

FIRST NATIONS CO-DESIGN VALUES REPORT

Eastlakes Shopping Centre Redevelopment • 19A Evans Avenue



Image Source: Conquest

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19A Evans Avenue, Eastlakes Connecting with Country team:



Prepared for:

conquest

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Acknowledgement of Country



JMP Aboriginal Consultancy would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Eastlake Shopping Centre Redevelopment project is located, the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

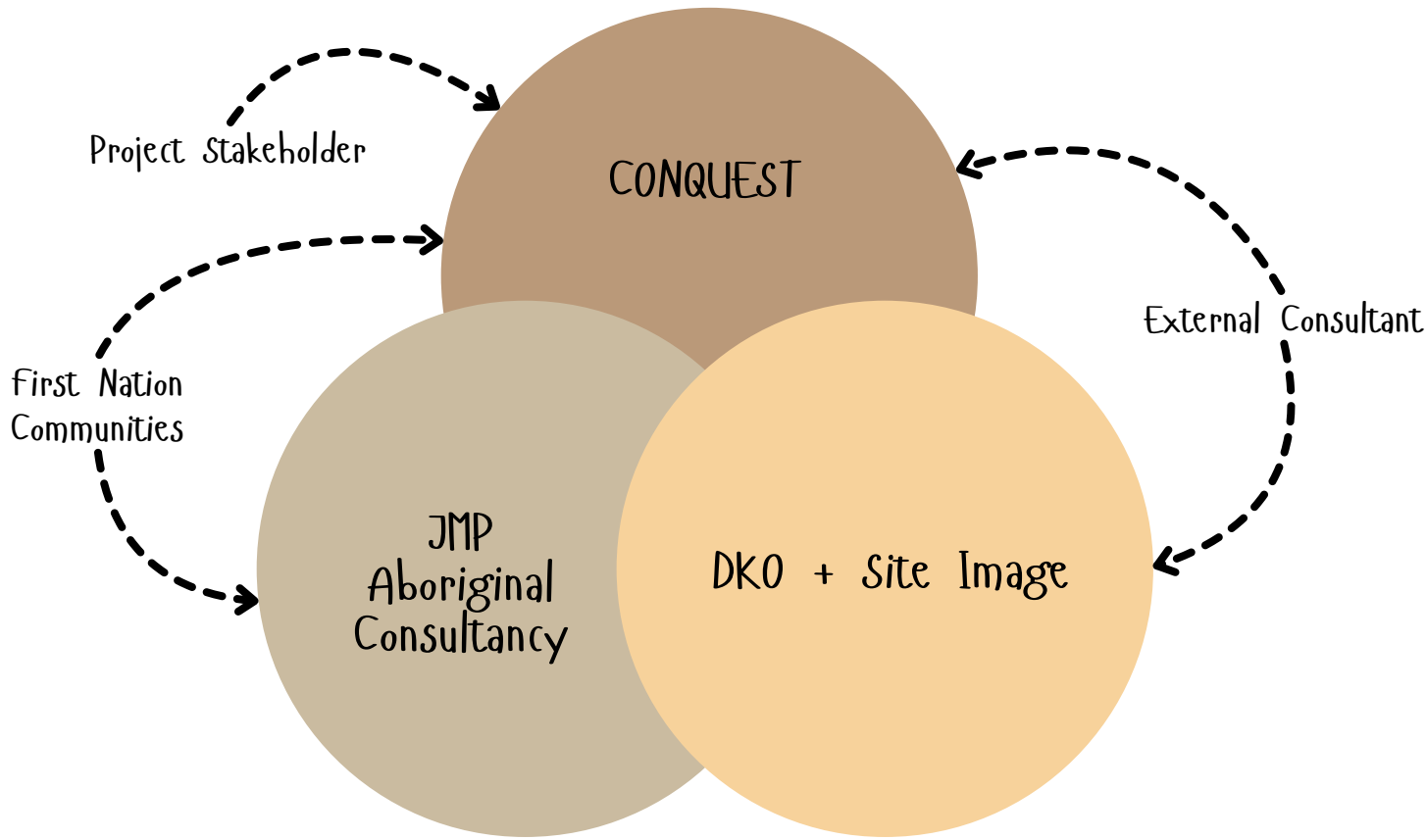
The Bidjigal people have cared for this Country for tens of thousands of years, sustaining its waterways, landscapes, flora, and fauna, and cultural knowledge systems. Their deep and enduring connection to land, water, and sky continues to shape the cultural identity of this place today.

As we plan and design within Eastlakes, we recognise the responsibility to honour this living culture through respectful engagement and meaningful co-design. This report seeks to acknowledge and reflect Bidjigal values, knowledge, and perspectives, supporting outcomes that connect people to Country and embed First Nations cultural principles into the future of the Eastlakes Area.



Our Point in Difference

At JMP, we work at the centre of a collaborative partnership that brings together First Nations communities, project stakeholders, and external specialists to ensure that cultural knowledge, design thinking, and technical expertise come together in a shared space. Our role is to facilitate genuine co-design, bring community insight into project conversations, and ensure all inputs flow toward outcomes that are grounded in Country, culture, and place. This integrated model supports stronger relationships, clearer communication, and project solutions that reflect the values and knowledge of the people and Country they serve.



Culturally Grounded Leadership and Local Knowledge

JMP is led by First Nations professionals with deep connections to community, culture, and Country. Our leadership brings lived cultural knowledge, ensuring all advise is respectful, place-based, and guided by Aboriginal values and protocols. We work directly with Custodians, Elders, and knowledge holders from early engagement through to final outcomes, ensuring our work remains culturally informed, locally relevant, and grounded in long-term relationships.

Integrated Design and Cultural Strategy

We embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge into planning, design, and development through genuine co-design processes. Working alongside Custodians, architects, and planners, we ensure cultural narratives, values, and ecological knowledge shape meaningful design outcomes. Our approach extends beyond compliance - supporting lasting cultural visibility, community identity, and connection to Country

Cross-Sector Experience and Multidisciplinary Capability

JMP brings broad experience across infrastructure, urban planning, environment, education, and cultural heritage. Our team includes Aboriginal specialists in civil design, planning, ecology, and engagement, enabling integrated cultural advice at every project stage. This multidisciplinary capability ensures cultural values are embedded holistically and that we can navigate complex project requirements with integrity and responsiveness.

Trusted Facilitators of Place-Based Cultural Engagement

We deliver meaningful, place-based engagement through Connecting with Country processes. Our team facilitates Walks on Country, cultural mapping, and design workshops that bring Custodians, communities, and project teams together. Our approach creates space for dialogue, relationship-building, and cultural learning - ensuring Country is actively listened to and meaningfully reflected in project outcomes.

Overview



Designing with Country

Designing with Country begins with understanding Country - its stories, its people, and its cultural foundations. When we give respect, listen deeply, and share knowledge, the design process becomes reciprocal: *If I give, you give, and we all receive*. This approach strengthens relationships and leads to outcomes that honour both Traditional and contemporary Australia.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- What is your cultural and spiritual foundation?
- What similarities can you recognise between Traditional and modern Australia?
- How do you observe, listen to, and respect Country in your work?



Connecting to Country Aim

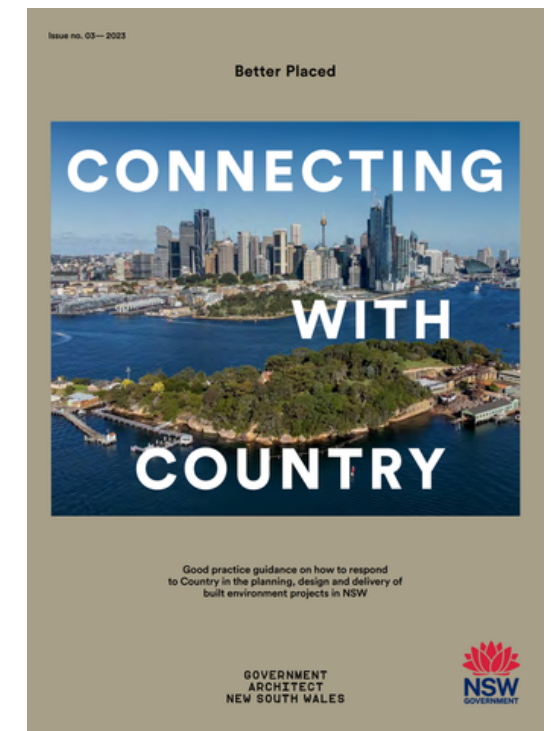
The aim of Connecting to Country is to guide project teams in understanding the deep cultural connection First Nations peoples have to their language regions and traditional lands. This process supports better design outcomes by ensuring that cultural knowledge, values, and perspectives contribute meaningfully throughout the project lifecycle. Ultimately, it benefits everyone involved - the land, the community, and the project.



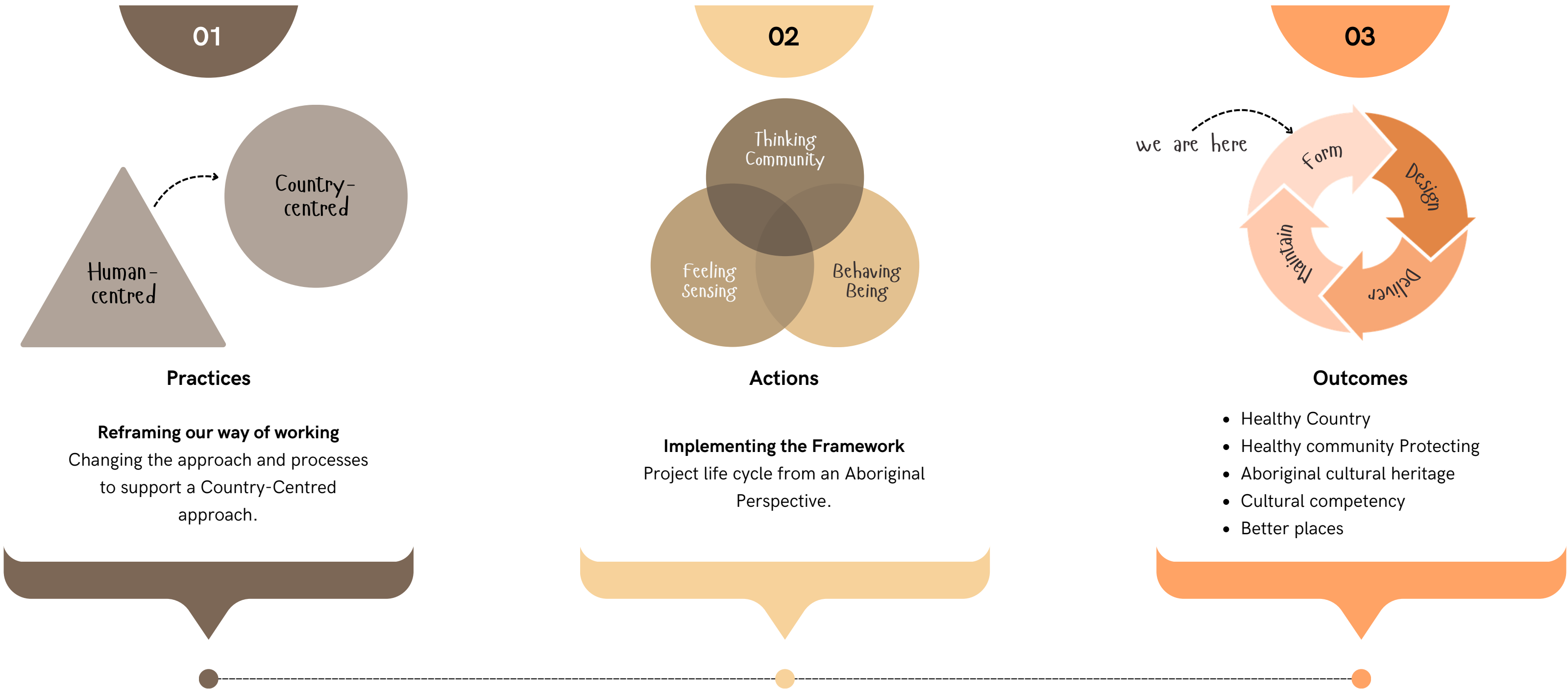
Our Methodology

Our approach guides design teams through a culturally informed Connecting to Country process. This involves:

- **Deepening Understanding:** Building awareness of the cultural narratives, histories, and knowledge embedded in the Traditional lands where our projects take place.
- **Research & Reflection:** Exploring the ancient past, cultural stories, and connections that continue to shape Country today.
- **Engagement with Elders:** Meeting and listening to community Elders to understand cultural values, priorities, and recommendations for the design.
- **Creative Integration:** Supporting design teams to draw inspiration from these cultural insights, allowing ancient values and modern creativity to shape meaningful, place-based outcomes.



Framework



Source: Connecting with Country Framework (Figure 5)

Walking in Two Worlds

Western Methodologies & Paradigms

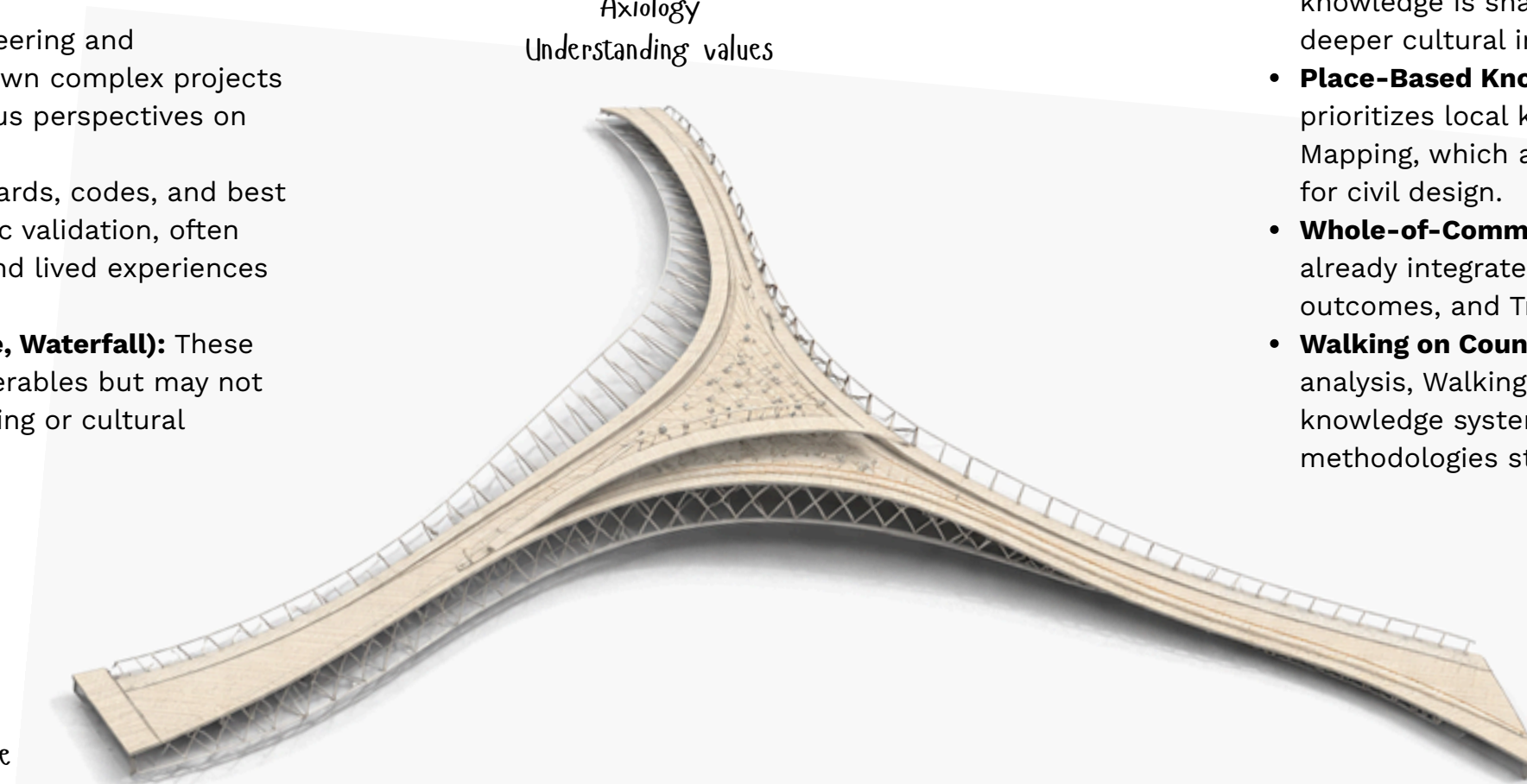
Western research methodologies are grounded in structured, systematic inquiry that emphasizes objectivity, empirical data, and repeatability. These approaches are common in engineering and project management:

- **Positivism & Post-Positivism:** Engineering projects rely on measurable, empirical data to guide decision-making. The assumption is that knowledge can be objectively gathered through observation, mathematical modelling, and experimentation.
- **Systems Thinking:** Widely used in civil engineering and infrastructure design, this method breaks down complex projects into components but may overlook Indigenous perspectives on interconnected relationships with Country.
- **Evidence-Based Practice:** Engineering standards, codes, and best practices rely on historical data and scientific validation, often excluding traditional ecological knowledge and lived experiences of First Nations peoples.
- **Project Management Frameworks (e.g., Agile, Waterfall):** These methodologies focus on efficiency and deliverables but may not accommodate community-led decision-making or cultural protocols.

WHILE WESTERN METHODOLOGIES HAVE LED TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS, THEY OFTEN FAIL TO ACKNOWLEDGE INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS, PARTICULARLY THE RELATIONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND PLACE-BASED CONNECTIONS TO COUNTRY.

Axiology
Understanding values

Ontology
Understanding of being or the kinds of things that have existence



Indigenous Methodologies & Paradigms

Indigenous research methodologies are relational, place-based, and centred on respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. These approaches prioritize lived experience, storytelling, and community engagement:

- **Relational Epistemology:** Knowledge is not just extracted but built through relationships with people, Country, and cultural practices. In engineering projects, this means working with communities rather than on communities.
- **Yarning & Story work:** Instead of structured surveys or interviews, knowledge is shared through conversations and storytelling, allowing for deeper cultural insights.
- **Place-Based Knowledge & Cultural Mapping:** Indigenous research prioritizes local knowledge, often expressed through Aboriginal Values Mapping, which aligns closely with your work in cultural value mapping for civil design.
- **Whole-of-Community Approach:** Your Aboriginal engagement model already integrates this methodology by ensuring co-design, resolution outcomes, and Traditional Owner involvement.
- **Walking on Country as a Research Method:** Unlike traditional site analysis, Walking on Country immerses engineers in Indigenous knowledge systems, offering a lived understanding of place that Western methodologies struggle to capture.

Epistemology
Understanding the study of how we know things



Lycett, Joseph. "Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroos." NLA 1775-1828.

