

FIRST NATIONS CO-DESIGN VALUES REPORT

Shop-Top Housing • 494-500 & 516 Military Road, Mosman



Image Source: Joseph Lycett Aborigines Spearing Fish, Others Diving for Crayfish; a Party Seated beside a Fire Cooking Fish

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Acknowledgement of Country



JMP Aboriginal Consultancy would like to acknowledge the Cammeraygal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Mosman stands.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

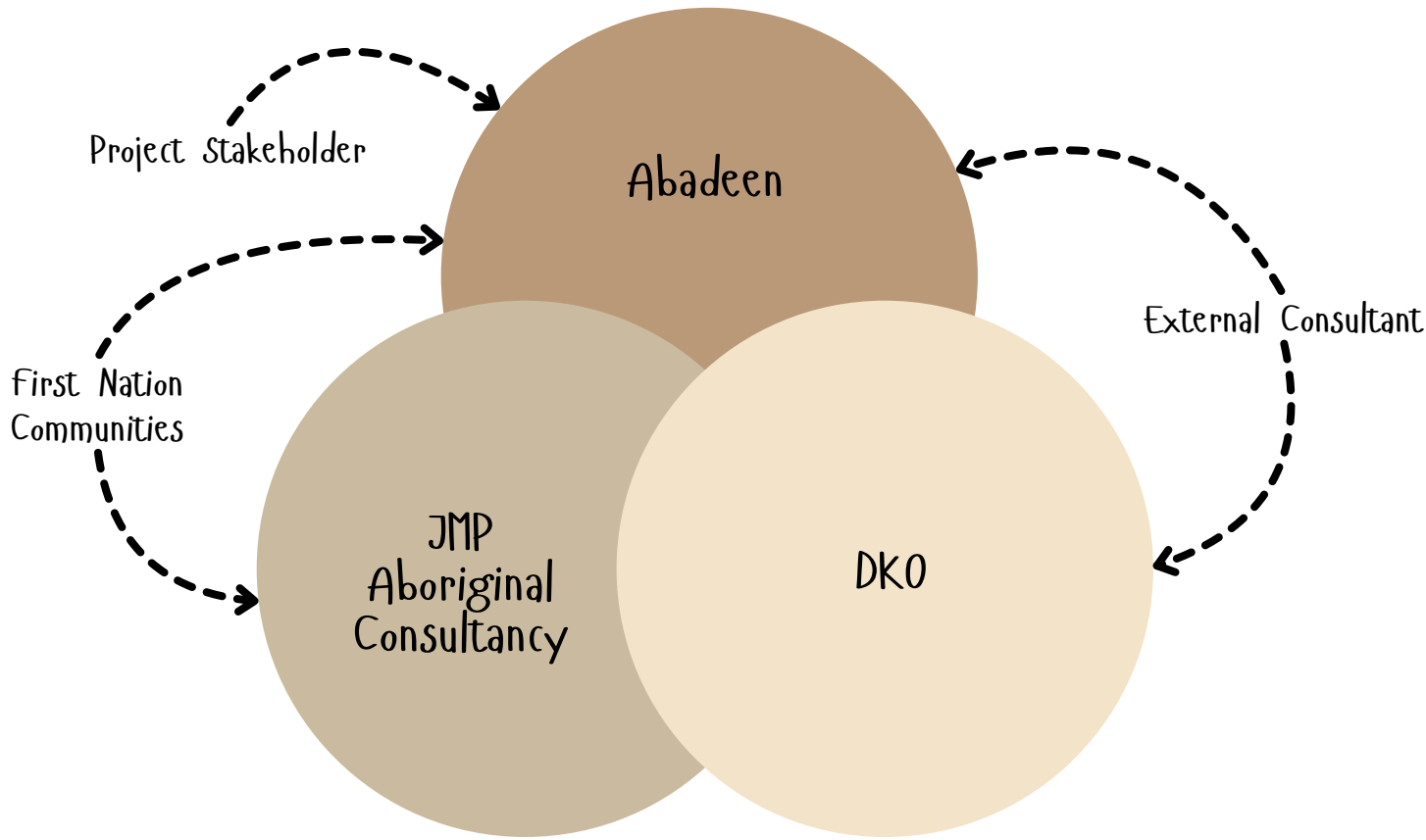
The Cammeraygal people have cared for this Country for tens of thousands of years, sustaining its waterways, landscapes, flora, and fauna, and cultural knowledge systems. Their deep and enduring connection to land, water, and sky continues to shape the cultural identity of this place today.

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



Our Point in Difference

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



Culturally Grounded Leadership and Local Knowledge

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

Integrated Design and Cultural Strategy

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

Cross-Sector Experience and Multidisciplinary Capability

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

Trusted Facilitators of Place-Based Cultural Engagement

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

Overview



Designing with Country

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

Questions to Ask Yourself

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



Connecting to Country Aim

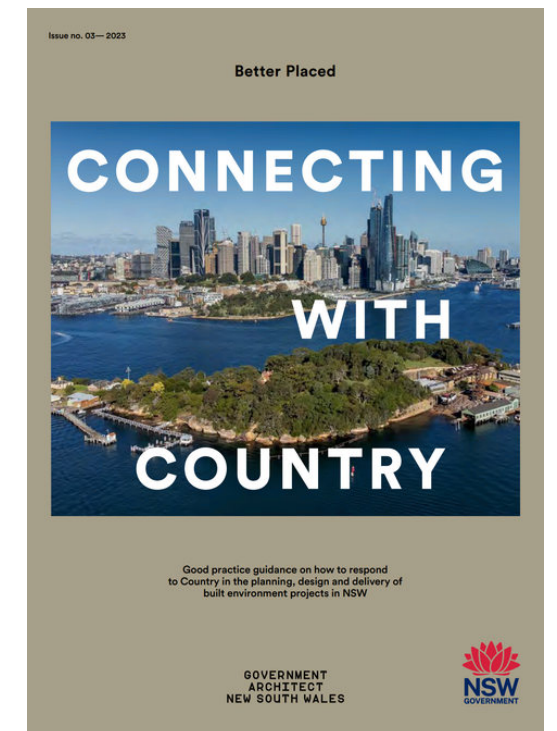
The aim of Connecting to Country is to guide project teams in understanding the deep cultural connection First Nations peoples have to their language regions and traditional lands. This process supports better design outcomes by ensuring that cultural knowledge, values, and perspectives contribute meaningfully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



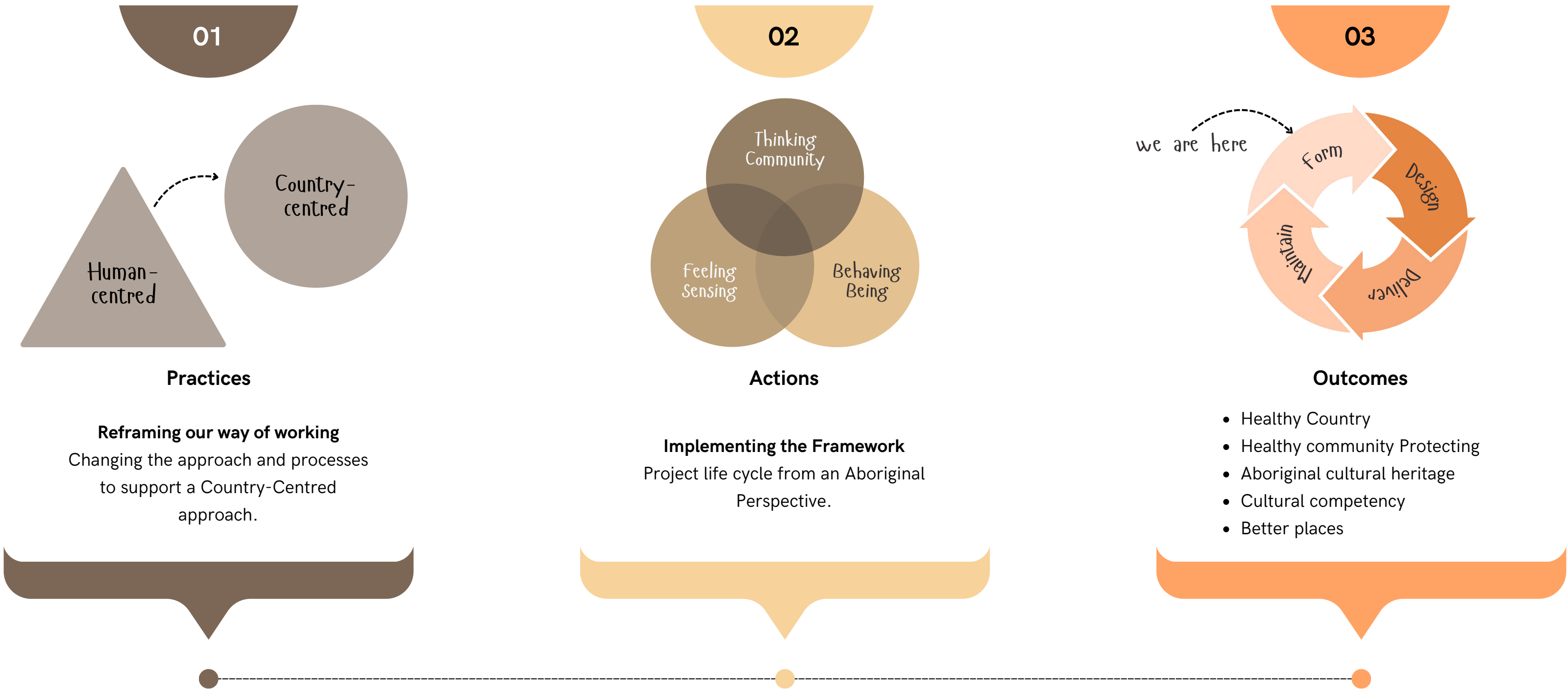
Our Methodology

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

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



Framework



Source: Connecting with Country Framework (Figure 5)

Walking in Two Worlds

Western Methodologies & Paradigms

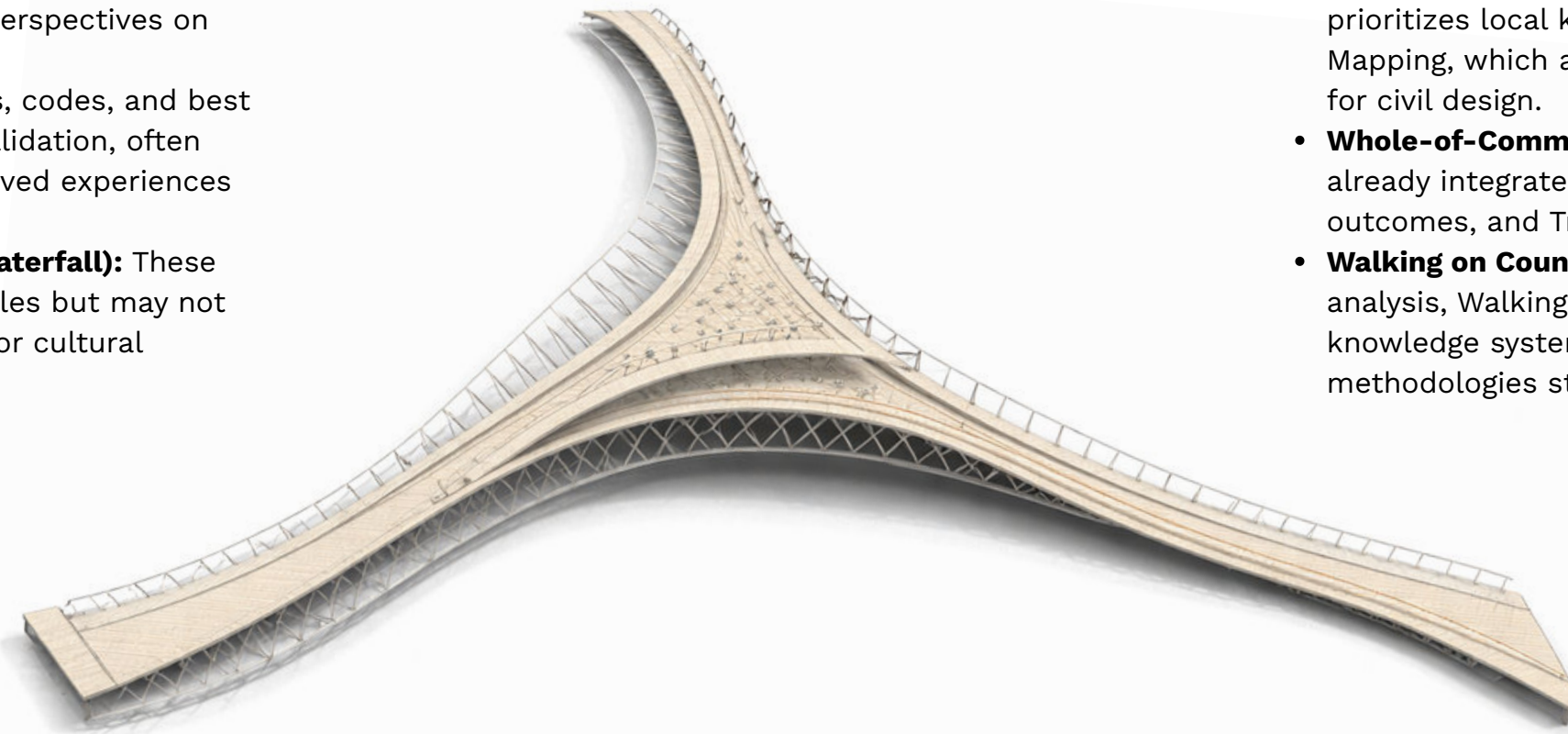
Western research methodologies are grounded in structured, systematic inquiry that emphasizes objectivity, empirical data, and repeatability. These approaches are common in engineering and project management:

