

Country Centred Design: *Narrative Report*

North Rosebery Park & Green Link



by

Old Ways, New

Culture, Research, Strategy, Technology

Acknowledgement of Country

Residing on the Wangal/Gadigal lands, in the heart of Sydney, *Old Ways, New* acknowledges and pays respect to Elders past, present and the future leaders of our community. Our acknowledgement of Country, it's Traditional Owners and their sovereign lands is expressed with deep reverence and connection to the importance of these protocols, as we tread gently in the footsteps of our ancestors paving the way for a better future for all our people.

Acknowledgement of Community

Old Ways, New acknowledge the interconnecting stories, knowledges and Songlines that connect outwards from Gadigal Country across the continent and beyond. We acknowledge and respect the contemporary multicultural experiences of this continent, and the various Indigenous peoples' who live here. We express deep gratitude for the generosity of spirit with which people have contributed to this project and future vision.

Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property



The materials, assets, methodologies, themes and quotes in this report remain the cultural property of knowledge holders, in perpetuity and must not be shared without prior consent.

Old Ways, New embeds Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) in our agreements with the Traditional Custodians, Elders and community members who take part in all aspects of our work. This includes yarning groups, workshops and interviews, and those who provide the cultural or Traditional Knowledges which have informed our work. We utilise the United Nations mechanism, Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to create clear agreements to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are consulted appropriately and all ICIP is protected. Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocol, will be followed in order to protect the rights of knowledge holders engaged.



*“Nature is the greatest teacher, biggest classroom,
largest university, it's talking to us everyday.
We only have to sit down and observe it to let it
talk to us in that sense...”*

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Section 1

Introduction

Indigenous-led Design

Document Purpose



This Country Centered Design Report details the Indigenous community engagement, cultural knowledges research and design process for North Rosebery Park and Green Link. This document presents cultural research, the framework and an interpretive strategy as a result of considered engagement with local Indigenous Custodians, community and organisations.

In turn, the document shares a methodological approach to this Indigenous-led design process, detailed design and interpretive strategy.

This resource was created through a co-design process with Gallagher Studio and delivered to our client, The City of Sydney as part of the Detailed Design for the development of North Rosebery Park and Green Link in October 2021.

Context and approach

Old Ways, New have been engaged to develop the cultural and conceptual foundations for *North Rosebery Park and Green Link* upgrade in addition to working in collaboration with the head Landscape Architect to incorporate local Indigenous people's perspectives and cultural knowledges into the design development stage of the project.

Our vision is to create connection to Country. This project has been developed through an Indigenous-led co-design process, incorporating cultural knowledges, systems and a relationship to past, present and future dreamings.

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Country Centred Design

*Our methodology is a cultural process,
creating solutions for the needs of the environment, its systems,
the humans who occupy these spaces and systems which we design.*

Country Centred Design



Country Centred Design (CCD) was created and developed by Old Ways, New as an alternative to the human-centric design processes which preface the needs of humans above and beyond any other living being, element, entity and or natural system. Our Indigenous-led process comprises four key cycles: **culture, research, strategy, technology**. These cycles often evolve into feedback loops, as does the nature of working with natural systems and humans within a process that embraces complexity.

We have tested the methodology in a variety of contexts and iteratively developed it over six years to be both structurally flexible for utility while providing required specificity through a series of iterative processes and outputs. Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices and design principles guide all processes and practices within the cyclic methodology, all the time prioritising and centering the needs of Country and respecting its agency and autonomy as an intelligence entity.

The first cycle, **culture**, begins by developing relationships with Traditional Custodians and their communities; utilising strategic stakeholder engagement practices which assist in building a cultural understanding of Country from deep time, to present and future dreamings at the heart of the project.

Adhering to the cultural protocols of consulting with the most appropriate local Indigenous Custodians first, enables us to work with those leaders to develop the group most appropriate to advise the project during the consultation phase.

When working through the **research** phase of CCD, we frame questions to determine what are the ways in which Country and communities have resolved the similar issues previously, over deep time. We utilise a range of modalities including user experience research, futuring techniques, interaction design and action research principles. Our enquiry situates and presences the various kinship and environmental systems used by Indigenous peoples over millennia to decipher the design and developmental decisions we can learn from.

