

PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge Country, and the Cultural Landscape that we are working upon. We acknowledge the custodianship of its people and the privilege and responsibility to Connect with Country.

We acknowledge all First Nations people and their ongoing connection to culture, lands and waters and their valuable contribution to the community.

We recognise, acknowledge, and extend our respect to many others who have custodial obligations for Country and have been connected to the Parramatta River for many generations, including their Elders past, present and emerging.

Parramatta River is a uniquely beautiful site with plentiful stories and history. We honour and respect the knowledge shared with us to create this document and are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with community.

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INTRODUCTION

This document has been created by Yerrabingin for the Parramatta River Catchment Designing with Country project.

The project was funded through a grant under the Metropolitan Greenspace Program, which supports councils to deliver projects that improve regional open space and community liveability as part of the NSW Government's vision for a 'Green Grid' across Greater Sydney and the Central Coast.

It builds on previous work by Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG), including the Masterplan for the Parramatta River, *Duba, Budu, Barra – Ten steps to a Living River* and the research document *First Nations Peoples of the Parramatta River and surrounding region*.

The holistic approach of the Masterplan addresses:

- Duba (Land) – developments, water systems, regeneration of biodiversity and stabilisation of riverbanks;
- Budu (also Badu) (Water) – feeding creeks and catchments, surface water, flow speed, and the river body itself; and
- Barra (Sky) – the weather, calendar systems, climate, and day and night.

The Masterplan recognises the Traditional Custodians of the Parramatta River, its tributaries and surrounding lands, and their significant and enduring cultural ties to Country. It also aims to increase First Nations leadership in waterway governance by strengthening relationships between local and state government agencies, First Nations groups and community members, to facilitate ongoing management and business opportunities.

The Designing with Country Framework has been developed by Yerrabingin following the Connecting with Country Framework process, in collaboration with the PRCG project working group and community members through Design Jams and Walks on Country in the Parramatta River catchment.

The purpose of the document is to share our findings and recommendations.

In Section 1 we introduce how we understand Country and what Country means to us. We then share the Elements of Country framework, which helps us to see and understand Country more clearly, especially in urban environments.

Section 2 looks at the Elements of Country as expressed across the Parramatta River catchment (PRC) area, the key considerations and opportunities related to each element and a summary of opportunities to improve the health of Country across the network. This section closes with a case study into First Nations River Management around the world and the opportunities that exist in this space with the PRC area.

Section 3 introduces the Connecting with Country Framework. The framework outlines the steps for developing sustainable, regenerative projects and the process for community engagement. This section includes the detailed 'how to' information about examining landscape health and bio-cultural knowledge at sites, and provides a summary Matrix table to support the assessment. We have included the Matrix assessment information for the PRC sites addressed in this document.

Section 4 expands the Connecting with Country Framework assessment findings presented in the Matrix for the eight sites, sharing an overview of the site, the landscape assessment, the bio-cultural lens and the recommended interventions and opportunities to improve the health of Country.

The river system is alive and interconnected. Our hope is that this information will provide a basis to support greater care for Country and connection to Country for all in the river network.

All references to language in this document comes from *The Sydney Language* by Jakelin Troy.

CONTRIBUTORS

Our thanks to the Designing with Country Project Working Group, comprised of First Nations community members and representatives from PRCG member organisations, who provided input and feedback on the research paper:

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The document was reviewed by the PRCG Full Group Committee in February 2023 and endorsed at the March 2023 meeting.



ABOUT THE PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP

The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) is an alliance of local councils, state government agencies and community groups that are working together on the mission to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025. The PRCG provides overarching strategic direction and coordination to address different aspects of ecological and waterway health, including riparian protection, biodiversity, litter prevention, and community engagement. It also works with local and state government agencies to improve stormwater and wastewater management, water sensitive urban design, and land-use planning.

Parramatta River is one of Sydney's most iconic waterways. The river extends from Blacktown Creek in the west to where it meets Lane Cove River in the east and flows into Sydney Harbour. Approximately 21 km in length, the headwaters of the river are fresh water up until the Parramatta CBD at the Charles Street weir, where the river becomes estuarine (where fresh and saltwater mix).

The catchment area itself covers 266 km². A network of streams and creeks traverse the upper and lower parts of the catchment that all eventually flow into Parramatta River.

The area includes several diverse ecological communities that support more than 370 species of wildlife such as the majestic Powerful Owl and threatened Southern Myotis.

The Parramatta River catchment encompasses 11 local government areas (Blacktown, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland, Hunter's Hill, Inner West, Parramatta, Ryde, Strathfield, and The Hill Shire).

The region is home to more than 750,000 people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds, and central to many significant and vibrant cultural, sporting and recreational events and activities.



A photograph of a lush green forest with a stream, overlaid with a large white circle containing the word 'COUNTRY' in blue text. The background shows a dense forest with tall trees and a small stream flowing through the undergrowth. The foreground is filled with green grass and ferns. The overall scene is bright and natural.