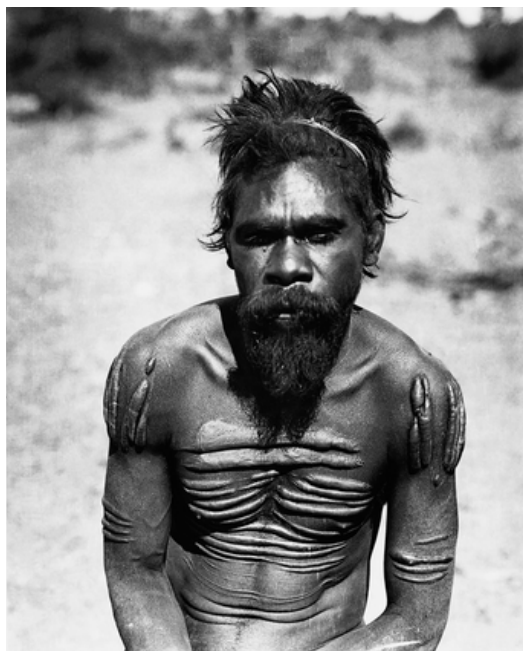
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FIRST NATIONS CUSTOMS AND SPIRITUALITY

Aboriginal Lore

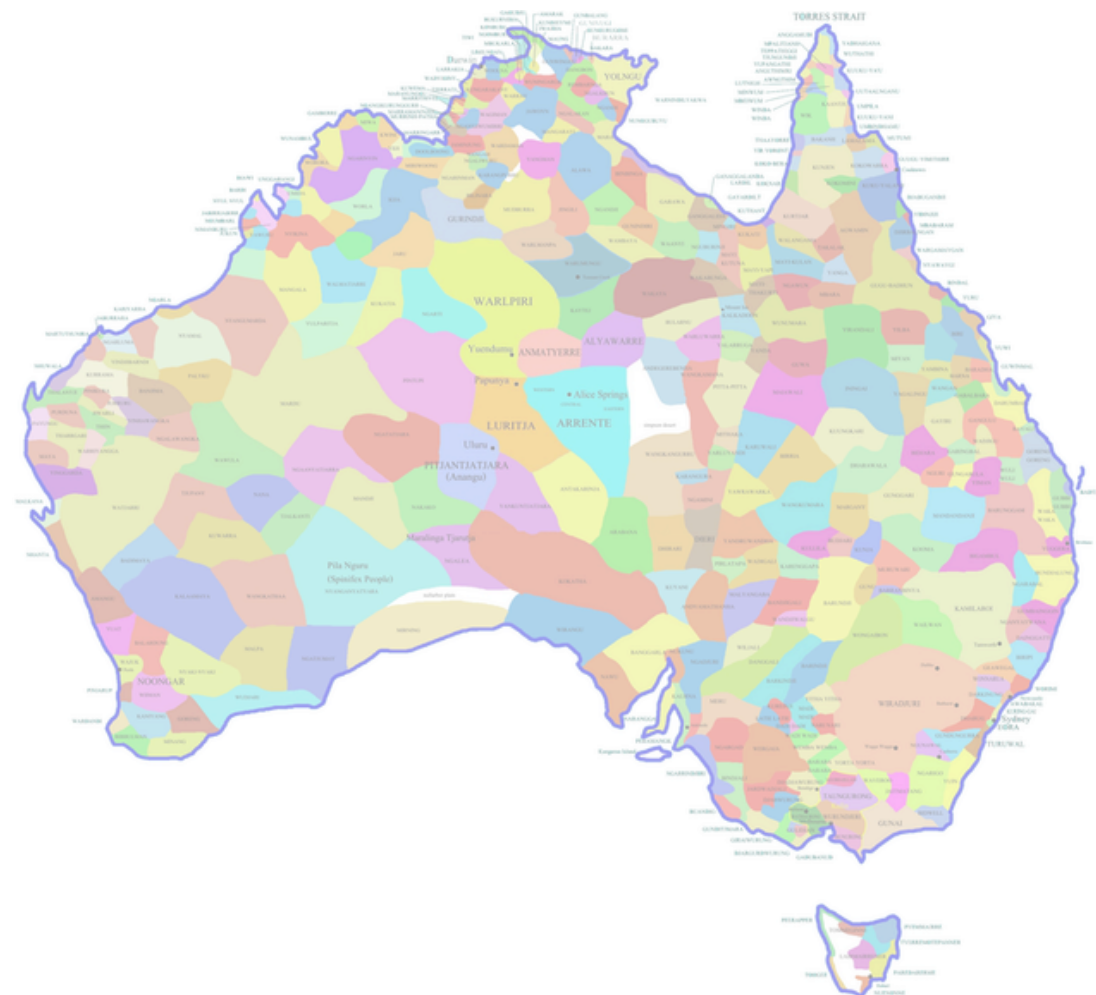
Aboriginal lore encompasses the traditional laws, customs, and spiritual beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, transmitted through generations. In contrast to Western legal systems, which are formally documented and enforced by institutions, Aboriginal lore is deeply rooted in oral traditions, songs, ceremonies, and the everyday practices of Indigenous communities. This lore serves as a comprehensive framework that shapes daily life, social relationships, cultural obligations, and environmental stewardship.

A fundamental aspect of **Aboriginal lore** is the concept of Country, which includes land, water, air, and all living entities. Aboriginal lore acknowledges the profound interconnectedness between people and their environment, with each individual bearing a custodial responsibility to nurture and protect the land. This stewardship is deeply embedded in respect for sacred sites, ancestral beings, and cultural practices that sustain both communities and the natural world.



Jingili man with well-marked cicatrices, Powell Creek, Central Australia, September-October 1901

Aboriginal lore delineates distinct roles and responsibilities for men and women, commonly referred to as “*Men’s Business*” and “*Women’s Business*”. These roles encompass gender-specific knowledge, ceremonies, and cultural duties, thereby ensuring the preservation and practice of cultural heritage within the community. Additionally, kinship systems play a vital role in Aboriginal lore, establishing intricate relationships among family, clan, and the broader community. This framework reinforces values of mutual respect, cooperation, and collective responsibility.



Australia Aboriginal Tribes Map © Connection and Wellbeing Australia (CAWA)

Deeply anchored in principles of respect, reciprocity, and a holistic understanding of existence, Aboriginal lore serves as a vital force that upholds cultural identity, directs ethical behaviour, and nurtures harmony between people and their Country. It transcends a mere set of rules; rather, it embodies a way of life that forges connections among past, present, and future generations through a steadfast commitment to land, culture, and community.



Aboriginal rock art is one of the most enigmatic draws of Australia’s Kimberley region.
© Liz Jack

Sky Country

The Dreamtime and the Stars

In Aboriginal culture, the sky is understood as Sky Country - a living realm that holds deep spiritual, cultural, and practical significance. It is not separate from the land below, but intrinsically connected, forming part of a holistic worldview in which land, water, sky, people, and ancestors are interrelated. The sun, moon, stars, and the Milky Way each carry cultural meaning and are woven into stories that connect past, present, and future.

Sky Country has long played an essential role in guiding daily life. Aboriginal peoples used the stars as navigational tools, enabling movement across Country for hunting, gathering, trade, and ceremony. The appearance and position of particular stars and constellations marked seasonal changes, indicating when certain foods were available or when important cultural practices should take place. In this way, the sky functioned as a knowledge system, supporting sustainable relationships with the environment.

Alongside its practical role, Sky Country holds profound spiritual importance. It is understood as the realm of ancestral beings whose actions during the Dreaming shaped both the land and the sky and established cultural law. Celestial events, such as eclipses or meteor showers, are often interpreted as expressions of ancestral presence or communication, reinforcing the ongoing relationship between people and their ancestors.

Star formations such as the Emu in the Sky and the Seven Sisters (Pleiades) are central to many Dreaming narratives, linking cosmology with ecology and cultural identity. These stories demonstrate how Sky Country continues to inform knowledge, law, and cultural practice, reinforcing an enduring connection between Country, ancestry, and living culture.



Seven Sisters (Pleiades) Star Dreaming Story - Japingka Aboriginal Art Gallery



'Sky Country' © Holly Sanders



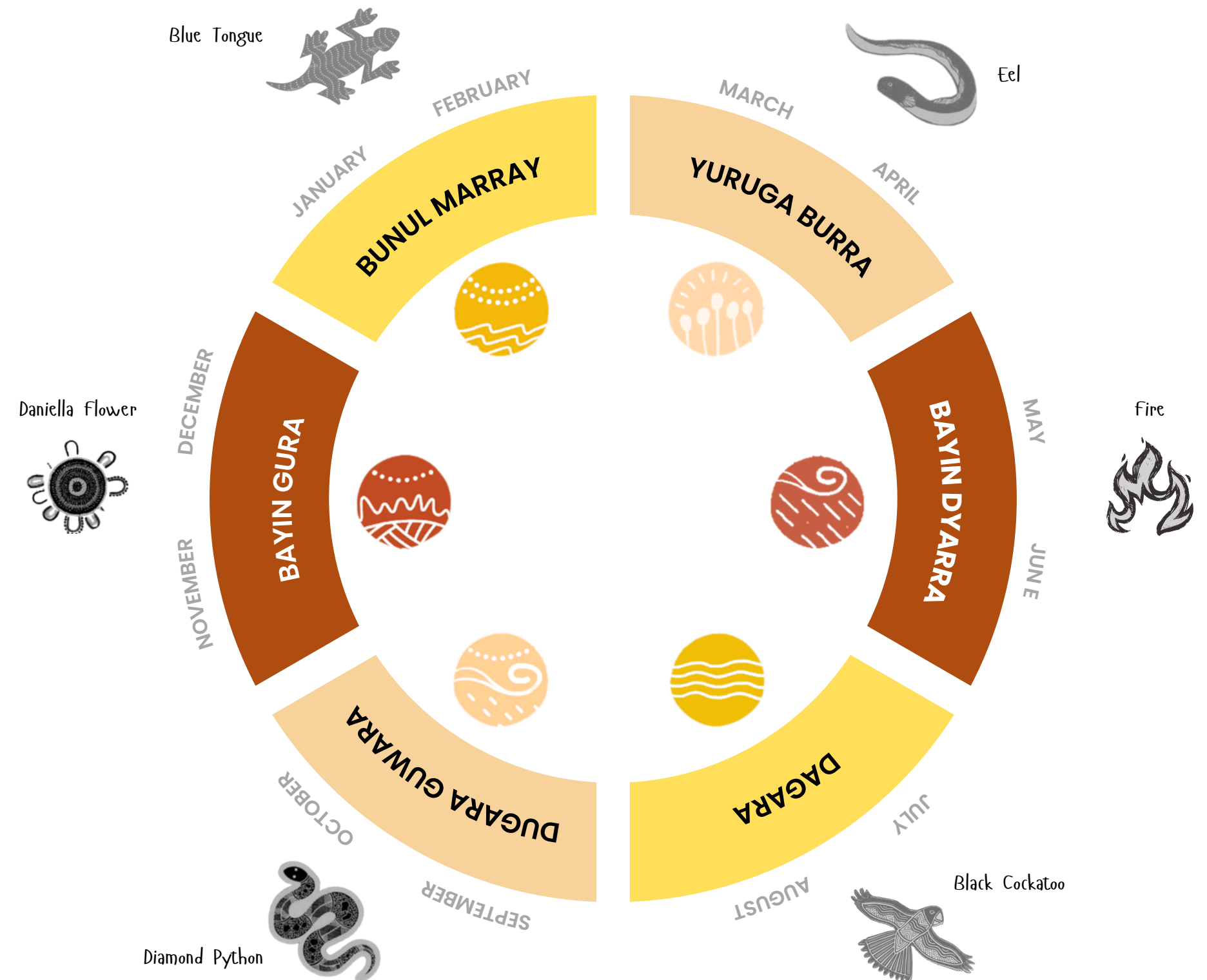
The Emu in the Sky as seen from Kuringai National Park. © Barnaby Norris/Ray Norris

Aboriginal Seasons

Aboriginal seasons represent a fundamental aspect of how Aboriginal Australians perceive and interact with the natural environment. In contrast to the conventional four-season system prevalent in Western cultures - spring, summer, autumn, and winter - Aboriginal cultures recognise a more diverse array of seasons, typically ranging from six to seven. These classifications vary significantly based on the specific climate, geography, and environmental conditions unique to each region.

The Aboriginal conception of seasons is intricately linked to the land, flora, fauna, weather patterns, and cultural practices of various communities. The cyclical nature of the environment, along with the movements of the sun, moon, and stars, plays a pivotal role in shaping the Aboriginal seasonal calendar. This calendar serves as a guide for activities such as hunting, gathering, cultural ceremonies, and sustainable land management practices.

Aboriginal seasons represent a sophisticated and deeply ingrained system that integrates the physical, spiritual, and practical dimensions of life. These seasonal frameworks equip Aboriginal communities with the knowledge necessary for navigating the land, sustainably harvesting resources, and aligning their activities with the rhythms of nature. More than merely a method of tracking time, the seasons act as a map of relationships - connecting people, the land, and the ancestral spirits that inhabit both. Understanding Aboriginal seasons thus provides insight into the profound and intimate connection that Aboriginal peoples maintain with the natural world, a relationship that has been cultivated and transmitted over tens of thousands of years.



The First Architects

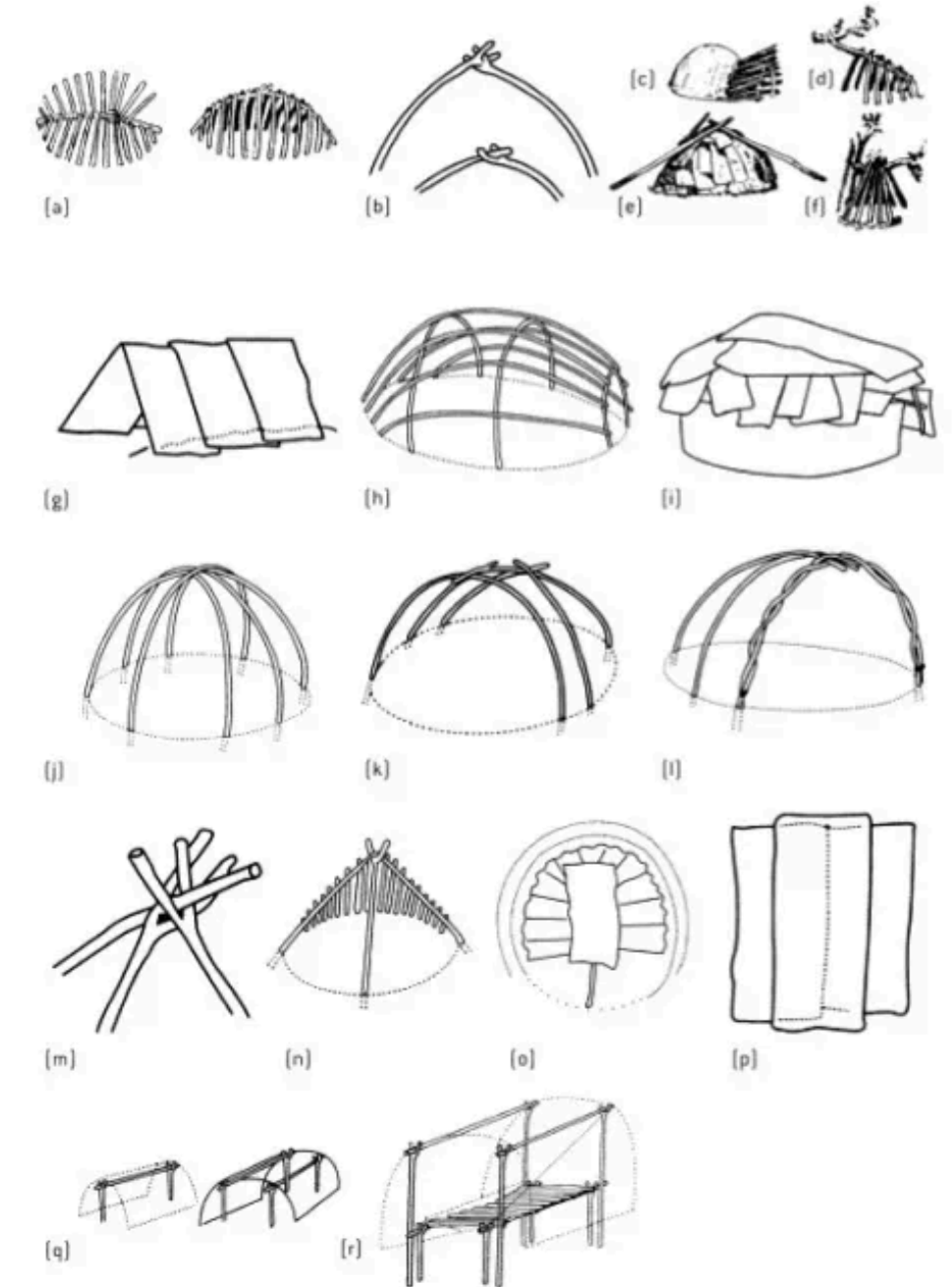


A 19th-century engraving of an indigenous Australian encampment

Aboriginal people are often acknowledged as the world's first architects - not in the conventional sense of modern construction, but through their adept and sustainable design, creation, and maintenance of environments over millennia. Their profound connection to the land, deep understanding of nature, and intricate systems of knowledge enabled them to become pioneering architects of the landscape, long before the advent of Western architectural practices.

The Architecture of the Land

Aboriginal architecture transcends the physical structures typically associated with Western definitions. It encompasses the environment itself - landscapes, waterways, seasonal cycles, and ecosystems - all of which were intentionally shaped and managed by Aboriginal communities. Their architectural accomplishments are evident in their harmonious coexistence with the land, skilfully transforming the natural world to meet their needs while simultaneously protecting and sustaining it.



© Walter Roth: Studies of Aboriginal ethnoarchitectural forms, Queensland, 1897

Influence in Design

Dance and Practices

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is a formal ceremony conducted by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to greet visitors on their traditional lands. This ancient practice has been adapted to modern contexts and is often performed at the beginning of events, including public ceremonies, festivals, and significant gatherings. The ceremony serves to acknowledge the local Indigenous communities' enduring connection to the land while ensuring that visitors recognize and respect the customs and cultural significance of the area they are entering.

Smoking Ceremony

The Smoking Ceremony is another vital ritual among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, frequently incorporated into the Welcome to Country but also performed in other contexts, such as cleansing a space or commemorating an important event. This ceremony involves burning native plants, typically leaves from specific trees, to produce smoke believed to possess cleansing, healing, and protective properties.



Bidjigal Elders & traditional owners Aunty Yvonne Simms and Uncle Glen Timberly
Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony - UNSW & PVC Indigenous and Nura Gili

Key aspects of Aboriginal Dance

- Storytelling and Dreamtime Narratives
- Connection to the Land
- Ceremonial and Ritual Significance
- Costumes and Body Decoration



Wiradjuri man Joe Williams dancing at #YarriJackyJackyCorroboree22 - Darkeye Photography

Aboriginal dance is a culturally significant practice that embodies deep spiritual, social, and historical meaning for Aboriginal Australians. It serves as an expression of identity and a connection to the land, facilitating the communication of stories, traditions, and ancestral knowledge through movement, music, and symbolism. Integral to ceremonies, rituals, and celebrations, Aboriginal dance acts as a vital link between the people, their ancestors, and the natural world.