Always, we work with and through the *old ways* (Indigenous traditional knowledges and knowledge systems).

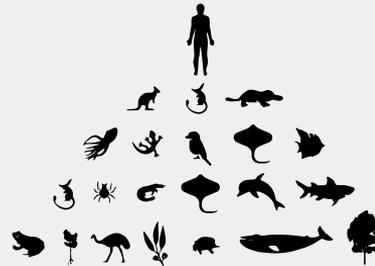
Country Centred Design



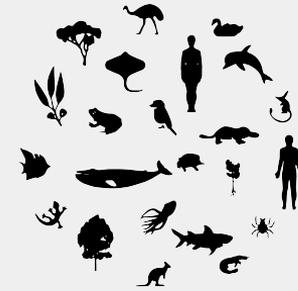
Connecting to Country informs our deeper research. Through the relationships developed with Indigenous Custodians and knowledge holders, we combine cultural and western knowledges to establish a critical research base. The research and engagement phases intersect within the culture cycle, ensuring the knowledge base is tested and cross referenced by Indigenous knowledge holders and specialists, with Country, its scales of time and movement, all the time, grounding our inquiry.

Within CCD our approach to **strategy** does not assume the tool or technology component till the iterative process of working through the cultural considerations, associated knowledges, community engagement and strategic design decisions. What we test for is as important as defining the purpose and intent, such as cultural fit, business model and technical requirements of the service and or product.

In order to deliver a culturally informed wayfinding and lighting design, we firstly develop the **technical** requirements. Once we have successfully tested the strategy and key design decisions with the Indigenous stakeholder groups the technical approach is then progressed.



In Western worldviews, man positions themselves in a hierarchical relationship above all non-human beings. All Western systems are typically based on this world view: social, justice, financial, political, cultural and built environment systems. This manifests in the categorisation of knowledge and practices into separate groups which may increase efficiency while hindering sustainable practices across interconnected complex systems.



Indigenous worldviews understand humans are part of the environment in a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship with all that is in it. It is relational in structure and dynamics. Country Centred Design embodies these principles through a design process which enables the sustainable development of systems, places, experiences and services.

Language Terminology



The following terminology details use of language within this document.

Indigenous peoples: United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples term for first nations peoples - prefacing the plural, discrete identities of Indigenous peoples.

Aboriginal peoples: First nations peoples, specifically from the Australian mainland continent, not including Torres Strait Islanders.

Traditional Custodians: Aboriginal Peoples with a sustained intergenerational connection and obligations for caring and stewardship of Country.

Elders: Those with cultural authority and seniority.

Traditional Knowledges: Specific cultural knowledges, skills and practices relating to Country, including Songlines, Dreaming, language, ceremony, symbols, seasons and cycles, held and transmitted within and by community.

Deep time: A timescale that Aboriginal peoples use that recognises their existence on Earth since the beginning of time. In the Australian context, deep time acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have always been here.

Indigenous Protocols: Protocols define appropriate ways of using Indigenous Traditional Knowledges, cultural material, and ways of engaging with Indigenous people and communities. They encourage ethical social norms and interactions based on reciprocity and respect.

Section 2

Research



Clan Connections & Networks

As part of the Dharug and Eora nations, Gameygal, Gadigal, Gweagal and Bidgigal are the closest and most relevant clans of the North Rosebery Park region.

