

Gamaragal Country



Berrys Bay Connection to Country Principles





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Please note:

In order to highlight the use of Aboriginal Design Principles, this document may contain examples from other Aboriginal Countries.

Warning:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this document may contain reference to or images of deceased persons.

Warami wellamabamiyui, yura.

It is good to see you all, people.

This document acknowledges the elders, past and present, of the Gadigal and Gamaragal People as the traditional custodians of the land and its knowledge.

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Introduction

Berrys Bay has long been used by the Gamaragal and Gadigal peoples and will now be rehabilitated into a natural parkland like setting.

This document is a summary of Connection to Country activities and processes that the Berrys Bay Master Plan team have applied in regards to Aboriginal engagement and involvement.

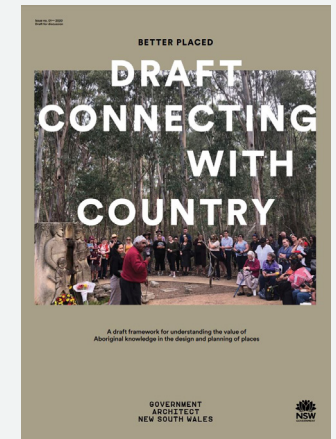
The first part is based off desktop research and gives an overview into this Country, its people and their culture, and areas and themes significant to the site.

The second part is a summary of conversations the design team had with relevant Aboriginal community members to provide a basis for further conversations to occur.

The concepts discussed in this document are high level and result from early engagement in the project's development phase. It is intended that the concepts discussed will form a basis for and help guide future more in-depth engagement and design development.

It aims to be the 'first step' towards future engagement with Relevant Aboriginal Parties (RAPs).

These documents have informed the research for this report:



Country, People, Culture

Some groups surrounding Sydney Harbour



Country

Language Groups

This Country is traditionally inhabited by people of several language groups, including Darug (Dharug) and Dharawal (Tharawal). Within these language groups there are at least 36 sub-groups.³

Each sub-group is distinguished from others by the use of different designs and decorations on tools and weapons, unique body decorations—for example painted designs worn during ceremonies, also the cicatrices (scarification) formed during initiation rites. Some sub-groups also had distinctive hairstyles.³

The original inhabitants of coastal Sydney suffered from the trauma of occupation and the severing of their spiritual bonds to Country. Within two years of settlement, kinship ties in the area were damaged, more than half the population died from smallpox.⁵

Despite the damage done by colonisation the cultures, language and knowledge has lived on through the descendants of Aboriginal people.

Salt Water Country

The waters and surrounds of Warrane were a bountiful food resource for its people, who would access with bark canoes (Nawi). The men would make wooden spears and tools, while the women were the masters of the Nawi, and would make and use fishing lines and hooks to fish for food. Once a fish had been caught, the women would cook their fish on small fires built on an ochre clay base on the canoe floor.⁶

Watkin Tench observed that the Gamaragal possessed the best fishing grounds in Port Jackson. Sea urchins, shellfish and other foodstuff were thrown into the water to attract fish. Shell middens can still be seen in several Sydney locations providing a record of countless meals, showing the type of food that was eaten and the places where feasts were held.⁶

Tench also observed that men tended to make spears and wooden tools and weapons while women made and used fishing lines and fish hooks. He observed: 'the fish hooks are chopped with stone out a particular shell, and afterwards rubbed until they become smooth... considering the quickness with which they are finished the excellence of the work, if it be inspected, is admirable!'.⁷



BANNELANG [BENNELONG] MEETING THE GOVERNOR BY APPOINTMENT AFTER HE WAS WOUNDED BY WILL [NILLE?] MA RING IN SEPTEMBER 1790.
SOURCE: NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (LONDON)

Gamaragal Country

Gamaragal Country

Governor Arthur Phillip noted that the Gamaragal people occupied 'the northwest side of Port Jackson'. Their Country is now thought to extend from Cremorne in the east, to Woodford Bay in the west, and probably to Middle Harbour which forms a natural boundary to the north.⁷

Carbon dating of archaeological material shows that people have lived in this area for at least 5,800 years.⁸

Aboriginal languages are oral and were not written down until colonisation so there are often variations in how words are spelt. The following names are also used when referring to Gamaygal people: Càmmeragal, Cam-mer-ray-gal, Cameeragal, Camera-gal, Kamarigal.⁸

Country changed by rising sea water

During the last ice age about 12,000 years ago, sea levels were around 100 metres below their current level and the eastern coastline of this continent was about 25 to 30 kilometres further east.⁹

As ice caps melted the river valleys filled up with sea water as sea levels rose and the lower-middle slopes of the ancient valleys were slowly inundated.⁹

The sea eventually flooded the area that is now Port Jackson and food resources for Gamaragal people would have changed dramatically.⁹

As the sea level stabilised about 8000 to 6000 years ago, it provided a rich maritime resource economy to Gamaragal people until after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.⁹



NORTH VIEW OF SYDNEY NEW SOUTH WALES, 1822 BY JOSEPH LYCETT,
STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Gamaragal People

Gamaragal People

Early colonists noted that Gamaragal people were 'robust and muscular' people, and the men presided over the initiation of young males from other Sydney area groups.¹⁰

There are approximately 1,000 identified Gamaragal sites in the Warringah, Willoughby, Lane Cove and North Sydney Council areas. These sites include middens, rock engravings, axe grinding grooves, carved trees, fish traps and stone arrangements.¹⁰

An investigation of a rock shelter at Balls Head in 1964 uncovered the skeleton of a female. It is not uncommon for burials to be found in middens in NSW.⁸ A small tooth with traces of vegetable gum found near the skeleton suggests that the woman had adorned her hair or wore a necklace.¹⁰

Food remains from a midden at Balls Head consisted almost entirely of shellfish. The main species being rock oyster, hairy mussel and Sydney cockle. The study concluded that the site had been used by women, who gathered shellfish, while men used the area to make and repair implements.⁸

The group of petroglyphs or rock engravings at Balls Head, featuring a shoal of fish, human figures and a large marine creature, is further testimony to the cultural significance of the harbour.¹⁰



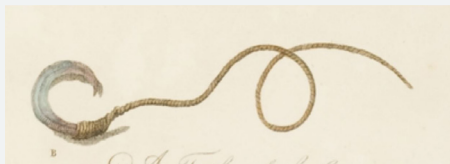
FISHING NO 1, FOREIGN FIELD SPORTS, FISHERIES, SPORTING ANECDOTES FROM DRAWINGS BY MESSRS. HOWITT, ATKINSON, CLARK, MANSKIRCH, STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Gamaragal Culture

Barangaroo, a Gamaragal Woman

Barangaroo was a Gamaragal woman, and was a prominent figure in Sydney's early history. Having survived the smallpox epidemic of 1789 that killed her first husband, and it is believed more than half of Sydney's Aboriginal population¹¹, she was 'one of a reduced number of women who had the knowledge of laws, teaching and women's rituals and she exercised this authority over younger women'¹²