COUNTRY

1.1 HOW WE UNDERSTAND COUNTRY

We inhabit and are inhabited by Country.

We are part of the system of Country, our actions must always be Country positive, the path, health and spirit of water is integral to all life and cultural practice and at its centre is the river, a living being.

All actions flow into it and all life flows out of it. This is true of all Elements of Country and if considered collectively in our actions. We are an element of Country, within it and it is our responsibility to future generations.

Being connected to Country transcends language and culture – a connected system of action, emotion, and experience, as a Custodian of Country.

Its unique and distinctive elements are connected and open to everyone; a connective tissue, the interstices that flows between Water, Sky, Earth, us and our Non-Human Kin. Its infinite reach into and across the earth and into the sky. She guides and nurtures us and is the inspiration and repository of knowledge.

This project offers an opportunity to celebrate the all-encompassing nature of Country.



“Country is our Mother, our teacher, our library and our kin. It sustains, inspires and surrounds us. The experience of Country is both individual and collective, both new and familiar. From her we learn, share and flourish, continuing to care for Country is central to our being, our identity. Country is a responsibility, not a right and is there for all who respect and cherish her. Today we may not always be able to see Country instantly, but if we call to it, we can always sense her and again feel her embrace.” *Christian Hampson*

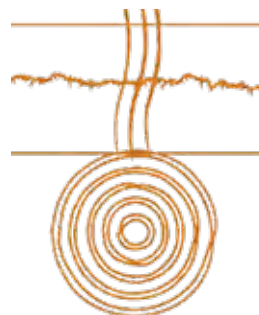
1.2 ELEMENTS OF COUNTRY

A way to think and learn about Country is to consider Country as made up of a series of interconnected elements: Move with Country, Water Country, Sky Country, Deep Country, Non-Human Kin Country, and Wind Country. This allows us to look at different parts of Country and the role they play in an overall system. This framework can help councils to look more closely at Country when starting a new project.



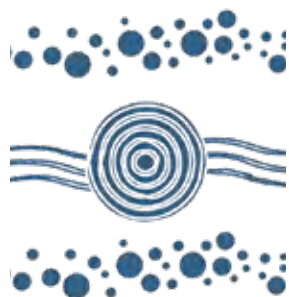
Move with Country

At the heart of Country is people and community, where our spirituality is embedded in environmental consciousness. To Move with Country is to be a Custodian of Country. It is where we record and share our knowledge through story, song, dance and art.



Deep Country

Deep Country is the most Ancient of connections and one that we honour for the many gifts it shares, such as the greenstone axe and the ochres that we paint with. When we dance we are celebrating and honouring the spiritual beings below our feet and their kin in Sky Country, representing the extent and connection of Country.



Water Country

Water Country is the connective tissue, the circulatory system, the confluences and paths within and between Country. It is the meeting of salt and fresh water, where one drop forms setting a path through Country, connecting with story and landscape.



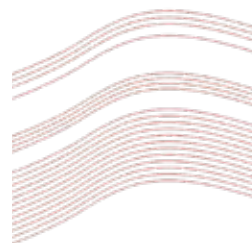
Non-Human Kin Country

Non-Human Kin Country fills the senses with colour, smells and sounds. On Country we are surrounded by our kin the animals and plants. This is where we learn about the connection of all living things and our responsibilities and roles within this web of connections.



Sky Country

Sky Country is a place of spirits and the ancestors and includes knowledge about navigation, the seasons, time and Songlines. It is also an important component of ceremony as it allows engagement with our ancestors and spiritual beings.



Wind Country

Wind Country carries the messages of seasonal change, the songs and words of our ancestors across Country. It is where the landscape and light vibrates to a rhythm, be it the trees and the grass, or the clouds racing across the sky.



LOOKING AT COUNTRY IN THE PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT

In this section we take a closer look at each element of Country, to better understand Country and how to include Country when planning new projects.

We will discuss how each element is expressed within the Parramatta River catchment area, outline the key considerations and opportunities for each element across the catchment area and provide a summary of key opportunities to make improvements to Country across the PRC area.

We also include a case study into how First Nations groups across the world are using cultural knowledge to look after river landscapes.

2.1 PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT MOVE WITH COUNTRY

Country needs people and people need Country. We are essential to keep each other healthy and happy. We are able to learn about and share Country through dance, art, song and storytelling. We create community and culture through these activities, fostering a spirituality and identity that is deeply connected to the environment around us.

It is crucial to prioritise the ongoing role of Aboriginal people as custodians of Country in Aboriginal cultural heritage planning processes, rather than solely managing tangible cultural heritage. Minimising harm to historic cultural heritage is positive, but there is much more that can be contributed from an Aboriginal perspective about caring for Country and environmental sustainability.

The nature of the custodial role of Aboriginal people in the Parramatta area changed with British colonisation. Faced with disease, violence, competition for resources, restricted access to Country and transformed landscapes, Aboriginal people have adapted their cultural practice and custodial roles.

