

# DRAFT

## Coffs Jetty Foreshore Connecting with Country Framework

January 2025



# Contents

1.1	Acknowledgement of Country	3
1.2	Respecting Country and Culture	4
1.3	Context and Purpose	5
1.4	Vision	6
1.5	Principles and Outcomes	7
1.6	Commitment to Processes	10
1.7	Actions and Responsibility	11

Figure 1: Jetty Beach, Coffs Harbour: Photography Seen Australia,

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# 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Country and pay respects to the Gumbaynggirr people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters on which the Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore is situated and connected to via a broader cultural landscape.

We recognise their continued connection to Country and that this connection can be seen through stories of place and cultural practices such as art, songs, dances, storytelling and caring for the natural and cultural landscape of the area.

We also recognise the continuing living culture of First Nations people, and the significance of the Gumbaynggirr Nation in that living culture. We recognise the contemporary stories of displacement and the cultural significance of Coffs Harbour in the continued journey of self-determination in Australia.

We acknowledge all the people who have and will contribute their stories of the Gumbaynggirr Nation and their connection to this place.

We recognise the importance of telling the First story, first. All other stories of place come from and are woven into the First Story.

**Source: Murawin**

Figure 2: Jetty Beach, Coffs Harbour: Photography Seen Australia,



## 1.2 Respecting Country and Culture

The extensive and rigorous Aboriginal engagement process undertaken has highlighted that Country within the Precinct is rich with memories, stories, spiritual meaning, ceremonial importance, ecology and songlines. It covers several interconnected sites of both spiritual and historical significance to the Gumbaynggirr people.

Given the significance of the Jetty Foreshore and surrounds; the long history of displacement and disempowerment of the Gumbaynggirr people on their own Country; and the repeated desecration and disruption of Country in this place since colonisation; the Aboriginal community hopes that any plans for the Precinct going forward will create opportunities for Gumbaynggirr people; take into consideration their values and priorities; deliver reparations in some form; and enable caring for and healing of Country in this place.

Over many tens of thousands of years Gumbaynggirr People have been observing and practicing cultural obligations in relation to understanding environmental changes and all of the seasonal and cyclical periods in between. Seasonal understanding of Country underpins many activities and provide a powerful tool to demonstrate and communicate connection to, use of and management of Country.

“The Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore is like the heart of Gumbaynggirr Country in the sense that it is an epicentre of connections”

**Cultural Knowledge Holder, Coffs Harbour, September 2021**

Figure 3: Muttonbird Island Photography Seen Australia



# 1.3 Context and Purpose

The Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore Precinct Revitalisation project (the project), led by Property and Development NSW (PDNSW) on behalf of the NSW Government, aims to transform the foreshore into a vibrant, inclusive space that is inclusive for all and honours the cultural and historical significance of Gumbaynggirr Country.

Central to the revitalization effort is the Connecting with Country Framework, a principle based approach designed to ensure that the development process respects and integrates Gumbaynggirr cultural values. This framework, informed by extensive community consultation, serves as a guide for embedding cultural, social, and economic benefits for the Aboriginal community into the project. By adopting this holistic approach, the project aims to promote reconciliation, self determination, and cultural respect while delivering tangible outcomes for the Gumbaynggirr people.

The principles outlined in this document are grounded in the key themes identified through the community engagement process:

- Grounded in Truth
- Do no further harm
- Respect & Knowledge Forefront
- Creating Continuous Connection
- Co-design with Aboriginal people.

These principles aim to address past harms, honour cultural knowledge, and ensure that Aboriginal voices remain central to the development and future of the precinct. Each principle is accompanied by specific recommendations to guide the practical implementation of these values in the revitalization project.

This Connecting with Country Guide is not just a set of guidelines but a commitment to a respectful, collaborative, and inclusive approach to development of the Jetty Foreshore. It reflects the NSW Government's dedication to creating a space that is not only economically vibrant and socially inclusive but also deeply connected to the cultural heritage of the Gumbaynggirr people. Through this project, we aim to build a future that honours the past, empowers the present, and inspires generations to come.