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

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

Axiology
Understanding values

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



Epistemology
Understanding the study of how we know things

Indigenous Methodologies & Paradigms

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

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



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

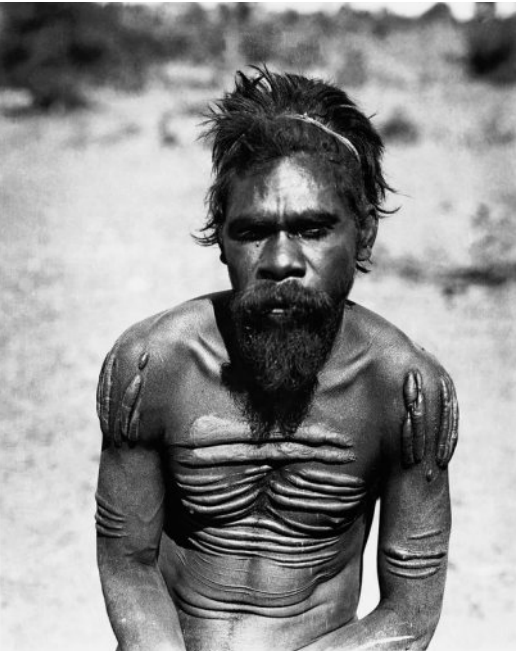
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FIRST NATIONS CUSTOMS AND SPIRITUALITY

Aboriginal Lore

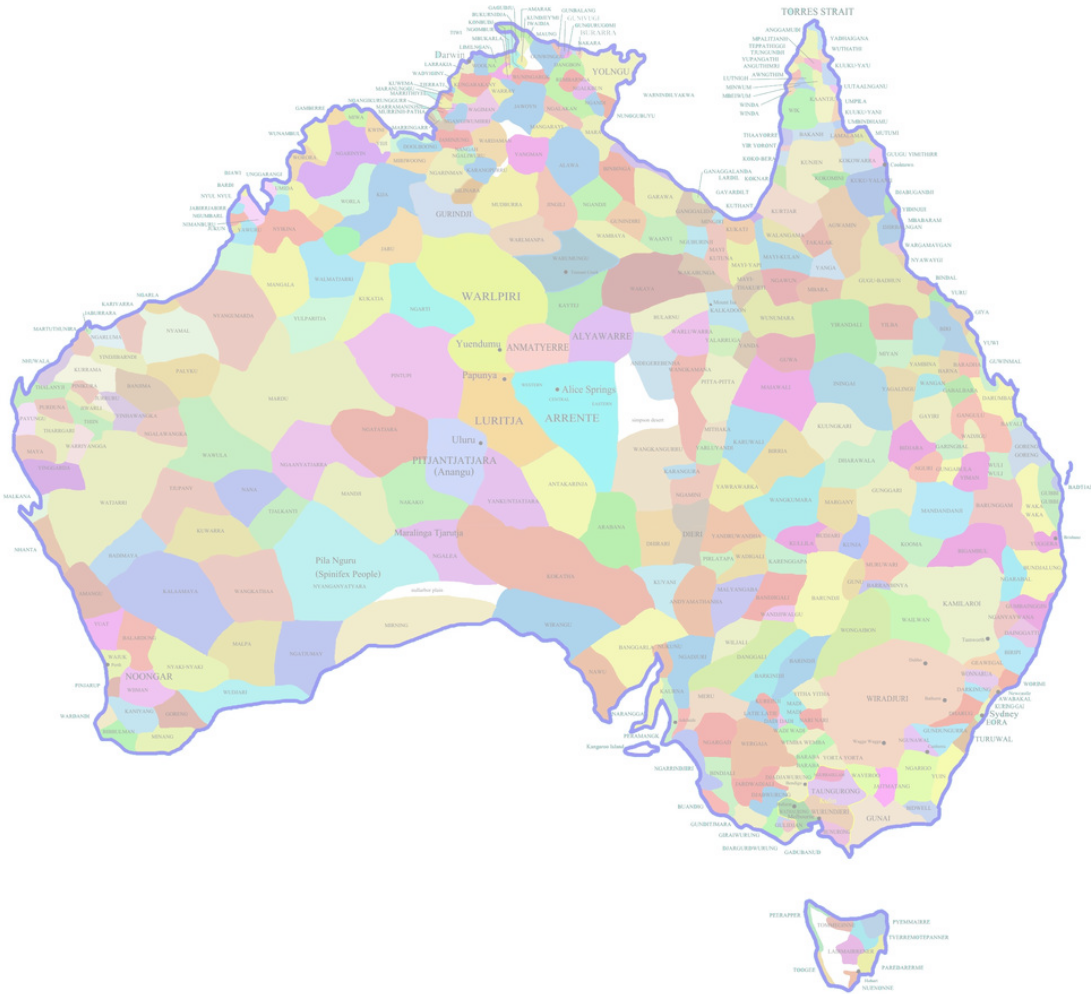
Aboriginal lore encompasses the traditional laws, customs, and spiritual beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, transmitted through generations. In contrast to Western legal systems, which are formally documented and enforced by institutions, Aboriginal lore is deeply rooted in oral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

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



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

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



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

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



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

Sky Country

The Dreamtime and the Stars

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

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

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

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



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



'Sky Country' © Holly Sanders



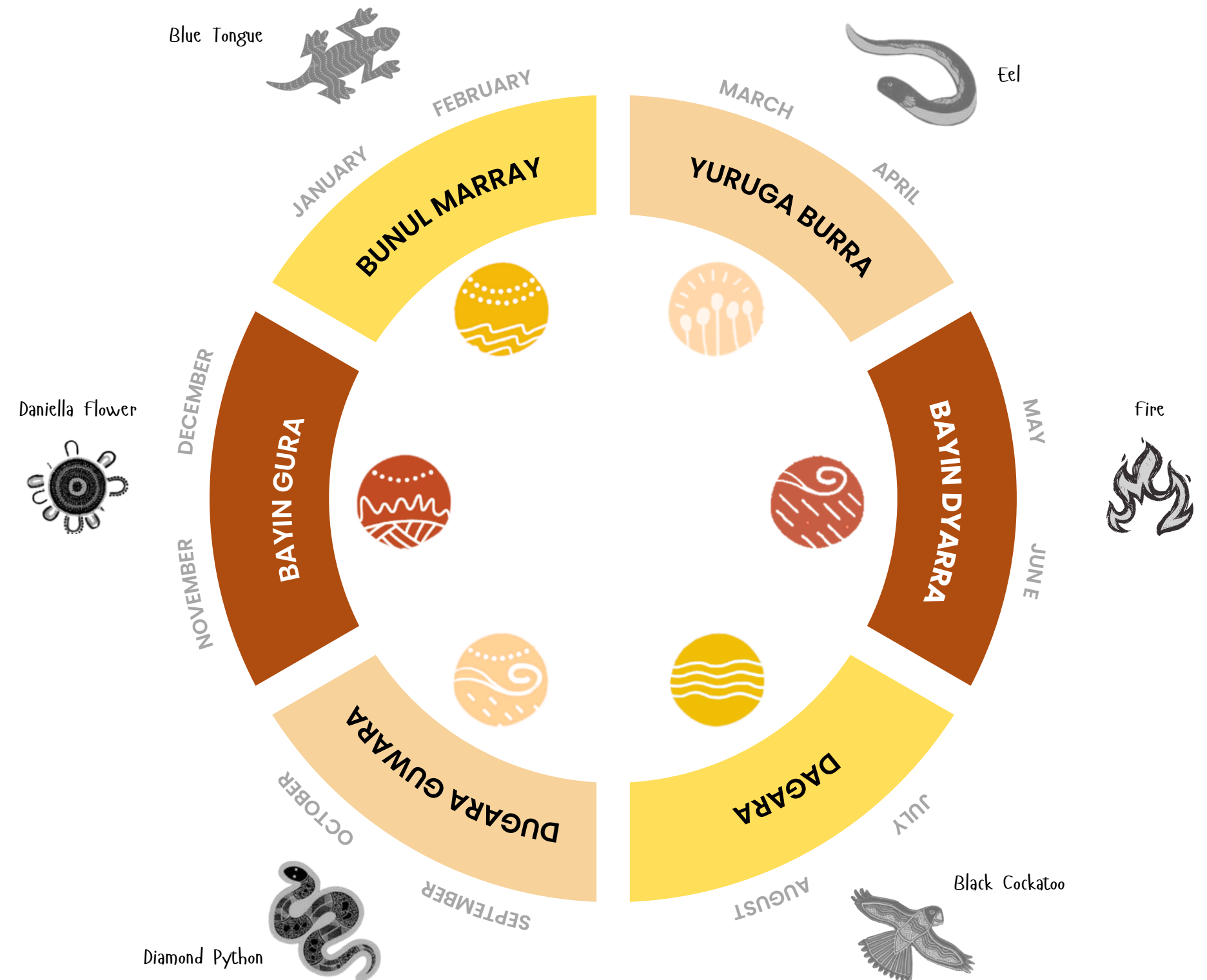
The Emu in the Sky as seen from Kuringai National Park. © Barnaby Norris/Ray Norris

Aboriginal Seasons

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

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

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



Manicuring Country

“If you are looking across the landscape and there is a particular heritage site or place in the landscape, that’s a tangible thing. But associated with that site might be stories, song, dance, and they are all part of our Australian Indigenous cultural heritage”

- Chrissy Grant, a Kuku Yalnji and Mualgal woman

The First Landscape Architects

Landscapes were designed, not discovered

For tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal peoples actively shaped and cared for the Australian continent. The land encountered by European settlers was not untouched wilderness - it was managed, productive, and carefully observed cultural landscape.

Through cultural burning, selective harvesting, and seasonal movement, Aboriginal communities maintained mosaic environments that balanced forest, grassland, and wetland systems. Fire was applied deliberately and at low intensity to regenerate growth, reduce fuel loads, and support animal habitats. Plant species were encouraged, transplanted, or protected according to ecological knowledge developed over millennia.

Country was not owned - it was cared for. Management practices were guided by cultural law, kinship responsibility, and intergenerational knowledge systems. The landscape was read as a living entity requiring ongoing attention and reciprocity.

Engineered ecologies and food systems

Aboriginal economies were highly sophisticated and regionally adapted. Across the continent, people cultivated native grains, managed yam fields, harvested seeds, and stored food. Grasslands were deliberately maintained to support grazing species, creating reliable and renewable food sources.

Aquaculture systems were equally advanced. Fish traps, stone weirs and modified water channels regulated tidal flow and fish movement. Coastal and riverine communities maintained sustainable harvesting cycles based on seasonal indicators and spawning patterns. Shell middens document long-term management rather than opportunistic extraction.

These systems demonstrate that Aboriginal land management was scientific, ecological, and enduring. “*Manicuring Country*” recognises that the Australian landscape was shaped through knowledge, intention, and deep custodial responsibility - not by accident, but by design.

The First Architects

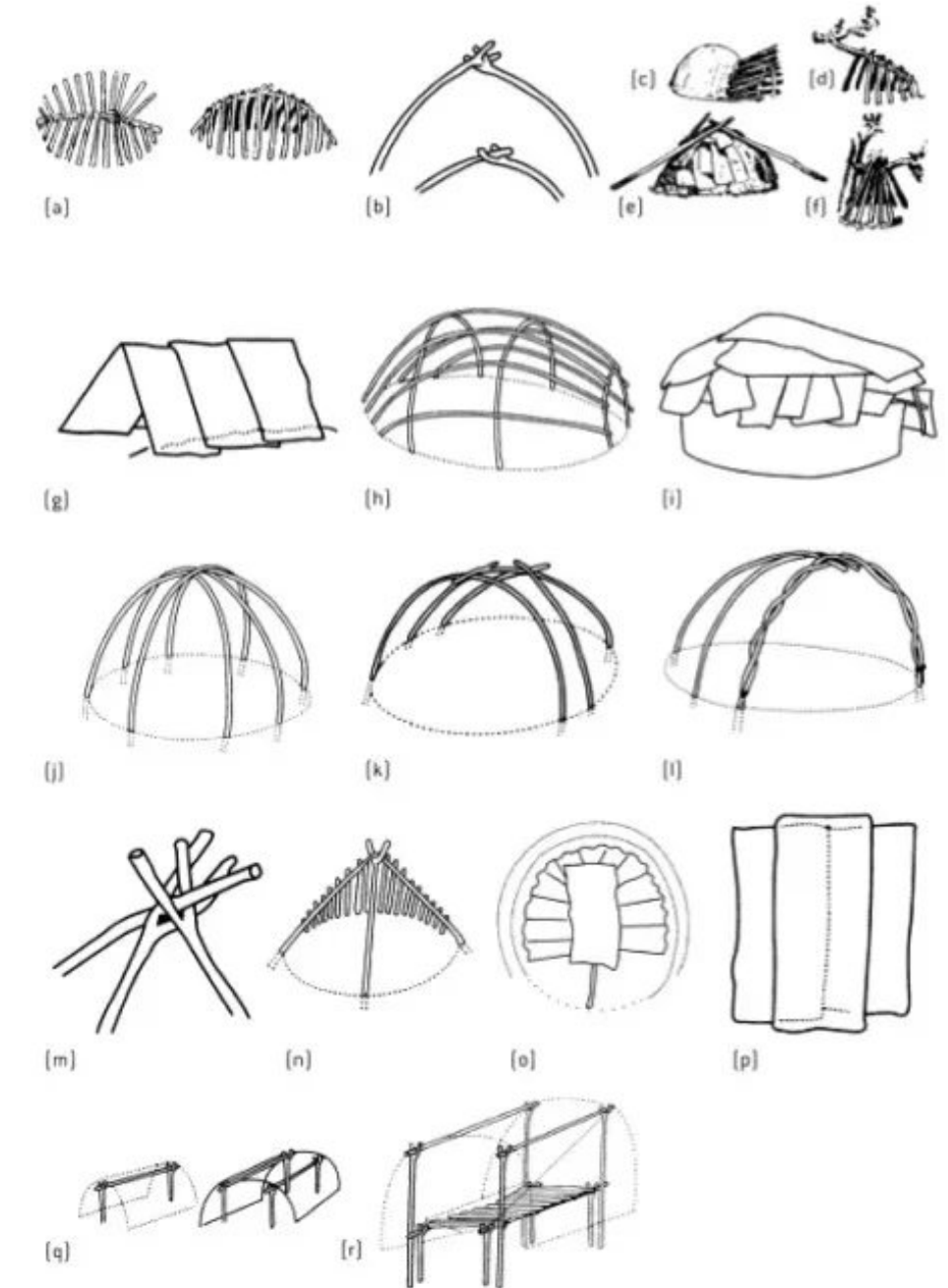


A 19th-century engraving of an indigenous Australian encampment

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

The Architecture of the Land

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



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

Influence in Design

Dance and Practices

Welcome to Country

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

Smoking Ceremony

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



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

Key aspects of Aboriginal Dance

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



Wiradjuri man Joe Williams dancing at #YarriJackyJackyCorroboree22 - Darkeye Photography