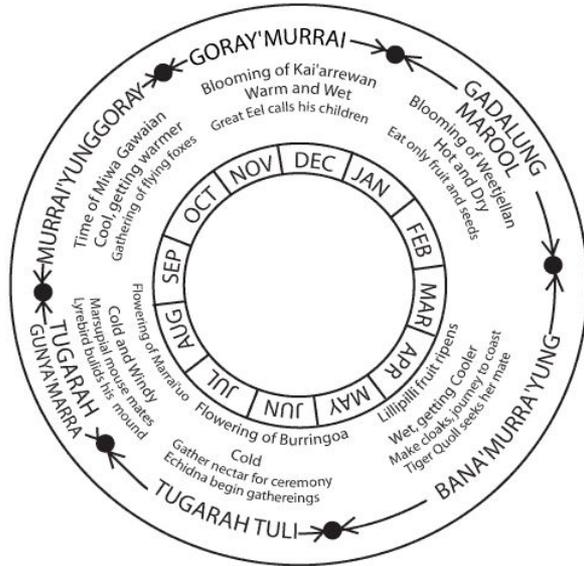
<i>Original Inhabitant Clans</i>	<i>Name and Description of Country (Estate)</i>	<i>Spellings in Historical Records</i>
GAMEYGAL	The area around Ka-may the name for Botany Bay, poss to the north west of Gwea.	Kamey-gal (c. 1790)
GADIGAL	Cadi, from the entrance of the harbour, along the south shore, to the cove adjoining the settlement.	Cadigal (c. 1790) Cadi-gal (c. 1793)
GWEAGAL	Gwea, the Southern shore of Botany Bay.	Gweagal (c. 1790) Gwea-gal (c. 1793) Gwea-gal-Leon (c. 1793)
BIDGIGAL	Probably to the north of Botany Bay and south east coast of city of Sydney.	Bediagal Bediagal, Bidjigals, Bid-ee-gàl, Bejigal, Be-dia-gal



Seasonality | Seasonal Calendar

This annual seasonal calendar compiled by Aunty Francis Bodkin does not rely upon dates in months and weeks, it is not set rigidly in time, but on key events that occurred in the environment.

The calendar below responds to the triggers of the environment, demonstrating how Aboriginal peoples cared for the land, living as one with it. This custodial relationship, expressed through cultural practices, sustained the natural environment and secured the viability of resources necessary to sustain and nurture healthy Aboriginal communities over many millennia.



Murrai'yungoray | Sept - Oct approx.

Cool getting warmer - time for major ceremony
The time of the gathering of the flying foxes. A magical time of the year when the flying foxes gather in the darkening skies over D'harawal Lands. Time of the Miwa Gawaian (*Telopea speciosissima*)



Goray'murrai | Nov - Dec approx.

Warm and wet - do not camp near rivers
The time of the blooming Kai'arrewan (*Acacia binervia*) which announces the occurrence of fish in the bays and estuaries.



Gadalung Marool | Jan - Feb approx.

Hot and dry - eat only fruit and seeds
The time of the blooming of the Weetjellan (*Acacia implexa*) signifies fires must not be lit. Kangaroos start having their babies.



Bana'murrai'yung | Mar - May approx.

West and getting cooler - time to make cloaks and start the journey to the coast. The time of ripening of the fruit of the Lillipilli (*Syzygium* spp). Cries of the Quoll seeing her mate can be heard.



Tugarah tuli | Jun - Jul approx.

Cool, time for the echidna to begin their gatherings
The time when the Burringoa (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) starts to produce flowers, indicating it is time to collect the nectar of specific plants for ceremony.



Tugarah gunya'marra | Aug approx.

Cool and windy - time to being journey to the highlands along rivers, ample fish
The time of the flowering Marrai'uo (*Acacia floribunda*). The marsupial mouse mates and dies. The Lyrebird builds his mounds when season ends

