

Blackwattle Bay
State Significant Precinct

Attachment 28:

Connecting with Country Framework for Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay

June 2021





GALUMBAN GABAMI CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK FOR TJERRUING BLACKWATTLE BAY

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WELCOME TO COUNTRY

This Country is tucoerah/tuggorah, where two waters and their unique environments meet. It is here that nattaigalo (fresh or sweet water) rises from underground springs and travels in streams across the land. Thick forests of Tjerruing (*callicoma serratifolia* or blackwattle) protect the freshwater as it flows into garigalo (saltwater) Country on the rocky sandstone shorelines of what is now known as Blackwattle Bay. These two diverse environments create the fertile wetlands and swamps of biddigalo (bitter or sour water) that are home to Dahl'wah (casuarina) and the stories of our women.

For thousands of generations, this Country has been carefully protected in a reciprocal relationship with eora (local custodians) including the D'harawal, Dharug, Eora, Gai-maragal, Gundungara and Guringai peoples. We pay our respects to the Ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging and honour their unique Ancestral connections to Country, story and knowledge.

Country here has provided for these local communities in great abundance for countless generations. It will be through honouring the enduring spirit of Country as a provider, healer and vital connection to culture that we can create a future whereby many diverse communities can continue to prosper connected to, and united by, Country.

Ngeeyinee bulima nandiritah
(May you always see the beauty of this earth)

Shannon Foster
Registered Sydney Traditional Owner and D'harawal Knowledge Keeper



MIDAN
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

bangawarra

1.1

DEFINING TERMS ‘COUNTRY’ AND ‘CONNECTION TO COUNTRY’

The one constant for all of the people of this place is the Country that we share. It is Country that brings us together and unites us. When we develop an understanding of and respect for Country, we create deep connections to place, and to one another as a community. For the Aboriginal peoples of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, life here is sustained by taking care of this Country and “when we look after Country, Country will look after us” (Foster, 2021). All local Aboriginal culture and law/lore stem from this fundamental premise.

“Country is often misunderstood as being synonymous with land, but it goes far beyond that. It comprises ecologies of plants, animals, water, sky, air and every aspect of the ‘natural’ environment. Country is a spiritual entity: she is mother. She is not separate to you: all things are connected, everything is interrelated.”

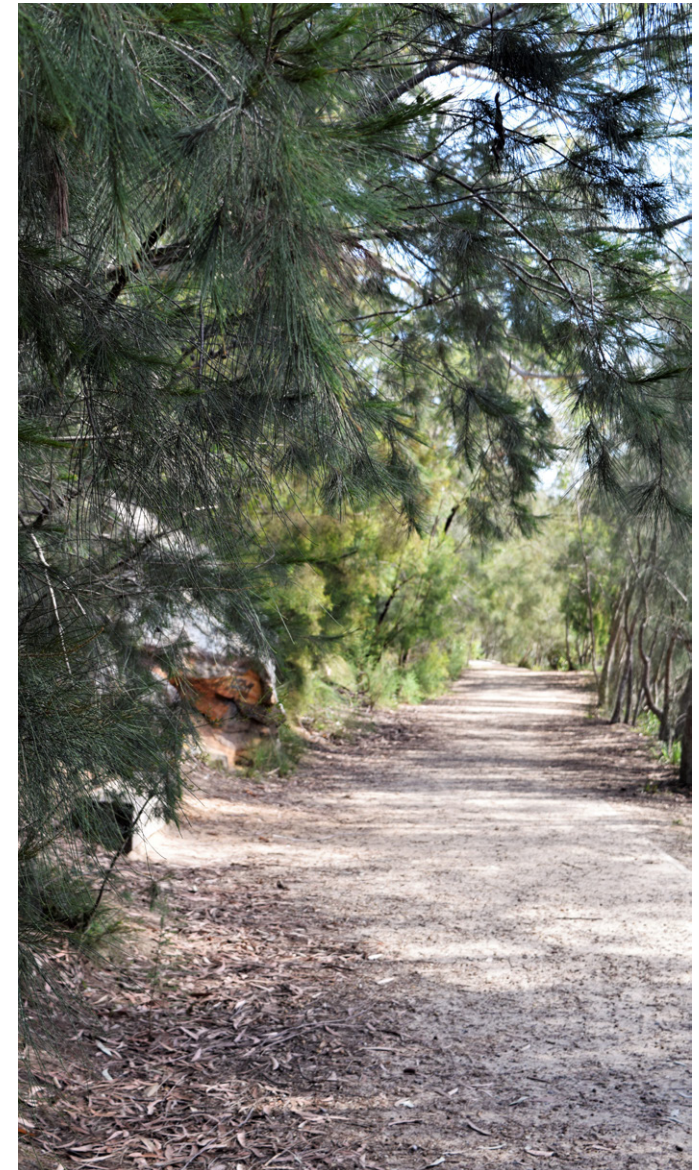
Foster, Shannon., Kinniburgh, Jo. P., & Country, Wann. (2020). There’s No Place Like (Without) Country. In *Placemaking Fundamentals for the Built Environment* (pp. 63-82). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. p68.

Country is not just the land or the landscape. Country is a spiritual entity, she is our Mother. It is therefore the correct protocol to capitalise the word Country so that it is understood as a proper noun, the name of mother translated into English. In this sentence, the common noun and proper noun version of the word demonstrate the difference: Aboriginal people are connected to Country (proper noun), and care for it/her across the beautiful country (common noun) now known as Australia (proper noun). Further, as a proper noun, Country retains its/her spelling, including the ‘y’ when pluralised. In any given place, including Sydney, there are almost always a number of shared, overlapping Countrys.

Country is made up of land formations, but also of all living and nonliving elements of the environment, including people and culture. All aspects of Country have their own spirit and are valued and protected as essential parts of a complex and interconnected system with each element reliant on all others as integral to the whole. Aboriginal life is not human centred, rather Country is prioritised above all else as the giver and sustainer of life, and humans form only a part of it. The purpose of human life is to care for Country, because without healthy Country, there cannot be healthy people or ecologies.

Country is more than just resources to be extracted and commodified. Aboriginal cultures have strict rules to ensure that Country can provide in sustainable and resourceful ways today, and long into the future. In order to achieve this, the local Aboriginal peoples work with Country and for Country employing adaptive management strategies that harness the natural forces of Country to help Country provide, but also to heal and regenerate. Some of the strategies employed include working within seasonal cycles, using fire technologies and tidal aquaculture systems.

One of the difficulties in describing and protecting Country is that Country also includes many intangible aspects of our culture such as stories, memories and Songlines. These aspects of Country are often disregarded or unknown to heritage consultants, as so many parts of Country are classified as “not of cultural significance” and can be destroyed in development.





Often you may hear that someone is going “on Country” which is a term used to describe going out into the bush or natural environment. We would argue that we are always on Country. It doesn’t matter how much you develop the land, change it or build upon it, Country is still here and it is still vitally important to Aboriginal peoples and the future of our cultures. This is an important aspect of culture that is often overlooked in urban areas located on heavily modified sections of Country. In order to get a more holistic understanding of Country it is necessary to consult with the Aboriginal peoples whose Ancestral stories and knowledges of that Country go back tens of thousands of years. Early colonial artworks of Country substantiate the oral histories, but only with respect to the tangible aspects of the natural environment. The colonial archives can never approach the knowledges of Country that local Aboriginal peoples have, and archives should not be respected as the authoritative source of truth about Country.

Connecting to Country

A deep, genuine connection to Country is not achievable without understanding the Ancestral stories and knowledges of that Country. Connecting with Country occurs through open engagement with local Traditional Owners/Custodians - those who carry and protect the Ancestral stories that have shaped culture and lore on Country since time began. Western stereotyping of Aboriginal stories as mythology or children’s tales reflects a misunderstanding of cultural protocols, a lack of genuine engagement with them and a palpable absence from society of the depth of knowledge that they hold, emerging only given the appropriate time, relationships and effort. Learning Country

through law, in story form, is a process that can only expand in depth and complexity over time and cannot be compressed into a short timespan such as the time to read this document.

The term ‘Traditional Owner’ is a colonial reference, which requires unbroken occupation of Ancestral Country and official registration as part of the process of recognition of local Aboriginal status. The term has its uses, and its limitations. The primary problem stems from the use of the idea of land ‘ownership’ which is incompatible with local Aboriginal understandings that land cannot be owned, but instead Country requires that you care for it/her. For peoples who were removed from their Country to distant missions or who were part of the Stolen Generations, the break in occupation of their Country can preclude registration. The way Ancestral connection to Country is described within Aboriginal cultures, translated into English, is with the compound word “on-Country”. If an Aboriginal person is “on-Country” it means they are living on the Ancestral Country of their family, where they hold ongoing knowledges, law and story of that place.

In Sydney, where non-Indigenous people do not often observe the cultural protocols of on-Country engagement, much Aboriginal consultation is carried out regardless of whether an Aboriginal consultant is on-Country or not. This erases or diminishes the local knowledges, stories, histories and peoples from the documents, built environment and public space of the city - leaving accounts harvested from colonial archives and records to stand in for Aboriginal local knowledge. By erasing the on-Country peoples, a lot of local, on-Country cultural information is misrepresented in official

reports, records, websites and processes, and consequently, also in the physical places and spaces of the city.

To respectfully connect to Country requires that we transcend a box-ticking mentality with respect to Aboriginal engagement and consultation, and work to change consultation and engagement practices, and their place within project programming. It requires that we begin the process of building relationships and developing understanding that extends beyond individual projects. To begin the process of connecting with Country requires that you take time to immerse yourself physically in a process known by many Aboriginal peoples as “walking up Country”. This is most effectively done with local Traditional Owners/Custodians who can enhance the process by also “talking up” Country - a process of invoking the spirit and knowledges of Country through embodied learning and engagement with her laws, told through stories.



1.2

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY

The 2020 Government Architect NSW DRAFT Connecting with Country Framework articulates the need for designers to make connections with local Aboriginal peoples, giving priority to partnerships with people holding Ancestral connections to the Country that is slated for development.

Designing with Country can only be achieved by firstly working to connect to Country, and then by respecting Country and its/her Ancestral stories throughout all design and development phases. Design should minimise damage, and as best as possible protect Country and its/her systems and ecologies in a sustainable manner, as part of feasibility, budgets and programming.

“If design and planning processes considered natural systems that include people, animals, resources and plants equally – similar to an Aboriginal world view – this could make a significant contribution to a more sustainable future world”.