Caring for Country may have taken different forms but it remains a central part of Aboriginal culture. Custodianship in the Parramatta River environment now includes practices such as the 'singing to eels' practice at Little Coogee, regeneration practices, assertion of rights, input to planning processes by sharing cultural knowledge about breeding and feeding grounds of marine animals and activation of local languages.

The cultural system of the area is highly influenced by the forest, riverine and estuarine features and is of high importance to Aboriginal clans and

people of the Burramattagal River. Burramatta means 'place where eels lie down'. Eels are a cultural keystone species for many Dharug people and remain a defining icon for the Parramatta River catchment.

Collaboration with local First Nations artists and designers is recommended to tell the stories of these places, providing access to Country for First Nations Peoples to continue cultural practice and creating ongoing roles for First Nations Peoples in existing and new organisations to influence the catchment landscape.

Key considerations:

- Ceremony
- First Nations visibility
- Caring for Country
- Communal gathering spaces and events
- Sensory experiences (smell, sight, sound, touch and taste)
- Use of language on site
- Aboriginal artists and designers
- Business opportunities

Image sources:

1. <http://www.guringaitours.com.au/beta/portfolio/smoking-ceremony/>
2. <https://kohlwildlifelab.com/whep/>
3. www.willumwarrain.org.au
4. https://www.aila.org.au/AILAWeb/Australia_Best_Playground/Adelaide_Zoo_Nature%27s_Playground.aspx



2.2 PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT WATER COUNTRY

Water is life. It is the circulatory system of Country. It is where raindrops fall and form and set a path through Country, carving stories throughout the landscape. It is where Freshwater and Saltwater Country meet. It is home to plants, animals and knowledges beyond number.

There are four ecological domains within the Parramatta River catchment area. Of the four, three are part of Water Country:

1. The estuarine domain including the estuarine reach and embayments of the river.
2. The freshwater domain including freshwater creeks and Lake Parramatta.
3. The riparian domains; vegetated transition zone between water bodies and terrestrial bushland.
4. Terrestrial domain including suburban bushland pockets and bushland reserve.

Each localised ecology and its functions have cultural values attached to it. Prior to urbanisation, the Parramatta River and surrounding coves and shorelines along the banks, offered places for fishing, resource gathering and camping.

Potentially the biggest opportunity Water Country provides in the context of this project, is recognition of Parramatta River's personhood. The concept and application of water as a living system allows for the preservation and enhancement of cultural and spiritual values. The health of the water is also highly culturally important, water quality planning must be an integrated component with planning design and management processes because they are intrinsically linked.

The aquatic ecosystems component of the Water Quality Guidelines is particularly important, as it represents the usual approach to protecting the health of the land. 'Healthy Country' is fundamental to Indigenous culture and spirituality, so this set of water quality guideline values needs to be explored in depth and is attached to Cultural landscape restoration. The aim of providing eel habitat and processes for eels will assist in the overall objectives of water cleanliness and Cultural landscape restoration leading to the overall objective of humans also returning into the river.

Designing with Water Country in mind means creating places where people can interact mindfully with water, escape from the built environment, rest, practise culture and be connected to the water.



The continuing presence of Water Country allows for regeneration and to renew ceremonial activities. There are also opportunities to restore the smaller streams and creeks that feed into larger waterways. Many small streams and creeks in the region have been channelised, leading to environmental degradation and stagnated water flow. These, too, may have traditional names we can begin using.

Key considerations:

- Living entity
- Habitat restoration and tidal flow
- Water Quality Guidelines – clean water and stormwater systems

Image sources:

1. <https://www.accommodationdirectory.com.au/attractions/bringelly/nsw?page=9>
2. <https://www.hellosydneykids.com.au/darling-harbour-playground/>
3. <https://www.foreground.com.au/culture/the-delightful-dialogues-of-catherine-mosbachs-landscape-architecture/>

2.3 PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT SKY COUNTRY

Sky Country is a place of spirits and our ancestors. As such, it is an important component of ceremony. It also includes important knowledge about navigation, seasonality and songlines. Sky Country is also a place of giving and wonder; a place of cloud and rain generation; and is an indicator of seasonal patterns, weather and shift.

The Parramatta River catchment area presents multiple opportunities to engage with Sky Country. Notably, Parramatta Park was previously the place of residence of Governor Brisbane who utilised astronomy to map and formalise the process of British colonisation. The telescope stones from Governor Brisbane's venture remain in Parramatta Park to this day.

There is potential for this project to partner with Greater Sydney Parklands and the First Nations community to decolonise this space and reclaim a First Nations Sky Country narrative, one that extends beyond Parramatta Park and is a recurring motif along the banks of Burramatta. The story of the Seven Sisters is an example of a songline that can be explained along different points of the river. Alternatively, traditional seasons and how they relate to non-human kin in the area and the stars in the sky can also be explored.

