq.com](http://www.tikaeq.com)