More than merely an art form, Aboriginal dance is a dynamic cultural practice that holds profound significance. It connects Aboriginal people to their ancestors, the land, and the cosmos, serving as a vehicle for knowledge transmission, cultural preservation, and reverence for nature. Through its movements, music, and symbolic elements, Aboriginal dance remains a powerful medium for storytelling and expression, fostering a deep connection to the past while continuing to thrive in contemporary Aboriginal life.



Aboriginal people night fishing by fire torches on Lake Macquarie, 1820. Joseph Lycett.

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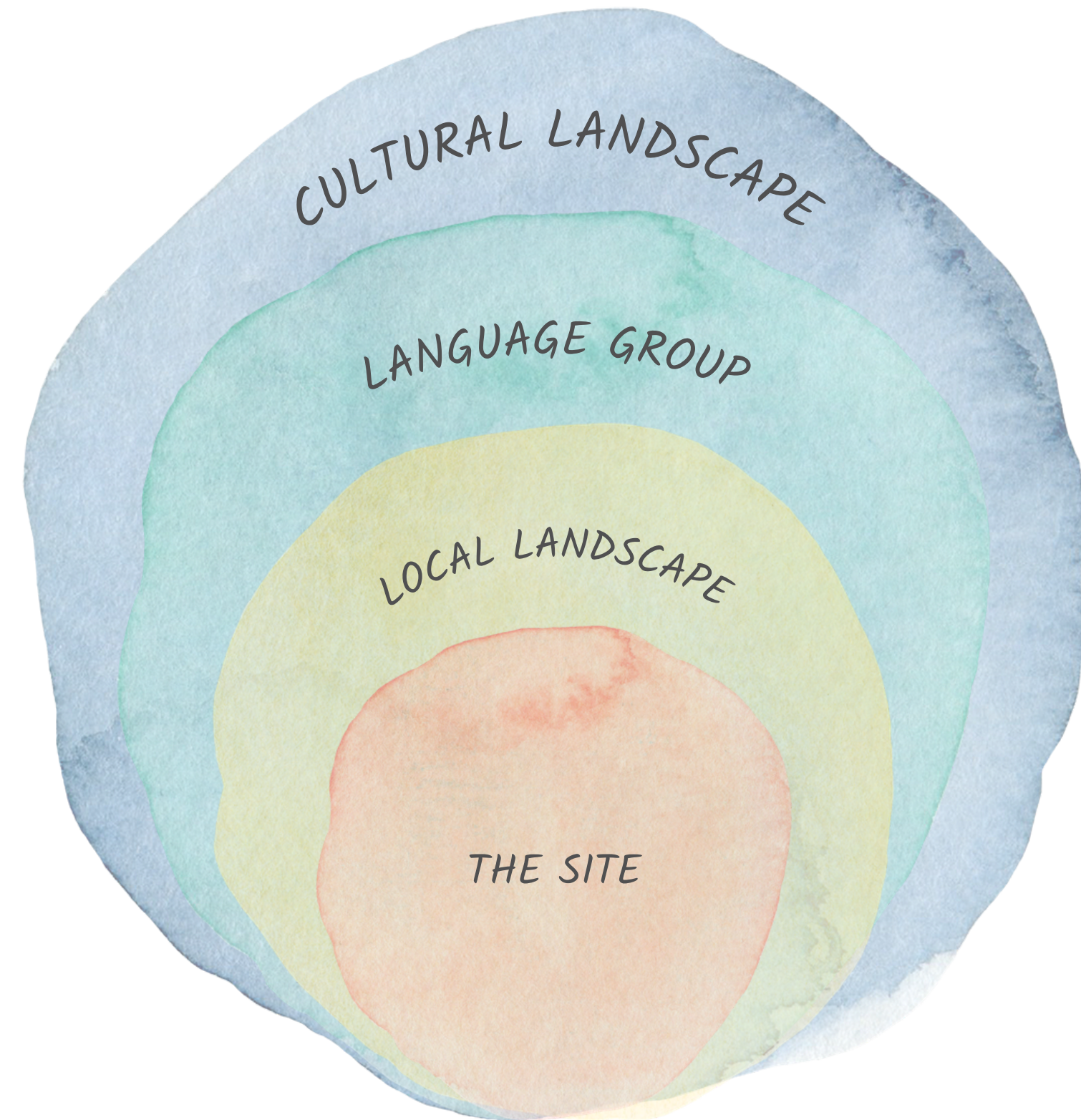
BIDJIGAL CULTURE

Cultural Scale

Mapping is a way of understanding place beyond cadastral boundaries. It situates 19A Evans Avenue within the layered cultural, ecological and historical systems that long predate contemporary urban development. Rather than viewing the site as an isolated suburban allotment, mapping reveals relationships - between wetlands and coastline, between freshwater systems and Botany Bay, between clan estates and seasonal movement pathways.

For projects on Bidjigal Country, mapping helps acknowledge that Eastlakes is not simply a residential suburb within Sydney's south-east; it sits within a broader coastal cultural landscape shaped by dunes, tidal flats, freshwater wetlands and the waterways feeding into Botany Bay (Kamay). These systems once supported fishing, shellfish gathering, plant harvesting and inter-clan exchange. By mapping across scales - from site, to local landscape, to clan estate, to the wider Eora Nation - we recognise that Country operates relationally. Each layer informs how land and water were understood, used and cared for over thousands of years.

Mapping these connections prevents Country from being reduced to symbolism or surface acknowledgement. It provides spatial clarity to cultural knowledge, grounding design and planning decisions within the deeper structure of place. In this way, mapping becomes both an act of respect and a practical framework - ensuring contemporary development sits more thoughtfully within Bidjigal Country's enduring cultural landscape.



Cultural Landscape

Eora Nation

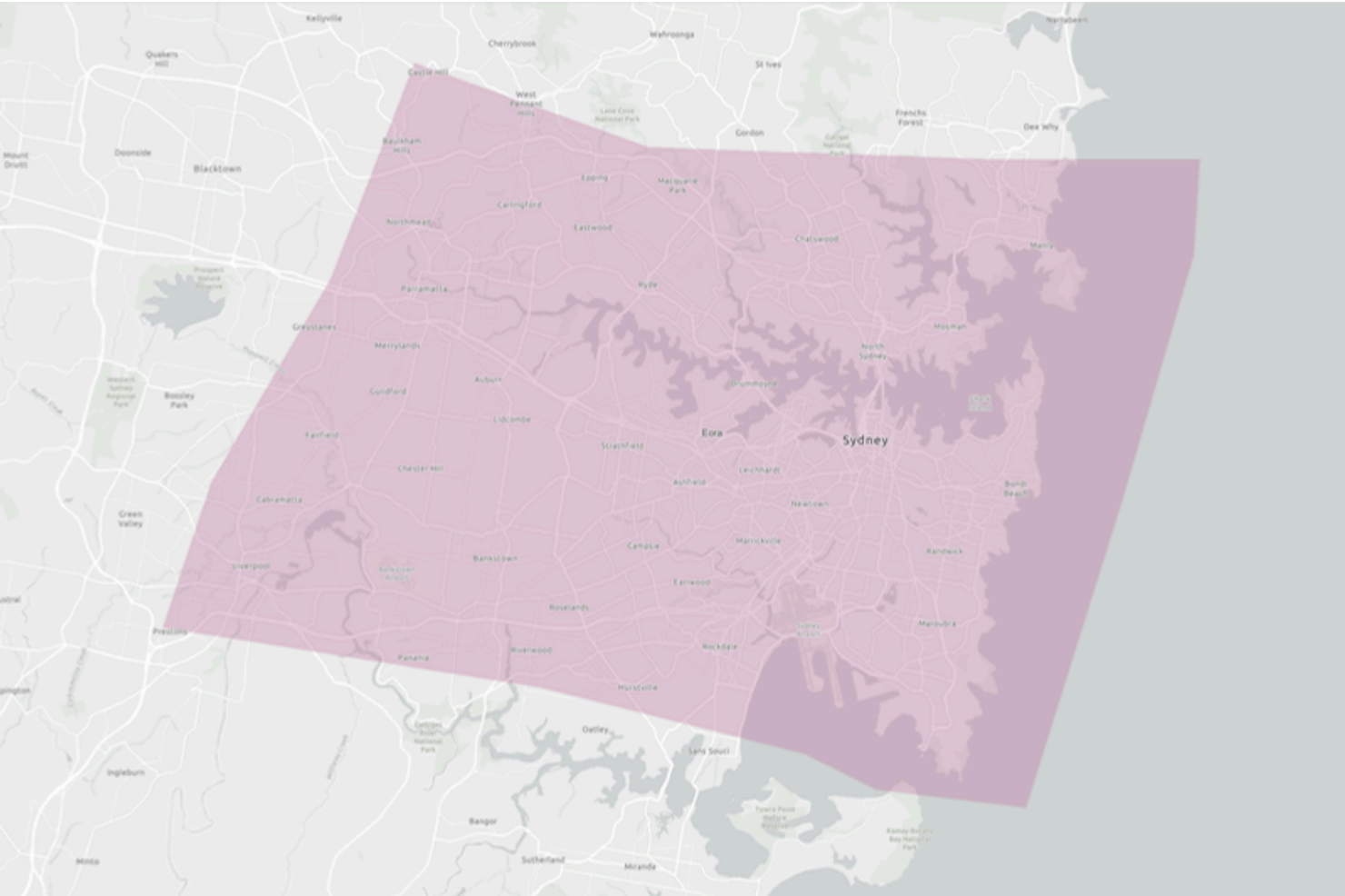
The Eora Nation refers to the Aboriginal peoples of the coastal Sydney basin at the time of first contact in 1788. The word “Eora” is commonly understood to mean “here” or “from this place,” reflecting a deep identification with Country rather than a rigid political boundary. Eora Country spans the saltwater harbour, river systems and coastal headlands of what is now central and eastern Sydney, including the harbour foreshores, Botany Bay, and the lower reaches of the Parramatta River.

Eora society was organised through interconnected clan groups, each with defined responsibilities to specific tracts of land and water. These clans included the Bidjigal, Wangal, Cammeraygal, Gweagal and others, each maintaining custodianship over their own Country while remaining part of a broader kinship network. Boundaries were not lines on a map but were understood through story, resource systems, marriage ties and shared ceremonial practice. Movement across Country occurred through permission, relationship and reciprocity.

The harbour and river systems were central to Eora life. Saltwater environments provided fish, shellfish and marine mammals, while adjacent forests supplied plant foods, medicines and materials for tools and shelters. Canoes carved from local timber enabled regular travel across the harbour and along the river corridors. Shell middens, rock engravings, shelter art and grinding grooves remain as material evidence of this long-standing cultural occupation.

Early colonial records frequently described the Eora as skilled fishers, canoe makers and navigators of the waterways. However, colonisation rapidly disrupted these systems through land seizure, disease, violence and environmental transformation. Despite this, Eora descendants continue to maintain cultural identity, language revitalisation, artistic expression and custodial authority. The Eora Nation is not a historical concept but a living cultural reality, with continuing connection to Country across the Sydney basin.

Understanding the Eora Nation provides the broader cultural framework within which the Bidjigal clan, and the site at 19A Evans Avenue, must be situated. The land is part of a much older cultural geography that predates modern suburb boundaries and continues to shape identity, belonging and responsibility today.



5.0 Traditional Custodians of the Land

Cultural Landscape (cont.)

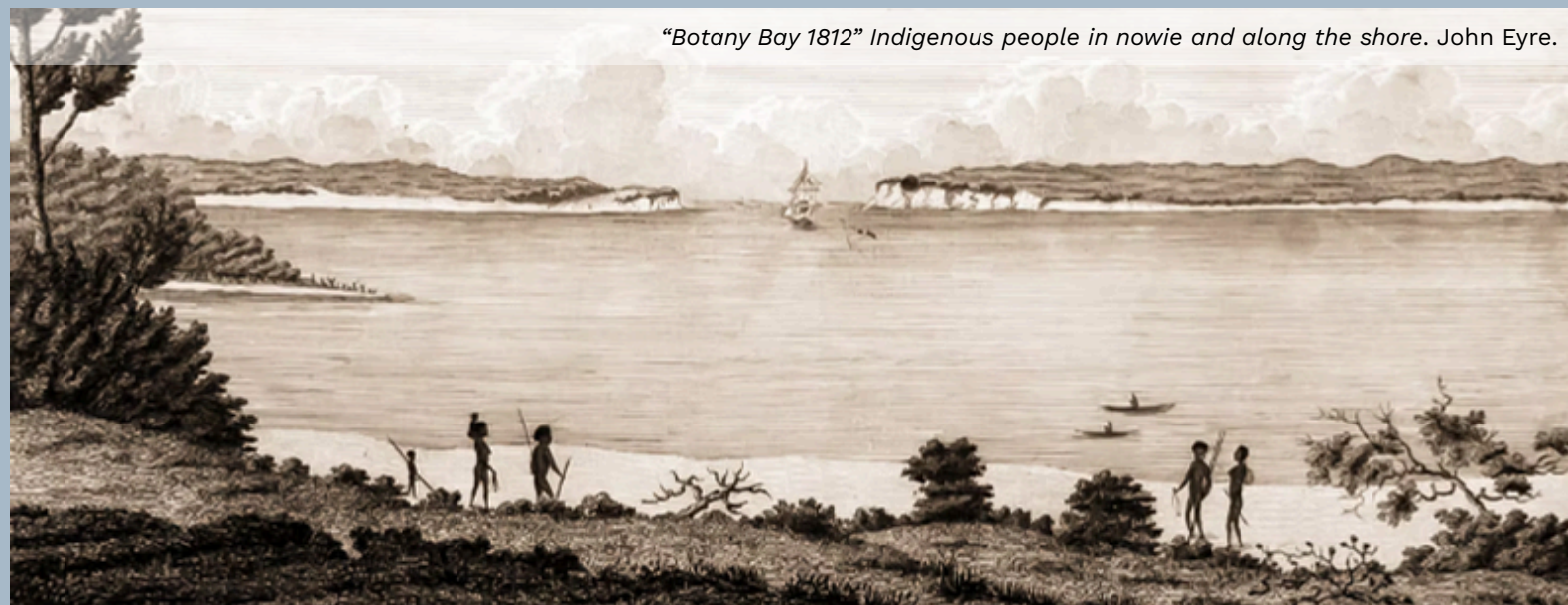
SONGLINES AND MOVEMENT PATHWAYS

Across the coastal lands now known as Sydney, the Eora cultural landscape was structured by water. Sydney Harbour, the Parramatta River, and Kamay (Botany Bay) formed an interconnected saltwater system that functioned as both ecological foundation and cultural highway. Canoes moved efficiently across tidal waters, linking headlands, coves and river mouths through daily travel and ceremonial gathering.

Movement followed both waterways and sandstone ridgelines. These natural corridors guided seasonal travel, trade, marriage connections and the sharing of knowledge.

Songlines embedded these routes within story, memory and law - mapping Country through narrative rather than boundary lines. Knowledge of currents, tidal shifts, fish migration and weather patterns shaped safe passage and resource management.

The marine economy was inseparable from these movement systems. Fishing grounds, shellfish beds and coastal plant resources were accessed through established pathways. Water was not a barrier but a connector, binding clan estates within a shared saltwater world. At this scale, Country operated relationally - through flow, exchange and continuity.



"Botany Bay 1812" Indigenous people in nowie and along the shore. John Eyre.

INTERCONNECTED CLAN ESTATES

The Eora Nation comprised multiple coastal clan estates, each with custodial responsibility for specific tracts of land and water. While estates were distinct, they were not isolated. Kinship networks, ceremonial obligations and shared ecological systems ensured ongoing interaction between neighbouring groups.

Boundaries were understood through relationship rather than rigid demarcation. Resource use was governed by cultural law, ensuring access while maintaining balance within ecological systems. Fishing areas, freshwater sources and gathering grounds were managed with awareness of seasonal cycles and collective responsibility.

This interconnected structure reinforced both autonomy and cohesion. Each clan maintained authority over its estate while remaining embedded within a broader cultural network. The coastal saltwater system was the unifying framework - linking estates through trade, marriage, ceremony and shared knowledge across the Eora landscape.

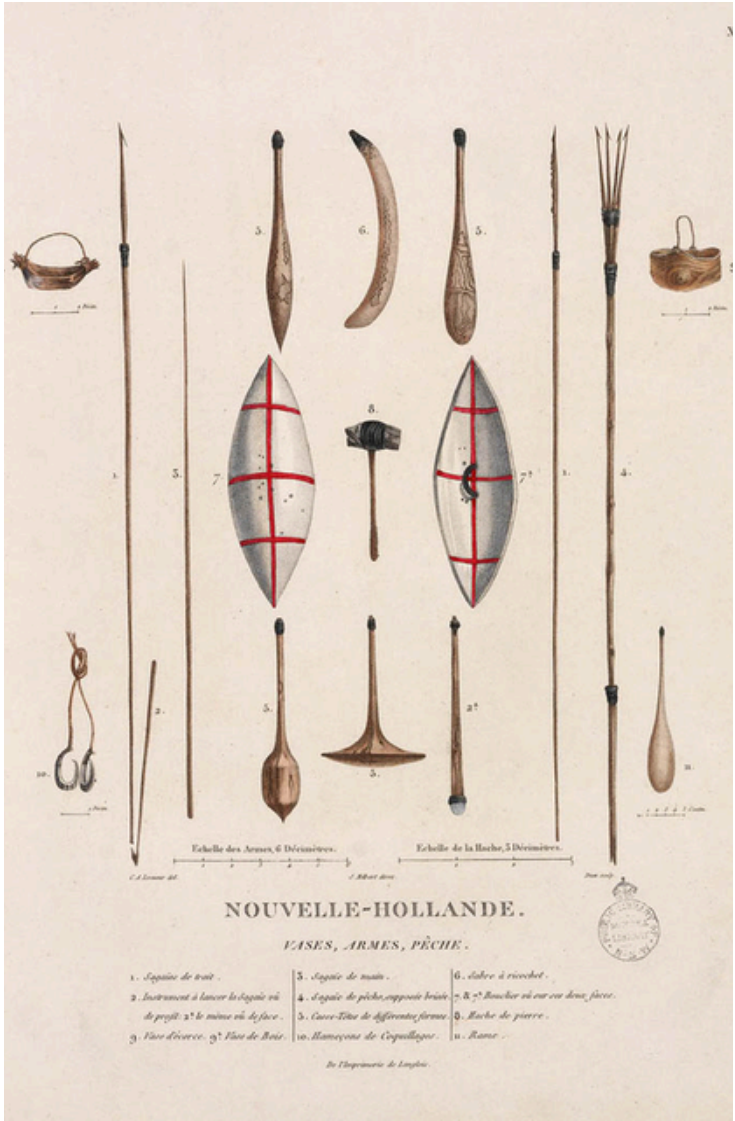


Cultural Expression

ARTS AND ARTEFACTS



Fish hooks of New South Wales and a feather of the cassowary c1789. By John White



By Charles Alexandre Lesueur



Charcoal European ship in rock-shelter. By Val Attenbrow.