The first written account of her in 1790 described Barangaroo as being in her early 40s, worldly, wise and freer of spirit than the settlers expected of a woman - at least the English women of the time.¹¹ The colonists observed her to be a determined and persuasive character. On one occasion, she refused to go to Sydney Cove to visit the governor with Bennelong, who went anyway. In a fit of rage, Barangaroo broke one of his fishing spears.¹¹



In another incident, a convict was being flogged for stealing hunting and fishing gear from her group. Barangaroo threatened the officer with a flogging of his own.¹¹

Barangaroo also refused to wear European clothes or drink their wine and was one of only a few women who had a pierced septum (nose). When she did visit the colony with Bennelong she was 'dressed up' with a bone through her nose and painted herself with white clay- a proud statement of her spirituality and culture.¹¹

In 1791, Barangaroo died shortly after giving birth to Bennelong's child. After a traditional cremation ceremony with her fishing gear, Bennelong spread his wife's ashes in present day Circular Quay.¹¹



Fisher Women

Barangaroo's power came from her role as a hunter and provider. She provided for the group with fish caught in and around the harbour, using a bark canoe known as a Nawi.¹¹

Unlike the settlers, Barangaroo would only ever catch enough fish for her people's immediate needs. When she witnessed settlers catch about 4,000 salmon- more fish than they could possibly eat- she was outraged. This fiercely independent woman perhaps could see the demise of her traditional way of life.¹¹

Fish is a staple food for people along the coast and harbour. Women made their fishing lines (carr-e-jun) by twisting together two strands of fibre from kurrajong trees, cabbage trees or flax plants. Sometimes animal fur or grass was used.⁶

The distinctively crescent-shaped fish hooks, called burra or bara, are honed from the broadest part of the turban shell. The pearly reflection of the hook would have acted as a lure. The skill of the women in catching the fish and navigating the changeable harbour conditions in their modest Nawi was also greatly admired.⁶

Their skills are described in detail in journals and captured through multiple watercolours. These artworks show fisherwomen in Nawi with fires going, fishing, minding and feeding their small children.⁶



ABORIGINAL WOMAN WITH HER BABY, IN A CANOE FISHING WITH A LINE, C1805. IMAGE: MITCHELL LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF NSW (PXB 513)

FAR LEFT: BARA, OR FISH-HOOKS, MADE FROM TURBAN SHELL. IMAGE: PAUL OVENDEN, AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM.

LEFT: FISH HOOKS OF NSW, DETAIL FROM PLATE IN JOHN WHITE'S JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO NEW SOUTH WALES, 1790. IMAGE: MITCHELL LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF NSW (MRB/ Q991/ 2A2)

Cultural heritage of the Greater Sydney region

The area of Sydney Harbour holds many significant Aboriginal heritage, including the following.

Middens

These are mounds of shell built up over hundreds or thousands of years as a result of countless meals. They primarily contain mature species of edible shellfish species. They might also contain bird and animal teeth and bones, campfire charcoal and stone tools.¹⁰

Rock Shelters – “giba gunyahs”

These are places where the Gamaragal people would have taken shelter. This would have been a warm place to eat, sleep, repair or fashion tools and, we can imagine, talk of stories and exploits. Artefacts such as stone tools may be found in the rock shelters.¹⁰



MIDDENS ARE REMNANTS OF FEASTS AND GATHERINGS, THEY ARE TIME CAPSULES THAT SHOW WHAT TYPES OF FOOD WERE COLLECTED AND EATEN

Painting and stencils

Stencils are produced by mixing ochre in the mouth with other material into a wet paste and spraying it over the object to be stenciled. Often we find stenciled hands and tools represented in rock shelters. Other forms of artwork include ochre painting as well as charcoal drawings and etchings.¹⁰

Grinding grooves

These are grooves resulting from the production or sharpening and maintenance of an edge ground tool such as a stone axe. These sites are usually located near a water source, like a water hole.¹⁰



WATERHOLE AND GRINDING GROOVES AT BALLS HEAD. PHOTO BY DANIELE HROMEK

Engravings

Engravings were made by drilling or pecking a series of holes in the rock which were then connected to form a line. An accepted understanding of these engravings is that they are the product of sacred ceremonies and were periodically re-engraved as part of ongoing ritual and to pass on knowledge and stories.¹⁰

Shields

Shields were coated with white pipe clay and often painted with a red vertical line crossed by one or two horizontal lines.¹²



ENGRAVINGS OF A SEA CREATURE AT BERRY ISLAND RESERVE, WOLLSTONECRAFT. PHOTO: VISITSYDNEYAUSTRALIA.COM.AU

Scar Trees

These trees are evidence of bark and wood being removed for shields, shelters, coolamons and canoes. The tree was not killed by these methods and therefore scarring is evident.¹³

Bora or Ceremonial Ground

Bora grounds are Aboriginal ceremonial places. These are where initiation ceremonies are performed and are often meeting places as well. A bora ground most commonly consists of two circles marked by raised earth banks, and connected by a pathway.¹³

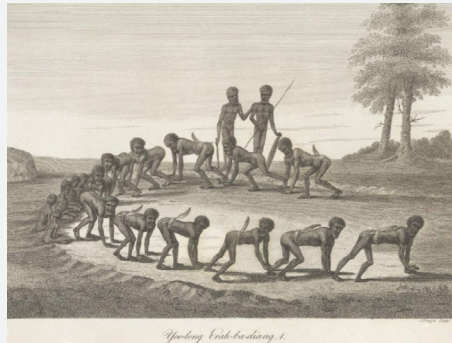


SCAR TREES ARE RARE IN THE SYDNEY REGION

Cultural places of the Sydney region

Meeting places

Meeting places are places where different groups of Aboriginal people met to trade and partake on corroborees together. In the Sydney region, such corroborees are known to have taken place near Hyde Park and The Domain near the CBD.¹³



CORROBOREE AT HYDE PARK, YOO-LONG ERAH-BADIANG.1 ENGRAVING BY JAMES NEAGLE AFTER THOMAS WATLING, 1798.

Sacred places

Sacred places are areas set aside for religious ceremonies, initiations etc. Very little evidence of the use of such sites remain, the major tell-tale signs being the arrangement of stones in patterns or formations.

Most sacred sites were located on hilltops which offered panoramic views of the groups lands. A prerequisite for such sites was a large slab of flat rock upon which engravings recording tribal history and culture could be made.¹³



ROCK ENGRAVINGS AT BEN BUCKLER, NORTH BONDI.

