

First Nations Engagement Summary Report

Bays West Precinct Renewal – Stage 1
Master Plan

Department of Planning & Environment

25 May 2022

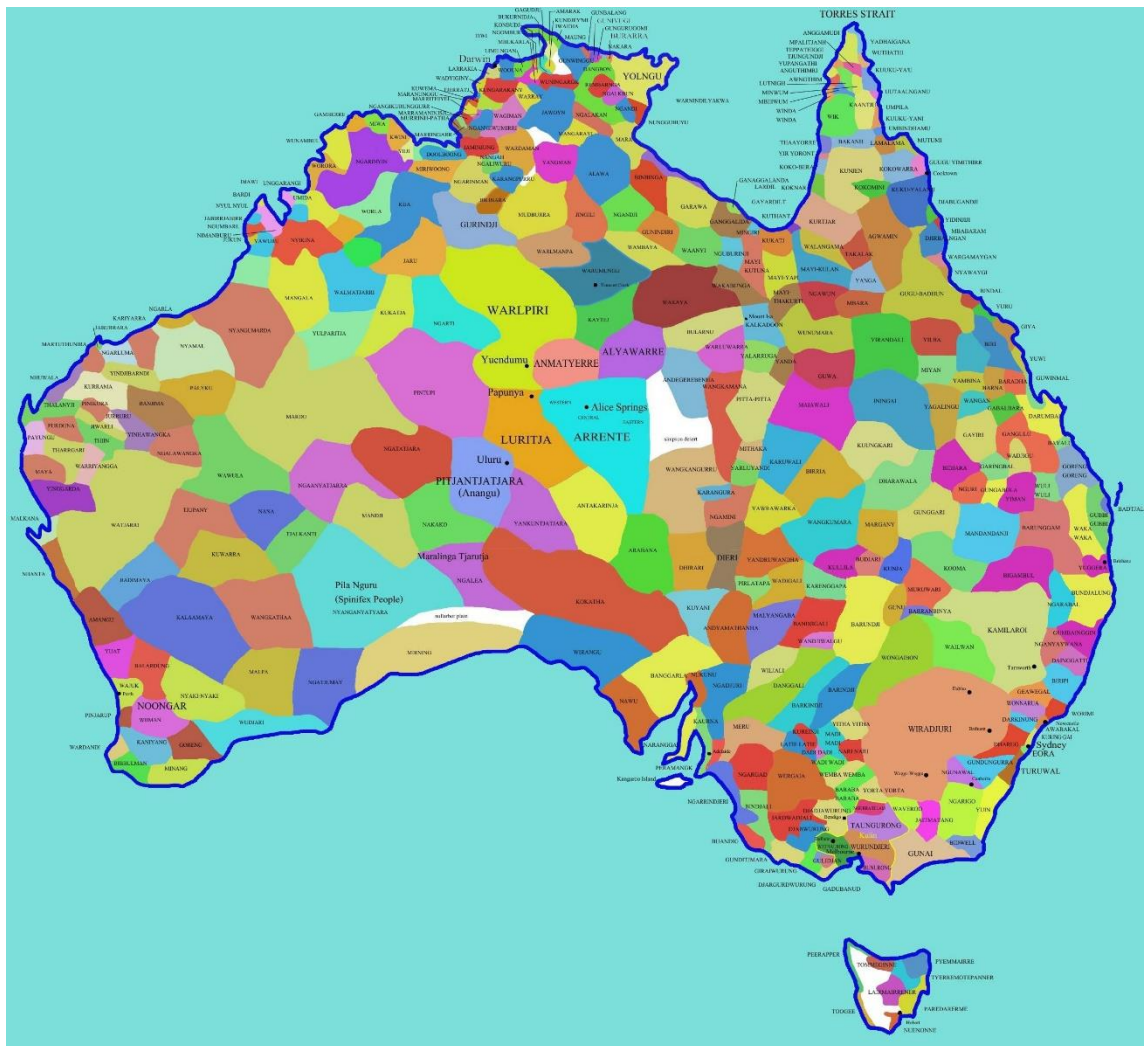


Acknowledgment of Country

Cox Inall Ridgeway respectfully acknowledges all Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we work, live, and play.

