



Kogarah Golf Course Redevelopment

Connecting with Country

Country-Centred Design & Cultural Integration Framework

November 2025

Prepared by 
ngurra
advisory 



Acknowledgement of Country

Ngurra Advisory and the project team acknowledge the Bidjigal people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Kogarah Golf Course redevelopment will take place.

We recognise their enduring connection to the tidal flats, mangrove systems, sandstone headlands, saltwater pathways, and river landscapes that continue to shape this part of the Cooks River.

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

We honour the stories, knowledge, and cultural practices that have been generously shared with us through engagement, and we commit to embedding these values into the design, delivery, and long-term stewardship of this project.

Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property Rights

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

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

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

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

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Project Overview

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

3. Community Engagement

4. Design Principles

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

5. Opportunities

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

6. Implementation & Action Plan

7. Ongoing Evaluation and Accountability

Disclaimer: The information contained in this report is specific to the property located at Kogarah Golf Course, 19 Marsh Street, Arncliffe, NSW.

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

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

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

A Message from Ngurra Advisory

Designing with Country acknowledges Aboriginal peoples' deep and enduring knowledge systems, ways of being, knowing, and doing that have guided sustainable relationships with land and water for thousands of generations. It is more than a methodology. It is a commitment to truth, understanding, and education, ensuring that cultural heritage is recognised, valued, and embedded in the places we shape.

A genuine connection with Country goes beyond consultation. It requires relationships, reciprocity, and responsibility. This Framework is not only about how we design spaces, but how we build respect, trust, and shared stewardship with the communities and Countries we work alongside. By grounding decision-making in the wisdom of Country, we create environments that are functional and sustainable, while also culturally and spiritually meaningful.

For the Kogarah Golf Course Redevelopment on Bidjigal Country, we encourage approaches that uphold cultural values, restore ecological health, and strengthen visibility and opportunities for local Aboriginal communities. This work is not just a responsibility, it is our collective commitment to ensuring that future generations inherit a deeper, stronger, and more connected relationship with Country.



Amy Barnes
Managing Director



Mat Cornwell
Managing Director

Introduction

This Connecting with Country Framework has been developed to guide the design, delivery, and long-term operation of the proposed redevelopment of the Kogarah Golf Course precinct, undertaken in partnership with Stockland and John Boyd. Located on Bidjigal Country, along the tidal flats, mangrove systems, saltmarsh edges, and waterways of the Cooks River, the framework ensures that Aboriginal knowledge, cultural values, and community aspirations are meaningfully embedded into every stage of the project. It honours the deep and enduring connection of the Bidjigal people to this landscape.

This area holds profound spiritual, ecological, and cultural significance for the Bidjigal people. The project presents a unique opportunity to demonstrate respect for Country by integrating Aboriginal knowledge systems, cultural narratives, and community priorities into the design, construction, and long-term stewardship of this evolving precinct.

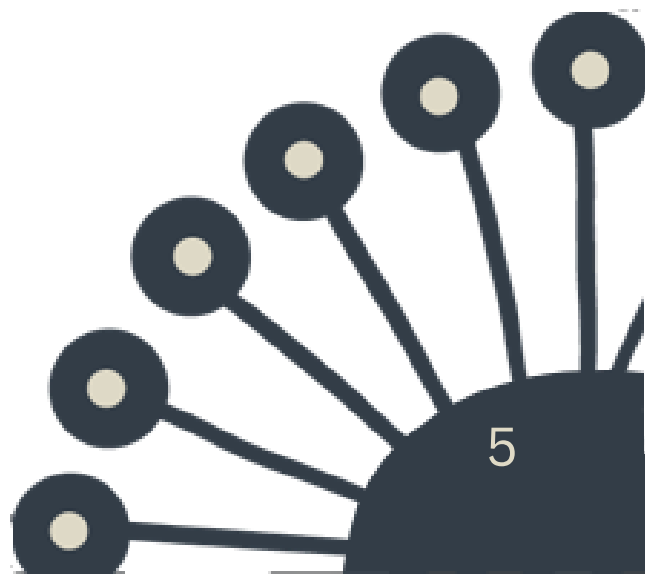
The redevelopment represents a major opportunity within the Bayside and Georges River region, transforming a significant public-facing site into a place that is inclusive, sustainable, culturally grounded, and environmentally restorative. The project will strengthen community connection, respond to the ecological rhythms of the Cooks River, and create spaces that respect Country, increase cultural visibility, and support local community wellbeing.

The proposal meets the criteria for assessment as a State Significant Development Application (SSDA). As part of this process, the project will undergo review by the State Design Review Panel (SDRP). Achieving design excellence is therefore paramount, ensuring that cultural values, environmental performance, sustainability, and high-quality place outcomes are rigorously tested, validated, and upheld throughout all stages of planning and design.

Located within an area undergoing coordinated renewal, the project aligns with local and regional planning priorities, contributing to recreational improvements, ecological restoration, economic activation, and enhanced public access to green and blue spaces.

