

2-10 Valentine
Avenue
Parramatta

Connecting with Country

Holdmark NSW Pty Ltd

Prepared by Artefact Heritage and Environment

15 December 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Artefact acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of our land, Australia.

We acknowledge the Gadigal and Wangal people as the custodians of Pirrama (Pyrmont) where our Sydney office is located, the Awabakal, Worimi and Wonnarua peoples of the Hunter Region where our Mulubinba (Newcastle) office is located, and the Wiradjuri people of the Central West where our Bathurst office is located. We pay our respects to them, their culture and their Elders past and present. We extend our respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with whom we work.

When we travel to Country we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we walk.

We acknowledge the Burramattagal traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters where this project was undertaken. We thank them for sustaining and caring for Country for millennia.

Front cover: Detail from *Dharug Land* by Tara Lloyd, 2025. Reproduced with permission.

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Cultural warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this report contains the names and images of people who are deceased.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been prepared to support a State Significant Development Application (**SSDA**) SSD- 90243456 and concurrent Rezoning Application (**RA**) for the site at 10 Valentine Avenue Parramatta.

The Minister for Planning, or their delegate, is the consent authority for the SSDA and this application is lodged with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (**DPHI**) for assessment.

The report was developed following guidelines in the Government Architect New South Wales, 2023. *Connecting with Country* framework.

2. INTRODUCTION



2.1 Background

This report has been prepared to support a State Significant Development Application (**SSDA**) SSD- 90243456 and concurrent Rezoning Application (**RA**) for the site at 10 Valentine Avenue Parramatta.

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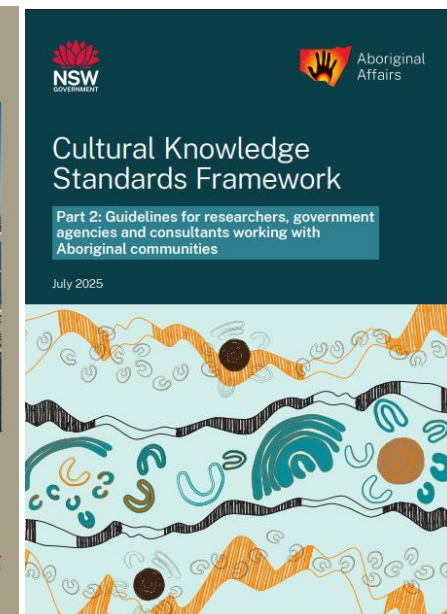
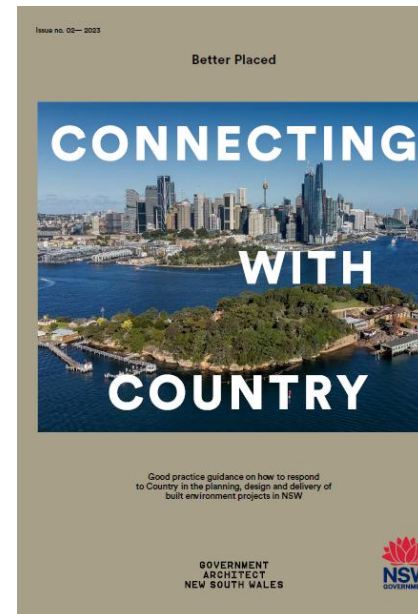
2.2 Scope of report

Artefact Heritage and Environment (Artefact) has been engaged by Holdmark NSW Pty Ltd projects to develop a Connecting with Country report for this project, which is Informed by the cultural connections to Country shared by stakeholders. These cultural values and connections are used to inform actions, outcomes and design principles to embed Country into the development of the site and provide a best-practice framework for designing with Country.

2.3 Guiding documents

The following guiding documents have been consulted during the preparation of this Connecting with Country report:

- Government Architect New South Wales, 2023. *Connecting with Country*.
- Government Architect NSW, 2025. *Frequently Asked Questions*.
- Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), 2013, *Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*.
- Aboriginal Affairs, 2025, *Cultural Knowledge Standards Framework Part 2*.



2.4 The site

The site at 10 Valentine Avenue, Parramatta, is located within the City of Parramatta Local Government Area (**LGA**), approximately 19km northwest of Sydney CBD and 16km northeast of Liverpool CBD. The site covers 3,937m² and is legally described as Lot 2 in DP 1119257.

The southern part of the site is currently occupied by six-level above ground carpark with 286 spaces. The northern portion of the site is occupied by 13-storey commercial office building with basement levels. Vehicular access into the site is available via the combined entry in the existing commercial building at 10 Valentine Avenue. An additional egress point from the above ground carpark is located to the south of the entry and provides exit only access onto Valentine Avenue.

The site is positioned within the Parramatta CBD, which is approximately 19km north west of the Sydney CBD and 16km north east of the Liverpool CBD. The site is located just southeast of Parramatta Railway Station, approximately 440 metres from the planned Parramatta Metro Station. It is also approximately 2 kilometres southeast of the future Westmead Metro Station on the eastern side of Hawkesbury Road.

The site is in the Deerubbin LALC.

2.5 Project description

The application seeks development consent for the redevelopment of the site for a mixed-use development comprising residential accommodation (shop top housing and co-living housing) and retail uses.

Specifically, this application seeks approval for the following:

- Demolition of the existing multi-deck car park.
- Demolition of existing internal fit-out within the commercial building.
- Site preparation works including:
 - Removal of trees as outlined in the Arborist Report.
 - Excavation on the southern portion of the site to a maximum depth of six basement levels.
- Construction of a 72-storey shop-top housing development, which will accommodate:
 - Six levels of basement with 144 car parking spaces, bicycle parking, services, waste storage.
 - Lobby, retail premises and loading dock at ground level.
 - 479 residential apartments on Levels 1-70.
 - Communal open space and resident amenities on level 5 and level 71.
 - Rooftop plant on level 72.
 - Vehicular access provided via Valentine Avenue.
 - Dedication of 3% of dwellings as affordable housing.
- Change of use of from commercial premises to co-living housing and ancillary retail.
- Alterations and additions to the existing commercial premises to accommodate co-living housing including:
 - Upgrade to existing internal lift access.
 - Alterations to the basement with amenity, laundry, jam space, manager's office and 17 co-living housing spaces.
 - Ground level retail premises and communal internal facilities including a gym, yoga room and wellness lounge.
 - Upper levels: Co-living housing providing 608 beds across 440 units in private rooms, and 2-, 3- and 4-room configurations, communal internal facilities on each level and communal open spaces on level 7 and level 14.
 - Alterations to the building façade

- Hard and soft landscaping and public domain works along Valentine Avenue and Parkes Street.
- Building identification signage on the shop-top housing building and co-living housing building.
- Stratum subdivision into two lots.
- Extension and augmentation of physical infrastructure and utilities as required

Refer to Architectural Plans prepared by Buchan collaborating with Furtado Sullivan and Curzon + Partners appended to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

A concurrent RA is proposed under the SSDA. The RA seeks to amend the *Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023* to amend the zoning, height, permissibility and FSR controls for the site.

Refer to the EIS for a full description of the proposed amendments under the RA.

2.6 Terminology

Due to the huge disruption of colonisation and the challenges of translating Aboriginal languages into written English, there are a variety of ways of referring to the Aboriginal peoples and languages of the area. As language is revitalised and more knowledge is shared, terminology may also change. This report therefore uses different terminology and spellings interchangeably depending on the source for example, Darug and Dharug.

2.6.1 Cultural context

A number of key contextual issues are important to consider when developing a Connecting with Country report for a new project:

Country, culture and community: The many interpretations of Country are often expressed by Aboriginal communities through cultural practices of these aspects.

Caring for Country: Caring for Country is a cultural obligation that Aboriginal people undertake with a deep sense of responsibility, ownership and stewardship. Caring for Country includes caring for the wellbeing of Country's interconnected systems now and for the future.

Identity: For Aboriginal people, Country is at the core of identity. Aboriginal peoples' connection with Country has continued over thousands of years, from deep time. It is a source of valuable wisdom and knowledge that can guide all of us to improve the way we plan and design the places where we live and work.

Cultural safety: Cultural safety is about creating a socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually safe space where there is no challenge or denial of a person's identity. For Aboriginal people this means feeling safe, valued and able to participate in their cultural, spiritual and belief systems, free from racism, discrimination and lateral violence.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property: Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP) are the rights that Aboriginal people have to protect their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and cultural expression.

2.6.2 Sources

This report may include information from a number of sources, such as historical records and community knowledge, which at times may contradict each other. This can occur because over time new information and interpretation of sources arises. Further consultation and research should be carried out if developing any future Heritage Interpretation or Public Art Strategies for this project.

2.7 Cultural warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this report contains the names and images of people who are deceased.

Section 5 provides a summary of the history and culture of the Aboriginal people of the area. It includes information collated from colonial sources and should be read with this in mind. It contains descriptions and terms which reflect the views of the period in which the content was created but may not be considered appropriate today.

2.8 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property

Artefact has prepared this Connecting with Country Report for the project. This report, and the information and cultural knowledge gathered in its preparation, are to be used for the above project only.

This project aims to facilitate a meaningful, considered, and functional framework for understanding the relationships between Country, community and individuals and integrating this understanding into design principles for the site.

Please note that all cultural knowledge shared by Elders, knowledge holders, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and the Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) that is included in this document remains the intellectual property of those who have shared it. The rights of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) must be protected at all times.

The following best practice ICIP guidelines from the *Connecting with Country framework* (GANSW 2023) will be followed:

- Payment made to knowledge holders for their traditional knowledges shared

- Credit of organisations or individuals for their traditional knowledges
- Information and guidelines about ICIP included in reports
- All usage of the information must be approved by the organisation or individual before finalised or published
- If requested by the organisation or individual, ICIP can be included in a written agreement with the organisation or individual

This work embodies the cultural heritage, traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expression (ICIP) of the Baramadagal community. It was created with the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Traditional Owners of the Baramadagal community. Dealing with any part of this work for any purpose that has not been authorised by the Traditional Owners is a serious breach of customary law and may also breach the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). For enquiries about permitted reproduction of the ICIP contained in this work, contact office@artefact.net.au

2.9 Authorship and acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Alexandra Gaffikin (Senior Associate, Artefact), Dr Stephen Gapps (Senior Historian), Katrina Eckford (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer, Artefact), with input and review from Jenny Winnett (Technical Director, Artefact).

Artefact has worked in collaboration with a number of Aboriginal knowledge holders in preparing this report and would like to thank them all for their generosity in sharing cultural knowledge for this project.

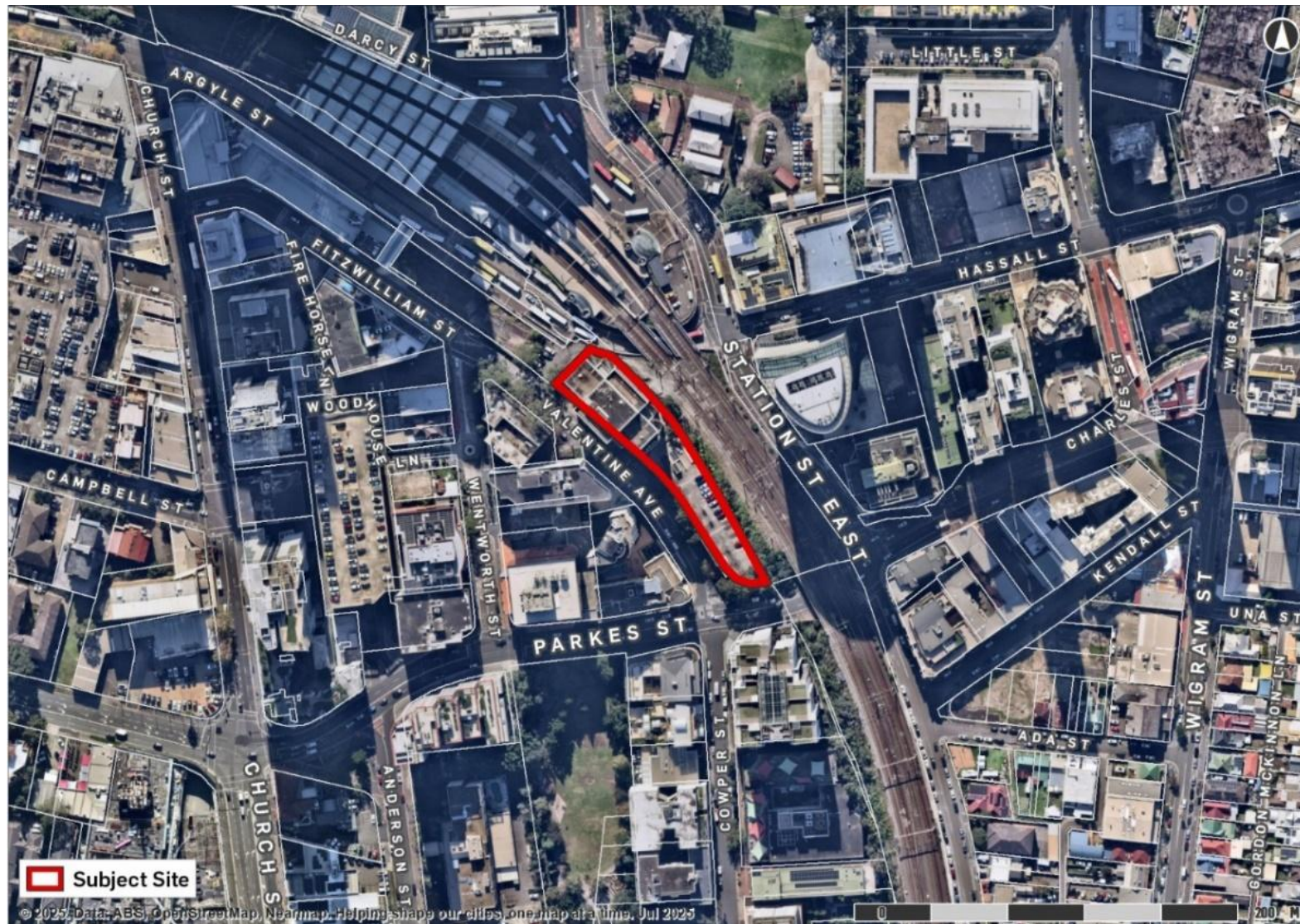


Figure 1: Study area (source: Urbis)

3. GANSW CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK



3.1 Introduction

The *Connecting with Country Framework* (GANSW, 2023) prepared by the Government Architects NSW Office, seeks to assist design project teams to integrate Aboriginal culture into development projects. The predominant message of the framework is that the current design approach mentality needs to shift from Human Centric to Country Centric, to create a healthy Country with culturally diverse and safe spaces that simultaneously address the growing environmental problems that society faces today.

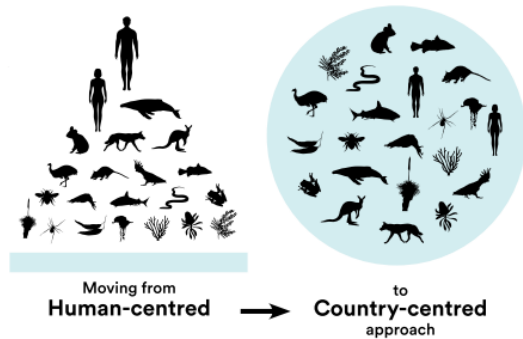


Figure 2: Human-centred or Country-centred approach (source: GANSW, 2023)

It advocates for an integrated approach that combines Aboriginal knowledge and western science which recognises and appreciates the interconnectedness of all elements of society and the environment. The essential message is that if we look after Country, Country will look after us. To facilitate the behavioural change required to put Country at the forefront of new design, the framework expands upon three components of Aboriginal cultural knowledge systems and aligns them with three cognitive elements (Thinking, Feeling, Behaviour):

- **Communing with Country (Thinking):** the connection to Country through mind and spirit as demonstrated through forms of cultural expression.

