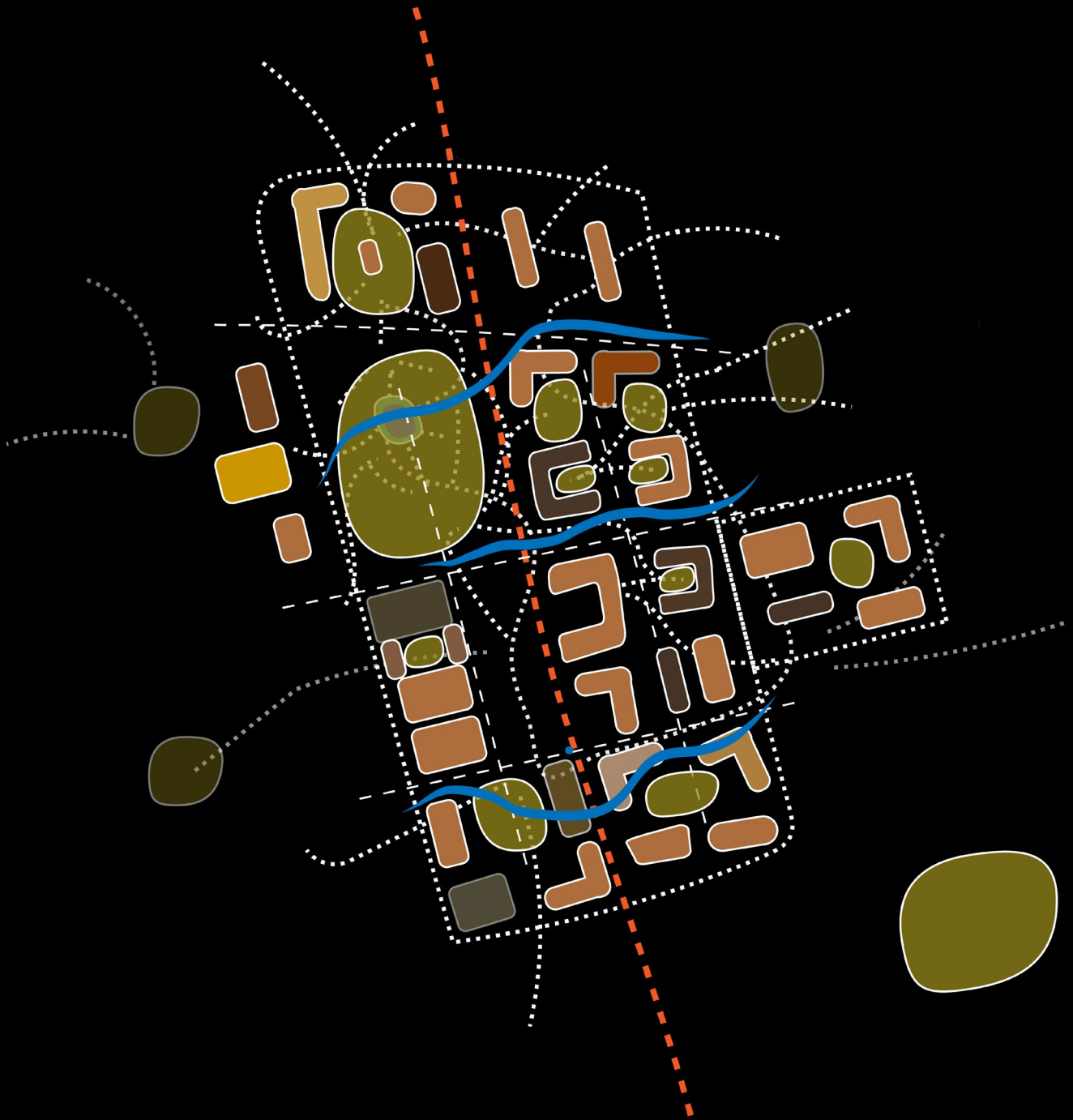




Waterloo South

Designing with Country Strategic Framework

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We are an Indigenous led studio
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operating in partnership with
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Cover page: artwork by Craig Kerslake

**WARNING: this document will be confronting to many and
depicts images and stories of people who have died.**

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Introduction

This Designing with Country Strategic Framework (the Framework) is submitted to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (the Department) on behalf of Stockland and NSW Land and Housing Corporation (the Applicant) in support of a concept State Significant Development Application (SSDA) for the redevelopment of the site within the Waterloo Estate (South) Precinct Area, hereby known as “Waterloo South”.

In this report reference to “Homes NSW” or “the Applicant” shall also be taken to mean “New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC)” who is the registered owner of 93 per cent of land within the Waterloo South Precinct Area. Any reference to “Waterloo South” in this report should be read as the redevelopment of land owned by Homes NSW (previously Land and Housing Corporation) and associated public land (such as roads) throughout the Precinct Area.

The concept development is categorised as State Significant Development (SSD) as per Section 26, Schedule 1 of State Environmental Planning Policy Planning Systems 2021 (Planning Systems SEPP) as the project includes housing development carried out by or on behalf of the LAHC, with an estimated development cost (EDC) of more than \$30 million.

The concept, in summary, aims to deliver:

- High quality mixed tenure housing in the context of a rapidly transforming area.
- Approximately 3,300 new dwellings, of which a minimum 30% will be social housing, approximately 20% will be affordable housing, and a maximum 50% will be market housing (measured as a percentage of the total residential gross floor area).
- Publicly accessible open space and public realm activation.
- An authentic mixed-use precinct, with housing co-located with non-residential uses, community uses, essential services, and access to public transport.

The concept SSDA will guide the detailed design of future buildings, open spaces, and the public realm within the Waterloo South site. The concept SSDA seeks development consent for key planning metrics, including maximum building envelopes, building heights, setbacks, vehicular access points and road network, and the distribution of floor area across different land uses and residential tenure types.

A state-assessed rezoning application has also been prepared and submitted concurrently to give effect to this concept SSDA. The state-assessed rezoning application seeks amendments to the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP 2012) and the Waterloo Estate (South): Design Guide 2022 (2022 Design Guide) to align with the maximum building envelopes sought in this concept SSDA. Notably no additional gross floor area (GFA) or density is sought under the state-assessed rezoning application than is currently permissible on the site under the SLEP 2012.

The Site

The Waterloo South Precinct Area comprises approximately 123,149m² across 10 street blocks in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA), generally bounded by Cope, Raglan, George, Wellington, Gibson, Kellick, Pitt and McEvoy Streets. The Waterloo South site area, excluding any privately owned properties within the Waterloo South Precinct Area, comprises approximately 114,822m², or just over 93% of the land within the Precinct Area. The legal description of Waterloo South Precinct Area is detailed in table below.

Address	Lot / DP
Lots owned by NSW Land and Housing Corporation (land is subject to both the rezoning and the concept SSDA)	
209-219 Cope Street, Waterloo	Lot 1 DP 217386
238-246 George Street, Waterloo	Lot 1 DP 225159
229-231 Cope Street Waterloo	Lot 3 DP 10721
6 John Street, Waterloo	Lot 1 DP 533762
97-109 Cooper Street, Waterloo	Lot A DP 105916, Lot B DP 105916, Lot C DP 105916, Lot 14 DP 10721,
248-254 George Street, Waterloo	Lot 2 DP 533678
232 Pitt Street, Waterloo	Lot 11 DP 635663, Lot 10 DP 635663
74-76 Wellington Street, Waterloo	Lot 1 DP 224728
331-337 George Street, Waterloo	Lot 3 DP 533680
247-251 Cope Street, Waterloo	Lot 1 DP 533679
339-341 George Street, Waterloo	Lot 1 DP 77168
250 Pitt Street, Waterloo	Lot 313 DP 606576
Cooper Street, Waterloo	Lot 3 DP 217386
Lots owned by others (land that does not form a part of the concept SSDA)	
221-223 Cope Street, Waterloo	Lot 6 DP 10721, Lot 7 DP 10721, Lot 9 DP 10721, Lot 8 DP 1147179
225-227 Cope Street, Waterloo	Lot 5 DP 10721, Lot 4 DP 10721
233 Cope Street, Waterloo	Lot 12 DP 1099410, Lots 1-41 SP 79210
116 Wellington Street, Waterloo	Lot 10 DP 10721, Lot 11 DP 10721
111 Cooper Street, Waterloo	Lot 15 DP 10721
291 George Street, Waterloo	Lot 10 DP 1238631, Lots 1-20 SP 96906
110 Wellington Street, Waterloo	Lot 101 DP 1044801, Lots 1-58 SP 69476
336 George Street, Waterloo	Lot 3 DP 10686
213-215 Cope Street, Waterloo	Lot 2 DP 217386

Ganggalang Hello!



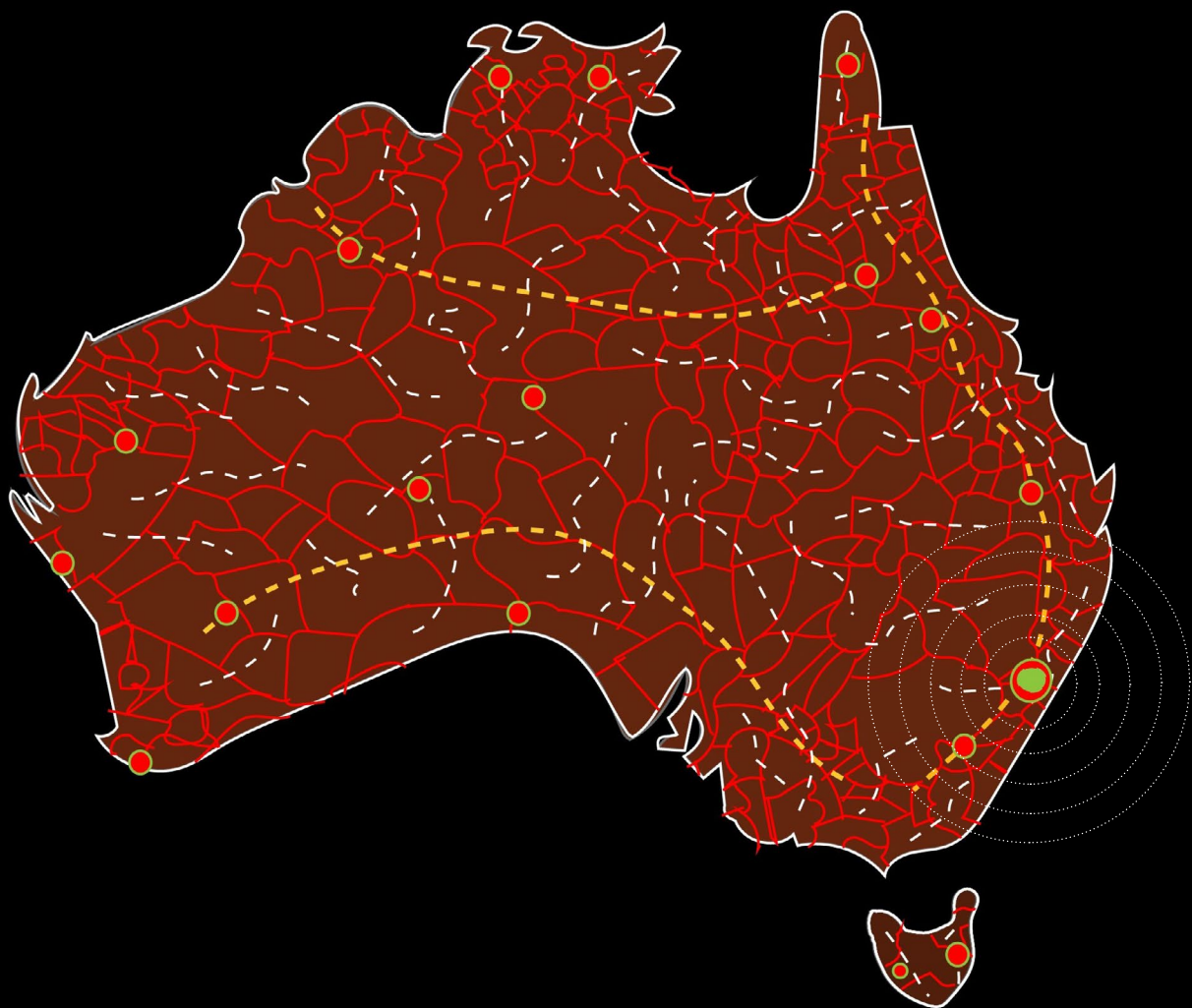
We acknowledge and pay respect to the Gadigal people, past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

An abstract map-like illustration on a black background. It features several blue lines of varying thickness and color (light blue to dark blue) that meander across the page, resembling waterways or terrain. Overlaid on these are dashed white lines that form a network of paths or boundaries. Three red, hand-drawn style markers are placed at different points: one at the top center, one in the middle right labeled 'Sweetwater', and one on the far right labeled 'Bitterwater'.

1.

Introduction





1.1 Waterloo

Waterloo is situated on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. The Gadigal clan is one of the 29 Aboriginal clans of the Sydney basin which make up the Eora nation. As the City of Sydney's Barani website reports: "The territory of the Gadi(gal) people stretched along the southern side of Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour) from South Head to around what is now known as Petersham."¹

The area is part of a broader landscape of swamps, creeks, and woodlands that supported a rich and interconnected system of life and culture long before European settlement. These wetlands, including the former Waterloo Swamp and Sheas Creek, provided fresh water, and food sources such as eel, fish, and plants. As well as providing sustenance, this Country has held cultural, ceremonial, and spiritual significance for Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

The Waterloo area formed part of an important seasonal movement route for the Gadigal and neighbouring clans, linking coastal resources with inland areas. The abundance of water and vegetation created a fertile landscape for gathering, storytelling, and cultural practices tied to kinship and Country. These cultural ties persist today through ongoing connections maintained by the local Aboriginal community. When the British invaded, Aboriginal people sought refuge here.

Despite the urban transformation and industrialisation of the area over the past two centuries, Waterloo remains a site of cultural significance for many Aboriginal families, particularly those connected to The Block in Redfern. Stories of resilience, community, and self-determination continue to shape the identity of Waterloo, reminding us that this is still unceded Gadigal land.

¹ Heiss and Gibson (undated) 'Aboriginal groups of the Sydney area', in City of Sydney Council, Barani: Sydney Aboriginal History website

1.2 Project Background

1.1.1 Waterloo Estate

The Waterloo Estate is a major urban redevelopment initiative led by the NSW Government in collaboration with Stockland as a Renewal Partner, aiming to transform the existing Waterloo public housing estate into a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable mixed-use neighbourhood. The project covers approximately 19 hectares and is one of the most significant urban renewal programs in the state. Homes NSW will manage the existing 750 social housing units, tenant relocations, and tenant participation.

The Waterloo renewal project will deliver approximately 3,300 new homes with a mix of 30% social housing, 20% affordable housing, and the remaining as market housing. 20% of the social homes and 15% of the affordable homes will be prioritised for Aboriginal people. Alongside housing, the project will deliver new open spaces, community uses, and improved street networks. The vision is to create a diverse, well-connected urban precinct that promotes social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity.

The Waterloo Metro Station enhances the accessibility and catalyse investment, positioning Waterloo as a future-focused, transit-oriented community.

The renewal will be staged over 30 years and is being delivered in partnership with the Homes NSW, alongside private sector and non-government stakeholders.

Project areas

The suburb of Waterloo is located within the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) and is located 3km south of Sydney CBD. The site is part of the broader Waterloo Estate, which comprises the North, Central, and Southern precincts and accommodates a significant community residing in social housing.

This project has a key focus on Waterloo South Precinct Area (the site), as shown in Figure 1. The ideas developed for this document would need to be expanded and further tested for central and north.

1.1.2 How the project will meet the needs of First Nations people?

The Gadigal people of the Eora Nation are the Traditional Custodians of the place we now call Waterloo, and today this estate is home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people from many language groups far and wide. The renewal of Waterloo South will focus on cultural inclusion, housing outcomes, and greater support for ATSI people.

The project is committed to supporting and improving outcomes for the Aboriginal community, and to respecting and celebrating the integral role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture and heritage plays in the area.

The project will be executed by Stockland, in the capacity of developer leading design, planning, and construction, in collaboration with Community Housing Providers (CHP) and Aboriginal Community Housing Provider (ACHP)

- City West Housing (CHP)
- Link Wentworth (CHP)
- Biribee Housing (ACHP).

These providers will manage the new social and affordable housing tenants and coordinate wrap-around support for tenants.

Throughout this process, will continue to be identified to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people through the project's:

- design
- planning
- delivery
- operational phases.

The project will also prioritise Aboriginal procurement and workforce participation during construction to create more job opportunities for the local Aboriginal community.¹

Homes NSW has outlined several requirements for this project, including engagement with First Nations businesses and the involvement of a suitably qualified and experienced Aboriginal architect in the design and delivery of ATC housing.

¹ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/about-nsw/housing-and-infrastructure-projects/social-building-projects/waterloo-renewal-project>



Waterloo North and Central (future)

Future plans for Waterloo Central and Waterloo North will be developed in the later stage, once renewal of Waterloo South is underway.

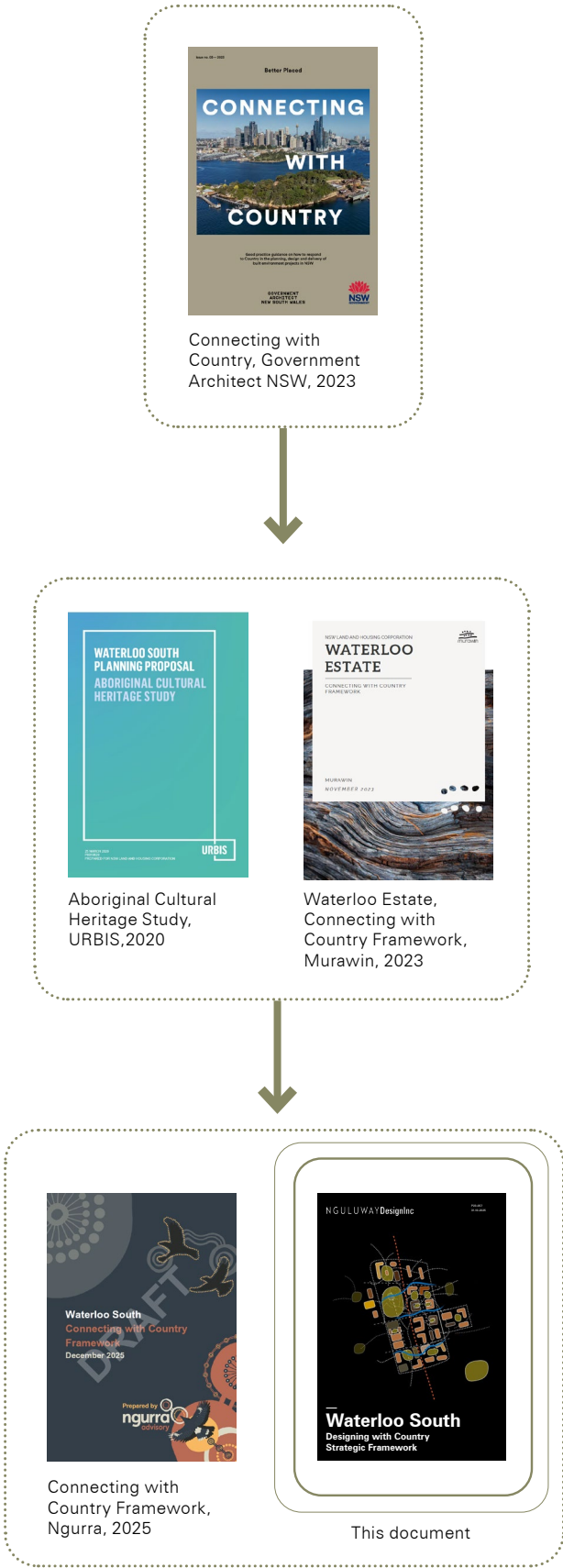
Waterloo South (this Project)

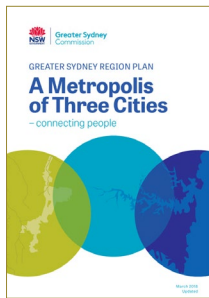
Waterloo South covers about 65% of the Waterloo Estate and is the first stage of the renewal. It will be redeveloped over the next 10 to 15 years

Figure 1: Waterloo Renewal Project area

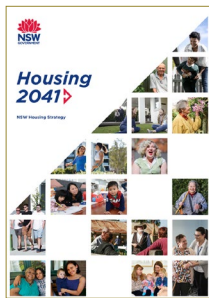
1.2.1 Purpose of this document

The Waterloo South Designing with Country (DwC) Strategic Framework (this document) is intended to guide Country-led outcomes across the Waterloo South Precinct Area and support built environment professionals involved in the project. It outlines precinct design themes, opportunities, and strategies, offering practical recommendations to embed Aboriginal stories and practices into planning and design. Developed from previously documented conversations with stakeholders and community—particularly through the Connecting with Country Framework, 2023 by Murawin—it reflects extensive consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal stakeholders. The approach moves beyond symbolism, embedding deep cultural layers into spatial layouts, materials, landscaping, and site strategies. It also supports the preparation of design briefs for individual projects within the precinct, ensuring a holistic and enduring recognition of Aboriginal culture and identity.

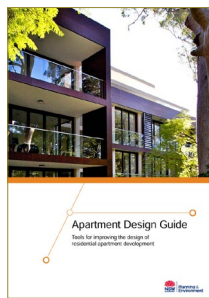




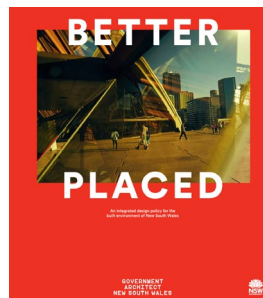
Greater Sydney
Regional Plan,
GSC, 2021



NSW Housing
Strategy, NSW
Government, 2021



Apartment Design
Guide, NSW
Government, 2021



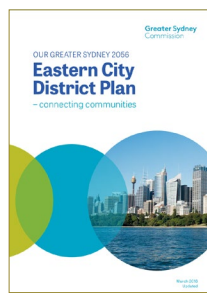
Better Placed, Government
Architects, 2017



Greener Places, Government
Architects, 2020



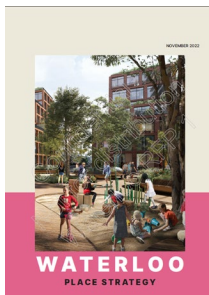
Sydney Green Grid, NSW
Government, 2021



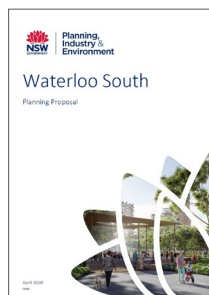
Eastern City District
Plan, GSC, 2021



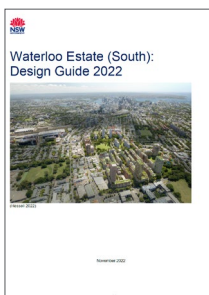
Development Control
Plan, City of Sydney,
2012



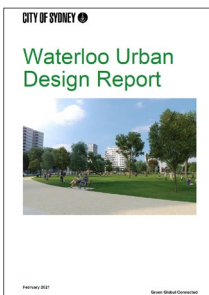
Waterloo Place
Strategy, HATCH
RobertsDay, 2022



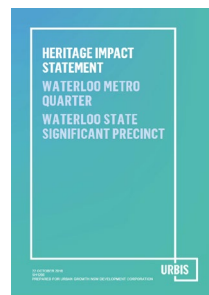
Waterloo Estate
South Planning
Proposal, DPIE, 2020



Waterloo Estate
(South): Design Guide
2022, Hassel, 2022



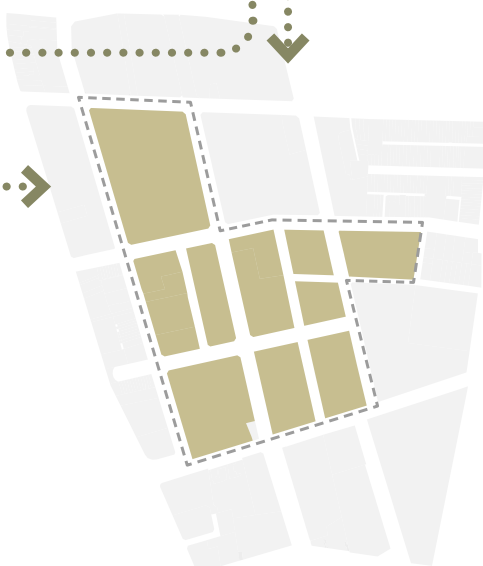
Waterloo Urban
Design Report, City of
Sydney, 2021



Heritage Impact
Statement,
URBIS, 2018



Draft Waterloo Estate
South People and
Place Plan, Homes
NSW, 2024



1.2.2 How to use this document

This document is structured in four parts. Parts 1 and 2 focus on background studies and research, a process of Truth Telling, re-discovering Waterloo, and understanding the layers that have shaped its current form. Parts 3 and 4 build on these findings and identify emerging narratives that can guide future development while acknowledging Country and staying true to the history of Place.

An understanding of Parts 1 and 2 is imperative to meaningfully translate recommendations from Parts 3 and 4 into design.

01 Starting with Country

Introduction

02 Rediscovering Country

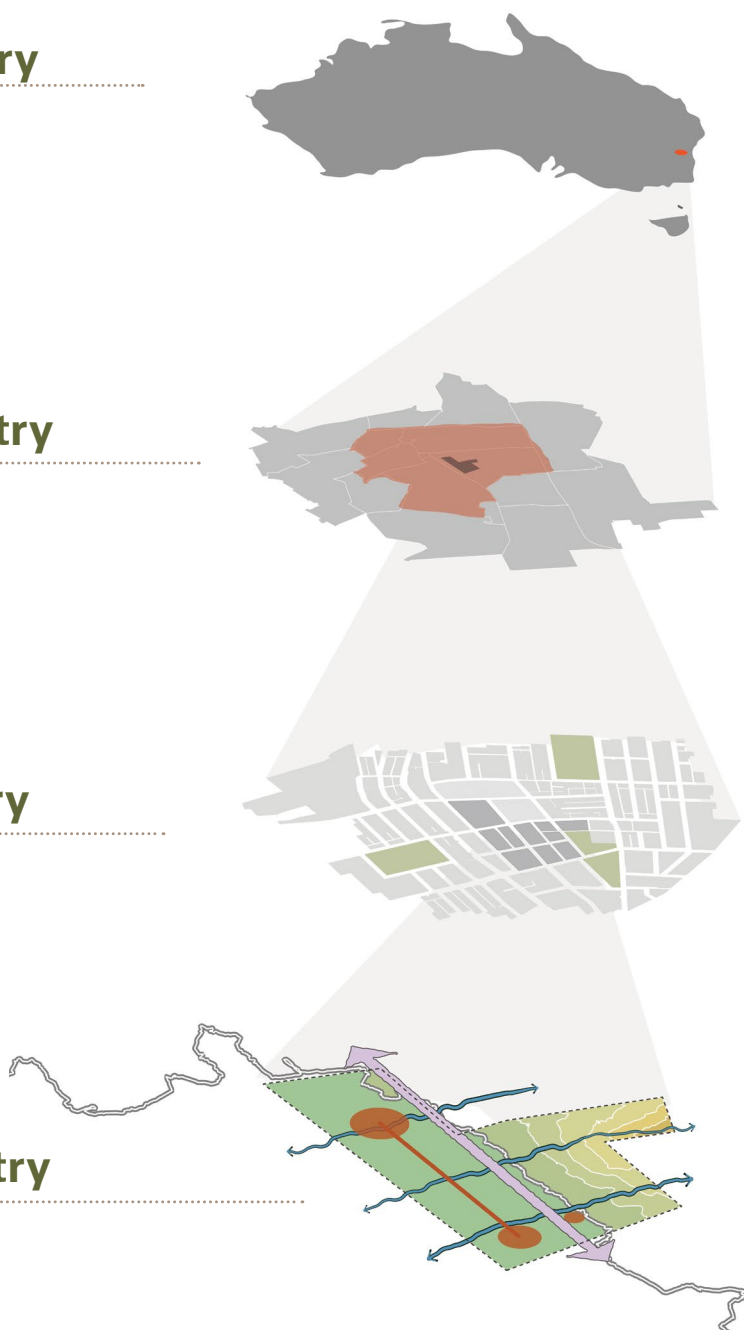
Context

03 Re-stor(y)ing Country

Precinct

04 Implementing Country

Block + Building



1.2.3 Connecting with Country vision

The Waterloo Connecting with Country Framework, 2023 by Murawin includes a clear vision for an “inclusive precinct, rooted in traditional knowledge and Truth Telling” that directly responds to the aspirations and concerns of the Aboriginal community. This vision has formed the foundation for the Designing from Country process presented in this document.