Ngurra Advisory has been engaged to lead and support the Connecting with Country process, working alongside Bidjigal Traditional Custodians, Elders, and Knowledge Holders. Through Reconnection to Country sessions, Visioning Workshops, Walks on Country, and forthcoming Validation Workshops, the voices, experiences, and cultural authority of the Bidjigal community are being embedded into the design framework and will continue to guide decisions through delivery and long-term operations.

Importantly, this redevelopment presents a critical opportunity to lead by example, embedding respect for Country, elevating Bidjigal cultural presence, and ensuring that culturally responsive design principles shape the heart of a major precinct transformation. In doing so, this Framework aligns with Stockland's Designing with Country and Reconciliation Action Plan commitments, ensuring that cultural values are not only acknowledged but actively woven into governance, design, delivery, and ongoing care for Country.



Project Overview



Site Background

The site at 19 Marsh Street, Arncliffe, formerly the Kogarah Golf Course, is located on the lands of the Bidjigal people, whose cultural, spiritual, and ecological connections to the Cooks River stretch back thousands of generations.

Positioned along the tidal reaches of the Cooks River, the site forms part of a wider cultural landscape shaped by mangroves, saltmarsh, estuarine flats, sandstone edges, and freshwater creeks. These interconnected environments have long supported Bidjigal cultural practices such as fishing, gathering, seasonal movement, and ceremony. For Bidjigal people, this landscape is a living cultural system that holds memory, knowledge, and identity.

The Cooks River served as a cultural pathway, linking communities and providing a place for meeting, travel, and exchange. Seasonal shifts in water movement, birdlife, and plant cycles continue to teach about the health and rhythms of Country. Despite urbanisation and modification of the river, Bidjigal Custodians maintain enduring connections to this place and continue to advocate for cultural recognition, ecological restoration, and respectful development.

The redevelopment of the Kogarah Golf Course precinct presents a meaningful opportunity to honour these connections. As the site transforms, it carries both responsibility and potential: to care for the river's ecosystems, strengthen cultural visibility, and embed Bidjigal stories and values into public spaces and design outcomes.

By grounding the project in Traditional Custodian knowledge, cultural protocols, and place-based storytelling, this redevelopment can contribute to cultural safety, ecological healing, and long-term stewardship of this important part of Bidjigal Country.

Project Team

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

Developer

John Boyd Properties: A key project partner in a 50/50 joint venture with Stockland, working together to deliver the redevelopment of the Kogarah Golf Course precinct.

Development Partner

Stockland: A joint venture partner leading the planning and delivery of the precinct, bringing expertise in large-scale urban development and long-term place stewardship.



Architect

Grimshaw Architects: Grimshaw is the lead architect for the project, responsible for shaping the built form and ensuring the design responds to Country, community, and environmental context.

GRIMSHAW

Landscape Architect

Moir Studios: is the landscape architect for the project, guiding the integration of cultural values, ecological restoration, and place-based design across the public realm and open spaces.



Connecting with Country and Community Engagement Consultants

Ngurra Advisory: Leading engagement with Bidjigal Traditional Custodians and embedding cultural values, knowledge systems, and community aspirations throughout the project.



Traditional Custodians

Aunty Barb Simms: a highly respected Bidjigal Elder and Knowledge Holder, provides cultural guidance and insight to ensure the project honours Bidjigal Country, history, and community values.

Aunty Margie: is a respected Bidjigal Elder who brings deep cultural values and lived experience to the project, ensuring decisions remain grounded in connection to Country and community.

Together, this diverse team is committed to delivering a development that meets architectural and environmental standards and fosters cultural respect, understanding, and a strong sense of belonging for all who engage with the space.

Project Vision

This project sits on Bidjigal Country, a place rich in culture, history, and deep-time connection. Our vision is that this redevelopment honours the enduring relationship the Bidjigal people hold with the Cooks River, its tidal flows, mangrove systems, saltmarsh, sandstone edges, and the more-than-human kin who continue to live within this landscape. We seek to ensure that the knowledge, stories, and responsibilities carried by Ancestors guide this project so that Country is respected, celebrated, and cared for, now and for generations to come.

This redevelopment is more than a change in land use; it is a place of Country, where cultural values shape the way people move, gather, learn, and connect. Through thoughtful design, the precinct will reflect the rhythms of saltwater Country, the teachings of birds and tides, and the ongoing presence of Bidjigal custodianship. Pathways will follow the logic of water and movement; planting will mirror seasonal cycles; and public spaces will offer opportunities for gathering, reflection, and cultural expression.

The colours and textures of Country will guide the character of the precinct, drawing from the warm tones of sandstone, the deep greens of mangroves, the silvers of saltmarsh grasses, the blues of tidal waters, and the soft pinks, oranges, and golds of sunrise, alongside the purples, reds, and deepening blues of sunset. These colours reflect the daily cycles that have guided Bidjigal people for thousands of years, grounding the project in the living palette of this Country.

Naming places, paths, and features in Bidjigal language will return cultural visibility and identity to this landscape. Language will act as a living presence across the site, a daily reminder of whose Country this is, encouraging recognition, learning, and ongoing connection.