This report was prepared on Awabakal Country, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



About this document

This document has been prepared by Cox Inall Ridgeway for the Department of Planning & Environment. It is a summary report of feedback heard from a variety of First Nations stakeholders in relation to Stage 1 Master Plan of the Bays West Precinct Renewal.

While the views reflected in this summary report do not reflect the entire views of Sydney's Aboriginal community, it is hoped that the diverse cross-section of feedback included can help shape project outcomes that are beneficial to the local First Nations community.

Cox Inall Ridgeway acknowledges the community members who participated in the project and thanks them for their generosity, time, and knowledge.

Executive summary

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment (**DPE**) has identified the Bays West precinct as an urban renewal opportunity. The precinct encompasses White Bay, Glebe Island, Rozelle Bay, White Bay Power Station, and Rozelle Rail Yards. The announcement of the construction of a new metro station that will open in 2030 will create significant new opportunities for the precinct, providing connections to surrounding areas and further afield.

Cox Inall Ridgeway (**CIR**) were engaged by DPE to support future key phases of the project in relation to White Bay Power Station and the Robert Street sub-precincts, including:

- Stage 1 Draft Master Plan
- Rezoning

CIR planned and facilitated First Nations stakeholder engagement to collect relevant feedback on Stage 1 Draft Master Plan and ensure that Aboriginal perspectives and culture can be embedded as key considerations as the project progresses.

CIR also sought feedback on Murawin's "Feedback status report from aboriginal stakeholders: draft bays west place strategy (2021)" to deepen the understanding of engagement already undertaken.

In preparing for engagement, CIR developed a summary of key Aboriginal learnings and outcomes to date and circulated this summary to identified stakeholders as a way of re-introducing stakeholders to the project. Through this engagement, key Aboriginal stakeholders provided feedback on a number of themes, including:

1. Built form and land use

1.1. Built form

- For culturally appropriate design outcomes to be realised in all built environment projects, stakeholders said it is critical that Country is explored beyond typical landscape outcomes.

1.2. Building heights

- Constrained building heights can preserve the significant heritage view corridors across the precinct and that facilitating sensory access (be it visual, aural, or otherwise) to Country from inside built structures is always a desired outcome.

1.3. Uses and yields

- Stakeholders supported the proposed range of activities in the Draft Master Plan, especially if Aboriginal employment and cultural outcomes could be realised through the project. It was also noted that day and night-time activation was an ideal outcome

1.4. Housing

- Affordable housing options for Aboriginal people in Sydney has long been a priority for Aboriginal communities.

2. Connecting with Country

- The key principle of revealing, expressing, and celebrating the natural and cultural narratives and knowledge from custodians to reveal the richness of layers and stories of place was the right approach.

3. Public domain and open spaces

- Stakeholders endorsed the approach to the public domain and open spaces and identified ample green spaces and access to water as key highlights.

4. Heritage (White Bay Power Station)
 - DPE should investigate whether there were any Aboriginal employees when the White Bay Power Station was operational to ensure that this was captured and reflected in the broader White Bay Power Station story
5. Social and Community Infrastructure
 - Stakeholders has an overwhelmingly positive response to the planned social and community infrastructure.
6. Traffic and Transport
 - Stakeholders said that DPE should work with Transport for NSW to develop ways to tell this story of connection and place through transport infrastructure and assets, such as creating Aboriginal artwork on buses, trains, light-rail, and boats.
7. Road network and street hierarchy
 - Consider road network and street hierarchy designs that provided a greater sense of place and space across the precinct was a more preferred outcome
8. Sustainability
 - Stakeholders responded positively to the Master Plan's approach to sustainability, particularly the overarching commitment of Connection with Country, which stakeholders said is a logical and culturally inclusive approach

Feedback on the Murawin Report were summarised in these key themes:

1. Education, Employment & Business
 - Stakeholders emphatically agreed that project outcomes that support Aboriginal education, employment and business are ideal
2. Cultural Agency & Integration
 - Stakeholders agreed that cultural agency and cultural integration are key project considerations in delivering genuine project outcomes for Aboriginal people, communities, and businesses.
3. Cultural Immersion
 - Stakeholders agreed that cultural immersion across the precinct is an ideal outcome and that while artwork and creative installations are valid ideas, the use of Aboriginal language across the precinct is paramount to acknowledging and respecting Country.
4. Cultural Place
 - No specific comments, but concepts generally supported.
5. Real Outcomes
 - Stakeholders agreed with the frustrations in Murawin's report and were adamant that the project must be able to demonstrate real outcomes and benefits for Indigenous people, culture, and communities.