Economic places

Generally campsites which show evidence of occupation. Often close to or within rock overhangs and caves used to give shelter, evidences of occupation include middens (piles of discarded shells at feasting sites), fish traps, scarred trees, cooking mounds, wells, watering holes (often depressions carved into flat rock surfaces used to catch the water), remnants of discarded tools, quarries and axe sharpening grooves.¹³



WATER WELL AT BALLS HEAD. PHOTO: DANIÉLE HROMEK6

Burial places

Senior members of a group were buried or cremated at sacred sites from which their spirits were freed to travel skyward. Other family members were buried within their area, often near campsites, in caves and beside middens. Often such sites were marked by earth mounds, stone arrangements and carved trees.¹³



AN ABORIGINAL FUNERAL BY JOSEPH LYCETT, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA NLA.OBU-138501624

Design

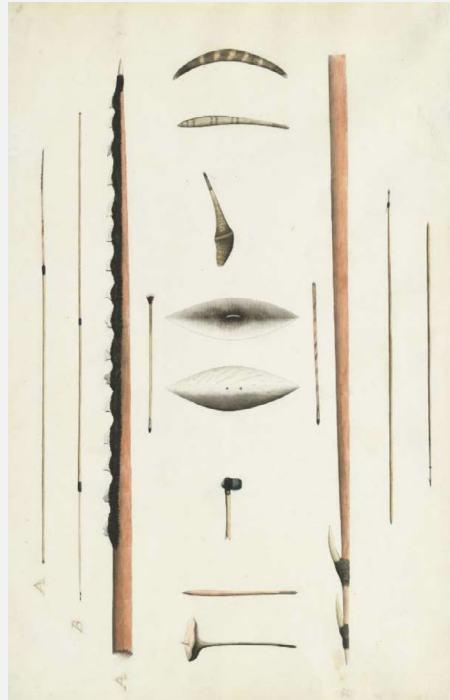
Fishing Culture in Design

Fish is a staple food for people along the coast and harbour. Women made their fishing lines (carr-e-jun) by twisting together strands of fibre from kurrajong trees, cabbage trees or flax plants. Sometimes animal fur or grass was used.

The distinctively crescent-shaped fish hooks, called burra or bara, are honed from the broadest part of the turban shell. The pearly reflection of the hook would have acted as a lure.

Women were the makers of the fish hooks. They would rub the shells down on sandstone rocks until thin enough to cut a hole. They then shaped into a crescent shape. Watkin Tench noted that Barangaroo was making a fish hook when he visited their camp on the north side of the harbour.⁸

Their skills are described in detail in journals and captured through multiple watercolours. These artworks show fisherwomen in nawi with fires going, fishing, minding and feeding their small children.¹⁴



ABORIGINAL HUNTING IMPLEMENTS AND WEAPONS, PORT JACKSON PAINTER, ACTIVE 1788-1792 NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA.



NECKLACE WORN BY FEMALES, FIBRE CORD NECKLACE MADE OF REED PIECES (PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS), PORT JACKSON, c1860s, BRITISH MUSEUM.



FISH HOOKS OF NSW, DETAIL OF PLATE FROM JOHN WHITE'S JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO NEW SOUTH WALES 1790. IMAGE: MITCHELL LIBRARY. STATE LIBRARY OF NSW.



CHARLES-ALEXANDRE LESUEUR, INDIGENOUS WEAPONS SYDNEY REGION (1802-04), AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM.

Interesting places at Berrys Bay

1 Berry Island Reserve

A traditional fishing, hunting and camping site during the 19th century. Other features include numerous middens and a carving of a giant sea creature, a waterhole and axe grinding grooves.¹⁶

2 Waverton Park Cave

An important shelter with midden nearby, which is part of the broader cultural area and occupation place.¹⁷

3 Waverton Park Midden

Part of the broader cultural area and occupation site.¹⁷

4 Whale rock engravings

Part of the cultural area. Multiple engravings here include a large whale with human figures. This engraving was recorded as early as the 1840s.^{17, 18}

5 Coal Loader 1

Shelter with midden, cultural area and occupation site.¹⁷

6 Quarantine Cave

This cave was used as a shelter and there are the remains of a midden within the cave.¹⁷

7 Balls Head

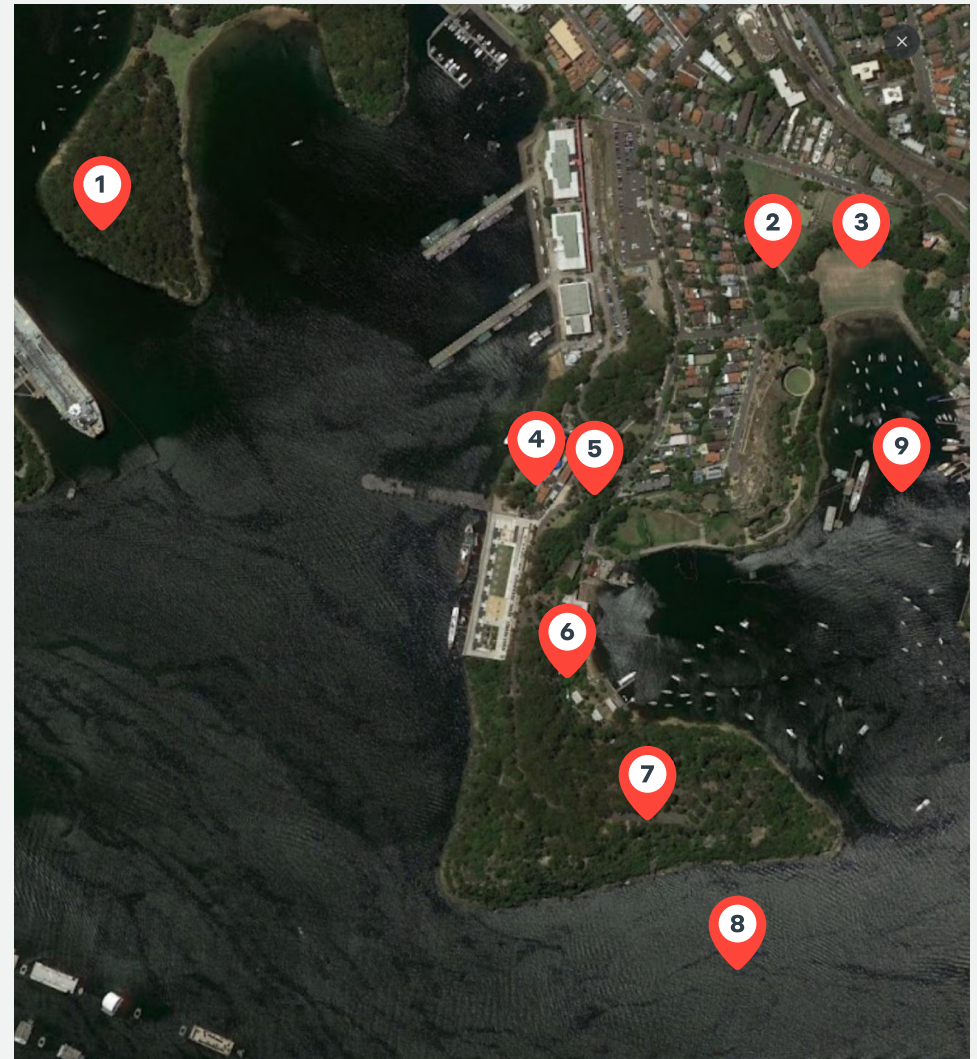
One of the finest Gamaragal sites on the lower north shore including a culturally important spring. Wallabies and penguins lived here within living history.¹⁸