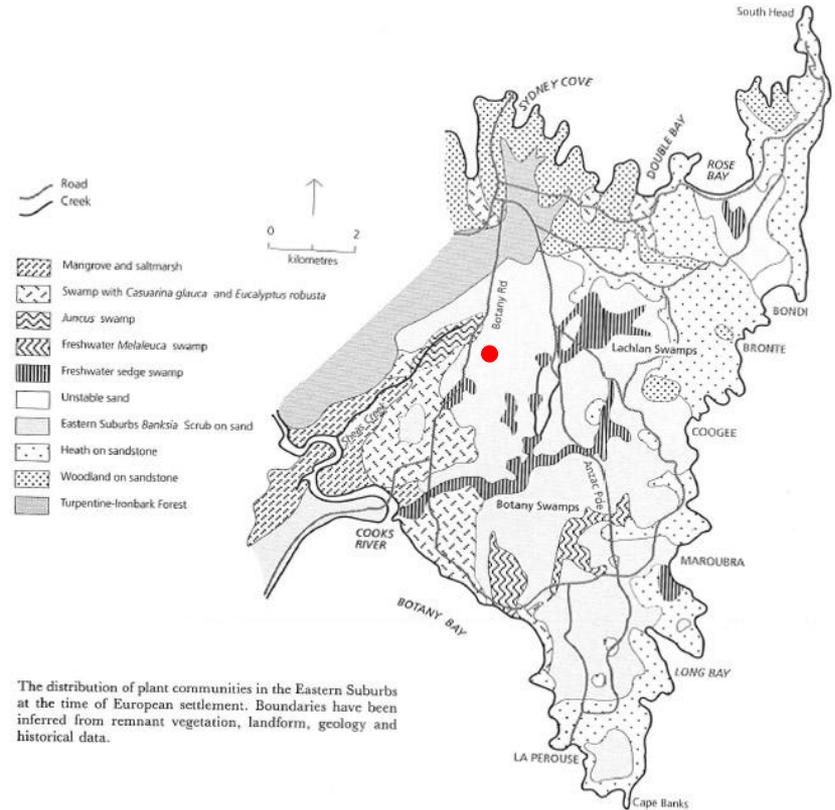
Cultural Mapping

Pre-colonisation, the Rosebery Park area was once characterised as a sand ridge between two significant bodies of saltwater, Botany Bay and Sydney Harbour. It was a transitional place for both the Gadigal and Bidjigal peoples moving between each place seasonally. It was surrounded by freshwater wetlands to the west with creeks covered by heath and scrub. To the east, the sand ridge was a natural bank to the continent's eastern border coastline, prior to the last ice age, 20,000 years ago, stabilising approx 6,000 years ago.

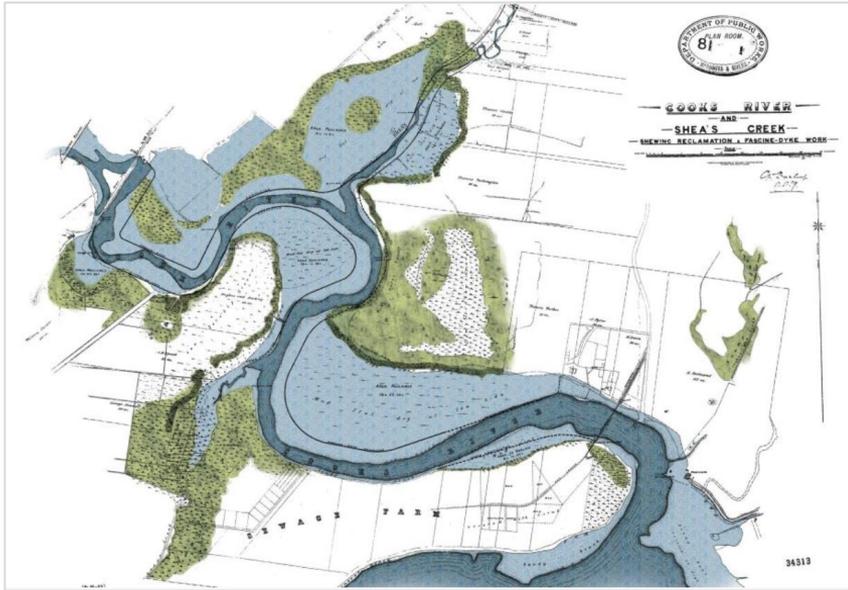
It is now largely an industrial and residential precinct on the northern side of Botany Bay. The main features of its original environment were extensive sand dunes draining into a system of freshwater swamps. On the wind-blown sand dunes was Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

The large and complex wetlands, enabled the following natural attributes:

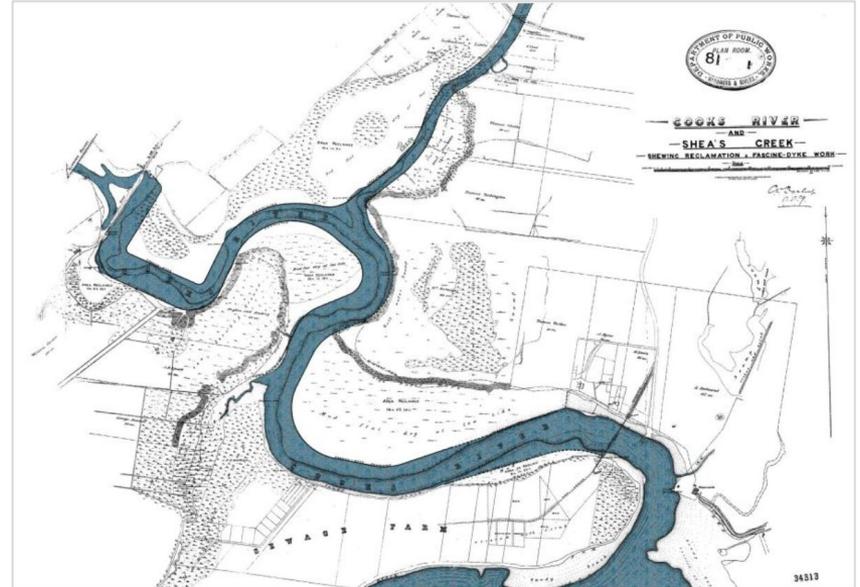
- Biodiverse wildlife habitat
- Natural filtration and movement
- Flood protection with flow reduction
- Cultural amenity
- Renewal, cleansing, and fertility
- Flooding, seasonality, and sustainability
- Food and resources
- Energy and water cycles



Geography



Alexandra canal as it was before 1880



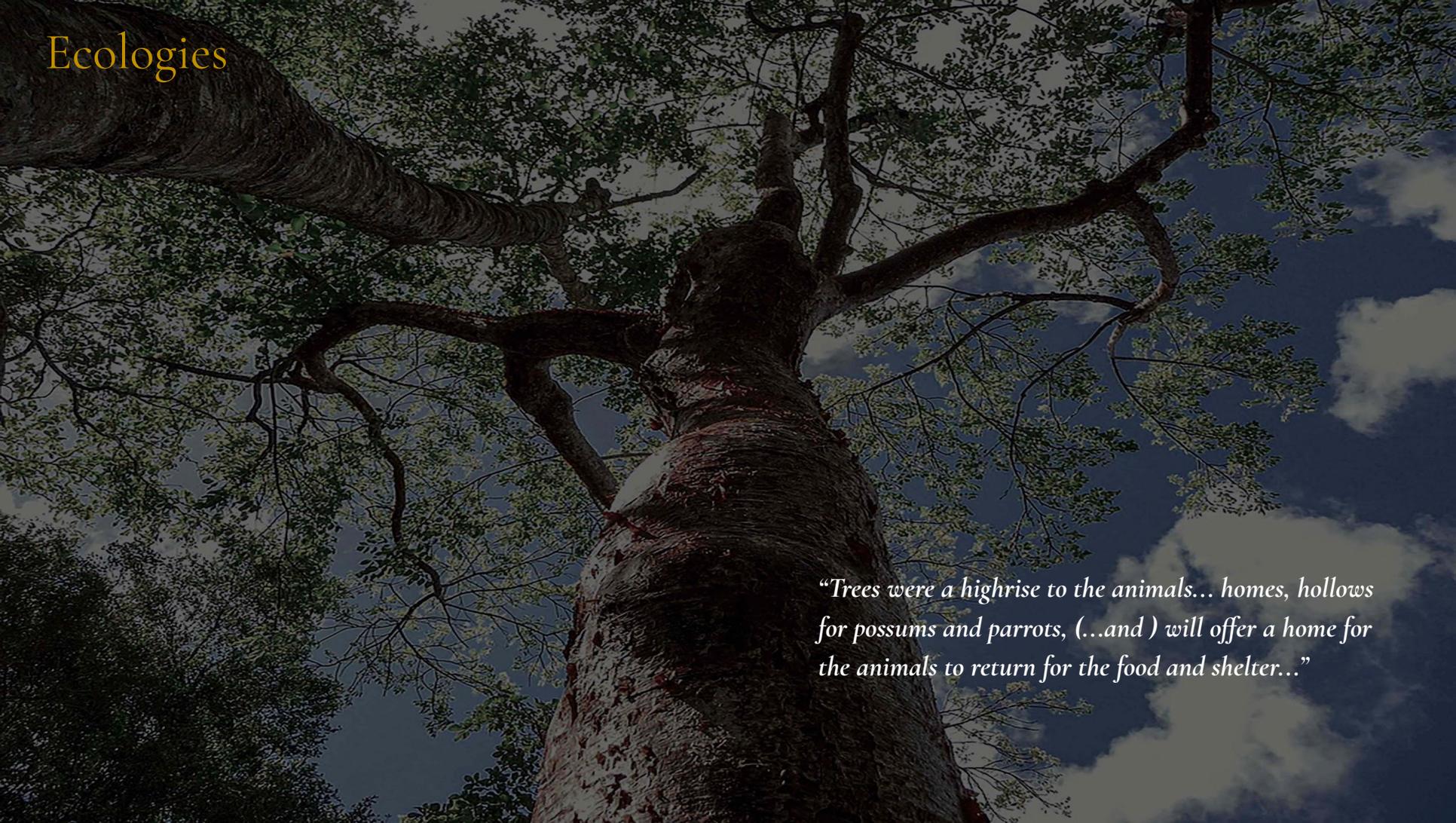
Alexandra canal from late 1880s to 1990s