Vision:

Lead by traditional wisdom and the pursuit of truth, Waterloo will deliver a world-leading urban homeland that honours the proud legacy and thriving community of this place, where Country is central and celebrated, and where together we can all reach our full potential.

Principles:



Foundations

These are the facts about people and place that ground this project.



Guiding Principles

These are the philosophic ideals that flow through the project.



Catalysts

These are the tangible and intangible actions and activations that will bring elements of Country to life in this project.



Vision For Country

This is the overarching ambition for Waterloo to achieve, in order to Connect with Country.

1.3 Ongoing Connection

Engagement for the Waterloo South Renewal has been undertaken with Traditional Custodians, local Aboriginal organisations and Waterloo residents to inform the early direction of this Designing with Country Strategy. These conversations represent the beginning, not the conclusion, of a long-term, trust-based relationship with community, grounded in respect, care for knowledge, and shared responsibility to Country.

This ongoing commitment means engagement will continue with a broader and evolving range of local Aboriginal community members and residents, ensuring that cultural knowledge, lived experience and community aspirations continue to meaningfully shape planning, design, delivery and stewardship across Waterloo. In recognition that Country, culture and community are not static, engagement for this project will not be treated as a one-off activity; accordingly, the Designing with Country and Connecting with Country strategies will operate as living documents, regularly revisited, tested and strengthened as the project progresses.



Figure 2: Photo from one of the consultation workshops

Who we engaged

Engagement for the Waterloo South project involved Gadigal Custodians, local Aboriginal community members, Aboriginal service providers, artists, youth representatives, Elders and residents with longstanding connections to Waterloo and Redfern. Participants reflected a broad cross-section of cultural knowledge, lived experience and community leadership, ensuring that both cultural authority and contemporary community perspectives informed the work. Engagement prioritised voices with deep local connection, while also recognising Waterloo as a place shaped by many Aboriginal families, mobs and organisations over time.

When & Where

Engagement was undertaken across multiple stages of the project to inform both the Designing with Country Strategy and the Connecting with Country Framework. Sessions were held at key points to test emerging ideas, surface aspirations and concerns, and refine directions before decisions were finalised. Engagement took place through a mix of on-Country conversations, community venues and facilitated workshops, ensuring accessibility and relevance while respecting cultural protocols and participant availability.

How we engaged

Engagement was delivered using culturally appropriate, relational methods that prioritised dialogue over presentation. This included yarning-based discussions, facilitated workshops, design conversations and iterative feedback loops that allowed ideas to be tested, challenged and strengthened. The approach emphasised listening first, transparency about how information would be used, and accountability in carrying community guidance forward. Rather than one-off consultation, engagement was approached as an ongoing relationship that continues to inform governance, design, delivery and long-term stewardship of Waterloo South.

Figure 3: Community engagement approach, from Connecting with Country Framework, 2025 by Ngurra Advisory

The background is a detailed painting of a coastal scene. On the right, a tall, layered rock cliff rises from a sandy beach. Several figures are visible on the cliff's face and at its base. In the foreground, a large, rounded rock sits in the shallow water. More figures are around this rock, some standing and some sitting. In the lower foreground, two figures are on a rocky outcrop in the water; one is standing and holding a long pole, while the other is lying down. The water is a deep blue-green with visible ripples. In the distance, rolling hills or mountains are visible under a sky with soft, white clouds.

2

Starting with Country



Aborigines spearing fish. Others diving for crayfish, a party seated beside a fire cooking fish. Painting by Joseph Lyce

2.1 Understanding Country

//

Let no one
say that the
past is dead.
The past is
all around us
and within
us".

-Oodgeroo Noonuccal

What is Country

Country is more than land—it encompasses the skies, waterways, plants, animals, stories, and people that belong to it. It represents deep systems of knowledge, identity, and connection that have guided Aboriginal communities for tens of thousands of years. Starting with Country is about recognising these living relationships and allowing them to inform how we plan, design, and care for place. It requires us to listen, learn, and design with respect for the ongoing presence of First Nations peoples and their custodianship of the land.

Relevance to the Waterloo Project

The Redfern-Waterloo area is often regarded as the heartland of Aboriginal culture in urban Australia. It has played one of the most influential roles in the modern history of Aboriginal resilience and activism, shaping national conversations about rights, identity, and self-determination. From the impacts of first settlement and government policies to the strength of community organisation in the 20th century, Waterloo tells a powerful story of Aboriginal endurance and regeneration.

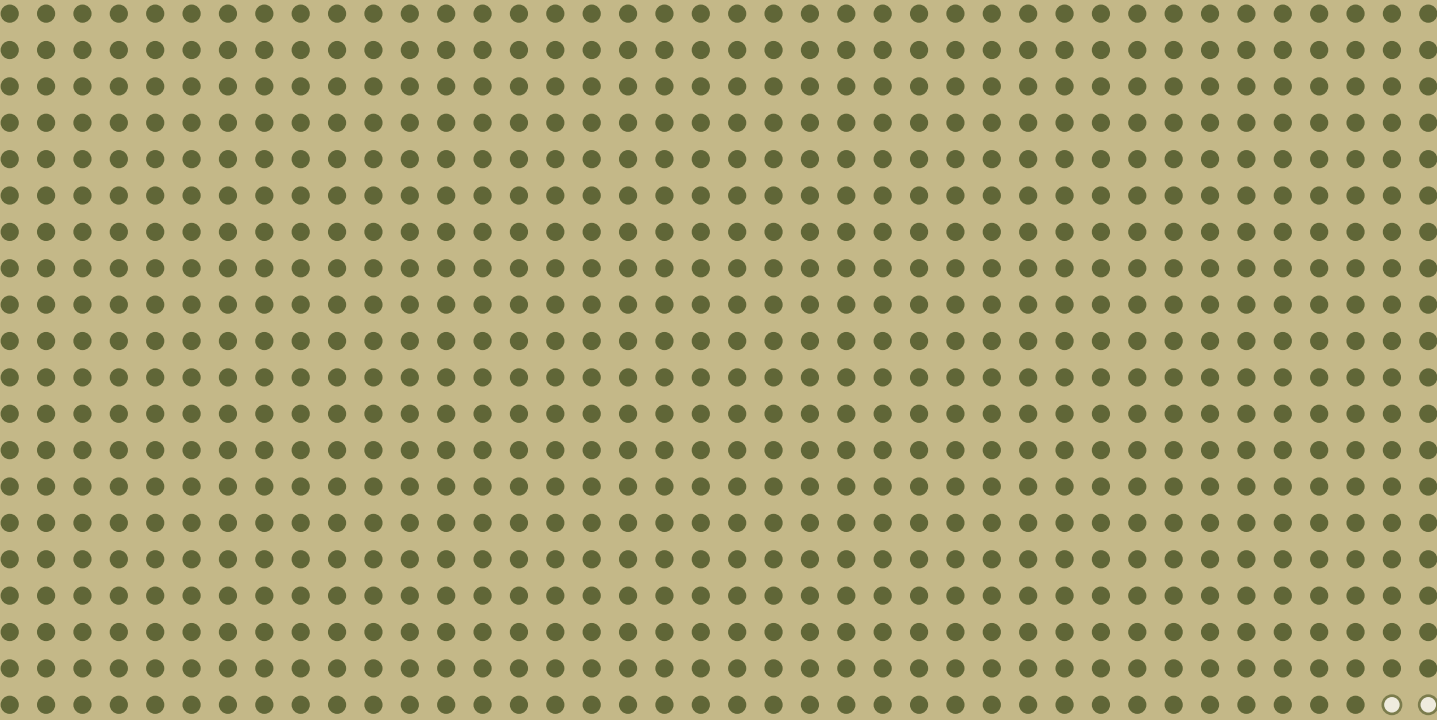
The redevelopment marks the beginning of a new chapter. It presents an opportunity to apply best practice principles, uplifting the area socially, culturally, and environmentally while fostering cohesion between existing and future communities.

The project team is committed to making a positive impact for the Aboriginal community and for everyone who is part of this Country. By starting with Country, this project has the potential to become a model for future urban development—one that leads through respect, collaboration, and genuine connection to Place.

2.2 Truth Telling

Modern history represents only a small fraction of the broader, enduring history of the Waterloo area. Acknowledging and learning from what came before is essential to moving forward meaningfully. As part of the Connecting with Country process, this project reflects a commitment to deepening cultural awareness and embedding Country-led thinking at every stage of design. The story of Aboriginal Redfern offers a powerful lens through which to understand the long-term impacts of urban development on culture, identity, and community across generations.

● = 100 years



Australia's historic timeline, with green dots marking each 100 years of Aboriginal occupation and white dots marking each 100 years of European occupation. Illustration by Niwilli White Forest, Nguluway DesignInc.

2.2.1 Traditional life

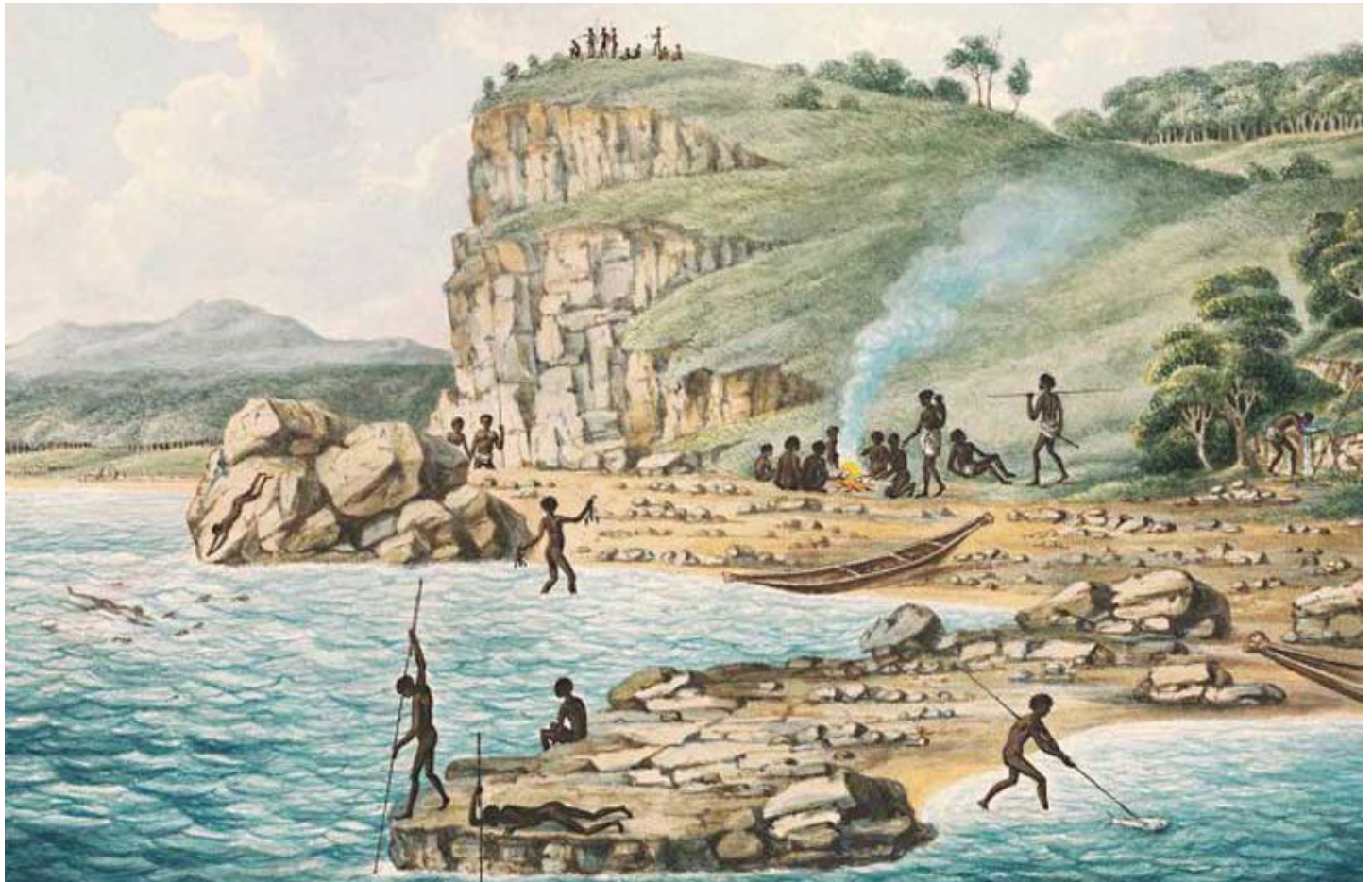


Figure 5: Aborigines spearing fish. Others diving for crayfish, a party seated beside a fire cooking fish. Painting by Joseph Lyce (ca. 1817). Source: National Library of Australia

Aboriginal people have lived on the Australian continent for more than 70,000 years, developing one of the oldest continuous cultures. Their way of life was deeply sustainable, grounded in a harmonious relationship with the natural environment. This connection was not just practical but spiritual, reflected in the concept of Belonging to Country, where reciprocity and co-existence formed the basis of social, cultural, and environmental systems.

Traditionally, Aboriginal groups were largely nomadic, moving across the landscape in accordance with seasonal cycles and resource availability. They did not view land as something to be owned; instead, they saw themselves as custodians responsible for caring for Country, ensuring its health for future generations. Through careful knowledge of plants, animals, and water sources, they maintained a balanced and resilient way of life that sustained both people and the land for millennia.

There is no word in the Wiradjuri language for sustainability or conservation - it is embodied in belonging to Country

- Craig Kerlake, Wiradjuri Architect

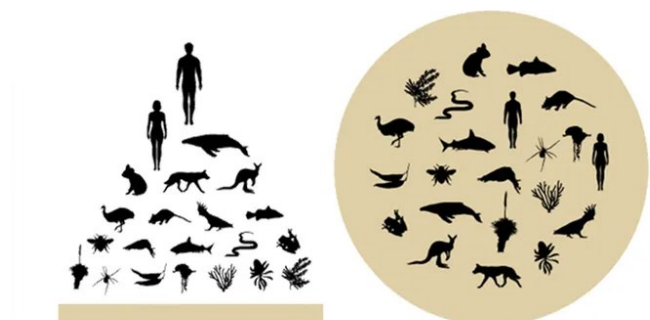


Figure 6: Human-centred or Country-centred Diagram, adapted from German architect Steffen Lehmann's 'Eco v Ego' diagram, 2010

2.2.2 Arrival

In 1788, the First Fleet arrived in what is now Sydney Cove, marking the beginning of British colonisation. For the British, this was seen as an opportunity to establish a penal colony and extend their empire. For the Aboriginal peoples of the continent, it was the beginning of an invasion that would profoundly disrupt their lives, culture, and connection to Country.

The British declared the land *terra nullius*, meaning “land belonging to no one.” This doctrine was used to justify taking possession of the land without treaties, negotiations, or compensation. It completely ignored the presence of hundreds of distinct Aboriginal nations, each with their own languages, laws, and spiritual systems tied to their Country.

It is striking that *terra nullius* and “Aboriginal” are both derived from Latin, yet their meanings contradict each other: Aboriginal meaning “from the beginning” and *terra nullius* meaning “land belonging to no one.” The contradiction is clear: How can you assert that the land was unoccupied when it was home to thriving, complex communities deeply connected to it for thousands of years?



Figure 7: Captain James Cook (1728-79) taking possession of New South Wales, taken from the collection of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria

2.2.3 Invasion

As colonisation spread, land was rapidly converted into private property under British law. This violent transition to private land ownership dispossessed Aboriginal peoples of their Country, cutting them off from traditional hunting grounds, sacred sites, and cultural responsibilities.

The 19th century saw the outbreak of numerous frontier or colony wars, where Aboriginal resistance was met with military expeditions and police-led reprisals. These conflicts often culminated in massacres, where entire communities were killed to secure territory for settlers.

Alongside violence, introduced diseases such as smallpox, influenza, and measles swept through Aboriginal populations. Lacking immunity, many communities were decimated, leading to catastrophic loss of life, knowledge, and cultural continuity.



Figure 8: A tinted lithograph depicting the Waterloo Creek massacre (Mooree). Source: Australian War memorial

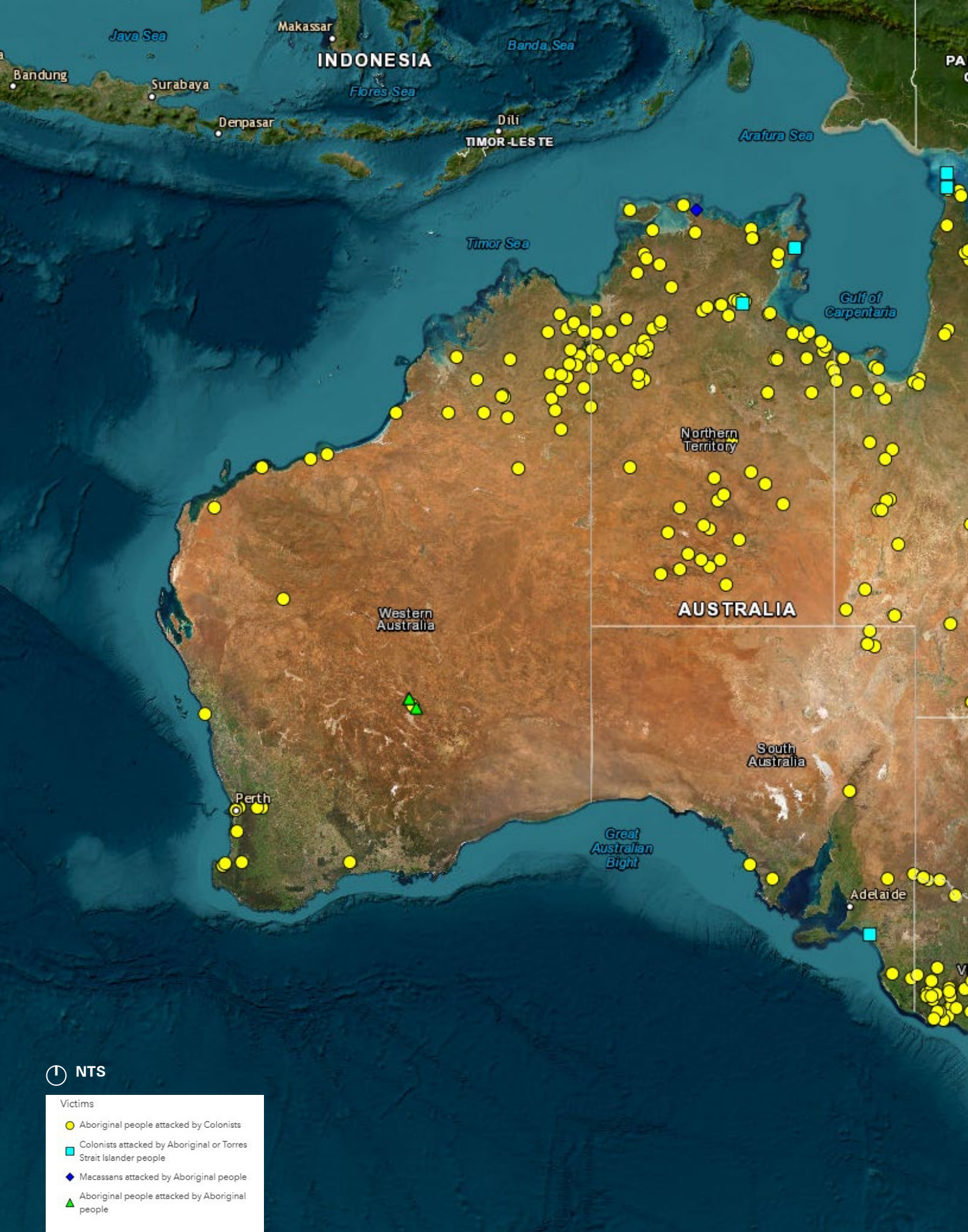


Figure 9: The Colonial Frontier Massacre Map, known massacre sites, Australia 1788 to 1930 Source: University of Newcastle



A quantity of stockmen in the interior having had their masters' cattle speared by the Native Aborigines were determined on revenging themselves the first opportunity – falling in with a tribe of strange Blacks 30 in number – men, women & children, a tribe they apparently never saw before, totally innocent of the charge, for which they were slaughtered without having given the slightest provocation...

- J.H. Bannatyne, 17th December 1838
(From the Myall Creek Massacre Letter)

2.2.4 Incarceration

Once the British had asserted ownership over the land, the question arose “What do you do with the original inhabitants?” The colonial response was often brutal: many Aboriginal people were jailed simply for existing outside the imposed laws and systems, their way of life criminalised.

Aboriginal people were not treated as equals, or even as people under the law. Policies and attitudes assumed they were a “dying race,” with officials expecting they would eventually vanish altogether. In reality, incarceration became one of many tools used to control and displace them, breaking cultural connections to land, family, and community.

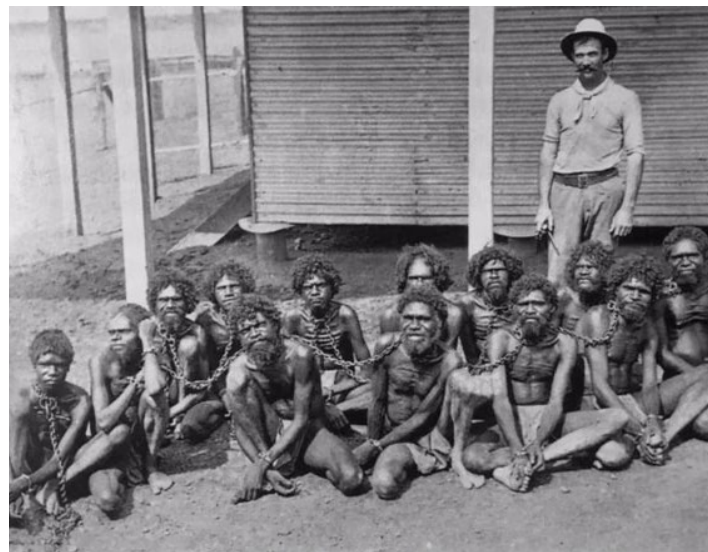


Figure 10: Aboriginal men in chains at Wydnham prison in Australia c 1901. This full-frame photo, published in the book *Nyibayarri*: Kimberley tracker (1995), shows boys on the left.

2.2.5 Dispossession*

After incarceration, dispossession became another deliberate tool of control. Aboriginal people were forcefully relocated to government- or church-run Missions, often likened to prisons. Between 1910 and the 1970s, many Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families, who became known as the Stolen Generations**. These relocations split families apart, severing the connections to Country and community.

On the Missions, Aboriginal people were not allowed to speak their languages, practice cultural traditions, perform ceremonies, or live according to their laws and customs. Day passes were required simply to leave the settlement, stripping away any freedom of movement.

As more and more Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from their homelands, Missions quickly became overcrowded. Living conditions were harsh, resources were limited, and people were cut off from their cultural, spiritual, and economic life practices. This systemic displacement was not just about controlling land, it was about breaking the cultural continuity that had sustained Aboriginal communities for tens of thousands of years.



Figure 11: Residents of the Carrolup mission gathered for a photo Supplied by Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation

*Interviews with Elders from should be a continuous process

2.2.6 Assimilation

Assimilation policies further entrenched the harm caused by dispossession. Aboriginal people were gradually removed from Missions, often under the guise of “protection”, but in reality as part of a plan to erase their identity.

Aboriginal people were subjected to a form of slavery, providing unpaid labour on farms, in households, and in industries without rights or fair treatment. The so-called Aboriginal “Protection” Authorities acted as instruments of control and, ultimately, genocide, deciding where Aboriginal people could live, work, and who they could marry.

Assimilation policy was underpinned by the belief that Aboriginal identity could be “bred out.” By the time a person was deemed to be only “one-eighth” Aboriginal, they were no longer considered native and could be granted the right to vote.

2.2.7 Enduring impacts

The invasion, incarceration, dispossession, and assimilation of Aboriginal people were driven by policies that sought to erase a culture and a people. These policies ultimately failed in their aim to destroy Aboriginal identity as culture, language, and community still endure. But they left a legacy of devastating, long-term impacts that continue to be felt today, including:

- Deaths in custody
- Intergenerational trauma
- Economic marginalisation
- Discrimination in education, work, and housing

Lower life expectancy, and limited access to culturally safe healthcare

The enduring impacts of these colonial policies are not relics of the past. They shape the lived reality of many Aboriginal people today. They are a call to acknowledge truth, address injustice, and work towards meaningful change.



Figure 12: The newly constructed mission church at La Perouse c. 1894. Randwick and District Historical Society

****The Stolen Generations were a central part of this policy. Children were taken from their families to sever cultural, spiritual, and family ties, deliberately disrupting the intergenerational sharing of knowledge and language. Many were placed in institutions or with non-Indigenous families, where they were taught to reject their heritage.**

2.2.8 Legacy of resistance

Aboriginal resistance to colonisation began with the arrival of the British and has taken many forms, from armed defence during the Frontier Wars to organised political activism. Early resistance leaders like Pemulwuy of the Eora nation and Windradyne of the Wiradjuri fought to protect their land, while communities maintained language, law, and ceremony in defiance of assimilation. By the 20th century, the struggle moved into public protest, with landmark events such as the 1938 Day of Mourning, when leaders including William Cooper, Jack Patten, and William Ferguson gathered to demand equality and land rights.



Figure 14: Aboriginal Day of Mourning, January 26th 1938, marked the beginning of the modern Aboriginal political movement. Credits: State Library of NSW



Figure 13: The SAFA group in front of 'Freedom Ride' bus, 1965. Credits: Ann Curthoys.