This report will support the evolution of the Stage 1 Draft Master Plan and rezoning of Bays West Precinct.

The Project

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment (**DPE**) has identified the Bays West precinct as an urban renewal opportunity. The precinct encompasses White Bay, Glebe Island, Rozelle Bay, White Bay Power Station, and Rozelle Rail Yards. The announcement of the construction of a new metro station that will open in 2030 will create significant new opportunities for the precinct, providing connections to surrounding areas and further afield.

In response to these opportunities, the NSW Government committed to exploring the future potential of the precinct. The Bays West Place Strategy was finalised in November 2021 following community consultation. Aboriginal consultancy, Murawin, was engaged to undertake Aboriginal stakeholder engagement to support the Place Strategy and developed a consultation report (the **Murawin Report**).

The Place Strategy provides a strategic narrative and vision for the future of Bays West and will guide the renewal of the precinct through master plans and rezoning of land over the coming decades.

It is also noted that Bangawarra undertook community engagement when developing the project's Connecting with Country Framework.

The first parts of Bays West to undergo master planning and rezoning are the **White Bay Power Station** (and Metro) and the **Robert Street** sub-precincts, which is Stage 1 of the renewal. These sub-precincts surround or adjoin the new metro station and their early redevelopment are an important first step in redefining Bays West and realising the urban renewal through placemaking and activation.

Subsequent sub-precincts will undergo future master planning and rezoning as the renewal of the wider precinct occurs over many years.

Cox Inall Ridgeway (**CIR**) were engaged by DPE to support future key phases of the project in relation to White Bay Power Station and the Robert Street sub-precincts, including:

- Stage 1 Draft Master Plan
- Rezoning

This engagement summary report pertains to Stage 1 Draft Master Plan, which went on public exhibition from early May – 31 May 2022.

CIR planned and facilitated First Nations stakeholder engagement to collect relevant feedback on Stage 1 Draft Master Plan and ensure that Aboriginal perspectives and culture can be embedded as key considerations as the project progresses.

CIR's work aims to capitalise on and deepen the engagement already undertaken by Murawin and Bangawarra.

In preparing for engagement, CIR developed a summary of key Aboriginal learnings and outcomes to date and circulated this summary to identified stakeholders as a way of re-introducing stakeholders to the project.

Who we spoke to

To capture diverse Indigenous voices, perspectives and lived experiences, CIR aimed to canvass a cross-section of Indigenous stakeholder groups including Traditional Owners,

local First Nations community members and residents, local Indigenous business and service operators, and young community voices (aged 18-25).

While multiple attempts were made to engage key cultural authority Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council on the project, this stakeholder did not express an interest in being involved.

What we spoke about

For Stage 1 Draft Master Plan, CIR's engagement focused on:

- Identifying issues or concerns in the Stage 1 Draft Master Plan
- Collecting broader community feedback on the Stage 1 Draft Master Plan
- Exploring key parts of the Project's Connecting with Country Framework with stakeholders
- Discussing the broad issues and opportunities identified in the Murawin Report, including Education, Employment and Business, Cultural Agency, Cultural Integration, Cultural Immersion, Cultural Place, and Real Outcomes

What we heard

Key feedback CIR heard in relation to the Project has been distilled into two key domains:

- Master Plan Feedback (noting that not all sections of the Draft Master Plan received feedback)
- Murawin Report Feedback

Where relevant, quotes have been used from stakeholders to express their feedback and recommendations in their own words. These quotes have been de-identified.