We can celebrate Sky Country by creating lookout places with access to expansive views. Placemaking in these areas can highlight connections to important landforms. Facilities that provide shade and shelter should make us consider our relationship with the sky, changing weather and environmental conditions. They should be designed so that they are responsive to seasonal changes in sun direction, wind direction, temperature and rainfall.

Key considerations:

- Shelter
- Shadow play
- Seasonality
- Views to night sky
- Constellations

Image sources:

1. <https://www.timeout.com/sydney/news/how-to-make-the-most-of-stargazing-thiswinter-in-sydney-070921>
2. <https://sway.office.com/s/FD5XtINT1vm5nJ1z/embed?accessible=true>
3. <https://diacos.com.au/product/acacia-floribunda-gossamer-wattle/>
4. <https://www.roslynnoxley9.com.au/exhibition/for-our-country-aboriginal-and-torr/4aep9>



2.4 PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT NON-HUMAN KIN

Plants and animals are our non-human kin. Just like our human brothers and sisters, they are our family. We are able to learn from them, seek refuge in their company, look after them and be nourished by them.

There are twenty seven distinct native plant community types in the PRCG region across 1,624 hectares. The most extensive endemic communities are the Coastal Enriched Sandstone Sheltered Forest, the Blue Gum High Forest and the Coastal Enriched Sandstone Moist Forest. Eleven of the endemic plant communities are endangered.

378 fauna species have been observed across the catchment region, with birds being most common (305 species) followed by mammals (35 species), reptiles (24 species), frogs (13 species) and one species of snail. There are 33 recorded species of fish and crustaceans across the estuarine environment of the catchment including two exotic species.

The meeting places of fresh water and salt water is meaningful as diverging waters play a role in species types. The ebb and flow of waters provides nutrient rich foods for many aquatic species. Many of these species undertake roles that assist the cleaning up of Country. The presence of microinvertebrates are important indicators of healthy water and provide the foundational structure of kin.

Sustainable, culturally derived landscapes aim to provide functioning ecological systems. It is the integrity of these systems that raise cultural understanding of Country and the relationships of the environment to people.

This also means acknowledging the concept of equity to kin. As humans, we are no more or less superior to the plants and animals around us, and as a result we should prioritise making areas available and specific to “kin” (or the flora and fauna of the area). This is especially important for species that have been identified as cultural keystone or secondary cultural keystone species, meaning that they have cultural value to people and place.

The presence of particular plants and animals are indicators of health of the waterways and adequate vegetation areas. To support healthy Country, the ecologies of endemic plants and non-human kin can be protected by holistic environmental management and regeneration projects. Urban design projects such as creating native communal garden spaces that incorporate accessible bush medicines and foods will support healthy ecosystems and allow people to learn about Country.

Key considerations:

- Keystone species
- Vegetation and mangrove rehabilitation
- Endemic native plants and landscape design
- Bush tucker gardens and resource narratives

Image Sources:

1. https://www.sydneydives.com/uploads/1/2/7/2/12728650/congar-eel_6_orig.jpg
2. https://farm4.static.flickr.com/3938/14984521314_31098ebf67.jpg
3. <https://knowablemagazine.org/article/food-environment/2021/many-mangrove-restorations-fail>
4. Yerrabingin 2020, Wategora Reserve Bird Life



2.5 PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT DEEP COUNTRY

Deep Country is ancient and spiritually grounding. We honour Deep Country for the many gifts it shares, such as axes, spearheads and the ochres we paint with. When we dance, we celebrate the spiritual beings below our feet and their kin in Sky Country, demonstrating the breadth of Country and the connections throughout.

Archaeological research into the Parramatta Sand Body provides an insight into Deep Country. It reveals an ancient landscape under the modern city of Parramatta, reaching along and outwards from Burramatta and south into Harris Park.

The Sand Body reveals to us the changing nature of the river valley from upwards of 18,000 years ago. The shape and course of the river adjusted over this time and First Nations People witnessed and adapted to these dramatic environmental changes.

Around 11,000 years ago people were using the Parramatta River Valley as a long lasting camp site, with features such as anvils, grindstones, heat retaining stones and stone tools remaining in the landscape. It was not until 2,000 years ago that Burramatta rose to its current water level. (Parramatta Park, Your Parramatta Park 2030 Draft Conservation Management Plan and Plan of Management. p.18).

The sandstone and gravel filters ensured the land was nourished. Sandstone is porous and a good aquifer as well as being a vessel for retaining water underground. Essentially a reservoir rock, the tiny pores are also good at filtering surface pollutants. This geological form of country allowed fresh, delicious water to be readily available drinking water resource for local Aboriginal people and has a role and place in contributing to the process of a clean river. The return of rocks and its associations along the Parramatta River are integral to the establishment and rejuvenation of these natural flow dynamics. The removal and uncovering of riverside sandstone is also part of this process of enabling these geological features to host marine invertebrates and undertake their role in this process.

We can share knowledge of Deep Country by using natural materials and earthy colours. There are opportunities to incorporate dance circles into public spaces and creative representations of layers or educational signage to inform visitors of the ancient history and continuing culture of that place.