Figure 15: First day of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, 1972. Left to right: Billy Cragie, Bert Williams, Michael Anderson, Tony Coorey. Credits: State Library of New South Wales

The civil rights era saw powerful movements like the 1965 Freedom Ride, led by Charles Perkins, which exposed racism and segregation, and the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy, a powerful symbol of sovereignty and self-determination. The land rights movement gained national attention through the Gurindji Wave Hill Walk-off of 1966, which inspired the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

Legal victories followed, most notably the 1992 Mabo Decision, which overturned terra nullius and recognised native title, and the 1996 Wik Decision, which confirmed that native title could coexist with pastoral leases. The Waterloo-Redfern area has served as a meeting place for many of these movements and significant figures over time. Their work and legacy are vital to acknowledge in the future development of this Place.

"We've been farming on that place before your mob set foot on the land. We handed it down from father to son. How can we not own it?"

Eddie Mabo

Early resistance



Figure 16: A portrait of Bennelong c1793, artist George Charles Jenner (image courtesy State Library of NSW – DGB 10)

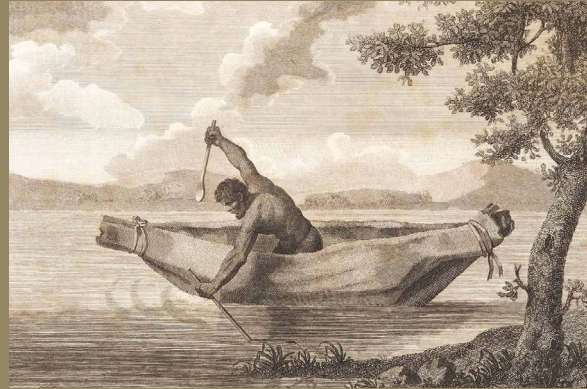


Figure 17: Engraving by Samuel John Neele of James Grant's image of 'Pimbloy', believed to be the only known depiction of Pemulwuy National Museum of Australia



Figure 18: Colebee applying grilled fish to Nanbarry's gum after having his tooth struck out c1798 State Lib NSW David Collins

Redfern Activists

This section requires consultation and vetting from Gadigal Elders, particularly female Elders. Interviews should also be conducted with Elders who were activists in the Redfern area.



Figure 19: 1974 ALS Gary Williams, Lyn Craigie, Alan Cameron, Gary Foley, Louisa Williams, Ann Weldon, Billy Craigie.
Source: National Archives of Australia.



Figure 20: Paul Coe, 1970.
Source: State Library of NSW courtesy of Tribune SEARCH Foundation



Figure 21: Michael Anderson, Alana Doolan, Paul Coe, Gary Foley, Cilla Pryor march
Source: Koori Web

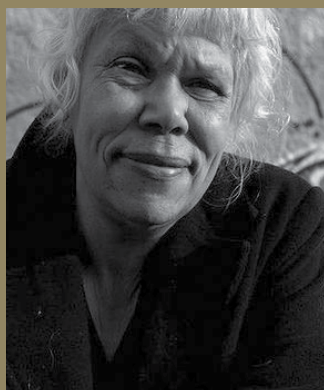


Figure 22: Isobel Coe
Source: Koori Web



Figure 23: A 1983 land rights march led by Cecil Patten and Lyall Munro Snr.
Source: State Library of NSW courtesy of SEARCH Foundation.



Figure 24: Bronwyn Penrith
Source: Australian Museum by Mervyn Bishop

This spread contains ongoing exploration of important Aboriginal figures from first contact to present day. Further consultation should involve identification of key Gadigal figures and members of the Redfern Aboriginal Community.



Figure 26: Charles Perkins, a key figure in Aboriginal rights movement



Figure 25: The “Black saint of Redfern”, Mum Shirl. Photo credit: Elaine Pelot Syron.

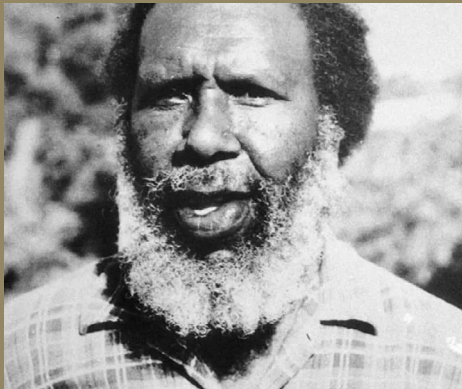


Figure 27: Eddie Mabo, Key figure in Mabo decision in 1992



Figure 28: Alana Doolan 2014-15 by John Jason Moore



Figure 29: 1972 Gordon Briscoe Aboriginal Tent Embassy
Source: State Library of NSW courtesy of SEARCH Foundation



Figure 30: Les Collins
Source: ATSICHS Brisbane



Figure 31: Bob and Sol Belleair at the front bar of the former Clifton Hotel in 1973, where they were refused service. Photographed by Richard John Pinfold, courtesy Fairfax Media



Figure 32: Arnold Williams, Lyall Munro Jnr, Cecil Patten, Ken Weldon and Dan Munro
Photo courtesy of Elaine Pelot Syron



Figure 33: Protesters gather near Mrs. Macquarie's Chair during the Bicentenary in 1988. Source: Fairfax Media via Sydney Morning Herald.

Today, Aboriginal peoples continue this long tradition of resistance through Invasion Day rallies, campaigns against deaths in custody, environmental protection efforts, and calls for truth-telling, treaty, and a Voice to Parliament.

These movements reflect the ongoing fight for justice, recognition of sovereignty, and the survival of one of world's oldest living cultures. Throughout all of this, the Community has stayed strong and continue to support their heroes and heroines.



Figure 34: Community celebrates with the Rabbitohs after Alex Johnston breaks the NRL try-scorer record in 2026. Source: Rabbitohs website



Figure 35: AFL player Nicky Winmar's famous 'I'm black and I'm proud' celebration as a response to racism. Photo: Wayne Ludby recreated in 2013 by AFL player Adam Goodes, against continued racism.

**"My deeper objective was for people to realise,
hey listen, second class is not good enough"**
-Charles Perkins



Figure 36: Uncle Shane Phillips, an advocate for Aboriginal rights and a respected member of the Redfern Aboriginal Community. Source: ABC

2.2.9 Journey to Reconciliation

The long history of Aboriginal resilience has gradually led to greater recognition and acceptance of Indigenous peoples in Australia. The journey of reconciliation is centred on repairing relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians through truth, respect, and justice. A major turning point came with the 1967 Referendum, which granted the federal government the power to make laws for Aboriginal people and to include them in the national census. Over time, non-Indigenous institutions began to incrementally acknowledge Aboriginal self-governance structures and incorporate Indigenous perspectives into policy.

Wider Australian society increasingly recognised Aboriginal history through key milestones such as the Mabo Decision (1992), Prime Minister Paul Keating's Redfern Park Speech (1993), the Bringing Them Home Report (1996), and the Walk for Reconciliation during Corroboree 2000. These events marked a growing awareness within White Australia of the profound and ongoing impacts of dispossession and intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal peoples. Together with continuing advocacy for truth-telling, treaty, and structural reform, they underscore that reconciliation is an ongoing process, one that demands honesty, shared responsibility, and sustained commitment.

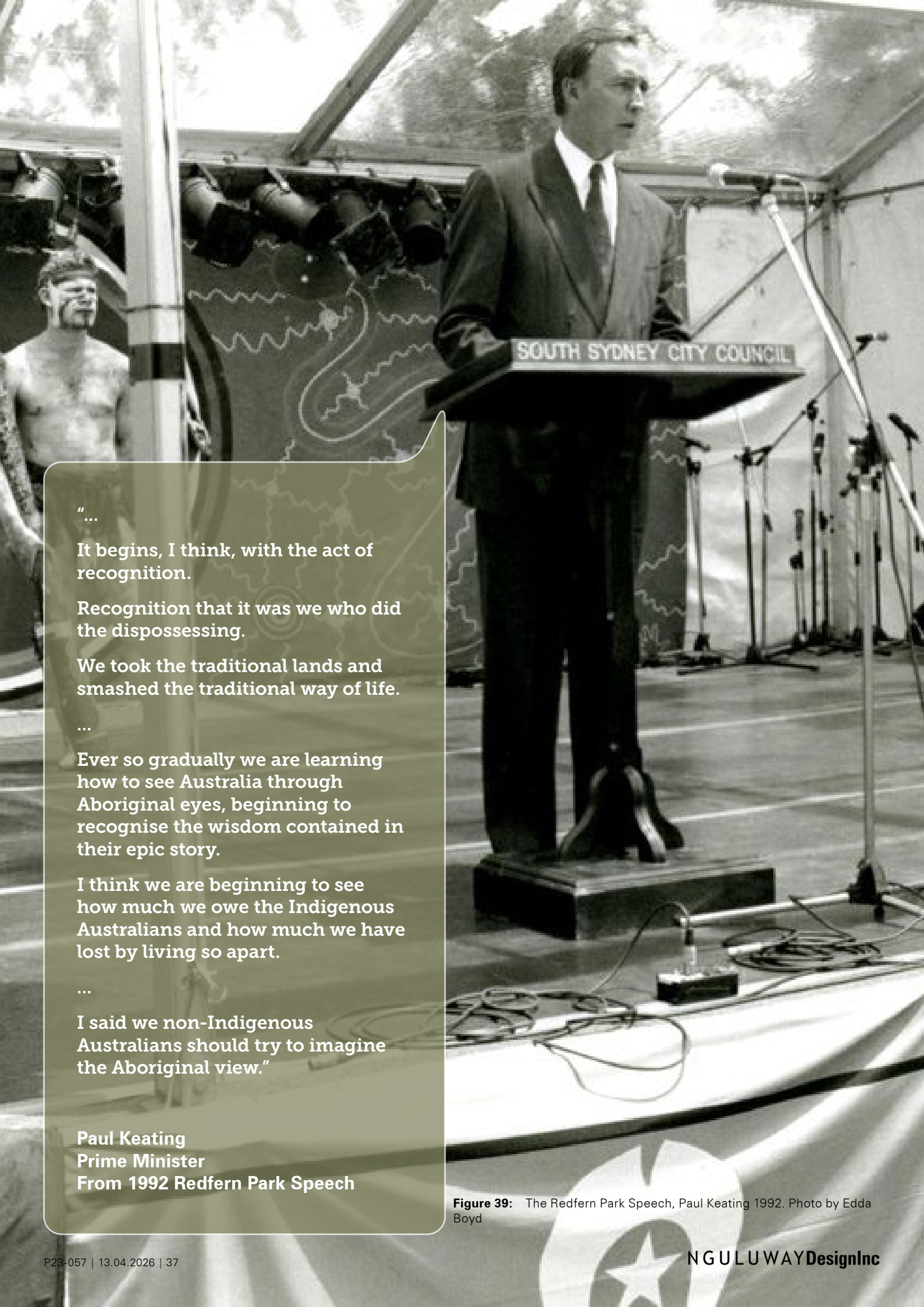


Figure 38: Handing back land to the Gurindji people, Vincent Lingiari & Gough Whitlam, 16 August 1975



Figure 37: Sydney on Australia Day 2008, three weeks prior to the Apology. Photo by Michael Davies





" ...

It begins, I think, with the act of recognition.

Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing.

We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.

...

Ever so gradually we are learning how to see Australia through Aboriginal eyes, beginning to recognise the wisdom contained in their epic story.

I think we are beginning to see how much we owe the Indigenous Australians and how much we have lost by living so apart.

...

I said we non-Indigenous Australians should try to imagine the Aboriginal view."

Paul Keating
Prime Minister
From 1992 Redfern Park Speech

Figure 39: The Redfern Park Speech, Paul Keating 1992. Photo by Edda Boyd

2.2.10 Beyond 'sorry'

True reconciliation requires more than symbolic gestures—it calls for meaningful action and deep cultural integration. Aboriginal culture offers valuable knowledge systems rooted in stewardship, reciprocity, and a profound connection to land, sky, and water. These largely untapped practices present powerful opportunities to shape future places in more sustainable and inclusive ways. Waterloo, located at the heart of Aboriginal Redfern—the birthplace of Aboriginal activism and a place of deep spiritual significance—is uniquely positioned to evolve into a leading Aboriginal precinct. Such a transformation would go beyond symbolism, addressing historical exclusion, affirming cultural sovereignty, and creating a place where both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents can learn, connect, and move forward together toward a shared future.

This image has been created by an AI language model and is intended to provide general information



Come draw in the sand with us

A photograph of a protest. In the background, there is a large plume of white smoke. Several people are visible, some holding flags and signs. One sign on the right says "JUS KEV". In the foreground, there are two Indigenous Australians. On the left, a woman with white body paint on her face and chest. On the right, a man with white body paint on his face and chest. The overall scene is one of a large gathering or protest.

3.

Rediscovering Country



3.1 Waterloo Over the Years

This summary outlines the historical transformation of the Waterloo area, tracing its evolution from pre-colonial times to the present day. The detailed history is explored in the following chapters.

Pre-colonisation

(tens of thousands of years)

- The Gadigal people lived on and cared for this land, known as Illpah, part of Gadigal Country.
- The area was rich in freshwater wetlands, creeks, and Eastern Banksia scrub, supporting abundant plant and animal life.



Creeks such as Sheas Creek and Blackwattle Creek ran through the area, creating mangrove habitats and wetlands central to Gadigal life

1788 British invasion

- Traditional water sources and hunting grounds around Illpah were polluted and restricted.
- Early conflict, disease, and displacement devastated the local Aboriginal population.

Early 1800s Disruption and refuge

- Colonial expansion pushed Aboriginal people off their lands.
- Redfern was perceived as undesirable swamp land by the colonisers, who started using for industry.



Aboriginal Redfern

- Aboriginal people from across NSW migrate to Redfern and Waterloo for work and community.
- The area becomes a hub for urban Aboriginal life.



1900

1830s–1900s

Urbanisation

- Creeks and wetlands are drained or concreted
- Traditional camping and ceremonial sites are lost
- Loss of native species like emus and black swans



1855

Opening of Redfern Station and the development of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops

1950s-1980s

Slum clearance and urban renewal

- Waterloo was identified by the NSW Housing Commission as a slum due to overcrowding, poor sanitation, and deteriorating housing stock.
- Large parts of Waterloo were cleared. The government demolished older terrace houses and built:
 - » Three-storey walk-up flats (1950s)
 - » Balcony flats (3–5 storeys) (1960s)
 - » High-rise towers (up to 30 storeys) (1970s)

2004

Redfern Riots

The death of Aboriginal boy TJ Hickey during a police pursuit sparks large protests and unrest.

The event exposes deep long histories of injustice and disadvantage.



1945

Redfern All-Blacks
Rugby League team



1970

Resistance

- Rise of Aboriginal activism. Redfern–Waterloo became the heart of Aboriginal political activism

- 1970** Aboriginal Legal Service
- 1971** Harold Thomas designs the Aboriginal flag
- 1971** Aboriginal Medical Service
- 1972** Black Theatre
- 1973** Aboriginal Housing Company
- 1977** NSW Aboriginal Land Council



2015- present

Waterloo Estate Renewal

2003

Pemulwuy
Redevelopment
Project opened

1992

Paul Keating's
Redfern Park
Speech



1980

Rise of Radio Redfern

(becomes Koori Radio in 1993)

3.2 Old Country New

3.2.1 Connections

Before it became known as Waterloo, the land was called Illpah and formed part of Gadigal Country. The Gadigal people, coastal saltwater custodians, moved seasonally between the harbour, grass plains, and wetlands of the area. They used the land for camping, hunting, fishing, tool-making, sharing knowledge, creating art, and harvesting plant foods and medicines. Pathways maintained through the dune heath connected coastal and inland clans, forming part of the broader network of Songlines. The elevated terrain of nearby Redfern served as a strategic vantage point and a key route linking significant locations such as Circular Quay and Botany Bay.

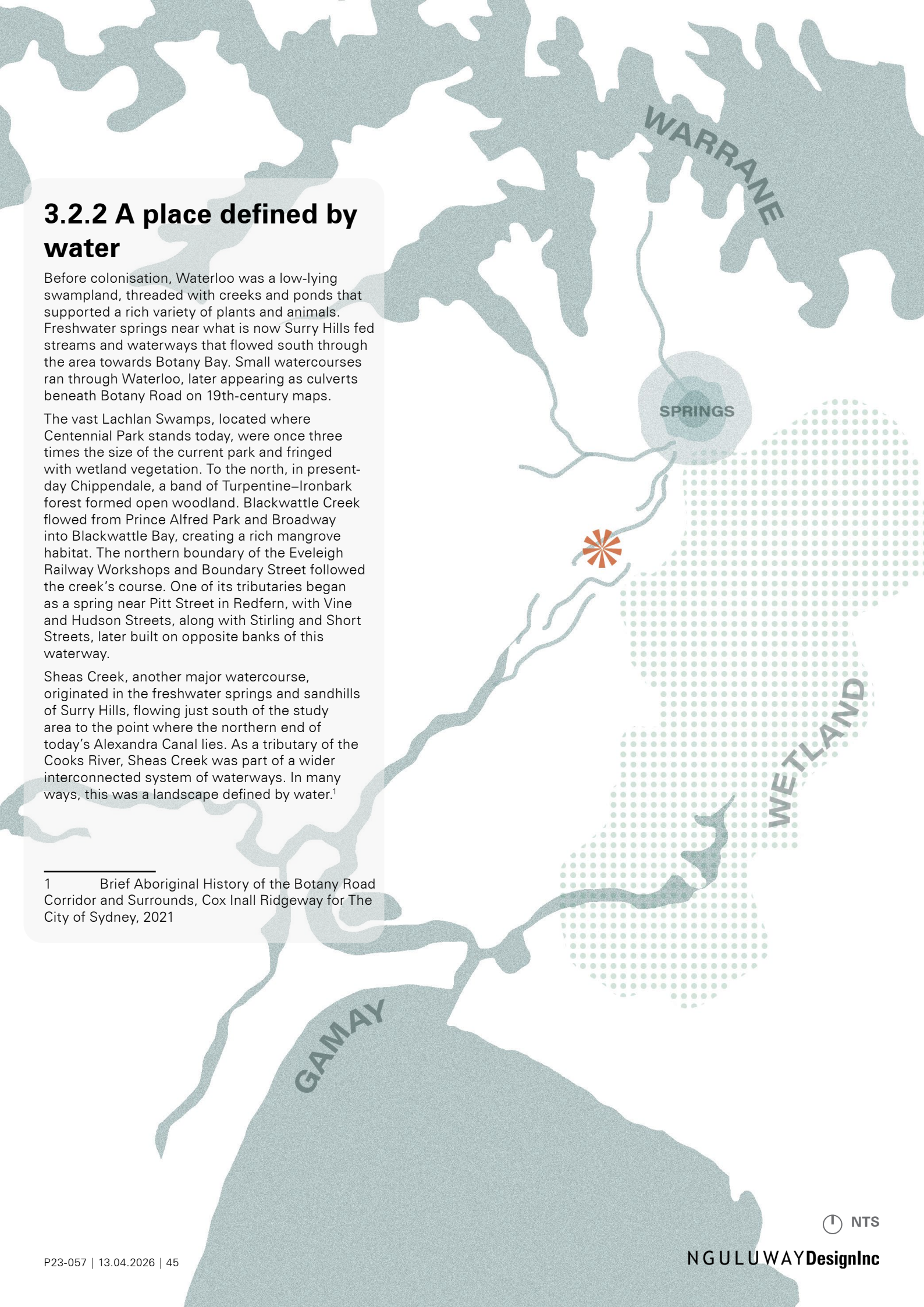
3.2.2 A place defined by water

Before colonisation, Waterloo was a low-lying swampland, threaded with creeks and ponds that supported a rich variety of plants and animals. Freshwater springs near what is now Surry Hills fed streams and waterways that flowed south through the area towards Botany Bay. Small watercourses ran through Waterloo, later appearing as culverts beneath Botany Road on 19th-century maps.

The vast Lachlan Swamps, located where Centennial Park stands today, were once three times the size of the current park and fringed with wetland vegetation. To the north, in present-day Chippendale, a band of Turpentine–Ironbark forest formed open woodland. Blackwattle Creek flowed from Prince Alfred Park and Broadway into Blackwattle Bay, creating a rich mangrove habitat. The northern boundary of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops and Boundary Street followed the creek’s course. One of its tributaries began as a spring near Pitt Street in Redfern, with Vine and Hudson Streets, along with Stirling and Short Streets, later built on opposite banks of this waterway.

Sheas Creek, another major watercourse, originated in the freshwater springs and sandhills of Surry Hills, flowing just south of the study area to the point where the northern end of today’s Alexandra Canal lies. As a tributary of the Cooks River, Sheas Creek was part of a wider interconnected system of waterways. In many ways, this was a landscape defined by water.¹

¹ Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds, Cox Inall Ridgeway for The City of Sydney, 2021



3.2.3 Flora and fauna

The unique landscape of Waterloo, once defined by its wetlands and sand dunes, supported a rich and diverse ecosystem. Aboriginal people relied on this environment for food, medicine, and materials for tool-making, demonstrating a deep, reciprocal relationship with Country. Their intricate knowledge of plant species and ecological systems was expressed through sustainable harvesting, crafting, and cultural practices. This close connection to nature was not only practical but spiritual and cultural. However, much of this landscape was lost through urban development, erasing many of the natural features that once sustained both biodiversity and cultural life.

What we heard:



Tell the Ibis story -
Waterloo is its Country



SWAMP MAHOGANY

The bark was used to make vessels, tools, and for medicinal use

COASTAL FOREDUNE WATTLE SCRUB

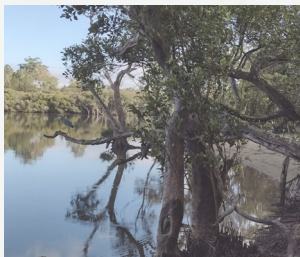
TALL SPIKE
RUSH



JOINTED
TWIG RUSH



REEDS



MANGROVES

'Elbows' and 'knees'
of mangroves crafted
into boomerangs

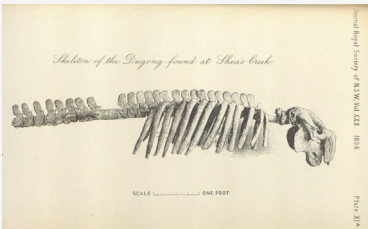


IBIS

WATER BIRDS
LIKE THE BROLGA
AND BLACK SWAN



Dugong remains
discovered in
Shea's creek with
tool indentations -
hunted for food



"Bring back native, endemic planting!"



GRASS TREE

Fire adapted plants, a source of food, and used to make tools

OLD MAN BANKSIA

COASTAL SAND MANTLE HEATH



NECTAR BIRDS

PINK WAX FLOWER

WALLUM & HEATH BANKSIA



CASUARINA

Gum tree used to make tools and Casuarina sap used as glue

TURPENTINE IRONBARK FOREST



PAPERBARK

GYMEA LILY

FERNS

POSSUM WINDER COATS FOR WOMEN



EMU AND WALLABY

Emu and wallaby were hunted for food. Wallaby fur was used as coats for men



Animal footprints in concrete - stories in pavers

3.3 Colonisation

3.2.4 Invasion and refuge

Following the British invasion in 1788 and the establishment of a penal colony at Warrane (now Circular Quay), the local wetlands and sandhills provided refuge from the colonial occupation and violent incursions, including Governor Phillip's failed mission to capture resistance leader Pemulwuy.

William Dawes, an early colonist, formed a notable relationship with Patyegarang, a young Gamaraigal woman. This resulted in the first written record of the Gadigal/Eora language. As colonists seized traditional sites, Aboriginal communities moved inland, conducting ceremonies and gatherings in areas such as Redfern Park and Victoria Park.

Over time, colonisation displaced Aboriginal camps further inland. While no confirmed archaeological sites exist in the immediate study area, the cultural history suggests strong potential for unrecorded Aboriginal heritage. Environmental degradation from colonial activities further eroded the natural habitat, leading to the loss of native species like emus and black swans by the 1800s.

Aboriginal people were marginalised and repeatedly pushed to the outskirts of their own land, as colonisers occupied grounds closer to the shore.

The region around Redfern Park, Victoria Park, and Prince Alfred Park provided refuge - in the wetlands, amidst the banksia shrubs of the sandhills.

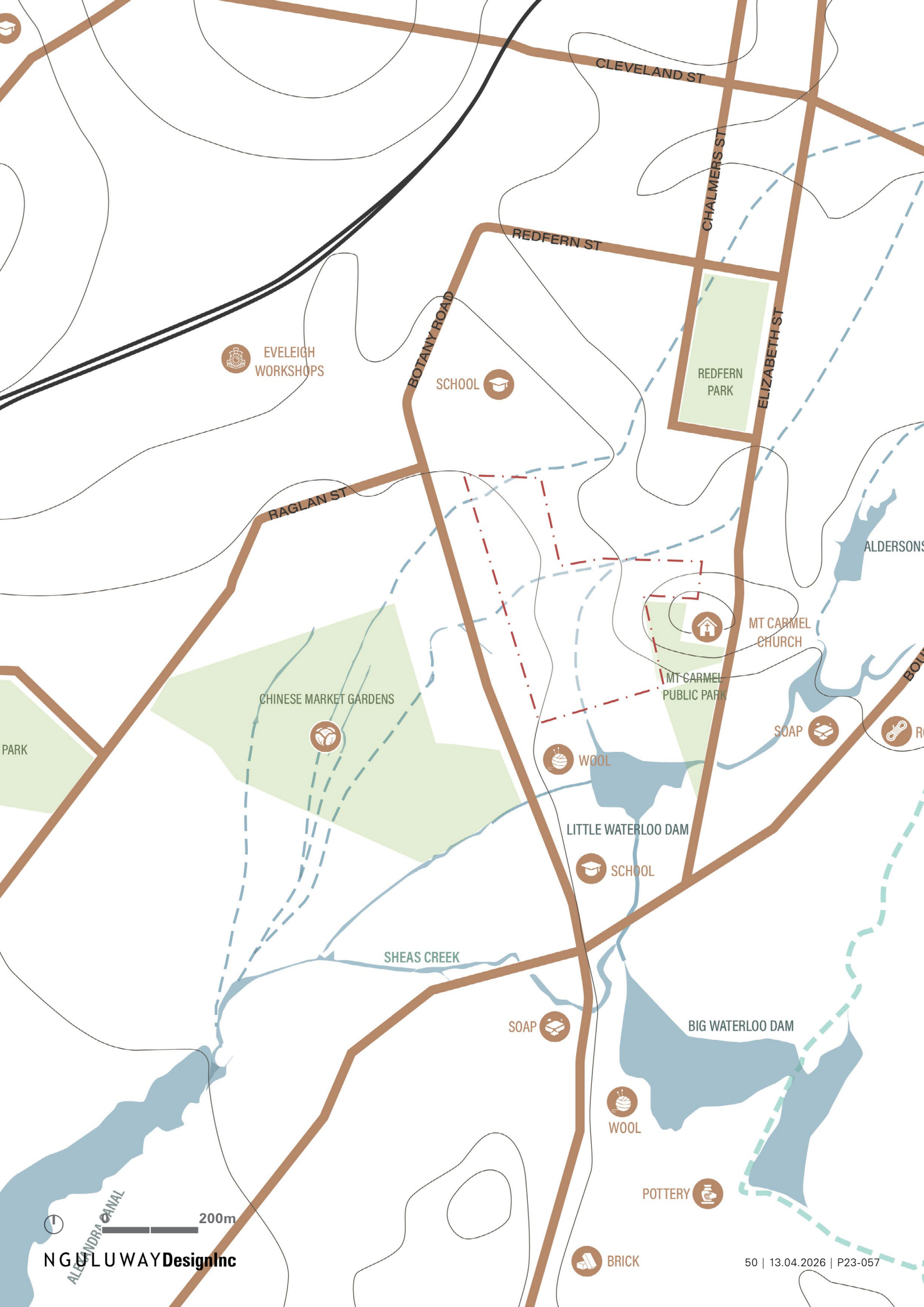
Further marginalisation forced movement to the La Perouse reserve, later converted to a mission.