8 Deep waters off Balls Head

Provided a safe place for whales to give birth in pre-colonial times.¹⁸

9 Berrys Bay

A traditional place to collect cockles to eat, back when there was more sand in the bay.¹⁸



Aboriginal engagement

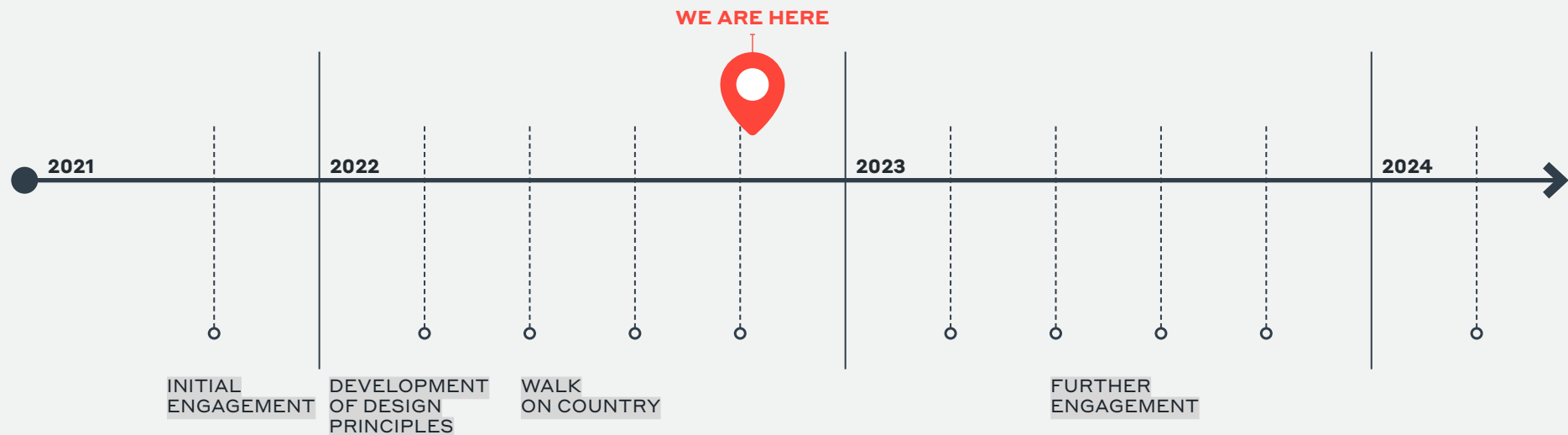
Engagement methodology

Our approach is to engage with relevant Aboriginal community members. While many Aboriginal groups and Peoples hold vast knowledge on this Country, its people and their culture, of immediate relevance are the Gamaragal and Gadigal Peoples, whose land Berrys Bay sits within. Our goal was to speak with anyone and everyone who has relevant knowledge about Berrys Bay, its Aboriginal people and their culture.

Our aim was to gather the narratives, stories and knowledge about this site and how Aboriginal culture might influence outcomes. With the NSW Government Architect's Connection to Country guidelines leading the way, our approach is to listen to relevant Aboriginal community members and co-design cultural outcomes with them.

Considering the public nature of this project, these narratives stay at a high level and do not focus on individual / private / sacred stories. The themes talked about are considered public stories to be shared and worked into the project interventions into their Country.

Please note: the engagement process is an ongoing and iterative process. There will be more opportunities for Aboriginal knowledge holders to be engaged and heard in relation to this project as it continues into the future.



Engagement with key stakeholders

The two Aboriginal groups we spoke to for this project are from the Gamaragal and Gadigal clans. These groups both have connections to this site and those engaged hold specific cultural knowledge relating to this area.

There will be opportunities to speak with more Aboriginal knowledge holders in the following phases of the project lifecycle. We ensured those who we did speak to covered the important aspects that would inform the project, primarily knowledge of landscape, Sydney Aboriginal art, totems, history and stories of the site.

Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

Nathan Moran, the CEO of the Sydney-based Metropolitan LALC, is included as a member of the Berrys Bay Community and Stakeholder Working Group (CSWG). The CSWG was established to advise and assist the Berrys Bay design team in understanding the current and future needs of the local community.

Separate to the CSWG process, the design team has also sought to engage LALC through this Aboriginal engagement process. Briefings have been offered and the draft documentation on the Connection to Report has been provided for review.

Aboriginal Heritage Office (AHO)

The Aboriginal Heritage Office is a joint initiative by Lane Cove, North Sydney, Willoughby, Ku-ring-gai, Strathfield and The Northern Beaches Council that's primary purpose is to help protect Aboriginal heritage in these areas.

AHO were approached to provide input to the master plan. AHO provided two key principles to consider when conducting the Connection to Country design processes which are:

- 1) Ensure all references to heritage use key sources that are recognised by the community.
- 2) Ensure any reference to Aboriginal knowledge holders have the correct titles. That is, do not refer to the knowledge holders by their Country/ clan group names as there has not yet been any Native Title determination in Sydney to confirm their status.

These two key principles have been actioned.

Engagement with local knowledge holders

In November 2021 we held some yarns with relevant Aboriginal community members who have strong connections to this site. They were briefed on the project and the material contained in this document was shown to them and feedback gained.

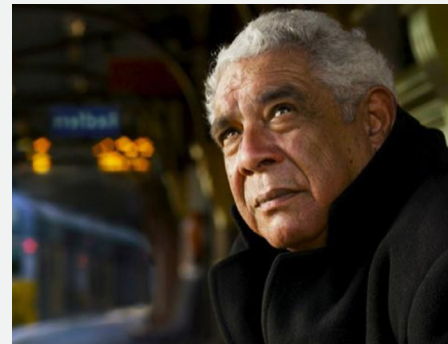
Again in February 2022 the community members were engaged through meetings with the design team. Further feedback was obtained and reflected within the contents of this document.

The Aboriginal community members were approached during the public consultation period for the draft master plan to provide their feedback and guidance. Dennis provided input and commentary to ensure that the narratives represented in the master plan are appropriate and accurate.

The following is a summary of what they said about this site and the potential for this project to reflect Country and culture.



PROFESSOR DENNIS FOLEY



UNCLE ALLEN MADDEN



UNCLE CHICKA MADDEN

Walk on Country with Aunty Margret Campbell

A Walk on Country was held on the 14th Of September 2022, led by Aunty Margret Campbell who took the TfNSW Berrys Bay Project team and members of the public on a cultural journey throughout Berrys Bay.

Uncle Dallas Dodd is a respected Aboriginal elder who attended to assist Aunty Margret Campbell with the Walk on Country.

Aunty Margret Campbell has been running Aboriginal Cultural Tours to the wider community since 1993. In 2012 Aunty Margret renamed her business to Dreamtime Southern X. Aunty Margret comes from an education background and has been a teacher at the Sydney College educating students about Aboriginal culture. She has also translated her cultural knowledge into school curriculums with the AECG (Aboriginal Education Consultative Group).