GANSW Draft Connecting with
Country discussion paper (2020)

Country-centred Design embraces the complex, interdependent character of Country, and the knowledge embedded within it/her. At Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, as on any part of Country, there are multi-layered and interconnected stories that provide a rich design context, and the opportunity to draw on numerous aspects of site history and knowledge into a range of spatial outcomes that celebrate deep history, story, ethnobotanical and cultural knowledges, animals or local climatic expertise.



This 'Connecting With Country Framework for Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay' establishes the relevance and importance of Connecting with Country to the design process, and insists that this spirit needs to continue into each phase of precinct development, expanding and building upon it at all levels of governance, design and experience. The presence of deep cultural awareness in the planning and design phases has the potential to translate to spatial and place-based experiences, including an enriched sense of connection to place and belonging for the people who live, work, visit and care for this place in the future. Connecting to Country must continue in every phase of development at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay.



1.3

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF FRAMEWORK

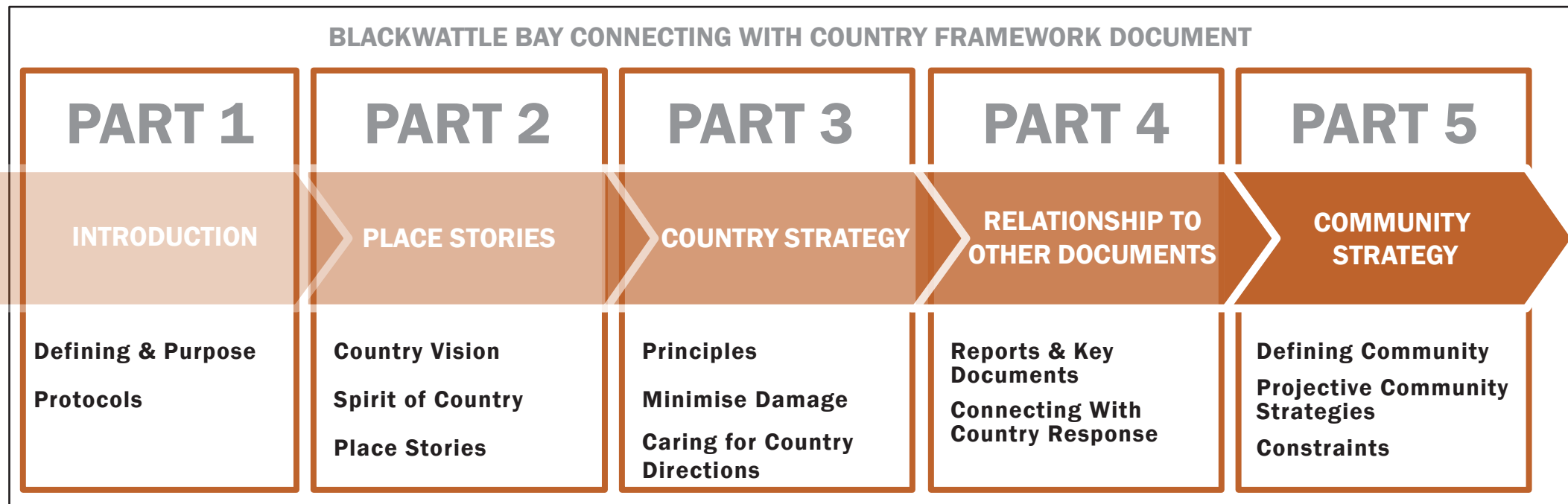
This document marks the start of a journey to embed considerations of Country into the future of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. Historically, urban planning has subscribed to international practices, completely overlooking the rich Aboriginal knowledges and people that could create something remarkable. At Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, the desire is to do better than business-as-usual, and to enrich the urban fabric by celebrating local Aboriginal values, epistemologies (ways of knowing), ontologies (ways of being) and axiologies (ways of doing) that can enrich the cultural identities of all people who live and work here.

Physical accounts of Country - through visual documents of the local people, their artefacts and activities, the land and the plants and animals - have dominated the colonial archive as well as colonial methods of city building. In a 'designing with Country' context, the same (visual) content can be reinterpreted from an on-Country Aboriginal perspective with local stories and knowledges that provide a richer way to understand our place. It is possible to recognise and acknowledge the separate stories, but to tell them together through Country, so that they become shared. We enrich one another's stories when we listen and share our different understandings and perspectives.

It takes work to connect with Country in a meaningful way and ensure that all who have association with Country are heard and included, but the benefits will far outweigh the effort. Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay is a highly modified site given the successive colonial interventions here, but the spirit of Country has endured and the stories and themes identified in the next sections of the document are provided as a starting point for designing with Country.



1.4 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE



1.5

CULTURAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND RIGHTS

The cultural Intellectual Property (IP) of all Aboriginal peoples, including the IP of the stories in this document, remains with the people they belong to. In this case the stories shared belong to the D'harawal people of the Sydney region who know themselves as Iyora/Eora here and these stories may not be duplicated or used without the express permission of Sydney D'harawal Elders or Knowledge Keepers. The stories shared are just the starting point. There are other stories, and there are many layers of these stories that have not been unpacked in this document. Learning these will require personal effort and commitment. There may also be other Ancestral stories of this location from other local peoples, and hearing them will involve the effort and time to learn in culturally appropriate ways.



1.6

STORIES OF COUNTRY

In writing sacred stories, there is a danger that they are received as information, that can be understood and known through reading. This is a colonial approach to learning that diminishes the depth of knowing embedded and embodied within them. The following quote captures the risk

“In the telling, these stories move out of the past and the mouths of those who told them to us, through our own bodies and emerge once more from within us onto Country - in our voices, our exhalations. Our storying becomes spatialised in the present moment, welcomed on the same Country where this practice has endured for countless millennia. The stories are absorbed through the ears and into the bodies of the listeners, who then share the embodiment with the Ancestors. This is bringing ourselves into a spatial engagement with Country. This is ‘talking up’ Country, and why storying as a practice is about more than just conveying information, it is a recursive process of knowledge filtration, communication, connection and return.

D’harawal Storytellers Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Fran Bodkin, Gavin Andrews and Gomeroi scholar Alison Whittaker explain that ‘[t]o meaningfully unlock the varying lessons and layers of meaning requires a much deeper reciprocal interaction between the story, the storyteller, the story-listener, and Country for the story itself over

time (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2016, p. 48 1). As we type these stories, we translate this practice from ears and body to one of eyes, and the shared space of encounter becomes dispersed. We are aware that this shift affects the sense of engagement with Country and the shared spatiality. Without a bodily engagement with Country, there is no ‘return’ and the recursive nature of storying is lost. We share this to bring attention to the rupture in process when we rely simply on knowledge acquisition, on written documents and archives of ‘otherness’ to tell stories.”

Foster, Shannon., Kinniburgh, Jo. P., & Country, Wann. (2020). There’s No Place Like (Without) Country. In *Placemaking Fundamentals for the Built Environment* (pp. 63-82). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. p74-75.

In Barkolo: Part Two of this document, we introduce some of the stories of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay Country. They can only ever be an introduction that requires commitment and effort to enact genuine learning on, and connection to, Country.



1.7

LOCAL PROTOCOLS: PEOPLE

In correct protocols, we should acknowledge Country first, and speak of the qualities or characteristics that this Country is known for, and how to care for it, before we begin to speak of peoples. Country is always first, and people come after that - as people are only one part of the interrelated entity that makes up Country. This will be explored in more depth in Barkolo: Part Two.

Local Aboriginal peoples understand that we do not own Country, just as we do not own our mothers. Instead, we understand that we belong to Country, and not the other way around. In contemporary society, colonial systems insist upon ownership, as well as borders and boundaries that may be based on a variety of imposed state, federal or local council government areas, Aboriginal lands councils jurisdictions, departmental dictates (Ross, 1988) as well as individual ownership. None of these colonial frameworks respect the Aboriginal laws of this Country that predated them, laws that embraced the interconnected nature of Country and peoples.

This Country is home to a complex and nuanced kinship system of interrelated Aboriginal peoples that each identify with diverse and extensive areas of Country in and around the region now known as Sydney. The early colonists could not appreciate the complex kinship systems that were in place when they arrived, and their oversimplified accounts of tribalism and fixed localities have prevailed (Behrendt, 2016). Local Aboriginal scholars have been recently overturning the mistakes in the archives - especially with respect to European ideas of land ownership that asserted one people and language for each place. In any given area there is more than just one Aboriginal community or group on-Country, however, in heavily colonised areas

even well-meaning non-Indigenous people still acknowledge one people, one place, one language, for example 'the Cadigal people of the Eora nation' as the only people of vast areas of Sydney, including Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. Other local people are routinely erased from acknowledgements such as this in the public account. Contemporary local Indigenous scholars are reasserting their Ancestral knowledges of Country that challenge colonial erasure, publishing widely on the matter (Gaimaragal Dennis Foley, 2001, 2014, 2020; D'harawal Shannon Foster, 2019, 2020, 2021; Dharawal Shane Ingrey, 2016 & 2020; D'harawal Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews 2016 and with D'harawal Fran Bodkin and Gavin Andrews 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016); Dharug Jo Anne Rey (2019, 2021)

As an example, we look to acknowledgements of Gadi Country, which are often the default acknowledgement for Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. Gadi is Country that all of the groups of Sydney identify with. You can hear references to all of the following: Gadi as Eora Country, as Dharug/Darug Country, as D'harawal/Dharawal Country and as sacred Gaimaragal Country, as well as others. There are references to Gadigal of the Eora nation, Gadigal of the Dharug/Darug nation; Gadigal of the D'harawal/Dharawal nation and others. It can be true that a number of different nation groups claim the same Country as mother, just as several children can claim the same person as their mother, and likewise a number of groups claim the same 'clan' names as their own family (as in the example of siblings). It is the colonial imposition of ownership and borders that have confused this in the minds of many people, even some Aboriginal people.



The same can be said for every 'clan' name and place in Sydney. No Aboriginal nation group should be erased on their own Country. It is aligned with Ancestral protocols, and culturally respectful, to honour all of the local peoples and to inclusively acknowledge them. In the example of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, you may hear only one name acknowledged. As outlined above, this is problematic. Firstly it erases the people, knowledges and stories of all of the other Aboriginal peoples who also share, care for and know this place. There are many Ancestral stories that tie other Sydney peoples to this area too, some of which we introduce in Barkolo: Part Two. In Sydney, always acknowledge the D'harawal, Dharug, Gundangara, Gai-maragal, Guringai and Eora peoples as communities with Ancestral connections to Country here. Anything less than this would be to succumb to the inherently racist, colonial impositions on local Aboriginal cultures and continue the erasure and silencing of Aboriginal peoples.