WETLANDS

SAND

HILLS



CLEVELAND ST

CHALMERS ST

REDFERN ST

ELIZABETH ST

BOTANY ROAD

RAGLAN ST

EVELEIGH WORKSHOPS

SCHOOL

REDFERN PARK

ALDERSONS

MT CARMEL CHURCH

MT CARMEL PUBLIC PARK

CHINESE MARKET GARDENS

PARK

SOAP

WOOL

LITTLE WATERLOO DAM

SCHOOL

SHEAS CREEK

SOAP

BIG WATERLOO DAM

WOOL

POTTERY

BRICK



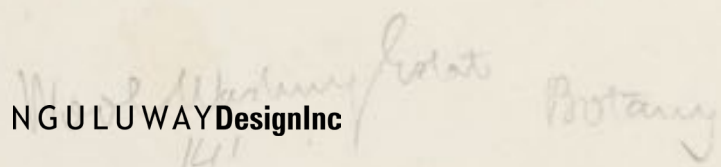
3.3.1 Emerging industries

By the late 1800s, the natural wetlands and ecosystems that once supported Aboriginal communities around the study area had been heavily degraded. Early colonial development, particularly the draining of swamps and redirection of creeks, erased vital natural resources. Wetlands were cleared, soils eroded, and waterways polluted by timber harvesting, livestock grazing, and industrial expansion. Government and factory owners further reshaped the land for infrastructure and market gardening, causing streams to dry up and native wildlife to disappear.

Despite these changes, Country, including its waterways and terrain, remained important for Aboriginal people well into the 20th century. Aboriginal communities continued to live in and around the area, maintaining cultural connections while adapting to increasingly urban conditions. However, this period also marked the deliberate exclusion of Aboriginal people from dominant historical narratives, leading to their absence in many written records—not because they were no longer present, but because their contributions were ignored.

As industrialisation accelerated, Redfern, Waterloo, and Eveleigh emerged as Sydney's major industrial precincts. Land grants to settlers like Dr William Redfern (after whom the suburb is named) and legislative restrictions on waterfront industries forced factories inland, placing the area at the centre of Sydney's working-class economy. The opening of Redfern Station in 1855 and the development of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in 1886 attracted a large labour force, including many Aboriginal people from across NSW.

Aboriginal workers contributed significantly to the industrial economy. Many migrated from regional missions and towns in search of employment opportunities denied to them in rural areas. Factories like the Federal Match Factory, IXL Jam Factory, and the Australian Glass Manufacturers employed Aboriginal men and women, with some holding senior roles. This influx of Aboriginal workers, alongside Anglo-Celtic, Greek, Lebanese, Chinese, and other migrants, created a culturally diverse community. Redfern, in particular, became a centre of Aboriginal urban life in Sydney.



By the early 1800s, Europeans viewed the Waterloo area as unused land, overlooking its Aboriginal significance. Early industrialists saw its cheap land and abundant water as ideal for establishing “noxious trades” such as wool washing, tanneries, fellmongeries, brickworks, soap works, and candle making—not for agriculture, but for industrial productivity that suited their needs.



Figure 41: Wool washing estate, Botany, c1870 by Samuel Elyard credits State Library of New South Wales

3.4 Aboriginal Redfern

3.4.1 A place to call home

By the 1920s, Redfern and the surrounding inner-city suburbs emerged as a vital centre of Aboriginal social and political life. Despite facing housing discrimination, Aboriginal people migrated to the area in growing numbers, drawn by existing community connections, work opportunities, and relative safety. The area's mix of low-income housing, worker's cottages, and converted boarding houses offered some accommodation, though often overcrowded and shared among multiple families.

Migration intensified through the mid-20th century, particularly after the closure of missions and reserves, peaking in the 1960s. Redfern became a hub for those escaping the control of the Aborigines Protection Board and seeking work, independence, and community. Social life revolved around venues like the Empress Hotel, the Clifton Hotel, and Palms Milk Bar, which offered informal meeting points and a sense of belonging.

Key community institutions also supported Aboriginal people during this time. The Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, established in 1964, provided essential support for newly arrived individuals, including meals, employment assistance, and social services.

Redfern's Aboriginal population reached approximately 35,000 by the late 1960s, making it the largest Aboriginal community in Australia's recorded history.¹ Despite challenges of poverty, overcrowding, and exclusion from mainstream narratives, the area became a powerful symbol of cultural resilience, urban survival, and Aboriginal identity.

"The one thing that we all had in common was that we were all poor. Redfern was regarded, by the rest of Sydney I suppose, as the slums, and despite there being some fairly dodgy landlords, it was a place where Aboriginal people could actually get somewhere to stay."

Gadigal Elder, interviewed by CIR June 2020

1 At 4 minutes, Foley interview (film) in Johnson (2014) *The Redfern Story*

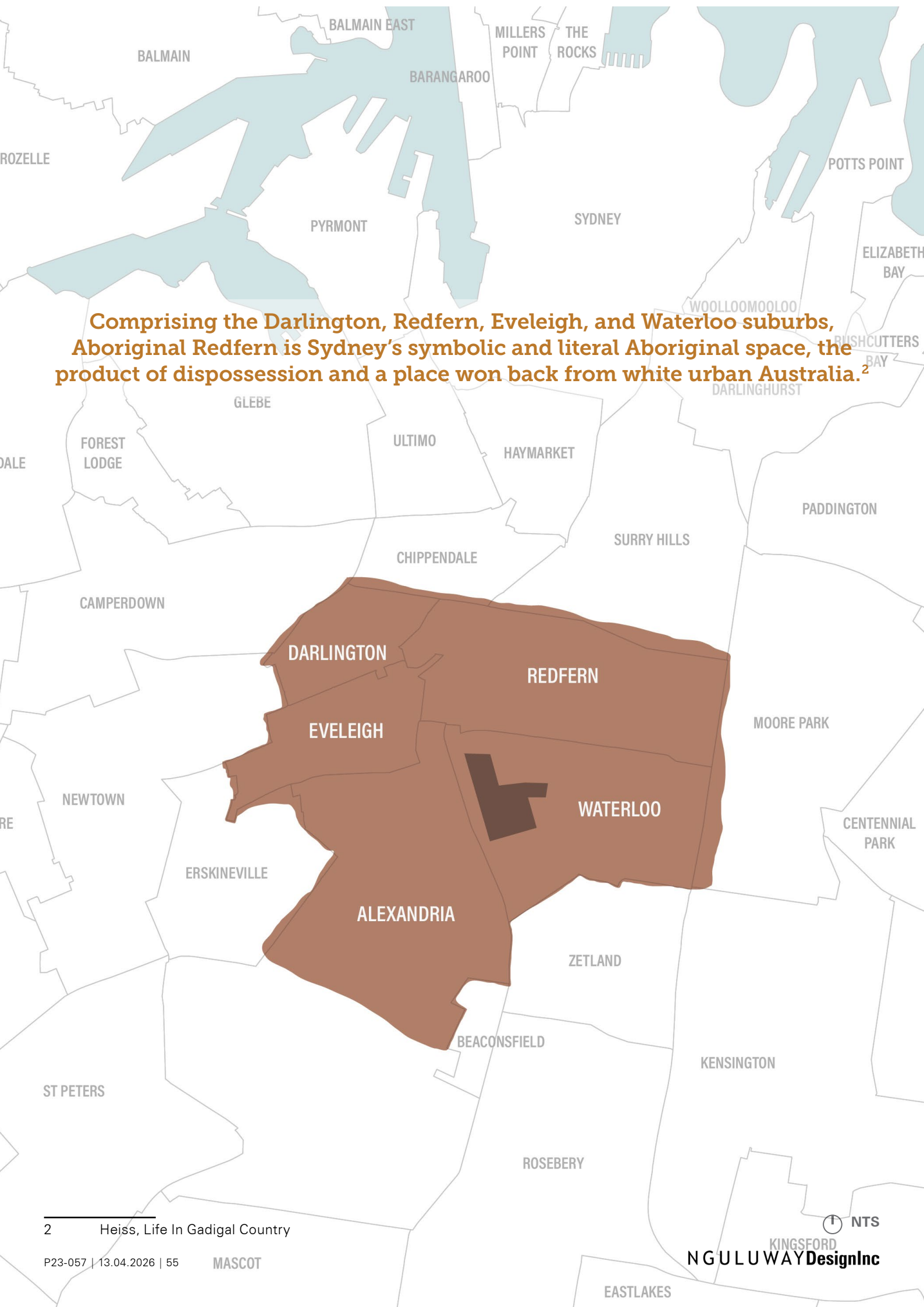


Figure 42: Derelict buildings, George Street Waterloo, 1953. Source: City of Sydney archives



Figure 43: Original terraces before Housing Commission development in Wellington Street Waterloo 196. Source: City of Sydney archives

Comprising the Darlington, Redfern, Eveleigh, and Waterloo suburbs, Aboriginal Redfern is Sydney's symbolic and literal Aboriginal space, the product of dispossession and a place won back from white urban Australia.²



² Heiss, Life In Gadigal Country

3.4.2 Resistance and self determination

Redfern and its surrounds became the epicentre of the Aboriginal rights movement in Australia, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. Grounded in earlier activism, such as William Ferguson's civil rights efforts, the area saw the birth of key Aboriginal-led organisations including: Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS), the Aboriginal Medical Service, and the National Black Theatre.

Aboriginal Legal Service

The Aboriginal Legal Service was established in Redfern, in 1970 as the first Aboriginal legal service in Australia. Created in response to widespread discrimination, police harassment, and the lack of accessible legal support for Aboriginal people, the ALS provided free legal advice, representation, and advocacy.

Aboriginal Medical Service

The Aboriginal Medical Service was founded in 1971 as the first Aboriginal community-controlled health service in Australia. It emerged in response to the poor health outcomes experienced by Aboriginal people, systemic racism in mainstream healthcare, and the lack of culturally appropriate services. Operated by and for the Aboriginal community, the AMS provided free, holistic healthcare.

National Black Theatre

Emerging in the 1970s in Redfern, National Black Theatre used performance as a tool for activism, truth-telling, and cultural celebration. It continues today through contemporary First Nations theatre companies.



Figure 44: Aboriginal Dance Theatre
Source: State Library NSW



Figure 45: Radio Redfern on Cope St, 1988.
Source: Redfern Oral History

Redfern and Waterloo were also important sites of shared history and examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities working collectively for social change.¹



Figure 46: Aboriginal Medical Service
Source: Redfern Documentary

¹ Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds, Cox Inall Ridgeway for The City of Sydney

REDFERN SOUTH SYDNEY

Inspired by the global civil rights and Black Power movements, a new generation of Aboriginal activists emerged, mobilising against systemic racism, police harassment, and poor living conditions. The Block, an area near Redfern Station, became a significant site of protest when landlords tried to evict Aboriginal residents. This led to the formation of the Aboriginal Housing Company in 1972, which secured funding from the Whitlam government to purchase homes for the community.

Redfern was also the birthplace of several Aboriginal community-controlled services, including The Settlement—a key organisation, that became models for Indigenous self-determination nationwide. These included the Murawin childcare centre and early land rights meetings such as the first NSW Aboriginal Land Council gathering. The community fostered a strong sense of cultural identity, safety, and solidarity.

The area also gave rise to significant cultural institutions. The National Black Theatre helped launch the careers of many Aboriginal artists and became a platform for political storytelling and cultural expression. Dance, music, art, and film movements also flourished, making Redfern a national cultural hub.

Although the shift in government policy toward self-determination in 1972 supported many of these initiatives, administrative controls and government accountability measures often limited their grassroots intent. Still, Redfern remained a powerful symbol of Aboriginal resistance, identity, and community strength, leaving a lasting impact on Indigenous rights movements across Australia.



Figure 47: A colourful mural wall with various Aboriginal motifs, including the Aboriginal flag, at the corner of Eveleigh and Lawson Streets Redfern photographed by Patricia Baillie. Source: City of Sydney Archives



Figure 49: Winners of the Koori Knock-out, Redfern Oval 2004. Source: State Library NSW

Blak sports

"So before all the Internet and all that stuff came in, you'd play your footy during that season, you'd go and play your cricket up on Mount Carmel Hill for Mount Carmel Cricket Club. Sport had a really big part in our life in terms of keeping us occupied, but also following our dreams. That's what we wanted to do.

But yeah, I think the sport aspect of the community back in the day, I remember that being massive, but also just, I suppose just the general connecting with the other families."

Will Gordon, Aboriginal public housing resident

Interviewed 30/01/2018 - Waterloo Stories

What we heard:

"Bring back the energy of what was once here"

"The Redfern All Blacks train in Alexandria Park "

"82 years (as a team) and they don't have a clubhouse "



"Back in the old days when the blackfellas would come down from the country, didn't have land lines, so had to turn up and look around. Go to the pubs where blackfellas drink and things like that, like the Empress."

Gadigal Elder, interviewed by CIR June 2020

Figure 50: Map showing significant historic meeting places in and around Waterloo for Aboriginal community

Koori grapevine

With formal gathering spaces denied to them, Indigenous communities across Victoria and southern New South Wales relied heavily on informal, word-of-mouth networks to share news and maintain connections. In this context, certain hotels emerged as informal hubs where people could hear updates, exchange information, and search for missing or displaced family members.



Figure 51: Clifton Hotel. Source: Australian National University Archives



Figure 52: Empress Hotel. Source: City of Sydney Archives

Historical places of significance

Koori services

- 1 The Block
- 2 Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs 1973-77
- 3 Former Black Theatre 1947-77
 - Koori Radio
 - Aboriginal Dance Theatre
 - NSW Aboriginal Land Corporation base of operations between 1970s to 80s
- 4 Aboriginal Medical Service
- 5 Former Redfern Public School
- 6 Aboriginal Medical Service Shop-front 1971-78
- 7 First Aboriginal Legal Service Shop-front
 - South Sydney Community Aid
- 8 First Black Theatre Site

Koori Grapevine

- 1 Former Lawson Theatre
 - 1 Lawson Sq
- 2 Former Empress Hotel
 - 87 Regent St
- 3 Palms Milk Bar
 - 140 Regent St
- 4 Former Clifton Hotel, Botany Rd
- 5 Former Cricket Arms Hotel
 - 56-58 Botany Rd
- 6 Cauliflower Hotel, est. 1838
 - 123 Botany Rd
- 7 Duke of Wellington Hotel,
 - 291 George St

Blak sports

- 1 Redfern Oval
- 2 Alexandria Oval
- 3 Waterloo Oval
- 4 Mt Carmel Cricket Ground (probable location)

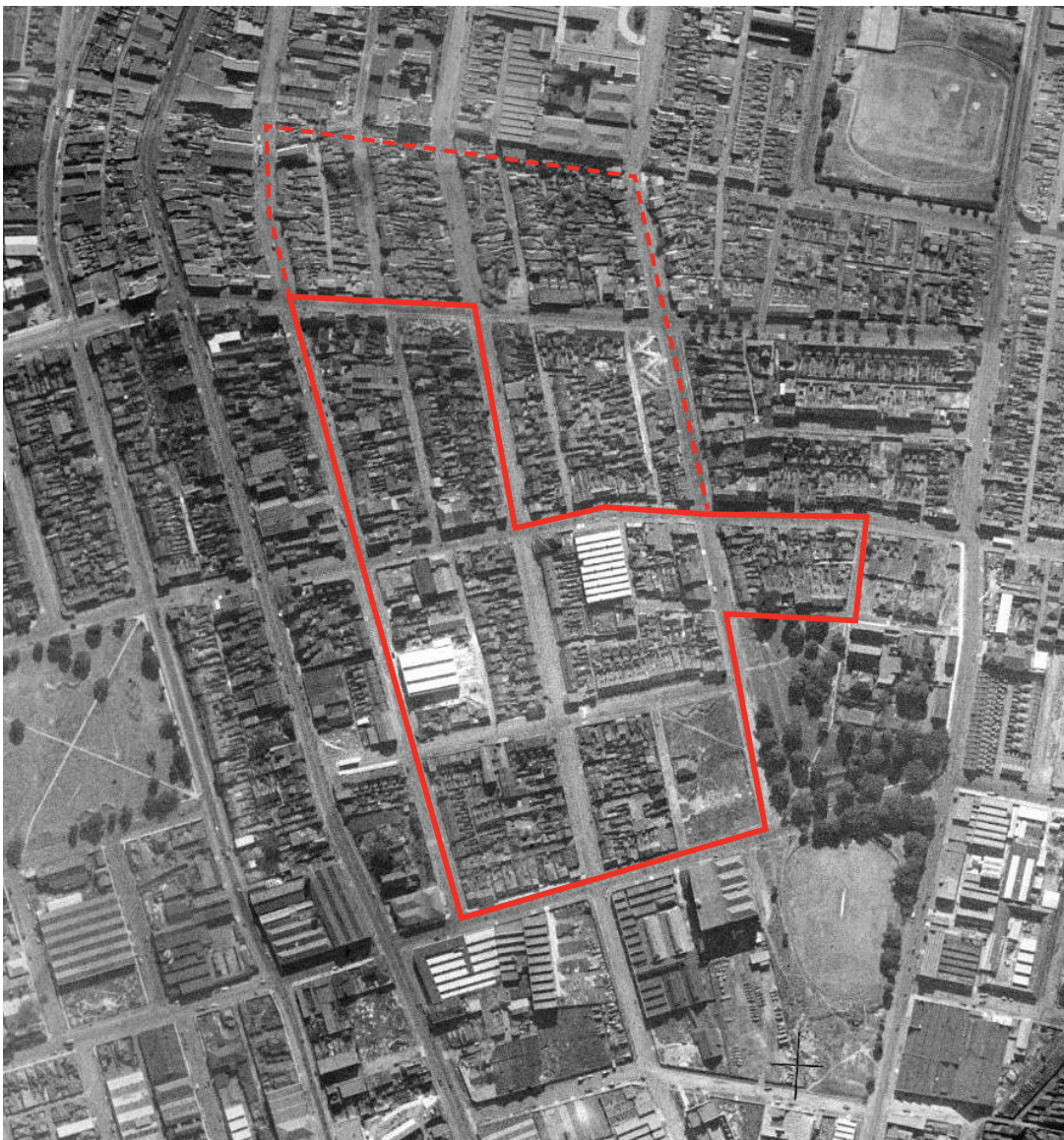
Other significant sites

- 1 Redfern Town Hall

3.4.3 Urban renewal

During the 1960s, the Housing Commission began a program to address what it labelled as inner-city 'slums' in areas like Redfern and Waterloo. While presented as "urban renewal," the process often displaced long-standing communities and disrupted established social networks.

1943



Waterloo had a traditional Victorian street network with square grids and terrace housing along the main streets and narrow laneways at the back. Large lots were required for the construction of walkup apartments and towers.

— Waterloo South
- - Waterloo Estate
🕒 NTS

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents worked together during this period to protect existing low-income housing in Redfern-Waterloo, recognising the importance of preserving affordable homes close to jobs, services, and community support. Despite this advocacy, major redevelopment proceeded, including the construction of the 29-storey Matavai and Turanga towers in Waterloo in 1977. These buildings became defining features of the suburb's skyline and symbolised a shift toward large-scale public housing as a solution to urban poverty—though not without significant social consequences for the communities affected.

1975



Hundreds of lots were amalgamated, terrace housing and some factories demolished, and streets were removed. This resulted in unusually large blocks and the loss of fine grain character of the area.

— Waterloo South
- - Waterloo Estate
⌚ NTS

3.4.4 Systemic disadvantage

In the mid-1990s, the Redfern-Waterloo area was marked by systemic disadvantage, shaped by a combination of socio-economic, racial, and urban planning factors including:

- Concentration of public housing
- Gentrification and polarisation
- Racialised narratives and media representation
- Urban decline and infrastructure neglect.

These overlapping forces contributed to long-term social disadvantage, limiting opportunities for the local community. Despite this, the area remained a centre of strong Aboriginal identity and activism. This laid the groundwork for community-led housing, cultural resilience, and the creation of nationally significant Aboriginal services.

"Despite everything everybody says about all the drugs and everything that ever happens in Waterloo, my son used to go to school on his own. My son is now 24. He used to catch the train. I've even walked through the middle of the "horrible Block" where people have said they've had their cars attacked and everything. I used to drive through there with, allegedly, an expensive car. Nobody ever said anything except for "hello" to me. Even from those people that are drunk; you smile at them and say hello and every single one of them have still said "hello" back to me."

THE MENTAL HEALTH SHAKE UP

In 1983 a reorganisation of Mental Health services in New South Wales took place. Its architect was David Richmond, a bureaucrat who worked closely with Jack Bourke at the Housing Commission.

CRIME IN WATERLOO

Jose Perez

Public housing resident, interviewed
14/6/2017 at Waterloo, NSW, 97:35

In the 1940s and 1950s Waterloo was synonymous with crime, as Velma Lawrence recalls:



Figure 54: Outrage at Jack Bourkes Housing Commission tactics, NSW Land and Housing Corporation Archive

Matavai and Turanga



Figure 55: Cover of the Housing Commission NSW report featuring the Matavai and Turanga buildings.
Source: Zanardo et al 2024

3.4.5 Waterloo today

From the 1990s, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in Redfern and Waterloo declined as industrial areas gave way to residential development. Rising living costs, social housing policies, and gentrification pushed many Aboriginal people to suburbs like Newtown, Marrickville, Mount Druitt, and beyond (often not by choice). Meanwhile, broader Australian society began acknowledging Aboriginal history and rights through milestones like the Mabo decision, Redfern Park Speech, and the Walk for Reconciliation. Despite growing recognition, inner-city gentrification continues to displace Aboriginal communities from their historic heartlands.

Despite the significant displacement, the Aboriginal Redfern area is home to almost 1000 people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin today, representing 3% of the total population. This is notably higher than the proportion in the City of Sydney (1.2%) and Greater Sydney (1.5%).¹

What we heard:



Kids used to play around the factories that stayed open late

"We need spaces for kids and soft spaces"

"Spaces to yarn, bring culture back, outdoor gyms to engage youth "

"Need to acknowledge Truth Telling"



Figure 56: Waterloo Park skating at the facilities launch in 1997. Source: City of Sydney Archives

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id (informed decisions).



Figure 57: The Waterloo Estate facilities launch in 1997. Source: City of Sydney archives



Figure 58: Group of teenagers on the basketball court at the Waterloo facilities launch in 1997. Source: City of Sydney Archives

Gadigal - a continued legacy



Figure 59: Uncle Charles "Chicka" Dixon.
Source: The Chicka Dixon Institute for Social Change



Figure 60: Aunty Nadeena Dixon
Photo credit: Sharon Hickey



Figure 61: Aunty Rhonda Dixon-Grovenor.
Source: Keep Left



Figure 62: Uncle Charles "Chika" Madden
Source: SBS



Figure 63: Uncle Allen John Madden
Source: AIP/OI



Figure 64: Uncle Ray Davison. Source:
Museum of Contemporary Art

This list continues to evolve through ongoing engagement - identifying key Gadigal figures and members of the Redfern Aboriginal Community.

We continue to listen.



Figure 65: Madeline Madden - Actress. Source: The West Australian



Figure 66: Joel Davison - Poet. Source: SBS

Of these many places to meet, some are owned and controlled by Aboriginal businesses and services. A few of these have been labelled below.

There is a need for more places of gathering.





4.

Re-stor(y)ing Country

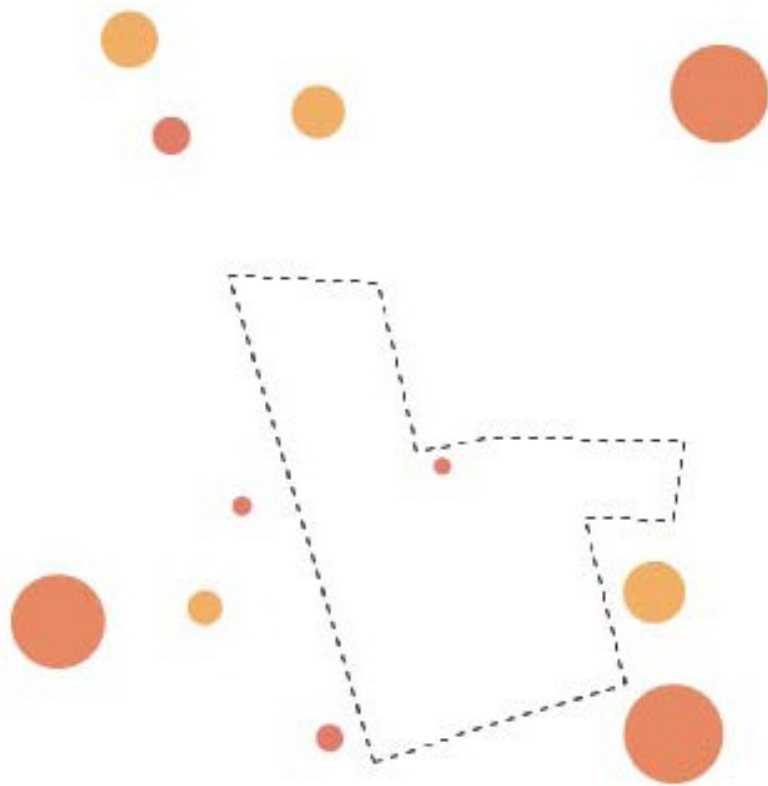


Weaving with natural fibres
By Debbie Taylor Worley, Gamilaraay woman

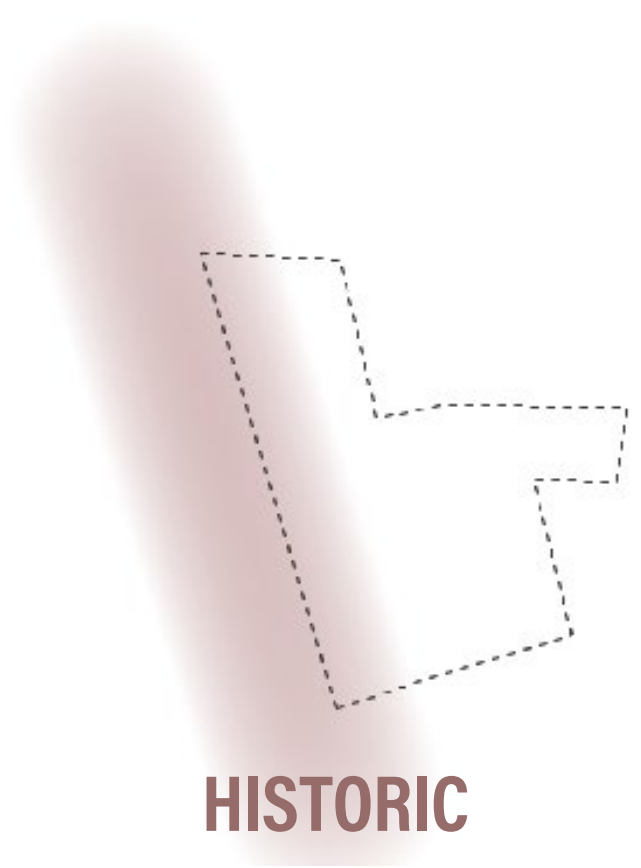
NGULUWAYDesignInc

KEY EMERGING THEMES

Four key recurring narratives emerged. These helped to define the themes described in the following pages.