- **Sensing Country (Feeling):** immersive cultural practices to provide insight into the emotional connection to Country.
- **Being on Country (Behaving):** working together to share knowledge and perspective to create cohesive and respectful designs.

To implement this Country centric approach, the framework identifies how Country can be incorporated into each phase of the design process as guided by the Aboriginal community:

- **Project formation** – starting with Country – ensuring that the project teams understand the nuanced concept of Country through cultural awareness training.
- **Project design** – imagining with Country – designing led by interpretive cultural narratives and an understanding of Country.
- **Project delivery** – shaping Country – design and construction led by the need to protect and promote Country.
- **Project maintenance** – a commitment to nurture all parts of Country, of which the new development project is part.

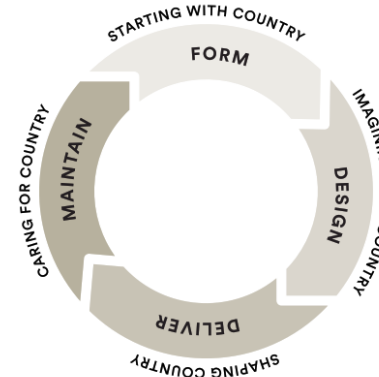


Figure 3: Project lifecycle from an Aboriginal perspective (source: GANSW, 2023)

Design focus:

- Language use and first nations place names
- Connect to the broader landscape
- Promote and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Acknowledge our shared history

Design opportunities:

- Learn from traditional Aboriginal architecture
- Support living ecosystems
- Reawaken memories
- In between spaces
- Indirect connections

The framework also provides practical assistance for how Country can be considered in project design at a precinct wide level, a building-scale project level and a small-scale project level.

3.1.1 Designing with Country discussion paper (GANSW 2019)

The Government Architect NSW draft *Designing with Country* discussion paper predates the *Connecting with Country Framework* and fed into its development.¹ It posed questions around developing practical guidance for the design industry to respond to current directions in planning policy. Its aim was to contribute to better understanding of, and better support for, a

strong and vibrant Aboriginal culture in our built environment. It stated that there are three essential elements of designing with Country: nature, people, and design:

- Architecture considers design and people (informed by nature). Architecture without people is just a sculptural object.
- Passive design considers design and nature, and when used by people becomes environmental design.
- Biophilic design considers the innate relationship between people and nature. Informed by design, this relationship could be understood as a genesis for Indigenous architecture.

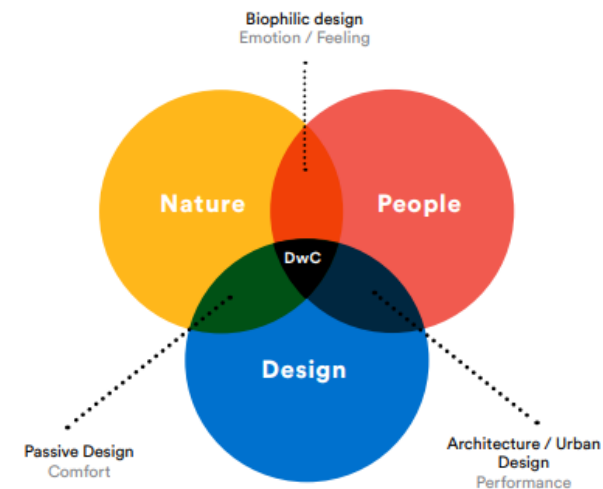


Figure 4: Elements of Designing with Country (source: GANSW, 2019)

¹ GANSW, 2020b.

4. CONSIDERING COUNTRY



4.1 What is Country?

The concept of Country does not have a corresponding concept in Western culture but is a deeply personal yet universal worldview fundamental to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Individual relationships with and definitions of 'Country' are deeply nuanced, and can vary depending on a person's life experience, place, and personal beliefs. It is key, therefore, to deeply listen to the perspectives of Australia's First Peoples and remove Western biases when thinking about Country.

A definition of country as 'land' may be the initial association made by a non-Indigenous person, but this is far too simplistic; instead, the idea of Country is an all-encompassing continuum of past, present and future, connecting tangible things like ecosystems, water, and people, as well as intangible concepts like story, identity, and home.

Country and identity are deeply linked for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and an understanding of Country is key to understanding both themselves and their community. 'Country encompasses everything. It includes both living and non-living elements. It holds everything within the landscape, including Earth, Water and Sky Country, as well as people, animals, plants, and the stories that connect them'.² Therefore, a person's identity and personal values cannot be separated from Country and are connected to all elements around them. A person's actions can positively or negatively affect all aspects of Country, including themselves.

"Thinking about what you're going to bring back to country. What was already here. It's all about healing country. So, when you want to consult with us like we've got to think about the best way to heal country."

Heidi Duncan, 10 October 2025



Figure 5: Interrelationships between Country, community and individuals (source: GANSW, 2023)

Country, just like people, can be healthy or sick, and requires care and respect. A network of mutual care between the land, animals, plants, and people stretches into deep time and must be constantly protected and nurtured to ensure the health of Country. Knowledge of how to maintain this network of mutual care is expressed through Aboriginal language, stories, and cultural practices and provides the bedrock of First Nations cultures. The network is interconnected and interdependent; changes in language, for example, affects all other elements.

Country is both spiritual and physical. Country is something that can be experienced, and that physical experience is key to the mutual health of First Nations people and Country itself. Walking on Country, feeling the touch of the air, sun, and wind, speaking to and listening to Country, and hunting on Country are ways of practicing culture that have been passed

² GANSW 2023. Connecting with Country Framework

down for many generations. The act of being on Country and feeling the connection with place is deeply significant for Aboriginal communities and a way of ensuring that individuals and families can thrive.

"I just want to see the younger generations come through and learn."

Aunty Helen Selwood, 10 October 2025

Cultural practices (also called cultural Law/Lore or protocols) and the languages used to refer to Country, are deeply diverse, reflecting the development of thousands of communities across Australia over millennia. All practices, however, are rooted in the idea of responsibility towards Country.

Country has been significantly disturbed by the colonisation of Australia. Delicate physical and spiritual ecosystems that have been nourished and maintained since deep time have been damaged by deforestation, loss of biodiversity, dislocation of community, and general development. Western systems of thinking and land-use cannot maintain or nourish Country, and some knowledge of how to care for Country has been lost.

However, the resilience of Aboriginal people across Australia and the strength of cultural practices has allowed much cultural knowledge and lore to survive colonisation. The knowledge of Aboriginal people of how to care for Country is diverse, and includes practices of agriculture, health, spirituality, and sustainability. This deep knowledge, based on the idea of mutual responsibility, should play an essential part in future placemaking and planning.

"Healing for Country, that's what I'm all about, making sure that you know we're doing the right thing by Country So that's why I'm interested to see what's happening today. And paving the way for the next generation because it's time for us to start doing that for our children and grandchildren too."

Heidi Duncan, 10 October 2025

Designs that echo traditional forms and stories and their contemporary interpretations are increasingly being integrated within new developments, sending strong, respectful messages about the timeless links between First Nations peoples and the landscape, and allowing for reflection and connection to Country. Traditional knowledge, when embedded meaningfully into development, has positive outcomes for communities and the environment. The significance of such design integration does not just lie in its aesthetics, but in the empowerment that public statements of value bring and the value of sustainable future development.

The involvement and authority of Aboriginal knowledge holders and Aboriginal architects, designers, and artists is paramount in developing future projects that connect meaningfully with Country and promote, sustain, and nurture the health of Country.

5. ABORIGINAL HISTORIES OF THE AREA

5.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the history and culture of the Baramadagal people of what is today known as Parramatta and the surrounding area. This history is collated from colonial sources and should be read with this in mind. It has images and names of deceased people and contains descriptions and terms which reflect views of the period in which the content was created but may not be considered appropriate today.

Please also note that this section includes references to the Parramatta Female Factory and Girls School. Readers who are impacted by these histories should be aware that they are discussed in this report.

5.2 Baramada Country and People

Aboriginal people have lived here for tens of thousands of years, for 'time immemorial', caring for Country. Over the last few decades, archaeologists have found evidence of human habitation in Australia at around 60,000 years ago or more. Archaeological evidence of Aboriginal people living in the Sydney region from Shaw's Creek west of the Dyarubbin (Hawkesbury-Nepean) River is dated at around 14,000 years ago and numerous other sites in the area have been dated at around 15,000 years ago. While Cranebrook Terrace, near Penrith in Western Sydney, has been dated to 41,700 years and a site near Parramatta at 30,000 years old, there is growing consensus among archaeologists and historians that people have lived across the Sydney region from around 50,000 years ago.

More ancient sites lie off the coast and in river valleys, now deep under water. Before the major sea level rise event at the end of the last ice age around 17,000 years ago, Aboriginal people living along the Parramatta

River could have walked downstream along the riverbanks to the sea about 30 kilometres beyond the current day coastline. Over generations they would have watched and told stories about the gradual change as the sea rose to fill the 'drowned river valley' of what is now Sydney Harbour until it reached present levels around 6,000 years ago.

Parramatta is one of several current day Sydney locations based on a traditional Aboriginal word or placename, generally understood to be from the Dharug word Baramada (often Burramatta), which is broken down to mean, Bara = eel, mada = place.³ The suffix gal = the people of, would be added to describe the Baramadagal who lived there. European attempts to transcribe Aboriginal words were often poor, and the early colonists transcribed the place of eels as 'Parramatta.'⁴



Figure 6: Aboriginal man and implements, (source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

³ Baramadagal is also spelt and used interchangeably with Burramattagal. The Barramadagal spelling is attributed to the language work of the Aboriginal woman Jakelin Troy. (Personal communication Jayne Christian, 4 September 2025). See also Troy 1994, *The Sydney Language*.

⁴ Christian 2021; Kass, Liston & McClymont 1996, pp. 4-7; Tench 1793, p. 230; Kohen 1986, p. 77; Brook & Kohen 1991, p. 3

Parramatta is in the centre of traditional Dharug Country in what Governor Arthur Phillip in 1788 called the County of Cumberland. The Cumberland Plain is a biological and geological (biogeographic) feature of the Sydney Basin, the major geological basin extending from the elevated coastal sandstone formations at the Sydney coast in the east, to the Dyarubbin or Hawkesbury-Nepean River in the west and south. The mildly undulating plains consist of soils that have formed through millennia of alluvial deposition are punctuated with occasional rocky outcrops such as at Prospect Hill.

Over the entire plain there are over 100 creeks and nine rivers, of which the Parramatta River rises in predominantly grassy or open woodlands to the west. The river was navigable by boats to a point at modern day Parramatta where it narrows and becomes rocky. As Surgeon John White described in April 1788; 'here the tide ceased to flow and all further progress for boats was stopped by a flat space of large broad stones over which a freshwater stream ran.'⁵

Here was the centre of Baramadagal eel fishing and trapping activities. Early colonist David Collins described how bara were harvested by placing hollow logs in the water and then drawing them up with the bara inside. At the confluence of brackish tidal saltwater and freshwater, Baramadagal could catch flathead and mullet fish, tortoises, mussels, oysters, crabs, prawns, freshwater crayfish and other fish.⁶

On the riverbanks, as another early colonist John Hunter noted, Aboriginal people 'live chiefly on the roots they dig from the ground ... the wild yam.' Governor Phillip soon declared Baramadagal land to be 'good country' for farming and 'to be settled' as soon as the colonists were able to.⁷



Figure 7: 'Native climbing a gum tree', Georgiana Lowe - album of drawings of New South Wales views, ca. 1842-1850, (source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, SAFE/PXD 390)

⁵ Birch 2007, pp. 217-219; White 1790, p. 128

⁶ Collins 1798, p. 462

⁷ Hunter 1968 [1793], p. 61; Phillip to Sydney, 15 May 1788, HRNSW, 1, 1, p. 133

5.3 People and lifeways

Given the devastating impact of violent dispossession and disease upon Aboriginal people in the Sydney region during colonisation, the precise identification of language groups and historical traditional lands or Country for a given area is often difficult today. Early colonial observer Watkin Tench believed there was at the least coastal and inland dialects of the same language and, while this is challenged by some historians who prefer less distinction between what were all 'canoe cultures' around Sydney's coast and waterways, there seems to have been an alignment with inland economies of the rivers, creeks and open forests of the Cumberland Plain, and coastal 'saltwater' focused groups.⁸

These groups were divided into extended family groups of around 30 to 50 people and were associated with certain territories and places which gave members particular social and economic rights and responsibilities. There were approximately 30 clans in the Sydney region, who moved around 'limited and deeply known' areas.⁹

The language group spoken on the Cumberland Plain is known as Dharug (Dharruk, Darug – alternative spellings). The Dharug language group is thought to have extended from around Appin in the south, to the Hawkesbury River, west of the Georges River, Parramatta and surrounds, the Lane Cove River and north to Berowra Creek.¹⁰



Figure 8: Fishing hooks crafted by Aboriginal communities living around Sydney Harbour, John White, 1790. (source: <https://www.researchgate.net>)

⁸ This historical overview does not seek to contest traditional or current definitions of affiliation with Country and acknowledges that multiple interpretations of such identity may exist. For more discussions of Aboriginal languages and land boundaries see: Aboriginal Heritage Office, 2015, *Filling a void: a review of the historical context for the use of the word 'Guringai'*; Stanner, 1965, 'Aboriginal Territorial Organization', pp 1-26, and Watkin Tench, 1793 [2004], *A complete account of the settlement at Port Jackson*, p. 122.

⁹ Gapps, 2010, *Cabrogal to Fairfield City*, pp 26-60; Attenbrow, 2010, *Sydney's Aboriginal past*, p. 78; Karskens, 2009, *The Colony*, p. 36; Gammage, 2012, *The biggest estate on earth*, pp. 281-304.

¹⁰ See Attenbrow, *Sydney's Aboriginal Past*, 2010 pp. 78-79



Figure 9: 'Native grass tree', Georgiana Lowe - album of drawings of New South Wales views, ca. 1842-1850 (source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, SAFE/PXD 390)

The traditional campsites were located on higher ground that gave access to water, along creeks and beside billabongs. Dharug people moved through the landscape to access the plentiful flora and fauna. Banksia flowers, wild honey, varieties of wild yam and burrawang nuts were recorded as important food sources. Small animals such as bandicoots and wallabies were hunted with traps and snares. Watkin Tench observed Dharug men carving toeholds into trees in order to swiftly climb while hunting possums, sometimes supplemented by smoking the animals out with fire.¹¹

Fire was a traditional land and forest management tool used by Aboriginal people throughout Sydney. It stimulated germination of many trees, and was used 'to clean Country', to drive animals into the paths of hunters, for cooking, food, warmth, opening tracks, cracking open stones and as a place to gather, dance and share stories.¹²

The Sydney region was a landscape rich with the imprints of activity, art and culture such as rock engravings and paintings, scarred and carved trees, ceremonial rock and mound structures, cooking ovens, villages of bark huts, stone tool quarries, grinding grooves and tool-making sites, burial and other shell middens, and other artefacts. All this activity had a lasting impact on the landscape, and many elements such as rock engravings in particular, survive or have been kept intact or cared for by community members. Over time, many Aboriginal pathways were taken up by the colonists and made into roads, some still on the same routes today. 'Kangaroo grounds' became colonial estates, fishing creeks became drains, hills and peaks used for communication became signaling stations and lookouts, and shell middens became the limestone for the bricks and mortar of early colonial buildings.¹³

¹¹ Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, 197; Kohen, 'Bells Creek Plumpton', 198; Blacktown City Council, 'Aboriginal Connections'.