The day started off with an acknowledgment to country and smoking Ceremony performed by Aunty Margret Campbell and Uncle Dallas Dodd who assisted Aunty Margret throughout the day.

Below are key themes from the walk on country:

– The whale engraving

Aunty Margret expressed how important Aboriginal engraving sites are and how they need to be protected. Aunty Margret also talked about how the engraved rocks are like ancient classrooms where children would sit and learn about the story of the whale and how the whale was sent out to sea to be the protector of the sea. As Aboriginal people have no written language, cultural knowledge was taught verbally through the engravings along with stories, songs and cultural practices.

– The Structure of Aboriginal Culture

Aunty Margret and Uncle Dallas talked about the structure of Aboriginal culture. Both spoke about the Kinship system and how the women would raise the boys until they were old enough to go and hunt with their fathers and go through traditional Lore.

– The Native Plants

Aunty Margret and Uncle Dallas spoke about the native flora of the Berry Bay area. They showed the Geebung plant and spoke about the uses. Geebung plant was a fruit with high nutrients for the local Aboriginal people. Uncle Dallas also spoke about the Lomandra grass and how the local people would pull the stem out and suck on the bottom white part for a hydration resource. The women would also use the plant for weaving and making baskets.

– Eel and Fish

The group then walked around to the lookout of Berrys Bay, Aunty Margret and Uncle Dallas spoke about the Eels and how they are in the Sydney Harbour and lead up to the Parramatta River. They also spoke about the local fish such as Mullet and how different fish would come into the Harbour at different seasons. Aunty also touched on the height of the lookout and mentioned that it would have been used as a viewing point to spot tucker for the mob or different tribes coming into their area.

In conclusion, the Walk on Country helped the project team and the local community members gain a greater understanding on Aboriginal Culture and helped build a better connection between the wider community and the First Nations community.



Professor Dennis Foley

On the 26th of November 2021 we had an initial yarn with Professor Dennis Foley about the project and this is what he had to say:



Main concern: Heritage

Dennis expressed concern for the preservation of Aboriginal heritage on the site, in particular the whale carving and Quarantine Cave

Ideas were put forward to explore for the protection and celebration of his heritage.

Site Aboriginal history

Dennis spoke of the whale carving, middens, ½ rock carvings that have been damaged.

This site had lots of resources, fish in particular.

Oysters came in July, then the penguins and mullet in August. Lorikeets, salmon and mullet in September.

Dennis spoke of the landscape reflecting the season, like a cultural calendar. For example when the mullet and whale came you knew it was summer.

Vast resources meant there was relative peace in the Sydney Basin for 3000 years, leaving time to develop culture and design.

The angophora tree is a sacred tree for Uncles people and he would like to see it come back to the site, including Kangaroo grass, sea grass and some cultural burning.

Brother and Sister whale

The sperm whale is significant to this site, as seen in the multiple carvings on the headland (Balls Point etc).

There was once a reef that went across the harbour along the line of the bridge, it used to allow sperm whales to pass over the top, but the more aggressive humpback whales could not pass, thus it was a birthing sanctuary of the sperm whale.

Balls Head whale carving

The carving of a man in a whale on Balls Point is actually a man riding a whale! To ride the whale showed great courage and showed you were fearless as there were dangerous bull sharks in the water. The whale was like a brother sister relationship to Aboriginal people in Sydney.

Protect and celebrate heritage

While Professor Dennis Foley wants to protect the heritage, he also wants to share these stories and sites with the public.

Bring people close to the water

Dennis mentioned an elevated walkway to bring people closer to the water and bush, but tread lightly on it.

Dennis provided comments on the masterplan in November 2022, providing input towards how Aboriginal narratives might be formalised in future art and place making initiatives as the project progresses. Dennis indicated a willingness to be consulted in future stages.

Uncles Chicka and Allen Madden

Uncles Chicka and Allen Madden met with us for an initial chat about the project and this is what they had to say:

Heritage and disturbance

Both Uncles suggested protecting sites is about knowing and educating yourself about it, and said "These sites are a bit like a cemetery - you wouldn't go and disturb them. This is part of our heritage and we need to educate both black and white."

The Uncles spoke about having yarning circles, both small and large, and their uses (a place that people can come and talk), important plants for the area (angophora trees and grasses), and the importance of telling the story of the site (both Aboriginal and convict/settler).

Heritage

The Uncles both expressed concern for the preservation of Aboriginal heritage on the site, in particular the whale carving.

Ideas were put forward to explore for the protection and celebration of his heritage.

Culture

Mundoie is the great sky god of Gadigal Land and along with mother earth form our connection to Country. He's known as other names in other tribes, for example Biambi in Darug.

Mundoie was represented in rock carvings of his footsteps, representing the sky god coming down to earth.

Mt Yengo was a spot where Mundoie came down to earth and flattened the mountain.

- Chicka explained features of this Country and made suggestions as to the themes and attributes that relate to this place.
- This was an introductory session to present the project to both Uncles, listen to their initial questions and any stories and ideas they had to represent culture on this site.
- Heritage was of key concern for both Uncles, and the protection during construction phase.



Aboriginal design and planning principles

Summary of design principles

01

Heritage and Country disturbance

Any construction should have as minimal disturbance to the ground as possible.

02

Important viewpoints

How might the design cater for any important viewpoints and enhance connections to the bush and water of Berrys Bay?

03

Celebrate Country

Can the project provide a space to celebrate this important Country?

04

Tell our stories

How might we tell the stories of this Country and it's Aboriginal people?

05

Heal Country

How can we begin to heal Country through appropriate design solutions?



1. Heritage and Country disturbance

Minimal disturbance

Any construction should have as minimal disturbance to the ground as possible.

For Aboriginal people the ground and water are important and should not be disturbed too much or else you change the ecosystem and cultural values within Country.

Specifically retaining and sharing the culturally significant attributes of this place is important for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

Protect heritage while sharing it

Creating a place where Aboriginal peoples cultural heritage is shared with users is very important in developing understanding and appreciation of our shared cultural heritage.