Carved Trees. By RJ Jr Etheridge.

Cultural Expression (cont.)

TOOLS



Backed artefacts from sites in Sydney region. By Paul Oviden.



Ground-edged hatchet with wooden wrap-around handle.



Shell fish-hooks made from 'Turbo turquata'. By Paul Oviden.

5.0 Traditional Custodians of the Land

People of Country

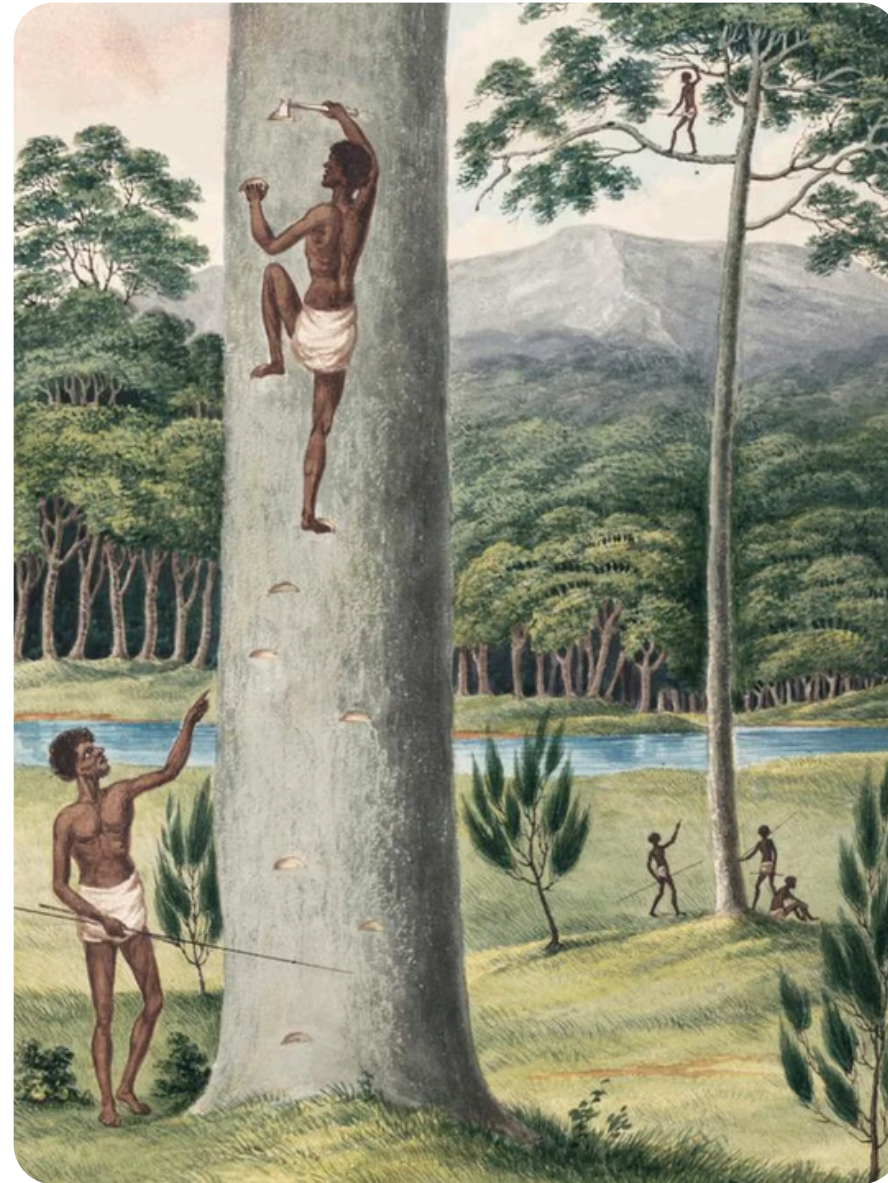
Bidjigal Country

The Bidjigal people are the Traditional Custodians of the alnds and waters extending from Sydney Cove south toward Botany Bay (Kamay), encompassing coastal plains, wetlands, sandstone ridges, and tidal systems that shaped daily life and cultural practice.

The Bidjigal lived in close relationship with saltwater and freshwater environments. The harbour, creeks and wetlands provided fish, shellfish and marine resources, while surrounding woodland and heathlands supplied plant foods, medicines, fibres and timber. Seasonal knowledge guided movement across Country, with an intimate understanding of tides, winds, spawning cycles and flowering patterns shaping daily life.

Country was understood relationally - as *Ngurra*, a living system of land, water, sky and kin. Responsibility to care for these interconnected systems was embedded within cultural law and passed through generations. Knowledge was shared through story, song, ceremony and practice, reinforcing belonging and custodianship.

Bidjigal Country is not defined only by geography but by these enduring relationships - between people, place and the natural systems that sustain life.



People of Country (cont.)

KINSHIP AND CULTURAL LORE

Bidjigal Country was governed through kinship systems that defined responsibility, authority and belonging. Cultural law structured relationships between people, land and water, ensuring that resources were accessed respectfully and sustainably. Boundaries were understood relationally - through lineage, marriage ties and ceremonial obligation - rather than fixed lines on a map.

Custodianship was embedded within these systems of law. Responsibility extended across landforms, waterways and marine environments, reinforcing the understanding of Country as Ngurra - living and interconnected. Knowledge was transmitted through Elders and maintained through ceremony, story and daily practice, sustaining continuity across generations.

Bidjigal Country remains living Country, and cultural practice continues through community, ceremony and cultural education across the Sydney region. Contemporary Bidjigal and broader Eora descendants engage in Welcome to Country ceremonies, cultural walks, language revitalisation and storytelling initiatives that reaffirm connection to place. These practices are not symbolic acknowledgements but expressions of ongoing custodianship and authority.

Today, cultural practice adapts to contemporary conditions while maintaining continuity with ancestral knowledge. Through ceremony, advocacy, education and environmental care, Bidjigal custodianship remains active - sustaining connection to land, water and community in the present day.



KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

Bidjigal life was closely tied to saltwater and wetland systems. Fishing, shellfish gathering and canoe travel formed core elements of daily practice, supported by detailed knowledge of tides, spawning cycles and seasonal change. Wetlands and coastal dunes provided plant foods, fibres and materials, while sandstone ridgelines offered vantage points and movement pathways.

Knowledge was experiential and place-based. It was learned through participation - observing currents, reading wind patterns, understanding ecological indicators and respecting seasonal rhythms. These practices were not separate from cultural identity; they were expressions of it. Through knowledge and practice, Bidjigal people sustained both community and Country.

Living Culture

The arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 profoundly altered Bidjigal Country. The land known as Cadi - centred around Warrane and extending across what is now central Sydney and surrounding coastal plains - was rapidly cleared to establish Sydney Town, the First Farm and Government House. Towering eucalypts, angophora and banksia that had stood for centuries were felled to create pasture and settlement. Wetlands were drained, waterways altered and native plant species removed at a pace and scale previously unknown on this land.

For the Bidjigal, this transformation was not merely environmental but cultural. Coastal waters that had long provided fish and shellfish were depleted as colonial extraction intensified. Slow-growing cabbage tree palms and other plant species used for food, fibre and tools were removed. Ceremonial spaces, including the areas around Woccanmagully (Farm Cove), were occupied and redefined under British governance.

The introduction of smallpox in 1789 had catastrophic effects, with over half of the First Nations population estimated to have died. While some colonial accounts claimed only a few Bidjigal survived, many dispersed to neighboring estates for survival. Despite the significant demographic loss, Bidjigal identity persisted. Efforts to reshape Cadi through land clearing, water contamination, and suppression of language and ceremonies failed to erase the underlying connection to Country.



The early stages of British settlement, 'Sydney Town,' 1790

Impacts of Colonisation

Understanding the impacts of colonisation provides necessary context for how Bidjigal Country has been reshaped and why many cultural markers are no longer visibly present. Acknowledging this history ensures that place is not interpreted solely through a colonial narrative, but recognised as layered with much older connections and responsibilities.

Engaging honestly with the past supports continuity. It affirms that Bidjigal culture was not erased, but adapted and endured. Remembering creates space for respectful practice in the present and strengthens the foundation for ongoing custodianship into the future.

Opened in 2001, “Cadi Jam Ora” translates to “I am in Cadi,” affirming the enduring presence of the Bidjigal people. The interpretive pathway traces the relationship between people and plants at the site of early contact between the Bidjigal and British settlers, guiding visitors through stories of culture, disruption and continuity across past, present and future.



The Cadi Jam Ora timeline. Royal Botanic Gardens.

Living Culture

Continuity and Adaption

Despite immense disruption, Bidjigal culture endured. Ceremonial practice, kinship structures and cultural knowledge continued across generations, often adapting to new circumstances while maintaining connection to Ngurra - Country. The Eora peoples remained steadfast in their adherence to cultural law, even as access to traditional lands was restricted.

Today, Bidjigal presence is visible across the city. Cultural interpretation sites such as Cadi Jam Ora at the Royal Botanic Garden acknowledge that this place remains Bidjigal land. Contemporary artworks, including Jonathan Jones' barrangal dyara (skin and bones), have reasserted memory and healing in spaces layered with colonial history. Such works do not simply commemorate the past; they actively restore visibility to First Nations narratives.

Language revitalisation, cultural education, environmental stewardship and Welcome to Country ceremonies affirm that Bidjigal custodianship continues. The harbour, dunes and coastal plains remain culturally significant, even within a dense urban environment.

Bidjigal Country is not a relic of pre-contact history. It is living Country - resilient, adaptive and enduring.



Footprints on Bidjigal Nura by Nicole Monks. Sydney Metro.

Local Landscape



Angophora Costata



Banksia Aemula



Corymbia Gummifera



Eucalyptus Umbra



Banksia Ericifolia



Hakea Teretifolia



Acacia Longifolia



Empodisma Minus



Microlaena Stipoide



Imperata Cylindrica

he canopy of Sydney Coastal Sand Mantle Heath is open and widely spaced, shaped by sandy soils and coastal exposure. Banksia serrata and Banksia aemula are defining species of these heath systems, adapted to nutrient-poor sands and fire regimes. Angophora costata and Corymbia gummifera punctuate the landscape with taller trunks, providing structural diversity across dunes and rises. Together, these species form a resilient coastal woodland-heath mosaic, supporting nectar-feeding birds, insects and mammals, while reflecting the sandy coastal ecology that once characterised the Eastlakes basin.

The shrub layer defines the character of Wallum heath. Dense, flowering shrubs such as Acacia longifolia and Banksia ericifolia provide seasonal colour and nectar resources, while Leptospermum laevigatum and Hakea teretifolia stabilise sandy soils and create habitat structure. This mid-layer forms a thick coastal heath, adapted to wind exposure, salt-laden air and fire. The density of shrubs reflects the sandy substrate and low fertility of the landscape, creating a biodiverse and ecologically sensitive ground-to-mid canopy system.

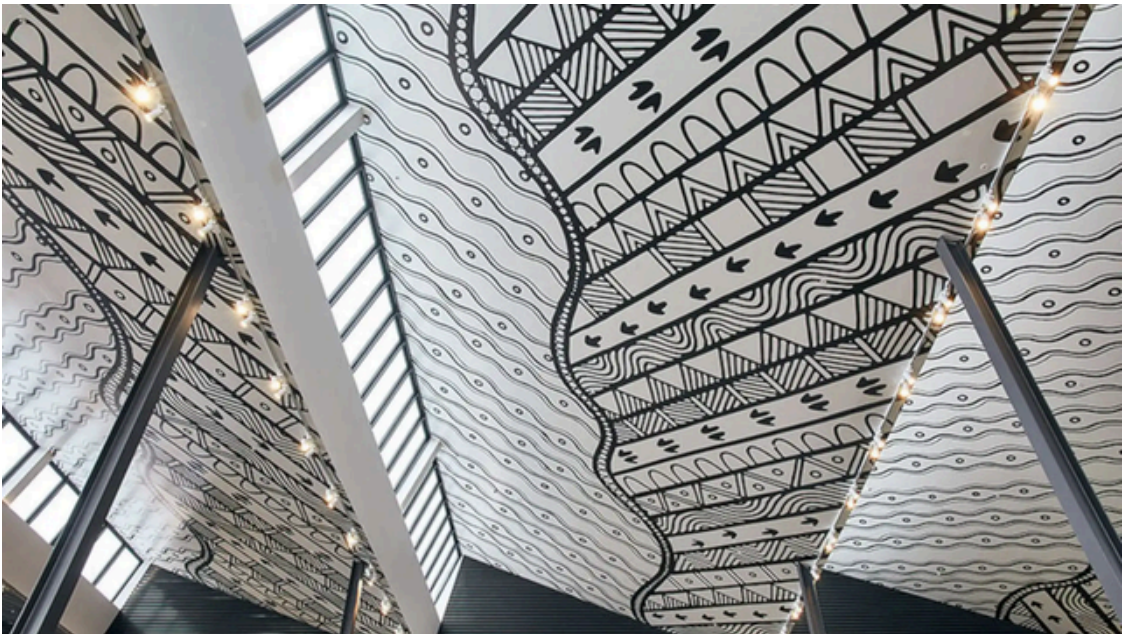
The ground layer of Wallum Sand Heaths is composed of grasses, rushes and hardy groundcovers adapted to shifting sands and periodic moisture. Lomandra longifolia and Microlaena stipoides stabilise soil and provide habitat complexity, while Imperata cylindrica and Empodisma minus reflect the transition between heathland and wetter depressions. This layer responds strongly to fire and seasonal rainfall, maintaining ecological openness while supporting insect life and small fauna. In the Eastlakes context, this ground layer would have connected sandy rises with low-lying wetland areas feeding toward Botany Bay.



6.0

FIRST NATIONS DESIGN ELEMENTS

Ceiling Treatment



Yagan Square, located in Perth’s CBD

Façade Design



An Indigenous perspective: Burringa Cultural Centre, In Melbourne's Dandenong Ranges.

Pavement Design

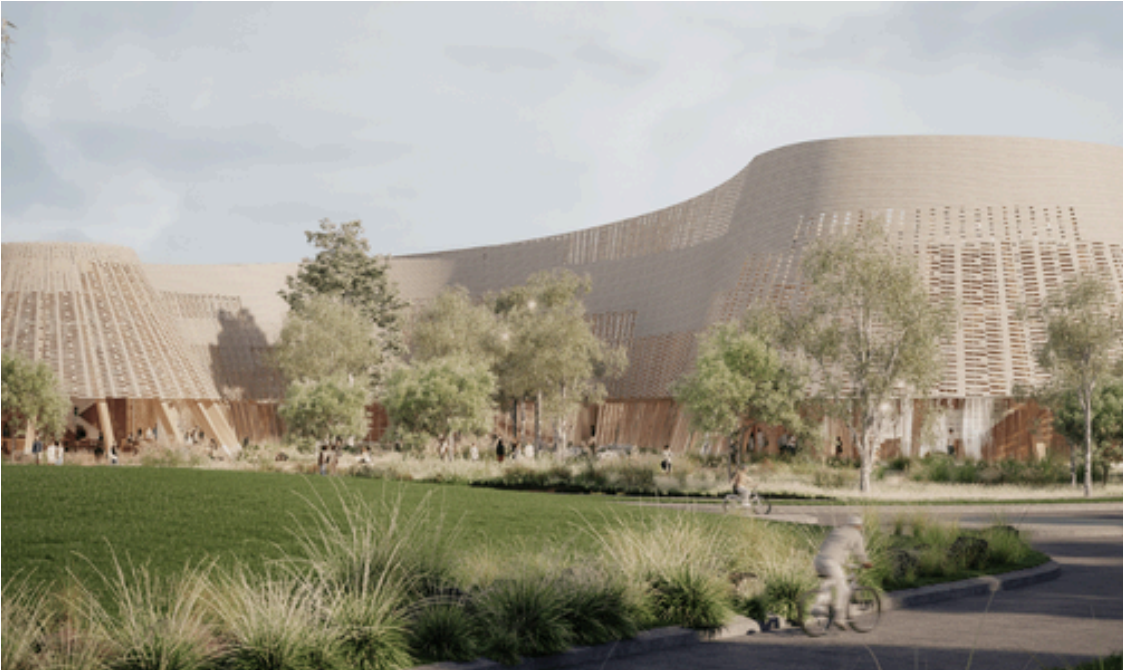


Ballarat Line Upgrade

Interior Design



Marri Ngurang (large place) installation by Charles and Allen Madden – Bidjigal Elders and Artist, BlackandWhite Creative, Urban Future Organization. Photo: Luke Butterly Photography



Western Sydney University Indigenous Centre of Excellence



Bluey Roberts, Rainbow Serpent 1989. Concrete Pavement Photo Sam Roberts

Entry Statement



Image credit: Scott Cameron Photography. Connection To Country—a project of Mili Mili's at Royal North Shore Hospital, New South Wales.



Burraja Bush Tucker Garden - Wodonga

- Other Uses:
- First Nations Language
 - Wayfinding

Gathering Area

Shading Area

Sculptures/Public Art

Immersion Area



Yunggorendi Mande Cultural Gathering Space



The shade canopy image: Courtesy of University of Tasmania



Macquarie Group 1 Elizabeth Street Public Art - Balarinji



Burraja Bush Tucker Garden - Wodonga



7.0

WALKING WITH FIRST NATIONS

Walk on Country and Design Input

Engagement

“A Walk on Country” involves engaging with the Traditional Custodians of the land to understand its pre-colonial and contemporary significance as a cultural landscape. This approach allows project teams to gain insights into traditional values and knowledge systems, fostering respect and informed decision-making through the Aboriginal perspective during the design process.

Design Input

Following the Walk on Country, a design input session is held to explore opportunities for embedding cultural values within the project. During this session, the project team presents an overview of the proposal to Elders and cultural representatives, creating a shared understanding of the project context and objectives.

The discussion then focuses on designing for Country, encouraging open dialogue and questions from the project team. Aboriginal perspectives are invited to inform key aspects of the design, including:

- Sustainability and care for Country
- Visual and spatial expression
- Cultural narrative and meaning within the built form

This collaborative process supports culturally informed and respectful design outcomes.

Endorsement

Presenting the developed design back to the Elders involved in the Walk on Country and design input sessions provides an opportunity to confirm that cultural values and local perspectives have been appropriately considered and represented.

The intent of this process is to achieve:

- Culturally accurate interpretation within the design
- Authentic representation of Country from a First Nations perspective
- Meaningful storytelling through a blend of art, design, and education



Walk on Country and Design Input



Walk on Country

Took place on the 18th of February 2026 for 16A Eastlakes to create a cultural narrative with Elder Aunty Barb Simms, Aunty Yvonne Simms and Aunty Marg Simms.



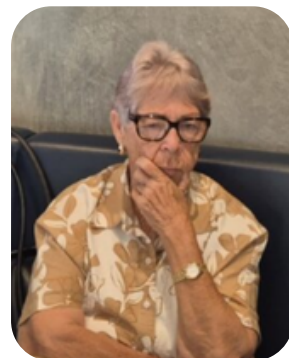
Design Input Session

Was conducted after the Walk on Country back at Bear and Bean Espresso which allowed the Elders and Design Team to collaborate and blend Modern Design with the influence of Indigenous Traditional input.