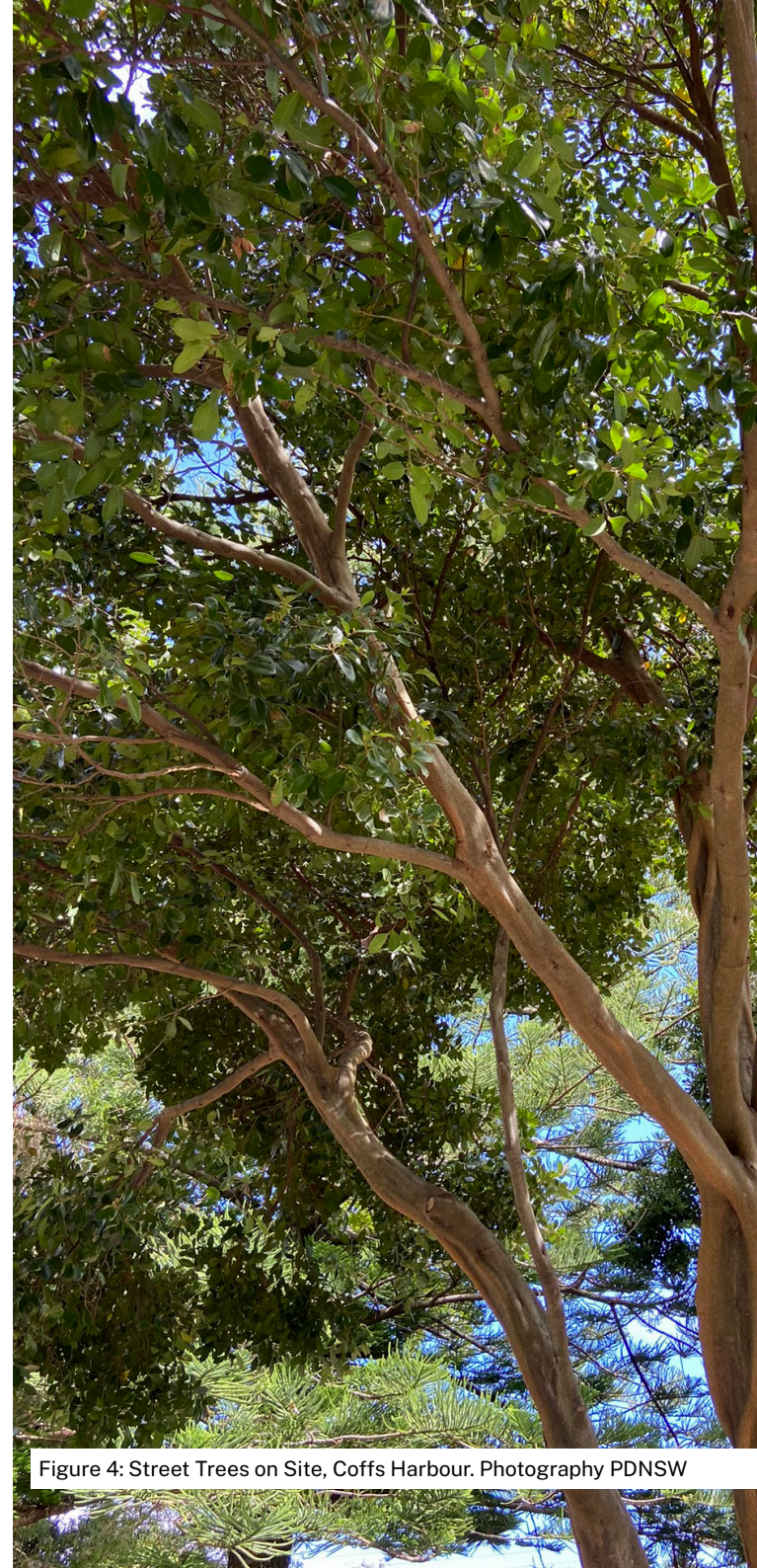


Figure 4: Street Trees on Site, Coffs Harbour. Photography PDNSW



# 1.4 Vision

**Coffs' family playground, a precinct of parks and places, that connects community with Country.**

The community is and always has been at the heart of creating a thriving regional economy and destination for Coffs Harbour. Shaped with the community, our vision is to ensure The Jetty Foreshore will become a world-class oceanfront precinct through:



Respecting

Gumbaynggirr, environmental and maritime roots now and into the future.



Promoting

community character, coastal activity and local economic sustainability.



Connecting

people to the water, the water to the city, and the city to the highlands.