Acknowledgement of Deep Country also translates into intangible actions, such as caring for creeks and streams to stop or rehabilitate existing erosion. Furthermore, Councils can implement no dig policies, so as to protect the non-renewable resource beneath our feet.

Key considerations:

- Erosion control
- Environmentally conscious construction policies
- Exploration of site geology
- Geological eco tones / colour palette

Image sources:

1. <https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/nawarla-gabarnmang/>
2. Yerrabingin 2020, Cultural Landscape garden, rammed earth Midden seat
3. <https://mapcarta.com/W136467799>

2.6 PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT WIND COUNTRY

Wind Country carries the messages of seasonal change, through the nourishment and pollination of plants, as well as the songs and words of our ancestors. It is where the landscape and light vibrate to a rhythm, be it in the trees and the grass, or the clouds racing across the sky.

There are many different kinds of winds which interact with the other elements of Country to create a variety of natural phenomena. There are winds which help us to hunt and fish, winds which make the water flat and ensure a smooth journey in our canoes, as well as winds which warn us that a big storm is coming. There are quiet peaceful winds which remind us to be present and reflect on all the things we have to be grateful for.

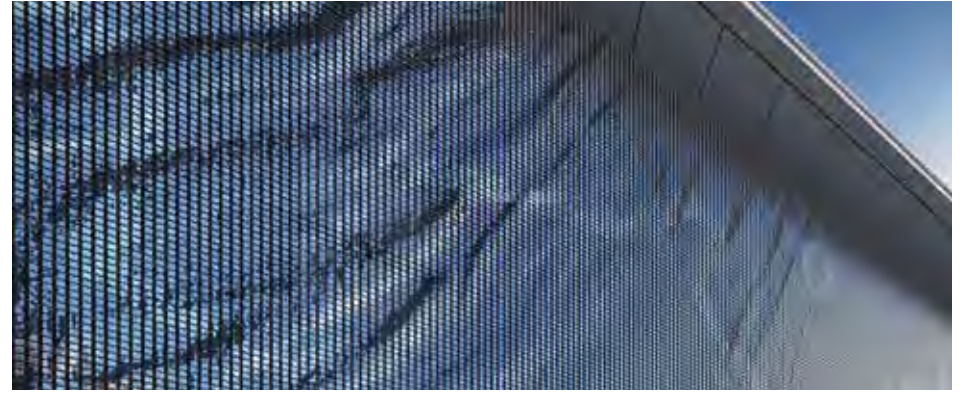
We can design with Wind Country in mind through the planting of endemic species, creating spaces to access a cool breeze on a hot summer's day, providing nodes for shelter and refuge, as well as avoiding constructing buildings that disrupt Country and channel wind into unpleasant tunnels. Other ideas include the creation of sound and renewable energy opportunities.

Key considerations:

- Pollination
- Seasonality
- Renewable energy
- Sounds of rustling trees
- Sound creation through art
- Movement

Image Sources:

1. <https://www.archdaily.com/69219/uap-ned-kahn-to-create-kinetic-artwork-for-brisbane-airport>
2. <https://laughingsquid.com/stunning-wind-sculptures-by-anthony-howe/>
3. Bonnie Follett 2020, Rustling Eucalyptus Tree
4. <https://www.quora.com/How-are-pollen-grains-from-wind-pollinated-flowers-adapted-to-their-function>



2.7 SUMMARY OF HOW WE CAN CARE FOR AND CONNECT TO COUNTRY

The following list of recommendations to improve the health of Country and our communities across the PRC are summarised from the exploration into the Elements of Country outlined previously. Some actions will be more suitable to particular sites and projects. Use the Connecting with Country Framework outlined in the next section to help identify the suitability of actions and interventions in more detail.

- Ensure First Nations people are central to planning and design processes from the beginning.
- Resource First Nations roles within organisations to support custodial relationships with sites across the river network.
- Develop regeneration / caring for Country programs at sites, such as planting and fire management in partnership with First Nations organisations.
- Create private spaces for First Nations people and groups for ceremony, where appropriate.
- Formalise access to Country for First Nations people and groups for resource gathering / management.
- Ensure First Nations people are central to regeneration projects, including restoring habitats, ecologies, waterways and eliminating pollution.
- Ensure existing known Aboriginal sites within the landscape are protected and where appropriate, interpreted for people to learn about why the site is there and what it was used for historically.
- Ensure that new structures and formations built within Country respect Country, that is, natural and sustainable materials are used; design considers the local context of Country in terms of colour and materials and considers local prevailing weather patterns; new additions are non- intrusive, reversible and do no hinder the interconnected nature of the elements of Country, such as interrupting a waterway or overshadowing plants.
- Celebrate and share culture by introducing local language through place naming, creating public art to share local stories and values, and encouraging people to explore the sites through events and tours.