“IF YOU WANT PROGRESS YOU HAVE TO BE A PART OF IT”

Aunty Barb Simms

Our Elders



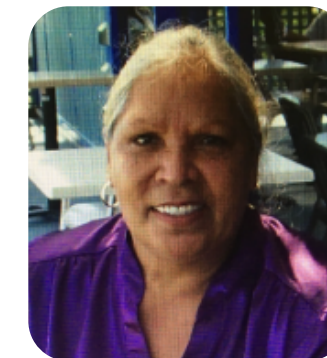
Aunty Barb Simms

Aunty Barb is a Bidjigal Women and respected elder with the Bidjigal community



Aunty Yvonne Simms

is a Bidjigal Elder of the La Perouse / Mascot Area



Aunty Marg Simms

Aunty Marg is a Bidjigal Women and respected elder with the La Perouse community

Walk on Country and Design Input



Connecting to Country

Cultural

- Bidjigal Country / Bidjigal Country
- Old bush grounds
- Whale story
- Trade site for Bidjigal and Bidjigal people
- Women were the storytellers, nurturers and birthers
- Men were the decision makers
- Waterways are birthing sites and birthing channels
- Grass roots were used as firestick carriers
- Possum skin was used for clothing
- Possible grinding grooves nearby
- Old walking track
- Black boy was used to make spear heads (mix it with water and kangaroo poo to create a hard concrete like paste)
- Ochre was found on site
- Connection to water

Design

- Include some edible green spaces that are seasonal, visible and continuous (fruit trees and native bush tucker)
- Involve the Indigenous community and Aboriginal advisory
- Age-appropriate areas (separate spaces for little kids to play away from the bigger kids)
- Accessibility (include ramps and handrails)
- Create a space for mums and bubs to be able to go and relax and have fun
- Cater to the community
- Name the buildings and places using Indigenous language
- Public art element
- Nature play / immersion area
- Plaque to acknowledge the Indigenous elders and community that are being consulted
- plaque to acknowledge the Indigenous people of the area
- Elevated seating
- shelters with Indigenous designs on them
- Community creation

Artists – Local Bidjigal



Adam Laws grew up within the knowledge of his cultural background, as a descendant of the Dharug and Darkinjung people of the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains regions of New South Wales, Australia.

As a member of an extended family network of artisans and cultural practitioners, Adam began contributing to his families output of creativity at an early age.



Nadeena Dixon

Nadeena Dixon is a Bidjigal ,Dharawal, Yuin Wiradjuri , NSW First Nations multidisciplinary artist , Adjunct Professor , researcher and Master Weaver , working across expanded media, conceptual systems, and Indigenous temporal frameworks.

7.0 Walking with First Nations

Connecting to Country Narrative

This site sits on Bidjigal Country, within the broader cultural landscape shared and travelled by the Bidjigal and Bidjigal peoples. Once old bush grounds threaded with walking tracks, this area functioned as a place of movement, exchange and gathering, a trade site where knowledge, tools and resources were shared between communities. Possible grinding grooves nearby speak to the shaping of tools and the daily work of sustaining life. Grass tree (Black Boy) resin, mixed with water and kangaroo dung, created a strong binding paste for spear heads, while grass roots carried fire across distances, ensuring warmth, cooking and ceremony continued from place to place. Possum skin cloaks provided clothing and protection, reflecting a life lived in rhythm with Country and grounded in sustainable practice.

Waterways across this landscape were more than physical features; they were women's spaces, birthing sites and birthing channels where life entered the world. Women were the storytellers, nurturers and knowledge holders, carrying cultural law through oral tradition and embodied practice, while men held roles as decision makers and protectors within kinship structures. These roles were complementary, grounded in respect and balance. The whale story, connected to coastal and riverine movement, reminds us that Country is layered with narrative, sea, land and sky bound together through ancestral presence and teaching. Walking on this Country today invites recognition of its depth and continuity. The old walking tracks beneath our feet echo thousands of years of footsteps, trade, ceremony and connection between Bidjigal Country and Bidjigal lands. Every element, water, bush, stone and sky holds memory of family-centred life and spiritual connection. To walk here is to move respectfully through a living cultural landscape shaped by story, sustainability and enduring custodianship.

Old walking track



Whale story



7.0 Walking with First Nations

Design on Country Narrative

This project is grounded in respect for Bidjigal Country and neighbouring Bidjigal Country, embedding cultural recognition into both landscape and built form. Buildings and key spaces are named using Indigenous language, reinforcing place-based identity and continuity of culture. Plaques acknowledge the Indigenous people of the area as well as the Elders, knowledge holders and Aboriginal advisory members consulted throughout the design process. Public art elements and shelters featuring Indigenous designs ensure culture is visible and celebrated, while elevated seating areas create gathering points that encourage yarning, reflection and shared community experience.

The landscape prioritises connection to Country through edible green spaces that are seasonal, visible and continuous across the site. These productive gardens support learning about bush foods while strengthening food sovereignty and sustainability. Nature play and immersion areas invite children to engage directly with land, texture and planting, while separate, age-appropriate zones ensure younger children can play safely away from older groups. A dedicated space for mums and bubs offers a welcoming environment to relax, gather and build connections, reinforcing the family-centred values embedded in Indigenous culture.

Accessibility and inclusivity are integral to the design, ensuring the site caters to the entire community. Ramps, handrails and considered pathways create equitable access for all ages and abilities, while pedestrian movement flows naturally between spaces to foster safety and connection. Sheltered gathering areas provide comfort and protection while maintaining visual openness, strengthening community creation through shared visibility and collective care. In this way, the design becomes more than infrastructure, it becomes a culturally grounded, inclusive and living environment that honours Country and supports community wellbeing.

Curved seating



Nature play / Immersion area



Design Principles

Women's Knowledge

Design Idea: A calm, sheltered garden space centred around a gently flowing water feature representing waterways as birthing channels.

Trade, Tracks & Decision Making

Design Idea: A central elevated meeting space inspired by traditional decision-making gatherings and the Whale story.

Living Country – Seasonal, Edible & Continuous Landscape

Design Idea: A continuous landscaped pathway following the alignment of the old walking track, planted with seasonal native edible species traditionally used by the Bidjigal people.

Acknowledgement, Legacy & Cultural Continuity

Design Idea: A prominent entry marker combining public art and formal acknowledgement.

Design & Landscape Connecting to Country Design Themes

The landscape and architectural vision for the Eastlakes development is grounded in principles of Connecting with Country, drawing inspiration from the natural systems, cultural histories and ecological character of the Botany Sands landscape. Designed in recognition of the Bidjigal people, the Traditional Custodians of this land, the project seeks to create meaningful placemaking that reflects the stories, movement and rhythms of Country. The design language responds to the site's historic dune systems, freshwater wetlands and riparian ecologies through flowing organic forms, layered planting and soft geometries that reference water movement, paperbark textures and remnant sand dunes. These elements shape the organisation of open space, circulation and communal gathering areas, creating a landscape that feels grounded, welcoming and deeply connected to place.

The building and surrounding landscape are envisioned as a vibrant and inclusive community environment where nature, culture and daily life intersect. Public and communal open spaces act as social hubs that encourage gathering, recreation and intergenerational connection, supporting Eastlakes' strong culture of family, food and shared knowledge. The rear of the building opens directly toward Jack Munday Reserve, extending native planting and habitat corridors into the development and reinforcing the environmental legacy of the area. Curved pathways, layered gardens and adaptable communal spaces create safe, accessible and flexible environments that foster social connection while celebrating the enduring relationship between people, water, landscape and Country.

DKO



SITE IMAGE
Landscape Architects



Project Site: 19A Evans Avenue, Eastlakes

This site is located at 19A Evans Avenue, Eastlakes, within the cultural landscape of the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation. Country here is shaped by its enduring relationship to wetlands, coastal heath, and the interconnected systems of water, wind, and vegetation that once defined the Botany lowlands. Prior to urbanisation, the area formed part of a rich ecological network of swamps, paperbark forests, and freshwater lagoons that supported abundant plant and animal life, providing food, medicine, shelter, and pathways for movement and gathering through practices grounded in caring for Country. Although the site now exists within a dense urban environment, these underlying ecological and cultural systems remain embedded within place and memory. The design is guided by the principle that connecting with Country is caring for Country, encouraging people to engage with, experience, and understand Country through everyday occupation and shared public life.

Responding to the layered character of Eastlakes and its historical wetland setting, the built form is grounded in Lived Country through the use of textured, earthy materials and landscape elements that reflect the site's natural origins, while upper levels become lighter and more open, engaging with Sky Country, daylight, and prevailing breezes. Landscape draws from the ecology of the former Botany wetlands, incorporating native planting, shaded gathering spaces, and layered vegetation that reconnect the site to local biodiversity and seasonal rhythms. Public spaces and pedestrian connections encourage movement, interaction, and community gathering, while natural materials, Indigenous design references, and subtle interpretive elements embed cultural narratives within the public domain. Spaces that support gathering and cultural practice, including opportunities for Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies, acknowledge the ongoing presence and custodianship of Bidjigal Elders. Together, the project positions Country as a living framework, creating a place grounded in connection, respect, and the enduring cultural identity of the Bidjigal people.



Design

Facade Design – Dune Forms & Landscape Inspiration

Connecting and designing with country is about storytelling and creating meaningful placemaking elements that recognise the local landscape and cultural heritage, and equally engage with the specific sense of place, and places created by the landscape and architecture.

Podium Design

The podium design draws from the colours, textures and natural layering of Country, referencing the warm sands, paperbark tones and organic forms of the Eastlakes landscape. Through its materiality and softened architectural expression, the podium creates a grounded connection to the Bidjigal Country and the site's wetland ecology.

*Dunal Shapes of the Eastlakes
Original Sand dunes providing
the soft curves of country
integrated into Podium.*



Design

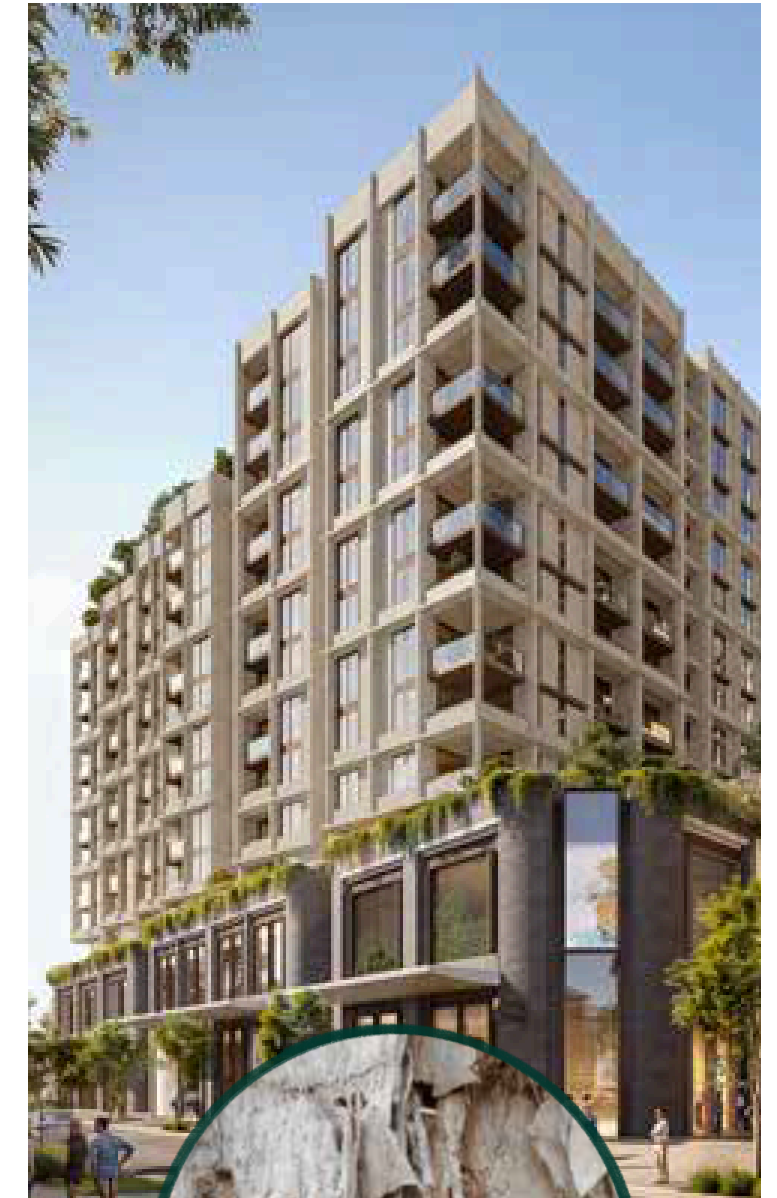
Facade Design – Dune Forms & Landscape Inspiration

Connecting and designing with country is about storytelling and creating meaningful placemaking elements that recognise the local landscape and cultural heritage, and equally engage with the specific sense of place, and places created by the landscape and architecture.

Tower Design

The Tower design draws from the textures and natural layering of Country, referencing the wind blown sand dunes. Also referencing the Banksia of the native scrub land and Paperbark of the natural wetlands across the site with the laying of the original Eastlakes landscape.

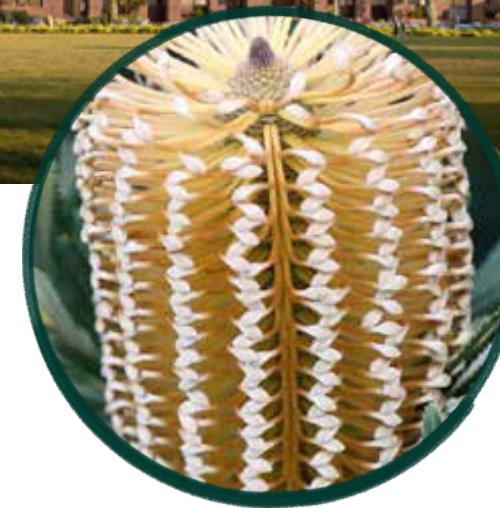
Through its materiality and softened architectural expression, the Tower creates a grounded connection to the Bidjigal Country.



Sand Dunes



Banksia



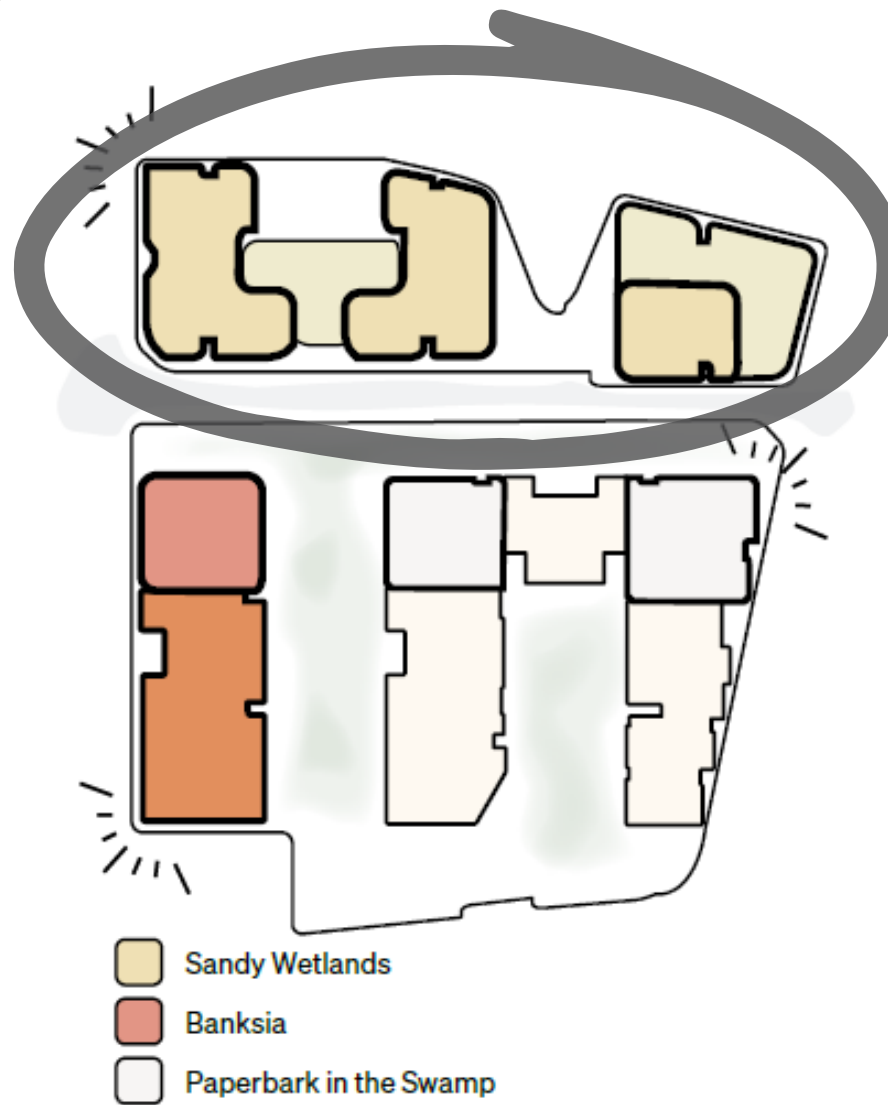
Paperbark



Design

Materials- Sense of Connection “Sandy Wetlands”

Palette of soft sandy tones that respond to the natural movement and textures of the site's former wetland landscape.



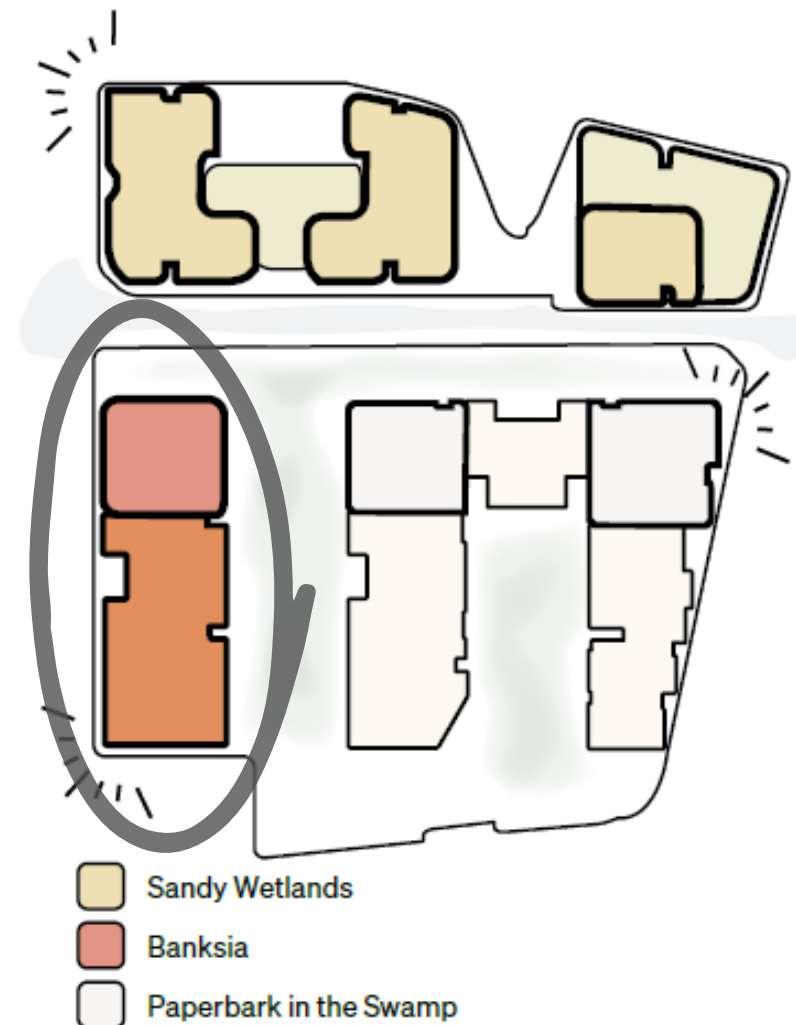
The architectural response draws inspiration from the ecological and cultural history of the Eastlakes landscape, acknowledging the site as part of the broader Botany wetlands system and the traditional Country of the Bidjigal and Bidjigal peoples of the Eora Nation. The design language responds to the memory of the former wetland environment through fluid and organic forms that reflect the movement of water, wind and shifting sandplain ecologies once characteristic of the area.