Domain 1 – Master Plan Feedback

1. *Built Form and Land Use*

1.1 *Built form*

Although too early in the project to discuss detailed design outcomes, stakeholders expressed a desire for the built form across the precinct to explore ways to integrate Aboriginal culture, Country, and heritage in modern and inclusive approaches.

For culturally appropriate design outcomes to be realised in all built environment projects, stakeholders said it is critical that Country is explored beyond typical landscape outcomes.

The history between Aboriginal people and urban design is fractured as is the historical exclusion of Indigenous voices in these processes.

As such, there is an enduring and damaging narrative (although decreasing in recent years) that Indigenous perspectives are incompatible with the built environment.

Stakeholders said that a project of this scale provides an opportunity to reflect Aboriginal expressions in built forms in a significant and meaningful way.

Stakeholders recommended that as the project progresses, there should be a particular focus on how the built form is influenced by Country in the design's exterior, interior, and sustainability features.

To achieve this, stakeholders said it is essential that the project team consider how the design first and foremost heals Country before exploring other cultural design outcomes.

It was noted that as Connecting with Country is an overarching project principle, identifying opportunities for delivering such project outcomes should not be overly onerous.

Stakeholders said that other key future considerations for the built form include building materials (ideally recyclable where possible), the internal design of buildings and public spaces and how they reflect Indigenous design principles, other opportunities to connect with Country (such as access to Sky Country through design of open roof tops, etc), and the naming of sites across the precinct in local language.

To ensure cultural protocols are followed and that built form outcomes are culturally informed, such outcomes must be supported and developed by future engagement.

1.2 *Building heights*

Stakeholders had little specific feedback on the building heights, but did note that construction, in essence, detracts from and impacts Country and that in light of this, the project should ideally result in outcomes that allow people greater access to Country and the natural environment.

Stakeholders responded well to building heights being constrained by preserving the significant heritage view corridors across the precinct and that facilitating sensory access (be it visual, aural, or otherwise) to Country from inside built structures is always a desired outcome.

A stakeholder noted that, *“As an Aboriginal person, when I look at urban environments – especially tall towers and office buildings – I often think that they make no sense when*

considering the Country they're sitting on. Large buildings should complement Country and embody the essence of the culture and stories underneath and, in essence, be an extension of Country. But often, these big buildings just sit on Country with no regard for the significance of what's underneath. It would be good to see buildings in the precinct make sense to the story of Country at Bays West and the enduring significance of the place to Gadi and Wangal people."

1.3 Uses and yields

Stakeholders supported the proposed range of activities in the Draft Master Plan, especially if Aboriginal employment and cultural outcomes could be realised through the project.

It was also noted that day and night-time activation was an ideal outcome, especially from a cultural perspective.

A stakeholder suggested that day and night could be key design inspirations in the built form and across the precinct as, *"The natural day and night cycle is significant in Aboriginal life. It you want to have a continual conversation about culture, think about day and night – it dictated people's movement and behaviours and ceremony. In some Gadi dialects, the language changed depending on what time of day it was. If there were even some creative installations across the precinct that told that story in an engaging and educational way, that would be a great outcome."*

1.4 Housing

Stakeholders noted that the relationship between Aboriginal people and affordable housing in inner-Sydney has always been tenuous.

CIR heard that developing affordable housing options for Aboriginal people in Sydney has long been a priority for Aboriginal communities.

Due to the continued displacement of Aboriginal people from their Country and traditional lands, advocate groups and City of Sydney strategies have aimed to lobby for and create affordable housing options for Indigenous people.

Stakeholders noted that many Aboriginal community members still reside in social housing in Sydney. However, community members also relayed the fact that while many Aboriginal people who grew up in the area still see it as their home, they can no longer afford the cost of living associated with the locality.

As such, community members would like to see more affordable housing options across Sydney, with dedicated tenancy spots for Aboriginal peoples.

While stakeholders are supportive of housing developments across the precinct, they would like to see positive housing outcomes for Aboriginal people explored.

However, in light of the Draft Master Plan noting that "the type of housing [for the precinct] is not defined at this stage but can include affordable housing", some stakeholders raised the historical failings of affordable housing across Sydney, and highlighted Waterloo Estate and the selling off of Milsons Point public housing as key examples.