# 1.5 Principles and Outcomes

No.	Principle	Objective/Potential Outcomes
1	<b>Grounded in Truth</b> - Emphasises the importance of acknowledging the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization on Gumbaynggirr Country and its people.	<p>This principle underlines the necessity of truth-telling as a foundation for healing and protection of Country. Recognizing the deep scars left by historical injustices, the approach to development must prioritize undoing past harms and preventing further damage.</p> <p>Incorporating truth-telling in the Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore Revitalisation involves protecting and honoring sacred sites and sites of significant historical connection. These sites, such as Giidany Miirlarl (Mutton Bird Island) and the Red Rock Massacre site, are central to the cultural and spiritual identity of the Gumbaynggirr people. Development should not only avoid these areas but also facilitate their restoration and integration into the community's narrative through informative signage and dedicated cultural spaces.</p>
2	Acknowledge and protect significant sites.	The sacred sites of Gumbaynggirr Country hold stories, memories, and spiritual significance. By acknowledging and protecting these sites, we honor the wisdom embedded in the land. Truth-telling becomes a communal act — a bridge between past and present, creating understanding and respect. Sharing these stories through signage and other forms of public education ensures that the history and cultural importance of these sites are not hidden. Returning land to the care and control of the Aboriginal community ensures that this truth is preserved and respected.
3.	Provide reparations and facilitate healing for the community	Healing requires concrete actions. It involves seeking ways to provide both material and emotional reparations for the community. As we tread gently on this Country, we aim to minimize disruption, regenerate significant sites, and create spaces for ceremony and healing.
4.	Ensure that development plans do not displace Gumbaynggirr people from their Country	Governance within the community emphasizes that Gumbaynggirr people should not be displaced from their ancestral lands. More than planning, protection involves creating plans — it encompasses ensuring access, continuity, and care of Country. This means development must be undertaken with the clear intention of maintaining the Gumbaynggirr people's connection and access to their land, ensuring that they are not pushed out or marginalized by the new developments economically or socially. It also involves implementing measures to protect and enhance the cultural and environmental integrity of the land, ensuring that it remains a living, thriving space for the community.

No.	Principle	Objective/Potential Outcomes
5.	Education and Understanding of Country and Culture: (Prioritizing Knowledge Sharing)	Integrate programs that educate the broader community about Gumbaynggirr culture and history. Emphasise the importance of fostering a deep understanding and respect for Gumbaynggirr knowledge, heritage, and cultural practices. Education initiatives can take various forms, such as cultural workshops, storytelling sessions, and school programs. These initiatives ensure that the rich history and cultural significance of Gumbaynggirr Country are passed on to future generations, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.
6.	Engagement with Elders and Community: (Incorporating Wisdom into Development)	Engage Gumbaynggirr Elders and community members actively in all stages of the project to provide cultural guidance and approval. Elders are the custodians of knowledge and traditions, and their involvement is crucial to ensuring that development respects and honours Gumbaynggirr culture. Their insights and approval should be sought for all significant decisions, from the initial planning stages to the final implementation. This engagement should be collaborative with ongoing dialogue that enables Elders to share their wisdom and ensure that the project aligns with cultural values and practices.
7.	Preservation and Integration: (Honoring Heritage Sites)	Protect historical and cultural sites while integrating Gumbaynggirr art and design into public spaces. Preservation of heritage sites is paramount to maintaining the cultural integrity of Gumbaynggirr Country. Focus on safeguarding these sites from any potential harm due to development. Additionally, encourage the inclusion of Aboriginal art and design elements in public spaces, creating a visual celebration of Gumbaynggirr culture. These artistic integrations, such as murals, sculptures, and traditional motifs, serve as daily affirmations of the cultural landscape, enriching the aesthetic and cultural value of the precinct. This approach ensures that the Precinct's development is not only respectful but also deeply intertwined with its cultural roots.
8.	Collaborative Design: Active Co-Design with Community	Creating a collaborative design process that involves the Gumbaynggirr community at every stage. This emphasizes the importance of active co-design, ensuring that Gumbaynggirr voices are central in shaping the project's vision and execution. By embedding Aboriginal perspectives in the design, the project will reflect the community's cultural values and needs, leading to outcomes that are culturally relevant and meaningful.



No.	Principle	Objective/Potential Outcomes
9.	Sustained Engagement: Ongoing Consultation and Feedback	Focus on establishing and maintaining strong, ongoing relationships between the project team and the Aboriginal community. This approach helps build trust, fosters mutual understanding, and ensures that the project adapts to the community's evolving needs and concerns.
10.	Economic Empowerment: Supporting Aboriginal Enterprises	Support and prioritize Aboriginal led enterprises within the precinct to foster economic empowerment. Create opportunities for Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs as part of the project. Allocating spaces for Aboriginal led shops, cafes, and cultural centres within the precinct ensures that the economic benefits of the revitalization are shared with the Gumbaynggirr community. Additionally, prioritizing procurement from Aboriginal businesses for various aspects of the project further supports economic self-sufficiency and empowerment.

# 1.6 Commitment to Processes

Precinct Development NSW understands that working in a genuine and inclusive manner with local Aboriginal stakeholders changes typical project formation, design, delivery and maintenance phases. The principles and actions outlined in this document commit ourselves and our collaborators to processes that shift from a BAU approach to development of government lands, to a Country-led approach.