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

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



Barangaroo and the Eora Fisherwoman

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CAMMEREYGAL CULTURE

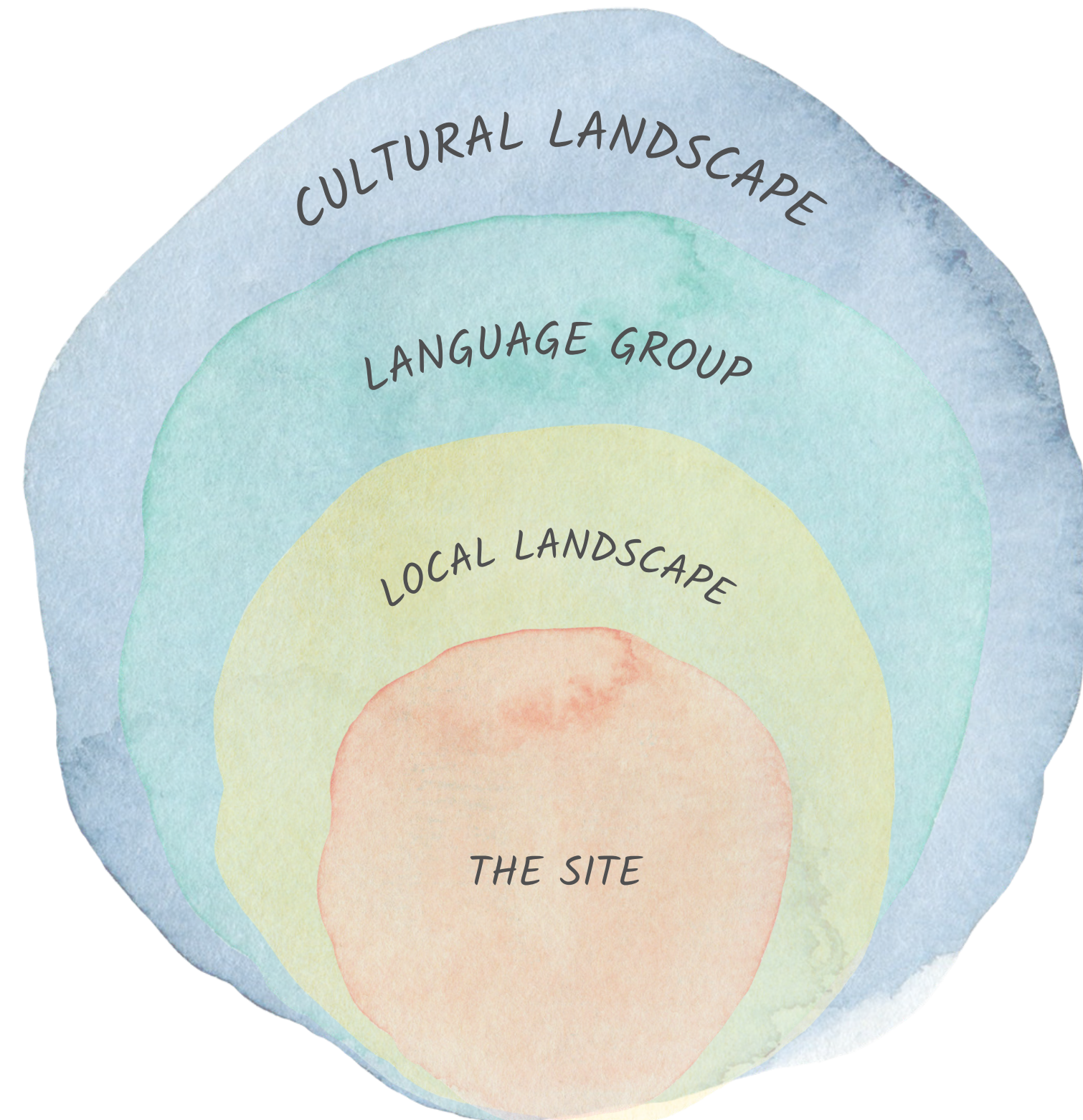
Cultural Scale

Mapping is a way of understanding place beyond cadastral boundaries. It situates 494-516 Military Road within the layered cultural, ecological and historical systems that long predate contemporary urban development. Rather than viewing the site as an isolated commercial corridor within Mosman, mapping reveals relationships - between harbour waters and sandstone headlands, between tidal systems and bushland, between clan estates and established movement pathways across *Warrane*.

For projects on Cammeraygal Country, mapping acknowledges that Mosman is not simply a peninsula suburb; it sits within a broader harbour cultural landscape structured by *Warrane* (Sydney Harbour), sheltered coves, rocky foreshores and elevated sandstone ridgelines. These systems supported fishing, canoe travel, shellfish gathering, plant harvesting and inter-clan exchange across the Eora Nation. The harbour functioned as both food source and movement corridor, connecting estates across saltwater and sandstone.

By mapping across scales - from site, to local headland landscape, to Cammeraygal estate, to the wider Eora cultural network - we recognise that Country operates relationally. Each layer informs how land and water were understood, used and cared for over thousands of years.

Mapping these connections prevents Country from being reduced to symbolic acknowledgement. It provides spatial clarity to cultural knowledge, grounding design and planning decisions within the deeper structure of place. In doing so, mapping becomes both an act of respect and a practical framework - ensuring contemporary development responds thoughtfully to the enduring cultural landscape of Cammeraygal Country.



Cultural Landscape

Eora Nation

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

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

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

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

Understanding the Eora Nation provides the broader cultural framework within which the Cammeraygal clan, and the site at 494-500 & 516 Military Road, must be situated. The land is part of a much older cultural geography that predates modern suburb boundaries and continues to shape identity, belonging and responsibility today.



Cultural Landscape (cont.)

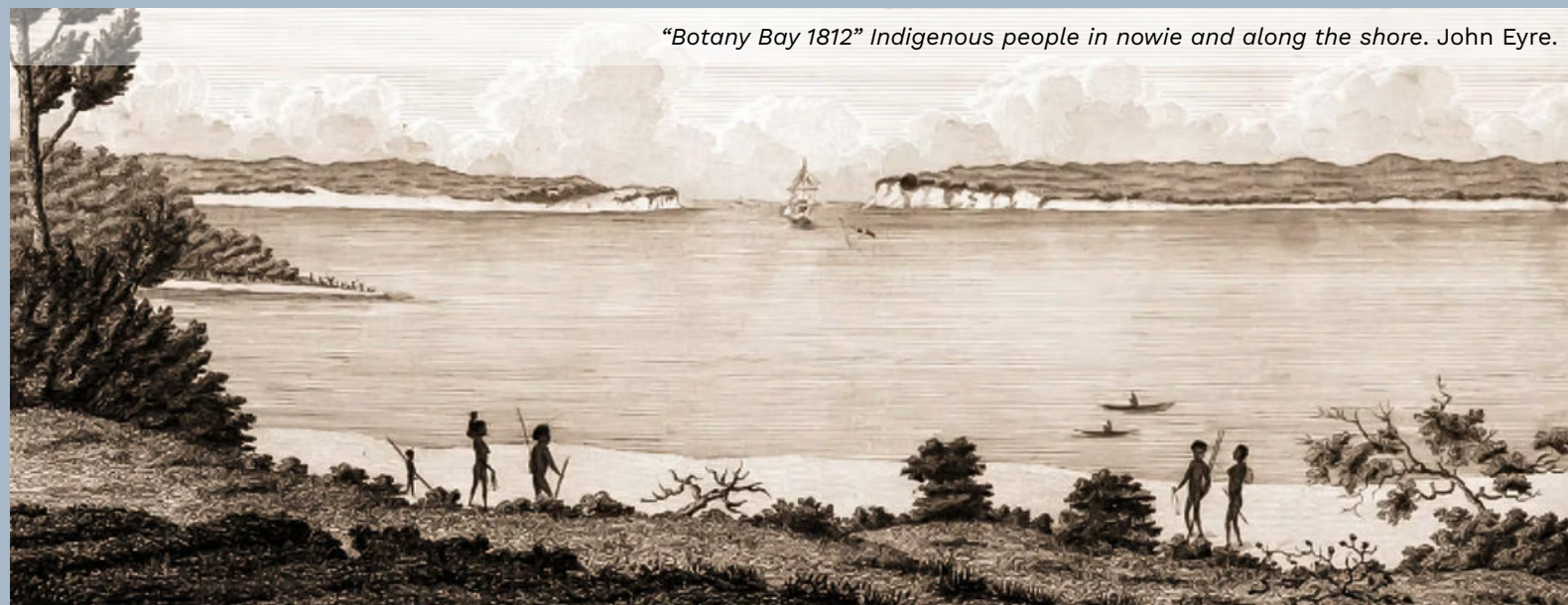
SONGLINES AND MOVEMENT PATHWAYS

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

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

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

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



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

INTERCONNECTED CLAN ESTATES

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

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

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

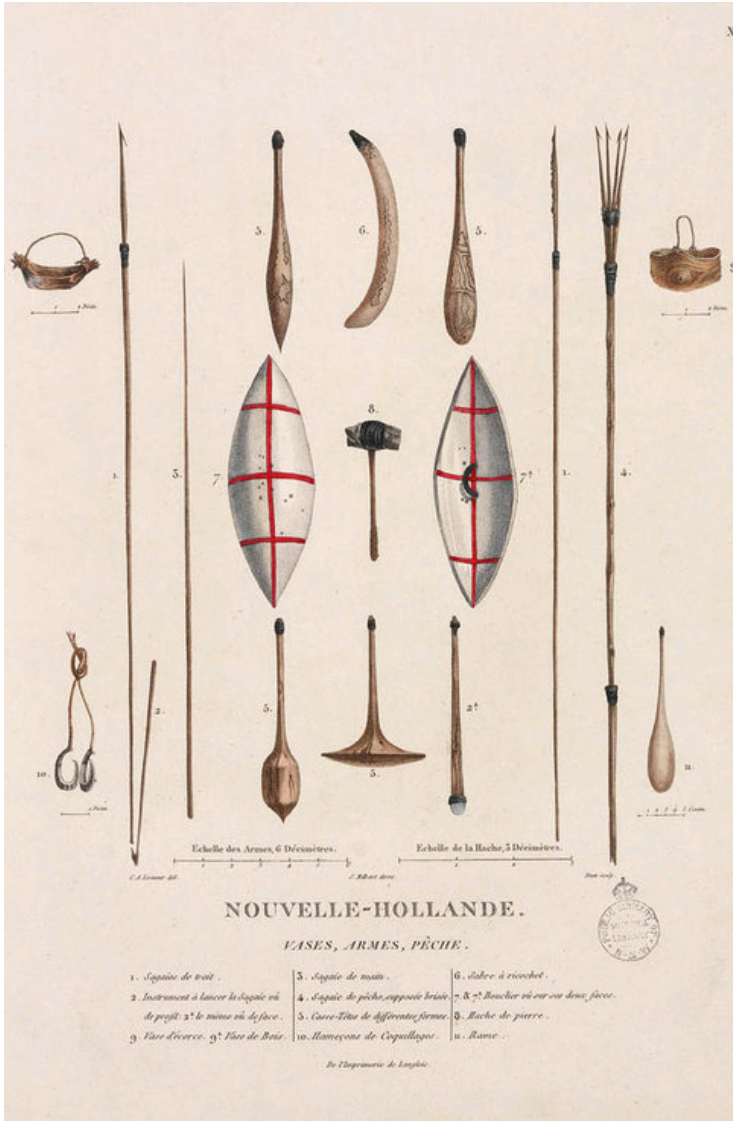


Cultural Expression

ARTS AND ARTEFACTS



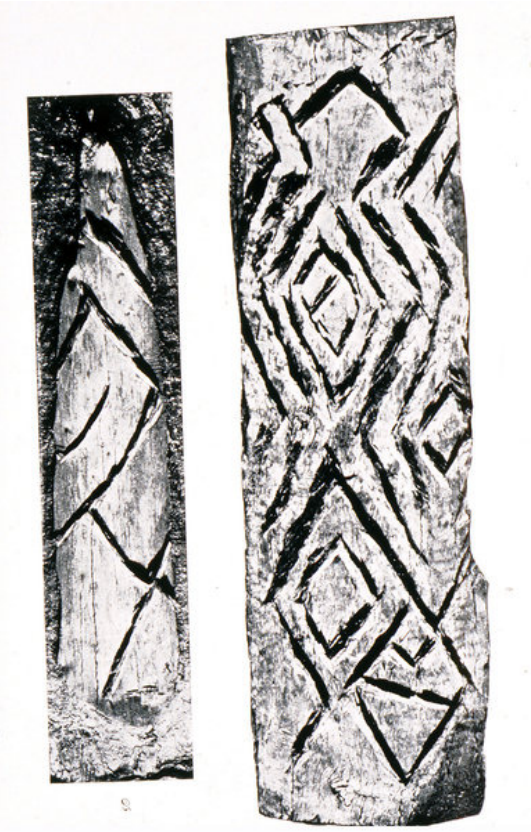
Fish hooks of New South Wales and a feather of the cassowary c1789. By John White



By Charles Alexandre Lesueur



Whale carving at Balls Head



Carved Trees. By RJ Jr Etheridge.