As an aside, often these names include the suffix "gal" as the word for people, but in local languages 'gal' is the suffix for 'man' and 'galeen/galyon' is the suffix for women. It is not appropriate to only acknowledge the men of Country so it is advised that this wording is avoided. Instead the word peoples should be used with the name of the Country they are from eg: peoples of Gadi (grass tree) Country, which is more accurate from a cultural perspective, or in the case of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, the peoples of Tjerruing (Callicoma) Country.



1.8

LOCAL PROTOCOLS: LANGUAGE

There is also not a single language for Sydney. There are several languages of the Sydney region, with dialects of each, with many local peoples being multilingual. Some of these languages have survived, being shared and passed down between local families, while others are being revitalised through archival and other sources. In recent years the fine-grained nature of language in Sydney has been overwritten by one document and furious territorial debates over ownership of it.

'The Sydney Language' (1994) document was compiled by Jaky Troy, a Ngarigo woman from the Snowy Mountains researching Aboriginal language of the Sydney region from colonial documents. She compiled wordlists from archival notes of some of the colonists, none of whom spoke the languages they inscribed. In the 'Sydney Language' document, Troy herself noted that what is included is a "very limited selection" of language words. The first sentence of the preface expressed Troy's belief that the languages were extinct, which explains the lack of engagement with Aboriginal language speakers, but this extremely problematic position has since been proven incorrect.

To incorporate local language into programs and places of Sydney, it is common for people to draw on the wordlists from the book 'The Sydney Language' and to claim the language as exclusively Gadigal or Dharug, for example. In the same way as attributions of Country are not mutually exclusive, neither necessarily are the local languages. The author of 'The Sydney Language,' herself noted in her Foreword and Introduction (that most people fail to read as they skip to the easily accessible wordlists):

"The Sydney Language is a sample of some of the common words known by the people of Sydney which includes the D'harawal, Dharug, Gundangara and Guringai peoples. Some of these people have claimed the language sampled and called it by their tribal name eg: Dharug and Cadigal. In reality, the language is representative of all of the tribal groups of Sydney as a region."

"There is also no evidence for either name having been used by the language's speakers as the label for their language. Therefore, rather than arbitrarily deciding on one of the two names, neither of which are authenticated, I have chosen to refer to the language as simply 'the Sydney Language'"

(Troy, 1993, 6)



From this explanation, it is evident that the words of several languages have been conflated into the one 'Sydney Language' document. Additionally Troy chose to exclude some of the Turruwul (D'harawal) wordlists, because William Ridley, the original transcriber, had noted that the informant mixed up two languages: Turruwul & Gwea (but both are, in fact, Dharawal languages)! Some of the words from the Sydney D'harawal languages were omitted, which is only one of the reasons that D'harawal speakers of Sydney have many words that are not in the 'Sydney Language' document. We should note here for clarity, that language differentiates the D'harawal people of Sydney from the South Coast D'harawal people, as they do not share the same language, and this Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay document only references D'harawal words from Sydney.

We emphasise that there is a need to connect to local Aboriginal people if you ever hope to draw on the culture and languages of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. Local language speakers will have their own sources and dictionaries, and are the best way to connect to local languages.

In this Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay Connecting with Country Framework, you will encounter one of the languages of the Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay location - the local D'harawal words about this place, that are shared by one of the authors of this document, D'harawal Knowledge Keeper Shannon Foster. Many of the language words used in this document overlap across other languages of the Sydney region.

Under DURUGAI Part 3.10 a discussion of language and dual naming protocols is provided.





BARKOLO

PART TWO: PLACE STORIES OF TJERRUING
BLACKWATTLE BAY COUNTRY

bangawarra

2.1

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY VISION

Sydney D'harawal Elder, Aunty Fran Bodkin explains, “to know the future we must first know the past”. This then requires that we know, understand and acknowledge the true stories of Country and her peoples. Knowing Country means that we can then make the right decisions now so that our futures are protected.

In this Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay Connecting with Country Framework, you will encounter local Aboriginal stories and knowledges. These are a small selection of the D'harawal stories of this place. They are shared by one of the authors of this document, D'harawal Knowledge Keeper Shannon Foster, whose Ancestors kept these knowledges alive, and whose Elders and Knowledge Keepers still celebrate, live by and share them today.

The cultural Intellectual Property (IP) of all Aboriginal peoples, including the cultural IP of these stories, remains with the people they belong to and can never be vested or assigned. In this case the stories belong to the D'harawal people of the Sydney region who know themselves as Iyora here, and these stories may not be duplicated or used without the express permission of Sydney D'harawal Elders or Knowledge Keepers. The stories shared are just the starting point. There are other stories, and there are many layers of these stories that have not been unpacked in this document. There may also be other Ancestral stories of this location from other local peoples, and hearing them will involve the effort and time to learn in culturally appropriate ways.



2.2

THE SPIRIT OF COUNTRY

For Aboriginal people, understanding that all things are connected and interrelated means that we also understand that all time is significant, whether it be the past, the present or the future. Our conception of time as non-linear means that everything that is done in this time (and place) is influenced by our past and impacts our futures. Aboriginal Waanyi author, Alexis Wright explains “All times are important to us. No time has ended and all worlds are possible.”

Country is a spiritual entity, and this spirit persists through time (future, past, present and in between) and through successive occupations. The incarnations of the Sydney Harbour that are alluded to in the oral histories and Ancestral stories of the local Sydney peoples have impacts on the way Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay is understood through history. For example, the Sydney D’harawal stories of the Boomatjaril, Parradowee and Booambilyee articulate three distinct states of Port Jackson and therefore also of the Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay - all prior to colonial land reclamations.

Approximately 125000 years ago, in a former inundation, sea level was 6m higher than the current level and the bay was largely under waters that lapped the low lying sandstone outcrop of Pymont. This phase is referred to in the story of Booambilyee the Shark Spirit, who swam in the area in deep history.

The D’harawal story of Paradowee the Eel Spirit, describes the time from 20000 to 14000 years ago during the last Ice Age, when Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay was as a part of a tableland near the escarpment that flanked the rivulet valley (of the now Parramatta River).

Approximately 6000 years ago the bay flooded again to roughly its current level, and where Wentworth Park lies was a freshwater creek lined with Tjerruing, and behind them Dahl’wah. The stories of each of these trees is outlined in Barkolo Parts 2.3 and 2.4 respectively. The freshwater supply of the bay has cultural value to the Sydney peoples, which is outlined in Barkolo Part 2.5.

Physical evidence of local Aboriginal occupation at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay along the freshwater course, on the shoreline, in the engravings and shell (resource) collections on the sandstone of Pymont have all been carelessly destroyed. Now the creek is piped under roads and the park, the foreshore has been polluted and then ‘reclaimed’ and the sandstone of Pymont has been extensively quarried. The sense of physical erasure, while seemingly complete, does not correspond to cultural or spiritual erasure. The spirit of this Country survives despite all that has been done to it/her, and connection to Country remains for the local peoples.

Physical evidence of the cultural occupation of the bay/tableland from the last Ice Age now lies under sea level in saltwater Country, such as an important cave called the Boomatjaril that is mentioned in the Dharawal stories of the harbour. Its recent rediscovery using hydrographic technology is substantiation of Aboriginal stories and connection to Country in this area for tens of thousands of years.



2.3

TJERRUING

Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay Country is known and named for Tjerruing (*Callicoma Serratifolia*) which grew prolifically along the creekline and was given the common name 'blackwattle' by British colonists. Despite the English misnomer, Tjerruing is not a wattle. It has spherical lemon-yellow fluffy flowers that appear similar to those of the local acacia species (such as *acacia decurrens* and *acacia parramattensis*) which were also assigned the misnomer 'blackwattle' in the early days of the colony after their suitability for mimicking the wattle and daub houses built in Britain.

When named "Blackwattle Bay" many people assumed that the name was referring to the acacia species of Sydney but there are approximately 12 different plants that are referred to as blackwattles. Many Aboriginal heritage reports discuss the acacia species and not Tjerruing (*callicoma*) going into detail about how Aboriginal peoples use the blackwattle as a resource. The same uses do not apply to Tjerruing.

Tjerruing grows on the banks of freshwater streams and its root system is integral in maintaining the structure and integrity of muddy banks. The roots of Tjerruing prevent erosion during seasonal flash flooding and storms, thereby protecting the integrity of the local terrestrial environment from the aquatic environment. Tjerruing has played an important role in the lives of local Aboriginal peoples for millennia, including providing hard wood for tools and equipment and the blossoms of Tjerruing are a culturally important source of nectar blooming in the season of the Parradowee (October/November).

An essential rule of sustainability for D'harawal people is to never pick flowers. Flowers are an important food source for many animals

and insects and will eventually bear the seeds of the plant to create future generations. Instead, flowers are washed everyday while they are still on the plant. To tell the practice of cultural flower washing requires a brief description of the local gulima (wooden bowl). The gulima is made from the goolime - gum trees with knots or burls that have been created when a branch has broken off and the bark has grown over the remaining stub creating a dome-like protuberance. This hemisphere is sliced off the tree and hollowed out to create a bowl with a rounded bottom that is stable in soft earth or sand. The gulima bowl can be formed by chipping away at the wood but it is much more efficient to place the hemisphere over the opening of a termite mound and wait for the wood eating insects to hollow the bowl out for you.

Early each day, at the time of *gugugara djanaba* (when the *kookaburra* laughs), the women go to the stream and collect freshwater in their gulimas, taking the water to the Tjerruing flowers first thing in the morning before the sun and the wind dry out the nectar. The flowers are washed in the freshwater, so that the nectar builds up in the water and makes a high energy, refreshing drink perfect to help start the day. In its most concentrated form, the nectar solution is given to the Elderly and the babies who are not thriving as its high kilojoule content is required to support their health and vitality.

Tjerruing is a popular and important D'harawal association plant to many other plants. When Tjerruing is grown around other specific species it has the potential to enhance the health and survival of the other plants as well as increase the effectiveness of their active ingredients and medicinal qualities.



Leaves of Tjerruing

2.4

DAHL'WAH

Alongside the Tjerruing you will also find Dahl'wah, the casuarina glauca, that marks the transition between aquatic and dry terrestrial environments. She withstands environmental stresses, forming a community on the edges of wetlands that protects the converging aquatic and terrestrial environments from each other, the Biddigalo (sour, brackish water) and the Nattaigalo (sweet, freshwater). Dahl'wah creates an important ecological and cultural space for D'harawal people of Sydney. On Country, she serves to protect us from the damaging impacts of urbanisation, filtering smog and drowning out the dust and noises of traffic and construction. She is often reduced to an 'environmental buffer zone' in planning, but culturally she holds so many rich layers of story.