Visitors and community members will experience Country through all five senses, the sound of water moving through restored tidal edges, the scent of native plants and salt on the air, the warmth of natural materials, the colours of seasonal flowering, and the tactile textures of stone, bark, and vegetation. Mangrove-inspired forms, tidal references, and shoreline textures will honour the ecosystems that have long sustained Bidjigal people. Sculptures drawing from Bidjigal cultural artefacts, along with culturally grounded wayfinding along the foreshore, will guide movement and return cultural narratives visibly into the public realm. Spaces for yarning, rest, and cultural practice will ensure the spirit and energy of Country are felt across the site.

We hope this redevelopment will reflect the strength, resilience, and ongoing responsibilities of the Bidjigal community, while supporting new opportunities for all who live, work, and gather here. By working together in respect and partnership, we are creating a place that promotes truth-telling, cultural visibility, ecological restoration, and healing.

We are committed to ongoing collaboration and care, ensuring this precinct grows as a place of pride, learning, and connection for Bidjigal people and the wider community. It is our hope that this project will stand as a symbol of respect, reconciliation, and shared responsibility for Country, and a lasting legacy for future generations.

This vision has been shaped with the guidance, cultural insight, and lived experience generously shared by Aunty Barb and Aunty Margie, whose leadership and knowledge continue to ground this project in the values of Bidjigal Country.

About this Country

The Bidjigal people are the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters surrounding the lower Cooks River, Botany Bay, and parts of the Georges River system, including the area now known as Arncliffe and the former Kogarah Golf Course. For tens of thousands of years, Bidjigal people have lived in close relationship with the tidal flats, mangrove forests, saltmarsh, sandstone formations, and freshwater creek systems that define this Country.

The Cooks River has long been a cultural pathway, a place of movement, gathering, and exchange. Along its banks, people travelled between saltwater and freshwater, stopping at fishing grounds, meeting places, and resource-rich ecologies that sustained community life. These pathways were not only physical but also cultural, woven into Songlines, ceremony, trade networks, and shared responsibilities for caring for land and water.

This landscape once supported abundant mangrove forests, shellfish beds, fish nurseries, tidal mudflats, and coastal scrublands that provided food, medicine, fibre, and tools for daily life. Seasonal cycles, tidal rhythms, and the behaviours of birds and marine species guided movement, harvesting, and cultural practice. Knowledge of sky Country, including stars, winds, and celestial markers, informed navigation, fishing patterns, and connections across the broader Botany Bay region.

Water is central to Bidjigal Country

The sound, flow, and memory of water continue to hold cultural significance, carried through the river, tidal inlets, and remnant creek lines that run beneath the modern landscape. The smell of salt on the air, the texture of mangrove bark, and the crunch of shell beneath the feet reflect how Country is experienced, remembered, and understood through all the senses.

Despite the extensive modification of the Cooks River through dredging, channelisation, land reclamation, and urbanisation, the Bidjigal community has maintained a strong and enduring connection to this place. Their stories, cultural practices, and responsibilities to Country continue today, with Custodians actively advocating for the protection, restoration, and celebration of their heritage.

Cultural markers such as tidal zones, remnant mangroves, dunes, and sandstone outcrops remain important places of memory, anchoring Bidjigal presence in the contemporary landscape.

The surrounding Bayside and Georges River areas also continue to support a growing and diverse Aboriginal community. According to the 2021 ABS Census, the Bayside LGA recorded 3,797 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, representing 2.2% of the population, reflecting the strong ongoing presence of First Nations families in this region.

Today, Bidjigal people and their descendants remain deeply connected to this Country, continuing to share cultural knowledge, advocate for ecological healing, and uphold responsibilities to care for land, waterways, and sky. The redevelopment of this precinct offers an important opportunity to honour their living presence, restore cultural landscapes, and strengthen visibility and recognition of Bidjigal identity in this place.

Community Engagement Summary

Who we engaged

Ngurra Advisory worked with Bidjigal Elders and Knowledge Holders, including Aunty Barb and Aunty Marjorie Simms, whose cultural knowledge and lived experience guided the development of this Framework.

When & Where

Engagement took place between July and October 2025 and involved Walks on Country, site visits, yarning sessions, and collaborative workshops focused on culturally respectful dialogue. These sessions created space for Custodians to share stories, identify cultural values, and guide meaningful ways of connecting with Country across the project.

How we engaged

Engagement included a Reconnection to Country session, a Visioning Workshop, a Walk on Country, and on-site yarning. These sessions provided cultural insight, identified key values, and supported the integration of Bidjigal perspectives into the project's design direction.

Engagement & Consultation

Our Engagement Approach

Our approach to engagement for the Kogarah Golf Course Redevelopment is grounded in deep respect for the Bidjigal people, the Traditional Custodians of this Country. Ngurra Advisory has worked closely with Aunty Barb Aunty Marjorie Simms, listening to their cultural knowledge, lived experience, and guidance to ensure that Bidjigal values and aspirations are meaningfully embedded throughout the project.

Our engagement approach moves beyond consultation. It is a genuine partnership where Bidjigal voices guide the project's vision, cultural themes, design directions, and future operations. The project team has participated in Walks on Country, Visioning Workshops, on-site yarning sessions, and cultural discussions to deepen their understanding of Bidjigal culture, the significance of saltwater Country, mangroves, tidal landscapes, and the broader cultural systems connected to Botany Bay and the Cooks River region. These experiences have supported cultural capability across the team and reinforced the project's commitment to Country-led design.