Cultural Expression (cont.)

TOOLS



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



Ground-edged hatchet with wooden wrap-around handle.



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

People of Country

Cammeraygal Country

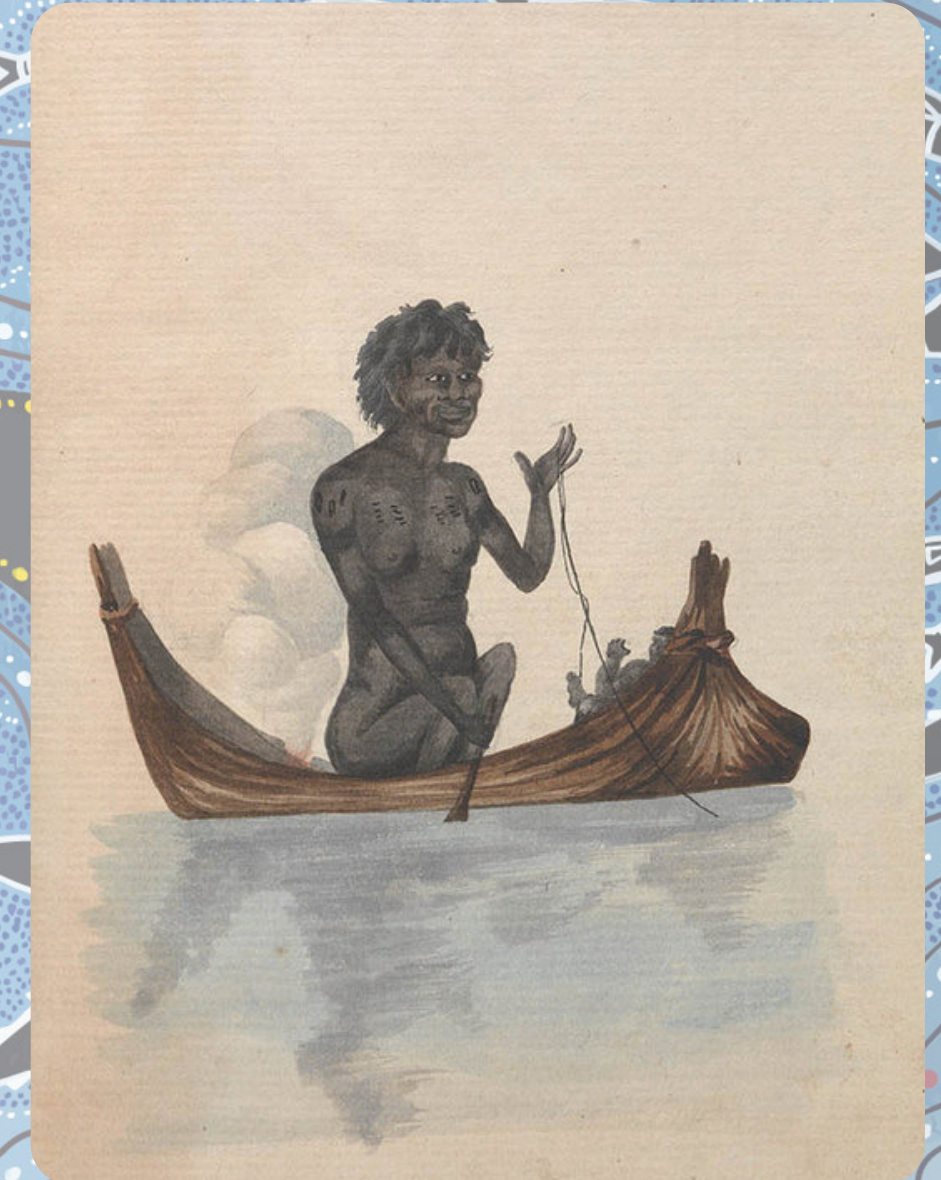
The Cammeraygal people are the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters along the northern shores of Warrane (Sydney Harbour), encompassing sandstone headlands, sheltered coves and forested ridgelines that define what is now Mosman and the broader north harbour region.

Early accounts described Cammeraygal men and women as physically strong and robust - a reflection of lives lived in close relationship with harbour and bushland. Daily movement across sandstone terrain, fishing from canoes, diving in tidal waters and gathering along rocky foreshores required endurance, skill and intimate environmental knowledge. Physical strength was not incidental, but part of a way of life shaped by Country itself.

Cammeraygal life was closely attuned to the harbour environment. Tidal waters, rocky foreshores and inlets provided fish and shellfish, while surrounding woodland and sandstone country supplied plant foods, fibres, timber and materials for tools and watercraft. The harbour functioned not only as a food source but as a movement corridor, linking neighbouring clan estates across the broader coastal network.

Country was understood relationally - as an interconnected system of land, water, sky and kin. Knowledge of tides, seasonal cycles, winds and marine patterns guided daily practice. Responsibility for caring for these systems was embedded within cultural law and carried through story, ceremony and lived practice.

Cammeraygal Country is not defined solely by mapped boundaries, but by enduring relationships - between people and harbour, between sandstone and sea, and between generations who continue to maintain cultural connection to this place.



People of Country (cont.)

KINSHIP AND CULTURAL LAW

Cammeraygal society was structured through kinship systems that defined identity, responsibility and belonging. Relationships extended beyond immediate family to wider clan networks across the harbour and surrounding estates. These kinship structures governed marriage, ceremony, resource sharing and custodial obligations to specific places.

Cultural law guided how land and water were used and cared for. Access to resources, movement across Country and participation in ceremony were shaped by inherited responsibility rather than ownership in a Western sense. Authority was relational and embedded in knowledge, age and cultural role. Through these systems, balance between people and environment was maintained across generations.

Cammeraygal Country remains living Country. Cultural practice continues through community gatherings, ceremony, cultural education and advocacy across the north harbour region and greater Sydney. Contemporary Cammeraygal and broader Eora descendants maintain connection through Welcome to Country ceremonies, cultural walks, language renewal and storytelling that reassert relationship to harbour, headlands and shoreline.

Today, connection to Warrane and the surrounding sandstone landscape remains central. Through ceremony, education and cultural presence in public space, Cammeraygal custodianship endures - sustaining relationships between land, water and community in the present day.

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

Cammeraygal knowledge was grounded in close observation of the harbour landscape. Understanding tides, currents, wind patterns and seasonal change shaped daily life and informed when and where to fish, gather or travel. The sandstone headlands and sheltered bays were read as living systems, each with distinct qualities and responsibilities.

Practical knowledge was transmitted through story, demonstration and ceremony. Skills such as canoe making, fishing, plant harvesting and tool production were embedded within broader cultural teachings. Knowledge was not abstract - it was practiced, performed and continually renewed through relationship with Country.

Living Culture

The arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 brought rapid and irreversible change to Cammeraygal Country. The harbour that had sustained generations through fishing, travel and ceremony became a site of military occupation, resource extraction and settlement. Sandstone headlands were quarried, forests cleared, and coves transformed into wharves and estates.

Introduced diseases devastated harbour communities, disrupting kinship networks and cultural continuity. Access to traditional fishing grounds and movement pathways across *Warrane* was increasingly restricted as land was granted, fenced and developed. Social structures that had governed responsibility and care for Country were placed under immense pressure.

The transformation of the north shore into estates, infrastructure and later dense urban development altered ecological systems that had supported Cammeraygal life for millennia. Marine stocks declined, freshwater sources were modified, and ceremonial and gathering places were absorbed into the expanding colonial city.

Despite this profound disruption, Cammeraygal identity was not extinguished. While the physical landscape changed, cultural connection to harbour, sandstone and sky endured carried through descendants, community and continued presence on Country.



Impacts of Colonisation

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

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

The sculptural forms embedded in the sandstone reference the ancient presence of the eel within Sydney's tidal systems and acknowledge the enduring cultural connections of First Nations peoples to Warrane (Sydney Harbour). The work honours deep time, saltwater knowledge and the continuing custodianship of Country.



Living Culture

Continuity and Adaption

Despite the profound disruption brought by colonisation, Cammeraygal culture did not disappear. Connection to harbour, sandstone and sky continued through family lines, community networks and the persistence of cultural knowledge. While access to land and water was restricted and the physical landscape transformed, relationship to Country endured.

Cultural practice adapted to new conditions. Knowledge that had once guided fishing, gathering and movement across Warrane was carried forward through story, teaching and community memory. Kinship structures continued to sustain identity and belonging, even as people were displaced or dispersed across the broader Sydney region.

Across Mosman and the north harbour today, Cammeraygal custodianship remains present. Cultural education, ceremony, language renewal and recognition of Aboriginal place names reaffirm ongoing connection to Country. Adaptation has not meant loss of identity; rather, it reflects resilience - the capacity to maintain cultural continuity while navigating changing social and environmental conditions.

Continuity is expressed not only through remembrance, but through active presence. Cammeraygal Country remains living Country, sustained through enduring relationships between people, harbour and land.



St Leonards Health Organisation Relocation (SHOR)

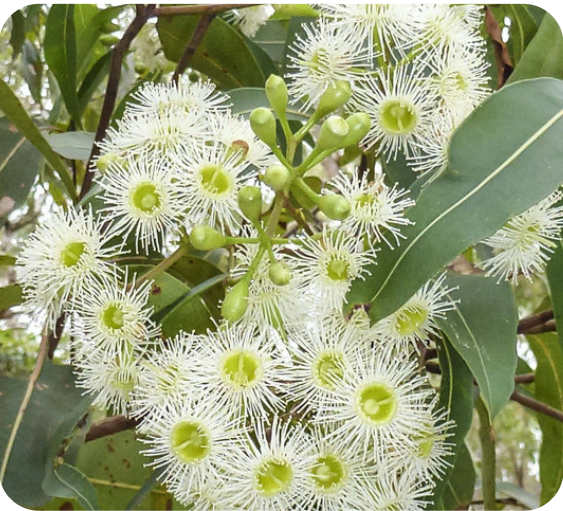
Local Landscape



Angophora Costata



Banksia Serrata



Corymbia Gummiifera



Eucalyptus Piperita



Grevillea Sericea



Hakea Teretifolia



Leptospermum Laevigatum



Themeda Triandra



Dianella Caerulea



Lomandra Longifolia

The canopy species of the Sydney Coastal Sandstone Foreshores Forest — including Angophora, Banksia, Bloodwood and Peppermint — form the structural backbone of sandstone Country. These trees provided timber, bark, resin and medicinal leaves, while also shaping habitat, shade and seasonal indicators across the headlands. More than resources, they functioned as ecological markers, signalling soil conditions, water availability and seasonal change. Their presence reflects a long-standing relationship between people and the resilient sandstone landscape.

The canopy species of the Sydney Coastal Sandstone Foreshores Forest - including Angophora, Banksia, Bloodwood and Peppermint - form the structural backbone of sandstone Country. These trees provided timber, bark, resin and medicinal leaves, while also shaping habitat, shade and seasonal indicators across the headlands. More than resources, they functioned as ecological markers, signalling soil conditions, water availability and seasonal change. Their presence reflects a long-standing relationship between people and the resilient sandstone landscape.

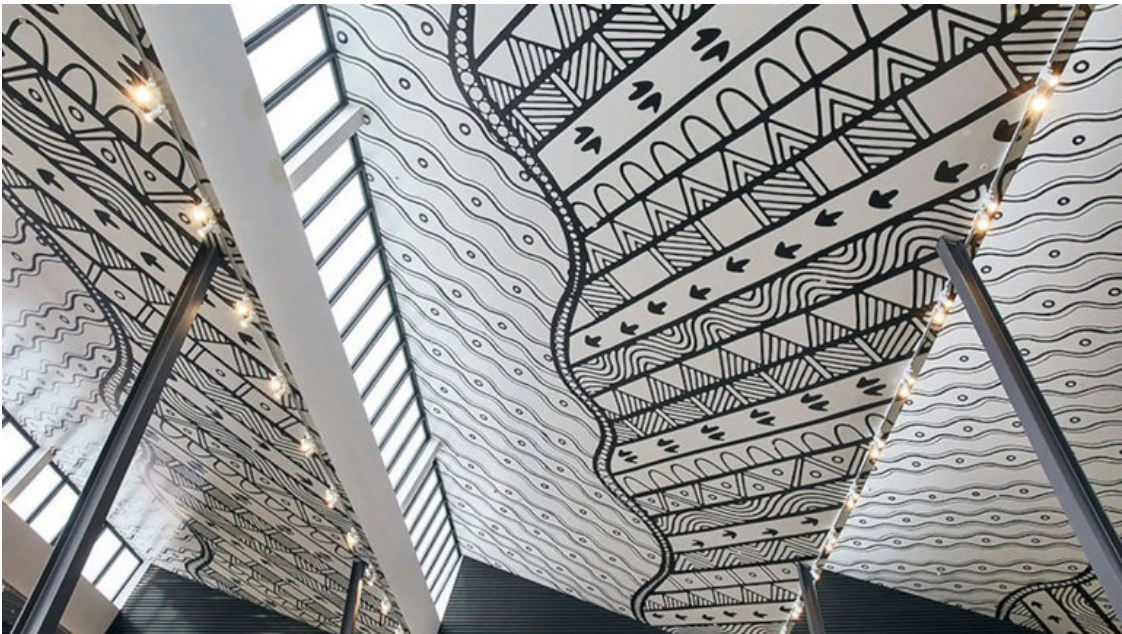
The dense shrubby understory characteristic of this forest type supported biodiversity and cultural practice alike. Flowering species such as Grevillea, Hakea, Tea Tree and Geebung offered nectar, edible fruits, medicines and materials for tools and shelter. These shrubs stabilised soils along exposed slopes and coastal edges, while also contributing to pollination cycles and habitat networks. The diversity of the shrub layer reflects the fine-grained ecological knowledge embedded within Aboriginal land management systems.