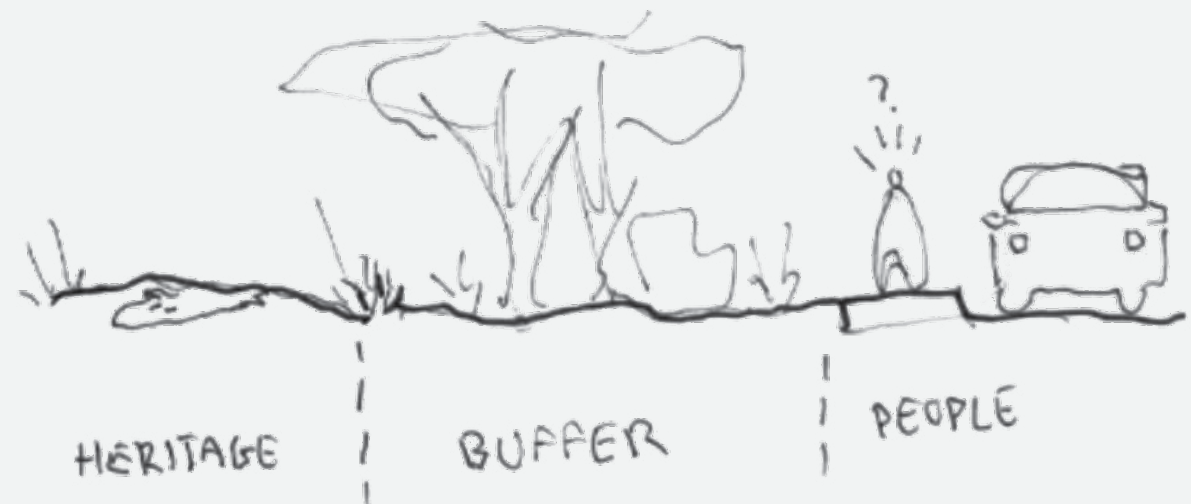
This needs to be done in conjunction with protecting these valuable and unique features for future generations.

Clever design can address the need for sharing information while protecting the cultural heritage from damage into the future.

Create a buffer

This place holds incredibly significant and valuable cultural heritage features such as the Whale Rock engraving, the Quarantine Cave and midden sites. We have a responsibility to protect these places while allowing for users to learn and enjoy this unique place.

Creating buffers and restricting access through vegetative planting and other landscape features while not disturbing the cultural artifacts is part of the challenge in getting the design right.



2. Important viewpoints

Viewpoints

How might the design cater for any important viewpoints and enhance connections to the bush and water of Berrys Bay?

Professor Dennis Foley outlined the importance of connecting people to the bush and the water when accessing this place.

Elevated spaces provide the perfect place to look at Country. Through maintaining significant viewpoints we can start to learn and understand how the landscape is arranged and how it was traditionally used by Gamaragal people.

We can also use viewpoints to share stories about this place, using features in the landscape to educate and inform users about the cultural landscape surrounding them.

Effective design solutions will consider maintaining and enhancing existing views to the harbour and back to the bushland as a way of allowing movement across the landscape.

Consider important views of Country and provide access

Traditionally Aboriginal people have used high points as places for educating the next generation about their Country and how to move across and access Country.

There are places within the Berrys Bay park where this tradition may be continued, by allowing high places and viewpoints to become gathering places to learn about features of Country.



Provide opportunities for viewing landmarks

There are opportunities within this park to create a unique sense of place by retaining viewpoints to features such as the Harbour Bridge, Opera House and the harbourside.

Views such as these are world renowned and iconic to our identity in Australia. Berrys Bay is well placed to be a destination where visitors can sit and enjoy the views throughout the year, especially during celebrations and events.

Allow for universal access for all users when designing movement corridors, to make the most of views and allowing all potential users the pleasure of access.

3. Celebrate Country

Can the project provide a space to celebrate this Country?

The project has the potential to celebrate Country and culture so as to enhance the users experience and create an ongoing connection with this place.

The area surrounding Berrys Bay has been highly modified since colonisation however the Balls Head reserve has maintained much of the natural features of Country. We can bring these elements into the Berrys Bay project area to further enhance and celebrate Country.

Removing introduced species of vegetation wherever appropriate is a clear way of decolonising Country that has been highly modified and disturbed.

Enhancing and maintaining existing endemic vegetation and habitat areas allows for increased biodiversity and health of Country.

Groves of Angophora and Allocasuarina

By retaining and enhancing existing natural features in the landscape we can celebrate Country for what it is and what it offers.

Professor Dennis Foley expressed a cultural value associated with Angophora trees and would like to see them enhanced and retained onsite.

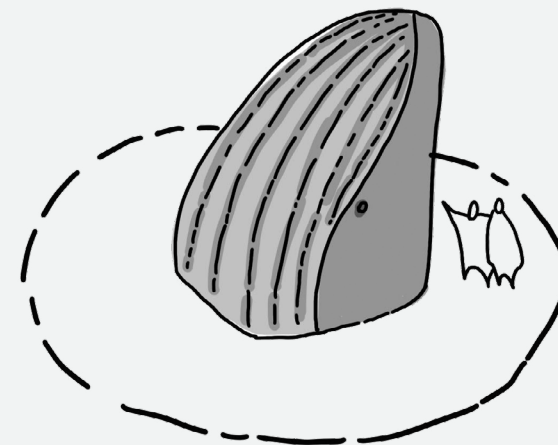
Groves of Allocasuarina species are already onsite and offer a valuable food source to glossy black cockatoos and other native species. By maintaining and caring for these plants we are allowing Country to be what it wants to be while enhancing



Significance of the whale

Due to the presence of the whale engraving, cultural connection to the whale is significant to this site.

This cultural heritage provides an opportunity to tell the story of Aboriginal peoples history, use, and stories through design and features within the park.



4. Tell our Stories

How might we tell the stories of this Country and its Aboriginal people?

Berrys Bay and the Balls Head area are culturally significant places for Gamaragal people.

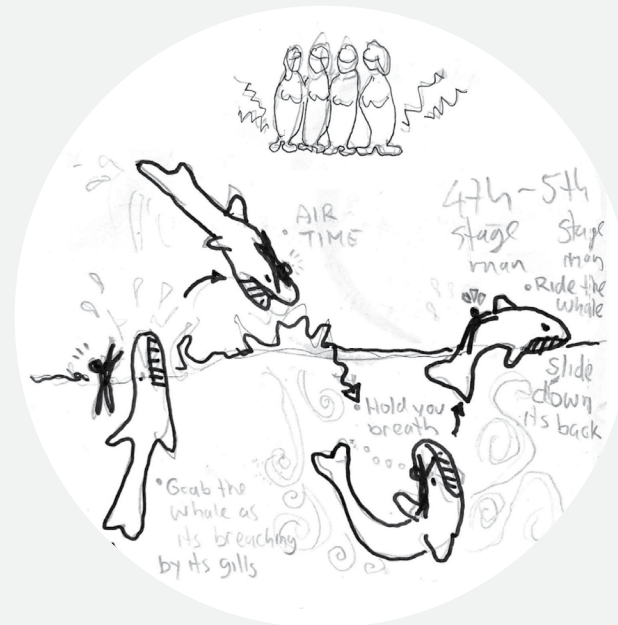
By sharing this unique and rich cultural heritage we can ensure that these stories are not lost but are valued and woven into the fabric of our culture and society for future generations to share and enjoy.

We can enhance the visitors' experience and sense of place by sharing stories, with permission from relevant Aboriginal community members, that are unique and belong to this place.

In this way we can create a destination for school groups, tourists and residents to explore local Gamaragal culture through sharing the stories that belong and are unique to this place.

Gamaragal people gathered at places around the harbour to share information and tell stories about their Country, passing down important knowledge to the future generations.