¹² White, 1790 [2003], 'Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales', p. 163; Gammage, 2012, *The biggest estate on earth*, pp 163-185; Griffith, 2018, *Deep time dreaming*, p. 240.

¹³ Griffith, 2018, *Deep time dreaming*, p. 241; Gammage, 2012, *The biggest estate on earth*, p. xix; Attenbrow, 2012, *Sydney's Aboriginal past*.

Around Eastern Creek stone tools in particular reveal a lot about previous ways of life. Tools in this area were usually made of silcrete and sometimes of quartz, quartzite and chert. Stone points were attached to wooden handles to create tools used for food preparation, as knives and as weapons. These can be found today across the Western Sydney area, demonstrating the ongoing connection Dharug people have to their country.¹⁴

5.4 First encounters

The first encounters between the British colonists and the Sydney people were initially based in curiosity, with both sides attempting to comprehend each other. However, misunderstandings or transgressions of Aboriginal law and protocol soon escalated into violence and retribution. Unarmed convicts outside the encampment at Sydney Cove were increasingly targeted during 1788. However, in April 1789, what Sydney Aboriginal people called galgala or smallpox broke out and more than half - possibly even 80 percent - of the population around Sydney Harbour were dead within a month.

Despite such massive death and disruption to Aboriginal lives across Sydney, in 1794 resistance warfare against the colonisers began in earnest along the new settlements on the Dyarubbin (Hawkesbury) River and was to carry on through the 1790s, largely under the leadership of the famous warrior Pemulwuy. This ‘constant sort of war’ as one colonist described it, continued until Governor Macquarie ordered the now infamous military campaign across the Sydney region that ended in the Appin Massacre of April 17th, 1816.

As the Cumberland Plain became more closely settled during the 1800s, Aboriginal people continued to live near their traditional Country where they could. Some managed to live in the centre of the growing city of

Sydney such as a group of families who caught and sold fish at Circular Quay and others at Rose Bay, while other families continued to live on the outskirts of populated areas such as at La Perouse and at Salt Pan Creek on the Georges River.



Figure 10: Hunting tools used by Aboriginal communities in the Sydney Region, John White 1757 (source: <https://www.researchgate.net>)

¹⁴ Blacktown City Council.

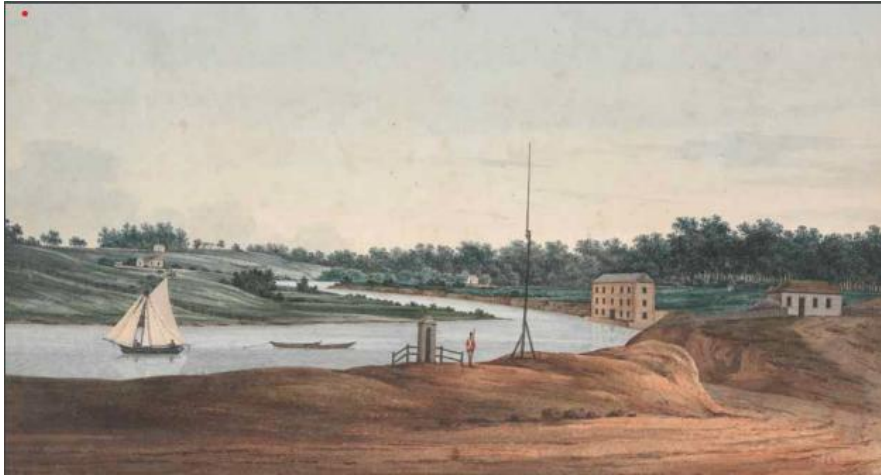


Figure 11: The landing place at Parramatta (source: State Library of NSW).

5.5 Resistance at Parramatta

Parramatta, accessible by boat, with fresh water and surrounded by open woodlands, was of strategic military importance to the colony. The first structure was a redoubt or small fort and the location chosen as the second seat of government. As historian Grace Karskens notes, Governor Phillip's attitude towards the Dharug people at Parramatta was strikingly different to his attempts to gain the confidence of people such as Bennelong around Sydney Cove – 'there were no meetings, no dancing, no gifts or high hopes of "living in amity" ...the settlement of Parramatta was a true invasion, with well-organised military defences.'¹⁵

The colonists were correct in their fears of conflict and the threat Aboriginal warriors posed to their precious stock and maize crops that were spreading out into other small settlements at Prospect Hill and 'The Ponds,'

2 miles northwest of Parramatta. In mid-1791, the small group of farms at the foot of Prospect Hill came under attack from 'more than one hundred' warriors in one raid, and were attacked several times over the next months, requiring soldiers to be sent out from Parramatta. Between 1791 and 1794 several colonists in the districts around Parramatta were attacked and some were killed by warriors. David Collins noted their attacks and raids had become 'frequent and extensive' and in April 1794, one raid on the Government Farm at Toongabbie turned into a battle between constables and warriors.¹⁶

Ongoing resistance warfare came to a head in 1797 when Pemulwuy led a large force of warriors up to the township of Parramatta itself. In what has become known as the Battle of Parramatta, at least five warriors were killed and Pemulwuy and others wounded. As he had received 'seven buck shot in his head and other parts of his body', yet soon escaped captivity, it was rumoured by both colonists and Aboriginal people alike that Pemulwuy 'could not be killed' by firearms. Pemulwuy's resistance continued, with several escaped convicts joining forces with his guerrilla warband. By 1801, Governor King had had enough and issued orders to the settlers to 'drive back the hordes of natives' around Parramatta, the Georges River and Prospect Hill. In November, rewards were offered including free pardons for convicts. Pemulwuy, wanted 'dead or alive', was shot and killed in June 1802 and, in the name of 'science', his head cut off and sent to England. To this day it has not been returned to his Country.¹⁷

Even after the death of Pemulwuy, conflict and resistance continued across the Sydney region. Another Government Order banning all Aboriginal people from entering the 'Grounds or Dwellings of any Settler' was issued in 1805. While some Aboriginal people attempted to negotiate their safety and continued access to the settlements and a 'Conference' was arranged at 'the brush between Prospect and George's River', Pemulwuy's son

¹⁵ Karskens 2017; Phillip 1793, p. 299

¹⁶ Gapps 2018, pp. 96-97, 104-105; Collins 1798, pp. 304-305

¹⁷ Collins 1798, p. 305; Smith 2020

Tedbury had united a band that continued to harass travellers, kill stock and raid farms, until Tedbury was shot and killed in 1810. By 1814, drought conditions and expanding settlement to the south led to more conflict called by later observers 'Cannabaygal's War' after the fearsome Gandangarra warrior, which culminated in the Appin Massacre in April 1816 that effectively ended resistance warfare in the region.¹⁸

At the same time as resistance warfare was occurring across Sydney, some Aboriginal people were still living in or moving in and out of the settlements. At Parramatta in 1804, a traditional dispute resolution occurred where, according to the *Sydney Gazette*, 'the well-known Yaranibi received a spear wound in the back.' He had apparently 'forsaken his unfortunate female companion in the hour of sickness and affliction to perish unassisted.'¹⁹

5.6 Native institutions

Government policies of removing Aboriginal children from their parents in order to assimilate them into white society effectively began in 1814. William Shelley, a former missionary from London, proposed to Governor Macquarie a plan for the education of Aboriginal people in 'useful skills', including religion and morals, and domestic duties for women and girls in preparation for marriage. Macquarie enthusiastically agreed and established the 'Black Native Institution of NSW' at Parramatta, installing Shelley as the manager. Some children were 'selected', others coerced, and others sent by their families – often only until they realised they could only visit them once a year at the Annual Feast. Macquarie even ordered that any children captured or orphaned during his 1816 military campaign were to be brought to the school. The Native Institution must be seen as a

foundational part of what was to become colonial policy well into the future – the forced removal of children from their families.²⁰



Figure 12: Southwest view of Parramatta in New South Wales by an unknown artist 1811, Sydney Living Museums [Rec no: 31759] (source: Museum of Sydney; MOS2005/17)²¹

5.6.1 The Annual Feast

Macquarie's efforts to as he called it 'civilise' Aboriginal people also centred in 1814 of the instigation of an Annual Feast with the hope of coercing parents from across the Sydney region to hand their children over

¹⁸ Gapps 2010, p. 100-101; Karskens 2010, p. 225

¹⁹ Sydney Gazette, 16 December 1804, p. 4

²⁰ See Brook, J., and Kohen, J., The Parramatta Native Institution and the Black Town: a history. UNSW Press, Sydney 1991

²¹ <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/media/5115> full record available at: <https://first.mhnsnsw.au/#record/31759>

to the school. But once the children were in the institution strict rules prevented them from leaving:

*Fourteenthly, That no Child, after having been admitted into the Institution, shall be permitted to leave it, or be taken away by any Person whatever (whether Parents or other Relatives) until such Time as the Boys shall have attained the Age of Sixteen Years, and the Girls Fourteen Years; at which Ages they shall be respectively discharged.*²²

Aboriginal parents 'resisted the school and pined for their children'²³ so a slatted fence was built in 1815 so parents could see their children. Superintendent William Shelly noted the reluctance of Aboriginal parents to give up their children and Yarramundi spoke of the fear of 'men in black clothes' taking the children to the Institution in 1818.²⁴

The feast continued well into the 1840s, and items including shirts, hats, trousers, petticoats and blankets were distributed to attendees at various points throughout its lifetime. As European farms and settlement increased, Aboriginal people lost access to traditional foods and any handouts, however unhealthy, were taken up. Possum and kangaroo cloaks were becoming scarce, and people were forced to take the blankets. By the 1830s the practice of issuing blankets at the feast had also turned into a kind of census of Aboriginal people. From 1833 the feast was moved from December to March to issue blankets and clothing to Aboriginal people before winter. People travelling to the feast from the west camped at Clay Cliff Creek, others would camp near the Toll house on the Western Road. John Taylor recalled that after the feast, hundreds of Aboriginal people

would 'gather for an evening corroboree on the vacant ground on the corner of Macquarie and Marsden streets.'²⁵

People were recorded having travelled from the south coast and southern highlands in 1843 to attend the feast, which proved a more enduring institution in Parramatta than the school. Many Aboriginal clans travelling from the south established a camp at A'Beckett's Creek near the junction of Union Street and Woodville Road, Granville to attend this annual festival.²⁶



Figure 13: The annual meeting of the native tribes at Parramatta, New South Wales, the Governor meeting them c1826, By Augustus Earle (source: National Library of Australia [nla.pic-an2820681])²⁷

²² "Establishment of the Native Institution 1814 – Government and General Order Government House Sydney Saturday 10th December 1814". From History of Aboriginal Sydney <https://historyofaboriginalsydney.edu.au/ajax/node/10880?width=700&height=600&content-only=true>

²³ Norman, H, 2015 'Parramatta and Black Town Native Institutions' <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/parramatta_and_black_town_native_institutions>

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Hassall 1902, pp. 17-20; Gapps 2010, p. 148-151

²⁶ Anne Tsang, "Holroyd – a brief history," Parramatta History and Heritage, 2020<<https://historyandheritage.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/research-topics/suburbs/holroyd-brief-history>>

²⁷ <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/media/1404>

5.7 Significant Dharug figures

5.7.1 Maugoran

Maugoran was a Baramadagal Elder, likely living at the head of the Parramatta River with his family in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Maugoran's name was derived from maguro 'fish', his wife's name Gooroobera (garubura) meant 'firestick', his son's name Ballooderry (baluderi) meant 'leatherjacket fish; and Boorong, his daughter, meant 'star' (Burang). Maugoran is credited as issuing the first formal protest about being pushed off Country with the establishment of the military post and convict farms at Rose Hill. Maugoran raised his dissatisfaction with Chaplain Richard Johnson and Lieutenant William Dawes, who passed on his concerns to Governor Phillip. In response Phillip sent more soldiers to Rose Hill. It is believed that the family relocated to the river flats of Meadow Bank.²⁸

5.7.2 Boorong

Boorong was the daughter of Baramadagal Elder, Maugoran, born in 1777. Boorong, was taken to Sydney Cove in 1789, at age 12 as she was suffering from smallpox. She was cared for by Arabanoo and upon recovering was placed in the care of Chaplain Richard Johnson and his wife Mary. Initially it was believed she was an orphan, however, in 1790, she was taken on a boat with Governor Phillip to meet the Wangal man Bennelong and Maugoran. By

1797, Boorong was married to Bennelong and had a son named 'Dickey'. Boorong is buried alongside Bennelong at Kissing Point.²⁹

5.7.3 Bidgee-Bidgee

Bidgee-Bidgee born in 1787, was a Baramadagal leader. Bidgee Bidgee was the youngest son of Maugoran and related to Bennelong who had married Bidgee Bidgee's sister Boorong later in life.³⁰ He participated in whaling and sealing voyages and was a 'guide' or tracker in 1816. It is believed that Bidgee-Bidgee succeeded Bennelong as the leader of the Aboriginal community living near present day Ryde. In 1816, he was issued with a kingplate declaring him 'Chief of the Kissing Point tribe.'³¹

5.7.4 Baludari

Baludari (also known as Balloderry) was the eldest son of Burramadagal Elder Maugoran and wife Gooroobera. His name is derived from the term for the Leatherjacket fish which were abundant in the Parramatta River. He and his family were displaced by European settlers and resettled along the northern shore of the river. By 1791, Baludari had befriended Governor Phillip, and he acted as a guide and interpreter leading a European expedition between Parramatta and the Hawkesbury.

Upon returning to Parramatta, Baludari made a canoe and began to barter food for other goods. However, this venture was short lived, as convicts destroyed his canoe. Infuriated, Baludari covered himself in body paint and

²⁸ Keith Vincent Smith, "Wallumedegal: An Aboriginal History of Ryde," City of Ryde, 2005, <https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/library/wallumedegal-an-aboriginal-history-of-ryde.pdf>; Dictionary of Sydney, "Maugoran," State Library of NSW, Accessed 26 February 2024, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/person/maugoran>

²⁹ Dictionary of Sydney, "Boorong," State Library of NSW, Accessed 26 February 2024, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/person/boorong#ref-uuid=0f900d92-ba1e-41c8-85f5-e4dd05435ee6>; Smith, "Wallumedegal", [https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/library/wallumedegal-an-aboriginal-](https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/library/wallumedegal-an-aboriginal-history-of-ryde.pdf)

[history-of-ryde.pdf](https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/library/wallumedegal-an-aboriginal-history-of-ryde.pdf); Meredith Lake, "Why we should remember Boorong, Bennelong's third wife, who is buried beside him," The Conversation, 22 November 2018, <https://theconversation.com/why-we-should-remember-boorong-bennelongs-third-wife-who-is-buried-beside-him-107280>

³⁰ <https://collections.sea.museum/objects/201792/heroes-of-colonial-encounters--bidgee-bidgee>

³¹ National Gallery of Australia, "Bidgee-Bidgee," <https://www.portrait.gov.au/people/bidgee-bidgee-1787>

went to Phillip's Parramatta residence, declaring that he would seek revenge. Phillip informed Baludari that he would deal with the crime, punishing the offenders. However, this was incongruent with Aboriginal customary law, and Baludari sought retribution by spearing a convict who had walked away from the Parramatta settlement.