**A SENSE OF
BELONGING**



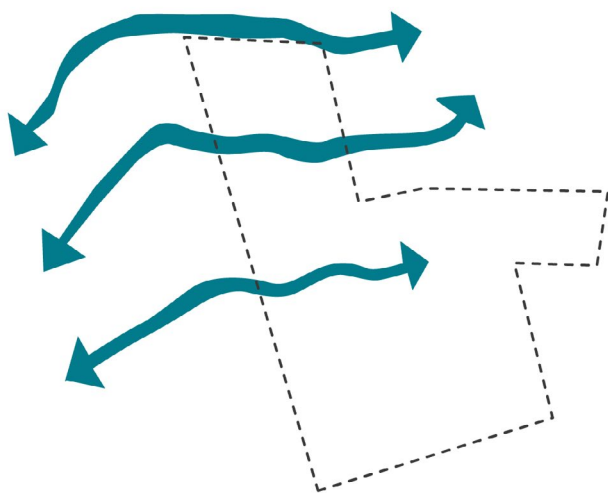
**HISTORIC
CONNECTIONS**

4.1 Approach

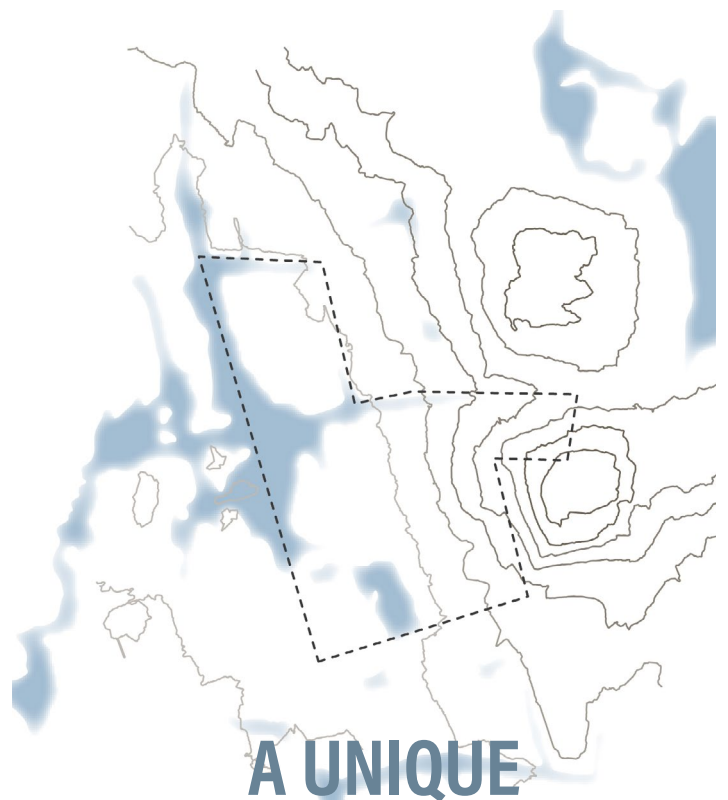
There were four key recurring narratives about Redfern-Waterloo area emerged from the analysis of historical, cultural, and environmental aspects outlined in the previous parts, alongside documented and ongoing conversations with the community (illustrated below). This has informed the development of design themes for the Waterloo South Precinct.

Four key themes are: Belonging to Community, Contemporary Journey Lines, Water Story, and The Fold.

These themes are rooted in the unique natural and cultural features of the area and serve as guiding principles for design. By overlapping these themes, precinct-level strategies have been established to ensure a cohesive and culturally resonant narrative throughout the site.



**HISTORIC
WATERWAYS**



**A UNIQUE
LANDSCAPE SETTING**

4.2 Belonging to Community

Redfern-Waterloo is the cultural and political heartland for Aboriginal resistance; a space of shared struggle and identity where grassroots movements originated. In this hub, Aboriginal people retained connections to community despite systemic oppression and restrictions, establishing kinship networks and cultural continuity in the city (refer to Section 3.4).

Regardless of gentrification and cycles of displacement, Aboriginal communities still view Redfern-Waterloo as a place that embodies their stories, achievements, and ongoing connection to Country in an urban context. Aboriginal services and important gathering spaces still persist in this region.

The future precinct should tie into this strong legacy of community and identity. There should be dedicated spaces to celebrate culture, perform arts, and share knowledge. Through the introduction of a cultural and communal street, facilities and services introduced in the precinct can anchor and tie into the broader network of Aboriginal Redfern. Cooper Street, with its proximity to social infrastructure and accessibility, presents an ideal location. It forms an axis between the two proposed open spaces within the precinct and is reinforced by service and communal spaces located along its length.

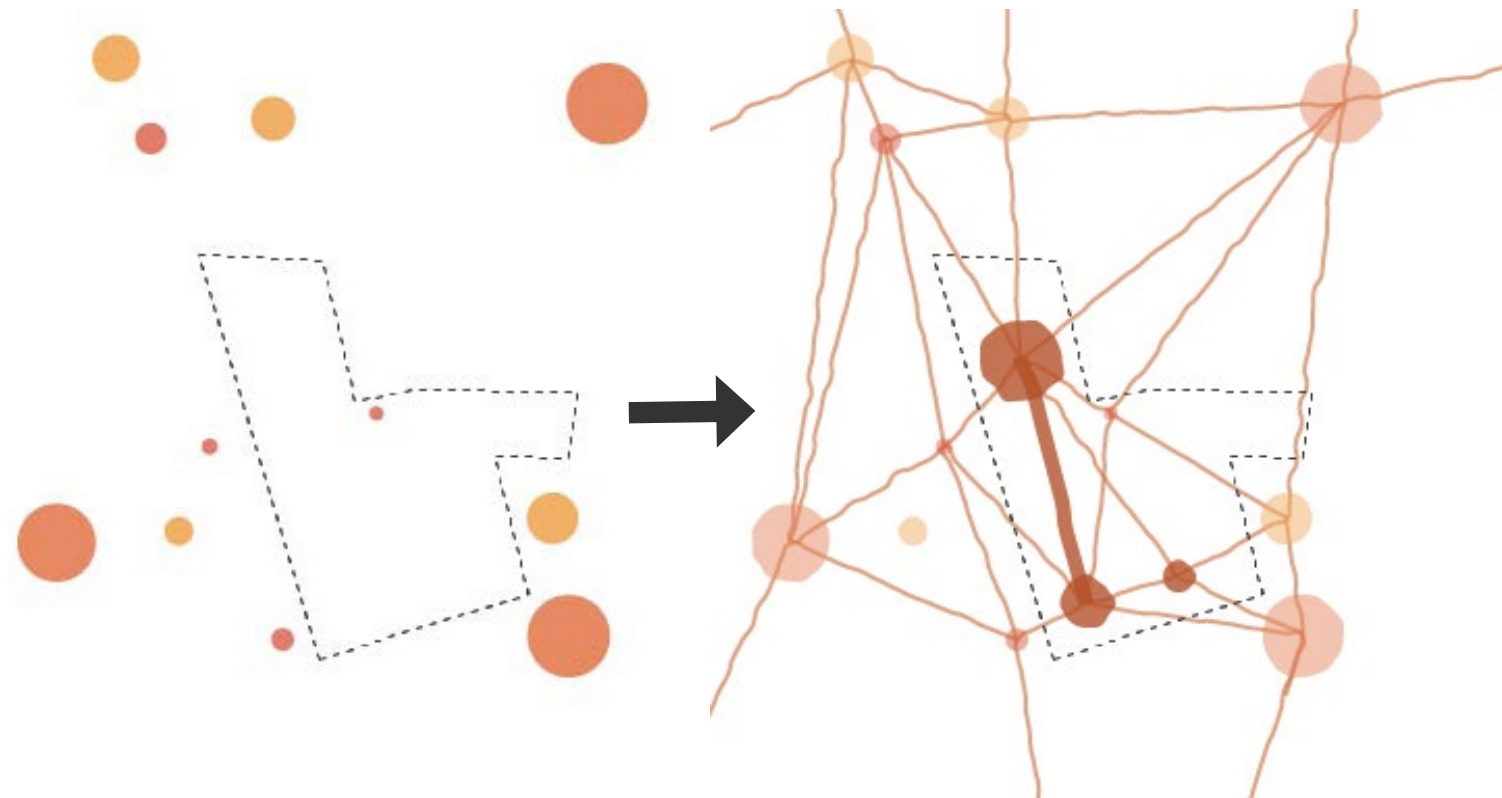




Figure 69: Yirran muru (Many pathways) - Aboriginal Interpretive Play Space In Shell harbour
P23-057 | 13.04.2026 | 75

Scattered places of Aboriginal significance and community gathering exist in and around the Waterloo South Precinct. The proposed community-based uses and services within the precinct present an opportunity to connect with and anchor this existing network of culturally important spaces. These new spaces should reflect Aboriginal culture and support truth-telling, creating familiar and welcoming environments for community members to return to. While the main community street runs north-south, linking key gathering areas within the site, lateral connections to culturally significant locations (such as Waterloo Park, Alexandria Park, and the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation) can extend this cultural design quality across the broader area.

What we heard:

"Acknowledge the whole multicultural community"



First teach the young ones and mob about culture. Displaced community has created a loss of connection and culture.



Provide opportunities to young ones in the community, give value to social enterprise



The gathering spaces and shop-fronts along the community street are opportunities to design a spaces that welcomes and empowers community; through either set ups for small businesses or visible embracing and celebration of elements of culture.

WELCOMING



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

These become platforms to share cultural knowledge, encouraging awareness and appreciation.

SHARING CULTURE





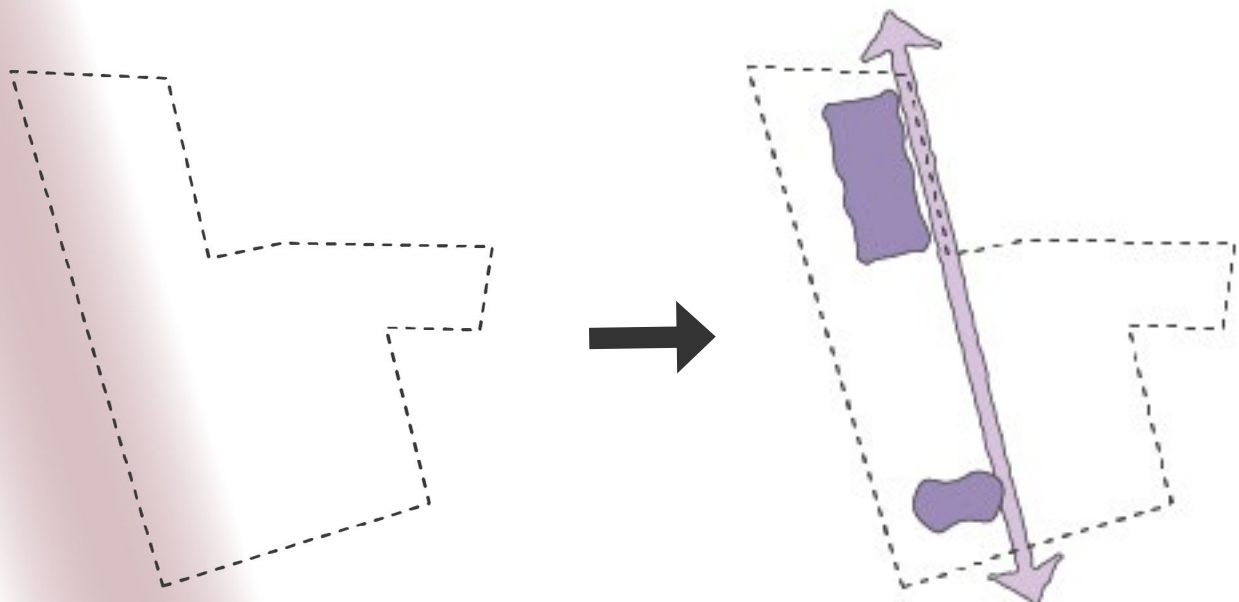
Figure 70: Darling Square by ASPECT Studio
NGULUWAYDesignInc

4.3 Contemporary Journey Line

Waterloo was the threshold between sandhills and wetlands, making it a meeting point for foraging and hunting. The old Songline between Warrane (Sydney Harbour) and Gamay (Botany Bay) runs north-south in the vicinity of the site, believed to be along current day Botany Road.

Modern day journeys around the site are primarily east-west, linking places like Redfern Park, Alexandria Park, Centennial and Moore Park, Eveleigh Innovation Hub, Green Square and so on. The vehicular nature of present-day Botany Road provides a less pleasant north-south travel experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

Cyclists already tend to use George Street, informally cutting across the existing landscape of the Matavai and Turanga towers. By integrating some of the characteristics of the old paths of movement, George Street could be re-imagined as a contemporary Journey Line, allowing for free-flowing movement, meeting points and gathering spaces, spill out activities, and landmarks along the way. This gesture would be a respectful interpretation of the Songline that runs along present day Botany Road.



In reimagining George Street as a Contemporary Journey Line, consider the major anchor points within the precinct which attract gatherings of people from the wider area; influencing major pedestrian movement flows through the precinct. These anchors could include the Metro Plaza, employment hubs, major retail spaces, educational facilities, healthcare facilities, and nearby recreation areas.

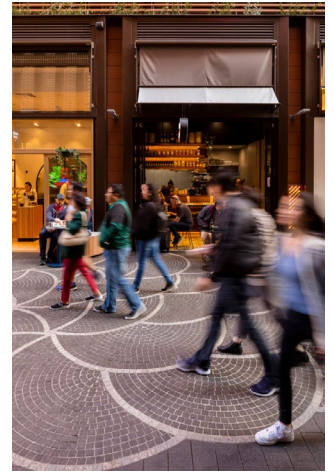
The Contemporary Journey Line has the potential to act as the central movement spine that connects these destinations and reflects the passage of people that has been caring for thousands of years. Open spaces and public domain areas, if strategically positioned beside these anchors, can function as natural spill-out points. They can offer places for people to pause, rest, gather, or reflect along the journey. Together, these elements present the opportunity to establish the corridor as both a functional and accessible movement route, whilst being a living landscape that supports social interaction, and cultural expression.

What we heard:

"Climbing rocks, climbing trees - ancestors' playground over flat square grass area"

Unlike Botany Road, George Street can be conceived as more pedestrian focused.

MASS MOVEMENT



BLURRED BOUNDARIES



Moments to pause, sit, and acknowledge Country should be scattered along this Journey Line. Weaving organic edges and movement to George Street can facilitate those moments of interaction and activate the street.



LANDMARKS AND GATHERING

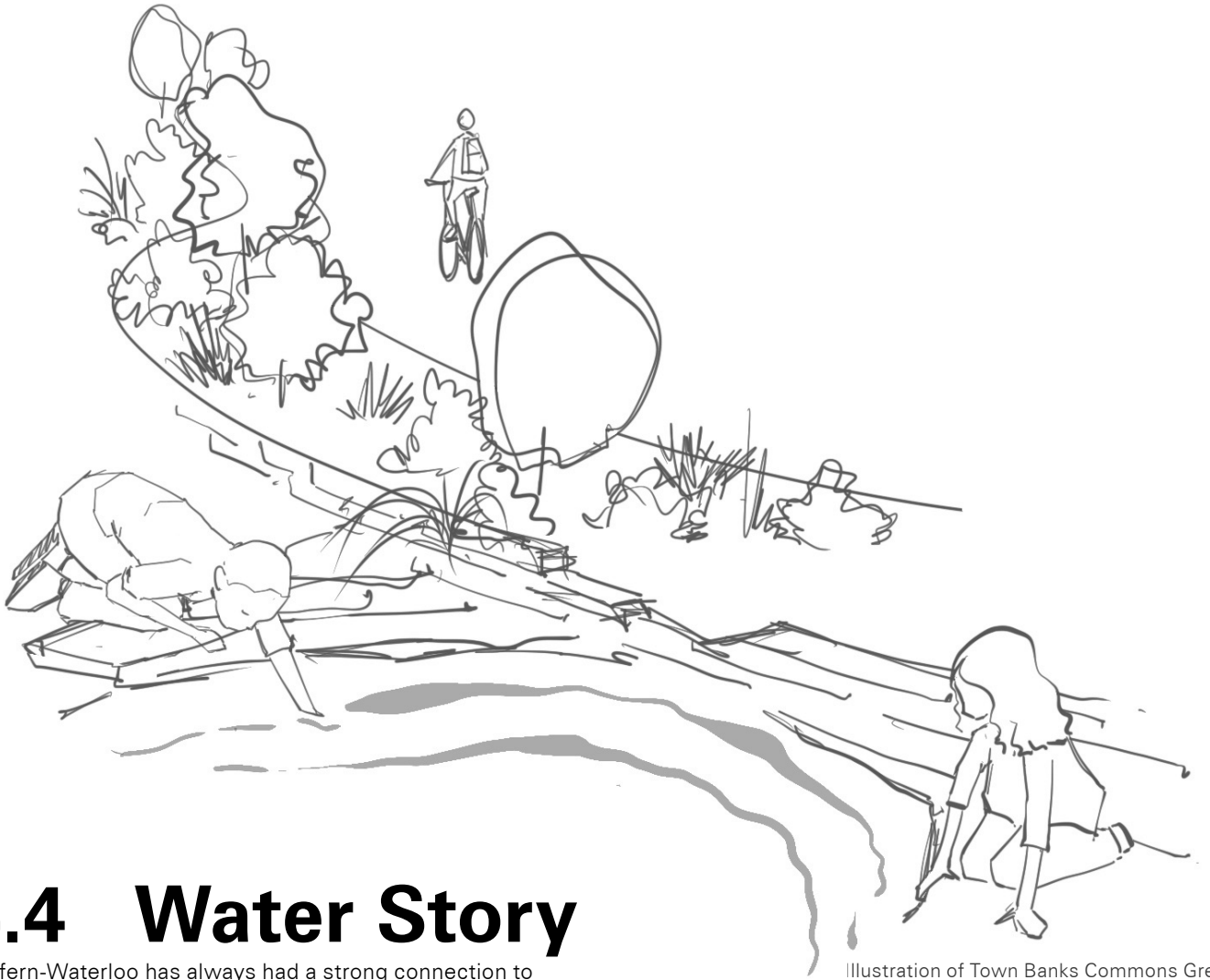
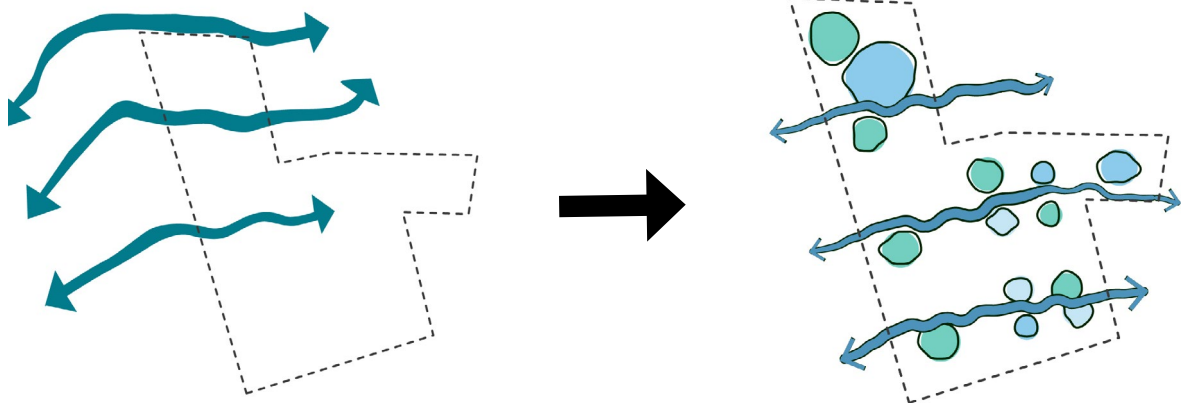


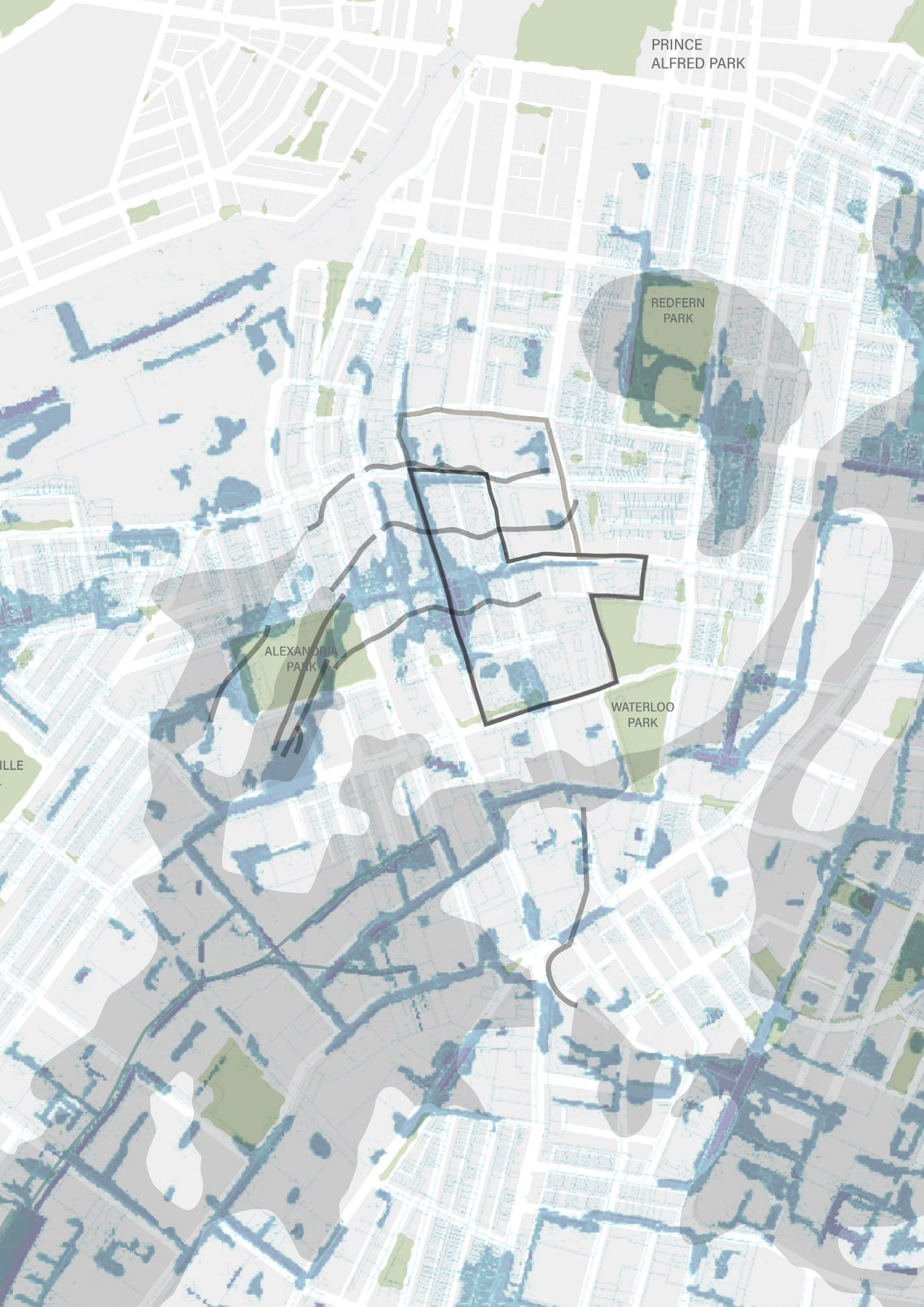
Illustration of Town Banks Commons Greenway
by Irene Sarah, Nguluway DesignInc

4.4 Water Story

Redfern-Waterloo has always had a strong connection to waterways, with its history and evolution deeply intertwined with the presence of water (refer to Section 3.2.2). Historically, streams once ran east-west across the site, and their traces can still be read in today's flooding maps.

This theme draws on these movement patterns and translates them into east-west connections across the site. In traditional knowledge, the relationship between nature and people is blurred and interconnected. Similarly, this theme traces old water movement through varying media. In some locations this could be actual integration of water streams, in others it would be the flow of people, imparting the qualities of slowing, curving and pooling to create moments of pause along the way.





PRINCE
ALFRED PARK

REDFERN
PARK

ALEXANDRIA
PARK

WATERLOO
PARK

ILLE

Juxtaposing desire lines to existing amenities (grey dots), contours, historic water patterns, the three prominent streams that used to traverse the site are interpreted as follows:

- One across the park to the north
- The second between the existing water channel and Reeve Street, cutting across the central precinct blocks
- The third as a series of through site links that permeate the southern blocks to reach Waterloo Park

Where these movements intersect, 'ponds' of gathering are identified (coloured dots) where spaces can be designed for connection, interaction, and activity.

What we heard:

"Slow down movement to learn"

REDFERN PARK

"Bring water back - places where you can touch and feel Country without an entry fee"



DAYLIGHTING URBAN STREAMS



WATER PLAY



Daylighting the movement of water, particularly in present areas of pooling, can establish a sense of connection and awareness. This would promote connection to and custodianship of Country while creating opportunities for better water management through Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD).



Where streams are interpreted as laneways, water imparts a meandering, local quality to the space.