Ecologies



'Birds helped, they were like people, they knew the lingo of our people, the birds and animals....Birds offer messages and journey through too...'

Ecologies



“Trees were a highrise to the animals... homes, hollows for possums and parrots, (...and) will offer a home for the animals to return for the food and shelter...”

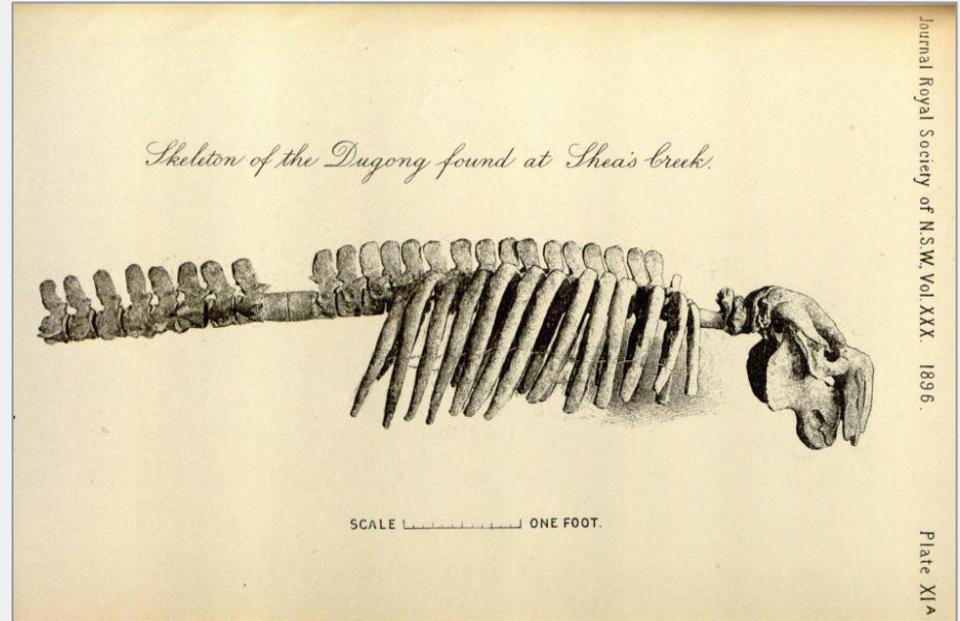
Archeology



During salvage excavations at Shea's Creek and construction in the late 1880's of a navigational canal floodplain to connect Botany Bay with Alexandria along the Shea's Creek, a large marine mammal skeleton was uncovered in silty deposits below the low water mark.

It was located over one kilometre from the Cooks River, the closest source of deep water. The large skeleton was found to be that of a Dugong, not known to commonly inhabit the colder waters adjacent to the current NSW coast. Recently, the Dugong bones from this site were radiocarbon dated and found to be about 6,000 years old. The presence of the bones suggests that water temperatures in the Sydney region were once warmer.