Dahl'wah grows in clusters, tall and straight with distinct needle-like leaves that fall to form a soft allelopathic carpet around the trees. Snakes and other reptiles find this surface inhospitable and the lack of undergrowth too exposed, so it is a safe place of comfort and refuge. D'harawal children of the Sydney Basin are taught that if they get lost in the bush they should go to Dahl'wah, because they are safe there, and the lack of understorey means they will be easily spotted by their family when they are searching. While the children wait they are comfortable on the soft leaves and safe from reptiles. They can take the woody seed pods, called munyamarli, and rub them between their hands, as they allow their worries to get their feet stuck in the holes of the seed pod. They can blow three times and overnight the night spirits will chase their worries away.

Dahl'wah also creates shared cultural space - a place to make string together and share stories - hence the term 'yarning'. Dahl'wah also

has the nickname Bididi, which means the old lady tree, our protector who keeps us safe. If you listen carefully amongst the casuarinas, every so often you will hear the chatter of the old Bididi/ladies as the breeze moves through the fine spindly leaves.

During the early years of the colony, the colonists thought Dahl'wah could be used as a resource to exploit. They tried to use her wood, resembling oak, to repair their boats after their long journeys. After failed attempts to use her, as she was too tough and not pliable, they called her 'she' oak because, in their eyes, she was useless and too difficult to work with. This gendered term is far less respectful than her language name, Dahl'wah, but if we must use an oak reference, then 'swamp oak' is not as offensive.

The D'harawal story of Dahl'wah tells of the strong spirit of the women of Country, who protect and nurture family and all living organisms.



Leaves of Dahl'wah

2.5

BUBALAMAI

Bubalamai describes the healing and medicinal qualities of water. Whilst Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay has become famous for its saltwater location and views across the water, it is named for the freshwater creek that flows into the bay. The freshwater of Blackwattle Creek arises from four sources the main one being located at what is now Prince Alfred Park, a second, smaller one further south around Ashmore Street Erskineville, another at Pitt Street Redfern and the closest being located on what is now Victoria Park on the corner of City Road and Broadway approximately 1.5kms south of Blackwattle Bay. Victoria Park is a known women's ceremonial and birthing ground, as are many areas of Country where freshwater springs begin their journey across Country.

Freshwater is vital for life and is protected and valued as such by Aboriginal peoples. Freshwater is carefully managed by the women of local communities to ensure that it is not being wasted and there is always enough for children, the elderly, ceremonies and medicines. Women administer supplies of water to the men of the community who need to justify the use of the water to the women. This was misinterpreted by European men as an act of women's subjugation and not evidence of their vitally important role in the survival of the community. Many aspects of our matriarchal communities have been misinterpreted by the patriarchal European society that has colonised Country and written observations about our communities from outsider perspectives. Today, we are still challenging these misrepresentations.

Throughout the Pymont district, streams and rivulets run and seep through the sandstone escarpment. Close to the site of

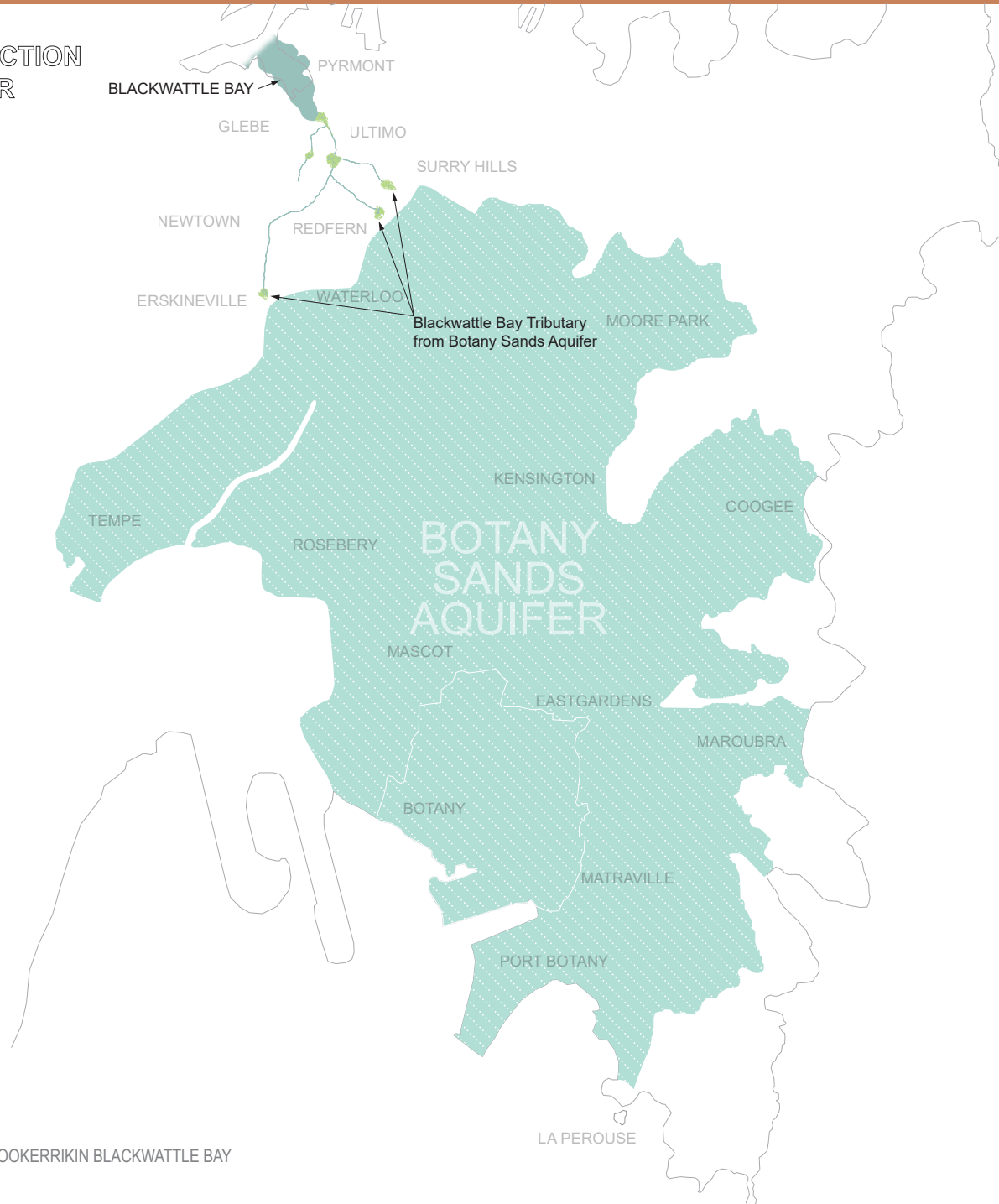


Washing the nectar from grevillea flowers using the same technique used for washing Tjerruing flowers

the present day Bank's St precinct a stream of fresh, cold water seeped through the stone of a gibberagunya (rock shelter) and collected in a depression in the sandstone creating a vital source of freshwater for local peoples. The gibberagunya was a well known and recorded shelter for Aboriginal people and served as a burdhi mana (shell collection sites which are often incorrectly referred to as shell middens/rubbish piles). When Europeans discovered this freshwater source, the depression was dug out and deepened and turned into a water collection point that they named Tinker's Well. Unfortunately, Tinker's Well was destroyed in the early 20th century for development, though streams of water can still be seen seeping through the seams of the sandstone escarpment where Bank St becomes Bowman St at the Pyrmont Peninsula.



BLACKWATTLE BAY CONNECTION
TO BOTANY SANDS AQUIFER



2.6

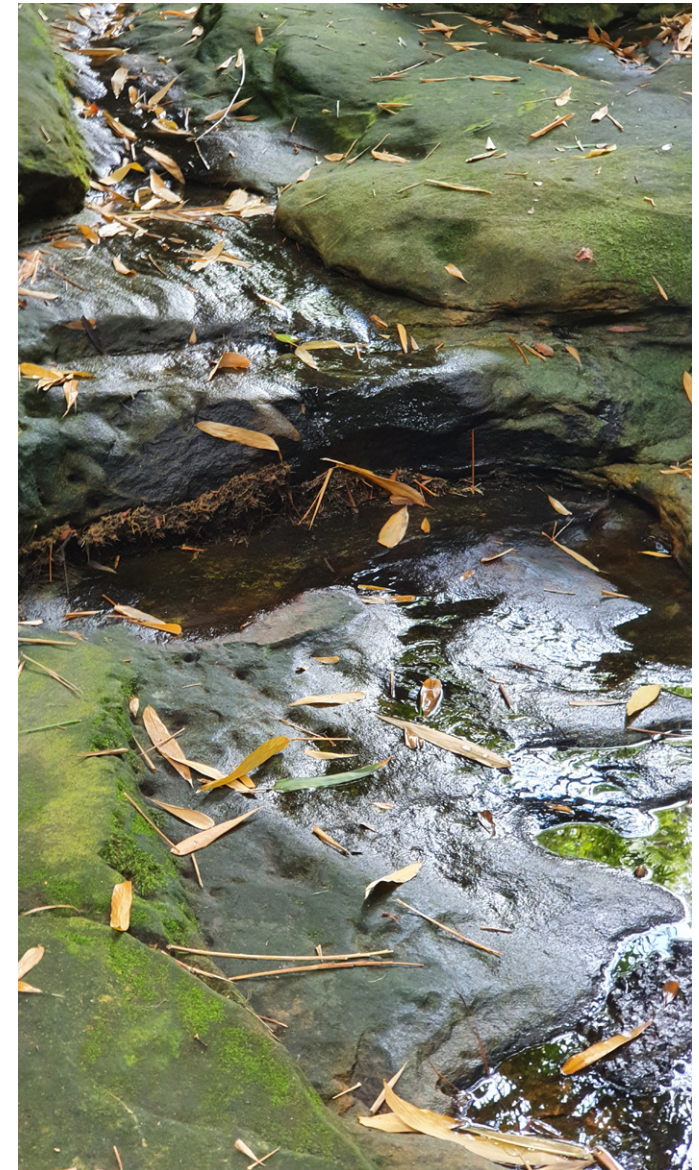
BOOMATJARIL

The entry to Bays West and Darling Harbour holds a sacred site on the local D'harawal Songlines of Parradowee, the Eel Spirit and law keeper of the rivers, and Booambilyee, the Grey Nurse Shark spirit and law keeper of the seas. When the harbour was inundated as sea levels rose, the Eel Spirit and the Shark Spirit had to renegotiate and share access to the sacred, healing place known as a Boomatjaril, a deep cave located underwater in Sydney Harbour. They peacefully agreed to honour one another's laws and respect each other's access to the healing place. They negotiated peace in these waters, and found respectful ways to share the same Country, and to care for Country in a way that was sustainable for both. and every ripple of the incoming tide that enters the places we now know as White Bay, Jones Bay, Blackwattle Bay and Darling Harbour first pass through the sacred healing place, bringing peace and healing to the peoples who share this Country. Through this story people learn the importance of coexisting peacefully, and particularly of respecting one another's laws and culture.