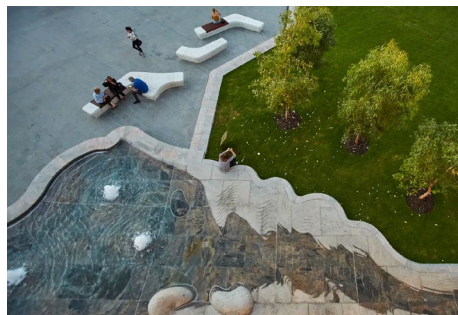
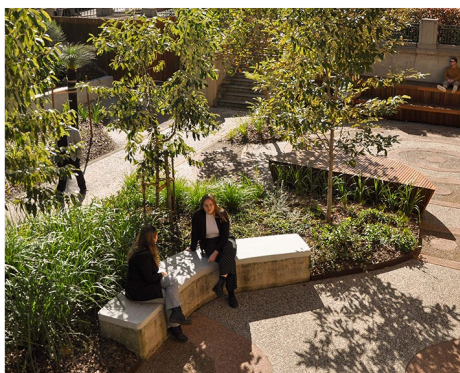
LOCAL AND MEANDERING



FINE GRAIN

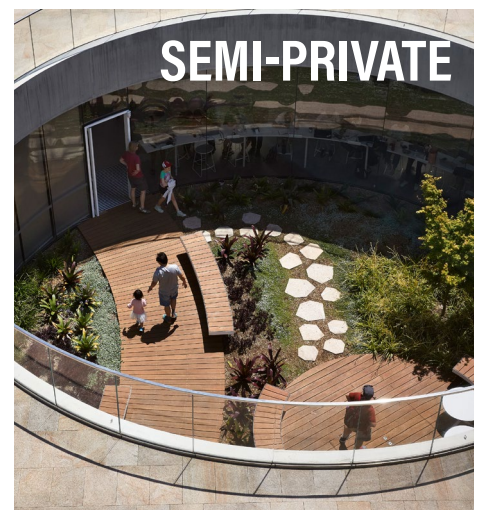


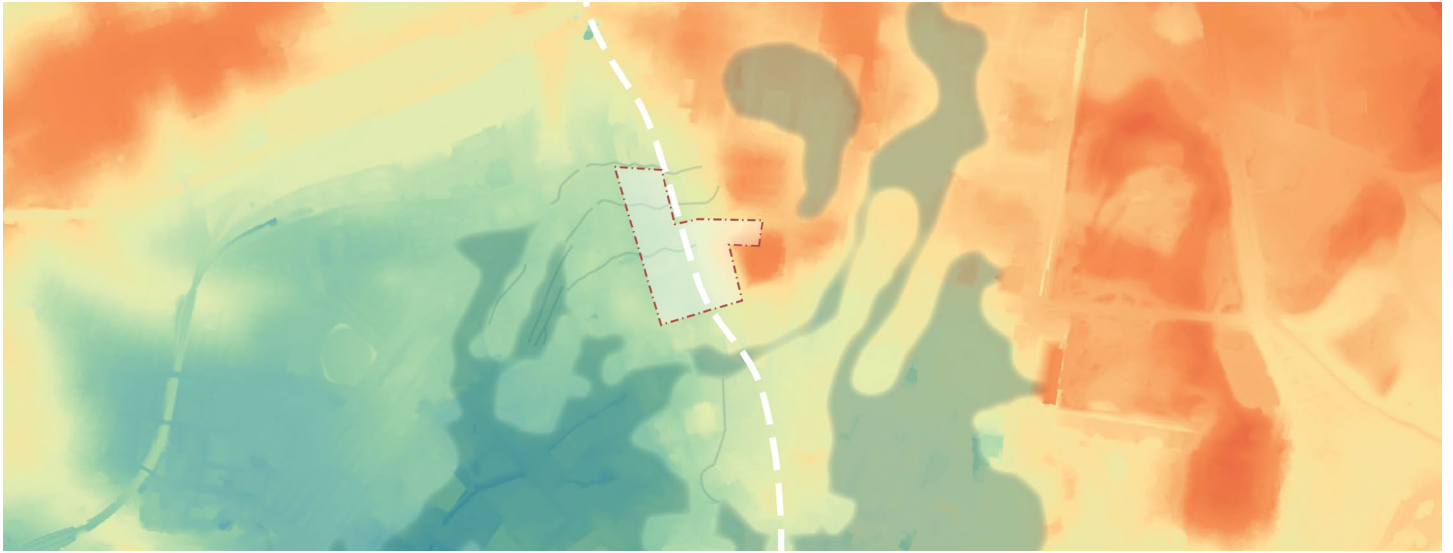
CREATING CONNECTION



REFLECTIVE

Ponds could be smaller, intimate spaces of reflection, courtyards with interfaces to built context, or at the confluence of local movement with larger movement paths.





4.5 The Fold

The site transitions from sandhills to ephemeral wetlands, historically shaping a unique landscape that slopes down towards Botany Bay. This natural fold through the centre of the site creates distinct topographic characters on either side of George Street. West of George Street, the site is almost flat, falling slightly, making it suitable for parks and facilities for people with disabilities and the elderly. East of George Street, the topography climbs towards Waterloo Park and Mount Carmel.

This narrative celebrates the pre-colonial landscape of the area by acting as a base for regenerating and taking inspiration from the landform, flora, and fauna.

This duality offers an opportunity for design expression: the eastern side can celebrate the elevated, dry landscape, while the western side can reflect the character of the wetlands. Together, these contrasting conditions tell the story of the terrain, embracing both the dry heights and the wetter lowlands as defining elements of place.

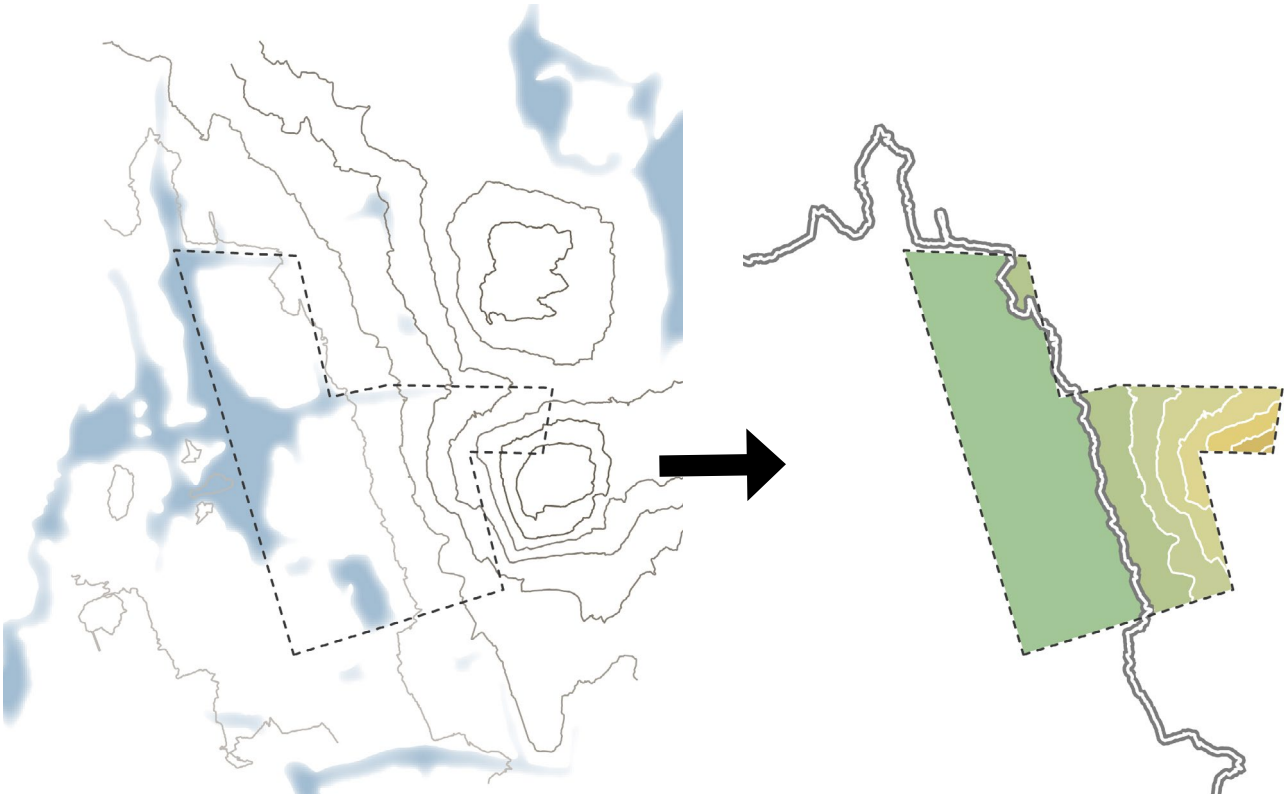




Figure 71: Walk of the Town. Photo courtesy of T.R.O.P terrains open space
P23-057 | 13.04.2026 | 87

The built environment presents an opportunity to reveal the old landscape of Waterloo, drawing on the texture, colour, and form of wetlands and dry healthlands. This character can be expressed through materiality, envelope, and form of built structures and through the hardscape and planting in the public domain. The inspirations for look and feel of the wet, dry, and transitional zones are illustrated on the following page.

Elements like natural pooling towards the west and south and steep terrain leading up to Waterloo Park could be emphasised and integrated in the design response of each block. In addition to this, endemic plant species should be explored to reinforce the Gadigal story of Country.

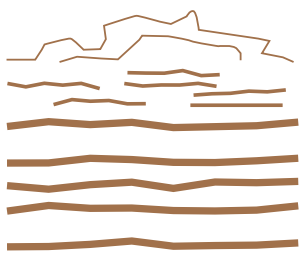
What we heard:



Incorporate the sight, sound, and smell of nature

"Incorporate stories into the planting selection"

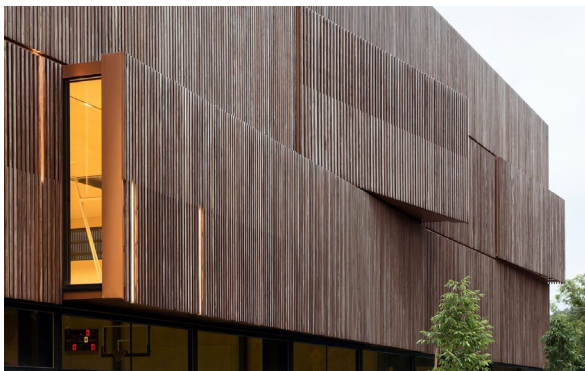
"Referencing natural forms and materials in design (use of natural form rock over cut edge blocks)"



HORIZONTAL



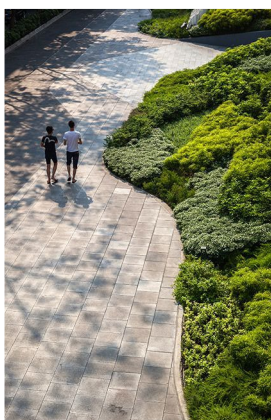
Longer spans and horizontal elements that reflect previous coastal sand hills, featuring hardy plants and material.



DRY COUNTRY

TRANSITIONAL

George Street roughly coincides with the fold in the landscape and should be designed with its own character, creating a transition between wet and dry Country.



WET COUNTRY



VERTICAL



Vertical elements that are drawn from mangroves and reeds with a cooler, more reflective material palette.



4.6 Naming Strategy

The Waterloo State Significant Precinct Study – Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement Report by Murawin identifies several key Aboriginal words that are meaningful for place-making and design. These words are drawn from The Sydney Aboriginal Language document by Dr Jakelin Troy, and their use has been affirmed by Gadigal descendants, government officials, and members of Aboriginal community organisations. The selected words reflect the character of specific places within the master plan and are aligned with the overarching design themes, helping to embed cultural significance and language into the built environment.

YURUNGI

duck

METRO
PLAZA

GURU

deep water

WELLINGTON ST

YANA

walk

ALEXANDRIA
PARK

GUNYA

house

JOHN ST

NUWI

canoe

MCEVOY ST

REDFERN PARK

PITT ST

What we heard:

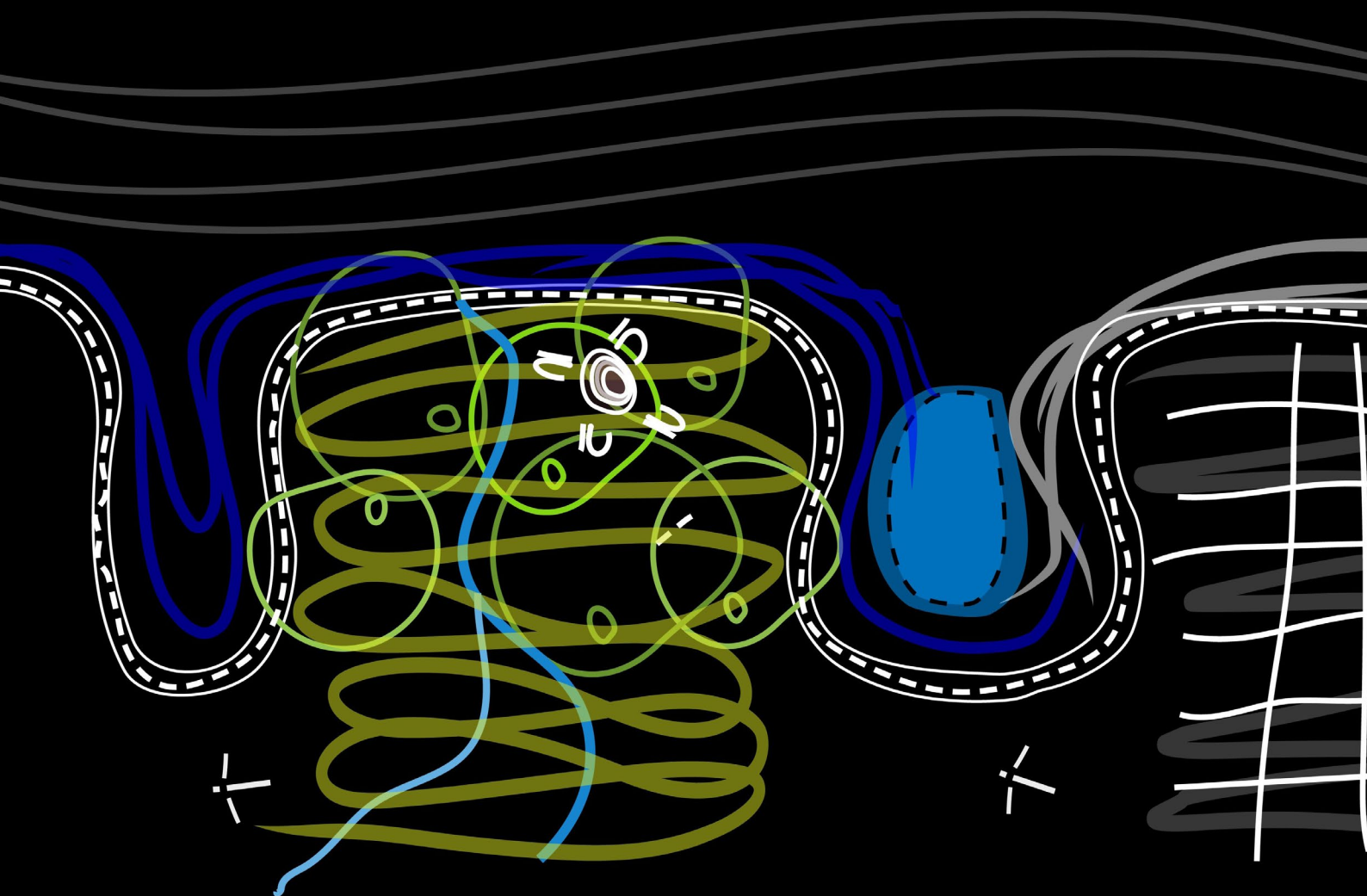
"Name buildings after local people to maintain the identity of Waterloo"

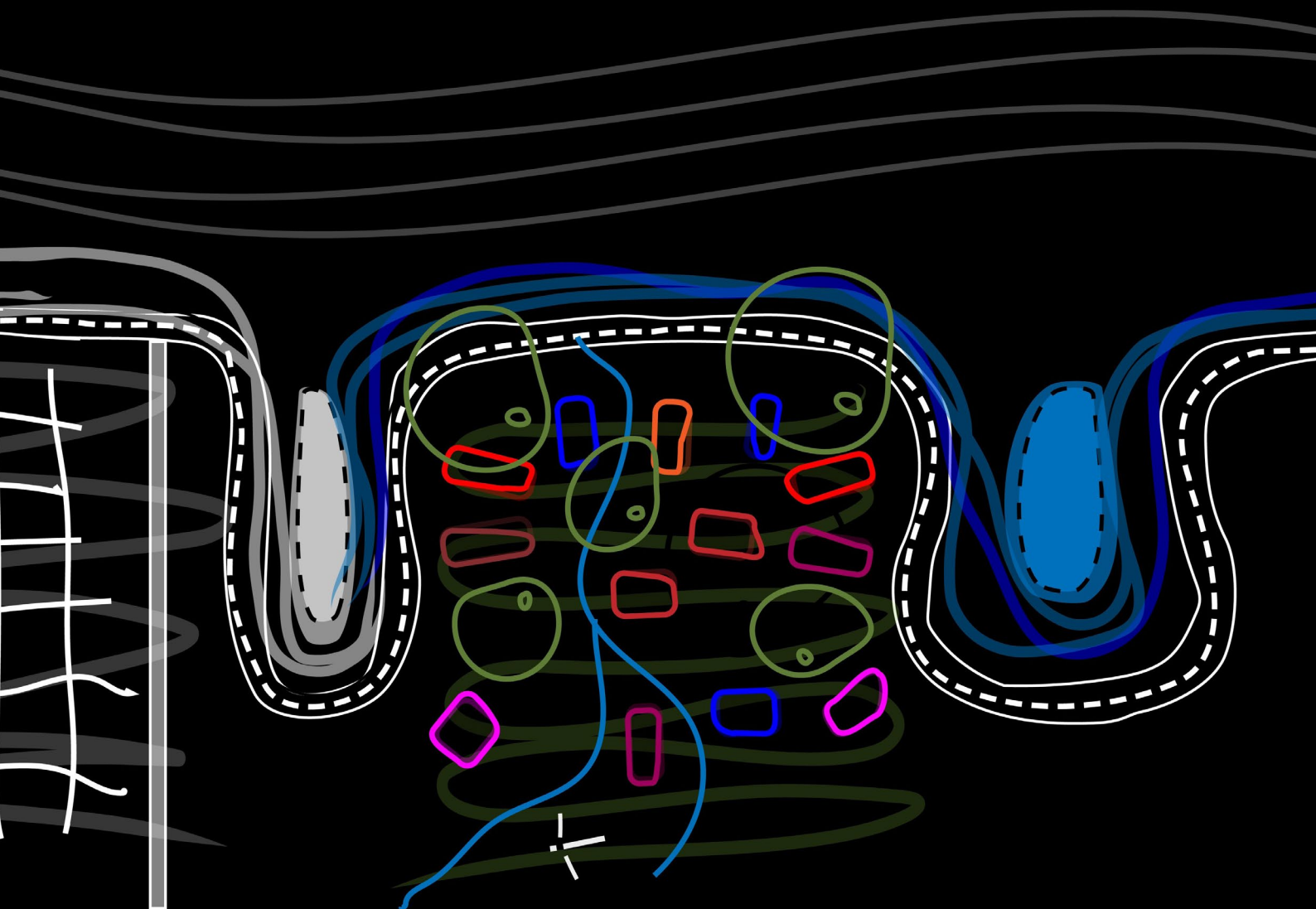
Refer to Section 2.2.8 and Section 3.4.5 for important people



5.

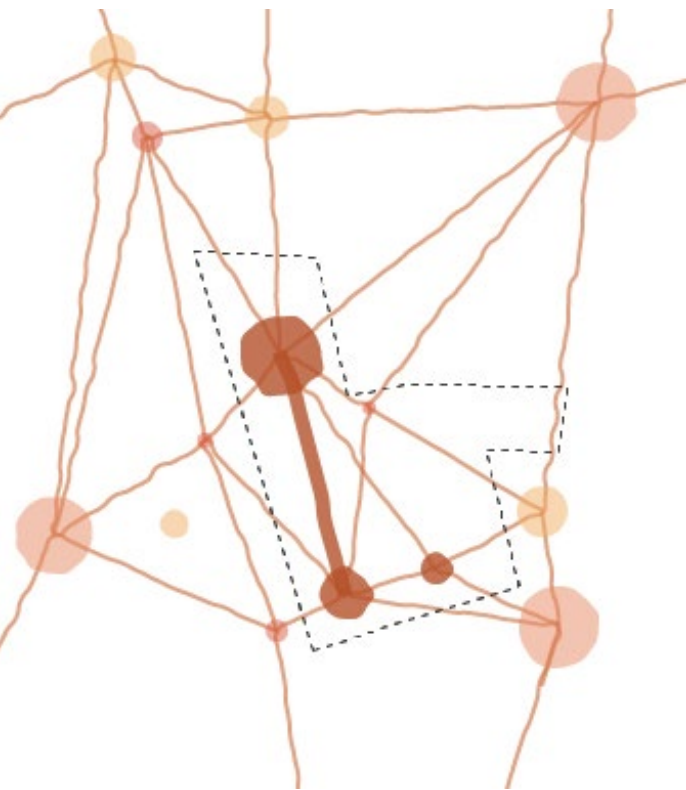
Implementing Country





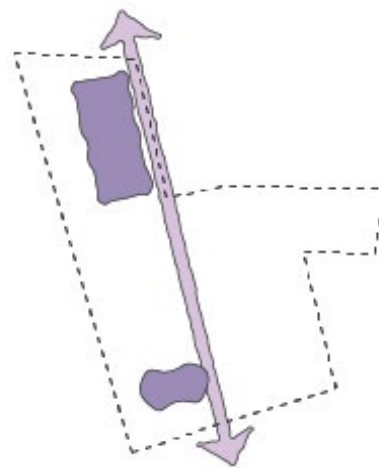
5.1 Stories Coming Together

The emerging themes have been overlapped to form precinct-level strategies, ensuring a cohesive and unified narrative across the Waterloo Estate South Precinct.



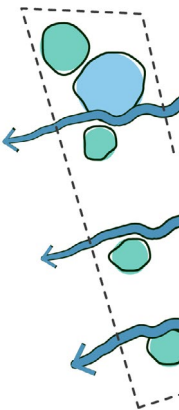
BELONGING TO COMMUNITY

Aboriginal heartbeat of the precinct



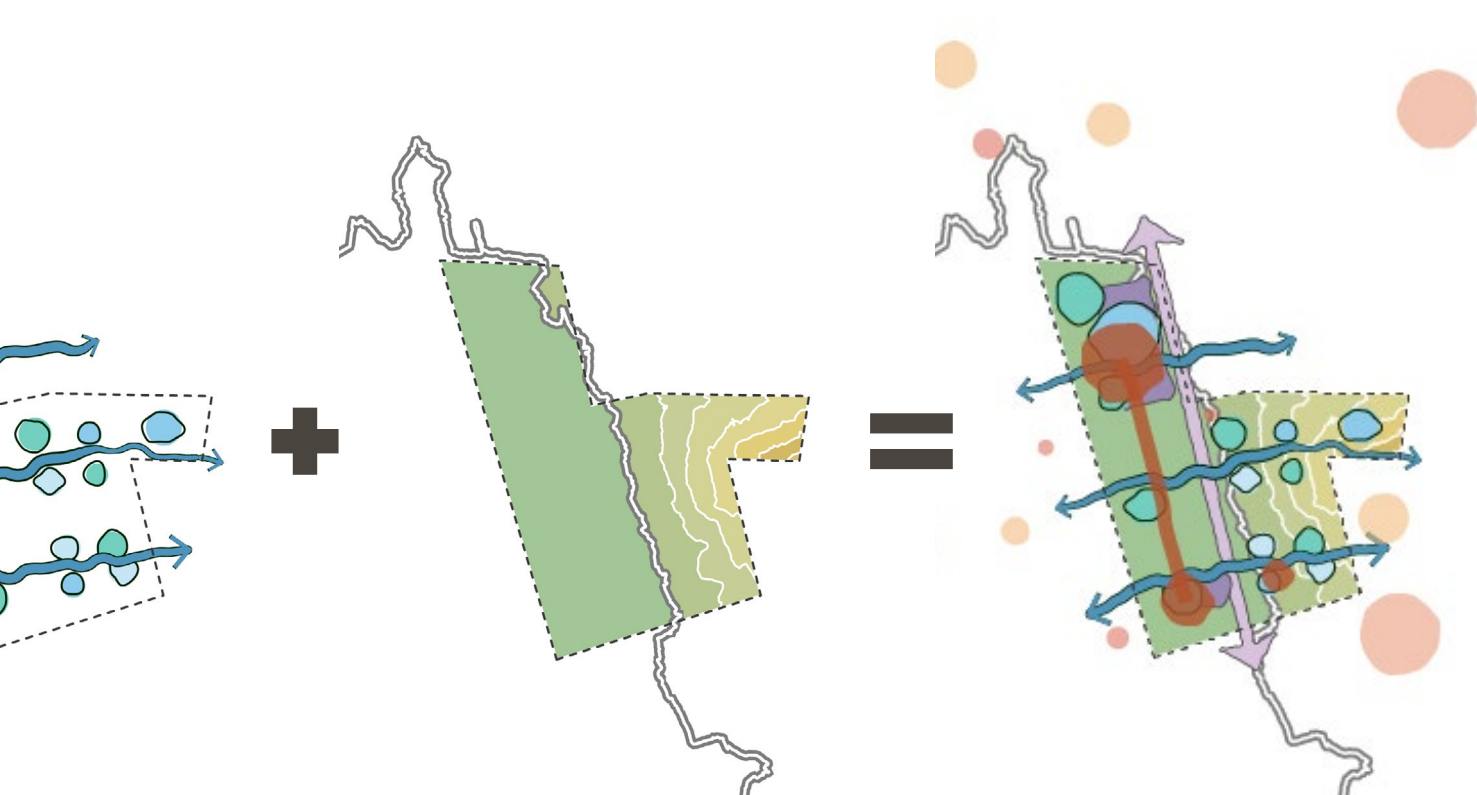
CONTEMPORARY JOURNEY LINE

Contemporary reflection of the
existing Songline



WATER

Streams



RIVER STORY

s and ponds

THE FOLD

Dry Country
Wet Country

DWC FRAMEWORK

Bringing it all together
Guiding the precinct

5.2 Belonging to Community

The proposed community-based uses and services within the precinct present an opportunity to connect with and anchor this existing network of culturally important spaces. These new spaces should reflect Aboriginal culture and support truth-telling, creating familiar and welcoming environments for community members to return to. Some of the methods to consider include:

- **Story telling:** Use integrated artwork, facade patterns, or interpretive elements that acknowledge histories (including difficult histories) and honour Gadigal Country, their history and contemporary culture.
- **Gathering spaces:** Provide spaces that feel culturally safe and familiar for Aboriginal community including generous thresholds, indoor yarning spaces, and communal rooms for intergenerational activities. Create gathering areas that are flexible, non-hierarchical (circular or semi-enclosed spaces rather than formal squares).
- **Community street:** Treat Cooper Street as a primary cultural spine with embedded storytelling, shaded gathering spots, and points of rest reflective of Country. Map and integrate gathering nodes at a variety of scales. Consider where different age, gender and specific activities can unfold and purposefully design them into circulation routes.
- **Local businesses:** Provide appropriately sized ground floors to support local businesses and startups.