6.0

FIRST NATIONS DESIGN ELEMENTS

Ceiling Treatment



Yagan Square, located in Perth’s CBD

Façade Design



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

Pavement Design

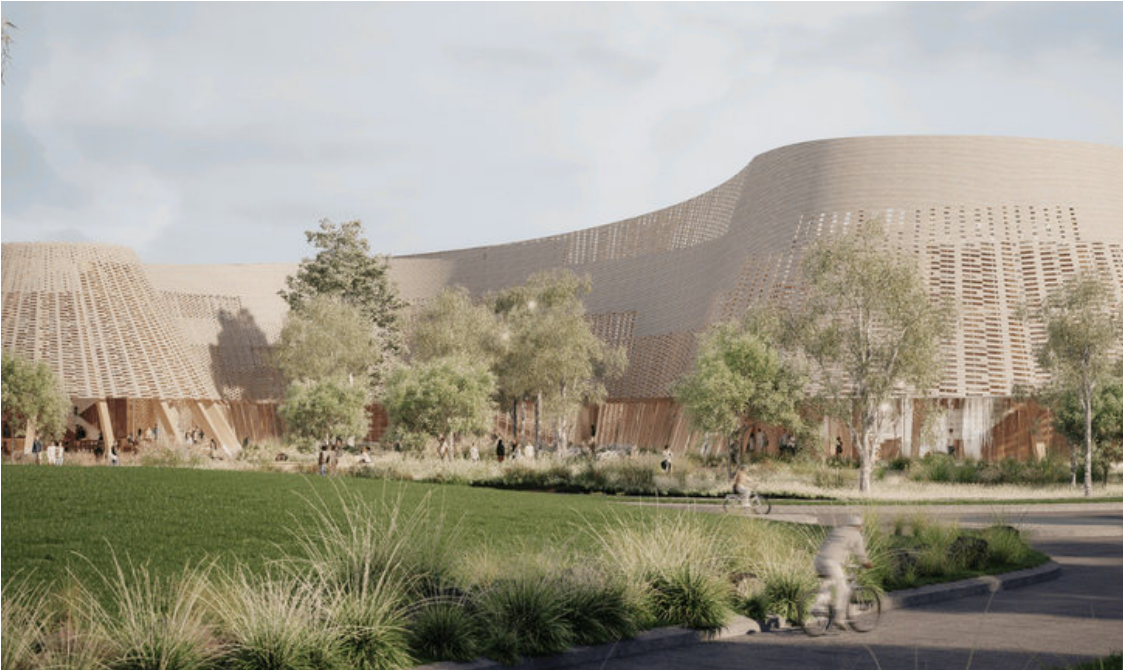


Ballarat Line Upgrade

Interior Design



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



Western Sydney University Indigenous Centre of Excellence



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

Entry Statement



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



Burraja Bush Tucker Garden - Wodonga

- Other Uses:
- First Nations Language
 - Wayfinding

Gathering Area

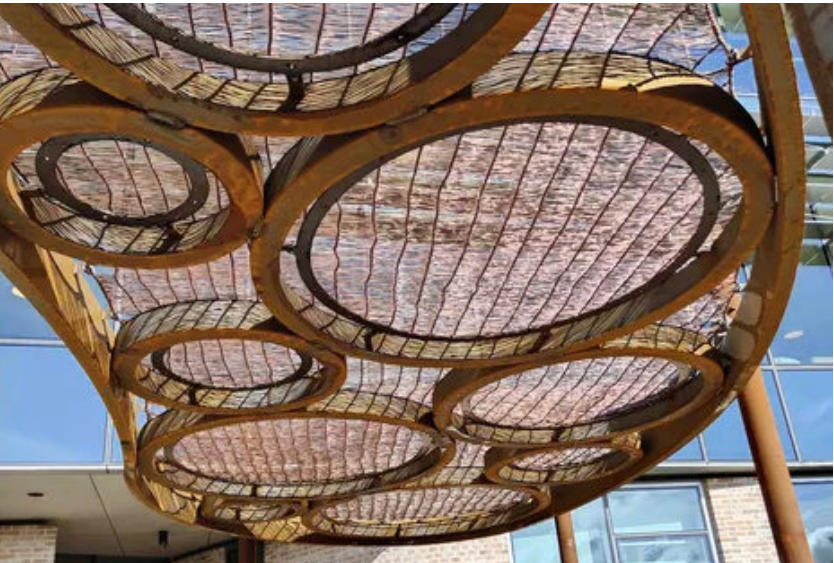
Shading Area

Sculptures/Public Art

Immersion Area



Yunggorendi Mande Cultural Gathering Space



The shade canopy image: Courtesy of University of Tasmania



Macquarie Group 1 Elizabeth Street Public Art - Balarinji



Burraja Bush Tucker Garden - Wodonga



7.0

WALKING WITH FIRST NATIONS

Walk on Country and Design Input

Engagement

Walk on Country is meeting with Traditional owners of the country where the project is located. The aim for the design is to gain a greater understanding of the traditional country prior to colonisation. This personalised approach allows all people involved in the project to gain knowledge of the traditional values that still exist today. But not widely known. The walk on country allows the project team to walk with traditional custodians to gain a sense of country and to view through an Aboriginal lens.



Design Input

Followed by the walk on Country our design input session allows our Project Team to sit down and to explore the design opportunities. By first giving a Project overview to our elders and to then open the conversation on designing for country. We encourage our project teams to ask questions and to become better advised via Aboriginal views from a:

- Sustainability
- Visual
- Design



Endorsement

By being able to present the final design back to our elders engaged in the Walk on Country and the design input session will allow the design team to ensure that we have met the cultural representation of the local community where our project is situated. What we are endeavoring to achieve is:

- A culturally accurate interpretation within the design.
- A representation of Country from a First Nations Perspective
- Being able to showcase Traditional stories with a blend of Art and Education



7.0 Walking with First Nations



Walk on Country and Design Input

The Walk on Country took place on the 17th of March 2026 for Military Rd, Mosman, to create a cultural narrative with Elder Aunty Jean Moran and Maree Walford. The Design Input Session was conducted after the Walk on Country, which allowed the Elders and Design Team to collaborate and blend Modern Design with the influence of Indigenous Traditional input.



Our Elders



Aunty Jean Moran

Aunty Jean is a Cammeraigal Women and a respected elder in the Northern Sydney and Beaches Area



Maree Walford

Maree Walford is a proud Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay woman from Lightning Ridge and is well respected in the community.

Connecting to Country



CONNECTING TO COUNTRY

FATHER SKY & MOTHER EARTH

ART REPRESENTATIVE
THROUGH TRADITIONAL
PATTERNS (WEAVING)

NATIVE ENDEMIC SPECIES

CONNECTING TO THE 7
SISTERS STARS (SKY
COUNTRY ART AND OR
LIGHTING)

LAMANDRA

COLOUR PALETTE YELLOW
(SANDSTONE), WHITE (PAPERBARK)
USE SHADING TO BLEND WITH YELLOW
AND WHITE

QR CODES

SANDSTONE CONNECTION

BUILDING INTO SKY
COUNTRY

MILITARY ROAD WALKING TRACK

COMMUNITY GARDEN AS A
SENSE OF INCLUSION AND
EMERSION OF DISCOVERY

FISHING WOMEN

STORIES ARE IN COUNTRY

SHELL SHADES INTO
FACADE

SOFTEN CORNERS FOR
WIND COUNTRY

TOTEM CONNECTION

BLENDING OF SANDSTONE
COLOUR PALETTE INTO
THE FACADE

SANDSTONE /
SALTWATER COUNTRY

BEING, BELONGING & BECOMING

BLACKBOYS INTO
THE PLANTING

EVERYTHING STAYS
ON CAMMERAYGAL
COUNTRY

COMMENTS THE SHADE OF
COUNTRY

SHELLS IN THE AREA PATTERNS INTO THE
BUILDING, FISHING LINES

SANDSTONE COMES SMOOTH
AND ROUGH

LOCAL SITES BIRTHING TREE AND
WHALE TOTEM

Connecting to Country (Art Strategy)

Artists – Local Cammeraygal



Emma Hicks is a Sydney-based artist, writer and academic of Gamilaroi and European heritage. Emma has exhibited both nationally and internationally working across film, installation and performance.



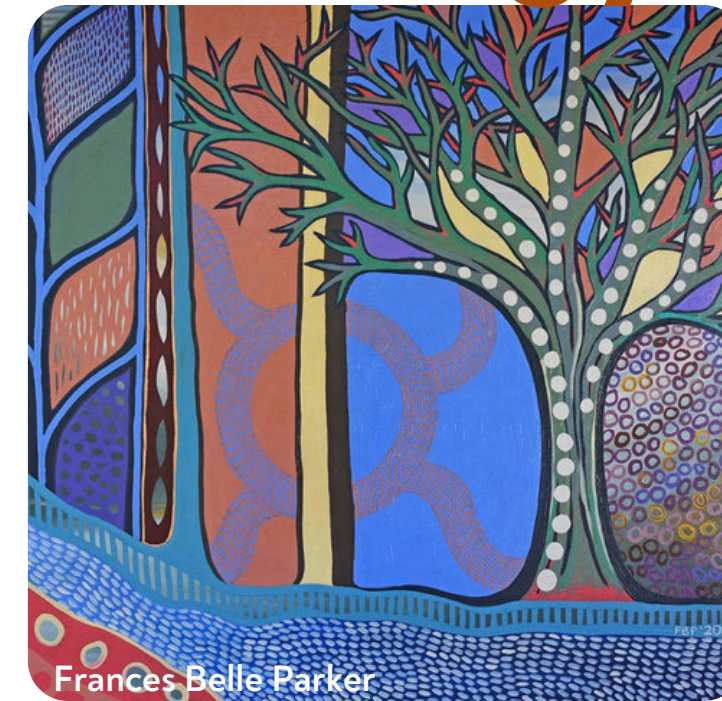
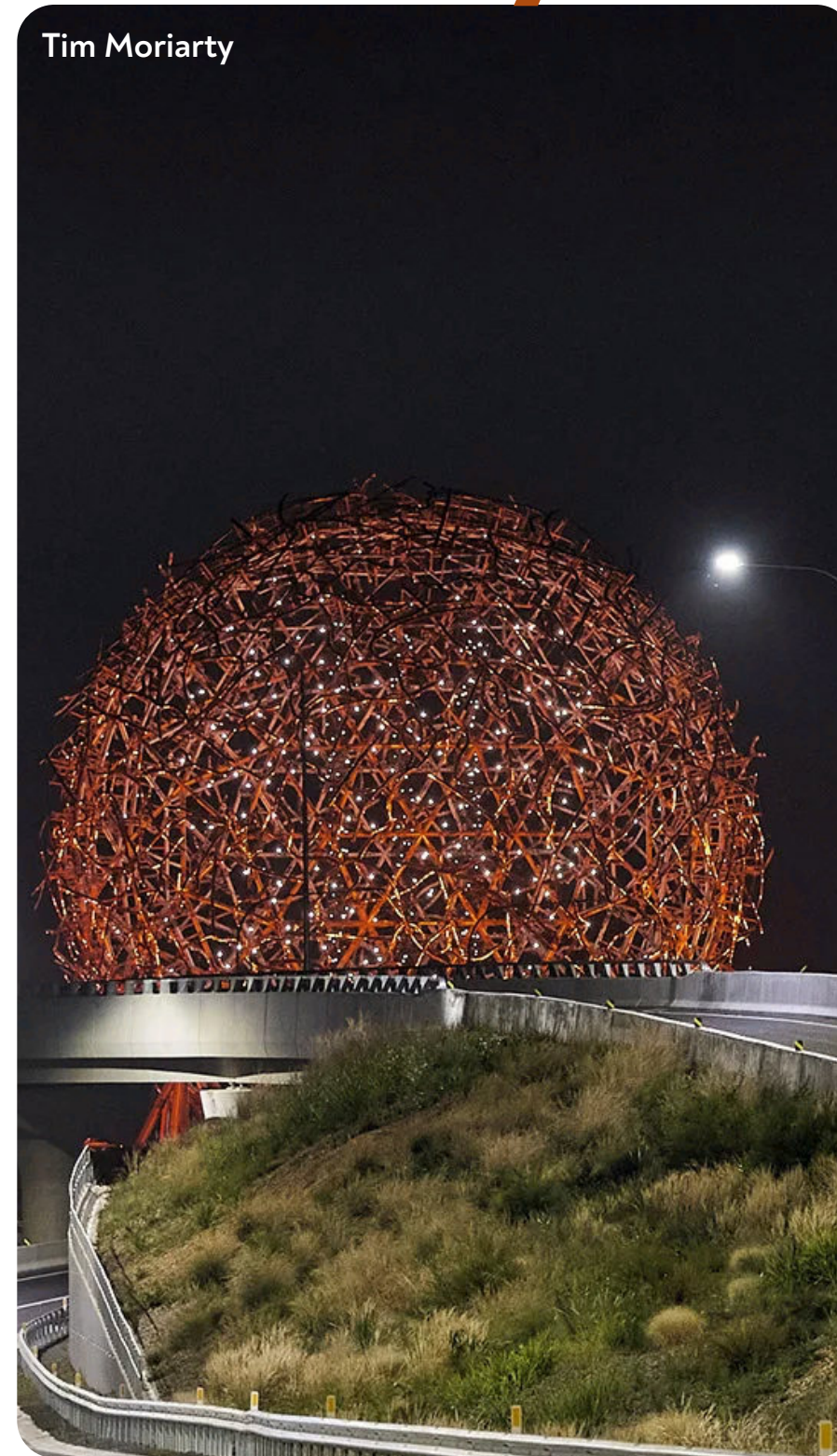
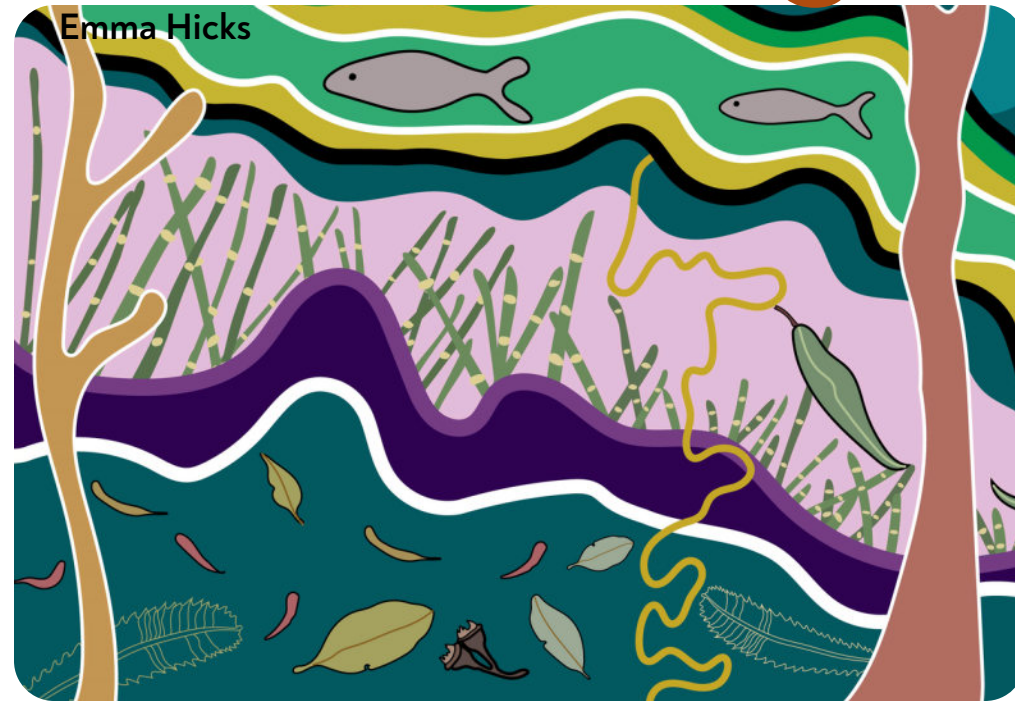
Tim Moriarty is an Australian designer, drone pilot and digital musician whose work blends platforms and genres. Tim's highly creative work draws on his drone skills, digital work as a computer animator, and classical training as a musician.