Dredging of the harbour filled the deep Boomatjaril cave with silt and concealed it so that it did not appear on bathymetric charts until recent years. Hydrographic surveys have now confirmed the location of the Boomatjaril that the D'harawal people had not seen for 6000 years, but that still remained in their consciousness, culture and stories as an important part of Country.

While the Boomatjaril is not directly in Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, it is pertinent to note that the spirit of the Boomatjaril remains: including as a healing place; as a place of peace, of ceremony and of rest. Lore and ceremony has had to adapt over time with the changes in

the environment, but this spirit of peace, rest and ceremony remains, washing into the bay on every incoming tide.



2.7

OTHER STORIES

In the spirit of inclusive acknowledgement, we share a reference to other Sydney people, not ordinarily acknowledged at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, but for whom the bay retains sacred cultural status.

Gaimaragal Elder and Storyteller Dennis Foley tells the creation story of Baiame, the Gaimaragal creator, and the three giant goannas who carved the Sydney rivers of the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Georges and Tubughowal (the Parramatta). A smaller female goanna spirit who joined them chose Blackwattle Bay as the place to rest, and to give birth to innumerable types of lizards. Blackwattle Bay is a sacred site for Gaimaragal people as the birthplace of lizards. (Foley & Read, 2020)





DURUGAI

PART THREE: CONNECTING TO COUNTRY STRATEGY

bangawarra

3.1

IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPLES ACROSS TJERRUING BLACKWATTLE BAY

To respectfully connect to Country requires that we transcend a box-ticking mentality with respect to Aboriginal engagement and consultation, and work to change consultation and engagement practices, and their place within project programming.

Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay Country has always been cared for and protected by local Aboriginal people. An opportunity exists now to create with Country, a new urban space that is worth protecting into the future, and that simultaneously ensures and protects our own futures: A place where people can come to celebrate the enduring spirit of this Country, its/her features and foods, as well as its/her people and cultures. This place can operate with local Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing - understanding that what we do, every action and word, will affect all other things, both living and non-living. That is what this Country knows. Care for Country and Country will care for you.

This is an important moment to acknowledge and remember the layered histories of this place as we develop the same land. We need to consider how the cruel imbalances and desecration can be rectified and past wrongs to Country and its custodians addressed with what we do. Development here needs to do better into the future.

All outcomes are possible, so this is the moment that we must ask ourselves, what do we want the future of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay to look like? Do we want our future to be peaceful, abundant and sustainable? In the midst of a global climate crisis, escalating bushfire seasons, water extremes (shortages and floods), worsening

weather events, and impending sea level rise, how do we ensure that this will be our future? Decisions we make today, projects we undertake, the ways in which we operate right now, in this time, will dictate what our future looks like. As custodians of this Country, local Aboriginal people hold vital knowledges and perspectives for ensuring that the future is protected.

To correct the colonial record, local Sydney Traditional Owners and their Aboriginal Elders and Knowledge Keepers need to have opportunities to share their deep Ancestral knowledges of this place with all of the peoples who come to Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay to live, work or visit - enriching the identity of this place for everyone both culturally and spatially.

Acknowledgements-of and welcomes-to Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay Country will be inclusive of all peoples of this place, and language naming and storytelling from all of these peoples will proudly permeate the public spaces, streets and places of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. This place will acknowledge all of the people of the kinship system, never just one or two.



3.2

MINIMISE DAMAGE TO COUNTRY

Sustainably conserving and protecting what is existing is essential for the continued celebration of Country. As much as possible development at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay should make positive contributions to caring for Country, augmenting habitats and improving damage that has already been done. In caring for Country, unnecessary further damage or disruption to the established ecologies must be avoided and opportunities for contributing to revitalising the health of Country and to protecting access for on-going enactment of culture need to be prioritised.

To ensure that everything on Country belongs to Country, new vegetation must consist of species endemic to this place, especially acknowledging the Tjerruing (*Callicoma serratifolia*) and Dahl'wah (*causarina glauca*) as important species.



3.3

CARING FOR COUNTRY DIRECTIONS

COMPLETE ECOLOGIES

Sharing their connections to Country, local Sydney Aboriginal peoples understand that what you do affects others that you may not see at this moment. They may be in this space in the future, or they may be many kilometres away, working to care for your Country too. This is particularly evident in river systems, where you may not know the peoples downstream, but your obligations to them are that you maintain clean abundant waterways and they will do the same. Everything is interrelated, intertwined and part of a system that we may never fully see or comprehend.

How can Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay become a catalyst for the enhancement and protection of natural systems? For sustainable and careful stewardship of Country, including remediation of degradation, particularly of the waterways and foreshore? Restoring the environmental balance will support the wellbeing of the community - human health is totally dependent on the health of ecosystem within which they live, work and play.

Urban development and landscape need to incorporate complete ecologies, including faunal habitat and locally native planting that is not confined to openings in concrete or planted in areas of monoculture. The local botanical species need to grow in connection with their naturally occurring companion species, at upper-, mid- and under-storey. This type of planting will prevent nuisance behaviour of birds that is triggered by incomplete ecologies or lack of understorey.



3.3

CARING FOR COUNTRY DIRECTIONS

STORIES OF COUNTRY

For local D'harawal peoples, we learn through our old stories of our ancient "Dreaming" known to us as the Garuwanga. These are richly layered knowledge bases, which are revealed through deep engagement with the content. We also learn from our Narinya stories which is our living Dreaming; the events, the lore and the knowledge of this time and place today. It is through our Narinya that we can understand and explain that our Dreaming did not end in 1788; the Dreaming is not some long ago, ancient time that is now over. Through our Narinya, our Dreaming continues and we can understand that this time today, and the knowledges that we lay down, will be ancient and significant lore for the future.

In contemporary archaeology and heritage reports, Aboriginal cultural heritage is confined to physical "artefacts" such as axes, worked stone, handprints and fishhooks. This is a colonial rhetoric that typically overlooks or rejects the many forms of intangible cultural heritage. For local Aboriginal peoples, cultural significance is not limited to physical 'evidence.' Culture is manifest in law, through story, and in the Songlines of Country. Respecting spaces as part of a Songline that connects people and creatures to one another can strengthen the sense of belonging to a place. To challenge the perpetual erasure of stories, we must tell them and make sure they are heard, especially local stories that have been historically overlooked in favour of the colonial archives. The Sydney D'harawal stories of the Tjerruing, the Dahl'wah, the Boomatjaril, Parradowee and Booambilyee, as well as many others, depict the richness of this immediate Country and why it is

important to care for Country here.

Caring for stories is fundamental to caring for Country, and in the process has the additional impact of preserving and promoting language and culture. Learning opportunities emerge from connecting story to Country, and should be incorporated throughout the public spaces of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. Understanding the Songlines of this place can also inform holistic approaches to designing with Country across the precincts.



3.3

CARING FOR COUNTRY DIRECTIONS

LANGUAGES OF COUNTRY

This 'Connecting with Country Framework for Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay' document has provided an opportunity to use dual naming. The local name for the dense callicoma groves, a name that predated the colonial misnomer, sits proudly alongside the English language word. This has been partly to demonstrate how readily dual naming can be adopted and implemented, even in a dense urban development.

Dual naming has been supported for twenty years by the New South Wales Geographical Names Board, which demonstrates an opportunity and a commitment to designing with Country at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. Some local protocols need to be conveyed for future development. Firstly, and non-negotiably, Sydney Aboriginal protocols dictate that places are never named after people. To avoid disastrous controversy with Aboriginal communities, adhere firmly to this protocol. Place naming reflects qualities or features of Country, that may include creatures or stories of that local Country. At Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay place naming (including streets, parks, promenades, plazas etc) must reflect the stories of Country, the features and the creatures of this place in the languages of the local peoples: at the very least D'harawal, Dharug, Eora and Gai-maragal.

When using local language, either

1) use words that are common to all of the languages

OR

2) select words from a series of language sources, not just one.

Each of these approaches is demonstrated below.

A word common to many languages

Use a word that is common to as many of the different local languages as is feasible, such as Manwari, and acknowledge all of its sources.

eg: **Manwari (D'harawal, Dharug, Eora)** meaning to access or find;

A selection of words from all of the Sydney Languages

Choose a selection of words from different languages, and acknowledge the sources.

eg: **Megal, Gurigurang and Bubalamai**

Megal (Sydney D'harawal, Gaimaragal) meaning tears, salt water

In the Sydney D'harawal Dictionary (Bodkin, 2008 p.469) it means tears. In Gaimaragal it refers to tears of Baiame that became the salt water (Foley 2020).

Gurigurang (Sydney D'harawal, Dharug, Eora) meaning celebration.

In the Sydney D'harawal Dictionary (Bodkin, 2008) it means to celebrate, fulfillment, happiness, reward (p24 & 79). In the Sydney Language document, it means glad (p66).

Bubalamai (Sydney D'harawal) meaning healing, repairing and protecting Country.

In the Sydney D'harawal Dictionary (Bodkin, 2008) it means healing waters, to heal or repair. No words exist for heal, repair, protect, mend, or fix in the Sydney Language document.

The wisdom of selecting words that are in a number of the local languages is founded in the logic that all of the local Sydney Aboriginal peoples can see their language and culture reflected and no local peoples are marginalised or erased by the selection.

FORMER SHORELINE

Knowing Country and its natural topographies, shorelines and distinctive features is vital to understanding and connecting to Country.

At Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, Country has been significantly damaged and altered for the purposes of colonial development. Knowing the naturally occurring aspects of Country, like the shoreline prior to colonial destruction is key to demonstrating respect and care for the intrinsic characteristics of Country. One of the most significant changes to Country at Blackwattle Bay is the destruction of the natural, intertidal shoreline through reclamation. The public realm holds the opportunity to tell the stories of Country, to show not just where the shoreline was, but the stories and culture associated with it, and by revealing the spirit of Country either in a literal sense or through the design elements incorporated into developments.