While the project is too early to define housing parameters, community members expressed some concerns that projects that have 'social beginnings' can often and easily become 'entirely commercial' and lose sight of any socially-intended outcomes.

Some stakeholders noted that there needed to be project accountability and a 'chain of custody' for project processes that intend to have social impact.

CIR heard, *“some projects start off really positively and they are engaging the right people, asking the right questions, and being inclusive in design process, but when it comes to construction and operation of the project or asset, what was being sold to stakeholders in the design phase is no longer on the table.”*

Stakeholders asserted that any housing in the precinct should be welcoming and inclusive residential dwellings for all people that retains and attracts residents on lower incomes, particularly First Nations peoples, families with children, older people, and students.

Stakeholders noted that should affordable housing become an intended project outcome, they would like to see a project commitment to ensure that such a vision is realised when the asset becomes operational.

2 *Connecting with Country*

Stakeholders were emphatic in their support for the Connecting with Country approach and said it was an interesting, innovative, and culturally respectful approach to Country at the project site.

Noting the complex and intricate nature of Country, stakeholders said the key principle of revealing, expressing, and celebrating the natural and cultural narratives and knowledge from custodians to reveal the richness of layers and stories of place was the right approach.

A stakeholder commented that, *“Listening and understanding Country creates a greater sense of connection between person and space. A better connection with space can profoundly influence how a person treats and interacts with that space, so by exploring and reflecting Country in all project outcomes, we can help enable people to better appreciate and respect Country in all expressions.”*

Noting the placement of Connecting with Country in the Draft Master Plan, stakeholders appreciated and lauded the commitment that, *“Rather than acting as a stand-alone driver, Connecting with Country underpins all of the themes and their associated directions.”*

As Country is a holistic concept that should not be siloed into discrete project outcomes, stakeholders supported that assertion that Country underpins all project themes and directions.

It was further noted that outcomes do not have to “look Aboriginal to be Aboriginal” and that they respected the Indigenous design principles weaved throughout the Draft Master Plan.

Stakeholders also agreed that the place stories of Bays West that have been used to support the Connecting with Country approach (Coexistence and healing; Water; What Country provides; Infrastructure and interconnectedness; Resilient communities) were culturally appropriate and relevant for the precinct.

Stakeholders especially loved the *sweet to sour to salt* concept, who noted the importance and significance of taking an ancient Indigenous concept and applying it to life in modern Sydney.

A stakeholder said, *“Being able to demonstrate the relevance and benefits of Indigenous knowledge systems to a broader and modern audience helps show that our culture is worth safeguarding and continuing, for now and for future generations.”*

Stakeholders also reflected on the project aim of delivering an outdoor and indoor learning space through 'Water Country' and said that any project outcome that educates people on Country and culture is preferred.

The themes of Water, Energy and Power, and the aspiration to elevate knowledge as the power of the future was acknowledged as a positive step forward in cultural understanding and belonging between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

A stakeholder said, *"It is only through learning about our culture and our ways of life can we bridge the gap between what non-Indigenous people think our culture is compared to what it actually is."*

Stakeholder engagement resulted in only one recommendation for the Connecting with Country approach: commit to ongoing and transparent engagement with Traditional Owners to ensure culturally appropriate design processes and outcomes are realised.

Separate from the Connecting with Country design approach, stakeholders also commented that a key part of connecting with Country is providing opportunities for Aboriginal people, communities, and businesses to access and thrive on Country. A key part of this is supporting Indigenous economic development.

Community members reflected on the reality that there are very few First Nations businesses, entertainment venues, cafes and restaurants, galleries, or other cultural spaces with prominent shopfronts, or located on high streets or in significant precincts.

Some community members noted that creating opportunities for First Nations businesses across the precinct should be explored.

It was recommended that scoping or canvassing opportunities for First Nations businesses or organisations should be done so in collaboration and partnership with local community groups and members.

3 Public domain and open spaces

Stakeholders endorsed the approach to the public domain and open spaces and identified ample green spaces and access to water as key highlights.