Insights shared by Custodians have directly informed the development of the Connecting with Country Design Principles Framework, outlining cultural themes, design priorities, and pathways for cultural visibility and ecological restoration. This Framework has guided early design concepts and will continue to shape long-term planning, ensuring the redevelopment honours and sustains the living cultural connection of the Bidjigal people to this place.

Outcome of Engagement

Engagement with Bidjigal Custodians, particularly Aunty Marjorie Simms and Aunty Barb, has been central to shaping the Connecting with Country Framework. Through on-Country experiences, collaborative workshops, and culturally grounded dialogue, the following key outcomes have been achieved:

Cultural Themes Confirmed

Key cultural themes identified through engagement include:

- Honouring Bidjigal Country
- Tidal Movement and Saltwater Systems
- Water as Memory, Life, and Teaching
- Daily Cycles of Light (Sunrise/Sunset) and Sky Country
- Living Cultural Presence and Community Legacy

Engagement & Consultation

Integration Into Design

Custodian insights have informed architecture, landscape design, and public realm outcomes, including:

- Use of Country's colour palette, sandstone, mangrove greens, saltmarsh silvers, sunrise and sunset tones.
- Foreshore-inspired forms and landscape textures referencing mangroves, tidal edges, and shoreline ecologies.
- Sculptures and wayfinding inspired by Bidjigal cultural artefacts.
- Five-senses design (sound of water, scent of native plants, warm natural materials, tactile stone and bark, seasonal colour) to strengthen lived connection to Country.
- Bidjigal language naming opportunities across pathways, features, and public spaces.

Traditional Custodian and Aboriginal Community Involvement

Custodians have played a central role in shaping the Framework, ensuring cultural integrity and authenticity. Engagement has also identified opportunities for:

- Ongoing cultural governance
- Cultural restoration initiatives
- Aboriginal employment, training, and economic participation
- Community partnerships and long-term cultural programs

Strengthened Cultural Capability

Walks on Country, workshops, and cultural dialogues have strengthened the cultural capability of the project team, enhancing understanding across architecture, landscape, environment, engineering, and planning disciplines.

Validated Cultural Framework

The draft Connecting with Country Design Principles Framework has been reviewed with Custodians to ensure alignment with Bidjigal values, stories, and cultural aspirations.

Commitment to Ongoing Partnership

There is a shared commitment to ongoing partnership with the Bidjigal community, supported by mechanisms for long-term collaboration, cultural guidance, and accountability.

Engagement & Consultation

Future Engagement

As the project progresses, engagement will continue with Bidjigal Custodians and the wider Aboriginal community. This will include:

- Additional workshops to integrate and refine cultural concepts.
- Engagement with specialist Aboriginal consultants, including language experts, artists, and knowledge holders in areas such as water, landscape, cultural healing, and interpretation.
- Cultural Immersion sessions to deepen the team's understanding of native plants, ecosystems, and cultural practices.
- Finalisation of the Country-Centred Design & Cultural Integration Framework.
- Development of a detailed Action Plan to embed Connecting with Country principles through design, construction, and operations.

Cultural Protocols and Knowledge Sharing

All engagement is conducted respectfully and in alignment with Bidjigal cultural protocols. Knowledge shared by Custodians has been provided with permission and treated with care. Consideration will be given to a Smoking Ceremony at the commencement of construction to honour and cleanse Country for safe progression.

The project team will continue to uphold Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) protections, ensuring stories, language, symbols, and cultural knowledge remain the property of the Bidjigal people and are used only with informed consent and only for this project. This approach safeguards cultural integrity and ensures that community ownership and authority are respected.

First Nations Working Group

To ensure cultural knowledge and community voices remain central throughout design, delivery, and ongoing operation, a First Nations Working Group will be established. This group will include Bidjigal Traditional Custodians, Elders, Knowledge Holders, and representatives from the broader local Aboriginal community. The Working Group will act as a cultural advisory body, ensuring the project continues to honour Country, supports community aspirations, and embeds ongoing cultural guidance.



Design Principles

Architecture & Built Form

Landscape & Open Space



Architecture & Built Form

This section explores how buildings respond to Country through their form, materiality, and relationship to the surrounding landscape. It considers how structures can reflect cultural narratives, respect tidal ecologies and natural topography, and integrate sustainable design principles to create places that are connected, meaningful, and enduring.

Response to Country

The architectural approach for the Kogarah Golf Course Redevelopment is grounded in a deep respect for Bidjigal Country, recognising the site's cultural, ecological, and spiritual significance.

Design narratives are shaped by an understanding of Country as a living entity, where land, water, sky, plants, animals, and people are interconnected, and where movement, gathering, and memory continue to guide how place is understood.

The project honours the tidal landscape, the cultural significance of saltwater systems, the memory of water in former creek lines, and the ecological relationships embedded in mangroves, saltmarsh, estuarine birds, and daily cycles of light across Botany Bay.