3.3

CARING FOR COUNTRY DIRECTIONS

OUTCROPS & PENINSULA HIGHPOINTS AS CEREMONIAL SPACE

An important aspect of the saltwater Country coastline of Blackwattle Bay are the sandstone formations, both escarpments and highpoints, that hold the stories of Country and culture here.

In the highpoints of Country, ceremony can be performed without uninitiated onlookers watching or hearing the proceedings. Close to Blackwattle Bay is the Boora Birra which is a sandstone outcrop/highpoint that has been used for millennia as a site for ceremony. The outcrop of sandstone in the area now known as the Banks St precinct was a highpoint just like the Boora Birra and was used for important cultural ceremonies and events, and faces across to the equivalent ceremonial spaces on Glebe Island and at Glebe Point.

Today, many of these outcrops have been heavily quarried with ceremonial and sacred places destroyed and vast areas of Country completely altered through the commodification of the sandstone. Acknowledging these culturally important spaces and the destruction that has occurred is essential for connecting to Country and continuing the culture and stories that are embedded here.



SANDSTONE REMNANTS OF QUARRY

Country holds the earth, stone, water and stars that tell the stories of our culture and ceremonies. Whatever remains of the Country that our Ancestors walked deserves high level protection and preservation. There are many sandstone remnants scattered across the harbour that still hold vital physical evidence of the culture and stories of this place. A site visit is required to identify what remains of these physical spaces at Blackwattle Bay, as many archaeologically significant sites have been identified on other areas of Country surrounding Blackwattle Bay including burdhi mana (shell collections/middens), engravings and even (now underwater) healing sites.

THE LEVEL AND EXTENT OF QUARRY EXCAVATION

Caring for Country requires acknowledging and honouring Country as it naturally exists as well as highlighting the changes that have occurred since colonisation. The sandstone environment of Blackwattle Bay has been significantly impacted by quarrying and excavation. An important opportunity exists at Blackwattle Bay to reveal the true histories of Country and the changes that have occurred since colonisation to create the Blackwattle Bay that we know today. Truth-telling and acknowledging the past contributes to reconciliation and better futures for Aboriginal communities.



3.3

CARING FOR COUNTRY DIRECTIONS

WATER'S EDGE PROMENADE

Across the precincts of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay connect the public spaces in a contemporary Songline that celebrates the local stories, peoples and languages of this place.

The story of the Boomatjaril (in Barkolo Part 2.6) speaks of negotiating peace and mutual respect between peoples. The peace comes from the healing place, making this Country a place of rest, of ceremony and peace. This spirit of Country remains as the waters that enter the Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, Darling Harbour and Bays West continue to be washed through that healing place, ensuring the future also negotiates peaceful coexistence between the competing needs of aquatic and terrestrial ecologies, and human habitats. This negotiation must be carried out to ensure peaceful coexistence that is sustainable for future generations. Development at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay must incorporate measures for future anticipated climate change and sea level rise. This includes protecting access to the water, caring for healthy aquatic ecologies and sustainable approaches to the waterfront.

Profits may drive development, but they cannot be generated at the expense of healthy Country, or at the expense of other people, creatures, ecosystems, habitats, water or air quality, cultural, civic or spatial quality.

PUBLIC SPACE AND PARKLAND AREAS

As new parks and natural spaces are established at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, care should be taken to create opportunities for people and communities to connect to Country - including to connect to the Spirit of Country, to the plant and animal species of Country and to the Ancestral knowledges of Country. Public spaces and parkland areas should be utilised to acknowledge this Country, and create opportunities for local Sydney Traditional Owners and their Aboriginal Elders and Knowledge Keepers to share their knowledges and tell their stories of Country with all of the peoples who visit Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. The deep sense of connection to place that this affords will extend to meaningful cultural enrichment for everyone.



3.3

CARING FOR COUNTRY DIRECTIONS

CULTURAL CONNECTION (AND THE CULTURAL CENTRE)

There are many ways to support local Aboriginal cultural identity in a precinct such as Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay. Creating spaces that engage meaningfully with Aboriginal culture is a key element of understanding and connecting to Country and can be accomplished in a myriad of ways including:

- Using local Aboriginal language across the precinct and all developments
- Telling local stories of Country and culture through interpretation
- Using identifiably local Aboriginal visual expressions of culture in prominent spaces through key moves such as public art, graphic design and materiality

At Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay there is also a unique opportunity to create a dedicated space where everyone can celebrate local Aboriginal cultures, story, history, performance and knowledges. There is a recognised and documented need for a Sydney Aboriginal cultural centre in a prominent city location. Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay is an ideal, central location with physical connections to the harbour as saltwater Country and all of the transport options and amenities that would be required to accommodate guests wishing to access a world class cultural centre. The proximity to the new fish market also ensures a regular influx of visitors and tourists who would be an enthusiastic prospective audience.





MARIDYULU

PART FOUR: RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

bangawarra

4.1

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

In this part we provide responses to key reports and documents associated with Blackwattle Bay from a connecting with Country perspective.

While the referenced documents differ in their focus, they share some similarities from the perspective of Connecting with Country:

All of these documents focus on Aboriginal people, not Country. This reflects where the development/construction/planning/design/architecture industries are currently and points to what needs to change within them. For Aboriginal peoples, prioritising Country is always first. We hope that as these industries improve their practices to be more culturally respectful of protocol, that future strategy documents and their recommendations will prioritise Country first.

With the exception of the GANSW Draft Connecting with Country Framework, they're tokenistic with respect to Country and Aboriginal connections to it/her. Some of these documents have only one sentence, or overly simplistic references peppered throughout, that refer to people and are not meaningful.

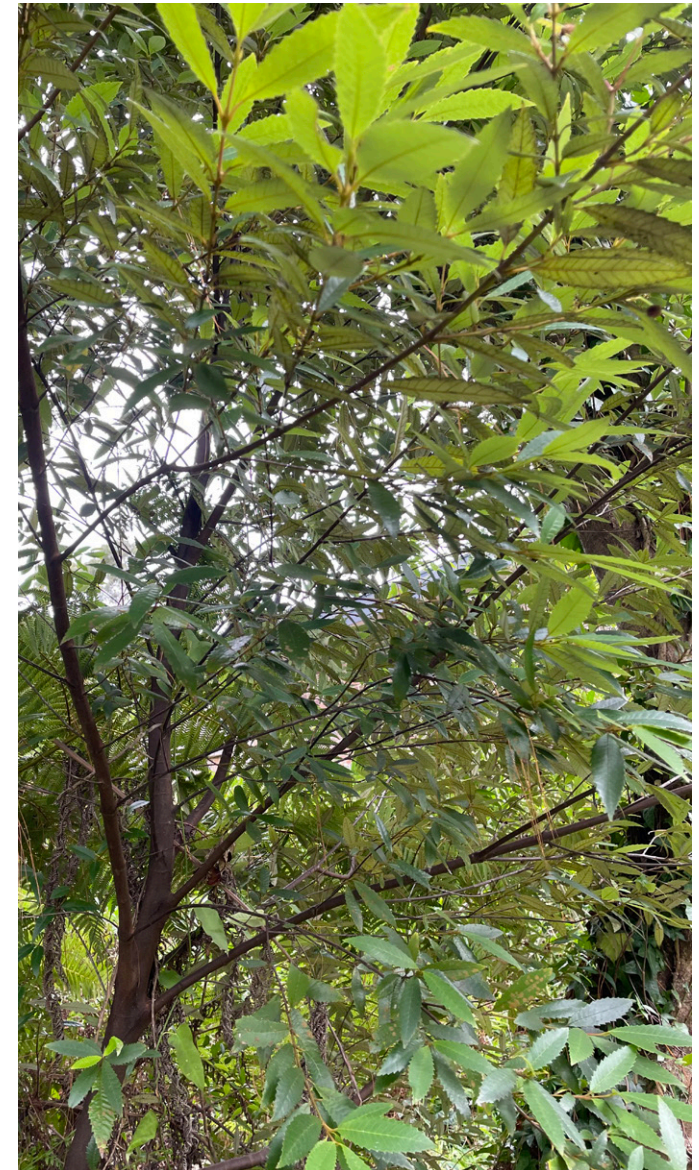
These documents fail to identify the many peoples of Country, often identifying only one or two smaller groups of a single 'nation'.

"In any given area of Country, there is also more than just one Aboriginal community or group as is evidenced by the communities of Jukkan Gorge [where Rio Tinto blew up a sacred site in 2020] – with the Puutu, Kunti, Kurrama and Pinikura peoples all connected to the same Country

– yet, especially in heavily colonised areas like Sydney, people insist on acknowledging one people, one place, one language, for example the Cadigal people of the Eora nation as the only people of vast areas of Sydney. To insist upon acknowledging just one group of people is minimising and racist and completely goes against who we are and how we have lived our lives, sustainably, for millennia."

Shannon Foster, 2021. 'Of no cultural significance': The science of understanding Country. University of Sydney Science Alliance publication. <https://www.sydney.edu.au/science/news-and-events/2021/01/22/science-of-understanding-country.html>

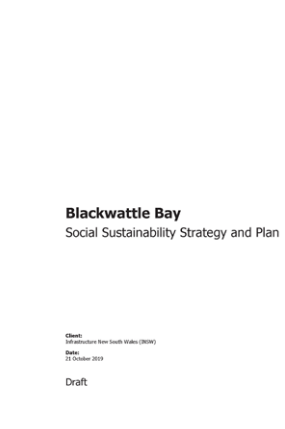
They are largely based in archival and desktop research and outsider (non-Aboriginal) information. Telling local Indigenous stories should be done by the on-Country Elders and Knowledge Holders.



4.2 REPORTS AND KEY DOCUMENTS

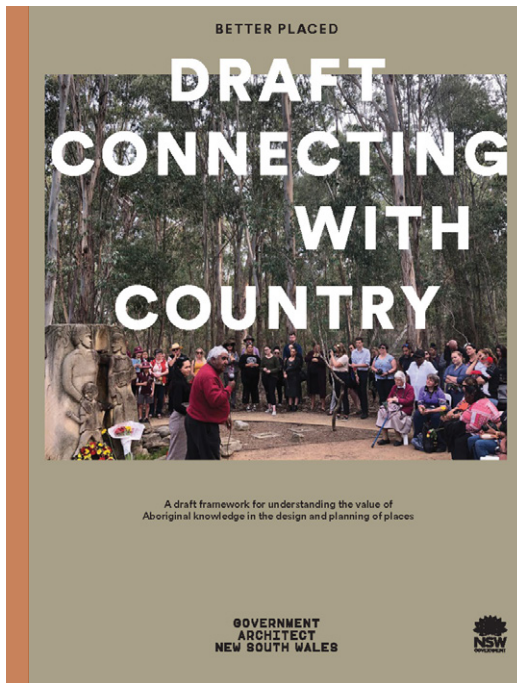
We will be providing Connecting with Country responses to the following reports and key documents listed below.