The building adopts a palette of warm sandy tones and textured finishes that reference the materiality and tonal qualities of local sandstone formations. This approach establishes a visual and tactile relationship with Country, reinforcing the connection between the built form and the natural landscape systems that historically shaped the site.

Design

Materials- Sense of Connection “Banksia”

The building draws inspiration from the native Banksia scrub landscape that once characterised the site,



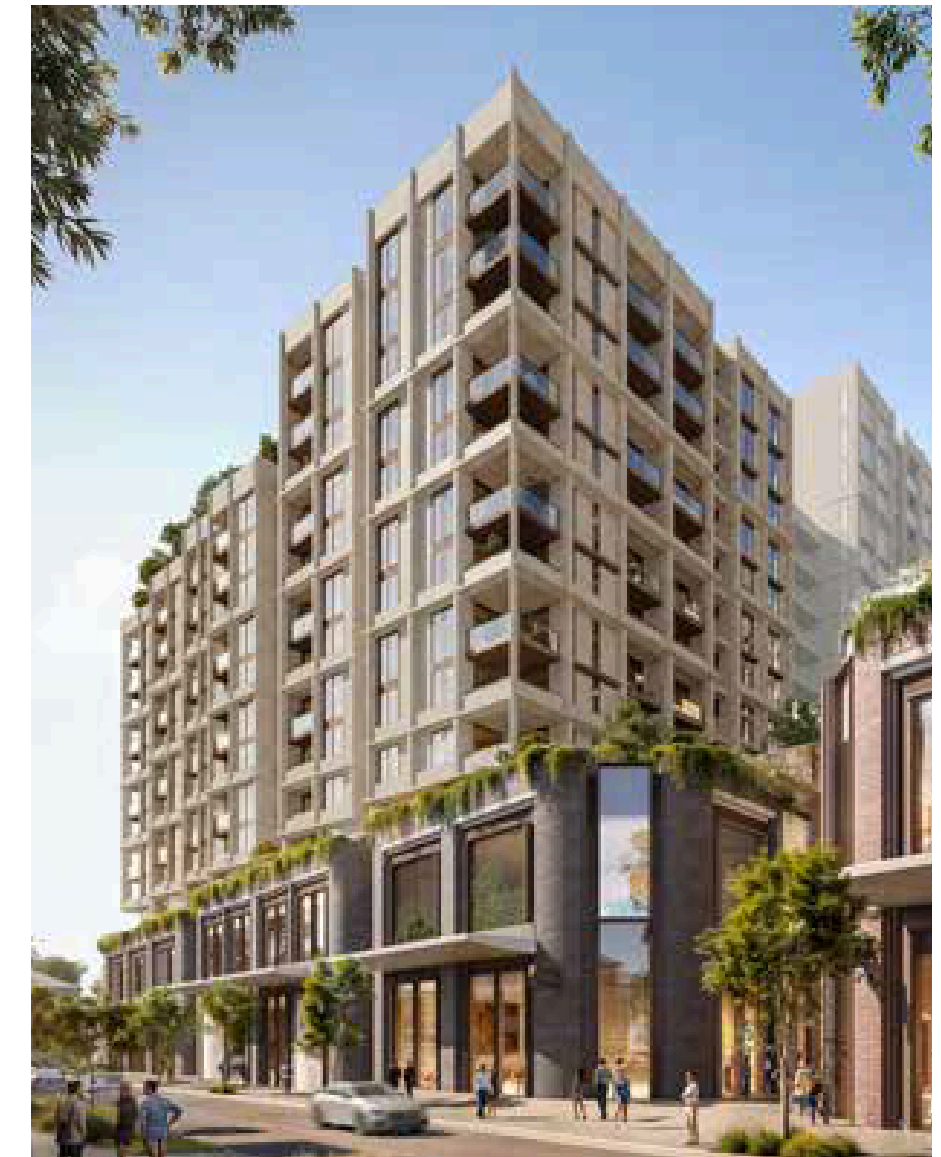
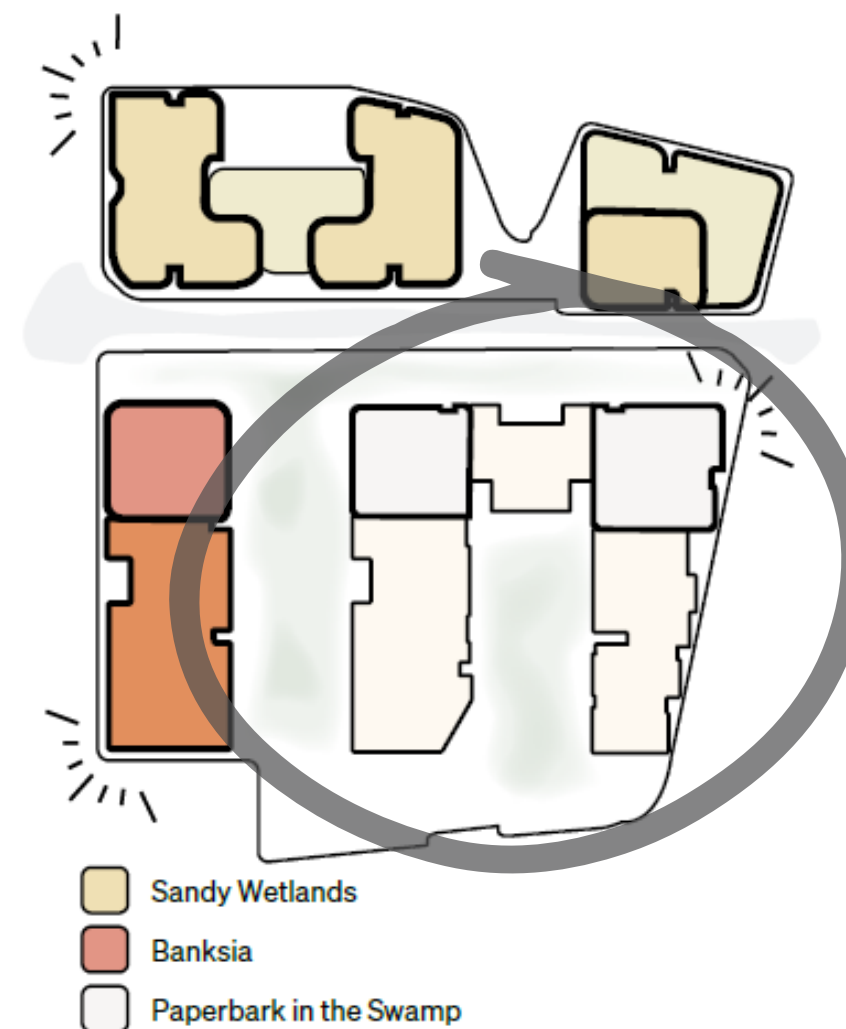
The architectural expression of the building responds to the ecological character of the Eastlakes landscape, drawing inspiration from the native Banksia scrub environment that once formed part of the broader Botany sandplain ecology and the traditional Country of the Bidjigal and Bidjigal peoples of the Eora Nation. The design interprets the form, texture and rhythm of the Banksia landscape through a contemporary architectural language that reflects themes of resilience, regeneration and connection to Country. Vertical façade elements establish a layered rhythm across the building elevation, referencing the upright form and textural qualities of Banksia trunks, flowering spikes and native heath vegetation.

The material palette incorporates warm earthy ochres, sandy browns and muted natural tones drawn from the surrounding sandplain environment and the bark and seed forms of endemic Banksia species. These colours and textures strengthen the relationship between the built form and the natural landscape systems that historically shaped the site, creating an architectural identity grounded in the ecological and cultural memory of Country while reinforcing a strong connection between landscape, materiality and place.

Design

Materials- Sense of Connection “Paperbark”

The building draws inspiration from the vertical trunks and layered textures of the paperbark trees that once characterised the site’s swamp and wetland landscape.



The architectural expression of the building responds to the ecological character of the former wetland landscape, drawing inspiration from the paperbark tree communities that once characterised the Eastlakes area and the broader Botany wetlands system on the traditional Country of the Bidjigal peoples of the Eora Nation. The design interprets the verticality, density and layered textures of paperbark environments through a composition of vertical and horizontal façade elements that create a rhythmic and organic architectural language. Curved vertical forms reference the slender assemblage of closely spaced paperbark trunks, reflecting the interwoven structure and natural layering found within wetland vegetation communities.

The material palette incorporates soft off-whites, silvery greys and muted sand tones inspired by the fibrous bark, filtered light and tonal variation of paperbark landscapes. These textures and colours establish a strong relationship between the built form and the surrounding ecological systems, reinforcing themes of resilience, adaptation and regeneration that are deeply connected to the environmental and cultural memory of Country. Collectively, the architectural response seeks to create a contemporary expression that is grounded in place and acknowledges the enduring relationship between landscape, ecology and Aboriginal cultural connection to the Eastlakes area.

Landscape

Ground Plane Planting and Materials (Healthy Country)

The landscape design is guided by a Connecting to Country approach that acknowledges the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation and draws inspiration from the historic dune systems, freshwater wetlands and paperbark landscapes of Eastlakes. Organic forms, curved pathways and layered planting reference the movement of water, shifting sand dunes and native vegetation patterns, creating a landscape language that reflects the natural rhythms and interconnected systems of Country. The design uses soft ovoid geometries, riparian-inspired edges and textured planting to create welcoming gathering spaces that support community connection, intergenerational knowledge sharing and everyday interaction. Through the integration of native habitat planting, water-sensitive design and natural materiality, the landscape responds to the site's ecological history while reinforcing themes of resilience, cultural continuity and connection to place.

The flowing ripple forms and riparian-inspired landscapes reflect the historic waterways and wetlands of Eastlakes, which were traditionally cared for and navigated by the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation. These waterways provided the Bidjigal people with vital resources for fishing, gathering food and plant materials, while the organic movement of paths and layered planting across the rooftop terraces honours the natural rhythms and cultural connection to Country.



The low-lying wetlands and marshlands of Eastlakes, traditionally cared for by the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, were rich with reedlands, sedgeland, and paperbark swamps featuring plants such as Broad-leaved Paperbark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), marsh grasses, and aquatic herbs like *Ludwigia*. The Bidjigal people used these wetlands as an important source of food, medicine, and materials, gathering plants for weaving and shelter while also fishing and hunting in the abundant waterways.

Landscape

Ground Plane Planting and Materials (Healthy Country)

Planting design is to feature the rich diversity of endemic flora, with different flowering, productive, medicinal, and edible plants featuring through the six traditional seasons. The planting design is also intended to attract, provide shelter and respite to key fauna Kin.

The landscape strategy supports a Healthy Country approach by restoring endemic planting communities that reflect the original ecology of Eastlakes and acknowledge the enduring connection of the Bidjigal people to Country. Drawing inspiration from the area's historic wetlands, paperbark forests and Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS) communities, the planting palette incorporates native species such as banksias, grass trees, paperbarks and coastal heath vegetation to strengthen biodiversity, habitat creation and ecological resilience. Layered planting and water-sensitive landscape design reference the natural systems that once defined the site, creating spaces that support local wildlife, seasonal change and community wellbeing. Through the integration of productive, medicinal and culturally significant native species, the landscape reconnects people to the ecological and cultural narratives of Country while fostering a restorative and resilient environment.



Landscape

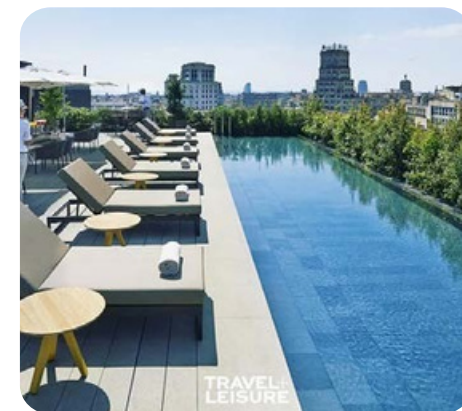
Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places)



Podium and rooftop spaces provide light, breezes and communal gathering areas that connect people with nature and Sky Country, acknowledging the Bidjigal people of Eastlakes.



The building design is centred around creating strong communal connections between people, nature and place. A series of shared gardens, gathering spaces and landscaped pathways encourage residents to come together, interact and engage with the surrounding environment as part of everyday life. Inspired by the values of the Bidjigal people of Eastlakes, the design reflects the importance of community, storytelling and connection to Country, creating spaces that support intergenerational living, shared experiences and a sense of belonging. Native planting, organic forms and open green spaces strengthen this relationship to the natural landscape, allowing the development to feel connected, welcoming and grounded in the cultural identity of the area.



Level 4



Level 14



Level 17



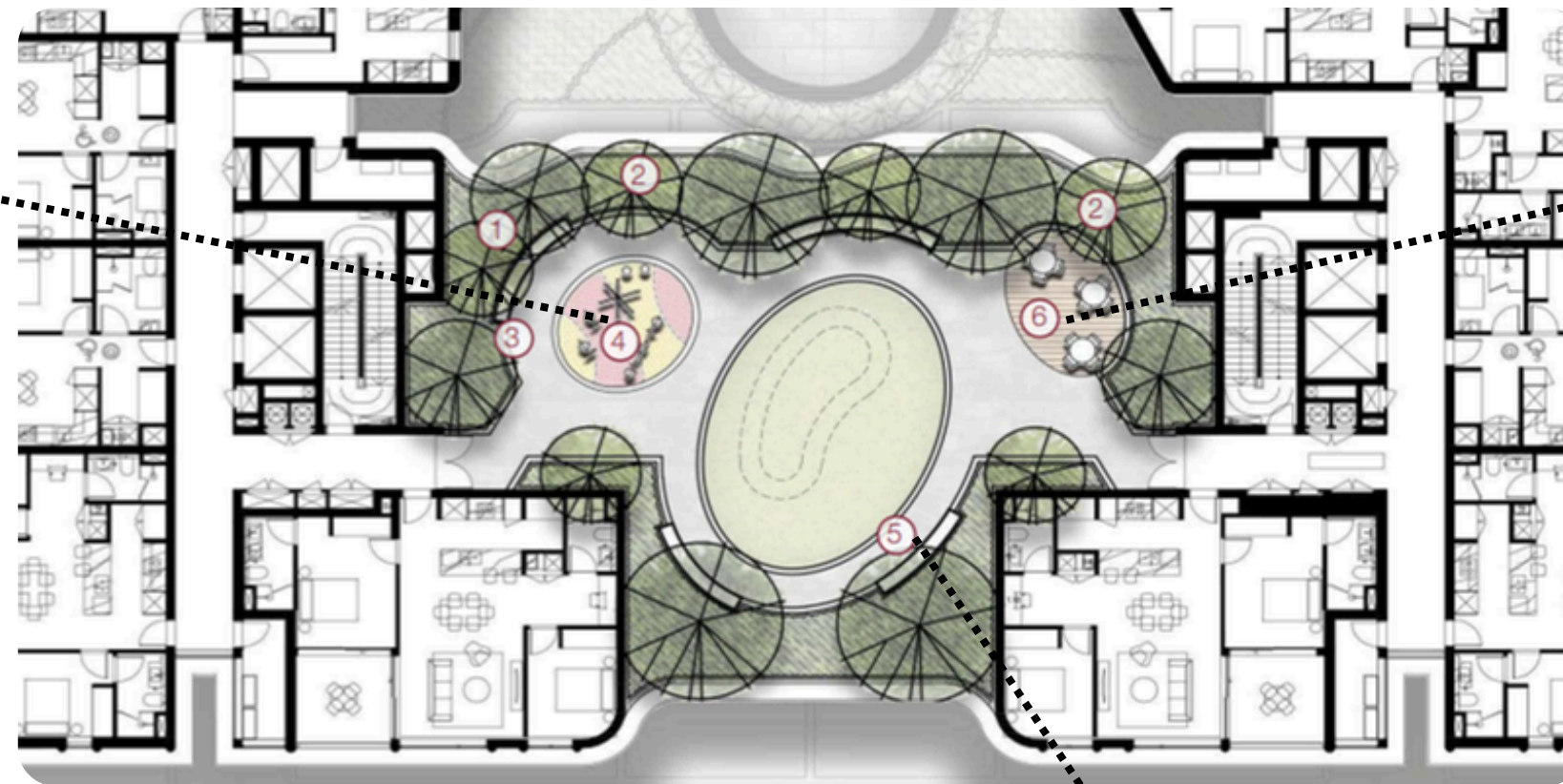
Level 18



Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy Building 1.

Including a children's play area reflects the Bidjigal understanding of Country as a place of learning, gathering, and intergenerational connection, where children engage with land, water, and community through play, storytelling, and shared experience.



Including social gathering and eating areas reflects the Bidjigal tradition of coming together on Country to share food, stories, knowledge, and ceremony, fostering connection, community wellbeing, and intergenerational exchange through collective experience.



Communal spaces honour Bidjigal kinship traditions through play, gathering, and shared connection to Country.