Stories contribute towards the identity and culture of society. By sharing Aboriginal peoples' stories of this place we can help to improve the narrative and understanding of the border community regarding the sophisticated and egalitarian culture of Aboriginal people so that their culture may be respected, understood and embraced.



5. Healing Country

How can we begin to heal Country through appropriate design solutions?

Since colonisation there has been a lot of disturbance, damage and destruction of the millenia long Care of Country by Aboriginal people.

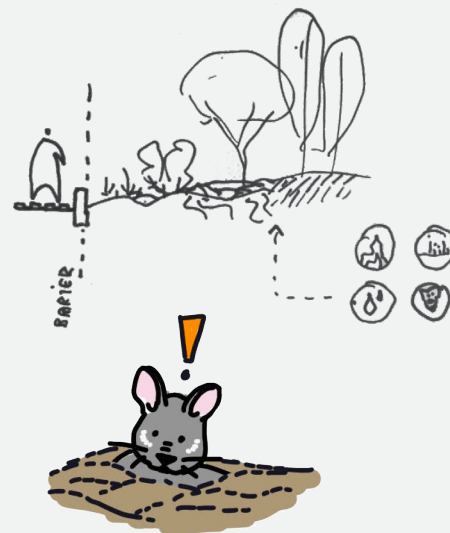
It is our responsibility as place makers and designers to leave things in a better way for the enjoyment of those that come after us. Healing Country involves listening to Aboriginal people, and embracing and supporting the unique attributes of Country.

Understanding that healthy Country supports more than humans is important so that we can design places that plants, animals and people can thrive.

Protect and share Country

Allowing access for people in some locations while restricting access in other places creates safe habitat areas for native species.

Planting endemic species that can host birds, butterflies, insects and reptiles creates a healthy ecosystem while future proofing places so that resilience and robustness is infused into the place.



Bring nature back to Country

Professor Dennis Foley shared that wallabies would come down from Lane Cove River to this location to graze on the Themeda / kangaroo grasses within the Angophora forest.

By restricting domestic animals to be on lead only we can support the return of iconic totemic species to thrive again in this location.



Celebrate the Bora ring

Bora rings located not far from the site are a part of the broader cultural landscape where people would gather, perform ceremony, initiations and dance.

There is an opportunity to reflect and create a modern interpretation of the bora rings through the design of gathering places and yarning circles in the Berrys Bay park design, in particular through the left over remnants of the BP silos.

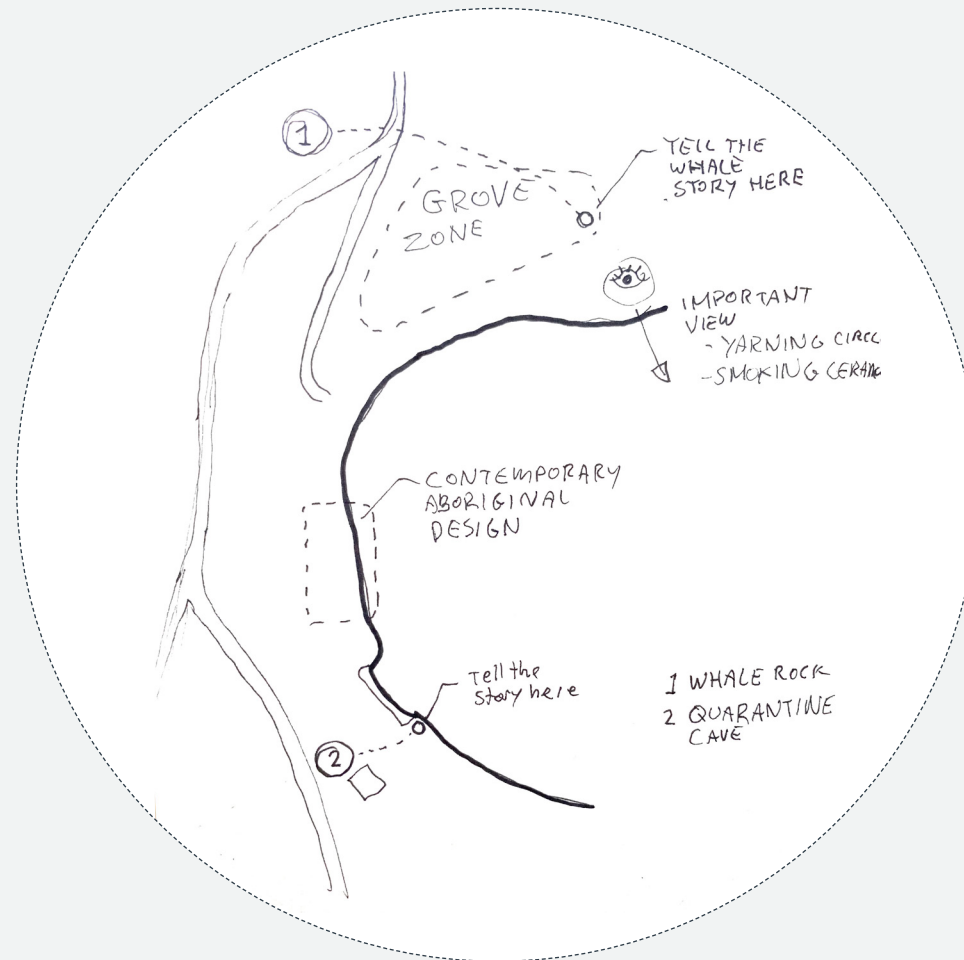
Cultural Masterplan

The following outlines the process of the Berrys Bay Cultural Masterplan.

Cultural features within the Berrys Bay area have been identified and located with guidance from the relevant Aboriginal community members through consultation and meetings.

In addition to this documentation, the Aboriginal Heritage Report for the Western Harbour Tunnel Environmental Impact Statement has also fed into informing the Cultural Masterplan.

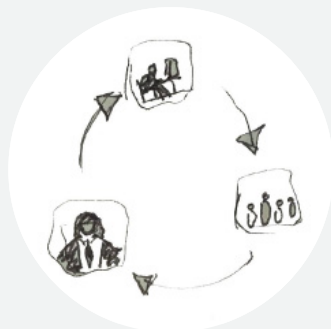
- Quarantine Cave
- Salt water connection
- She Oak Tree
- Totem habitats
- Angophora Tree



Actions for further engagement

With the creation of this document we did initial engagements with relevant Aboriginal community members and there is an expectation that they will continue to be engaged in all remaining stages of the project, and beyond.