- DRAFT CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK
- PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE STRATEGY
- PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE STRATEGY, SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT
- BLACKWATTLE BAY STATE SIGNIFICANT PRECINCT STUDY: ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT
- BLACKWATTLE BAY ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE ASSESSMENT (BLACKWATTLE BAY)
- BLACKWATTLE BAY SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY AND PLAN
- HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY (BLACKWATTLE BAY)



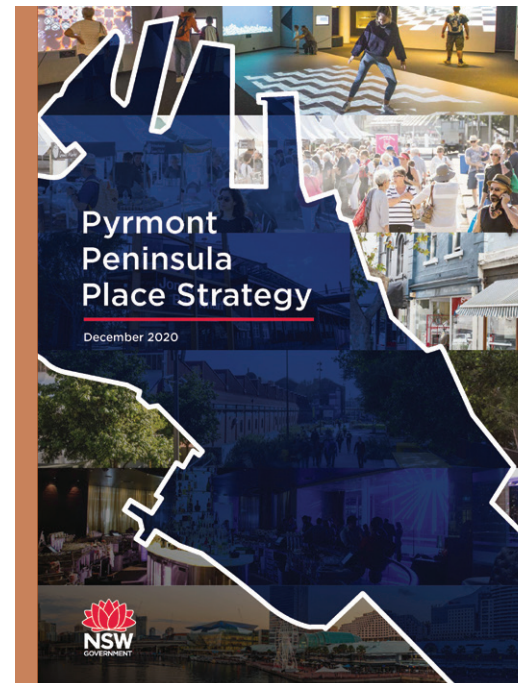
4.3

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO DOCUMENTS



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO: DRAFT CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK

- Connect to all the peoples of this Country, and never just one or two. Consult broadly within the complex kinship system of families and communities including the D'harawal, Dharug, Eora, Gaimaragal, Gundagara and Guringai peoples who hold local stories.
- Avoid extractive relationships with Aboriginal peoples. Pay Aboriginal people for their contributions to projects, reports, design processes and acknowledge their contribution.
- Acknowledge that cultural Intellectual property (IP) is distinct to professional IP. Be clear with Aboriginal collaborators that cultural IP & in particular Aboriginal cultural knowledges, languages, stories remains with the people and Country sharing it.
- Establish joint ventures and partnerships with local Aboriginal people, businesses and services. Encourage tendering and participation from Aboriginal stakeholders and support local Traditional Owners to participate at all levels throughout the lifecycle of works, including on-going management.
- Across the board, do not refer to Aboriginal people and cultures in the past tense. We are still here and we are still enacting culture.

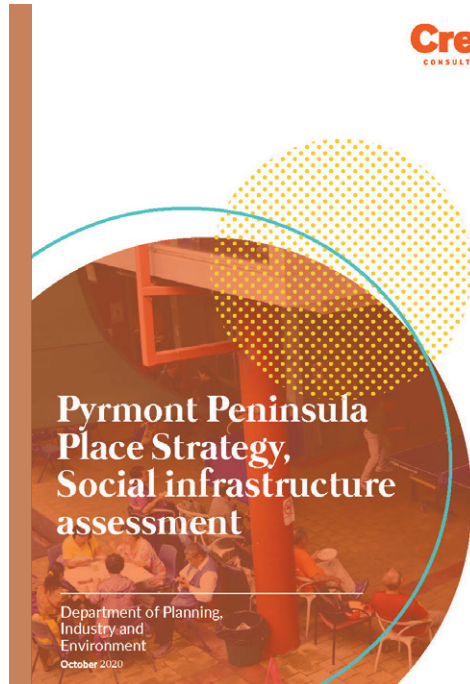


CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO: PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE STRATEGY

- When stakeholders collaborate on the shared future vision for the area, extend invitations to Aboriginal stakeholders.
- Consult broadly with Aboriginal stakeholders within the kinship system for this Country, particularly the Knowledge Keepers and Elders, including the D'harawal, Dharug, Eora, Gaimaragal, Gundagara and Guringai peoples who hold stories about this place.
- Acknowledge the local Aboriginal languages and understand that although some words may be shared or similar between peoples, others differ. Use a range of languages, words and sources, and acknowledge their sources. Across the precinct, all peoples will then see themselves reflected on their Country.
- Blackwattle Bay is not only a saltwater place to fish but has multiple sacred Aboriginal sites related to freshwater Country where ceremony and specific protocols take place, and to bitterwater Country beyond.
- Aboriginal approaches of caring for Country are valuable when working with contemporary approaches to sustainability

4.3

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO DOCUMENTS



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO: PYRMONT PENINSULA PLACE STRATEGY, SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

- Acknowledgements-of Country need to be inclusive of all of the people of the kinship system, never just one or two.
- Aboriginal sacred sites have not been outlined in 'social infrastructure' although they are everywhere across Blackwattle Bay.
- Capitalise Country as she is a living entity.
- Draft GANSW Connecting with Country framework document can be an added 'Strategic Driver' as there is nothing that specifically prioritises practices of caring for Country within the Social Infrastructure Assessment.
- Prioritise places for making culture in 'cultural facilities'



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO: BLACKWATTLE BAY STATE SIGNIFICANT PRECINCT STUDY: ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

- There must be an acknowledgement and understanding that Aboriginal archeology or cultural heritage that may not belong to one group may belong to another.
- Across the board, do not refer to Aboriginal people and cultures in the past tense, including names of sites.
- Places should not be assumed to be of one single Aboriginal group, as many groups may have relationships to one particular place and therefore, should be acknowledged as being the home of many peoples/groups.
- Although physical remnants of Aboriginal heritage are vital to care for, there must also be an acknowledgement of the intangible heritage that is connected to this place, such as the stories, memories, and songlines that highlight the complexity and interconnectedness of Country.
- Many archeological, anthropological and historical texts are incorrect making claims that are not true eg: Val Attenbrow no evidence of our lives prior to sea level inundation.

4.3

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO DOCUMENTS



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO: BLACKWATTLE BAY ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

- While there are efforts to engage with Aboriginal people and their communities, acknowledge an engagement with Country and her enduring Spirit.
- There is a need to acknowledge the sacred places that lie across the precinct, and that this Country is home to many Aboriginal groups and must not be generalised as a singular group of people.
- Prioritise the opportunity to allow people of Country to showcase their art and culture, prioritising the members of the kinship system, including the D'harawal, Dharug, Eora, Gaimaragal, Gundagara and Guringai peoples who hold stories about this place.



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO: EUROPEAN HERITAGE ASSESSMENT (BLACKWATTLE BAY)

- Acknowledge Aboriginal cultural heritage of all members of the kinship system at Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay.
- Make clear the presence of Aboriginal people on this Country, so as not to dismiss their heritage as just a blank slate before colonisation.
- Acknowledge the ongoing cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples as part of the colonial story.
- Recognise Aboriginal and colonial interactions as a part of 'European Heritage'.

4.3

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY RESPONSE TO DOCUMENTS

Blackwattle Bay

Social Sustainability Strategy and Plan

Client:
Infrastructure New South Wales (INSW)

Date:
21 October 2019

Draft

**CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY
RESPONSE TO: BLACKWATTLE BAY
SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY
AND PLAN**

- Social sustainability must include and acknowledge Aboriginal people and their continued connection to this Country of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay into the future.
- Aboriginal communities with Ancestral connections to Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay must be acknowledged. Consult broadly within the complex kinship system of families and communities including the D'harawal, Dharug, Eora, Gaimaragal, Gundangara and Guringai peoples who hold stories about this place. Never acknowledge only one or two people. Referring to this place as solely 'Gadigal' erases other Aboriginal groups who also have Ancestral connections to this place, as you have seen in the Ancestral stories in parts Barkolo & Durugai of this framework.
- Do not limit focus to only current residents, because the effects of colonisation and assimilation and gentrification have driven out many of the Aboriginal people who are connected to this place. Aboriginal connections should not be considered by the current geographical locations of people but through the multilayered and interrelated stories that connect them to Country.


**Heritage Interpretation
Strategy**

Blackwattle Bay State Significant Precinct Study
Submitted to Infrastructure NSW

NOVEMBER 2020
ISSUE: AMENDMENT - VERSION 1

**CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY
RESPONSE TO: HERITAGE
INTERPRETATION STRATEGY
(BLACKWATTLE BAY)**

- Prioritise Aboriginal people of the kinship system of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay Country for artworks, designs and interpretation in this precinct - being the D'harawal, Dharug, Eora, Gaimaragal, Gundangara and Guringai peoples who hold stories about this place.
- Acknowledge that Aboriginal connections to Country are not solely 'histories', but include contemporary living dreamings, called Narinya by the D'harawal.
- Across the board, do not refer to Aboriginal people and cultures in the past tense. We are still here and we are still enacting culture.
- When retelling the Aboriginal history of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, centre Aboriginal perspectives and knowledges, including oral histories. It is a recolonisation to only cite colonial/archival accounts and non-Aboriginal researchers.



WUGUL
PART FIVE: CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY STRATEGY

bangawarra

5.1 PRINCIPLES FOR CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY

We can see on this Country that colonisation has ostensibly erased many of the physical features of the landscape and for the people of this Country, government assimilation policies and the silencing and erasure of the truth, have attempted to do the same to local Aboriginal people. To move forward in a positive and abundant, shared future our past must be addressed, and the silencing and erasure ended through meaningful engagement with the people and cultures of Country.

The scale of the Tjerruung Blackwattle Bay Masterplan, and its significance for the local Aboriginal peoples, means that this place has the capacity for impactful enactment of true reconciliation. It can be an exemplar of world's best practice in sustainability and significant, cultural engagement by being grounded in the world's oldest, most sustainable knowledges. This is an opportunity now to showcase what can be achieved for the future if we work with Country and not against it.

The box-ticking mentality around community consultation in development/construction/design has led to a small number of Aboriginal people with consultation fatigue and reticence to engage, while the vast majority of those with knowledges and stories to share are overlooked and marginalised about decisions on their own Country.

For those who are willing to change the way they work with Aboriginal people, those who are willing to accept that the current business model is exploitative and extractive, and for those who commit to reciprocal relationships outside of singular jobs/tenders, the benefits will far outweigh any effort you make.