Image source: Action icons, Yerrabingin 2022

2.8 CASE STUDY: LIVING RIVER

Restoring a river system requires an integrated, holistic approach and the cooperation of all. New and increased environmental pressures, unprecedented in their complexity, are confronting people around the world (OECD 2012, World Economic Forum 2015).

The emerging problems involve interconnected ecological and social systems, and include ecological degradation, the under representation of indigenous peoples in decision making, declining resource availability, and climate change (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005, Steffen et al. 2007, Haines-Young and Potschin 2010).

Water resources are being forced to support economic and human use, as well as facilitate ecological processes. The demand for innovative institutional arrangements, which address the overuse of water, and under provision of ecosystem health is rising. One new and emerging approach is the use of personhood to protect water systems in law through the granting of legal rights to rivers. The approach has been applied to specific natural features, namely rivers.

In law, personhood is a concept utilised to determine the rights and responsibilities of an entity based on its possession of a series of characteristics, such as consciousness and relationships to others. Recognising the rights of nature and rivers as living systems or personalities are modern expressions of long practised Indigenous laws. In First Nations cultures, Country and the landscape features that exist within it, are living beings. They are alive, capable of decisions, interactive and independent.

In 2017, three rivers, the Whanganui River in New Zealand, and the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers in India, were given the legal status of persons, while in 2011 a hybrid form of the legal rights for nature concept was used to protect the rivers of the state of Victoria, Australia.

Aboriginal cultural heritage in this regard is intangible as well as tangible. It is the knowledge, 'the lore, culture, traditions and practice delivered through teaching of the Dreaming which contains water management, biodiversity, climate change and environmental science that all work towards supporting land and waterways to survive and thrive as they are their own living entities, with a body and spirit, intricately linked and dependent' (Pascoe, 2012; Gammage, 2014).



When First Nations knowledge of Country is incorporated into planning, policy and legislation, it allows for protection of First Nations People's rights to access water and clean environments for cultural and economic uses. This has benefits for the broader community, culture and environment. Furthermore, when we acknowledge the personhood of a place, we acknowledge that it is a moral agent. Moral agents interact with each other in a way that can be evaluated as morally 'good' or 'bad'.

The river gives life. It has inherent value in and of itself. It deserves respect. It should be called by its name, Burramatta.

Image Source: George Penkivil Slade 1867, Parramatta River (National Library of Australia)

2.81 LAKE PARRAMATTA: A CASE STUDY

At the headwater of the lake is Hunts creek, the largest conserved fragment of bushland in the LGA, covering 75 hectares. It is a biodiverse area, with water environments and riparian forest, only 2 km from the CBD of Parramatta. It is a significant place for the traditional owners of the land. Embedded in Country is a long history of occupation and use.

Evidence still remains of the regular usage of and occupation by the Aboriginal-Burramattagal clan within Lake Parramatta Reserve and Hunts Creek. A number of shelter caves, rock art including hand-stencils, stone-flaking, tree scars and midden deposits remain in the area.

The area includes a sandstone wall made from the sandstone of Hunts creek in 1856: the first dam built in Australia and a 1.4km circuit track, which at the start has an introductory bush tucker garden of food, fibre and medicine, giving landscape resource insight to the culture attached to the place.

A custodial volunteer group that removes invasive species and regenerates the area adds 20,000 plants into the reserve yearly.

This area facilitates seasonal swimming and has the water quality properties to sustain intensive use over spring and summer. The vegetated catchment is an influential factor to the health of the waterways, along with the natural sandstone filtration system, where natural feeder systems are intact. Another contributing factor is the point locations and urban use of the surface runoff being primarily residential drainage.

This location provides a foundational start as to what is required for caring for Country. The key elements can be used in planning for more degraded and urban/industrial affected sites.



2.82 EXAMPLES OF LIVING RIVERS AROUND THE WORLD



MAGPIE RIVER

On February 23, 2021, the Innu Council of Ekuanitshit and the Minganie Regional County Municipality declared the Magpie River as a legal person in order to protect it from hydroelectric dam developments. Located in Quebec's Cote-Nord region, the 120 mile long waterway is sacred to the Innu First Nation, who call it Mutuhekau Shipu. They have depended on it as a major highway, food source, and natural pharmacy for centuries. While only a first in Canada, granting legal personhood to the Magpie River acts to set a standard for recognising the rights of nature in law in order to protect these incredible ecosystems that have been thriving for tens of thousands of years without human intervention.



BIRRARUNG/YARRA RIVER

In Victoria, the Yarra River Protection Act 2017 includes the Wurundjeri perspective of the river, Birrarung, as a living and integrated natural entity, noting that the river is alive, has a heart and a spirit and is part of the Dreaming, and these factors are to be considered in future development and use of the river. (Shared Path, 2019, Parramatta River Aboriginal Leadership Case Study, p.6). In practice, the Aboriginal custodianship of Birrarung is enacted by Wurundjeri representation on a Council that has a mandatory voice on matters related to the river.