- 01 Engage in co-design of spaces**
- Engage with relevant Aboriginal community members in the co-design of spaces and places within Berrys Bay.
- They should be continued to be engaged in all remaining stages of the project, and beyond.
- 02 Continuous communication**
- Engage them in co-design. Continuous communication is key
- Workshop ideas together, then design teams are given time to integrate the themes and ideas into the scope of the project ready for another workshop.
- Don't go 'dark' on them, keep in reasonable regular contact.
- 03 Early workshops**
- Engage them in workshops, early and often as possible.
- Meet them on Country, on the site, or at a location of their choosing.
- Per scoped item engage in the following ways:
- Meeting 1: Listen
Meeting 2: Show and tell
Meeting 3: Getting it right
Meeting 4: Endorsement
- 04 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)**
- Ensure Cultural Intellectual Property is protected.
- Get all scoped elements endorsed by the relevant Aboriginal community members.
- Highlight opportunities for artists to be involved.
- 05 Ongoing relationships**
- Once the project is completed, the land owner (Council) and relevant Aboriginal community members will still be there, and we want to ensure that the relationship is strong and reciprocal.
- Highlight further opportunities for Aboriginal people to be involved after construction, smoking ceremonies, tourism opportunities, places for youth etc.



Actions for designers

The following are actions for the contractor to adhere to in regards to the identified Design Principles from the relevant Aboriginal community members.

01

Heritage and Country disturbance

- Protect identified sites and unexpected finds of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage within the project scope.
- Consult with the Aboriginal Heritage Office, and relevant Aboriginal community members for methods and program for protection of sites through all stages of the project from design to construction and public use.
- Develop a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the Berrys Bay precinct.

02

Important viewpoints - identify, protect

- Identify, protect and enhance important viewpoints during the co-design process with relevant Aboriginal community members.
- Create culturally safe places to gather, rest, learn stories of the area and enjoy the views and landmarks of the harbour. (Refer to NSCA 2021 for definition of culturally safe.)

03

Celebrate Country

- Plan and cater for more than humans, as well as human users. Provide habitat options for local species such as frog hotels, hollow logs, arboreal hollows, bird baths etc.
- Preference endemic plant species, materials and treatments (eg. permeable crushed sandstone pathways).
- Explore opportunities for cultural activities such as weaving with locally grown plants, yarning circles for gatherings etc. in consultation and co-designed with Aboriginal designers, artists or relevant Aboriginal community members.

04

Tell our stories

- Provide Cultural Competency training for the design and project delivery teams plus consultants.
- Employ Culturally responsive methods when engaging with Aboriginal peoples intellectual property. Ensure authorship of cultural knowledge, stories, designs etc.
- Co-design storytelling opportunities with relevant Aboriginal community members. Make stories accessible to all ages, abilities and users of the public space.

05

Heal Country

- Allow Country to be what it wants to be. Plan the precinct to support the health of Country.
- Investigate and adopt Cultural Land Practices with consultation of Aboriginal people.
- Invite and remunerate relevant Aboriginal community members to provide a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony or other cultural activities led by Aboriginal people.

Recommendations

Recommendation for the client (TfNSW) when determining the award of contract for the Berrys Bay project:

The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (ACA) regulate the National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA). Their 2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects (ACTIVE from 2022) was released 1st July 2021, it includes a new section of competency - Recognition of First Nations principles in designing for Country.¹⁹

We understand that the contractor will be most probably be from the Landscape Architecture discipline, however the following Performance Criteria (PC) are an example of current best practice when working with and designing for Country. It is also our understanding that the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) and the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) are both currently developing their own set of PC for Designing for Country for their industries.

Therefore it is recommended that the selected contractor for Berrys Bay will be able to display the following Performance Criteria (PC), outlined by the ACA.

- **PC 3**
Apply principles of project planning, considering implications for Country, environmental sustainability, communities, stakeholders and project costs.¹⁹
- **PC 8**
Be able to implement culturally responsive and meaningful engagement processes that respect the importance of Country and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across architectural services.¹⁹
- **PC 15**
Comply with legal and ethical obligations relating to legislated requirements in relation to copyright, moral rights, authorship of cultural knowledge and intellectual property requirements across architectural services.¹⁹
- **PC 17**
Have an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' aspirations to care for Country and how these inform architectural design.¹⁹
- **PC 27**
Understand how to embed the knowledge, worldview and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, shared through engagement processes, into the conceptual design in a meaningful, respectful and appropriate way.¹⁹
- **PC 34**
Communicate conceptual design proposals and associated information to client, stakeholders and communities using appropriate and culturally responsive methods appropriate to different audiences.¹⁹
- **PC 36**
Be able to apply creative imagination, design precedents, emergent knowledge, critical evaluation and continued engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to produce a coherent project design. This should be resolved in terms of supporting health and wellbeing outcomes for Country, site planning, formal composition, spatial planning and circulation as appropriate to the project brief and all other factors affecting the project.¹⁹
- **PC 45**
Be able to nominate and integrate quality and performance standards with regard to selected materials, finishes, fittings, components and systems, considering the impact on Country and the environment, and the whole life carbon impact of the project. This includes integrating life cycle assessments and other expertise and advice from consultants.¹⁹
- **PC 50**
Be able to continue engagement with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples throughout all stages of the project and its delivery in a meaningful, respectful and appropriate way.¹⁹

Further recommended Aboriginal engagement

We recommended continued engagement to be held with the following local Knowledge holders throughout the life of the project. This should include:

- Inviting them to be part of co-design activities
- Arranging smoking ceremonies, 'walks on Country' etc.
- Other Aboriginal related activities such as NAIDOC day celebrations, etc.
- Allow for engagement with additional Aboriginal stakeholders for example Margret Campbell and Tribal Warrior

Uncle Allen Madden

Note: Allen can meet for online TEAMS / Zoom sessions, can meet in person where ever, and can do 'walks on Country'

Uncle Charles (Chicka) Madden

Note: Chicka prefers to meet in person and a place near his house, such as Alexandria Park

Professor Dennis Foley

Note: Dennis can meet for online TEAMS / Zoom sessions, can meet in person wherever, and can do 'walks on Country'

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 - 7 Hoskins, Dr. I., North Sydney Council Historian, 2019, Aboriginal North Sydney, North Sydney Council. viewed 12/11/21, available - https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Library_Databases/Heritage_Centre/Leaflets_Walks_Publications/Aboriginal_North_Sydney
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 - 13 Aboriginal Heritage Office, Identifying Aboriginal Sites, Aboriginal Heritage Office, viewed 11/3/22, available- <https://www.aboriginalheritage.org/sites/identification/>
 - 14 Unknown author, Great Eora fisherwomen remembered in 'bara' artwork, viewed 12/11/21, available- <https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/articles/great-eora-fisherwomen-remembered-in-bara-artwork>
- Interesting places references**
- 16 Unknown author, Aboriginal Sites: Northern Beaches and Pittwater, viewed 12/11/21, available- https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Recreation_Facilities/Parks_Reserves/Search_Parks/Berry_Island_Reserve
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 - 18 Professor Dennis Foley, Gamaragal Elders, Pers. Comm during Berrys Bay Cultural Engagement meeting, 26/11/21.
- Access the following resources for more information:
- Recognition of First Nations principles in designing for Country**
- 19 Hromek, Dr. D, Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, 2021, Explanatory Notes and Definitions for National Standards of Competency for Architects, available: <https://djinjama.com/nsca-explanatory-notes-definitions/>

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