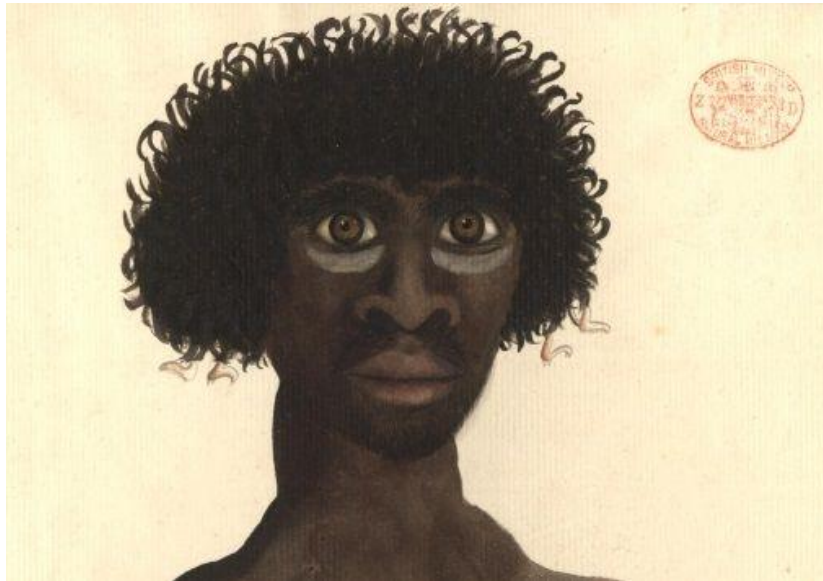


Figure 14: European portrait of Baludari, Thomas Watling, 1788-1790 (Source: Natural History Museum London)

After this Baludari was outlawed and the direction was put out that he could be shot on site. Baludari managed to avoid several attempts on his life, but in 1791 he fell gravely ill. On hearing this Governor Phillip reneged

on Baludari's outlawing and instructed for Baludari to be brought to Sydney Hospital, however he soon succumbed to his illness.

Baludari was buried in the garden of Government House in Sydney, and his funeral, organised by Bennelong, was attended by members of the Aboriginal and colonial communities. He was buried in his canoe, with some spears and a jacket he often wore.

Baludari's turbulent relationship with the colonial community reflects the complexity and fragility of early colonial interactions between the Dharug community and colonial authorities. Nowadays, a peaceful nature reserve along the shore of the Parramatta River has been named Baludari Wetlands in honour of the "brave and enterprising young man" who died too young.³²

5.7.5 Maria Lock

Maria Lock, a child of Yarramundi who was reported as 'Chief of the Richmond Tribe' and younger sister of Colebe (who was granted land at Blacktown) was one student who excelled. In the 1819 school examinations she took out the major award, competing against almost 100 of the local European children. After Governor Macquarie left the colony to return to England in 1821 the school suffered from lack of patronage and was moved to what became known as 'the Black's Town'.³³

5.7.6 Margaret 'Peggy' Goldspink

Peggy was taken from Kissing Point at 8 years old and was one of the last children admitted to the Parramatta Native Institution before it moved further west from the expanding township of Parramatta to the 'Black's Town' - present-day Blacktown - in the 1820s.³⁴

³² Michelle Goodman, "Baludari," Parramatta History and Heritage, accessed 26 February 2024, <https://historyandheritage.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/research-topics/aboriginal/baludarri-significant-figure-in-parramatta-history>

³³ Brook & Kohen 1991, pp. 23, 51; The Sydney Gazette, 17 April 1819

³⁴ Brook and Kohen 1991, p. 82

In 1824 Peggy was at the Black Town settlement. She was known to be a fine seamstress, religious and able to read and write. In 1828 she was a domestic servant for Reverend William Walker and in 1832 for Robert Campbell. She married Jonathan Goldspink at Heber Chapel in Narellan. Goldspink was transported as a convict in 1825, worked as a shepherd and then moved with Peggy to a farm at Tumbarumba near the Snowy Mountains.³⁵ Peggy had 13 children between 1832 and 1860, with many descendants today. She died in 1898 at Yass where her family had moved. Her place of birth was listed as Parramatta, suggesting she was a Baramadagalleon (Baramada clan group woman). She was one of many Dharug women who successfully navigated the disruption of colonial society.³⁶

5.7.7 Daniel Moowattin

Daniel Moowattin was born around 1791 in the Parramatta area and adopted as an infant by Richard Partridge. Aged about 14, he became an assistant to George Caley, the botanist employed by Sir Joseph Banks to collect specimens from the Australian bush. Daniel was Caley's 'interpreter, bush guide, plant-and leaf-getter, bird-trapper, servant and companion on botanising expeditions around Sydney'. He lived in Caley's cottage near Government House, Parramatta. Caley wrote notes on his collected items as 'got by Dan.'³⁷

Daniel was intrepid. In 1805 he sailed with Caley to Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land. Back in Sydney in 1807, while searching for a koala south-west of the settlement, Daniel found a high waterfall which Caley named and sketched as the 'Cataract of Carrung-Gurring on the River Moowattin'.

'Moowattin River' at first appeared in Matthew Flinders 1814 map of Australia, but it was later renamed the Cataract River. In 1808, Caley wrote that Daniel was

'the best interpreter of the more inland natives' language of any that I have met with . . . I can place that confidence in him that I cannot in any other'.

Moowattin even sailed with Caley to England in 1810. During one year in London he was supported by Joseph Banks and, dressed in the 'pink of fashion', he frequented theatres and public houses and smoked his pipe in the evening at a Chelsea coffee house.³⁸ But he always said that the fine shops and houses of the city were 'not equal to the woods' in his own country. He took to drink, which angered Caley and Daniel went back to Sydney with the nurseryman George Suttor. After two weeks at Suttor's Baulkham Hills farm, Moowattin sold a shotgun given to him by the botanist Robert Brown, bought some alcohol and went back to his precious 'woods', the bush. Some of the specimens he collected for Caley are today in the National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.³⁹

In 1816 he was employed as a labourer at the farm of William Bellamy at Pennant Hills and was found guilty of the rape and robbery of Hannah Russell, daughter of a convict settler. He was hanged on 1 November 1816 - the first Aboriginal person to be legally executed in Australia. Some analysis suggest Moowattin's trial took place in an environment where Indigenous people were often subject to colonial bias and unequal treatment under the law, which may have affected both the process and the outcome.⁴⁰

³⁵ Kohen 2006, pp. 53-54

³⁶ Kohen 2009, pp. 10-29; A History of Aboriginal Sydney. "Margaret Reed's story: Neil Sainsbury," Accessed 26 February 2024, <https://www.historyofaboriginalsydney.edu.au/west/margaret-reeds-story-neil-sainsbury>, Sarah Barns, "Weaving stories of connection," Storybox, accessed 26 February 2024, <https://www.storybox.co/parramatta-weaving>

³⁷ Smith, 2005. 'Moowattin, Daniel (1791-1816)', ADB

³⁸ Smith, 2005. 'Moowattin, Daniel (1791-1816)', ADB

³⁹ Sydney Gazette, 28 September 1816, p. 1

⁴⁰ See Ford and Salter 2008, 'Pluralism and Territorial Sovereignty: the 1816 Trial of Mow-watty in the Superior Court of New South Wales'

5.8 1800s – the ‘Parramatta Tribe’

Throughout the nineteenth century Aboriginal people continued to attend the Annual Feast, and an Aboriginal population of considerable size remained in the surrounding locality well into the 1830s. Large gatherings of several hundred people regularly occurred to the south at The Cowpastures near Camden and at the 1833 Annual Feast at Parramatta, apparently 800 Aboriginal people attended, many travelling long distances.

Even in the 1860s and 1870s ceremonial occasions still brought people together across the region. Thomas Fowlie recalled two campsites at Granville at this time where people stopped en-route to receive blankets at Parramatta, and performed ‘corroborees by night, until by the close of the seventies they ceased to come’. James Hassall noted a camp near Prospect, where in the 1830s traditional combats occurred prior to attending the feast.⁴¹

Between 1828 and 1834 the so-called ‘blanket returns’ noted a ‘Parramatta Tribe’ with around 40 people, many from the wider districts including Duck River, Ryde and Concord, but by 1841 there were only 11 people from the Weymaly or Prospect area. By the 1840s, closer settlement around Parramatta had pushed many Aboriginal people away from their traditional lands.⁴²

5.9 Incarceration, Resilience and Survival

By the 1880s the establishment of the Aborigines Protection Board brought new levels of control over Aboriginal lives. As Parramatta and nearby suburbs and industry expanded in the area, in order to survive, Aboriginal

people often kept their identity hidden. Yet throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, thousands of Aboriginal children were removed from their homes and families by the Aborigines Protection Board.

Some few managed to live in Parramatta through the twentieth century such as Aunty Joan Cooper, born in 1928 and who grew up in Parramatta. She recalled that as a young child at school she was ‘made to feel different for being Aboriginal’. She was also aware that her parents only ever spoke their language in private at home and that it was important for her to attend school in fear of being ‘taken away’ if she didn’t.⁴³

From 1887 until its closure in 1974, the Parramatta Girls Home operated to house what the Government termed ‘morally corrupt and depraved’ young girls. Many were Aboriginal. It was Australia’s longest operating state-controlled ‘child welfare’ institution, holding between 160 and 200 inmates at one time and, in total, potentially more than 30,000 children passing through its doors. While it was commonly called a ‘Girls Home’ it was in fact, according to Corrinne Sullivan, ‘a detention centre for girls, with prison-like conditions.’⁴⁴

In more recent years the stories of horrific abuse at the girls home have emerged and in 2022, the State Government apologised to former residents for the abuse and neglect they suffered and a memorial was erected on the site.⁴⁵

The latter half of the twentieth century was a turning point for Aboriginal communities in the fight for rights, beginning with the 1967 referendum. In the decades that followed, Aboriginal communities were able to garner

⁴¹ Fowlie 1918, p. 14; Hassall 1902, pp. 17-20

⁴² Kass, Liston & McClymont 1996, p. 106

⁴³ Johnson 2003, p. 60

⁴⁴ For inmates stories of their experiences see Lily Hibberd and Bonney Djuric, Parragirls Reimagining Parramatta Girls Home through art and memory, NewSouth, Sydney, 2019.

Sullivan, Corrinne (2017). "Aboriginal inmate experiences of Parramatta Girls Home". Australian Aboriginal Studies. 2: 84–97

⁴⁵ <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/about-us/parramatta-girls-home-memorial.html>

greater political power to oversee the health and education of their communities as well as celebrate and practice their cultures.



Figure 15: Section of Parramatta River mural (source: City of Parramatta)

5.9.1 Community-Led Cultural Care

There are numerous Dharug and Aboriginal organisations, as well as family groups, community networks, and grassroots initiatives actively engaged in caring for Country across this area. These efforts are grounded in longstanding cultural responsibilities and practices that continue outside the structures of government and institutions.

Cultural knowledge holders, Elders, and younger generations maintain connections through land management, ceremony, storytelling, education, and advocacy. Their work reflects diverse ways of relating to Country and strengthens the continuity of culture, despite the challenges of colonisation and ongoing dispossession. Recognising such collectives is essential to any genuine understanding of Country today. One focus of many local groups is the clean up of Parramatta River with the goal of making it healthy and swimmable again.



Figure 16: Ten steps to a living River (source: Parramatta River Catchment Group)

6. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT



6.1 Introduction

An understanding of the relevance and importance of the Aboriginal cultural landscape is fundamental to sensitive cultural design development aligning with the Connecting with Country principles. This understanding provides opportunities to explore Aboriginal peoples' unity with the natural environment and their traditional knowledge of spirit, places, land uses and ecology. These understandings are best developed through authentic and sustained consultation with Aboriginal knowledge holders and professionals.

6.2 Consultation planning

As the Traditional Custodians of the land, the local community maintains a dynamic connection to Country which informs their identity, culture, language, and ways of living.⁴⁶ The depth of this connection requires that appropriate, effective consultation with relevant community members must take place for any archaeological or heritage works occurring on their traditional land.

Under the Burra Charter;

*Article 12. Conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has significant associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place.*⁴⁷

The *Connecting with Country Framework* (GANSW, 2023) recommends the following strategy for building relationships with Aboriginal communities:

Building relationships with Aboriginal people requires appropriate allocation of time and resources to develop personal connections in ways Aboriginal people recommend and feel comfortable with.

Because cultural connections with Country differ between Aboriginal peoples and communities, projects need to be guided by those who are acknowledged by their communities as knowledge-holders for Country, and often in combination with nominated Aboriginal organisations such as local Aboriginal land councils (LALCs).

The *Connecting with Country Framework* (GANSW 2023) also highlights categories of stakeholders who could be involved:

Engagement should be undertaken in an inclusive way, and project teams should be open to diverse groups of people and points of view. In addition to LALCs, the groups that should be invited to join the engagement process include:

- 1. Traditional Custodians who have ancestral connections to a place*
 - 2. people from surrounding groups/tribes/ mobs/communities/nations*
 - 3. those who have moved to the area since colonisation and are integrated into the community*
 - 4. everyone else who wants a say.*
-

6.2.1 Stakeholder identification

Stakeholders were identified through consultation with Baramadagal representatives and community.

⁴⁶ Australian Heritage Commission, 2002. Ask First: a guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values.

⁴⁷ Australia ICOMOS, 2013. Burra Charter – The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance. 3.

6.3 Previous consultation and reports

The *Connecting with Country Framework* (GANSW 2023) recommends the activity ‘research and prepare’ and specifically ‘locate previous Aboriginal cultural heritage and technical studies relevant to the project’ so ‘to avoid consultation fatigue and prevent duplicating time and effort when information is already available.’

This section provides a summary of Aboriginal cultural heritage values discussed in existing resources and reports which consulted with stakeholders.

6.3.1 First Nations People of the Parramatta River and surrounding region (PRCG, 2023)

Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) commissioned this document to provide background research on the First Nations historical and cultural significance of the Parramatta River catchment area. The document was produced in consultation with:

- Leanne Watson Redpath and Jasmine Seymour (Dharug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation)
- Brad Moore (Local Land Services)
- Melle Smith-Haimona (community member)
- Reconciliation NSW and Yerrabingin
- Designing with Country Project Working Group

The following are some of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values outlined in the report:

- There is a connection between the local Aboriginal community and Country manifesting through cultural practices and knowledges

including songlines, kinship systems, totems, skin names and ceremonial lives.

- Early encounters and ensuing conflict resulting from colonisation mirrored the deterioration of the environment and Country with the dispossession and oppression of the Sydney Aboriginal communities.
- Aboriginal communities are reasserting their rights to Country and better standards of living, particularly since the mid twentieth century.
- The Parramatta River Catchment is a living landscape, and with greater First Nation involvement in land and water management, the landscape can be returned to a state of health and ensure the protection and celebration of Aboriginal Culture.
- We all have a responsibility to care for Country. This not only enables the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge, but also provides education and work opportunities, and assists with improved health.
- There are efforts to revive and encourage the use of First Nations languages.
- Include a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country ceremonies at key events and acknowledge and participate in national and local awareness days and events such as NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week, and National Sorry Day.
- Learn about First Nations history through music and theatrical performances, art galleries, films, books, and other cultural events.