WHANGANUI RIVER

In New Zealand, the Te Awa Tupua Act is the first legislation in the world that recognises a landmark (a river) as a living entity, granting it personhood with legal protections for its health and well-being. The Whanganui River has 'all the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person' (Shared Path, 2019, Parramatta River Aboriginal Leadership Case Study, p.5) which are enacted by Te Pou Tupua people, the human face of the Whanganui River.

Image Sources:

1. Magpie River, <https://kokatat.com/blog/the-magpie-river>
2. Yarra River, <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/yarra-river>
3. Whanganui River, <https://www.religiousleftlaw.com/2020/10>



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

This section looks at how we interact with and connect with Country. It will help us to better understand how our actions impact Country, and how we can work to improve the health of Country.

The Connecting with Country Framework outlines how we have considered and assessed the cultural value and health of Country at locations within the PRC area. It outlines the best practice community engagement strategy, which we have followed, and recommend that PRCG members follow when developing projects within the catchment in the future.

The Framework includes the Connecting with Country Matrix, which has been used to assess each site in detail, including looking at the elements of Country, the landscape variables, the bio-cultural lens, the presence of cultural sites and the overall health of Country to develop key opportunities to improve the health of Country at each site.

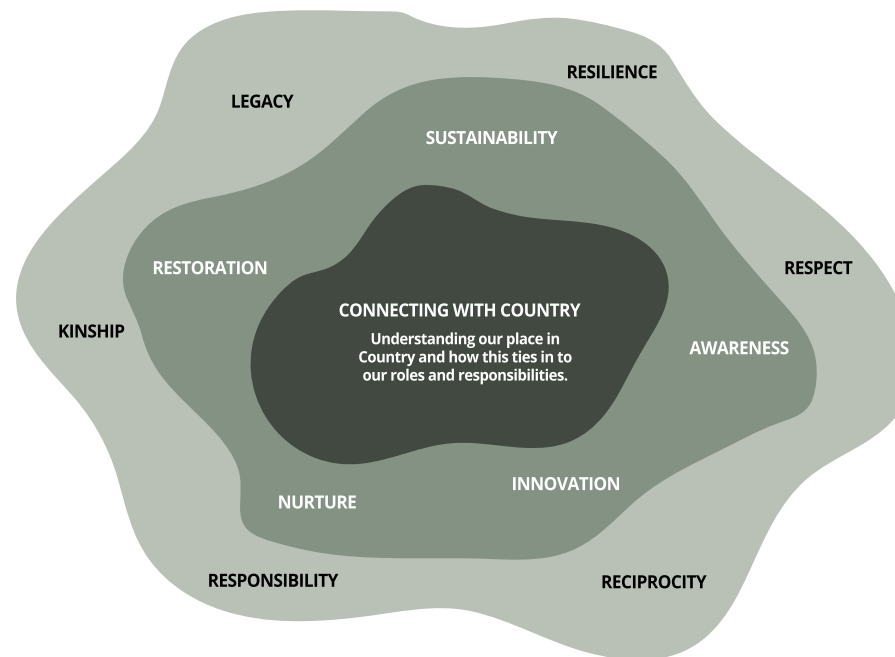
3.1 HOW WE CONNECT WITH COUNTRY

To connect with Country is to be grounded in the landscape and to practice the cultural knowledge stored within it. This encourages physical and emotional wellbeing for people and healthy Country.

Being connected to Country transcends language and culture. It is an interlaced system of action, emotion and experience. It highlights the many values that are similar across the cultures of our contemporary communities. Everyone can feel connected to Country.

Caring for and becoming a Custodian of Country means forming a strong relationship with all elements of Country that is based on respect, obligation and reciprocation. In order to create and maintain interconnection, it is imperative that Country contains endemic food and medicinal species, cultural resources, as well as keystone species and their habitats. These interdependent systems and relationships provide a framework for holistic infrastructure design, meaningful environmental policies and land management practices that are adaptive and regenerative.

Importantly, including First Nations knowledge of lands and culture at the onset of a project leads to design responses that are derived from knowledge of landscape variables and bio-cultural knowledge, creating meaning in placemaking conceptualisation and function.



Connecting to Country supports a socially inclusive, resilient, and innovative community that cherishes the wisdom and kinship of all cultures, captured through the lens of custodianship, creating wellbeing for all.

THROUGH SHARED EXPERIENCE

RESTORATION

Helping Country return to its pre-colonial state, and assisting it in continuing to thrive.

SUSTAINABILITY

Designing with the health of Country in mind by maintaining natural resources and promoting the re-use of materials.

AWARENESS

Remaining in tune with Country and teaching others to improve their capacity to appreciate and learn from Country.

INNOVATION

Draw inspiration from Indigenous People's role as the first inventors.

NURTURE

Caring for and protecting the land on which the site sits.

FOR AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

LEGACY

Re-invigorating and prolonging Indigenous knowledges and practices for future generations.

RESILIENCE

Understanding through shared experience that we are connected.