Buildings and public spaces are envisioned as extensions of Country, responding to tidal rhythms, seasonal cues, and cultural teachings shared by Bidjigal Custodians. Design draws from sunrise and sunset colours, the textures of mangrove roots and sandstone, and the movement patterns of water, birds, and people.

Key cultural design responses include:

Acknowledgement of Country

Design elements honour Bidjigal stories, language, and cultural presence.

Examples of integration:

- Cultural acknowledgement statements and interpretive markers in Bidjigal language.
- Subtle incorporation of Bidjigal motifs, patterns, and narratives within built form and interior surfaces.
- Storytelling elements positioned at key entry points and along movement corridors.
-

Cultural Safety and Inclusivity

Buildings and public spaces are designed to welcome, gather, and support ongoing connection to Country.

Examples of integration:

- Yarning and gathering spaces designed with shade, seating, and connection to natural elements.
- Accessible pathways reflecting movement lines inspired by tidal flow and cultural routes.
- Interpretive surfaces and storytelling nodes that express stories of water, salt, birds, sky, and Country.

Reading Landform, Movement & Tidal Systems

Built form responds to the flat tidal landscape and the historical movement pathways shaped by water and shoreline ecologies.

Examples of integration:

- Structures and pathways that follow the logic of water, referencing tidal flow and meandering creek lines.
- Building alignment informed by cultural movement routes and sightlines to sunrise and sunset.
- Terraces and edges opening to views toward water, mangroves, and sky, reinforcing cultural and ecological relationships.

Revitalising Language, Stories & Cultural Identity

Architecture and landscape elements reconnect people with Bidjigal cultural narratives.

• Examples of integration:

- Etched paving patterns reflecting tidal ripples, shell middens, and cultural pathways.
- Wayfinding elements incorporating Bidjigal language, bringing cultural visibility back into the public realm.
- Sculptural forms inspired by Bidjigal artefacts, designed in collaboration with local artists and Custodians.

Sky Country & Daily Cycles of Light

Design reflects cultural relationships to sky, light, wind, and daily cycle.

Examples of integration:

- Lighting design inspired by star patterns, moon cycles, or stories associated with sky Country.
- Orientation of communal and gathering spaces toward key sunrise and sunset alignments.
- Facade elements capturing the shifting colours of early morning and late afternoon light.



Materiality and Textures

Finishes reflect the colours and textures of saltwater Country, grounded in local ecology.

Examples of integration:

- Warm sandstone tones, mangrove greens, saltmarsh silvers, and sunrise/sunset hues within the built form palette.
- Natural materials such as stone, timber, and textured surfaces that echo the tactile quality of mangrove bark, sand, and shell.
- Use of soft, earthy finishes that feel welcoming and reflect the sensory experience of Country, touch, warmth, texture, and sound.



Landscape & Open Space

This section outlines how the natural environment, planting strategies, materiality, and public realm design respond to Bidjigal Country. It considers how cultural narratives, ecological systems, and sensory experiences can be embedded into the landscape to create places that reflect, respect, and sustain the deep connection between people, the environment, and Country.

Response to Country

The landscape response recognises this place as Bidjigal saltwater Country, shaped by tidal estuaries, mangrove forests, saltmarsh habitat, and the former freshwater creeks that once meandered through the area. The design seeks to re-establish these ecological and cultural layers through native planting, water-sensitive design, and foreshore activation that honours the memory of tidal flows, shellfish beds, and shoreline ecosystems.

Planting selections draw from species linked to the region's estuarine environment and cultural use, including Coastal Banksia, Lomandra, Dianella, Pigface, Mat Rush, Salt Couch, and native grasses, reconnecting the site to its natural systems. These species support pollinators, small birds, and insects that remain important cultural indicators for Bidjigal people.

The public domain is envisioned as a place of cultural safety, gathering, and sensory connection. Raingardens, swales, and naturalised water elements reflect the memory of water as life and teaching. Yarning spaces, shaded seating, and tactile pathways invite movement, rest, and deeper engagement with Country.

Along the foreshore, the landscape becomes an activated cultural corridor. Sculptures inspired by Bidjigal artefacts, interpretive wayfinding, and habitat-focused planting will tell the story of Country through texture, sound, scent, and movement. This ensures the shoreline once again becomes a place for gathering, cultural expression, and ecological renewal.

Key cultural design responses include:

Water as Memory and Life

Water is honoured as a carrier of memory, identity, and cultural teaching.

Examples of integration:

- Water features and textured finishes recalling tidal movement and former creek lines.
- Raingardens and swales mirroring natural drainage and cultural cycles of cleansing and renewal.
- Sensory water elements (sound, vibration, reflection) creating intuitive, immersive connections to Country.

Landscape and Planting

Endemic and culturally relevant species reflect local ecosystems and support ecological resilience.

Examples of integration:

- Planting palette with Coastal Banksia, Lomandra, Dianella, Kangaroo Grass, Pigface, and Mat Rush, reflecting saltwater and estuarine environments.
- Seasonal flowering and textural foliage connecting people to cycles of time and memory.
- Bush tucker species incorporated for cultural learning and interpretation.

Home for Humans and More-than-Human Kin

The site is acknowledged as a shared habitat for people, animals, plants, and spiritual kin.