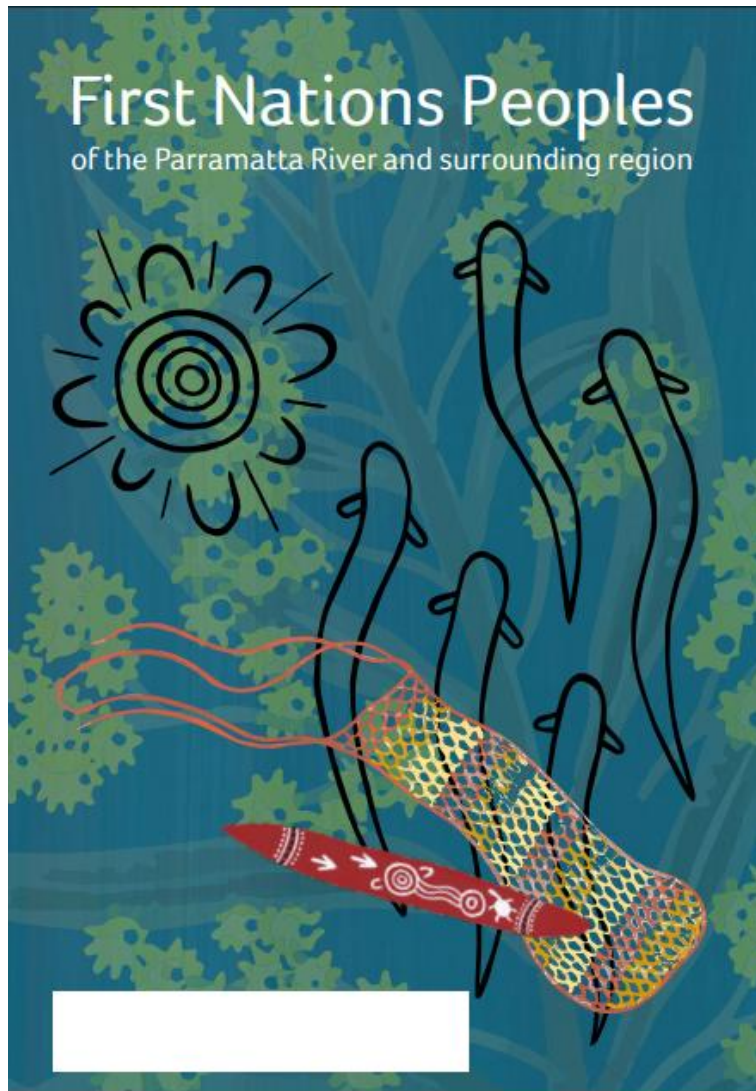


Figure 17: Front cover of report including artwork by, Leanne Watson Redpath (2023)
(source: Vincent Conroy, City of Canada Bay)

6.3.2 Parramatta River Catchment Designing with Country Framework (Yerrabingin and Parramatta River Catchment Group, 2022)

The framework was prepared by Yerrabingin on behalf of the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) and builds on the Masterplan for the Parramatta River and Connecting with Country Framework previously developed.

The report was compiled from existing resources and no additional consultation was carried out. The report begins by identifying that “we inhabit and are inhabited by Country” and explaining the holistic concept of Country.

The following Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values and recommendations are outlined in the report:

- Parramatta River and the land that surrounds it has been an important part of Australia’s ancient and more recent past.
- It is important to not simply focus on the identification and protection of individual sites of prior use or occupation, but consider the ongoing connection, both physical and spiritual, and the custodial relationship First Nations people have to the Parramatta River catchment.
- It is therefore crucial to prioritise the ongoing role of Aboriginal people as custodians of Country in Aboriginal cultural heritage planning processes.
- Custodianship in the Parramatta River environment now includes practices such as the ‘singing to eels’ practice at Little Coogee, regeneration practices, assertion of rights, input into planning processes by sharing cultural knowledge about breeding and feeding grounds of marine animals and activation of local languages.

- 'Healthy Country' is fundamental to Indigenous culture and spirituality.
- Yerrabingin developed an "Elements of Country" framework which includes:
 - Move with Country
 - Water Country
 - Sky Country
 - Non-human kin Country
 - Deep Country
 - Wind Country
- The continuing presence of Water Country allows for regeneration and to renew ceremonial activities.
- Designing with Water Country in mind means creating places where people can interact mindfully with water, escape from the built environment, rest, practise culture and be connected to the water.
- To support healthy Country, the ecologies of endemic plants and non-human kin can be protected by holistic environmental management and regeneration projects.
- Urban design projects such as creating native communal garden spaces that incorporate accessible bush medicines and foods will support healthy ecosystems and allow people to learn about Country.
- We can design with Wind Country in mind through the planting of endemic species, creating spaces to access a cool breeze on a hot summer's day, providing nodes for shelter and refuge, as well as avoiding constructing buildings that disrupt Country and channel wind into unpleasant tunnels.
- Celebrate and share culture by introducing local language through place naming, creating public art to share local stories and values, and encouraging people to explore the sites through events and tours.
- The report also includes introductions to:
 - The Dreaming
 - Songlines
 - First Nations kinship systems
 - Ceremonial life



Figure 18: Parramatta River Catchment Connecting with Country Framework front cover, Yerrabingin, 2022 (source: Vincent Conroy, City of Canada Bay)

6.3.3 City of Parramatta

Some resources developed by the City of Parramatta may also be useful to this project.

Discover Indigenous History in Parramatta (City of Parramatta, 2024)

The City of Parramatta Council have a website “At Parramatta” for discovering Indigenous history In Parramatta.⁴⁸ The following cultural heritage values appear on the website:

- The wetlands were named after a young Burramattagal man, Baludarri, who was one of the first Indigenous Australians to initiate trade with early settlers.
- Parramatta Park includes open bushland create by the Burramatta clan using ‘firestick burning.’
- Lake Parramatta has paintings, cave shelters, stone flakes, scar trees and shell deposits.
- Today Lake Parramatta also has the Arrunga Bardo Aboriginal Bush Food Garden.

Dharug and First Nations Community (City of Parramatta, 2024)

The City of Parramatta Council have a dedicated website for Dharug and First Nations Community.⁴⁹ The following cultural heritage values appear on the website:

- Parramatta is the land of the *Burramattagal* people, a clan of the Dharug, who first settled along the upper reaches of the Parramatta River.

- *Burramattagal* is thought to be derived from the Aboriginal word for 'place where the eels lie down' to breed.
- The *Burramattagal* have a close connection with the river, from which they caught fish, eels, and other food. Their bark canoes often held a central small fire, built on a mound of soil, to cook up their fresh catch.
- 'Fire-stick farming', was employed to burn vegetation to facilitate hunting and to change the composition of plant and animal species in the area.

Also available through the website is the First Nations Advisory Committee in the Parramatta First Nations Strategy which includes a message from Jayne Christian.⁵⁰



⁴⁸ City of Parramatta <https://atparramatta.com/discover/see-and-do/arts-and-culture/discover-indigenous-history-parramatta>

⁴⁹ City of Parramatta <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/community/dharug-and-first-nations-community>

⁵⁰ City of Parramatta https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/sites/council/files/2024-06/Digital_First%20Nations%20Strategy_MARCH%202024.pdf

6.4 Competition stage project consultation

6.4.1 Introduction

The following section details consultation undertaken for the previous design competition on the site for a build-to-rent scheme that is no longer being pursued following the declaration of a residential project on the site as State significant by the HDA.

6.4.2 Sharing cultural knowledges, 17 June 2024

The following Aboriginal stakeholders were approached about sharing their cultural knowledge for the concept design. They were sent the project brief and sketch for 2 – 10 Valentine Avenue, Parramatta on 17 June 2024 and subsequently approved sharing their cultural heritage knowledges with the project team.

- Aunty Julie-Ann Christian – Baramadagal woman
- Jayne Christian – Burramattagal woman
- Aunty Karen Maber, Curator of Darug Keeping Place at PHIVE
- Kylie Colemane – Wiradjuri and Darug/Burramattagal woman
- Aunty Cathy (Catherine) Leane – Knowledge Holder, Cabrogal Clan
- Tara Lloyd – Burramattagal / Wiradjuri woman
- Kara Brussen - Burramattagal woman

Cultural Heritage Values and recommendations

The following cultural heritage values and recommendations were discussed during the consultations:

Connections to Country

- Being on Country and walking on Country is very special to Aboriginal people.
- “We have an ongoing connection to Country, for our children and our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. We have an opportunity to connect with our land and with our ancestors” – Aunty Cathy Leane
- Aunty Julie-Ann Christian shared a sad scene she had spotted in a park where a fence had been erected which was pushing against a tree so much so that the tree had had to grow through and around the fence. Aunty Julie-Ann felt for the pain of the tree which now carries a scar and said we should “be the tree, not the fence”. “Country carries the scars of these opposite world views” - Jayne
- On the NSW Government Architects Connecting with Country framework: “I enjoyed reading the framework. I really liked that the framework recognised that you can engage with Traditional Owners – not just the government process”. “The framework really explained Connecting with Country – it reiterated that we are the oldest living culture in the world” – Kylie Colemane
- On Caring for Country: “It is a never-ending cycle of care. We have a responsibility to care for our mother – our Country” Kylie Colemane
- “We need to put the unity in community” – Kylie Colemane
- “We are eel people – burra means eel – so Parramatta – ‘place of eels’. Eels used to follow the water courses but now they can’t always do that, so they have to adapt and now they have to travel on land” – Kylie Colemane

- In terms of connecting with Country, Kara Brussen mentioned activities that her Burramattagal group had done recently including collecting leaves, bush dining, etc. She described these activities as an opportunity to slow down and concentrate on looking around. Development which encourages these activities for residents and users is good.

Acknowledging Country

- Kylie Coleman reiterated the importance of acknowledging Country and to not be afraid to try.
- Reading an acknowledgement at the start of a meeting or event is positive thing.

Darug Keeping Place

<https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/phive/about/keeping-place>

- Aunty Karen talked about how the Darug Keeping Place is in its establishment phase.
- The Keeping Place is Darug led and Council supported. Darug people are determining what will happen in that space.

Language and spellings

- There are different spellings of Darug / Dharug, Gabrogal / Cabrogal
- “Our sounds were not always well understood by those people from overseas who recorded our language” – Aunty Cathy Leane
- The intention to use Aboriginal Language is “an act of decolonisation” and is appreciated by Aboriginal people – Kylie Coleman

Plants

- Kylie Coleman talked about “bringing the outside into urban areas”, especially with plants and the environment.
- Kylie Coleman also talked “food sovereignty” and about the importance of opportunities for sharing Aboriginal cultural knowledges with the next generation.

Development

- Aunty Cathy Leane talked about the importance of cultural safety in design and development. “We can’t go back to a time when we lived in Country, but we can look in design for elements that help us feel culturally safe” e.g. “an opportunity to feel the open space, the rain, touch Country, design that incorporates our sensibilities, our past our future. That we can see ourselves in that building.” – Aunty Cathy Leane
- Aunty Karen Maber spoke about cultural safety and how small things can make a big difference. For example, she talked about the colour scheme of PHIVE and how an original idea had been to have red carpet. But while the designers were thinking about the Waratah she said that red carpets and red floors have connotations of blood and death and, given the history of the site, that this may be disturbing. Instead, through consultation, darker brown earth-coloured carpets were chosen instead.
- “Indigenous ways of doing things are actually good for everybody” – Aunty Cathy Leane
- Consider the comparison of Trees = Cathedrals. One wouldn’t pull down a Cathedral – so why pull down a tree?

- Kara Brussen described a building that she felt did not connect with Country. It didn't feel "organic", for example there were no opportunities to touch the earth. She asks when we are developing to consider where the opportunities are to create space for the natural elements and physically connecting to Country.

Health

- Aboriginal ways of being and holistic thinking e.g. connection to nature and integrating those into health spaces benefits the entire community.
- Culturally Safe spaces: Ensure that building design elements support cultural safety: being close to the ground, open spaces with access to natural light and air. Ensure Aboriginal people can see themselves in those spaces.
- Opportunities to connect to the ground/ earth. It's something so innate to us and should be facilitated more within our daily lives and the spaces that we inhabit.

6.4.3 Online design meeting, 28 June 2024

The Aboriginal stakeholders then met online with the project team on 28 June 2024 for a presentation and to review the initial concepts for the competition stage.

6.4.3.1 Attendees:

- Aunty Julie-Ann Christian – Baramadagal woman,
- Jayne Christian – Burramattagal woman
- Aunty Karen Maber, Curator of Darug Keeping Place at PHIVE
- Tara Lloyd – Burramattagal / Wiradjuri woman

- Anthony Palamara – Buchan
- Harvey Male – Buchan
- Alex Gaffikin – Artefact

6.4.3.2 Comments and feedback

Design

- Aunty Julie-Ann Christian "loves the example design", Jayne Christian stated "it looks cleaner and amplifies Country."
- Tara Lloyd appreciated incorporating Country into a new development early and not as an afterthought.
- Jayne Christian talked about her work with the Chair of First Nations Advisory Committee that often when they review buildings that community members say there is no consistency through Parramatta and that the place is unrecognisable. Every place is trying to stand out. Jayne likes the "gentleness" of this building concept.
- Aunty Julie said the concept "breathes."
- "Looking nice, smelling nice, tasting nice" – Aunty Karen Maber
- Aunty Karen Maber appreciated the inspiration of using the river as the river isn't just restricted to the riverside but "crosses Country" and is "in the minds and hearts of our people". Aunty described the "healing effect". Aunty described keeping the river "in our consciousness" even when physically further away from the river.
- Jayne Christian talked about the "river flow" and the river as the "veins of the body."

- “What’s true for Country is true for its people” - Jayne Christian. “It’s not good for us when Country is highly disturbed, it’s not good for any communities.”
- Good to provide space for deep breath and reset - Jayne Christian

Plants

- Recommend working with Kylie Coleman about appropriate plants – not just gardens but in the home – Tara Lloyd
- Consider how residents can take ownership of the plants and how they can collaborate in the building - Aunty Karen Maber
- “Imagine going to a certain floor and pick a leaf and make a relaxing cup of tea, Having a relationship with your environment” - Aunty Karen Maber
- The group suggested that we educate the residents on how they are part of something bigger than them; “collaboration and cooperation”
- When people care for plants, they are also caring for Country – “it means a lot to us” - Tara Lloyd

Education and naming

- Consider how people can be educated about Country – e.g. names of places.
- Anthony asked about a name of the building, or names of spaces internally
 - Tara Lloyd said they would think of something to represent them, their ancestors and Country.

- Tara Lloyd mentioned **Peggy Reid** who was one of the first people to be stolen. There has never been the opportunity to honour Peggy.
- Jayne shared more of Peggy’s story and her slavery – “humanising the memory of people” – “we have to do beautiful truth telling.”
- Aunty Julie said naming should “not be tokenising.”
- Tara Lloyd mentioned the healing that comes through honouring.
- Jayne also mentioned ‘Henry’ who was also put in the Parramatta Institute. Jayne also mentioned the importance of speaking for people who don’t have descendants.
- Aunty Karen Maber mentioned spaces for children and the “child in all of us” – she described “an oasis where you can forget your troubles for a moment.”
- Anthony asked about weaving art through the building.

Next steps

This initial consultation summary has provided some information and guidance to inform the project’s masterplan. Depending on the results of the Design Competition, Artefact could assist the project team by developing a full Connection with Country framework for the project, including undertaking further consultation and developing design principles to inform the design, and making recommendations for outcomes for Country, indicators for success and design realisations.

6.5 Post-competition stage consultation

6.5.1 Introduction

This section details the consultation undertaken for the post-Competition following the award of the competition to Buchan + Furtado Sullivan for a build-to-rent scheme.

6.5.2 Visit to Country and discussion, 10 October 2025

A visit to Country was conducted on 10 October 2025 and attended by Aboriginal stakeholders, as well as representatives from Artefact and the project team. The group primarily met at the site and were joined by additional project team members and Stakeholders online. The meeting was also recorded to be watched by additional Stakeholders afterwards.