1

Extending connections to existing places of importance from new communal uses in the precinct

2

Opportunity to create a courtyard for gathering amidst services like healthcare and children's facilities

3

Creation of a community street featuring places of gathering, activity, and empowering local businesses

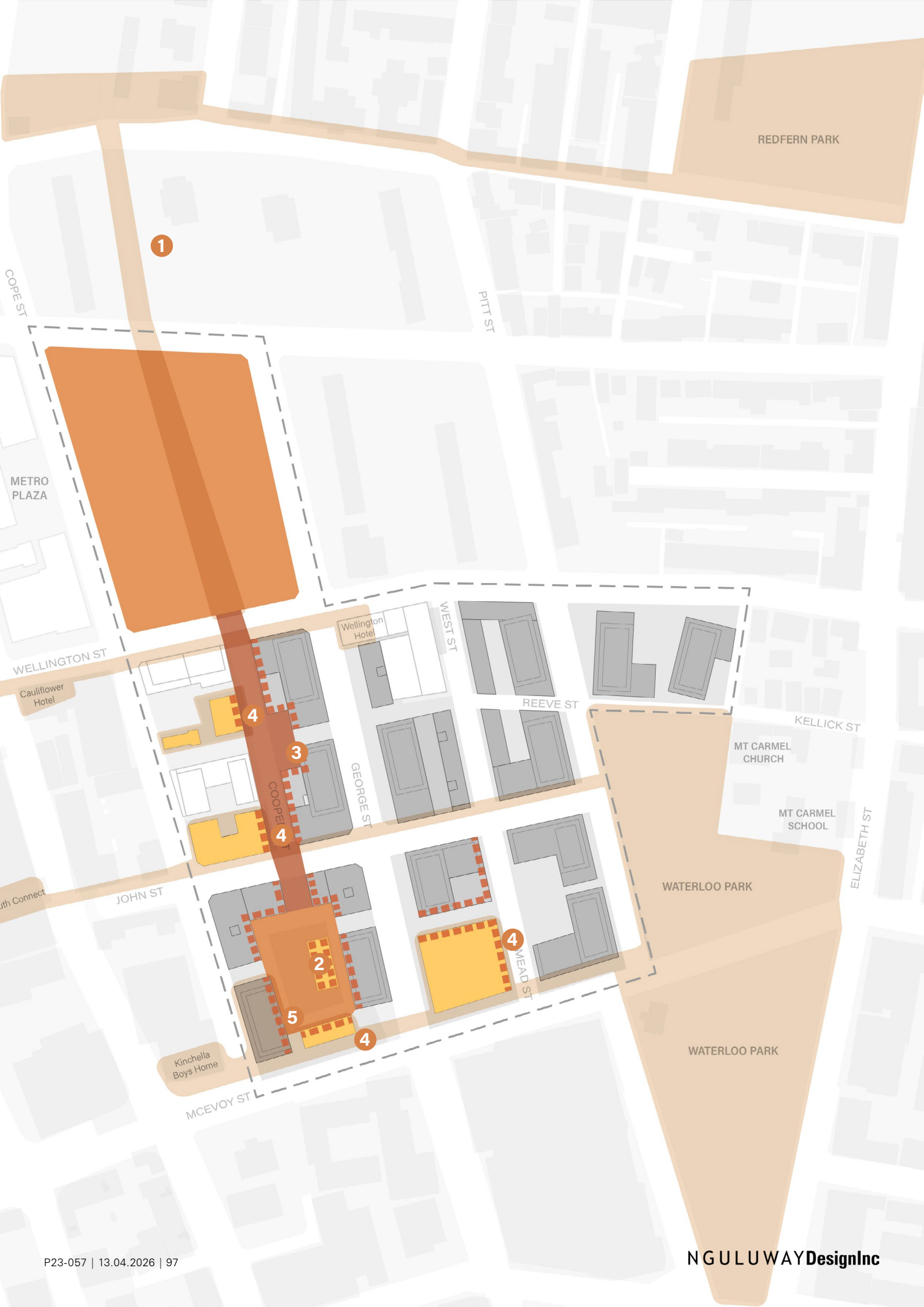
4

Potential interfaces with supporting community services like old age care and community centres

5

Potential to provide spaces for existing services in Redfern-Waterloo, extending community-based design across the site





5.3 Contemporary Journey Lines

Contemporary pedestrian and cyclist journeys often link between employment hubs or open spaces. Anchored by open spaces in the precinct and the Metro station, George Street presents an opportunity for mass movement to be designed to reflect the characteristic qualities of Songlines. This could be interpreted through the following methods:

- **Pedestrian experience:** Prioritisation of continuous, safe, and comfortable north–south routes for pedestrians and cyclists to counter the current vehicle dominated experience along Botany Road. Align major building entrances, verandahs, or communal thresholds toward George Street.
- **Landmarks:** Cultural markers along the street that signify stages of a journey such as material changes, artwork, ground inscriptions, or landscape thresholds. Introduce moments to pause, celebrating the transition through the landscape, where commuters can learn, reflect, or connect with Country between daily destinations.
- **Form:** Human scale form, shaded canopies, and natural materials to create familiar, culturally resonant environments. Curved, organic edges soften the built form, evoke natural landscapes, and support intuitive, fluid pedestrian movement.

1

Opportunity to build on mass connectivity from the Metro plaza to the gathering spaces and along George Street

2

Thresholds at the intersection of George Street and laneways or existing road networks present opportunities for incidental interaction

3

Imbuing the qualities of Songlines along the length of George Street to weave a more organic edge, activate the ground level and create various scales of gathering.

4

Creation of a more pedestrian dominated spill over space for medium scale gatherings and activities





REDFERN PARK

PITT ST

2

1

METRO PLAZA

WELLINGTON ST

2

WEST ST

REEVE ST

3

KELLICK ST

MT CARMEL CHURCH

MT CARMEL SCHOOL

ELIZABETH ST

WATERLOO PARK

JOHN ST

COOPER ST

2

GEORGE ST

4

MEAD ST

WATERLOO PARK

MCEVOY ST

2

5.4 Streams and Ponds

The historic association of the place with water can be recreated both symbolically and experientially. The idea of streams and ponds does not only translate literally into water. It rather provides cues to flow, movement, and patterns of gathering across the site. This concept can be interpreted through the following methods:

- **Streams:** Local movements along the site would be based on routes of convenience to reach bus stands, amenity, educational institutions, and the flow of water. Through-block flows can be identified by drawing connections between these destinations and movements of convenience. Reference should be given to contours and historic water movement patterns.
- **Ponds:** Along these streams of movement of either water or people, there are identified locations of pools or ponds of gathering.
- **Water management:** Water-sensitive design elements can reinforce the narrative by capturing, slowing, filtering, and caring for stormwater in ways that echo historic water behaviour and Gadigal relationships to it. This may include swales, rain gardens, permeable surfaces, or subtle water channels that contribute both ecological function and experiential meaning.

1

Opportunity to create meandering movement through the large gathering area, connecting the Metro plaza to Waterloo Estate Central Precinct in the future

2

Identifying east-west movement patterns to improve permeability of blocks

3

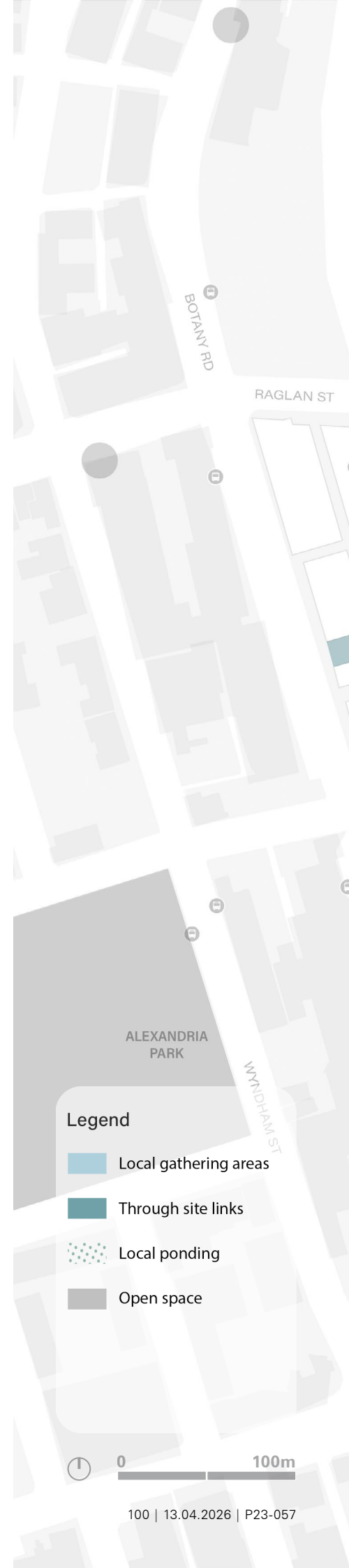
Designing pathways for leisurely movement providing opportunities to connect with and learn of place

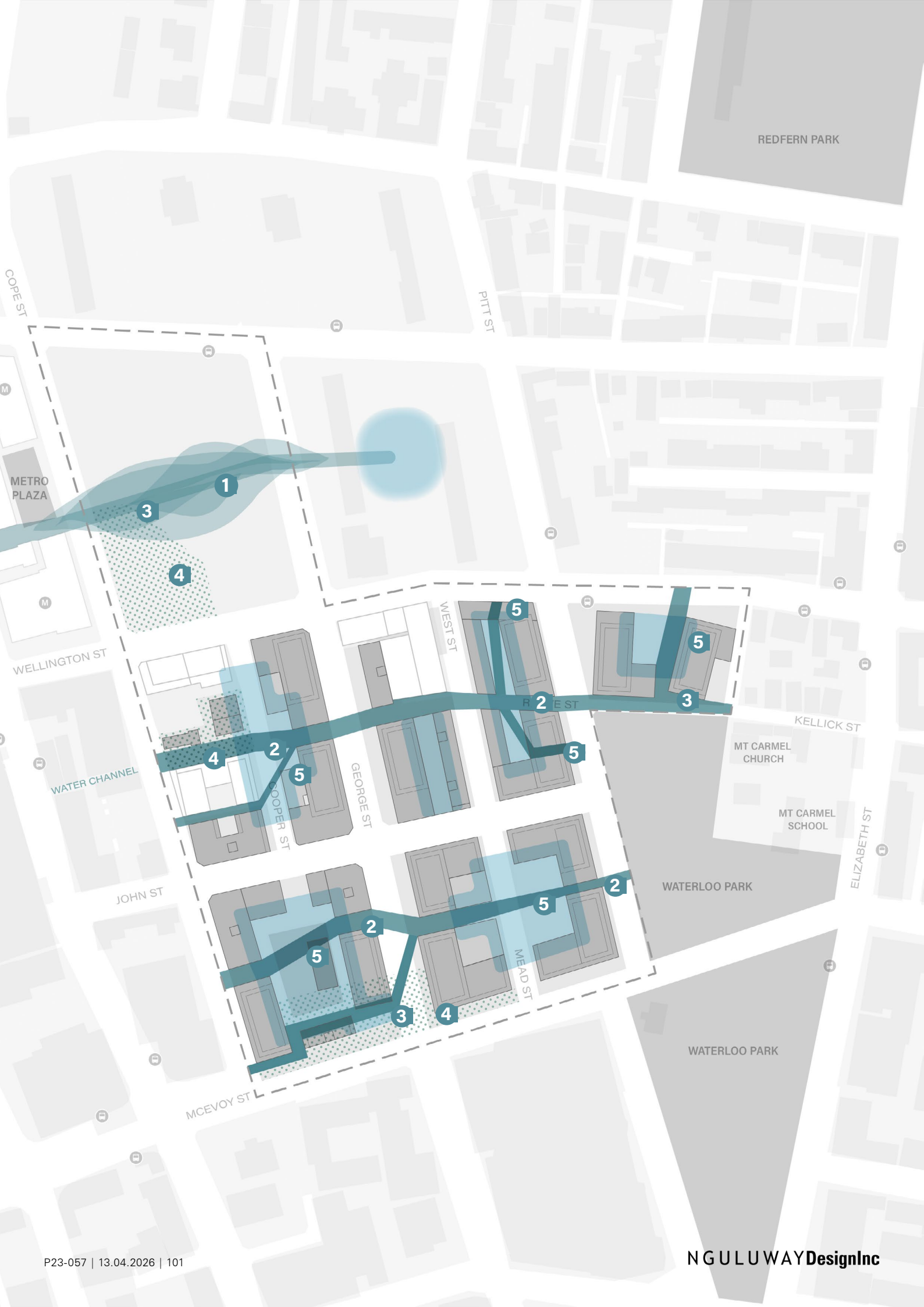
4

Reflecting and daylighting historic waterways on site through experiences of water

5

Opportunities for 'ponds' or gathering spaces to be located at the intersection of 'streams' with other paths or themes and within the built environment





5.5 The Fold

The site is zones into three typologies based on the historic landscape characters. The character of each zone (Wet, Dry, Transitional) could be interpreted through the following methods:

- **Materiality:** Treatment of buildings or hardscape design with colour palettes and materials to evoke the appropriate response to Country. For example, warmer timbers and hardy plants can be used in Dry Country, whilst cooler coloured concrete, tiles and bricks might be used in Wet Country.
- **Massing:** The interpretation of typical landforms found in Country can be used to inform the articulation of buildings. Facades may articulate horizontally in Dry Country whilst they are more vertical in Wet Country.
- **Planting:** The use of endemic plants is essential. The plants should be selected through consultation with Gadigal Knowledge Holders, and businesses that specialises in supplying Indigenous flora. These plants should be located in accordance with the historic landscape with attention paid to Wet, Dry, and Transitional zones.

1

Opportunity to design for ephemeral water features and integrate WSUD in a way that strengthens connection to Country and place

2

At the crease of the landscape there is an opportunity to embrace the transition from wet to dry Country through contrasting material, colour, and texture - adding depth to the experience along the Contemporary Journey Line

3

Opportunity to tie design language of public space to Waterloo Park and elevated surrounds





5.6 Layers of Designing with Country

Each of the Designing with Country layers have been overlayed to form a guide for the Waterloo South development. The overlay illustrates key aspects of each theme, highlighting different interfaces that public and built spaces would have with the themes of Country. Details of experience and quality can be referenced in Section 4.0. This overlay begins to depict how all of the Designing with Country layers are interconnected.

DwC OVERLAY

Legend

-  Community street
-  Open space
-  Community anchors
-  Wet Country zone
-  The fold in Country
-  Dry Country zone
-  Contemporary songline
-  Major gathering
-  Local gathering areas
-  Through-site links



0 100m

Figure 72: Overlay of Designing with Country layers



REDFERN PARK

PITT ST

WEST ST

REEVE ST

KELICK ST

MT CARMEL
CHURCH

MT CARMEL
SCHOOL

ELIZABETH ST

WATERLOO PARK

WATERLOO PARK

GEORGE ST

MEAD ST

5.7 Approach

The Waterloo South Precinct is organised into distinct blocks, aligning with the staged delivery of the project. Design recommendations have been developed for each block, guided by the four overarching design themes. Each block engages with these themes in unique ways, allowing for a diverse and context-sensitive design response while maintaining a cohesive character across the precinct.

This approach ensures that local identity and cultural relevance are embedded throughout the development. The specific design strategies for each block are outlined in the following sections.



Figure 73: Diagram showing development blocks

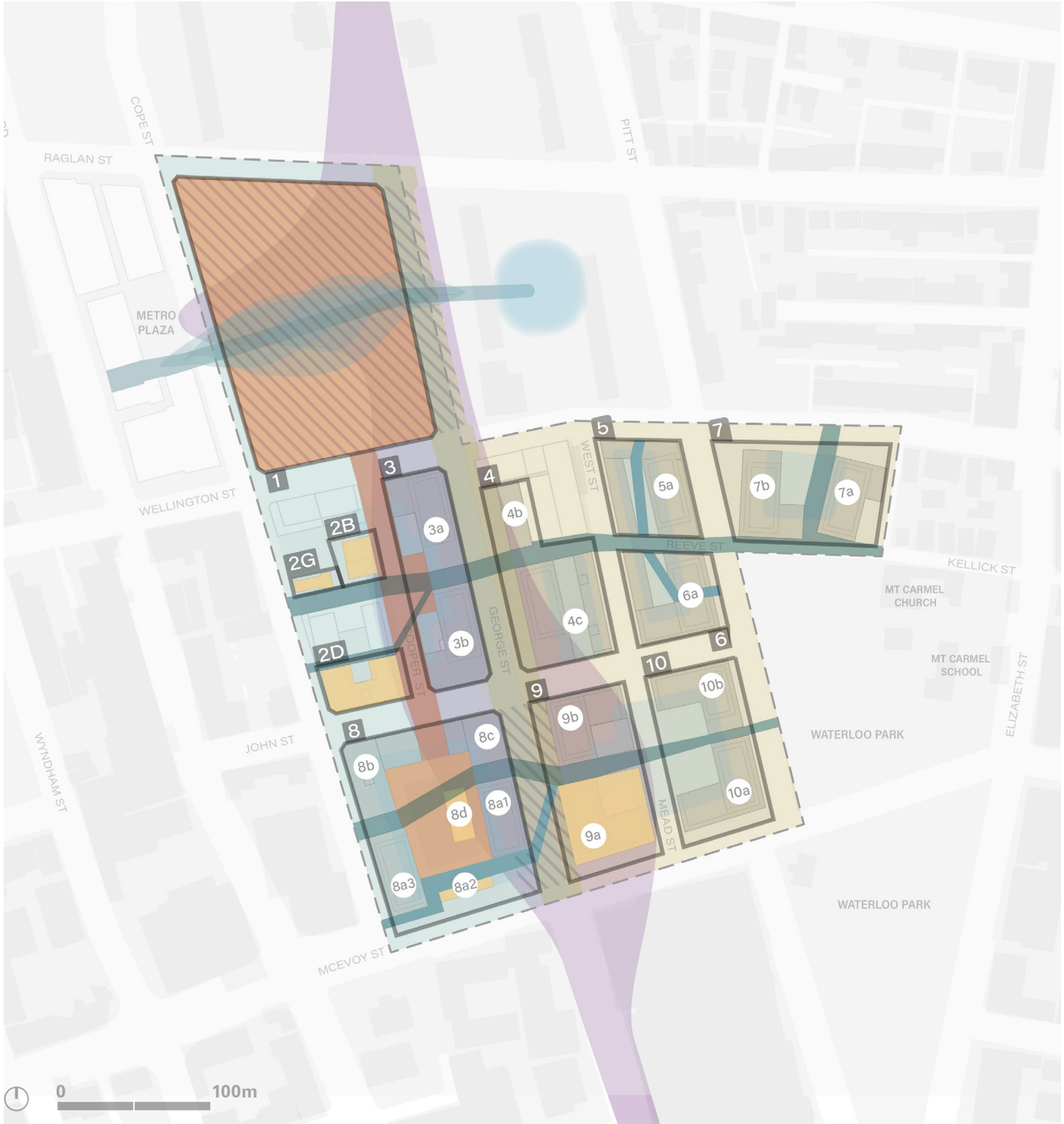
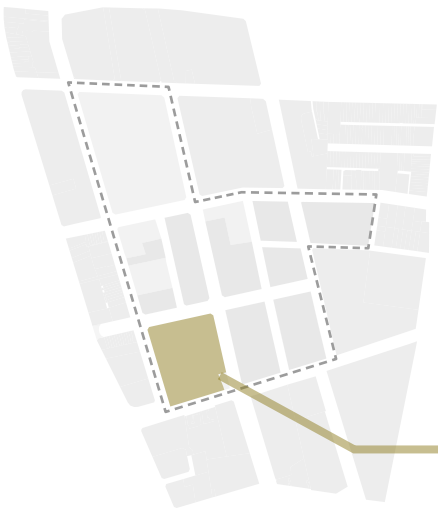


Figure 74: Diagram showing overlay of Designing with Country themes on development blocks

5.8 Guidance

5.8.1 Template



This section lists the different interfaces present along each block and uses the table matrix to highlight opportunities around each theme and interface.

The table compiles recommendations that are derived from previous sections of the report. In addition to this, the tables include insights shared during community engagement sessions.

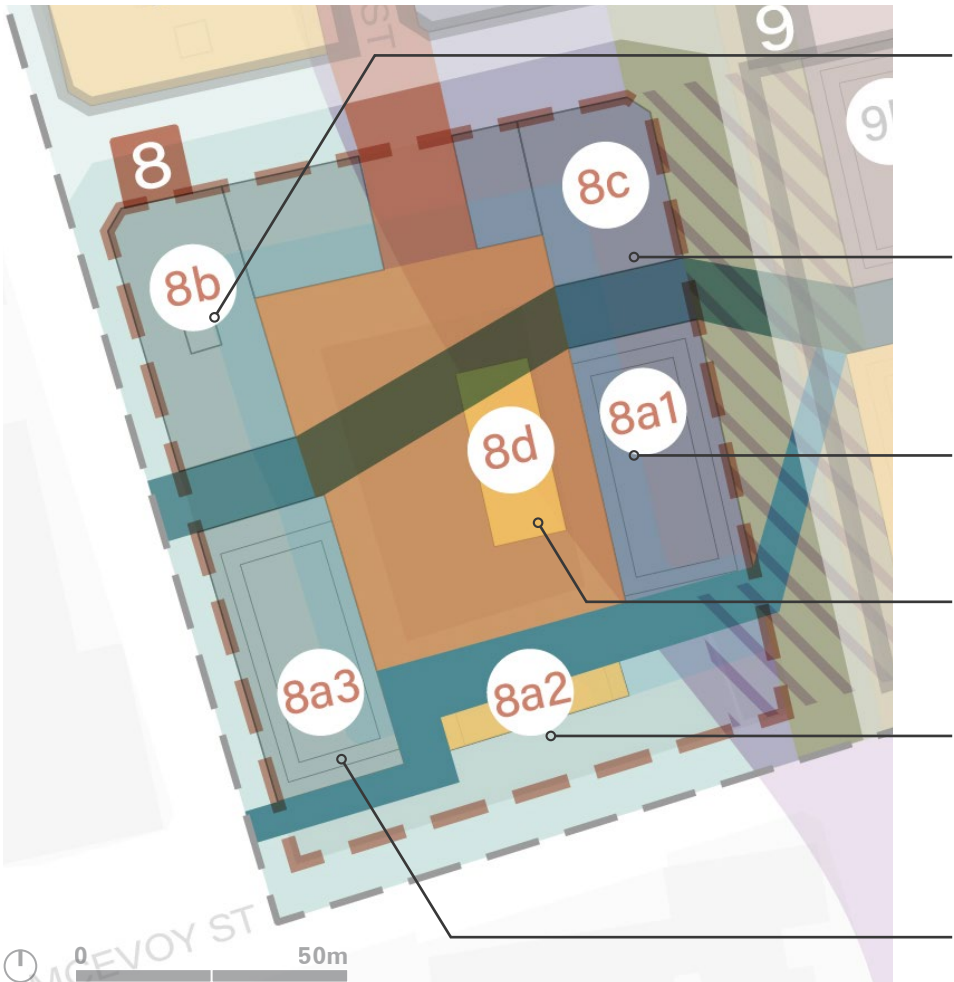
It is envisioned that these recommendations would be explored further during design development and delivery of each building and public space.

1

Key map showing block location within overall precinct

2

Recommendations to be explored further and implemented during concept design



Building 8B Interfaces and DwC layers

East face - Belonging
South face - Stream
Located in wet Country

Building 8C

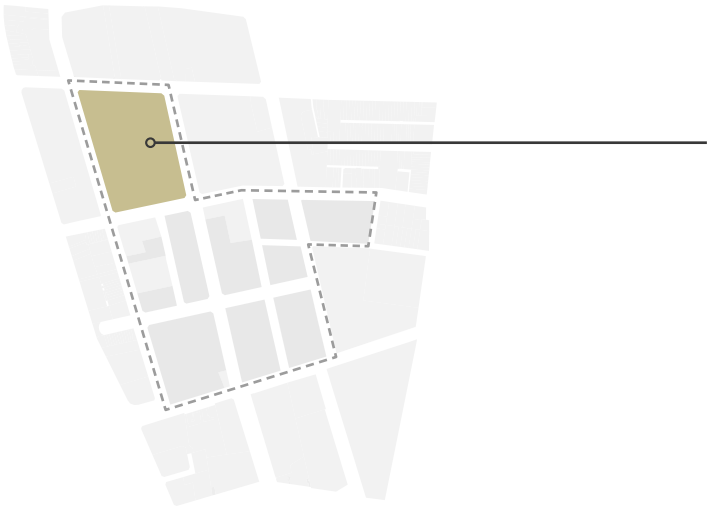
Building 8A1

Building 8D

Building 8A2

Building 8A3

5.8.2 Block 1



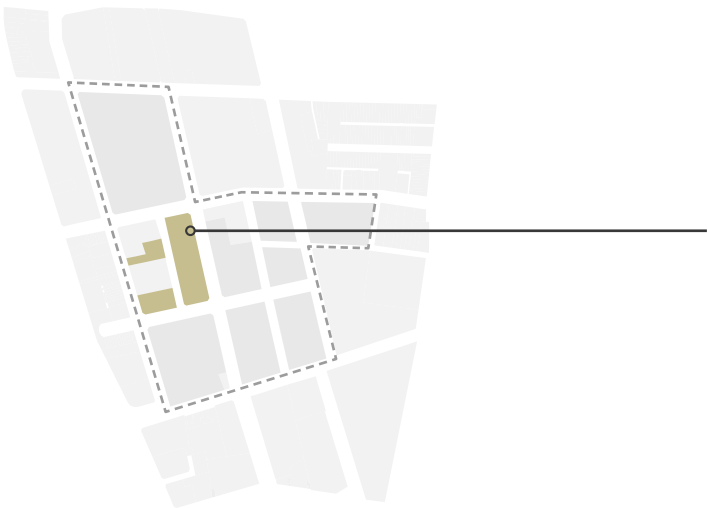
This spread lists the different interfaces present within Block 1

Block 1 is located in the north west quadrant of the Waterloo Estate South Precinct as indicated in the adjacent key plan. This block would be predominantly open space. The block is bound by Raglan Street to the north, Cope Street to the west, Wellington Street to the south, and George Street to the east.



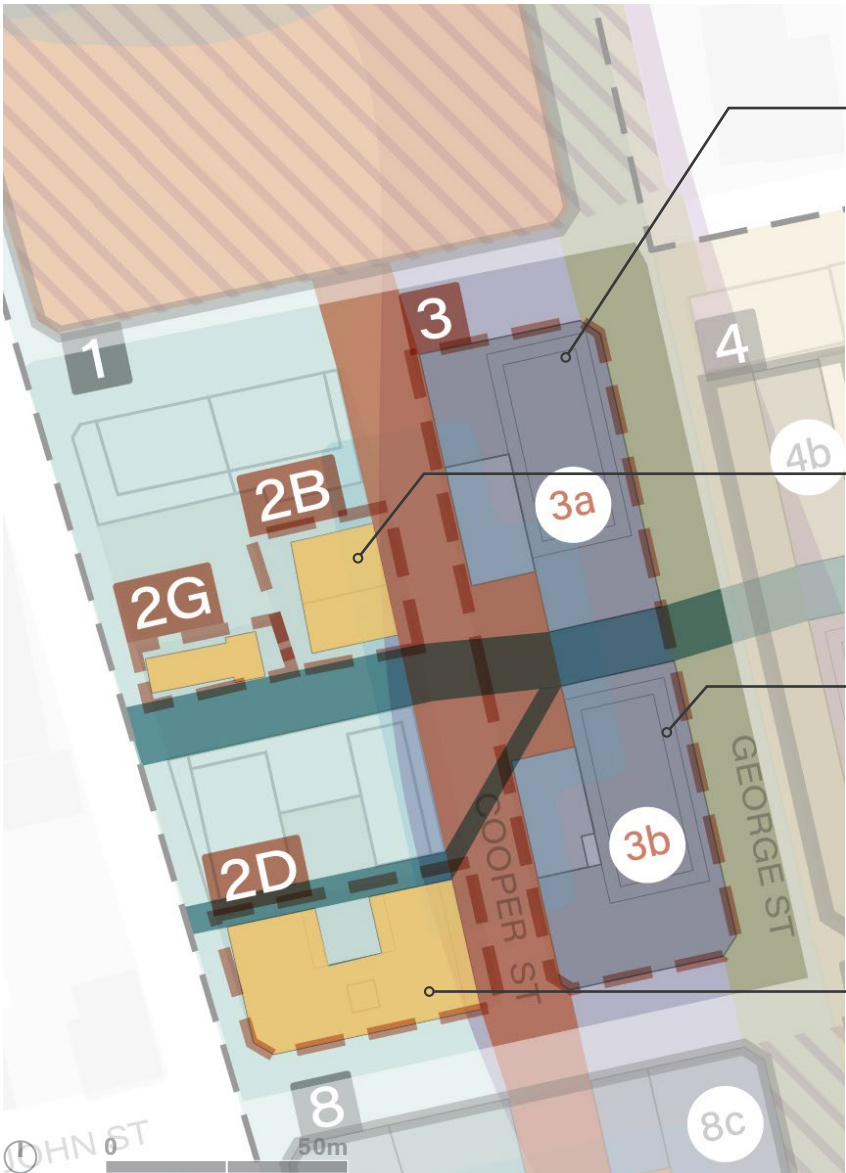
Building Interface and layers	
Open Space Interfaces	
East	Journey line
Centre	Stream
West	Metro plaza and mass movement for contemporary journeys
Within	Wet Country
Includes	Anchor point for communal belonging, larger 'pond' of activity
South-east corner	Responds to flooding

5.8.3 Block 2B, 2D, and 3



This spread lists the different interfaces present along Block 2B, 2D, and 3

These blocks are located in the mid-west quadrant of the Waterloo Estate South Precinct as indicated in the adjacent key plan. These blocks deliver communal amenity and retail at ground level with residential units stacked at higher levels. The block is bound by Wellington Street to the north, Cope Street to the west, John Street to the south, and George Street to the east. Cooper Street cuts between Block 2 and 3. There are private properties present on Block 2 that are not being developed.