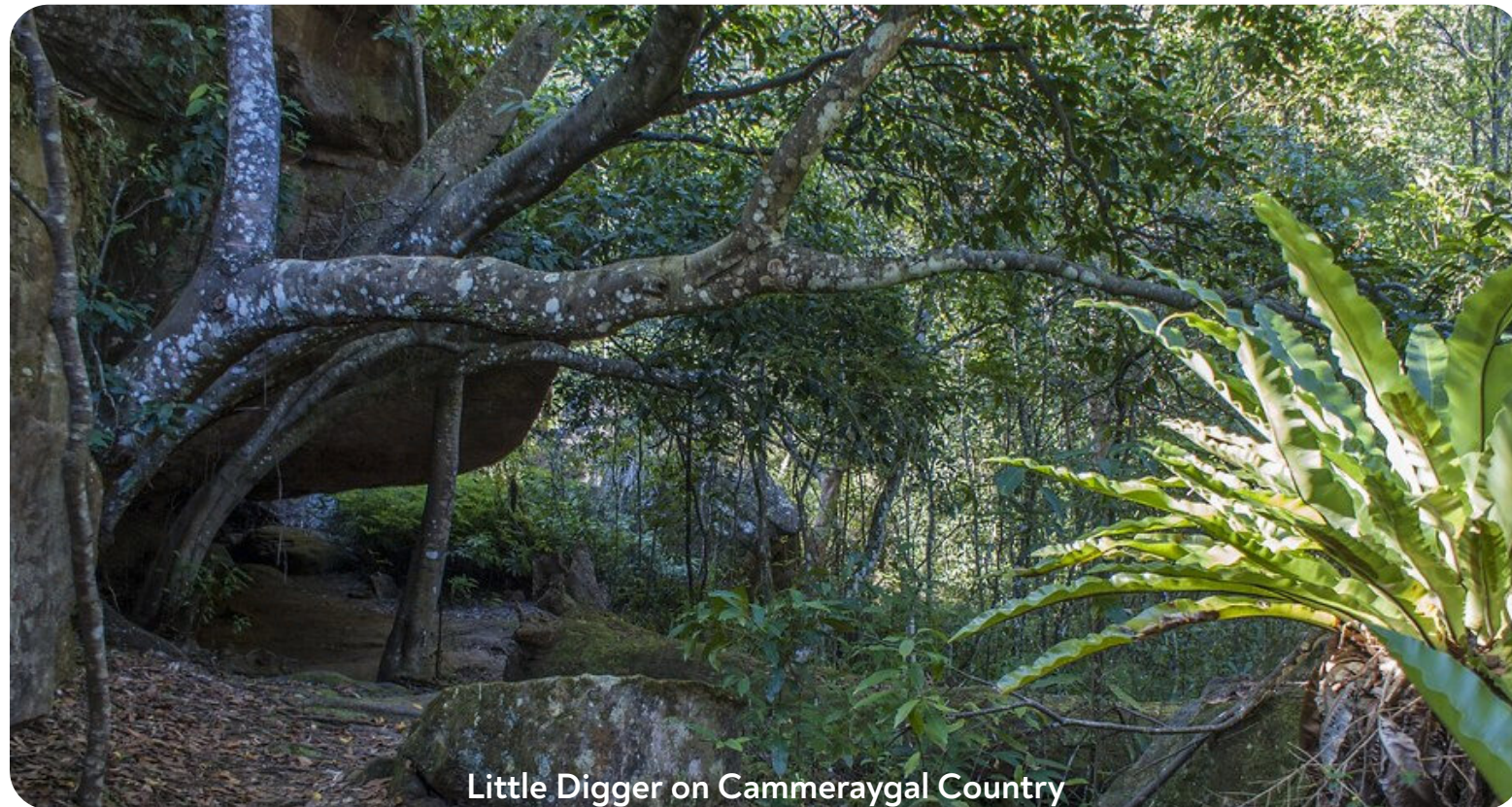
Frances Belle Parker is a proud Yaegl woman, mother, and artist from Maclean, Northern New South Wales. Inspired by her Mother's land, she has been an artist for nearly 25 years and gained prominence after winning the Blake Prize in 2000, becoming the youngest and first Indigenous recipient in its history.



Connecting to Country (Art Strategy)



Connecting to Country (Landscape)



Little Digger on Cammeraygal Country



Lomandra

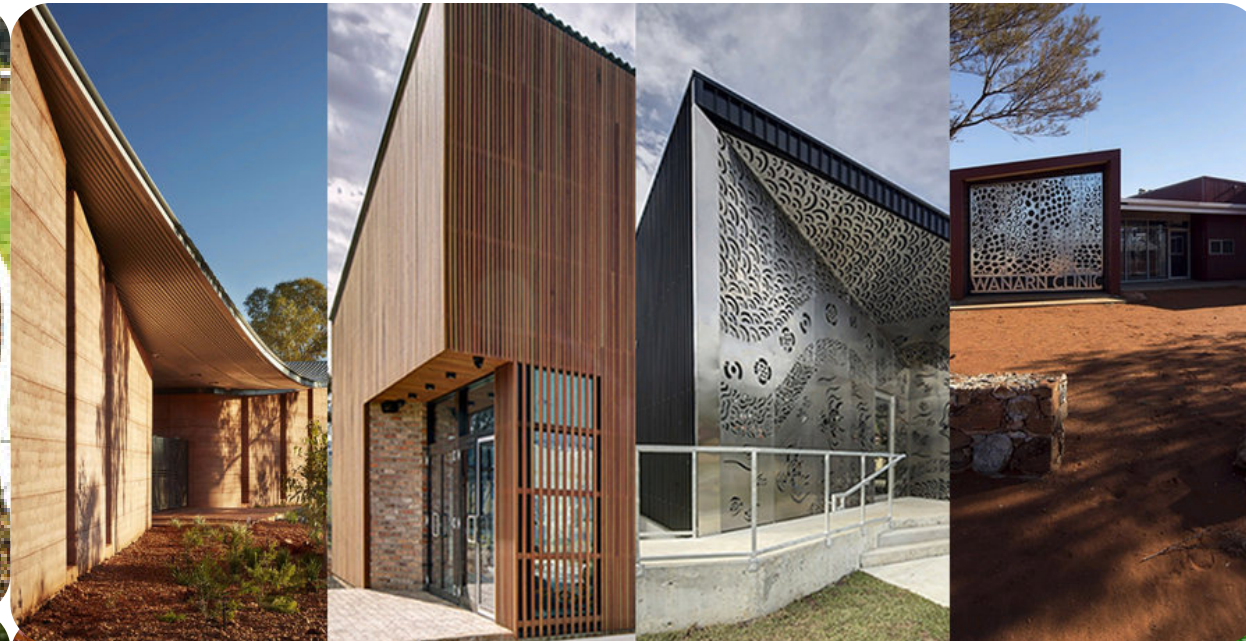


Whale Totem
BlackBoy



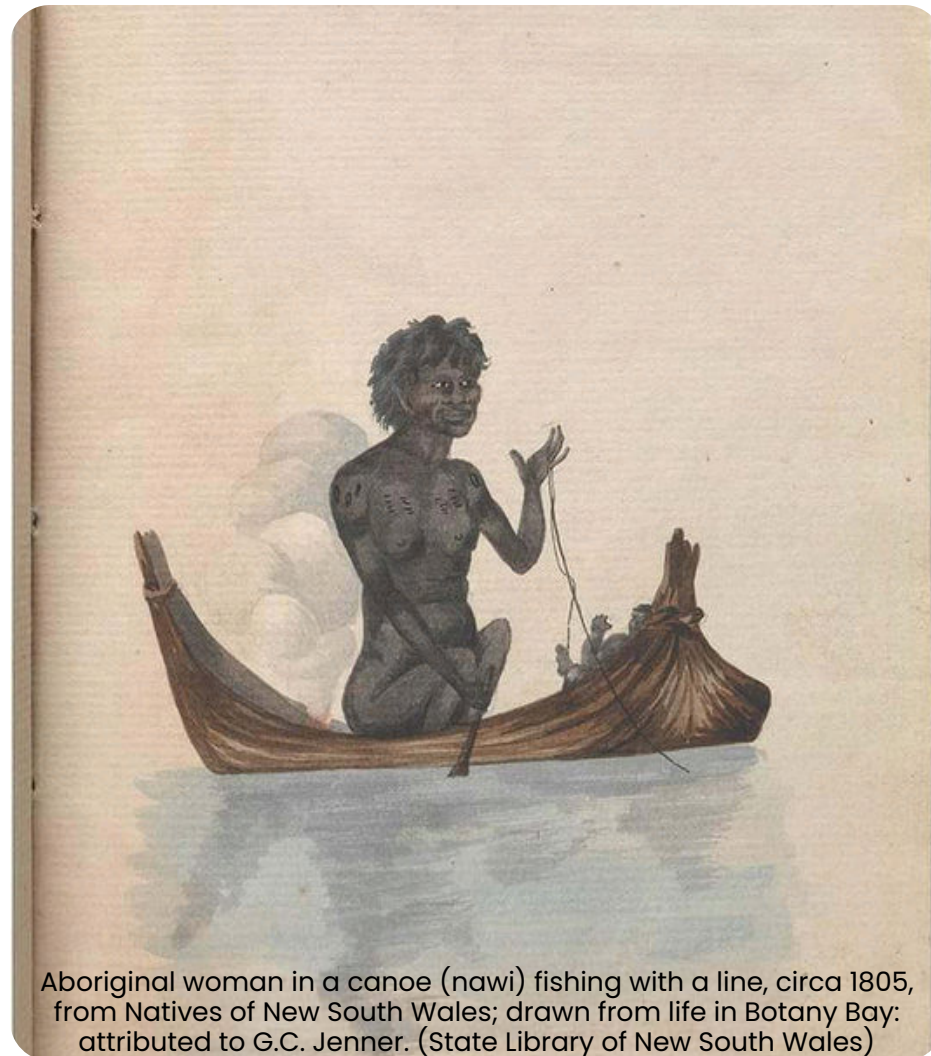
Connecting to Country (Construction)

EVERYTHING STAYS ON CAMERRAIGAL COUNTRY



Connecting to Country (Cultural)

- Father Sky
- Mother Earth
- Stories are in country
- Being, Becoming ,Belonging
- Building into sky Country
- Fishing Women
- Military Road walking track
- QR code
- Totem connection





8.0

CONNECTION TO COUNTRY – DESIGN THEMES

Walk on Country Narrative

Walking on Country here begins with the presence of Father Sky and Mother Earth, where stories are not separate from place but held within it. The site sits within Cammeraygal Country, where knowledge is embedded in sandstone, water, wind and sky. The connection to Sky Country is expressed through the Seven Sisters, guiding a layered understanding of Being, Becoming and Belonging. This relationship informs a design that reaches upward while remaining grounded, building into Sky Country while respecting the living systems below. Stories of Fishing Women, Whale Totems and Birthing Trees are acknowledged as ongoing cultural narratives, shaping a place that listens to and carries forward these histories.

The material language of the site responds directly to Country through sandstone and saltwater connections. Sandstone is expressed in both its smooth and rough forms, reflecting time, erosion and memory, while a colour palette of warm yellow tones and soft paperbark whites blends gently into the surrounding landscape. Shells found within the area inspire patterns woven into the building façade, alongside references to fishing lines and traditional weaving practices. Forms are softened to respond to wind Country, allowing movement and flow rather than resistance. Shade is considered as an extension of Country itself, creating spaces that are protective, comfortable and connected to natural rhythms.