6.5.2.1 Attendees:

- Jayne Christian, Baramadagal woman
- Aunty Julie Christian, Baramadagal woman
- Deb Constable, works in aged care
- Heidi Duncan, Baramadagal woman and social worker
- Aunty Helen Selwood, Baramadagal woman
- Kursty Colemane (online), Wiradjuri and Baramadagal woman
- Linda Sainsbury, Baramadagal woman (viewed meeting recording)
- Eliza Scobie, Town Planner, Urbis
- Peter Sullivan, Furtado Sullivan
- Natalie Ho, Furtado Sullivan
- Anthony Palamara, Buchan (online)

- Monica Krncevic, architectural graduate Buchan (online)
- Katrina Eckford, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer, Artefact
- Juanita Kwok, Artefact (online)
- Alexandra Gaffikin, Artefact

6.5.2.2 Agenda

- Welcome to Country
- ICIP
- Introductions
- Briefing and discussion

6.5.2.3 Discussion points

The importance of the Connection to Country process

The group discussed the importance of Connecting with Country and doing the right thing by Country, as well as paving the way for future generations.

"We always believe that our old ones are here and guiding us and so are yours. So it's a true collaboration. these processes in that are a way that we can stay engaged with the health of our country as well, which is important"

Jayne Christian, 10 October 2025

Heidi Duncan talked about the importance of Healing Country and how it is important for the younger generations of Baramatagal people to do consultation like this and pave the way for the next generation.

Build to Rent Plan

The group viewed the previous design concept which incorporated a green spine that travelled through the centre of the building with connection to air and sky. This green spine came with communal space for the residents

to socialise, which allowed for not only great connection to country but also connection to community.

This idea was loved however couldn't go forward due to the change from the Housing Delivery Authority to adjust the designation from build-to-rent to build-to-sell scheme.



Figure 19: Workshop with project team and stakeholders, 10 October 2025 (source: Artefact)

Change to Build to Sell Plan

The project team reported that with the scheme change, rather than communal areas, there will be more private balconies. This means there will be the need for different ways to incorporate Country into the design as there will no longer be the green spine communal areas. The project team talked about how, even with the design changes, they hoped that the

original aspirations and intentions will still be there. Anthony talked about the upcoming challenges to make this happen.

Stakeholders expressed their concern for the change in the amount of communal space and therefore the impact on the residents and Country, with Kursty raising awareness to the feeling of sky Country being cut through with the new design.

"I'm getting a little bit of an ick feeling because [the original design] had such beauty and greenery and community and it seems like with all the changes, that's kind of lost a little bit. The bottom area with the green is looking good, but the rest of it just looks like a knife cutting through sky Country. The 'softening' is missing."

Kursty Colemane, 10 October 2025

The project team and stakeholders then discussed that the project team will need to incorporate some good things from the last scheme into the new one and try to keep the aesthetic the same to avoid the feeling of isolation and disconnection from land and Country.

"It's hard because we liked the initial designs."

Jayne Christian, 10 October 2025

The Stakeholders also asked about the height of the building which the project team noting it would be the tallest building in Parramatta. Aunty Helen Selwood has lived in the area for decades and recalled when Parramatta felt like a country town. Aunty Helen dislikes the tall buildings in Parramatta.

Co-living

The group also talked about the existing building and its adaptive reuse as a co-living space. Eliza talked about it being used as potentially student accommodation.

Healing Country

Stakeholders mentioned healing Country, which involves giving back to Country.

"You have to think about what you're going to bring back to Country. What was already here and because that when we're on our spaces it's all about healing Country. We've got to think about the best way to heal country."

Heidi Duncan, 10 October 2025

It is important to avoid bringing in materials such as sandstone from other countries as it will make country sick. Native plants could be included and the Stakeholders suggested bringing in plants and materials that were here before, to heal Country.

The group talked about excavation and Kursty talked about the importance of reusing soils and sandstone on Country.

Water

It is important that there are elements of water throughout the design. Stakeholders shared how water can be a safe space when feeling overwhelmed or stressed and with no waterways around, water should be present. Jayne explained that this place would have been on a flood plain meaning water would have been present.

Water brings connection for many Aboriginal people. The sound of water can be calming and can also provide a sound distraction from the trains and the noise of central Parramatta. Jane talked about the "aesthetics" of water and Peter noted opportunities to incorporate water features into the plaza area perhaps as water walls.

Kursty recommended that having water around could also be used as a watering system for the plants. Kursty also recommended a "meadow wall" which is a wall that grows native grasses and is easy to maintain as well as providing noise reduction. The soil could also be reused in landscaping to

avoid using soil from other Countries. Soil from elsewhere has the potential to introduce asbestos, bacteria, moulds and pollutants.



Figure 20: Stakeholders viewing project plans (source: Artefact)

Plants

The Stakeholders talked about how native plants should be included in the development. The groups discussed Lomandra grass with Kursty sharing that her harvest time is around January and the summer months as its drier. The group use Lomandra grass for traditional weaving and Heidi Duncan shared an example of some weaving she had done for her earrings (see Figure 21).



Figure 21: Woven earrings by Heidi Duncan (source: Artefact)

Post workshop notes

Following the workshop and further discussions, Jayne Christian sent some additional points after the meeting;

- “Culturally, everyone is a visitor on our land and the renter / owner construct is a completely colonial distinction, and not reflective of people’s actual relationship to place, as we would see it.”
- Jayne also noted that the owner/renter distinction may not be the socio-economic distinction that the HDA assumes. She had had recent conversations with a real estate agent who said that many landlords are people renting out their homes so that they can rent another place closer to job opportunities.
- “It seemed that the communal space was being lost to accommodate balcony space. So then you think, what has to give to allow both communal space and balcony space - and it may mean making slightly fewer units which then impacts profit margin. But why should maximum profit be the sole determining factor and at what cost?”

This led to a discussion about how the HDA develops its specification and whether the HDA considers Country or consults with Aboriginal stakeholders.

Linda Sainsbury watched the meeting online and also noted the change in communal spaces:

- “I’m not happy with communal spaces being compromised for build to buy as there is no difference if an individual or family are residing in the property full time, part time or casually.”

Linda also had some comments/ questions about sustainability and noise pollution:

- “I would strongly recommend the soil excavated be reused in the same area, such as in the gardens as suggested. If the soil is excavated and

'stock piled' where would this soil be stored or moved to temporarily?
Or will the soil be placed in a spot onsite until used?"

- She also asked about the levels of parking

Linda also asked about the impact of the new Western Sydney Airport on the building as it is very high. She asked about noise and pollution and mitigation eg:

- Pollution capturing levels for both the lower building, main building and green/ social areas below?
- The smaller building looks very blocky with some greenery thrown in to make it more environmentally acceptable. I'm not sure what the windows and greenery are practical for?

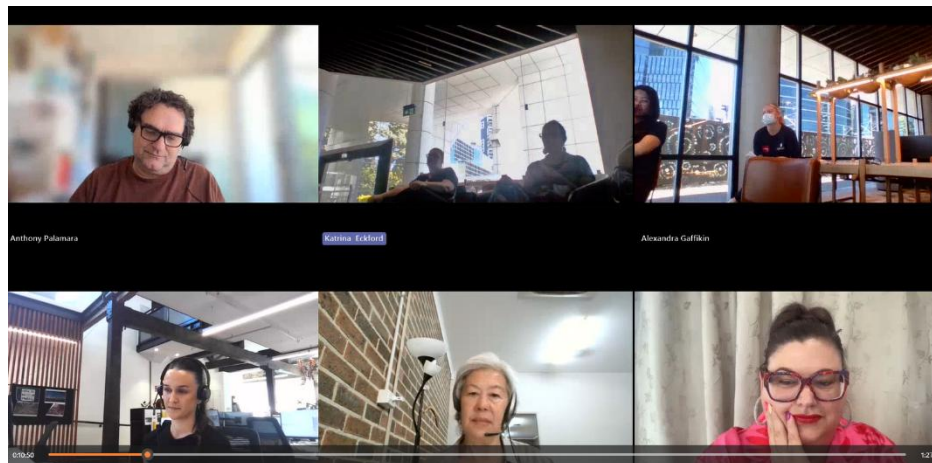


Figure 22: Online participants, 10 October 2025 (source: Artefact)



Figure 23: Kursty Colemane demonstrating some of her weaving, 10 October 2025 (source: Artefact)

6.5.3 Additional consultation about ongoing support for Baramadagal Community and Country

Following the discussions about the project, the Baramadagal Community emphasised the importance of ongoing support for Baramadagal Community and Country, not just one-off acknowledgements. The community have compiled a list of Baramadagal initiatives which could be a way to support Community and Country in the long term through financial or other types of support:

Organisation / Individual name	ORIC / ASIC registered	Community member contact	Area of Community Care	Current Projects
Barabirang Projects	ASIC registered corporation	Jayne Christian	Caring for Country Nation-building	• Baramadagal-led Nation Building Gatherings in collaboration with Powerhouse Museum Parramatta ○ Brings up to 30 members of the community from 5 of the apical bloodlines together twice a year. ○ Intention: “removing barriers to being on-Country with Kin” in circumstances where our lands have been so highly developed / colonised to the exclusion of us. ○ Strengthens community relationships between those living on-Country and off-Country. ○ Creates opportunities to care for Country and advocate for its needs. ○ Gatherings are a practical attempt to implement / enact Nation-Building principles on-Country. ○ Allows Community an opportunity to safely bring in members of the family who are suffering the disconnection caused by family’s stolen generations trajectory. ○ The initiative is currently funded until June 2027. Running cost is between \$80k - \$100k per annum. • Parramatta’s Lit - Sydney Fringe Festival ○ In 2025, Barabirang Projects and members of the Baramadagal family group worked together to support the Inaugural Parramatta’s Lit festival.

Organisation / Individual name	ORIC / ASIC registered	Community member contact	Area of Community Care	Current Projects
				○ Modest Funding was sourced through existing community relationships to facilitate the participation of 10 Baramadagal people over the course of a week to participate in hosting festival events. ○ We: ▪ Led the opening ceremony ▪ Hosted two yarning circles - one free to public, one ticketed. ▪ Opened and Spoke at the Literature Industry Day. ○ We hosted the Governor General of Australia and the Treaty Council in a pre-event to the co-led opening night. ○ Barabirang Projects supports the festival's bid to have Parramatta named as one of UNESCO's Cities of Literature. ○ Allows Community an opportunity to safely bring in members of the family who are suffering the disconnection caused by family's stolen generations trajectory. ○ With proper funding of between \$20k - 30k, we could ensure visibility and participation over the month for future festival events. River Rangers Pilot Program ○ Bringing together up to 20 people from the Baramadagal family group over four occasions in the next 12 months, to practice intergenerational Caring for Country, Monitoring and Observation of River health, Creation of a TO findings report - data sovereignty - to use in grassroots advocacy re: action for environmentally sustainable initiatives.

Organisation / Individual name	ORIC / ASIC registered	Community member contact	Area of Community Care	Current Projects
				- Allows Community an opportunity to safely bring in members of the family who are suffering the disconnection caused by family's stolen generations trajectory. - The initiative is currently funded until December 2026. Running cost is between \$30k - \$40k per annum.
Baramadagal Darug Tribal Governing Council	ORIC registered	Jayne Christian	Land Back Justice	Registration: Currently undergoing corporate restructure Current projects: community advocacy and cultural governance support partners to projects being run through other listed entities in this table
Darug Sustainable Heritage Association	ASIC business name registration	Jayne Christian	Land Back Justice	In collaboration with the Treaty Council to assert First Laws application in current land acquisitions. Can be used for working-group projects i.e. specific initiatives those working in the Connecting with Country collectives would like to oversee.
Back to the Bush Indigenous Corporation	ORIC registered w/ DGR status.	Jayne Christian	Caring for Country	Back to the Bush is an Australian environmental charity that is also endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), meaning it can receive tax-deductible donations. The organisation is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). It has an all-Indigenous Board, which includes Jayne Christian, and donations made to support Baramadgal Darug people are applied solely to the care of the Parramatta Darug area. Current projects are centred around: - Advocacy to reinstate cultural burning practice at Lake Parramatta Reserve, and capacity to facilitate the practice. - Monitoring, observation and advocacy for River health.

6.6 Ongoing consultation

It is recommended that consultation be carried out by current and future project teams throughout the lifetime of the development of the project. Consultation and engagement could include:

- Further design discussion meetings.
- Engagement of Aboriginal owned businesses and organisations.
- Support for Aboriginal projects.
- Training and internships for early career Aboriginal professionals and students.
- Commissioning of artistic works from locally connected Aboriginal artists.
- Ongoing approvals from Aboriginal traditional knowledge holders.
- Consult with local Elders.
- Cultural tours and walks on Country.
- Involvement of Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) in potential archaeological and heritage work.



Figure 24: Eliza and Aunty Helen viewing plans (source: Artefact)

7. ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES



7.1 Introduction

A summary of the Aboriginal cultural heritage values from historical research, previous consultation and ongoing consultations is provided in this section.

7.2 Values

Baramadagal Country

This land always was and always will be Aboriginal Country. For tens of thousands of years, these communities cared for Country, and significant sites are present throughout the waterways including Parramatta River. Despite more than two hundred years of dispossession, the Baramadagal people continue to have a connection to Country and pass on stories and cultural practices like weaving to the next generation.

Water and the environment

The natural environment, particularly Parramatta River and its surrounding landscape, is seen as a living cultural space that holds memory and meaning. Water features strongly in this worldview, representing both physical sustenance and spiritual wellbeing. Stakeholders stressed the importance of incorporating water and native plant species such as Lomandra into urban design as a way of promoting healing, connection to place, and environmental resilience.

Education

Education and communication are important cultural heritage values for Aboriginal peoples. Educating one another and in particular the younger generation about the stories of Country is important to assure culture and traditions are passed down. Opportunities to be consulted for Connecting with Country are also ways for Aboriginal stakeholders to advocate for Country and encourage the next generation.

Caring for Country

For the Baramadagal people, to care for Country is to nurture a relationship that sustains identity, wellbeing, and cultural continuity. This principle is underscored by practices such as walking on Country, gathering native plants, and engaging in ceremonies that reaffirm the interconnectedness between people and place. These expressions of connection are essential for maintaining cultural knowledge and passing it on to future generations. Baramadagal people emphasise that caring for Country is a cycle of reciprocity — it is about giving back through restoration, mindful design, protecting native species, and honouring traditional practices.

Language

Language and storytelling are central to expressing Baramadagal cultural identity. The revival and use of the Dharug language, including recognising traditional place names and their meanings — such as “Parramatta,” from *Burra-matta*, meaning “place of eels” — are seen as acts of decolonisation and cultural revitalisation. Through language, shared storytelling, and acknowledgement rituals, the Baramadagal community continues to strengthen their sense of belonging and visibility in contemporary spaces. Naming places and buildings meaningfully is not a tokenistic act, but a form of truth-telling, remembrance, and healing that connects present and past generations.

7.3 Registered Aboriginal sites

The location of Aboriginal sites is considered culturally sensitive information. It is advised that this information, including the AHIMS data appearing on the heritage map be removed from this report if it is to enter the public domain.

A search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) was completed on 30 September 2025 to determine the location of Aboriginal sites in relation to the current study area.

There are no AHIMS registered site located within the study area. The closest registered AHIMS site is approximately 50m Northwest of the study area. The AHIMS data demonstrates that identified Aboriginal sites are generally located in proximity to watercourses in this region and that there are fewer sites located in more developed areas.