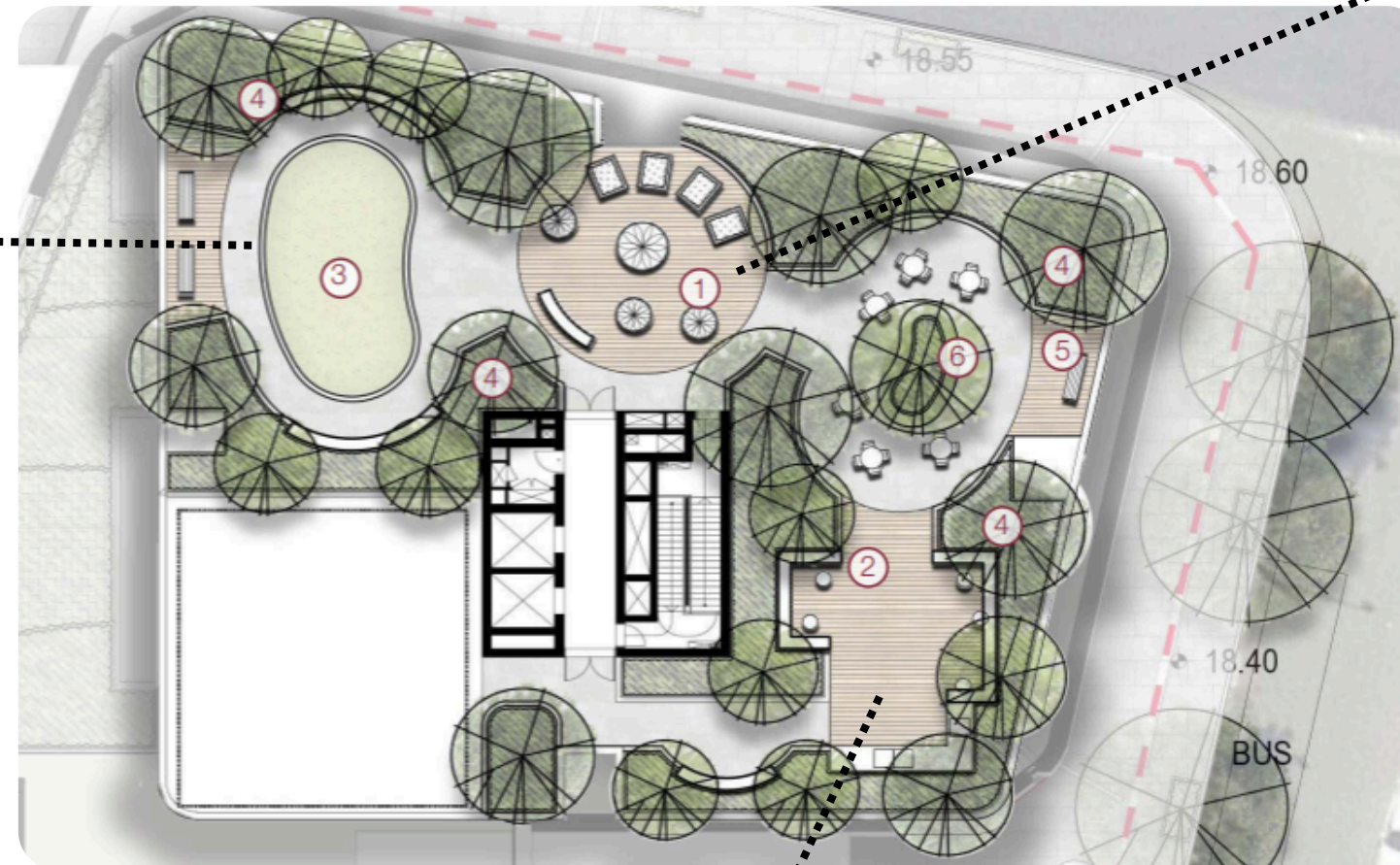


Including long bench seating supports the Bidjigal tradition of gathering, yarning, and shared connection to Country, creating spaces for community interaction, rest, observation, and the passing of knowledge across generations.

Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy Building 2.

The relaxation and gathering lawn reflects the Bidjigal people's long-standing connection to Country as places of meeting, storytelling, rest, and community gathering. Open communal spaces like these honour the cultural importance of coming together on Country to share knowledge, celebrate, and strengthen social connections.



The diverse and active social seating areas reflect the Bidjigal people's traditions of gathering on Country to connect, share stories, exchange knowledge, and strengthen community relationships. The flexible communal spaces encourage inclusivity, interaction, and a continued sense of belonging inspired by the cultural practices of the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation.

The community garden planters reflect the Bidjigal people's deep knowledge of caring for Country and the sustainable use of native plants for food, medicine, and cultural practices. These shared growing spaces celebrate connection to land, learning, and the continuation of community through planting and harvesting together.

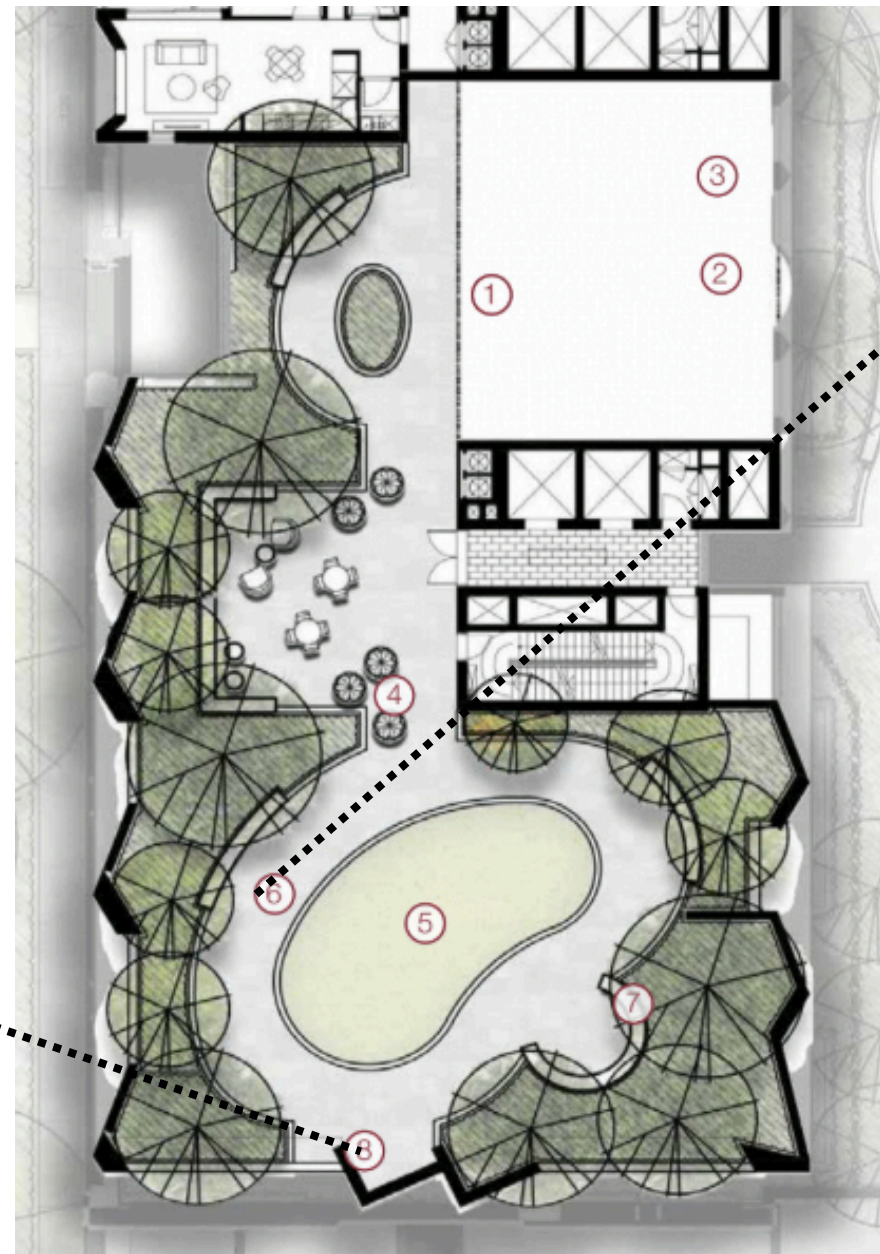


Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy Building 3.



The vista outlook edge reflects the Bidjigal people's enduring connection to Country and the importance of observing the landscape, waterways, and skies as part of cultural knowledge and navigation. Elevated outlook spaces encourage moments of reflection and appreciation of the surrounding environment, honouring the Bidjigal people's deep relationship with the natural rhythms of place.



The loop walkway and passive seating areas reflect the Bidjigal people's connection to walking Country, where movement through the landscape was a way of sharing knowledge, observing seasonal changes, and maintaining cultural ties to place. Quiet seating spaces encourage reflection and connection to the natural environment, honouring the Bidjigal tradition of gathering and resting within the rhythms of Country.

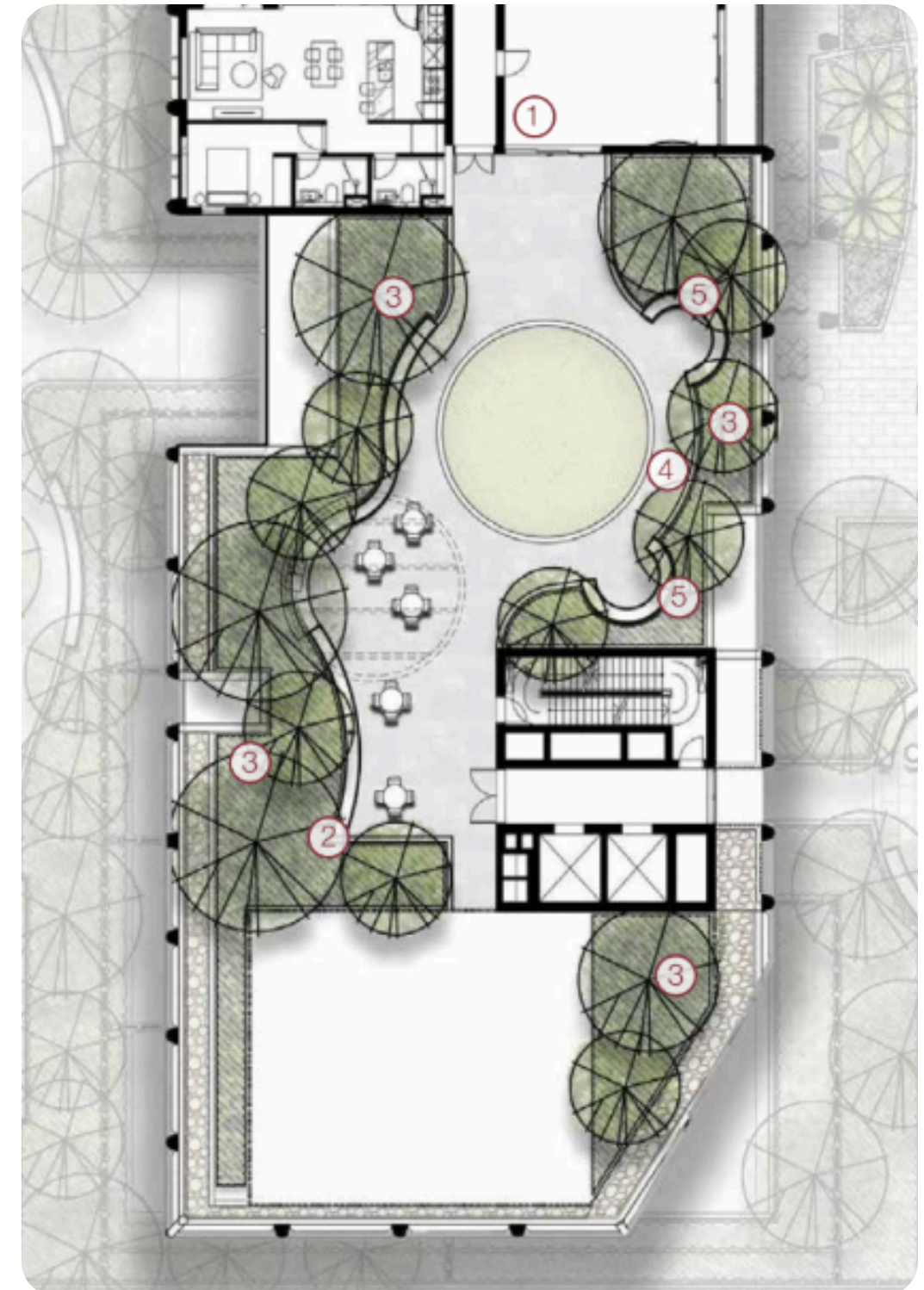
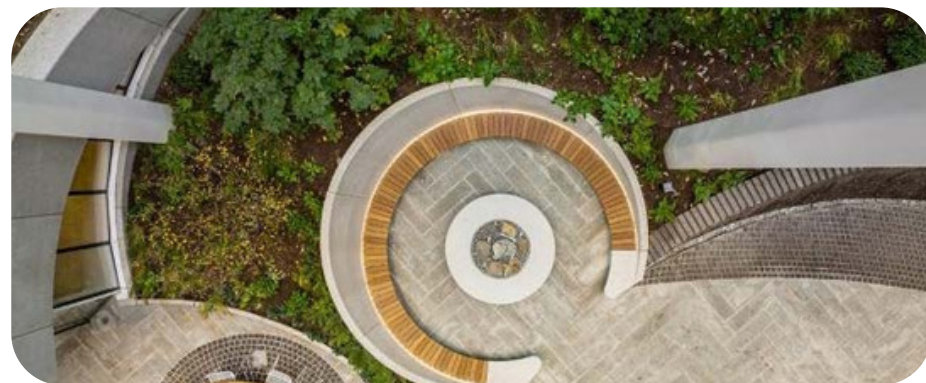


Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy building 4.



Curved, circular seating elements draw inspiration from the gentle movement of water ripples, reflecting the deep cultural and environmental connection the Bidjigal people have to Country and the waterways of Eastlakes. The flowing forms create gathering spaces that honour storytelling, connection, and the continual movement of community, water, and life across Country.

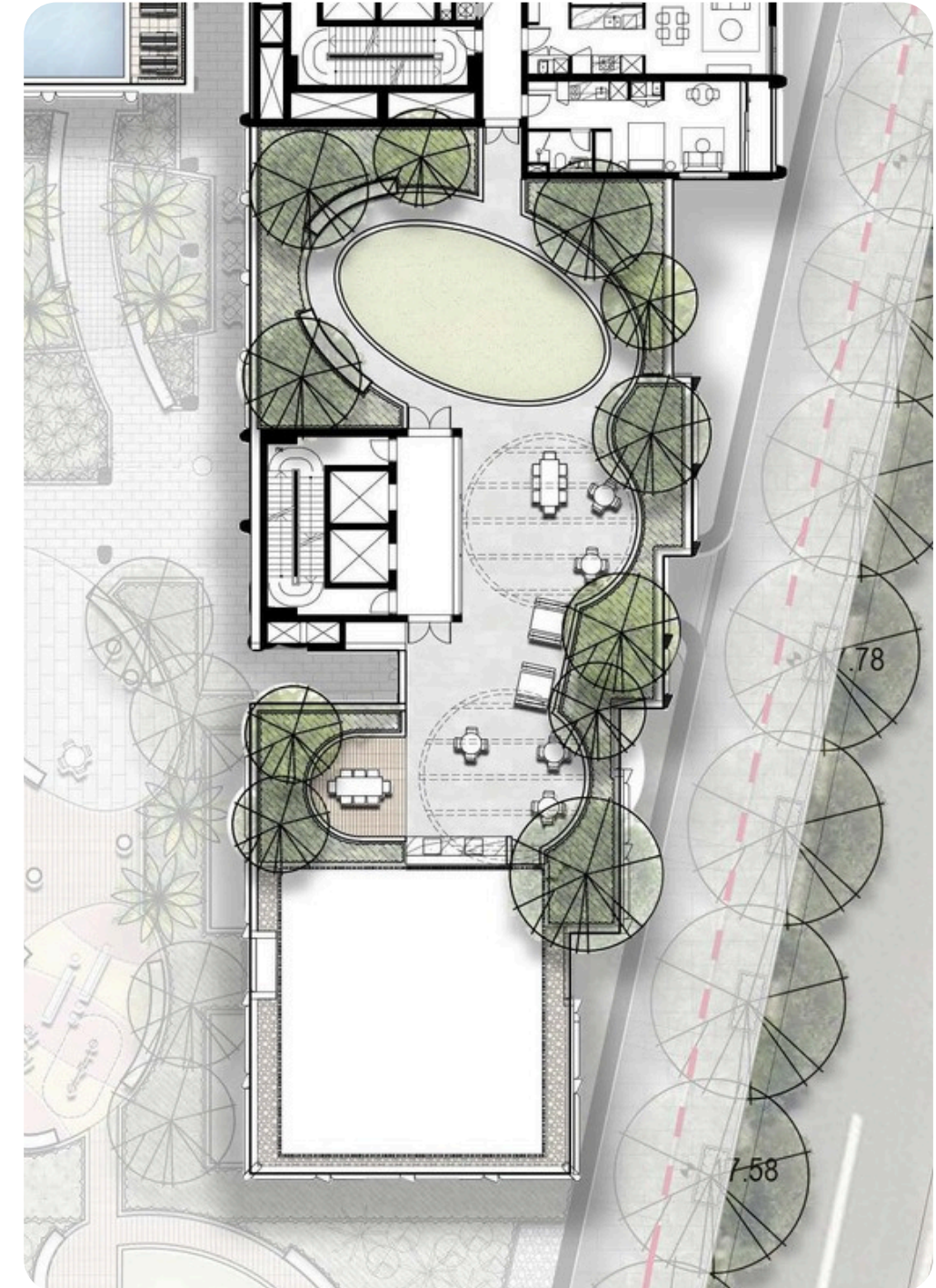


Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy
Level 14 Building 4.