Another intriguing aspect to this was the presence of cut marks on the bones of the Dugong skeleton. Stone axe heads were found in the archaeological deposits, above and below the Dugong skeleton, suggesting that Aboriginal people inhabited the area of Shea's Creek at this time and butchered the Dugong for food.





Indigenous Community Engagement

Engagement Method



Internal research on Country

We participated in a small COVID restricted visit on Country, exploring the site with our lead for the engagement - Elder, Aunty Bronwyn Penrith (a Wiradjuri and Yuin woman).

Desktop research

We undertook initial research into Indigenous knowledges of the site and defined relevant information to understand the history of place. To explore and facilitate deep listening, and ancient insights to be triggered and gathered for our engagement workshops.

Engagement Yarns

Aunty Bronwyn Penrith led recruitment, engagement and consultations. Multiple online yarns enabled us to work with Traditional Custodians, Elders, Knowledge holders and specialists through 60-90 minute zoom calls. We facilitated yarns and participant-led conversations addressing a range of topics relevant to *North Rosebery Park & Green Link*. By centering our engagements from the community's perspectives, we enabled Traditional Knowledges to inform the future vision for the site.

Yarn Topics included:

- Dharug/Eora related Songlines, trade routes and post colonial stories
- Ecologies: site specific plant and animal species
- Cultural practices, natural resources and tools
- Revealing future visions and new dreamings for the site..

Engagement Activities

- Kick off meeting
- Site Visit
- Deep research of site and surrounding area
- Develop external engagement assets
- Recruit Knowledge Holders for Covid sensitive online engagements
- Develop strategic Engagement Assets
- Conduct Multiple Engagement Sessions

Indigenous Stakeholders

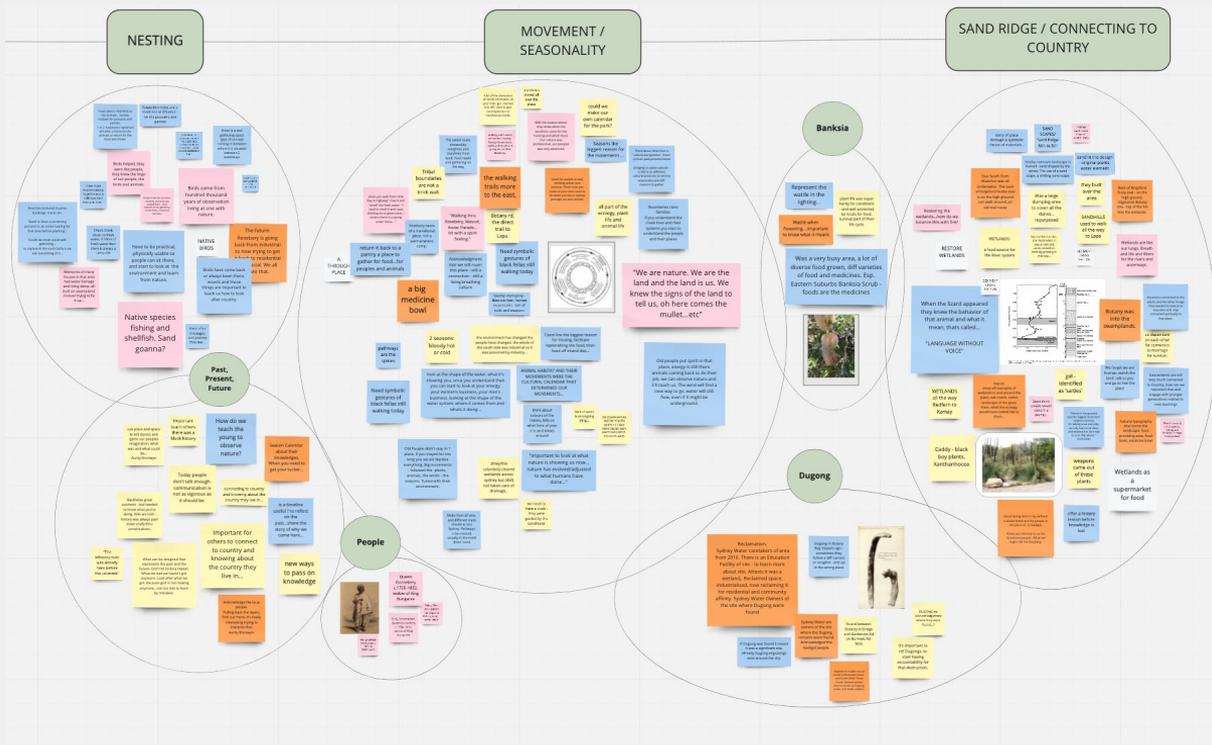
- Gadigal Custodians
- Custodian/Educators
- Local Elders
- Local Youths
- Cultural Knowledge Holders
- Bidjigal Custodians
- Local Land Councils
- Community Groups