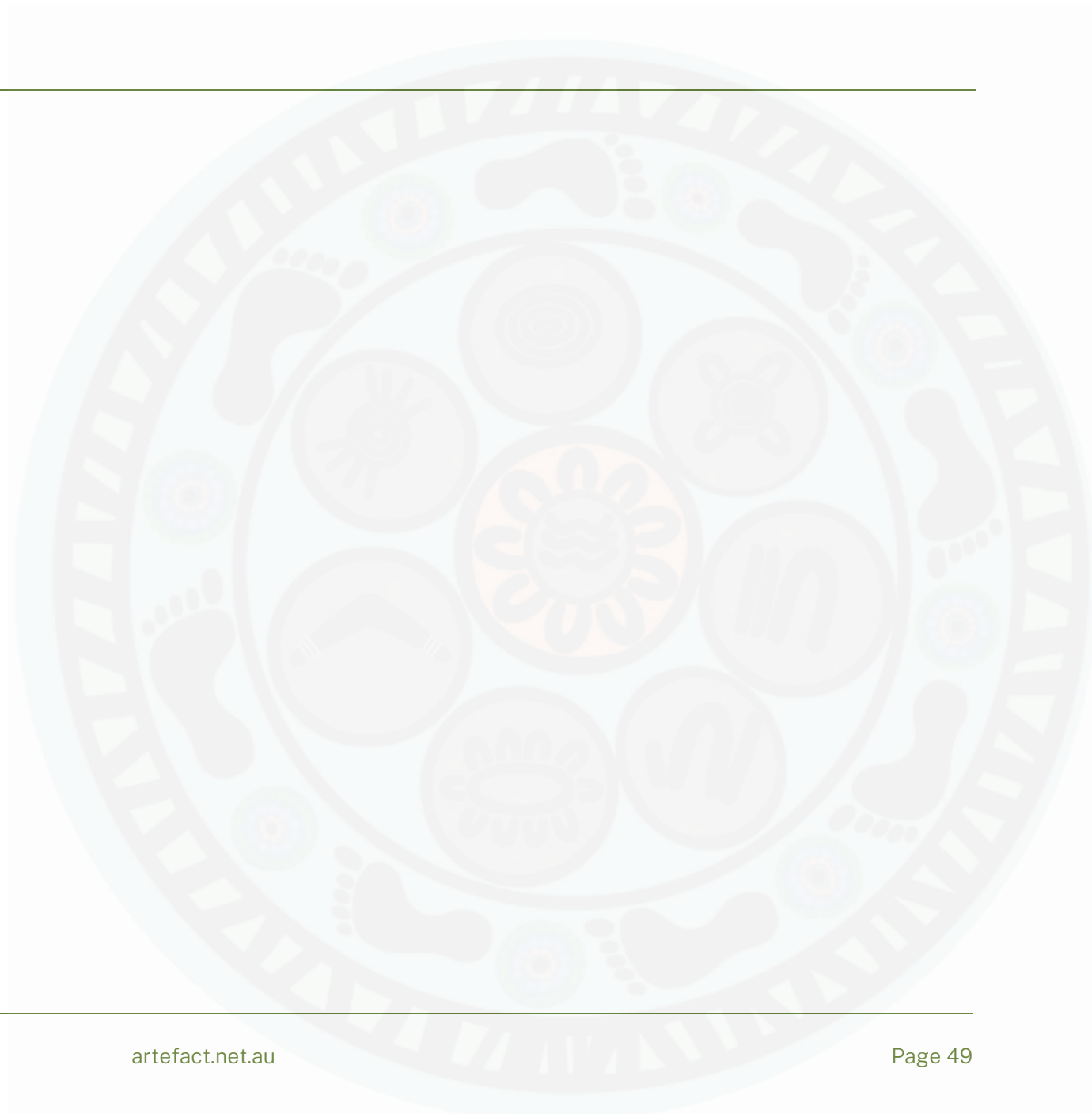
The broader Baramadagal landscape has a number of artefacts and potential archaeological deposits. AHIMS listed sites include artefacts, hearths and Aboriginal resource and gathering locations.

An *Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence Assessment* has also been prepared by Artefact (2025) and will be submitted with the SSD.



Figure 25: AHIMS extensive search results

8. DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY



8.1 Introduction

The *Connecting with Country Framework* (GANSW 2023) provides direction on ways to explore opportunities for design process and practices to support connection to Country in built environment projects. Bringing an understanding of Country into these processes can help improve project outcomes.

8.2 Design principles

These broadly applicable set of design principles are a useful tool for designers and developers to create places that reflect Aboriginal cultural heritage values. Icons developed by Tara Lloyd, Baramadagal woman.



Connection to Country

Design should reflect the Baramadagal people's deep spiritual, cultural, and ecological relationship with Country. Spaces should foster direct physical and sensory engagement with the natural environment – through native planting, access to natural light, air, and water, and opportunities to touch and walk on earth. Every aspect of the design should express ongoing care and respect for land, water, and sky, recognising that healthy Country means healthy people. Buildings should invite mindfulness and reflection, enabling residents and visitors to connect with the stories, cycles, and rhythms of the landscape.



Cultural Safety and Identity

Built form and landscape design should support Aboriginal cultural safety by allowing the Baramadagal community to see themselves reflected in place. This includes welcoming, open spaces, natural materials, and meaningful integration of cultural motifs, stories, and art. Materials, colours, and textures should evoke a sense of belonging, healing, and continuity. Consultations have shown that small design choices – such as earthy tones instead of harsh reds – can convey cultural sensitivity. Culturally safe spaces nurture wellbeing by providing environments that respect Indigenous ways of being while remaining inclusive for all.



Healing and Caring for Country

Design should actively contribute to the restoration and healing of Country. This involves reintroducing native species, reusing local soils and sandstone, incorporating water features, and avoiding imported materials that disrupt natural balance. Ecological sustainability and Indigenous custodianship are intertwined – every design decision should enhance the environment's health while honouring the living history embedded in the land.

**Continuing Culture and Knowledge**

Spaces should enable the ongoing practice, teaching, and sharing of Aboriginal cultural knowledge. This includes incorporating Dharug language and place names, areas for gathering, storytelling, and ceremony, and opportunities for cultural learning through design. Educational signage, art, and landscape features can reveal layers of meaning, reminding all users that they stand on unceded Aboriginal land. The design process itself should be grounded in collaboration with Baramadagal custodians — honouring their guidance ensures authenticity and embeds living culture into the project. Through continual engagement and respect, the design becomes a vessel for truth-telling, renewal, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

8.3 Examples of design realisations

8.3.1 Introduction

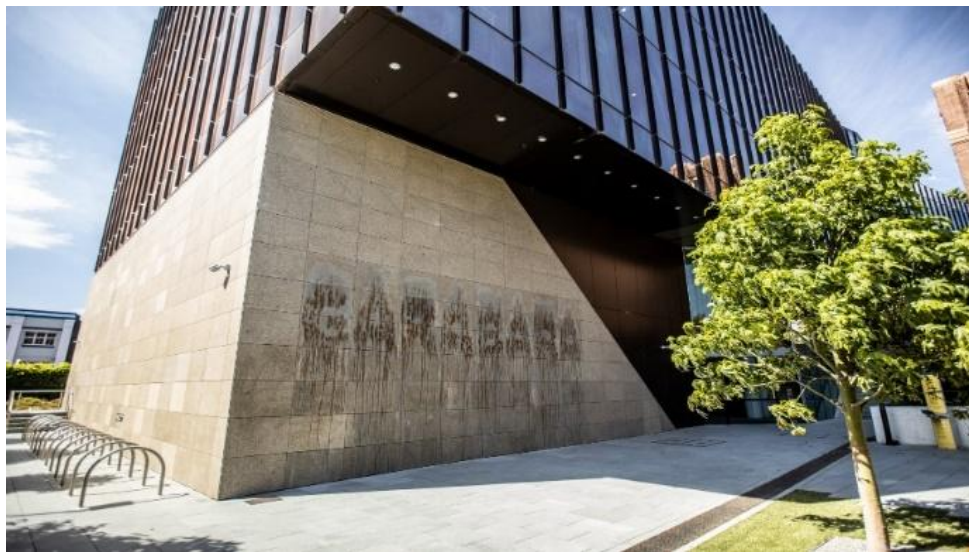
This section presents a series of tangible examples illustrating how the Design Principles outlined in Section 8.2 might be meaningfully expressed through the project's architecture, landscaping, and interpretive elements.

These examples, drawn from a diversity of Aboriginal Countries, demonstrate that there is no singular approach — rather, there are many ways to thoughtfully embed these principles throughout a project. The design outcome opportunities are grouped into broad thematic categories.



8.3.2 Acknowledgement of/Welcome to Country

A key method of communicating the importance of Country to audiences at a site is by providing a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country message at a main entry point. A Welcome to Country is given by the traditional custodians/knowledge holders of the area welcoming people to their land, while an Acknowledgement of Country is a sign of respect to the traditional owners of the land stated by the asset holder. Any content for these devices (text, graphics, use of local language) is to be developed with/by local Aboriginal knowledge holders.



Acknowledgement of Country, University of Sydney



Left - Interpretive panels acknowledging Country, Cairns Foreshore Redevelopment. Right - Acknowledgement of Dharawal Country road sign (NRMA)



Interpretive Acknowledgement of Country panel, Jamie Eastwood for Roussel Road, Axle West (source: Artefact)

8.3.3 Naming/Use of language

For Aboriginal people, connection with Country is intrinsically connected to identity through language, cultural practices and long held relationships between people and the land. Using Aboriginal words or phrases as elements in the paving, as audio recordings, to name key rooms or buildings in new developments or as dual naming for streets and public spaces is an interpretive option that recognises Aboriginal cultural heritage values. All language usage development should be done in consultation with Aboriginal knowledge holders.



Left: Dharug language incorporated into building and seating, St Leonards Health Centre right: Darumbal language stairs, Yeppoon'



Dharawal language incorporated into metal sheet, Billabong Campbelltown



Yirran muru (Many pathways) - Dharawal Interpretive Play Space, Shellharbour Civic Centre

8.3.4 Integration of Indigenous designs and forms into the built environment

Creative practices relating to place-making and the built form are powerful devices to incorporate and reflect the heritage values and stories of a site. Designs that echo traditional forms, spaces and narratives and their contemporary interpretations are increasingly being integrated within new developments worldwide, sending strong, respectful messages about the timeless links between Aboriginal people and the landscape, and allowing for reflection of contemporary connections to the land.

Using flowing forms that echo nearby rivers, re-using local materials and incorporating colours of Country provide a physical environment that explores the cultural significance of the site



Burrinja Cultural Centre, Melbourne's Dandenong Ranges



Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service allied health services hub in Newman. (Noel Nannup and Simon Forrest).



marri ngurang, Nicole Monks, Redfern

8.3.5 Native gardens and bush tucker

Integrating native flora and bush tucker into rooftop gardens or the broader landscape design promotes sustainability and creates learning opportunities about Aboriginal cultural heritage and native flora. Bush tucker plants offer unique flavours, nutritional benefits, and resilience to local climates. In rooftop gardens, bush tucker plants can thrive, offering fresh, local produce. In landscape design, these plants can create aesthetically pleasing, low-maintenance green spaces that support local wildlife and celebrate Aboriginal culture.



All images - South Eveleigh Native Rooftop Farm, South Eveleigh, Sydney, by Yerrabingin and collaborators

8.3.6 Gathering spaces and seating

As well as being essential functional elements of public space, seating, shelters, pathways, and circulation areas such as stairways, are useful sites for sharing information and learning about the cultural heritage of the site through design.

Creating gathering spaces within the landscaping of new developments can foster connections between people and increase feelings of 'home', cultural safety and comfort within the environment. They support social interaction, opportunities for informal and formal meetings, enjoyment and relaxation.

In general, these are considered safe spaces for sitting and talking, whose purpose might extend to specific community gatherings/meetups, teaching/learning activities, spaces for reflection and matters of wellbeing. Incorporating artistic elements and designs that reference an Aboriginal understanding and use of place into landscaping and seating arrangements can provide an enriched environment, points of engagement, conversation, and education.

Artistic patterning, text, or graphic image-based seating inserts are effective forms of interpretation, strategically positioned to engage people who have some time to pause, read and reflect absorbing messages and information about the site. This approach could be extended to overhead elements such as canopies, roofing and shade structures.



Seating at Barangaroo metro with inlayed oyster shells and acknowledgment of Country (Artefact)



Left: Reconciliation Garden (Arcadia), Queensland University Right: Learning circle, Macquarie University

8.3.7 Incorporating local and natural materials

Incorporating materials into the building and broader domain design which are prevalent in the area, including sandstone, timber and quartz, can help connect the new development to the natural landscape and cultural heritage of the region.



Timber paneling on façade at Centre for Nyoongar Culture and Environmental Design (iredale pedersen hook architect)



Meandering brick paving contrasted by natural sandstone blocks and native plantings at Bendigo TAFE, Six Degrees Architects.



Barangaroo Reserve, with sandstone walls (source: Janna Schreier Garden Design)

8.3.8 Artworks

Eye-catching, large-scale artworks are effective mediums for expressing Aboriginal heritage values in new developments. Public art is a powerful tool of cultural expression, with strong graphics able to tell stories and visually communicate cultural messages to a large audience. This type of interpretive media creates a visual statement about the cultural heritage of an area and is important in place-making.

Artworks can be stand-alone features, graphic designs used in site signage, or integrated within building facades, soffits, foyers or landscaping. Aboriginal artists with connection to the local area should be engaged if artworks are to be considered for integration a new development.



Tiddalick the Frog, located throughout Bigge Park Splash Park, by Amanda Newman & Natalie L. Simmons⁵¹



Caring for Country, by Jamie Eastwood for Roussell Road, Axle West (source: Goodman)



Left: Artwork at Bankstown Art Centre by Jane Cavanough; Right: 'Ancient Highways' lift foyer by Maddie Gibbs at Stanmore Station.

⁵¹ <https://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/whats-on/love-liverpool/walk-your-art-out/Bigge-Park>

8.3.9 Water features

The Aboriginal people of the Sydney area have a strong connection to salt water and fresh water. Water features in landscapes enhance both aesthetic appeal and ecological health. They create serene environments, promoting relaxation and mental well-being with the sound and aesthetics even with small scale elements like mini fountains and running water. Ecologically, water features support biodiversity by providing habitats for various wildlife, including birds, amphibians, and beneficial insects. They also help regulate local microclimates, moderating temperatures and increasing humidity.



Rainbow serpent sculpture Chandos Street. (source: Vanessa Hohnke, Namoi Valley Independent)⁵²

⁵² <https://www.nvi.com.au/story/6867484/gunnedah-rainbow-serpent-librarian-win-local-government-week-awards/>



Stone with water features (source: gardening with Angus)



Wild waterplay feature, Ian Potter Centennial Park

8.3.10 Interior design

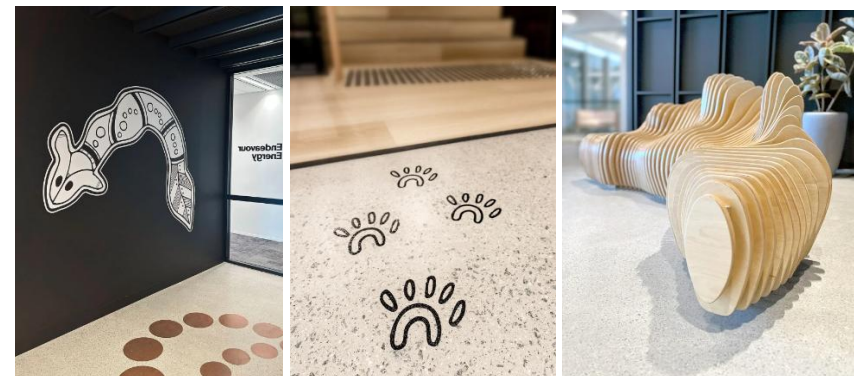
Incorporating soft furnishings and interior elements from Aboriginal artists and designers into interior design is a way to support local Aboriginal businesses while creating a sense of place and expressing Aboriginal cultural heritage values. Statement pieces can help to create welcoming and culturally safe spaces.