Examples of integration:

- Habitat structures such as pollinator gardens, insect hotels, and small bird nesting zones.
- Lighting design that protects nocturnal species while maintaining safety.
- Planting that restores ecological function and biodiversity across the site.

Foreshore Activation & Storytelling

The foreshore becomes a living cultural landscape, reconnecting people to saltwater Country.

Examples of integration:

- Sculptures reflecting Bidjigal artefacts placed along the shoreline.
- Wayfinding inspired by tidal rhythms, shell middens, and cultural pathways, incorporating Bidjigal language.
- Seating, lookout points, and cultural markers designed to experience sunrise, sunset, and tidal movement.
- Planting and materials selected to amplify sensory experiences, the smell of salt, texture of stone, sound of water, and shifting light of the estuary.



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Cultural Safety and Gathering Spaces

Outdoor spaces support welcome, ceremony, storytelling, and connection.

Examples of integration:

- Yarning circles and shaded rest areas grounded in natural materials.
- Inclusive public spaces for community gathering, cultural practice, and intergenerational learning.
- Pathways designed as interpretive journeys, connecting land, water, sky, and cultural stories.



Opportunities

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

Opportunities



Opportunities for Aboriginal Participation and Community Benefits

The Kogarah Golf Course Redevelopment presents a significant opportunity to create lasting social, cultural, and economic outcomes for the Bidjigal community and the wider Aboriginal population in the Bayside and Georges River region. By working in partnership with Bidjigal Custodians, Aboriginal organisations, and community stakeholders, the project can embed meaningful opportunities across every stage of its lifecycle. These include employment, skills development, procurement, and broader community benefits that support self-determination, strengthen local capacity, and honour cultural connections to Country.

Employment

Bidjigal Custodians have expressed a strong desire to see Aboriginal employment opportunities embedded throughout the project, particularly during the construction phase, which offers a vital entry point into long-term economic participation. By creating targeted employment pathways, the project can support sustainable careers across construction, landscaping, cultural landscaping, retail, hospitality, and precinct operations.

Beyond Construction

There is also significant opportunity to engage future tenants, operators, retail businesses, hospitality venues, and precinct management teams to ensure Aboriginal employment continues into the operational phase of the project. Embedding culturally appropriate recruitment practices, partnerships with Aboriginal employment agencies, and reconciliation commitments will support consistent Aboriginal participation after construction is complete.

Employment & Skills Development

EXAMPLE:

Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Skills and Employment Pathways Program

The project presents an opportunity to establish a Youth Skills & Employment Pathways Program specifically supporting Bidjigal young people and the broader local Aboriginal community. This would be a proactive, community-led initiative embedded throughout the project, not an offset.

Key Features

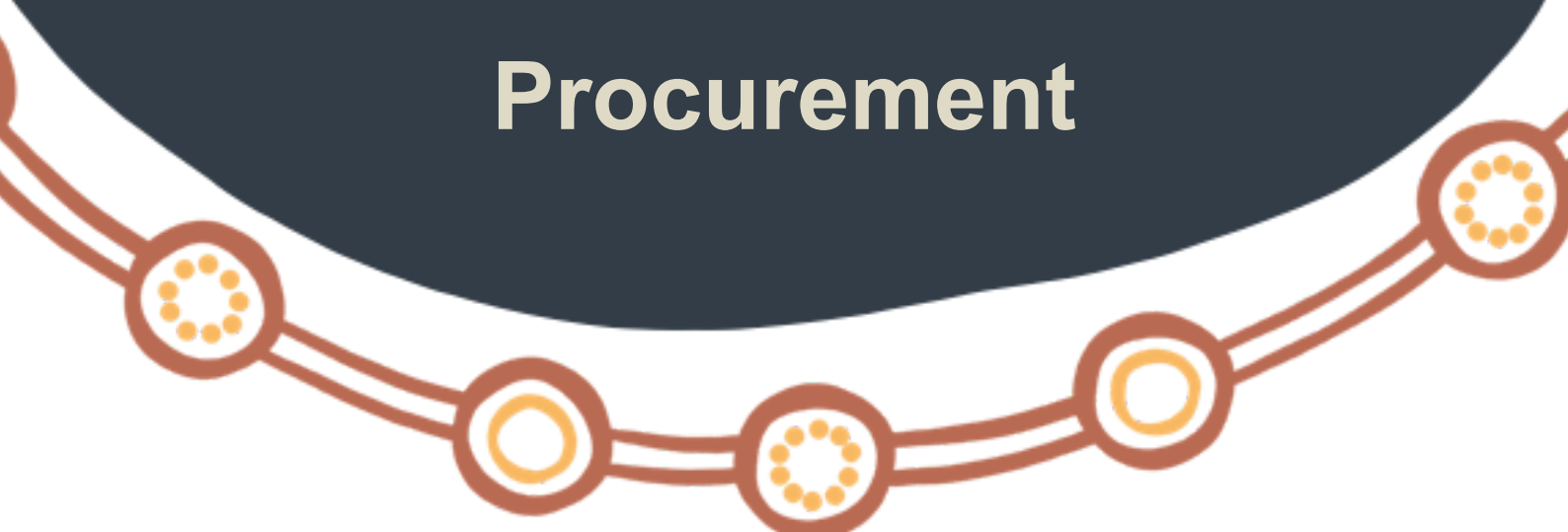
- Pre-employment training in construction, hospitality, retail, building management, and work health and safety (including White Card certification).
- On-site work experience opportunities, including landscaping, cultural landscaping, traffic control, materials handling, and construction support.
- Pathways into long-term roles within the completed precinct—such as facilities management, property services, retail, administration, and precinct operations.
- Ongoing mentoring, pastoral care, and upskilling delivered with Aboriginal training providers including TAFE NSW and Aboriginal Employment Strategy.
- Partnerships with local schools and colleges to create internships, apprenticeships, school-based traineeships, and long-term career pathways.