A typical 4 phase built environment project cycle can embrace and bring together familiar project management conventions and Aboriginal knowledge systems:

- Project formation can be understood as an immersive process of starting with Country – the phase at which we start to form an understanding of Country.
- Project design can be understood as a process of imagining with Country.
- Project delivery can be understood as a process of shaping Country.
- Project maintenance can be understood as part of an ongoing continuum of caring for Country.

‘Planning and design projects create places that are connected with Country’ quotes from GANSW Connecting with Country Framework, 2023

Figure 10:  
Project life cycle from an  
Aboriginal perspective  
Diagram adapted from architect Ben Hewett's  
'Project Lifecycle' drawing, 2018

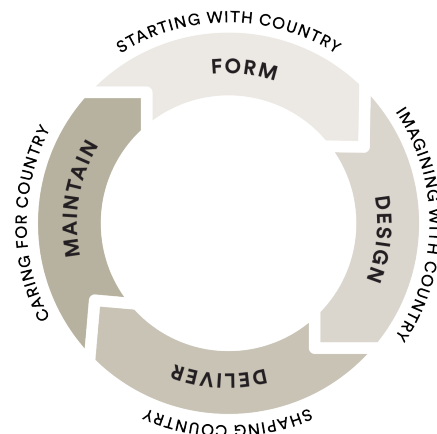


Figure 5: NSW Government Architect.  
(2023). Connecting with Country Framework  
(Issue 03). Retrieved from NSW Government  
website



Figure 6: Coffs Harbour Jetty. Photography: Seen Australia



# 1.7 Actions and Responsibility

Year	Actions	Responsibility	Principles
	<b>Protect and Honour Sacred Sites:</b> Ensure all sites are preserved and integrated into the public narrative through educational signage and restricted access.		1,2
	<b>Implement Reparative Projects:</b> Develop initiatives aimed at environmental and cultural restoration.  For example, the Old Quarry Site, once scarred, can be transformed into a canvas for restoration. The community has proposed several ideas for how the project can deliver reparations to the Traditional Custodians of Country, including protecting current residents, delivering long term employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, prioritizing procurement through Aboriginal businesses, supporting the development of Aboriginal enterprises in the precinct, and ensuring that the economic benefits of the project flow to the Aboriginal community in a sustainable way.		1,2,3,4
	<b>Establish Cultural Protocols:</b> Embed cultural protocols into all aspects of planning, design and construction to respect and protect Gumbaynggirr heritage.		3,4
	<b>Create Healing Spaces:</b> Designate areas for ceremony to facilitate learning and community healing.		1,2,3
	<b>Facilitate Truth Telling Initiatives:</b> Organize community events and platforms for sharing Gumbaynggirr stories and histories.		1,2,3,4
	<b>Prioritize Cultural Education:</b> Implement programs that stimulates community learning and awareness about Gumbaynggirr culture and history.		5,6
	Dual language signage and information boards throughout the precinct can serve as everyday reminders of the land's heritage, promoting continuous learning and appreciation.		5
	<b>Engage Gumbaynggirr Elders:</b> Ensure Elders are actively involved in all stages of the project to provide cultural guidance and approval.		6

Year	Actions	Responsibility	Principles
	<b>Incorporate Aboriginal Art:</b> Include Aboriginal art and design elements in public spaces to reflect and celebrate Gumbaynggirr culture		7
	<b>Preserve Heritage Sites:</b> Protect sites, ensuring they are preserved for future generations.		7
	<b>Facilitate Knowledge Exchange:</b> Create platforms for knowledge exchange between the Gumbaynggirr community and project developers.		5,6,7
	<b>Work with established mechanisms of Governance</b> -eg Connection with Country Group: consisting of Gumbaynggirr representatives to guide project development.		8,9
	<b>Consultations:</b> Keep community consultations regular to gather input and feedback from Gumbaynggirr people to ensure that the community remains informed and involved throughout the Precinct's lifecycle.		8,9
	<b>Set up structured engagement processes</b> , such as workshops and design charrettes, where community members can provide input and feedback.		8,9
	<b>Support Aboriginal Enterprises:</b> Allocate spaces within the precinct for Aboriginal led businesses and cultural enterprises.		10
	<b>Embed Continuous Engagement:</b> Ensure ongoing engagement processes are in place to adapt to the evolving needs of the community.		8,9,10
	<b>Promote Co-Design:</b> Involve Gumbaynggirr community members in co-designing public spaces and amenities to ensure cultural relevance and appropriateness.		8,9,10





Figure 7: Aerial of Coffs Harbour Photography Seen Australia