The landscape design strengthens this relationship through the use of native endemic species such as Lomandra and grass trees (Blackboys), reinforcing ecological and cultural continuity. A community garden becomes a place of inclusion, learning and shared care, encouraging immersion and discovery of Country. The Military Road walking track is acknowledged as a contemporary pathway layered over older movement routes, reconnecting people through journey and story. QR codes and embedded artworks provide opportunities to share knowledge respectfully, while maintaining that everything remains grounded in Cammeraygal Country. Through totem connections, planting, art and sky-inspired lighting, the design creates a holistic environment where culture, ecology and community are inseparable.



Design with Country Narrative



Designing with Country on Cammeraygal Country begins with an understanding that Father Sky and Mother Earth are interconnected, and that stories already exist within the land. This approach centres Being, Becoming and Belonging, allowing the design to emerge from Country rather than be imposed upon it. The connection to Sky Country, including the Seven Sisters, informs moments of vertical expression and lighting, creating a dialogue between ground and sky. Cultural narratives such as the Fishing Women, Whale Totem and Birthing Tree are acknowledged through spatial storytelling, ensuring the site reflects both ancestral knowledge and ongoing cultural presence.

The built form responds to the material and climatic conditions of Country through a strong sandstone and saltwater connection. Sandstone is expressed in both smooth and rough finishes, grounding the architecture in the local geology while reflecting the passage of time. A colour palette of warm yellow tones and soft paperbark whites is layered across the façade, blending with the natural environment. Shells and fishing lines inspire patterns that are woven into screens and shading devices, referencing traditional practices of weaving and making. Corners are softened to respond to wind Country, allowing air to move through the site naturally, while shaded areas create comfort and reflect the protective qualities of Country.

Landscape and community elements extend this design approach by embedding ecological and cultural relationships into everyday experience. Native endemic planting, including Lomandra and grass trees, restores habitat and strengthens connections to place. A community garden becomes a space for gathering, learning and sharing, supporting inclusion and cultural exchange. The Military Road walking track is reinterpreted as part of a broader network of movement, acknowledging both contemporary and ancestral pathways. Art, QR codes and totem references are carefully integrated to share knowledge in respectful ways, ensuring that all elements of the design remain connected to and guided by Cammeraygal Country.

DESIGN THEMES

Sky Country & Storylines

Deasign Idea: Guided by Father Sky, the Seven Sisters and totem connections, integrate sky-inspired lighting and storytelling elements that connect the built form to cultural narratives above.

Sandstone & Saltwater Connection

Deasign Idea: Use layered sandstone textures, shell patterns and a yellow–paperbark palette to ground the design in the meeting of land and sea.

Living Landscape & Native Ecology

Deasign Idea: Embed Lomandra, grass trees (Blackboys) and other endemic species into a community garden that supports habitat, learning and cultural continuity.

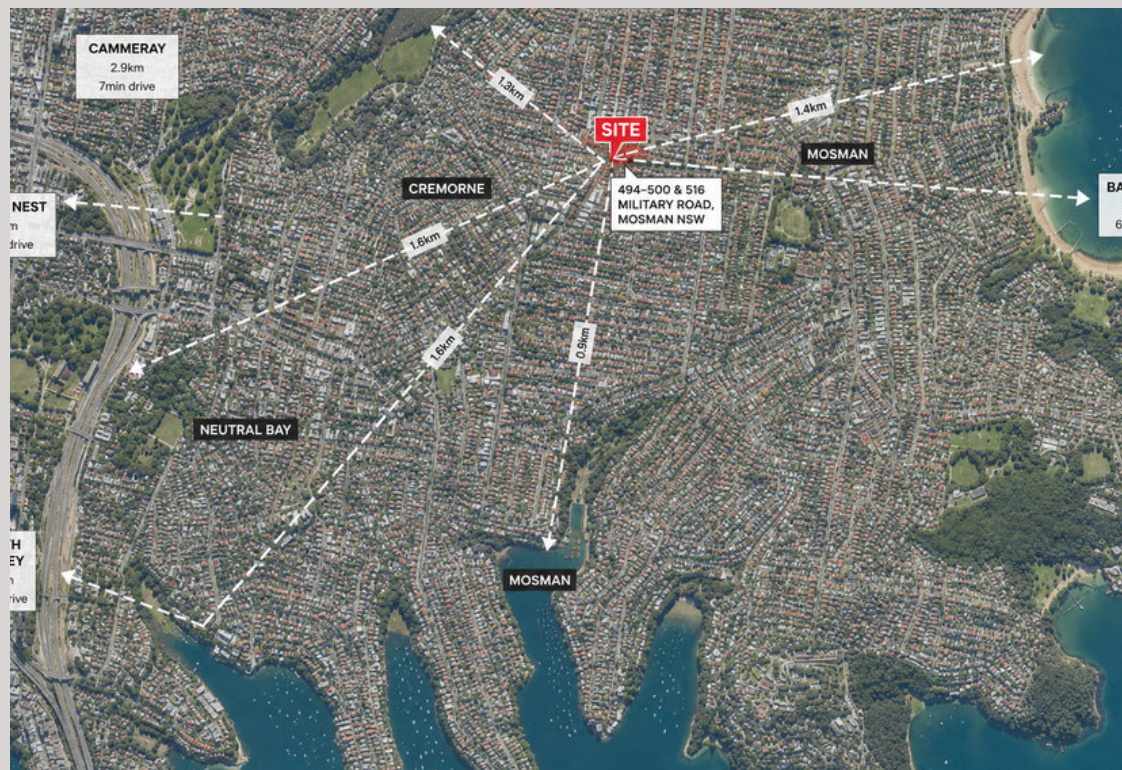
Movement, Wind & Cultural Pathways

Deasign Idea: Shape soft building edges and shaded walkways that respond to wind Country while aligning with the Military Road track and traditional movement routes.

Project Overview

The project site is located on Military Road, Mosman, within Sydney's Lower North Shore and a highly connected urban precinct characterised by a mix of residential, commercial and community uses. Positioned within the Sydney Harbour landscape, the area is defined by its ridgeline setting, established tree canopy and proximity to significant harbour foreshores and bushland reserves. The project seeks to enhance the public domain through a landscape-led approach that responds to the site's environmental character, promotes community wellbeing and reinforces connections to the surrounding natural landscape.

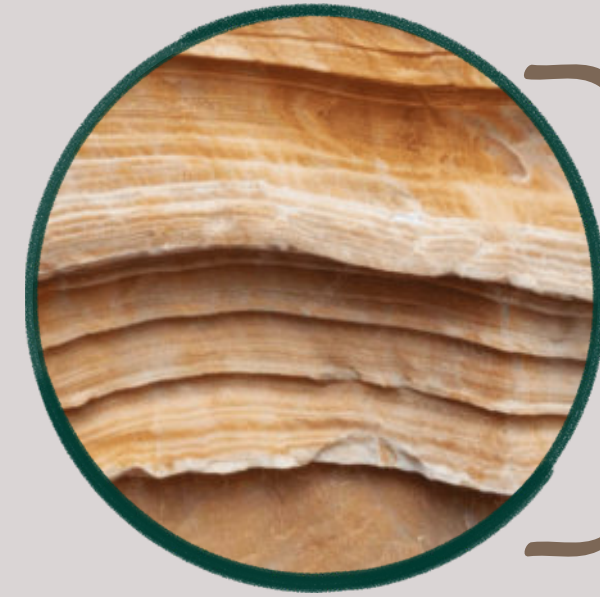
The site is located on the traditional Country of the Cammeraygal people of the Eora Nation and forms part of the broader cultural landscape of the Cammeraygal people. For thousands of years, Aboriginal peoples maintained strong connections to the land and waterways of Sydney Harbour, relying on the area's rich natural resources for food, shelter, tools and cultural practices. The harbour, ridgelines and bushland remain important cultural landscapes that continue to reflect enduring connections to Country. The project acknowledges this ongoing custodianship through the integration of culturally significant native planting, Healthy Country principles and landscape design that celebrates local ecology, cultural heritage and community connection.



Design

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY CONCEPTS

Design with Country principles guide the landscape response on Cammeraygal Country in Mosman, drawing on local geology, native ecology and cultural narratives to create a place that supports Healthy Country, biodiversity and meaningful connections to Country



SANDSTONE TEXTURES

Natural sandstone colours and textures draw inspiration from the geology of Sydney Harbour, grounding the development within its local landscape character.

Landscape Response: Locally appropriate materials and planting reinforce a sense of place while supporting resilient and environmentally responsive design.



ENDEMIC SPECIES

Native and endemic species, including Lomandra and Grass Trees, celebrate local ecology and cultural connections to Country.

Landscape Response: Indigenous planting restores habitat, enhances biodiversity and supports Healthy Country principles through ecological regeneration and cultural recognition.



CONNECTION WITH WATER

Shell forms, weaving patterns and flowing design elements reflect the area's connection to water, wind and traditional cultural practices.

Landscape Response: Water-sensitive planting, shade and gathering spaces support a Healthy Country approach by strengthening connections to natural systems and community wellbeing.

Materials

MATERIAL IDEAS AND INTERPRETATIONS



Grass Tree – Linear textures and radial forms inspire screening, detailing and landscape elements that reflect the resilience of **local native species**.

Banksia Flower – Organic patterns and **layered forms** influence architectural expression, celebrating the diversity of Sydney Harbour's **native flora**.

Sandstone Textures – Warm colours and stratified textures reference the **geological character** of the local landscape and **Sydney Harbour foreshore**.

Paperbark & Native Bark – Natural textures and **earthy tones** inform material selections, creating a **strong connection to Country and place**.

Together, these material ideas create a **contemporary design language** grounded in local ecology, **cultural narratives** and **Healthy Country** principles.



Material inspiration is drawn from the textures, forms and colours of local native species and sandstone landscapes, creating a contemporary design expression that strengthens connections to Country and supports Healthy Country principles

Design

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY CONCEPTS

A warm, earth-toned façade inspired by the sandstone escarpments, ochre soils, and natural textures of Cammeraygal Country, grounding the building within the character and colours of the local landscape



Curved building edges respond to the organic forms of Country, reflecting the natural contours of the harbour foreshore, waterways, and landforms that have shaped the cultural and ecological character of the area over countless generations

The design seeks to sit lightly within Cammeraygal Country, drawing from local landforms, ecology, and landscape character to foster enduring connections between people, place, and Country

Design

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY CONCEPTS

The integration of landscape throughout the development contributes to a more regenerative urban environment, recognising the importance of caring for Country through the enhancement of ecological function, canopy cover, and habitat connectivity within an increasingly urbanised setting

A design shaped by Cammeraygal Country reflecting the colours, forms, ecology and spirit of place while reconnecting people with the living landscape



Generous openings, balconies, and outdoor spaces strengthen the relationship between people and place, encouraging everyday engagement with the harbour setting, seasonal changes, native vegetation, and the broader ecological context of Cammeraygal Country

Stepped upper levels that reduce visual bulk and allow greater access to sunlight and views

Design

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY CONCEPTS

Positioned above the built form, the rooftop offers a unique vantage point from which to experience the natural setting of the Mosman peninsula. This elevated connection to sky, water, and landscape supports a stronger sense of place and belonging.



Positioned at the intersection of movement, community and landscape, the building embraces its corner setting to create a welcoming gateway that reflects the natural character of Cammeraygal Country.



Extensive planting integrated across podiums, terraces, rooftops, and balconies creates a living landscape throughout the building. This approach supports biodiversity, strengthens habitat opportunities, and reinforces the principle of caring for Country.

Designed to sit within the landscape, not above it, fostering an ongoing relationship with the natural and cultural values of Cammeraygal Country.

Design

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY CONCEPTS

The development contributes to a greener urban environment by integrating landscape at multiple levels of the building. This reflects principles of stewardship and environmental regeneration that align with caring for Country outcomes



Generous outdoor spaces foster opportunities for everyday connection with Country through views, breezes, vegetation, and changing environmental conditions. These spaces support wellbeing while encouraging a greater appreciation of the surrounding landscape and its cultural significance



Embedded within the existing canopy, the design draws the landscape upward through the building, strengthening connections to the ecology, character and living systems of Cammeraygal Country

Design

COMMUNAL OPEN SPACE & AMENITY



The communal open lawn reflects Cammeraygal cultural values of gathering, kinship and connection to Country by providing a shared space for community interaction, storytelling, recreation and engagement with the natural environment beneath the open sky.

The vegetated raingarden embodies Cammeraygal values of caring for Country by managing water in a way that supports natural systems, native planting and habitat creation. Reflecting the importance of waterways as sources of life, movement and connection, the raingarden integrates cultural and ecological stewardship within the landscape.

The precast concrete seating walls are designed to reference the layered forms and permanence of sandstone Country, creating opportunities for gathering, observation and connection to place. As communal meeting points within the landscape, they reflect Cammeraygal values of kinship, sharing knowledge and maintaining a relationship with Country.