Figure 26: Water Yuludarla commercial carpet collection – a contemporary interpretation, based on the artwork of Gumbaynggirr Artist, Brentyn Lugnan.



Reflection Pods by Lucy Simpson



Office wayfinding and furniture by Jamie Eastwood for Endeavour Energy Australia Offices.

9. PRACTICES



9.1 Introduction

This section explores how key elements of Aboriginal knowledge systems can be aligned with cognitive concepts of thinking, feeling and behaving, which are fundamental in the Connecting with Country design process, and provides examples of actions that can be undertaken by project teams to reframe their design approach to be Country- centered.

9.1.1 Thinking

‘Communing with Country’ describes a cultural practice used by Aboriginal people to connect with Country through their mind and spirit. The word ‘communing’ has been selected to convey a specific meaning: being in deep and intimate conversation with Country - but not in a religious sense as some may understand it. Communing with Country is presented as an invitation to explore the deep connection Aboriginal people have with Country, demonstrated through various forms of cultural expression. Project teams can learn about cultural practice as a way to deepen cultural understanding, guided and mediated by Aboriginal people.

Activities

- Engage in cultural awareness training.

9.1.2 Feeling

Understanding how emotions and feelings shape our responses to experiences and knowledge is an important step towards changing our approach. Where guided by Aboriginal people, being immersed in Country can awaken our senses and feelings and inform a deeper understanding of Country.

Activities

- Walk on Country.

- Participate in appropriate ceremony.

9.1.3 Behaving

Being on Country refers to the experience of being connected to and living in harmony with Country. Being on Country requires an understanding and balancing of complex systems of knowledge sharing, interrelationships, protocols and behaviours.

For many Aboriginal people, being on Country is also an important part of their identity and sense of belonging. It provides a connection to their ancestors and other living entities, to their cultural heritage, and to the broader community of humans and living beings that inhabit Country. A vital part of being on Country is through knowledge-sharing practices to support the health and wellbeing of Country. Knowledge is contained and shared within the cultural expression of many Aboriginal peoples.

Activities

- Ensure Aboriginal people retain authorship and control of their cultural knowledge and intellectual property, and how it is shared with others.
- Invite Aboriginal people to co-design and co-manage projects rather than just being asked to provide their cultural knowledge, stories and insights to help develop projects.
- Respect Elders and family.
- Listen and observe closely, and be modest.
- Ensure the design process is collaborative and inclusive.

10. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



10.1 Introduction

This section discusses actions which can be undertaken throughout the lifecycle of a project to facilitate the shift from Human-centric to Country-centric development. Project planning should address the four stages in the project lifecycle:

- Form (Starting with Country)
- Design (Imagining with Country)
- Deliver (Shaping Country)
- Maintain (Caring for Country)

The preparation of this Connecting with Country report is fundamental to shifting to the Country-Centric design approach, as it identifies Aboriginal cultural values and provides practical means of ensuring these values are reflected in all stages of the project. The tables below identify actions that have been taken in the preparation of this report and provides recommendations for future stages of the project.

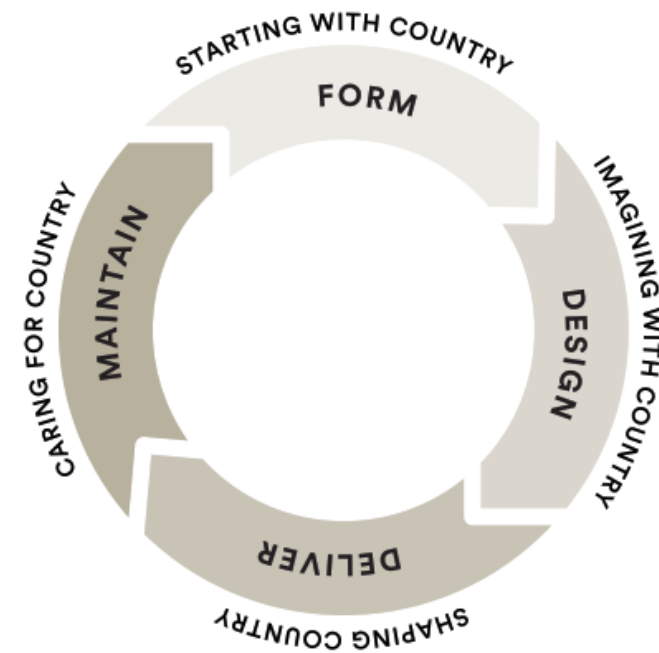
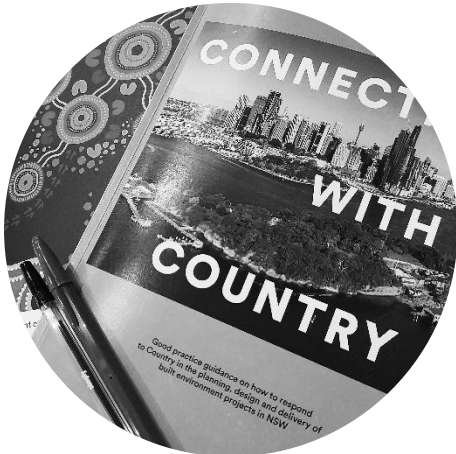


Figure 27: Project lifecycle from an Aboriginal perspective (GANSW 2020)

10.1.1 Research and prepare

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
Researching previous work and carrying out cultural awareness training are important preparation tasks to avoid Aboriginal Stakeholder consultation fatigue. 	• Project team members attended the Walk on Country on the 10 October 2025. • Artefact reviewed previous consultation reports and technical studies in section 6.3. • Project team members will review this CwC report. • Artefact worked with Aboriginal stakeholders to identify which Country the project is on-Baramadagal Country. • Through consultation and historical research this CwC report has identified key historical and cultural narratives - see section 5.	• Future team members should undergo cultural awareness training.

10.1.2 Establishing protocols and ways of working

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
Collaboration with Aboriginal stakeholders is important to establish protocols and a common understanding of how to communicate and behave with Community. 	- Stakeholder identification is discussed in section 6.2.1. - Stakeholders were asked during engagement activities how they would like to be addressed. - Protocols were introduced at the beginning of the Walk/workshop/discussion on the 10 October 2025. - Stakeholders were reimbursed for their time and knowledges. - All consultation activities started with an Acknowledgement of Country. - Cultural safety was discussed with the stakeholders on 10 October 2025.	- Continue to follow established protocols for community engagement and cultural safety. - Commission a Welcome to Country ceremony at important milestone events. - Consider ongoing opportunities for on-Country tours, ceremony, and sourcing Indigenous food and materials. - Consider ongoing opportunities for supporting the Baramadagal Community – see section 6.5.3.

10.1.3 Respect ICIP

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
Respecting ICIP protocols is important.	• ICIP protocols are included in section 2.8. • ICIP and other protocols were discussed at the start of the workshop and Walk on Country activities. • The ICIP protocols in this report have been compiled in consultation with Terri Janke lawyers. • Permission to use the front cover was sought from artist Tara Lloyd.	• Keep records of all engagement sessions and report back to the community on how ICIP is being used. • Seek permission before sharing any information. • Follow ICIP protocols to protect knowledge and intellectual property for future work (e.g., artwork) and ensure proper credit is given in development of public art and Aboriginal heritage Interpretation. • Redact AHIMS and any other sensitive information in publicly available reports.

10.1.4 Create training and employment opportunities

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
The creation of opportunities for training, education and employment of Aboriginal people should be considered throughout the lifetime of the project. 	- Aboriginal stakeholders were engaged for this CwC report. - Early career Aboriginal heritage officer Katrina Eckford attended the Walk on Country on 10 October 2025. - Opportunities to learn more about planning and design were given at the Workshop on 10 October 2025.	- Provide training to develop communities' spatial design skills and understanding of planning and design processes. - Consider financial support including scholarships to encourage community to pursue a career in built environment or heritage professions. - Support Aboriginal businesses in the project procurement strategy, and provide employment opportunities throughout all stages of the project life cycle. - Consider ongoing opportunities for supporting the Baramadagal Community – see section 6.5.3

10.1.5 Share Knowledge

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
Aboriginal stakeholders should have the opportunity to share knowledges and historic events. Cultural narratives will be supported and interpreted as part of the project. 	- Stakeholders had an opportunity to share cultural knowledges at the Walk on Country / Workshop on 10 October 2025. - Examples of design and interpretive ideas have been developed based on recommendations by Aboriginal stakeholders – see section 8. - Concerns and opportunities about the project were discussed on 10 October 2025. - The project team will review and respond to the feedback in section 5. - Cultural heritage values are summarised in section 7.	- Preparing a Heritage Interpretation and Public Art Strategy would help identify and communicate key cultural and historical narratives. - Schedule ongoing consultation during detailed design stages so cultural narratives will be supported. - Listen to community concerns about building development and how it will affect Country.

10.1.6 Design with Country

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
Designing with Country is a key consideration of Connecting with Country. 	• Design workshops and discussions were held on 10 October 2025. • Design principles have been included in section 8.2: ○ Connecting to Country ○ Cultural safety and identity ○ Healing and caring for Country ○ Continuing culture and knowledge • Design realisations have been included in section 8.3.	• Schedule in future opportunities for consultation and working with stakeholders. • Implement the design principles. • Consider incorporating Aboriginal place names and language into reports and signage, with consultation. • Where possible, use locally sourced, sustainable building materials and incorporate colours of Country. • Support living ecosystems and ecologies in landscaping. • Consider access and cultural safety in landscape and architecture. • Ensure the Aboriginal community has an opportunity to provide feedback on the detailed design concepts. • Ensure the design concepts include a space where community can gather/have access.

10.1.7 Consider Country

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
The project team must consider Country throughout the construction period and ongoing maintenance. 	Recommendations for construction and maintenance have been shared by Aboriginal stakeholders in section 6.3.1.	- Consult Aboriginal knowledge holders when developing environmental management recommendations to preserve their knowledge and enhance ecosystem health. - Consider plants which are low maintenance. - Develop a maintenance plan for artwork and interpretation elements. - Carry out evaluation with Aboriginal stakeholders post occupancy.

10.1.8 Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage

Action	Project outcomes	Recommendations
Aboriginal cultural heritage should be protected and celebrated within planning and design outcomes. 	• The project design has considered access to Country. • The project design has enabled the physical form of Country to remain recognisable and restored where possible. • An Archeological Archaeological Constraints Assessment is being prepared by Artefact Heritage (draft 2025).	• Follow the recommendations given in the draft Archeological Archaeological Constraints Assessment (Artefact 2025).

11. CONCLUSION



11.1 Conclusion and recommendations

This Connecting with Country report for 2-10 Valentine Ave, Parramatta has been prepared to align with the principles and guidelines of the Connecting with Country Framework (GANSW 2023) and associated best practice documents.

This document has been prepared in consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders from the area and provides a vision and design principles to embed Country into the future development of the site.

It is recommended that the project team consider key elements from this Connecting with Country report within the future planning for the site including:

- considering the Design Principles within the design stages for the current Planning Proposal and future development of the site – see section 8.2.
- actioning appropriate recommendations from the Actions/Recommendations – see section 10.
- facilitating ongoing consultation and design workshops with the Aboriginal stakeholders during subsequent key development stages.
- integrating meaningful interpretation/artwork/landscape elements within the design development stages of this project, through the development of a Heritage Interpretation and Art Strategy that requires consultation with key stakeholders.
- arranging Cultural Awareness Training for current and future project team members.
- updating Aboriginal stakeholders on the progress of the future development of the site.

Artefact would like to thank all stakeholders for their generosity in sharing their expertise and cultural knowledge during this project.



Figure 28: Consultation, 10 October 2025 (source: Artefact)

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13. APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION LOG

Person / organisation	Date	Contacted by	Mode	Issues discussed	Section where addressed in report
Jayne Christian	17/06/2024	Artefact	Email	Competition stage consultation	Section 6.4
	28/06/2024	Artefact	Online	Attended Design meeting	Section 6.4.3
	18/2/2025	Artefact	Email	Engagement and ICIP	Section 2.8
	19/2/2025	Artefact	Email	Briefing and discussion about engagement opportunities	Section 6
	6/3/2025	Artefact	Online	Discussion about ICIP protection for Aboriginal cultural knowledges on the project. Report updated.	Section 2.8
	10/10/2025	Artefact	In person	Attended Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	13/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent thoughts post workshop	Section 6.5.2 and 6.5.3
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	3/11/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent comments and edits for the workshop notes	Section 6.5.3 and section 14
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback. Received comments and updated report.	Section 6.5.2 and 6.5.3
Neane Carter, Teri Janke Lawyers	6/3/2025	Artefact	Online	Discussion about ICIP protection for Aboriginal cultural knowledges on the project. Report updated.	Section 2.8
Aunty Julie Christian	17/06/2024	Artefact	Email	Competition stage consultation	Section 6.4
	28/06/2024	Artefact	Online	Attended Design meeting	Section 6.4.3

Person / organisation	Date	Contacted by	Mode	Issues discussed	Section where addressed in report
	10/10/2025	Artefact	In person	Attended Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback	
Deb Constable	10/10/2025	Artefact	In person	Attended Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback.	
Heidi Duncan	10/10/2025	Artefact	In person	Attended Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback.	
Aunty Helen Selwood	10/10/2025	Artefact	In person	Attended Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback.	
Kursty Colemane	10/10/2025	Artefact	In person	Attended Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	3/11/2025	Artefact	Email	Reviewed workshop notes	Section 6.5.2
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback.	
Aunty Karen Maber	17/06/2024	Artefact	Email	Competition stage consultation	Section 6.4
	28/06/2024	Artefact	Online	Attended Design meeting	Section 6.4.3
Aunty Catherine Leane	17/06/2024	Artefact	Email	Competition stage consultation	Section 6.4
Kara Brussen	17/06/2024	Artefact	Email	Competition stage consultation	Section 6.4

Person / organisation	Date	Contacted by	Mode	Issues discussed	Section where addressed in report
Kylie Colemane	17/06/2024	Artefact	Email	Competition stage consultation	Section 6.4
	10/10/2025	Artefact	Online	Attended Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback.	
Linda Sainsbury	10/10/2025	Artefact	Online	Reviewed Workshop	Section 6.5.2
	13/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent thoughts post workshop	Section 6.5.2
	27/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Artefact sent draft workshop notes	
	3/11/2025	Artefact	Email	Had no edits for workshop notes	
	10/12/2025	Artefact	Email	Sent draft report for review and feedback.	
Tara Lloyd	17/06/2024	Artefact	Email	Competition stage consultation	Section 6.4
	28/06/2024	Artefact	Online	Attended Design meeting	Section 6.4.3
	21/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Ask for approval to use artwork	See page ii
	22/10/2025	Artefact	Email	Approved use of artwork	See page ii

14. APPENDIX B: RESPONSE TO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Matters that were discussed in DRP Session No 2 and based on the design material presented by **Buchan + Furtado Sullivan** and **Curzon + Partners** on 13 November 2025 included the following point:

21. The Panel support the Connecting with Country (CwC) approach. It is recommended that the SSDA outline next steps to continue the CwC engagement through all project stages including design development, documentation and construction.

This consultation strategy is a response to that request:

Stage	Consultation
Design development	1 x meeting
Documentation	1 x meeting
Construction	1 x meeting
Post construction	TBD



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