Building Interface and layers

Building 3a

North	Belonging
East	Contemporary Journey Line
South	Stream
South-west	Pond
West	Belonging
Within	Wet Country

Buildings 2B

East	Belonging
South	Stream
Within	Wet Country

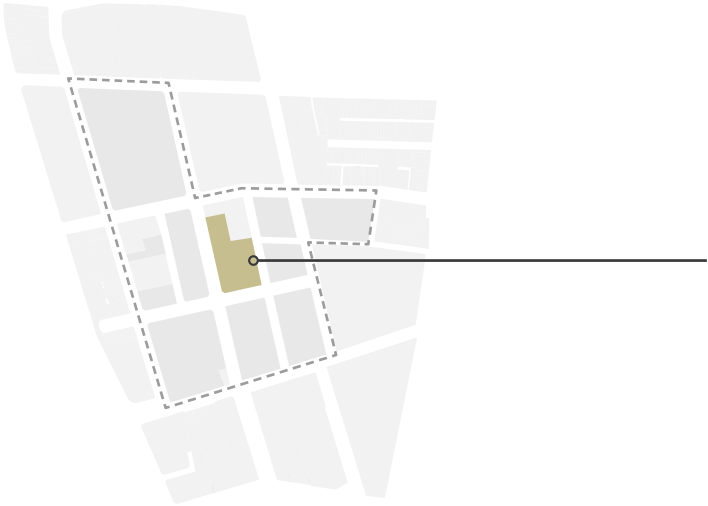
Building 3b

North	Stream
East	Contemporary Journey Line
West	Belonging
North-west	Pond
Within	Wet Country

Building 2D

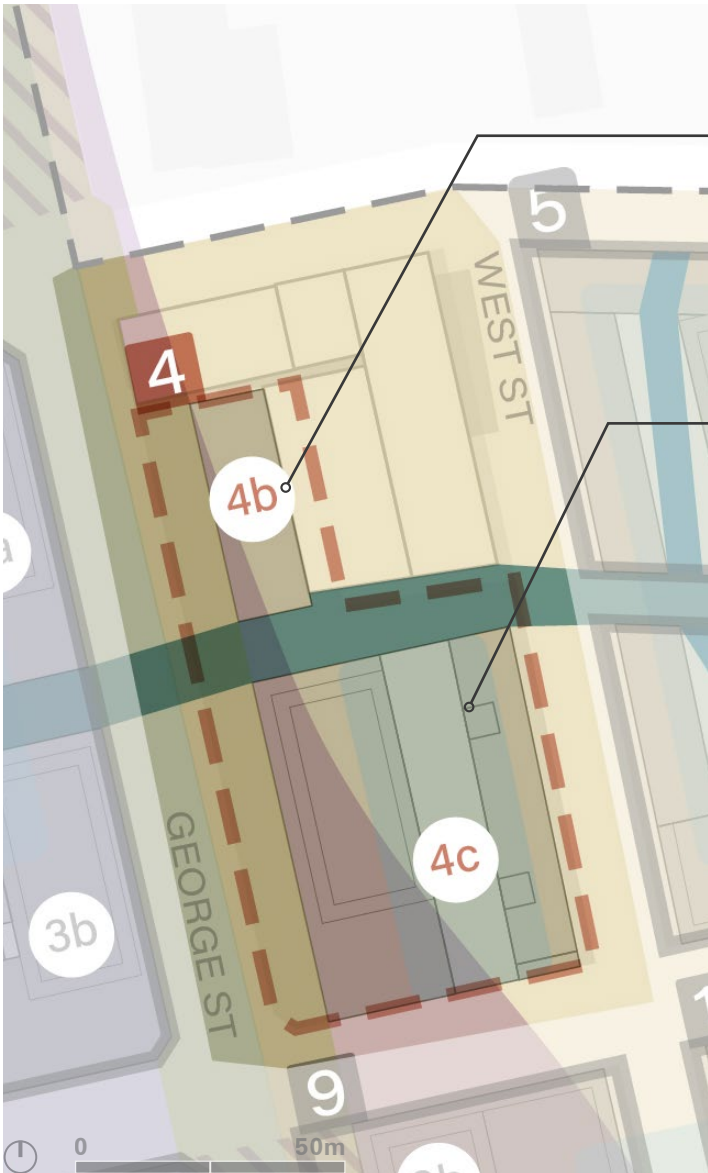
North	Stream
East	Belonging
Within	Wet Country

5.8.4 Block 4



This spread lists the different interfaces present within Block 4

This block is located at the centre of the Waterloo Estate South Precinct as indicated in the adjacent key plan. This block delivers retail at ground level with residential units stacked at higher levels. The block is bound by Wellington Street to the north, George Street to the west, John Street to the south, and West Street to the east. The northern property on this block is private and will not undergo development.



Building Interface and layers

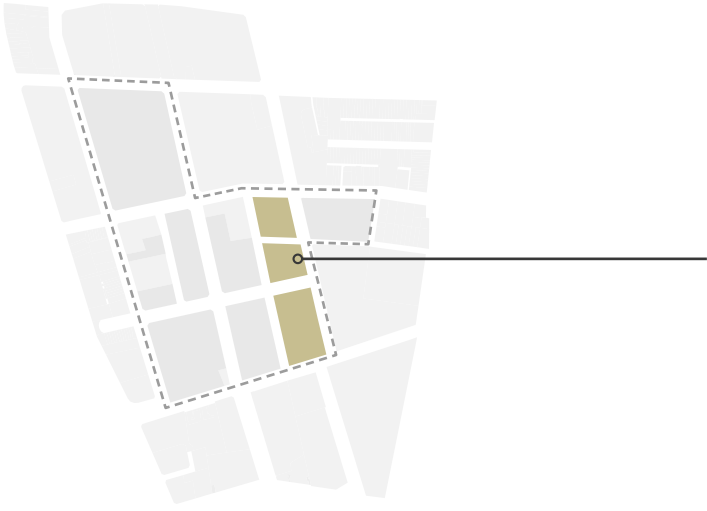
Building 4b

South	Stream
South-west	Pond
West	Contemporary Journey Line
Within	Dry Country

Building 4c

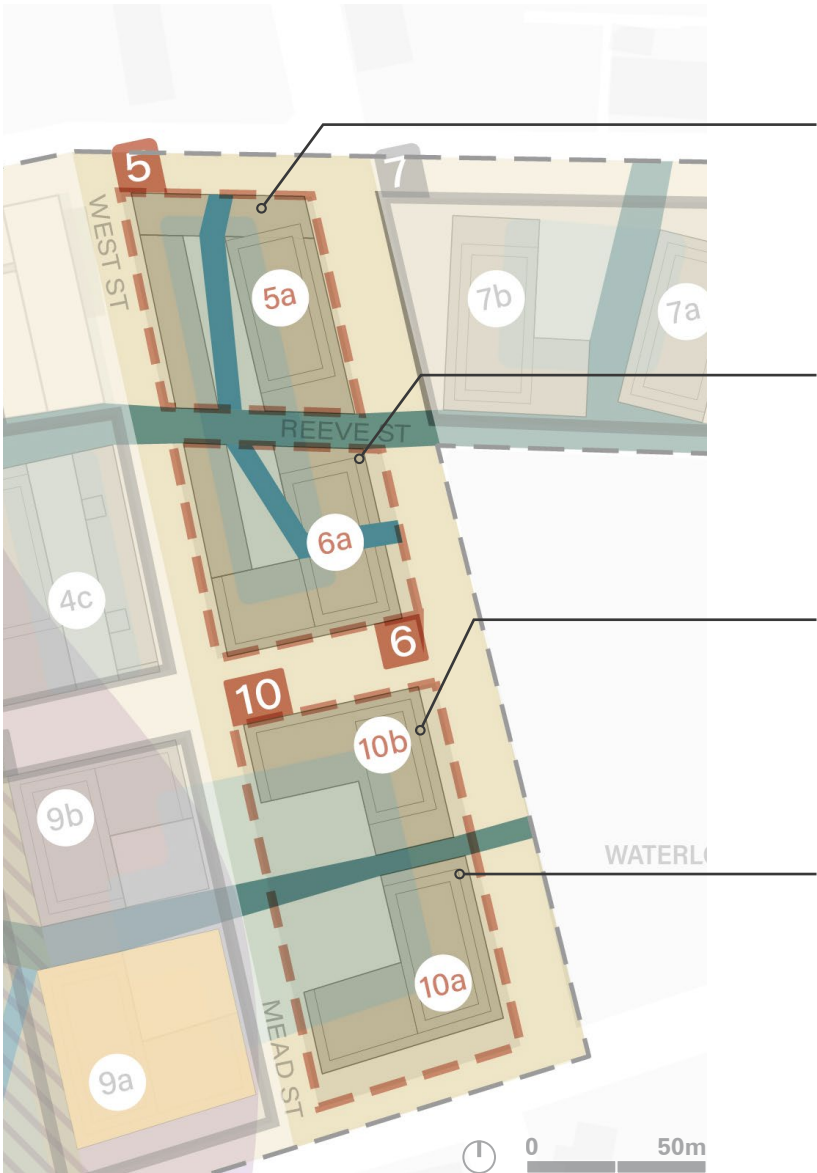
North	Stream
South-west	Threshold - Contemporary Journeys
West	Contemporary Journey Line
North-west	Pond
Within	Dry Country

5.8.5 Block 5, 6, 10



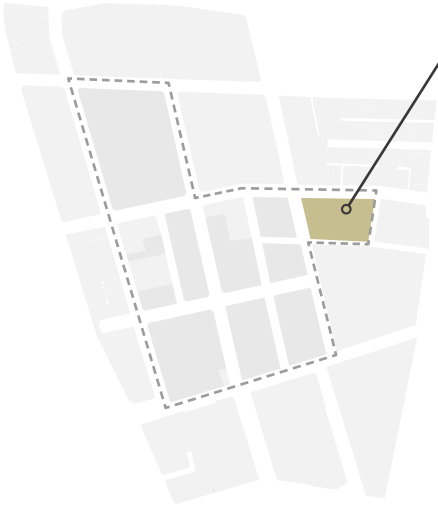
This spread lists the different interfaces present within Blocks 5, 6, and 10

These blocks are located at the eastern end of the Waterloo Estate South Precinct as indicated in the adjacent key plan. These blocks are predominantly residential. The blocks are bound by Wellington Street to the north, West Street and Mead Street to the west, McEvoy Street to the south, and Pitt Street to the east. Reeve Street separates Blocks 5 and 6 while John Street separates Blocks 6 and 10.



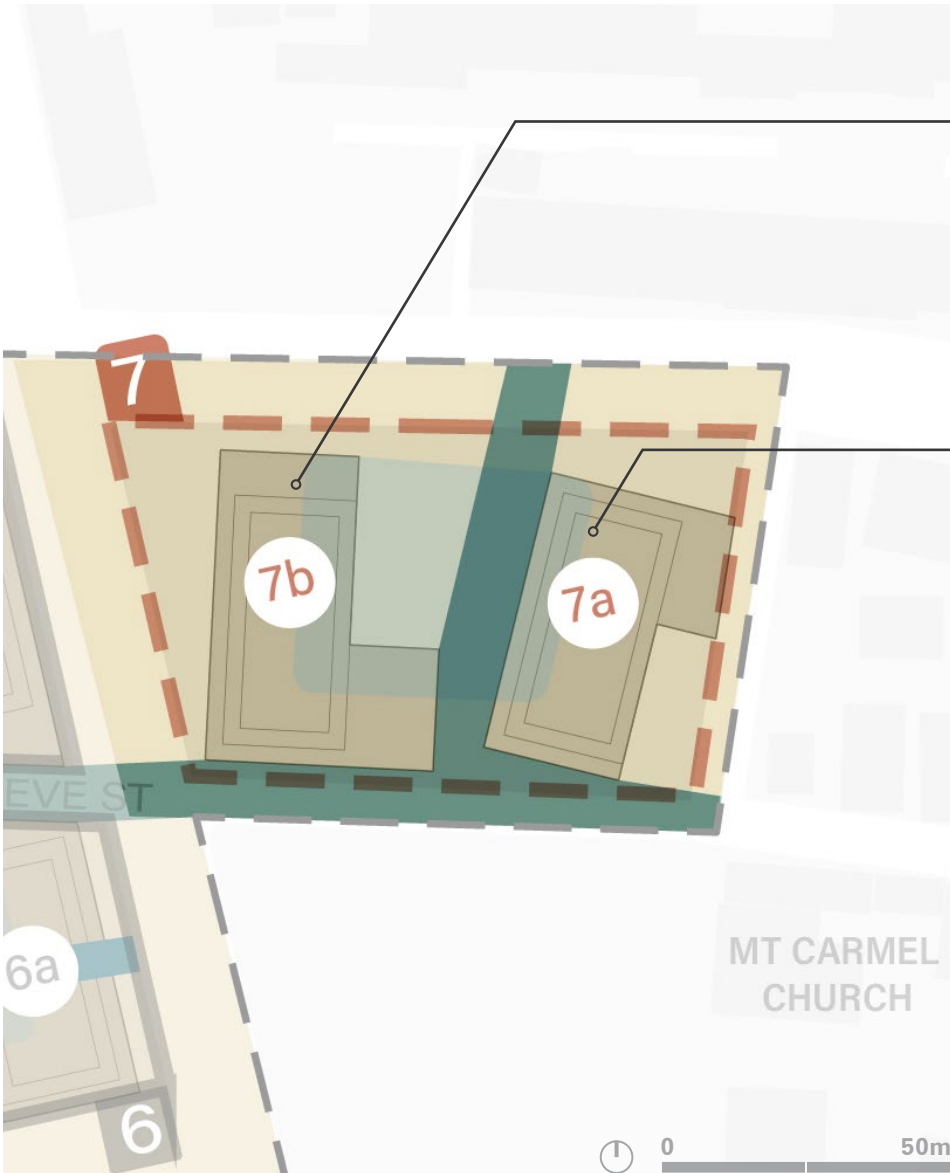
Building Interface and layers	
Building 5a	
South	Stream
Through middle	Streams and Ponds
Within	Dry Country
Building 6a	
North	Stream
Through middle	Streams and Ponds
Within	Dry Country
Building 10b	
South	Stream
Through middle	Pond
Within	Dry Country
Building 10a	
North	Stream
Through middle	Pond
Within	Dry Country

5.8.6 Block 7



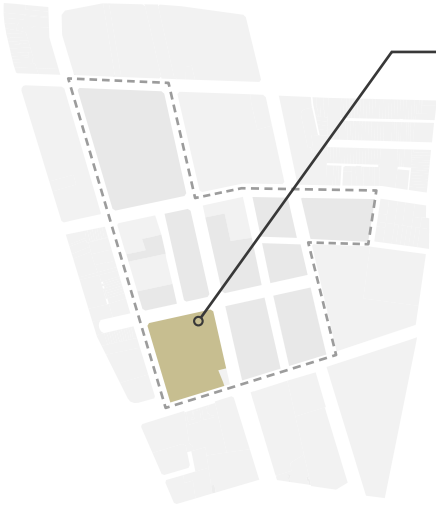
This spread lists the different interfaces present along Block 7

This block is located at the eastern end of the Waterloo Estate South Precinct as indicated in the adjacent key plan. This block is predominantly residential. The block is bound by Wellington Street to the north, Pitt Street to the west, Kellick Street to the south, and Gibson Street to the east.



Building Interface and layers	
Building 7b	
East	Streams and Ponds
South	Stream
West to East	Transition to Hilly Country
Within	Dry Country
Building 7a	
South	Stream
West to East	Transition to Hilly Country
West	Streams and Ponds
Within	Dry Country

5.8.7 Block 8



This spread lists the different interfaces present along Block 8

This block is located at the south west quadrant of the Waterloo Estate South Precinct as indicated in the adjacent key plan. This block is a mix of communal uses, retail, and residential units. The block is bound by John Street to the north, Cope Street to the west, McEvoy Street to the south, and George Street to the east.

Building Interface and layers

Building 8b	
East	Community Street
South-east	Belonging anchor
South	Stream
Within	Wet Country

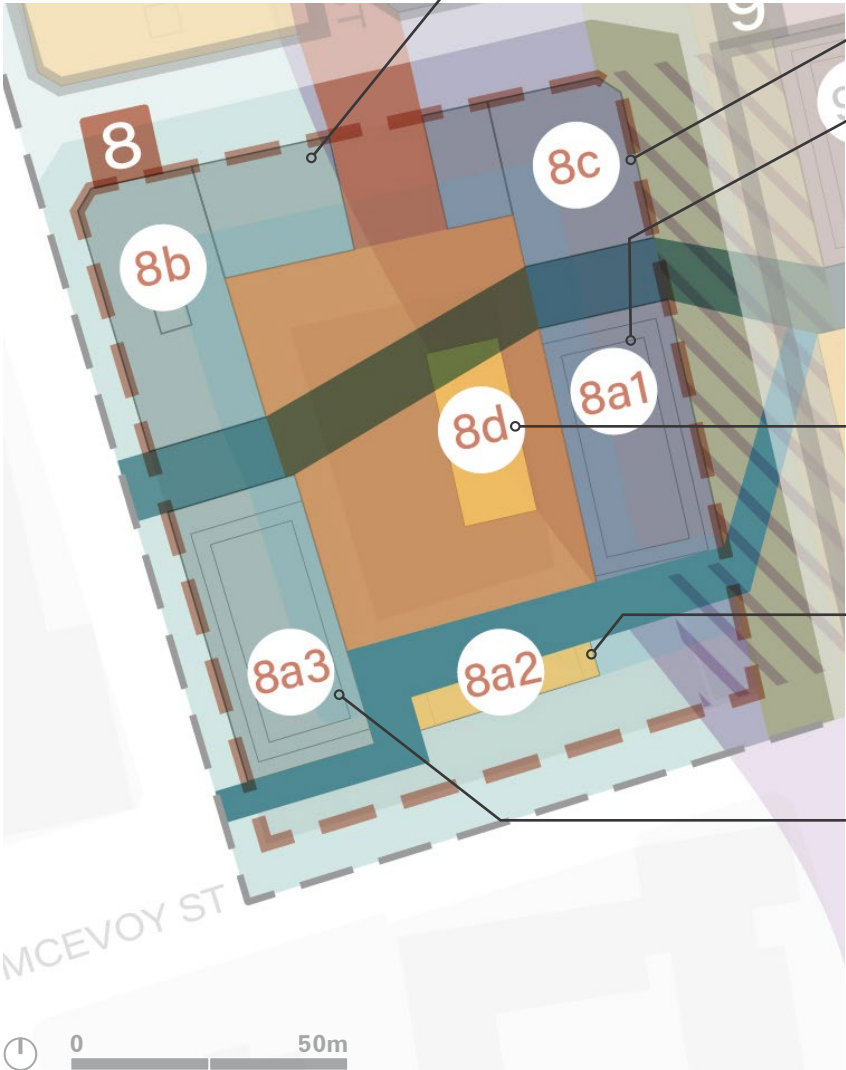
Building 8c	
East	Contemporary Journey Line
South	Stream
South-west	Belonging anchor
West	Community Street
Within	Wet Country

Building 8a1	
North	Stream
East	Contemporary Journey Line
South	Stream and wetland patch
West	Community Street
Within	Wet Country

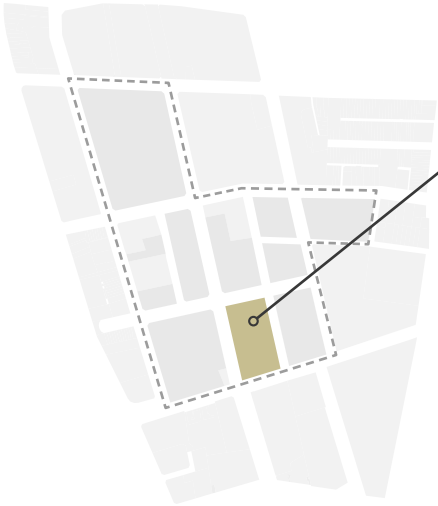
Building 8e	
North	Stream
Within	Wet Country, Belonging

Building 8a2	
North	Stream
Within	Wet Country

Building 8a3	
North	Stream
East	Belonging
South	Stream
Within	Wet Country

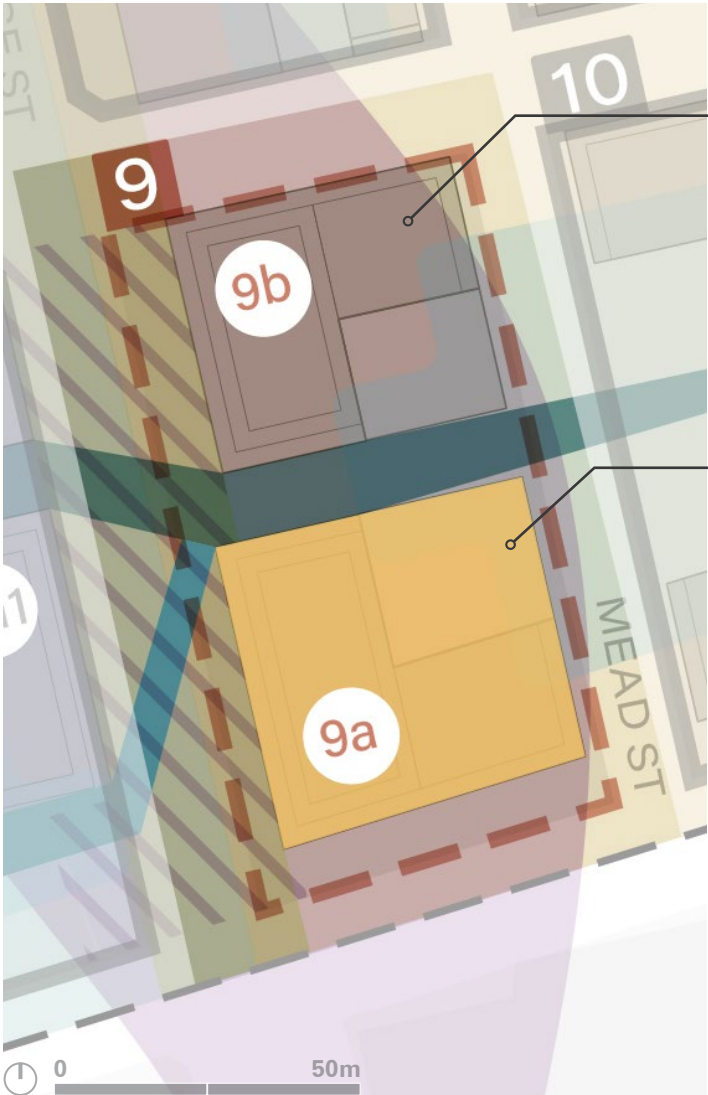


5.8.8 Block 9



This spread lists the different interfaces present along Block 9

This block is located at the southern end of the Waterloo Estate South Precinct as indicated in the adjacent key plan. This block delivers retail at ground level with residential units stacked at higher levels. The block is bound by John Street to the north, George Street to the west, McEvoy Street to the south, and Mead Street to the east.



Building Interface and layers

Building 9b

South	Streams and Ponds
West	Contemporary Journey Line and gathering
North-west	Threshold to contemporary journeys
Within	Dry Country

Building 9a

North	Streams and Ponds
South	Flooding patch
West	Contemporary Journey Line and gathering
Within	Dry Country, Communal space of Belonging



Figure 75: Skipping Stones at Lachlan's Lane by Axolotl

6.0 Beyond the Designing with Country Framework

Next steps

The next phase involves continued design development and ongoing engagement with Aboriginal knowledge holders and community members. It is essential to ensure Aboriginal voices are heard and meaningfully incorporated throughout all stages of design, delivery, and long-term maintenance, fostering a culturally responsive and inclusive precinct. This engagement is also key to defining an approach to Aboriginal employment opportunities and career pathways during the redevelopment of Waterloo and beyond.

Gadigal-centric interpretation

The opportunities, precinct design themes, design strategies, and recommendations identified in the DwC Strategic Framework (this document) will be further explored in the design stage.

The selected design teams will deliver responses to Country demonstrating how their proposal will provide a genuine and lasting connection to Country, reflective of the Framework. The design response will be explained in an Aboriginal Interpretation Strategy.

The design response will include:

- Identification of opportunities to implement the four key design themes for Country, as identified in this document.
- Identification of key responses and design moves, explaining their validity and providing assurance on how the themes will be implemented.
- Engagement with Aboriginal Design Panel.

Aboriginal stakeholder group engagement

The below design and reference groups are proposed to be involved in future stages to provide assistance in the delivery of outcomes.

Executive Indigenous Architect (EIA)

The Executive Indigenous Architect will provide initial project briefings to selected architects and maintain an ongoing role through the Aboriginal Design Panel. This ensures that Aboriginal perspectives are embedded from the outset and carried through the design process.

Aboriginal Design Panel

The Aboriginal Design Panel is a consortium of Stockland appointed consultants tasked with informing and guiding the implementation of the Framework. The Panel will consider the design response against the Framework and relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) requirements of the Waterloo Estate (South): Design Guide, as proposed to be amended - providing guidance and commentary as appropriate.

Aboriginal Reference Group

An Aboriginal Reference Group is envisioned to be formed as a result of community engagement. The group will be a community-based panel representing a diverse cross-section of stakeholders. Its role is to ensure that engagement and consultation with Aboriginal communities continue throughout the later stages of the project, maintaining cultural relevance and accountability.

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