A stakeholder noted that, *"Country is all around us – the landscape, the sea, the sky. In a large open space, there is a deep opportunity to reflect on the encompassing nature of Country and appreciate all she has given us and continues to give us."*

Some stakeholders identified the many opportunities that the public domain has to support Indigenous businesses, particularly cultural education and Indigenous tourism operations.

Stakeholders suggested ideas such as educational site walks across the precinct which can then possibly lead to maritime tours (through operators such as Tribal Warrior).

Stakeholders reported that DPE should investigate opportunities to activate the public domain through cultural opportunities and activities.

Other opportunities across the public domain and open spaces suggested from stakeholders include:

- **Utilising water as a feature across the site** – stakeholders said that water is calming, healing, and tactile, and a key part of Country at the site. As a site used for healing and connection for Aboriginal people in pastimes, it was noted that water should be integrated into the site and public domain wherever possible.
- **Planting significant flora, or interpretations of significant flora, across the site** – CIR heard that wattle is as an important plant, as it not only heralded the arrival of whales in Warrane, but that when pollen from the wattle settled on the water and fish thought it was food, they rose to the surface which made catching them easier. However, it was also noted that wattle can be an inconvenient plant choice in terms of pollen, asthma, height restrictions, etc, and that other interpretations of wattle could be considered (eg. Artworks, creative installations, etc)
- **Using rocks in landscape design** – Rocks provide shape and connections to the land as well as nods to history, such as rock art (often used for communication) and sandstone (a key cultural building block and identifier of Gadigal People)

Stakeholders also discussed the importance of making the public domain and open spaces accessible for people from all walks of life and suggested including amenities such as public showers, drinking fountains, etc, for homeless people, at-risk people, and people with poor social and emotional wellbeing.

A stakeholder said, *“the last thing a public space should be is exclusive and inaccessible. We need to design public spaces so that they can accommodate everyone – we are all people and we all have our own stories – and all lived experiences should shape public spaces, not just experiences that people consider ‘ideal’.”*

4 Heritage (White Bay Power Station)

Stakeholders were largely silent on this but noted that the project should investigate whether there were any Aboriginal employees when the White Bay Power Station was operational to ensure that this was captured and reflected in the broader White Bay Power Station story.

A stakeholder also noted an interesting parallel connection between the Power Station and Country in that, *“Many people were reliant on the Power Station for their livelihoods – it was symbolic of an industry that sustained people. This is how Aboriginal view Country – it is our life source and provides constant sustenance for us to thrive and survive.”*

5 Social and Community Infrastructure

Stakeholders has an overwhelmingly positive response to the planned social and community infrastructure.

The multi-purpose community and library hub was especially well-received, with some stakeholders noting that the library could provide a home to a dedicated collection of knowledge and educational materials about the local Aboriginal history relevant to the Bays West Precinct and surrounding areas.

Stakeholders recommended that community centres and halls should be made available for public bookings and private events, ideally with subsidised fees. As a precinct surrounded by Sea Country, stakeholders said that community venues across the precinct could be a sought-after event space, allowing community members and visitors greater access to connect to Country by maximising the available landscape.

It was noted that the population of Aboriginal people in Sydney is increasing – particularly amongst younger demographics – and that cultural education spaces to explore Sydney’s

Aboriginal heritage and history would be well-received. Such spaces could also be operated by local Aboriginal businesses, which in turn could stimulate the local Indigenous economy.

Stakeholders also suggested that any proposed theatres and creative spaces across the precinct could be used by creative Indigenous companies (such as Bangarra) to perform seasonal shows and that the precinct renewal and the stories of Country attached to the site provide a foundation for creative and inclusive storytelling and cultural expression.

Regarding parks, open spaces, foreshore walks and play spaces, stakeholders highlighted the importance of these features being culturally and inclusively accessible for people with a range of accessibility needs and requirements.

CIR heard that if a space is culturally safe and welcoming for an Aboriginal person with a disability, it will be safe and welcoming for anyone with a disability.

A stakeholder reported that there is no word for disability in any Aboriginal language. People with a disability were always included in the daily life of their mob, and while they might not have been able to hunt or fish, they were responsible for other tasks, like child minding or preparing food.