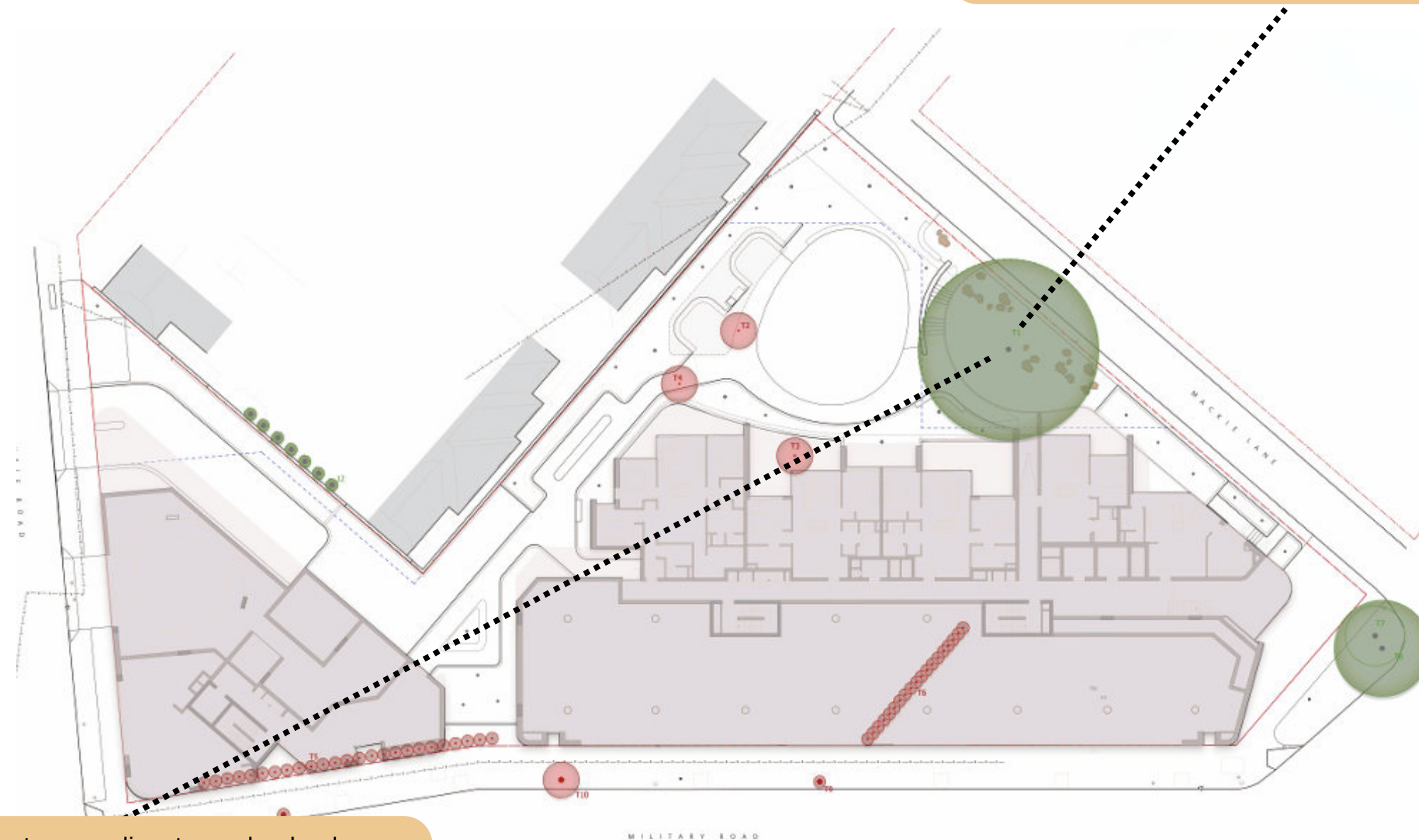
The communal open space integrates gathering, play, water-sensitive design and native planting to support Healthy Country principles while strengthening community connections to Cammeraygal Country

Design

PUBLIC DOMAIN & INTERFACES

The public domain is shaped by Cammeraygal Country, where retained canopy trees, open sky views and native planting create a landscape experience that strengthens connections to Country, supports biodiversity and fosters community wellbeing

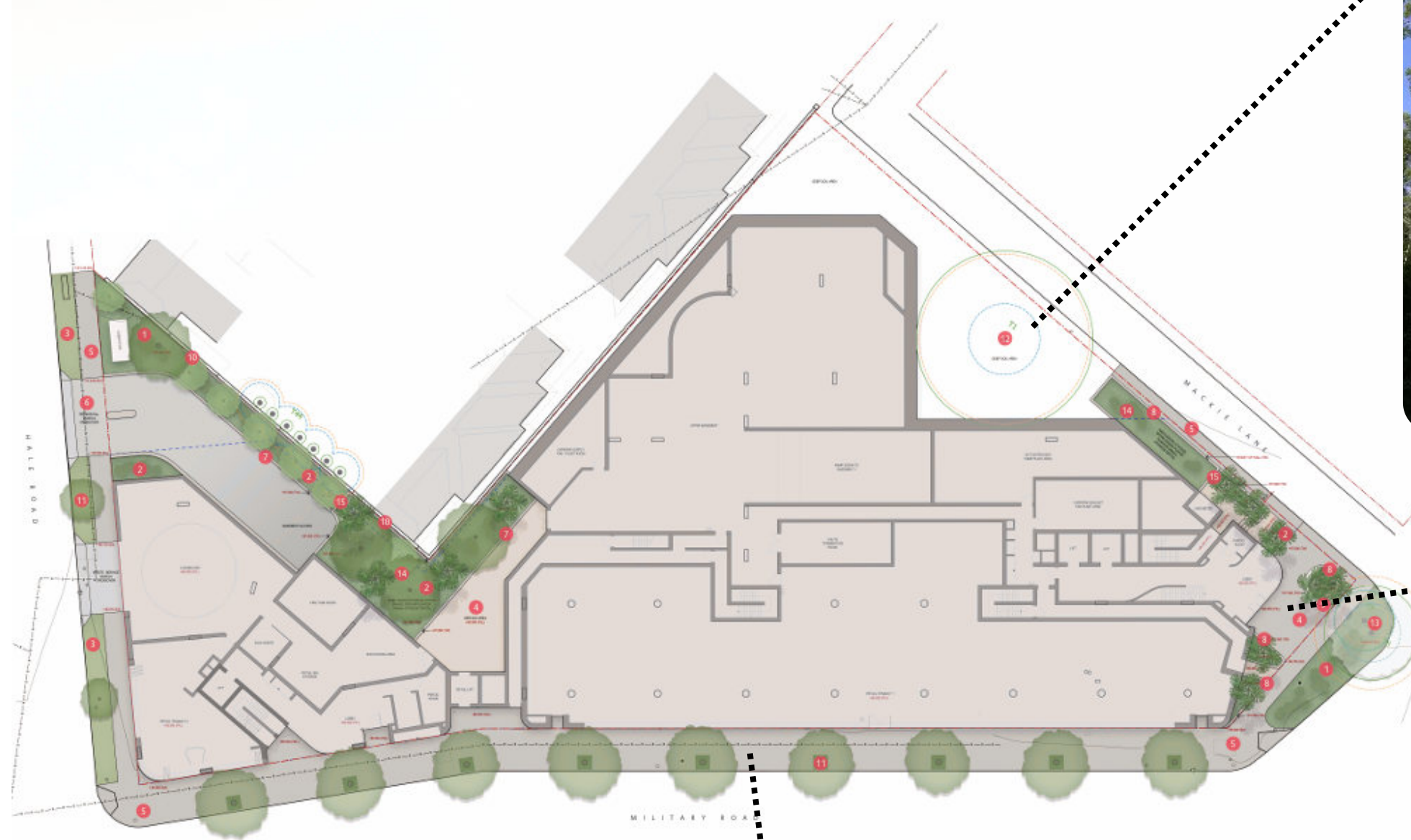
Strategic view corridors prioritise planting, canopy and open sky, creating a landscape led experience that reinforces wellbeing, wayfinding and connection to the natural character of Cammeraygal Country.



The retained mature Eucalyptus grandis acts as a key landscape landmark, framing views throughout the site while strengthening biodiversity, canopy cover and connections to Country.

Design

Landscape Plan Groundfloor



The retention of the existing *Eucalyptus grandis* preserves an important element of the site's natural character, supporting biodiversity, canopy cover and ongoing connections to Country through the protection of a mature native species.



The landscape design balances the protection of significant existing vegetation with water sensitive urban design initiatives, supporting Healthy Country outcomes through biodiversity conservation, natural water management and strengthened connections to Country

The lowpoint within the planter wall directs overland flow to the raingarden, supporting natural water movement and Healthy Country outcomes through improved water quality and landscape resilience.

The new street tree planting reinforces the cultural and ecological character of Country, contributing to biodiversity, urban cooling and a healthier landscape for future generations.

Design

Landscape Plan Level 1

Native planting and retained canopy trees strengthen local biodiversity and restore ecological connections to Country, reflecting a Healthy Country approach to landscape design.



The Level 1 landscape integrates gathering spaces, native planting and water sensitive design to support Healthy Country outcomes while strengthening community connections to Cammeraygal Country

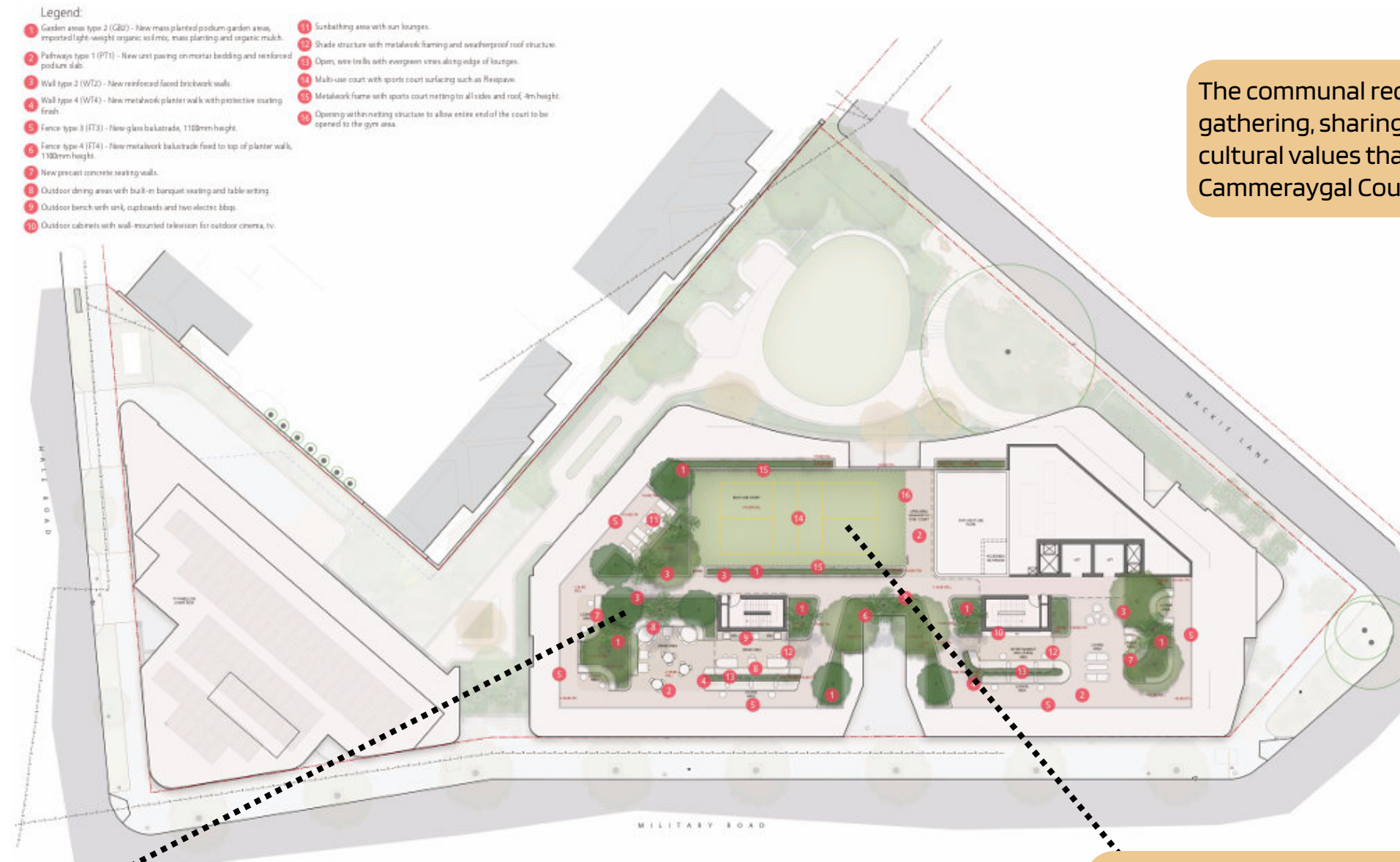


The central communal lawn provides a contemporary gathering space inspired by the cultural values of sharing, connection and community that have long been embedded within Cammeraygal Country.

The raingarden and water-sensitive landscape elements celebrate the movement and care of water through the site, acknowledging the significance of waterways within the cultural and ecological systems of Cammeraygal Country.

Design

Landscape Plan Level 10



The communal recreation spaces provide opportunities for gathering, sharing and connection, reflecting the social and cultural values that have long been central to life on Cammeraygal Country

Native planting integrated throughout the rooftop landscape strengthens biodiversity and creates habitat, supporting Healthy Country principles while reconnecting people with local ecology

The open lawn and surrounding landscape create a flexible space for recreation, storytelling and community interaction, fostering ongoing connections to Country and the natural environment

The rooftop landscape creates opportunities for recreation, gathering and connection to nature, combining native planting, open space and Healthy Country principles to foster wellbeing and strengthen connections to Cammeraygal Country

Design

Landscaping Strategy

The planting strategy for Military Road, Mosman incorporates locally appropriate **native species** that **reflect the ecological character of Sydney Harbour** and **strengthen connections to Country**.

Species such as Lilly Pilly, Grass Tree, Water Gum, Lomandra, Kangaroo Paw and Gymea Lily have **traditional significance to the Borogegal people, providing food, fibre, tools and shelter**.

The use of native, climate-resilient planting **supports biodiversity**, native wildlife and **healthy landscapes** while reducing water demand. By integrating **culturally significant species** throughout the site, the design acknowledges the enduring custodianship of the Cammeraygal people and creates a landscape that is both **environmentally sustainable and culturally respectful**.



Native planting reflects the ecological character of Sydney Harbour and the cultural heritage of the Cammeraygal people, supporting a Healthy Country approach through biodiversity, habitat creation and strengthened connections to Country

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