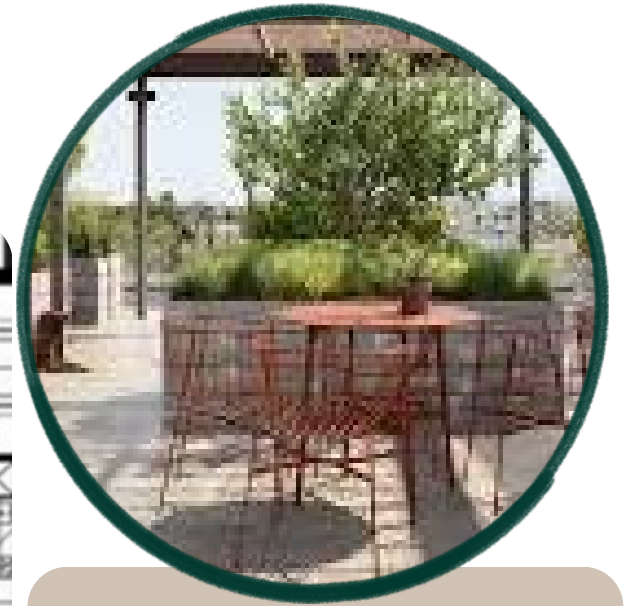
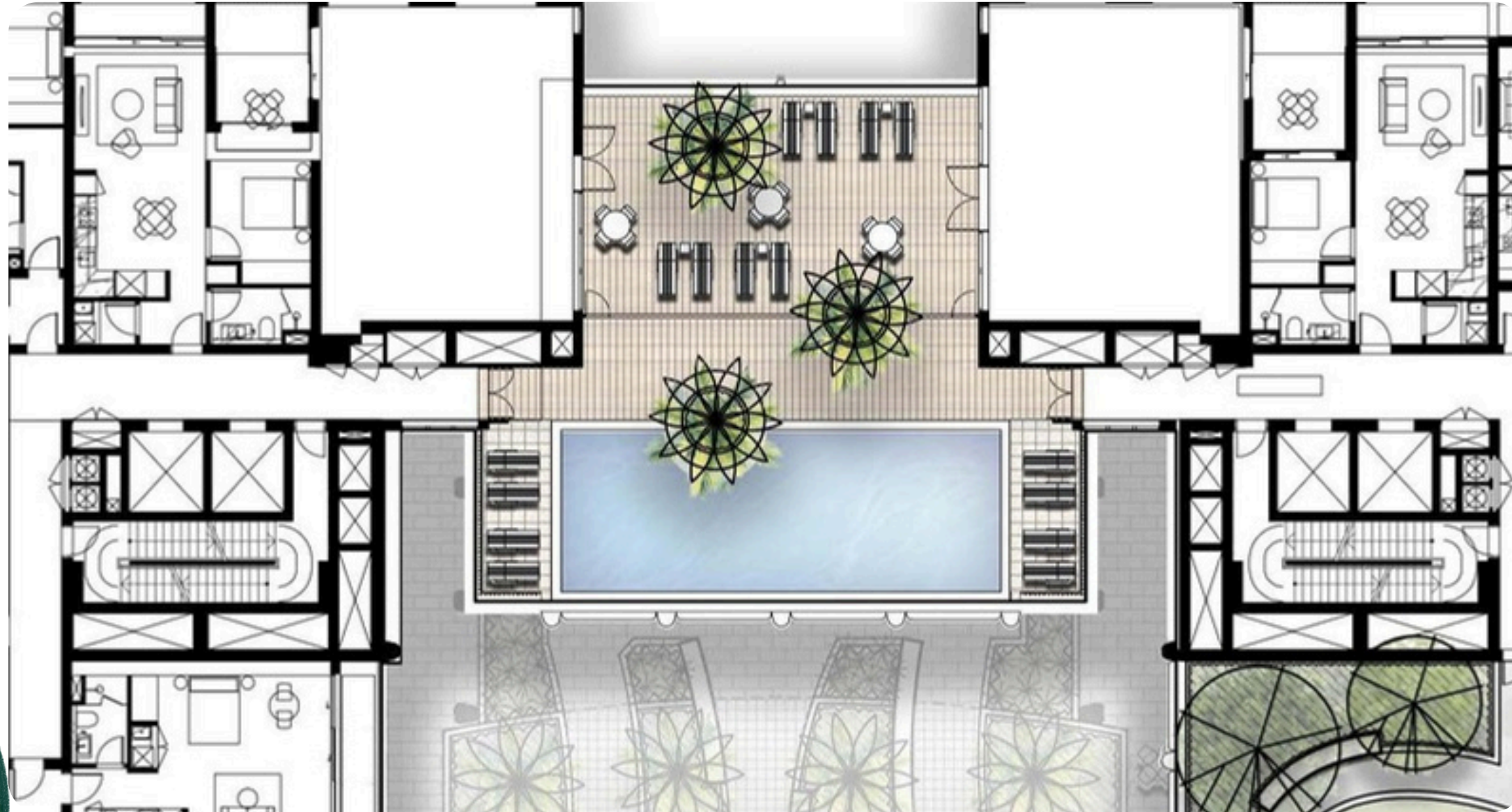
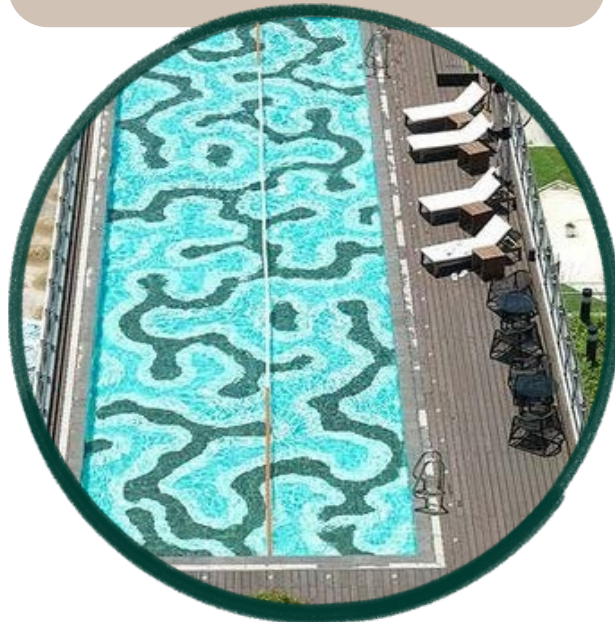
The communal area for Level 14, Building 4 are inspired by the concept of Kinship and Community Creation, reflecting the principles of Better Places through spaces that encourage gathering, connection and shared experiences. The design language draws from the surrounding natural systems of Bidjigal Country, using flowing ripples and riparian patterns to shape pathways, seating zones and planting beds that mimic the movement of water across the landscape. The overall form is influenced by ovoid dune shapes and organic waterway curves, creating soft, interconnected spaces that feel both calming and immersive. Paperbark textures and layered native planting strategies inform the material palette and vegetation selection, strengthening the connection to Country while providing shade, habitat and seasonal variation. The planting strategy focuses on native and endemic species arranged in naturalistic drifts and perimeter planters, reinforcing the fluid landscape character and creating a resilient communal environment that supports wellbeing, gathering and cultural connection.



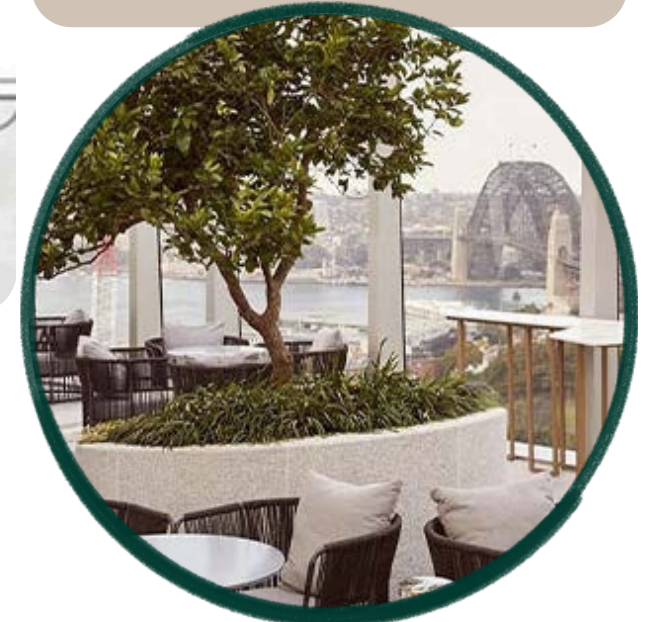
Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy
Level 14 Building 4.

The pool design incorporates a striking organic motif and integrated planter edges that reflect the flowing waterways and natural forms of Bidjigal Country, creating a space that connects water, landscape and community.

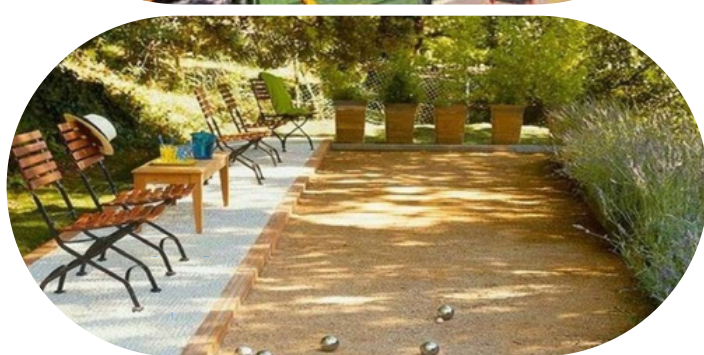


Palm planters and glazed viewing edges frame views to the surrounding landscape, drawing inspiration from the layered vegetation and open waterways of Bidjigal Country while creating a strong connection between built form and nature.



Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy
Level 4 Building 3.



Spaces for gathering, play and recreation reflect the Bidjigal understanding of Country as a place of connection, wellbeing and shared experience.

- The bocce court and communal seating areas encourage intergenerational gathering, storytelling and social connection, strengthening community relationships to place.
- Native planting and shaded pergola structures create opportunities for people to engage with seasonal change, biodiversity and the rhythms of Country.
- Informal play elements and gaming pavements support active learning and encourage children to interact with the landscape in meaningful and culturally responsive ways.
- Curved pathways and seating reference the organic forms found in the natural landscape, reflecting the movement and flow of Country rather than rigid urban geometries.
- Green edges and layered planting soften the transition between built form and open space, reinforcing a connection to the surrounding ecological systems of Bidjigal Country.
- Recreation spaces such as pickleball and putting areas are balanced with quiet zones, supporting both active and reflective experiences within the landscape.
- The integration of shade, planting and communal amenities supports comfort, inclusion and everyday use, encouraging ongoing care and connection to place.

Landscape outcomes prioritise opportunities for gathering, movement and connection, aligning with Bidjigal values of caring for Country and community wellbeing.



Landscape

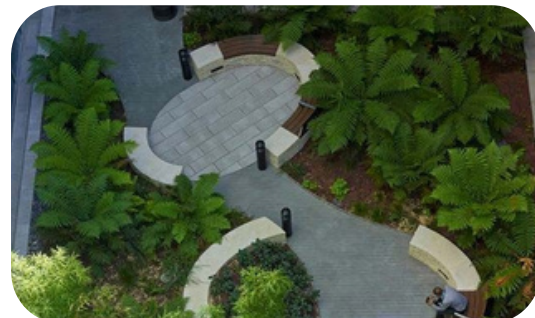
Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy Level 4 Building 4.



Children's play zone supports active learning, exploration and interaction with nature, encouraging younger generations to build a meaningful relationship with Country.



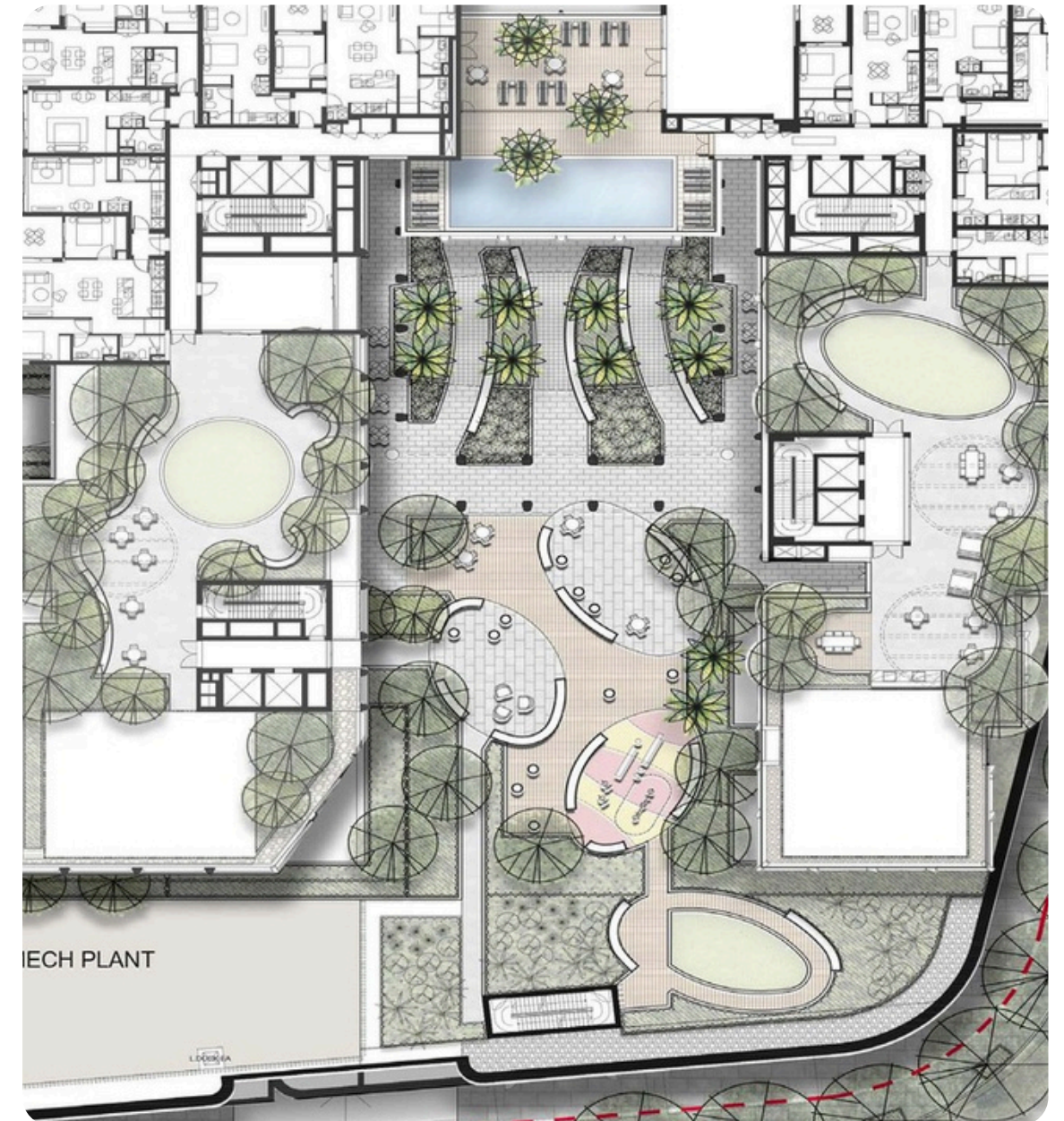
Garden seating with palms and bamboo integrates lush planting and shaded retreat areas that reflect the richness, diversity and calming qualities of the natural landscape on Bidjigal Country.



Lounges offer spaces for rest, reflection and connection, supporting wellbeing and slower moments within the landscape setting.



Linking timber deck provides a warm and natural transition through the landscape, referencing traditional pathways and movement across Country.

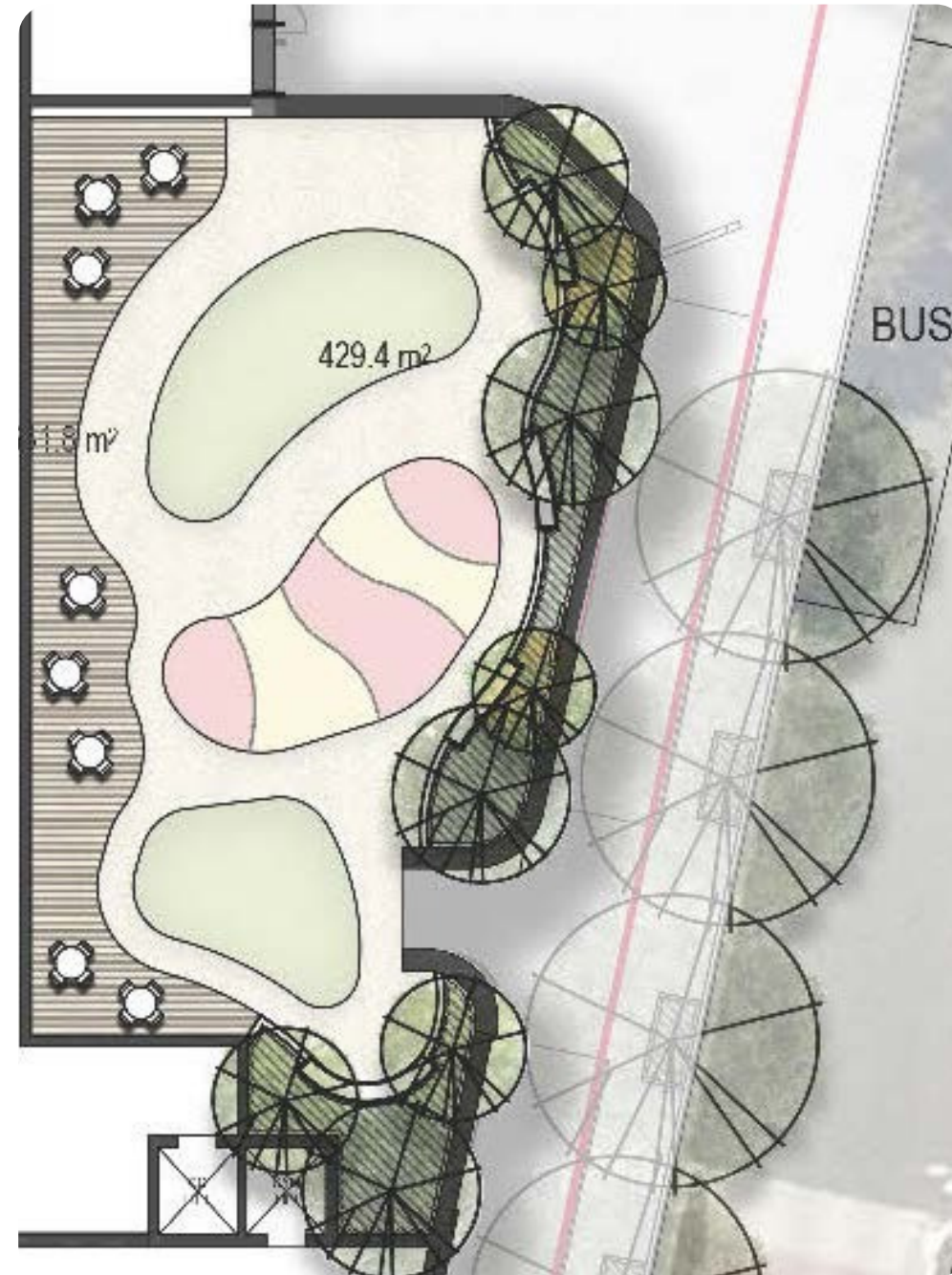


Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy Level 2 Building 4.



Bench seating to the eastern edge provides spaces for rest, observation and quiet connection to the surrounding planting and natural environment.



Mounded artificial grass creates playful landform experiences that reflect the natural undulations of Bidjigal Country, encouraging movement, gathering and connection to the landscape.



Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy
Level 4 Building 4 Lobby.



Water Ripples



Paperbark



Ovoid Dune

The lobby continues these design themes through forms and materials inspired by ripples and riparian systems, dunal landforms and the organic textures of Paperbark. Flowing curves, layered planting and natural materiality express the character of Country, bringing elements of the landscape indoors and strengthening the ongoing connection to Bidjigal Country.



Landscape

Communal Area's (Kinship) Community Creation (Better Places) also to planting strategy Building 4.



Jack Munday's environmental legacy in Eastlakes is defined by his leadership of the 1971 Green Ban, where the NSW Builders Labourers' Federation stopped the proposed redevelopment of the estate's only central open parkland. His actions protected vital community green space and preserved the natural character of the area for future generations. In recognition of this contribution, the reserve was renamed **Jack Munday Reserve** in 2021. The rear of the building now opens directly toward the park, extending the landscape through native planting and greenery to create a seamless connection between architecture and nature, tying the development into the environmental legacy of the site



The landscape and built form respond to the natural character of Eastlakes through generous open green spaces, layered planting, and organic pathways that reflect the waterways and ecological systems significant to the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation. Warm, earthy materials and soft architectural forms create a connection between the development and Country, fostering spaces for gathering, movement, and community that acknowledge the cultural history and enduring relationship of the Bidjigal people to land and water.

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