This program would be co-designed with Bidjigal Elders, Aboriginal organisations, and community leaders to ensure cultural integrity and meaningful benefit.



Kyle from Doolan Plumbing receiving 2023 Indigenous Apprentice of the Year from Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre (PICAC)

Procurement



Community Aspirations

Traditional Custodians expressed a strong preference for Aboriginal-owned and -led businesses to be meaningfully engaged throughout the project. Social procurement presents a tangible opportunity to reflect community aspirations, support Aboriginal economic growth, and create lasting value.

Project partners are encouraged to utilise Aboriginal business directories such as Supply Nation, YARPA NSW Indigenous Business & Employment Hub, and the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce to identify Aboriginal suppliers.

Where possible, local Aboriginal businesses should be prioritised, particularly those based in the La Perouse and Bayside region.

Examples of Implementation

- Sourcing native plants from IndigiGrow, a local Aboriginal-owned nursery at La Perouse, ensuring planting directly supports cultural revitalisation, biodiversity, and local Aboriginal economies.
- Engaging Aboriginal-owned trade and service providers, creating direct employment and supporting community capacity-building.
- Developing ongoing procurement opportunities post-completion, such as contracts for landscaping, ecological monitoring, and water testing, areas where Aboriginal businesses are well positioned to lead.

Specialist Procurement Support

The project team may also benefit from a dedicated Aboriginal procurement consultancy to provide culturally informed guidance on supplier identification, procurement matching, and integrity of engagement practices.

This approach ensures procurement is intentional, transparent, and aligned with Bidjigal cultural values, and supports broader ESG and cultural aspirations for the precinct.

Caring for Country

Caring for Country

Caring for Country is a deeply rooted cultural practice that reflects the spiritual, physical, social, and emotional connections Aboriginal peoples have with their ancestral lands, waters, skies, and all living beings. Country includes everything, plants, animals, waterways, air, seasons, winds, ancestors, and stories.

When Country is cared for, communities thrive. When Country is damaged, community wellbeing is impacted.

Caring for Country includes:

- Cultural land and water management practices
- Protecting native flora and fauna
- Restoring ecosystems through cultural and scientific knowledge
- Practising ceremony and strengthening spiritual connection
- Passing knowledge to future generations

Development must respect and uphold these practices by working with Traditional Custodians, enabling cultural access, and embedding Country-led principles into land management and design.

Caring for Country in This Project

The Kogarah Golf Course Redevelopment sits on Bidjigal saltwater Country, historically shaped by tidal flats, mangroves, mudflats, and estuarine ecologies connected to Botany Bay. Urbanisation has significantly altered these systems, impacting ecological health and cultural visibility.

Through this project, opportunities exist to:

- Restore native plant communities
- Embed water-sensitive design reflecting tidal movement and the memory of former creeks
- Create culturally safe gathering places that honour the living presence of Country
- Strengthen biodiversity, including pollinators, small birds, insects, and aquatic species
- Reinforce sensory experiences through sound, scent, texture, and light

All interventions should be guided by Bidjigal Custodians, ensuring that ecological restoration and cultural knowledge work together.

Community Benefits



Community Give-Back Package

To acknowledge cultural and environmental impacts, the project may consider establishing a Community Give-Back Package co-designed with Bidjigal Custodians. Potential components include:

Cultural Contribution

- Commissioning a local Aboriginal artist to create public art and interpretive elements reflecting Bidjigal stories.
- Integrating artworks within public spaces, pathways, and foreshore elements.
- Ensuring artists are appropriately acknowledged and protected through ICIP protocols.