5.2

DEFINING COMMUNITY(IES)

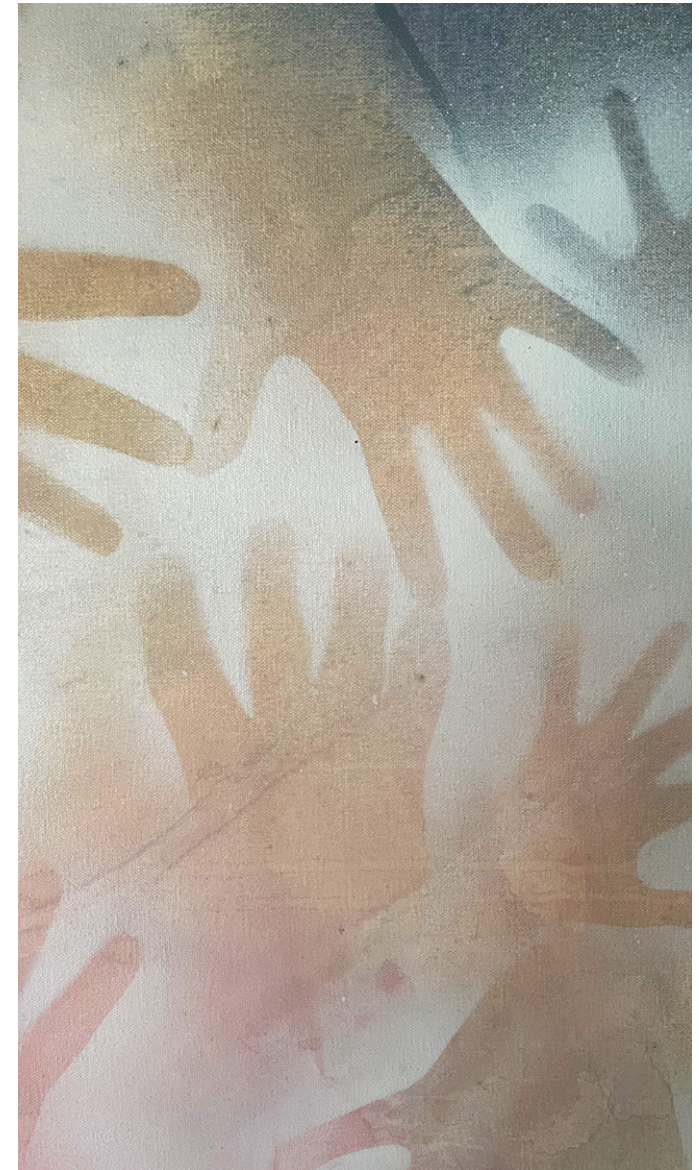
Defining the Aboriginal community as one, singular entity is problematic and contributes to an unconscious bias or even a racist minimisation of what is a complex and diverse range of peoples and cultures. In Sydney in particular, there exists the largest population of Aboriginal peoples in any urban area of Australia and care must be taken to understand the nuances inherent in these contemporary Aboriginal communities.

The industrial era of colonisation on Sydney Country in the early 1900s attracted many Aboriginal people from all over New South Wales and Australia looking to find work as an escape from the government control, poverty and harsh conditions on the missions and reserves. Aboriginal people found employment opportunities in the many sandstone quarries, abattoirs, shipbuildings, factories, and other industries that were established in areas such as that of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay and nearby Bays West, Waterloo and Redfern. This has led to large communities of Aboriginal peoples from other areas living in Sydney for several generations, feeling strong connections to place and community despite these not being their Ancestral lands. These communities have been integral to contemporary urban Aboriginal cultural identities and activism, and are highly valued and respected as such. Some of the Aboriginal nations that are represented in these communities are the Wiradjuri, the Gamilleroi/Kamilleroi/Gomeroi and Bundjalung among many others.

There are also Aboriginal communities of the Sydney metropolitan area with Ancestral connections to story and knowledges of this place that extend back thousands of years. This is the term we know

as “on-Country” peoples and it is people from these communities who hold deep Ancestral stories, knowledges and languages of this place that can enrich a sense of connection for everyone in the future of our shared city. To move beyond desktop research and colonial archival references (including their misinterpretations), then on-Country peoples must be prioritised for engagement above those from other places.

As discussed in section 1.1, in Sydney, where non-Indigenous people do not often observe the cultural protocols of on-Country engagement, much Aboriginal consultation is carried out regardless of whether an Aboriginal consultant is on-Country or not. This erases or diminishes the local knowledges, stories, histories and peoples from the documents, built environment and public space of the city - leaving accounts harvested from colonial archives and records to stand in for Aboriginal local knowledge. By erasing the on-Country people, a lot of local, on-Country cultural information is misrepresented in official reports, records, websites and processes, and consequently, also in the physical places and spaces of the city.



5.3

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONNECTING TO COMMUNITIES

Connecting to Aboriginal communities can be complicated and fraught and is always best undertaken by Aboriginal peoples, preferably by those on-Country with Ancestral connections to place. It must be understood that due to the long and destructive history of colonisation, there is a level of distrust and guardedness amongst Aboriginal communities when they are approached by non-Aboriginal people and this severely impacts collaborations and/or the consultation process.

Aboriginal peoples must be included in meaningful collaborations from the very beginnings of the development and right throughout the planning processes and not tokenistically consulted long after major decisions and strategies have already been decided. The input and priorities of the local communities should be known and understood at all levels and by all key personnel of the project teams.

It is highly offensive to approach communities with an already established design and strategy to request approval and sign off for a tick-a-box outcome. Instead, Aboriginal communities should be engaged meaningfully, with a true desire to listen and learn in a respectful way that can ensure that their needs and requests are understood and implemented throughout all aspects of the project.

First and foremost, the contributions of Aboriginal peoples must always be remunerated. It is not acceptable to ask people for their time and effort and not fairly pay them. Too often the only person in a consultation room who is not paid to be there is the local Aboriginal community member - while employees of a developer or institution are all paid to be there. While there are a small number of community



liaison officers who are paid full time for their work with Aboriginal communities, often Aboriginal peoples you approach to work with will not be employed to collaborate with your project teams. The details of remuneration, especially if you cannot provide remuneration, must be made clear from the outset so that individuals can make an informed choice about whether they would like to be involved.

Often consultants will talk to Aboriginal people, take their stories and information and use it in their reports, and pay nothing at all to do so, despite being paid themselves to perform the consultation. Aboriginal people are then reluctant to talk to these consultants again and are wary of anyone wanting to engage. This has been termed “consultation fatigue” when in reality, the issue is the extractive nature of the consultation and the lack of fair remuneration. It is recommended that any community consultation undertaken be completely transparent in methods as well as their remuneration models to ensure that Aboriginal community members are not taken advantage of and are valued and respected in the process.

Sometimes people might suggest that a cultural levy or other remuneration device be implemented. The complexity here is then understanding where does that money then go? Which communities receive the money? Often these well-intentioned ideas cause far more division and harm than good. It is highly recommended that individuals receive money directly. Any other reciprocation or funding model should be set up and directed by a panel of Aboriginal representatives across the different communities and members of the kinship system.

Many Aboriginal peoples are reluctant to interact with non-Aboriginal people particularly those working for government departments as there is usually a large cultural divide and a complete misunderstanding of appropriate behaviours leading to often painful and traumatic interactions for Aboriginal peoples that have lasting effects. It is strongly recommended, as a minimum, that project teams undertake ongoing cultural immersion and competency training in an effort to create culturally safe working environments for Aboriginal peoples. There must be a demonstrated effort to engage respectfully with Aboriginal communities, to listen and understand for true collaboration to take place.

Ideally, large scale projects like that of Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay, would have a dedicated Aboriginal Advisory Panel that would meet regularly to govern and guide the project. The panel should consist of people from across the many different communities including a range of industry professionals.



5.4

LOCAL ABORIGINAL LANDS COUNCILS

In 1983 the NSW state government ushered in a new bureaucratic process for Aboriginal engagement, and to create an advisory body for government. For 38 years Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC) have acted in this government mandated capacity. In the past few decades, this has been used in corporate and industry contexts as the primary means of access to Aboriginal peoples and communities, but it is not the only option available.

It can be increasingly difficult to make contact with a LALC as they are overburdened and typically underfunded. Community consultation is only a small aspect of their mandate and it is often not as urgent or pressing as other issues, so a project may not be addressed within a given timeframe, if at all.

It is not a requirement that the people of a Land Council are on-Country, and frequently they are not. In many parts of Australia this has led to tensions between LALC and on-Country Aboriginal peoples and in many places on-Country people will actively avoid engagement with the LALC. This may be because Land Councils are government bodies and many Aboriginal peoples are understandably wary of the government, or because local people see government priorities (such as power, money, colonial processes) as being at odds with their own cultural integrity and need for meaningful and longstanding connection to Country and the Ancestors and Elders of the place. Additionally, Land Councils are generally considered a place to gain cultural authority or consent from Aboriginal communities for corporate, industry or cultural projects. On-Country peoples do not need to gain consent or permission as they are already their own cultural authority (as they have been for thousands

of years before 1983) so a relationship with a Lands Council is in no way necessary. That many non-Aboriginal people will only consult with Lands Councils has now led to many local on-Country peoples being overlooked. Within Sydney it is advisable to connect and consult broadly with the extended kinship system - not only the LALC - and to be aware that the political context may not be straightforward.



5.5

INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITY GROUPS & ORGANISATIONS

There are many Aboriginal community groups, organisations and individuals to engage with in any given area and it is recommended that consultation is undertaken across a range of groups to reach as many Aboriginal people as possible. Groups are usually easily found online, through LALC websites, social media and local council sites.

Other resources to utilise when connecting with Aboriginal people are schools, the Department of Education, TAFE, Hospitals and Universities. Through these organisations you can find groups and individuals from a diverse range of fields and demographics.

Many Aboriginal people operate their own companies or work for several different employers. It is recommended that these community members are also approached as too often, consultants rely only on contacting government and community groups thereby missing opportunities to connect with important members of communities. These community members are easily found on social media and websites in the same ways that you would source any consultants or service providers.

As always, be open and upfront from the beginning regarding remuneration or what they would like as an act of reciprocity as some groups are not allowed to accept gifts whilst others rely on receiving money for their time and knowledge.

It is recommended that when Aboriginal stories and knowledges are used within a report that the people who have provided the information are named with their contributions unless they have requested to remain anonymous. It is also best practice to provide

individuals or groups with the information that is intended for use in the report for their final approval and sign off ensuring that the individuals or groups have final say over what is included and to ensure that their information has not been misrepresented.





NGEYINEE BULIMA NANDIRITAH
May you always see the beauty of this earth

bangawarra

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