Some suggestions put forward by stakeholders in relation to future accessible design features included telling stories in braille or describing design in braille, or the use of QR codes to provide more details of artworks or other design features.

Stakeholders also advised that for any cultural facilities, it must be ensured that people using wheelchairs and people of shorter stature are provided with opportunities to view performances through easily accessed viewing platforms.

A further suggestion was that tables with seating should provide space for people using wheelchairs so they can comfortably sit and place their chair to actively integrate them into social settings and conversations.

The use of colour was also discussed by stakeholders as a key accessibility design feature. Several stakeholders recommended that a subtle colour-palette be used, such as the earth colours of ochre and sandstone, eucalyptus, and yellows of wattle, which can provide a soothing environment milieu.

6 Traffic and Transport

Stakeholders raised the concept of connectedness when discussing the new Metro station.

Noting the planned precinct developments for Tech Central, Redfern North Eveleigh, and Circular Quay (all which have significant Aboriginal heritage attached to the precinct sites), stakeholders challenged DPE to explore how this sense of connectedness and a city-wide story could be told through design of the Metro at Bays West.

Stakeholders said that DPE should work with Transport for NSW to develop ways to tell this story of connection and place through transport infrastructure and assets, such as creating Aboriginal artwork on buses, trains, light-rail, and boats.

Stakeholders noted that this could be used effectively to spread mobile expressions of culture and awareness across Sydney.

Stakeholders conceded that this was an ambitious concept given the advertising space and revenue attached to public transport assets, but this in itself presents new opportunities for

the NSW Government to collaborate companies such as JCDecaux and other advertising/media organisations in commissioning Indigenous artworks for advertising spaces to tell stories of Country and culture.

7 Road network and street hierarchy

A majority of stakeholders preferred **Option 1: Primary street out of the front of the Metro Station**, noting that the design option that provided a greater sense of place and space across the precinct was a more preferred outcome.

There were no other comments on road network and street hierarchy.

8 Sustainability

Stakeholders responded positively to the Master Plan's approach to sustainability, particularly the overarching commitment of *Connection with Country*, which stakeholders said is a logical and culturally inclusive approach.

Stakeholders felt that the eight sustainability concepts under the overarching Connection with Country commitment are largely sensible, but that they would like to see the Indigenous economy considered as a sustainability consideration.

With consideration of Government Architect NSW's *Draft Connecting with Country Framework*, it now asks all NSW Government development projects to prioritise economic benefits to the local Aboriginal community.

As such, stakeholders noted that the precinct renewal should be able to define these benefits and that the Draft Master Plan is silent on that.

Stakeholders identified the following features of the sustainability approach in the Draft Master Plan as particularly positive:

- Provision of 30% tree canopy during Stage 1 (with stakeholders noting a preference for endemic, durable, sustainable, and Country-positive plant species)
- Creating the opportunity to enhance biodiversity on land and water (noting that some stakeholders believed this required greater consultation in the future to align traditional knowledge and cultural views of biodiversity with those responsible for developing the opportunities for enhancement)
- Improving water quality of the harbour while restoring and expanding the green and blue natural health systems (while also noting future discussions should be undertaken as water quality outcomes might be different for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people)

In the Draft Master Plan summary document, a stakeholder identified the following excerpt: *"The recognition and responsibility that this place was, is, and will continue to be a place of cultural significance for Aboriginal Peoples."*

While the sentiment was lauded, it was noted that genuine recognition and responsibility would manifest in project outcomes that see Aboriginal people and businesses being involved in the operation and delivery of the project and challenged DPE to explore ways in which this could happen.

Domain 2 – Feedback on Murawin Report

The Murawin Report resulted in six key themes:

- Education, Employment & Business
- Cultural Agency
- Cultural Integration
- Cultural Immersion
- Cultural Place
- Real Outcomes

Stakeholder feedback on these themes, and potential opportunities under each theme, are identified at a high-level below.