Community Benefit Fund

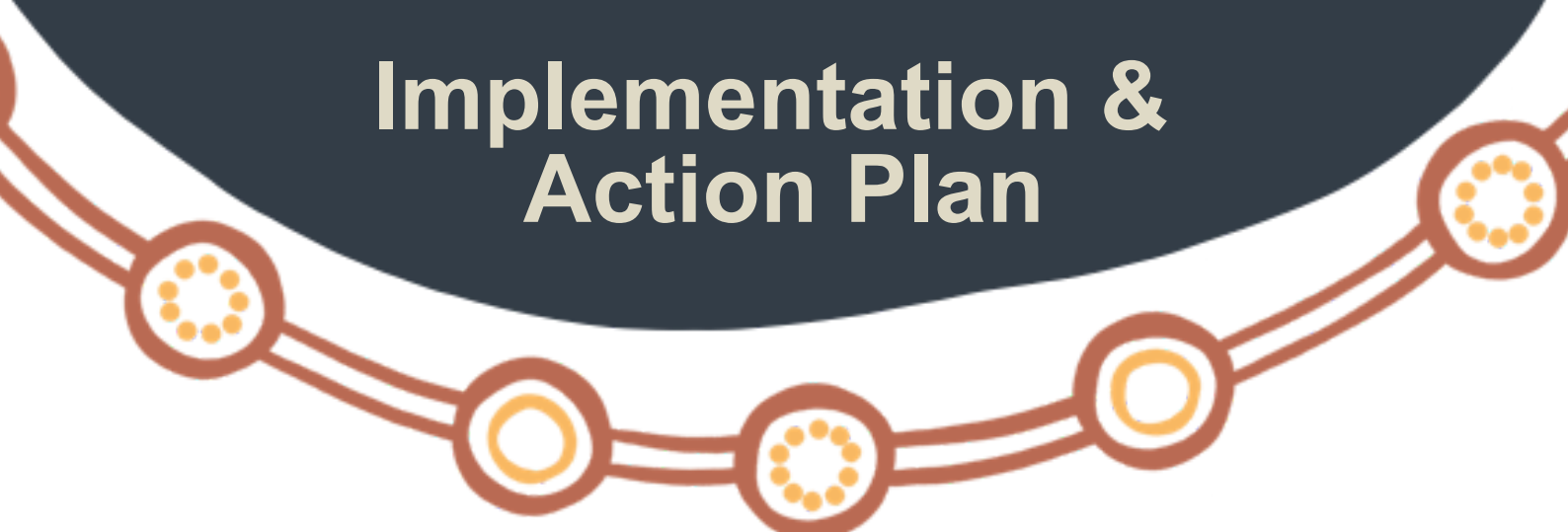
A dedicated fund supporting Bidjigal community-led initiatives, such as:

- Cultural and language revival
- Youth programs and education
- Health and wellbeing initiatives
- Environmental stewardship and ecological restoration

Cultural Protocols and Visibility

- Use of Bidjigal language in naming, wayfinding, and interpretation
- Smoking Ceremony at key project milestones
- Cultural inductions for project workers

Implementation & Action Plan



To support the delivery of the Country-Centred Design & Cultural Integration Framework, a detailed Action Plan will be developed to embed Bidjigal cultural principles across the project's architecture, landscape, foreshore, and public domain. This plan will establish clear milestones, responsibilities, and timelines, providing a structured pathway for translating cultural values into practical, measurable outcomes.

The Action Plan will ensure that key themes, such as cultural storytelling, ecological restoration, sustainable design, sensory connection to saltwater Country, and the use of Bidjigal language, are realised throughout the built and natural environment. It will guide implementation across all phases of the project, from concept design through construction and long-term operations, ensuring cultural priorities remain central to decision-making.

A core function of the Action Plan is to enable ongoing collaboration with a First Nations Working Group, comprising Bidjigal Custodians, Elders, Knowledge Holders, and local Aboriginal community representatives. This group will provide cultural oversight, ensure authenticity, uphold protocol, and guide the project team in maintaining cultural integrity.

Designed as a living document, the Action Plan will evolve as the project progresses, allowing it to adapt to new insights, innovations, and Custodian guidance. In doing so, the project ensures that Connecting with Country principles are not only respected but actively lived and embedded throughout the development's lifecycle.



Ongoing Evaluation and Accountability



A structured evaluation process will be implemented to measure the success of the project, the cultural integration framework, and the supporting Action Plan. This process will ensure the meaningful and ongoing integration of Connecting with Country across design, construction, and long-term operations.

By embedding a consistent evaluation and reporting process, the project team will remain accountable to its cultural commitment, supporting a responsive, transparent, and adaptive approach that respects Bidjigal aspirations and safeguards cultural integrity into the future.

Project consultants will provide regular progress reports, which will be reviewed by the First Nations Working Group to monitor cultural outcomes and maintain continuous Custodian engagement. This approach ensures that cultural embedment remains a central priority and that feedback from Custodians directly informs ongoing decision-making.

A Connecting with Country Progress Report will track key commitments, including:

- Indigenous procurement and employment targets
- Delivery of cultural design responses
- Integration of Bidjigal language, art, and storytelling
- Implementation of cultural learning for project teams
- Ecological restoration and Caring for Country initiatives

The reporting process will also identify and address any emerging cultural, environmental, or community concerns, ensuring they are managed respectfully and in accordance with Bidjigal cultural protocols.



Thank you

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this document, especially the Bidjigal Traditional Custodians, Aunty Barb, Aunty Marjorie Simms, who have generously shared their cultural knowledge, stories, and guidance.

Your contributions have been invaluable in shaping a project that remains grounded in the values, memory, and living presence of Bidjigal Country.

We look forward to seeing this project come to life in a way that honours the cultural values, stories, and aspirations embedded throughout the process. This redevelopment will stand as a place of respect, learning, and connection, a symbol of partnership, recognition, and ongoing relationship with the Bidjigal people.



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