Engagement Insights: Sensemaking



Our sensemaking was established from a process involving these key stages:

- Mapping quotes, stories, observations and findings from our desktop research to formulate questions pertinent to the context of the project and place.
- Preparing a comprehensive research Presentation to share with participants to enable the facilitation of on-line yarning.
- Preparing a series of questions reframing research into prompts for successful sharing of Knowledges.
- Recruiting a select group of appropriate Indigenous Engagement Participants.
- Recording group workshops and individual yarns for accuracy.
- Documenting yarns in real-time via Miro for all participant's insights.
- Collating the insights into groupings to identify commonalities that reinforce participants cultural knowledges and used these as the foundations of a system of Traditional Knowledges.
- From these groupings of insights then emerged our Key Concepts.
- Refining our Key Concepts, through collating engagement Insights, to formulate the cultural and conceptual framework and support the co-design process.



Section 4



Strategy

Design Workshops



We worked with Gallagher Studio in a co-design process over a period of three months to define the relationship between the cultural knowledges we revealed through our engagement process into a conceptual design process. Focusing on the ways we could translate deeptime knowledges into a contemporary relevance and future state for Rosebery Park.

The following points detail a high level overview of the co-design process with Gallagher Studio::

1. Workshopping key insights with Gallagher Studios to define 3 x key cultural concepts for design development
2. Synthesising key concepts by distilling key insights
3. Refining key concepts and translate into key moves through design workshops with GS
4. Developing ideas and themes into site specific context of park dimensions and technical considerations and requirements
5. Sharing early draft designs with key community participants, and
6. Refining detailed design.



Key Concepts



As a critical component of CCD we developed cultural Key Concepts to tether the design process to the site specific nature of Gadigal Country. The key concepts were created through synthesising the engagement insights and detail an interrelationship between the didactic nature of Country, the story, identity and character of place.



Nesting



Movement: Seasonality



Sand Ridge: Connecting to Country

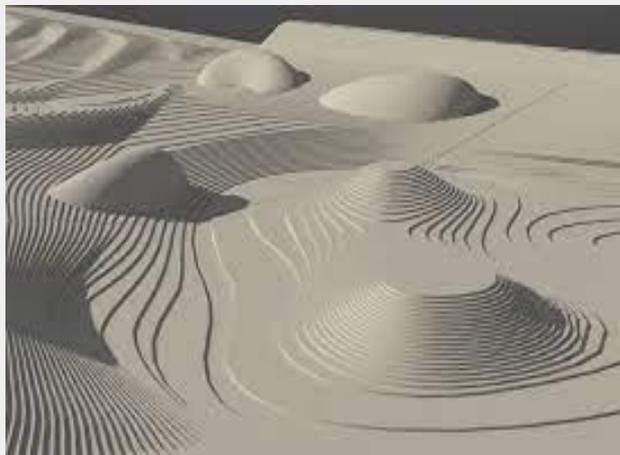
Nesting



Movement: Seasonality



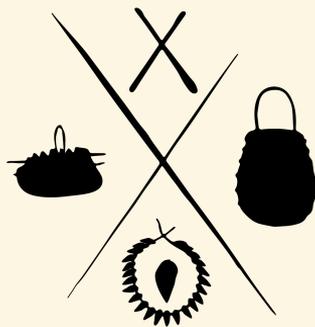
Sand Ridge: Connecting to Country



Section 5

Technology

TBC based upon advice from City of Sydney relating to the capacity of maintenance teams and budget required for our interaction design and digital interpretive strategy.



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Culture, Research, Strategy, Technology