Education, Employment & Business

Stakeholders emphatically agreed that project outcomes that support Aboriginal education, employment and business are ideal and identified the following key opportunities:

- Cultural education hubs/spaces
- Indigenous retail stores (such as fashion, specialist goods and wares, hospitality)
- Creative spaces (such as performing arts, visual arts)
- Indigenous and cultural tourism (such as walking tours and maritime tours)
- Indigenous cultural practices (such as healing)
- Space to support Indigenous tech start-ups (such as hotdesking solutions, etc)

A stakeholder suggested that DPE consider engaging the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce to develop an Indigenous procurement strategy to support the project and help identify appropriate business opportunities for Indigenous enterprise.

CIR also heard the following comments on the need to support Indigenous employment and business:

- The lack of affordable, fee-subsidized, or free spaces for Aboriginal businesses and organisations in Sydney is a significant barrier in growing the Indigenous economy.
- Creating spaces where Aboriginal people could more readily meet and participate in cultural activities at low or no cost is commonly requested from community members. This includes low cost or free activity spaces, spaces to display or practice arts and culture, and places to sit, reflect, and connect.
- Business hubs for Indigenous business to start-up and grow as well as for Indigenous people to find employment are highly sought after.
- Indigenous businesses are critical in addressing the concerns about decreasing visibility of Aboriginal people in the city, driven by factors such as gentrification and decreasing Aboriginal resident population.

Cultural Agency & Cultural Integration

Stakeholders agreed that cultural agency and cultural integration are key project considerations in delivering genuine project outcomes for Aboriginal people, communities, and businesses.

Stakeholders suggested the following governance structures that DPE could explore to support ongoing cultural agency and cultural integration through the project:

- **Elders/Cultural Knowledge Holders:** Creating a structure such as an Elders-in-Residence model to help guide the project and embed cultural knowledge and decision-making at the core of the precinct renewal. Elders and Knowledge Holders can also assist in providing ongoing advice to support project outcomes such as identifying Aboriginal employment, procurement, design, and retail opportunities throughout the renewal.
- **Ongoing Community Engagement:** Ongoing engagement is critical in not only genuine and beneficial relationship building but also in respecting Indigenous perspectives and cultural knowledge and ensuring that design outcomes are realised in culturally appropriate ways. Future engagement to support all precinct renewal stages is recommended.
- **Indigenous Design Experts:** It is becoming more commonplace for projects in the design and development sector to bring Indigenous creatives into the process from the beginning to ensure that Indigenous design perspectives and culturally appropriate ways of working and progressing can be embedded into the project. Stakeholders noted that bringing Indigenous creatives into the Project is especially important due to its size, scale, and duration. As the Gadigal people were the first clan impacted by colonization, it is critical that the Aboriginal connection, history, and stories need to be layered or acknowledged alongside the versions of dominant history which exist in the space, to create a place which can hold all those stories together. Where a project lacks Indigenous creatives, it is easy for the Aboriginal narrative to get lost. Indigenous creatives can often provide the key to transforming Aboriginal storytelling into design outcomes, especially when non-Indigenous design teams may feel uncomfortable in doing so. Stakeholders recommended that DPE should commit to identifying Indigenous creative experts to engage for future Project deliverables.

Cultural Immersion

Stakeholders agreed that cultural immersion across the precinct is an ideal outcome and that while artwork and creative installations are valid ideas, the use of Aboriginal language across the precinct is paramount to acknowledging and respecting Country.

Developing dual naming options in Gadigal and Wangal language for sites across the precinct was a sought-after outcome mirrored across all stakeholder groups. However, it was unanimously noted that this requires its own dedicated engagement process as projects around use of language are often political and complex among Indigenous stakeholders and communities and require time and nuance to obtain culturally appropriate outcomes.

Cultural Place

No specific comments, but concepts generally supported.

Real Outcomes

Stakeholders agreed with the frustrations in Murawin's report and were adamant that the project must be able to demonstrate real outcomes and benefits for Indigenous people, culture, and communities.

It was recommended that DPE work with relevant consultants and Indigenous stakeholders to develop an action plan to identify project outcomes that have feasible and beneficial Aboriginal outcomes and co-design a roadmap on ensuring these outcomes are achieved.