RESPONSIBILITY

A sense of custodial obligation to each other and to Country.

RECIPROCITY

Everybody playing their part, exchanging goods and knowledges for the benefit of community and Country.

RESPECT

Ongoing respect and care for Country.

KINSHIP

Obligation to educate and teach generations to come about connection to Country.

3.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Cultural connections with Country are different for all Aboriginal people and communities. All projects and their strategy to connect with Country must be guided by Aboriginal people who are acknowledged by their communities as knowledge-holders for Country, or the nominated spokesperson for knowledge-holders. This is also inclusive of Aboriginal organisations and groups such as Traditional Custodians, LALC (Local Aboriginal Land Council), PBC (Prescribed Body Corporates holding Native Title), Aboriginal community groups and organisations.

The Traditional Custodians along the Burramatta include the Burramattagal, Wangal, Wallemadegal and Gammeraygal Peoples. First Nations People from all over Australia also call somewhere in the Parramatta River Catchment home.

It is important to engage widely as there are varying opinions and beliefs within these groups, all of which deserve to be heard and considered.

First Nations knowledge systems were passed down orally. Speaking with First Nations Elders and knowledge holders first hand, will provide additional information that may not be readily available otherwise. It is important to understand and respect that some information may not be made accessible due to cultural protocols or distrust.

Language Guidance

When wanting to include First Nations languages in your project, it is important that this knowledge is gifted and appropriate permissions are sought. Potential words and phrases can be workshopped with the broader community, but permission will need to be granted by Custodians of that language

In the first instance, Councils should draw upon First Nations resources within their own organisation. Cultural Advisory Groups (CAG) at Council will be able to provide additional local context and key contacts.

If Cultural Advisory Groups are unavailable, the following is advised:

Contact Traditional Custodians

The Traditional Custodians along the Burramatta include the Burramattagal, Wangal, Wallemadegal and Gammeraygal Peoples.

Contact the Local Aboriginal Land Council

Burramatta runs through or close to the boundaries of Metro, Deerubbin and Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Contact First Nations Elders, community groups and organisations

Aboriginal Health Clinics, Aboriginal Legal Services, Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, Advocacy groups, Cultural practice groups and other grassroots programs, Prescribed Body Corporates (PBC).

Key (approximate land council boundaries):

DEERUBBIN

GANDANGARA

METROPOLITAN

3.3 CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY ABORIGINAL FRAMEWORK

We use the Connecting with Country Framework to understand the health status of Country and to determine ways to improve this. Page 24 includes a Matrix that can be used to collate the information from the framework assessment into a summary.

1. We look at Country, we examine what we can discover about the topics in the column below.

2. We talk to people, we investigate what we can learn about topics in the column below.

3. We consider the type of project suitable to Country and to the people connected to Country. Examples of the types of projects are below.

4. We assess all of the previous information together. The questions below guide this assessment.

5. Finally, consider how many of the Sustainability and Regenerative Projection outcomes your project will meet.

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

Law of country
Biocultural indices
Ecological Functions
Cultural Landscape context
Landscape form and function
Biological cycles and flow
Seasonal variations
Sky and atmosphere
Tangible and Intangible
Spiritual

CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE FROM COUNTRY

Cultural indices
Custodianship
Relationships
Knowledge caretaking
Knowledge and ideology
Values and significance
Traditional Custodians
Capacity
Spiritual

CONTEXT OF INTENT

Built Environment Projects
Design
Planning
Architecture
Revegetation/Restoration
Conservation
Sustainability
Governance
Information technology
Art /strategy

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 1 What does Country need?
- 2 How does the design respond to this?
- 3 How community would like Aboriginal knowledge to be used in the design and planning of places, design or activities.
- 4 How cultural landscape is respected and reciprocated in the design and planning of places.

CUSTODIANSHIP

GOVERNANCE CAPACITY

RECIPROCATION

REGENERATION

INNOVATION

TECHNOLOGY

RESILIENCE

Sections 1 and 2 make up the Landscape and Bio-cultural assessment.

The next slide includes more detailed information about how to assess Landscape variables and Bio-cultural knowledge.

THE FRAMEWORK AIMS TO:

- Demonstrate an improved level of cultural health for Country
- Suggest future indicators for health of Country
- Develop Aboriginal leadership opportunities
- Support innovative and culturally informed leadership for Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal people.

3.4 LANDSCAPE AND BIO-CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

Assessing Landscape variables to take account of Aboriginal cultural values and Cultural Lens when evaluating priorities.

LANDSCAPE VARIABLES:

Place status – Whether or not the place is an area of cultural significance, contains cultural heritage and whether local Traditional Owners would return to the place in the future, or any reciprocation to Country opportunities.

Current use of the place – A measure of the value of a river or wetland to Aboriginal people based on whether food and other resources are available and suitable for cultural use.

Aboriginal sites exist (AHIMS or other sources)

Cultural landscape/site health – A measure made up of health indicators:

- **MESSY** (Contains 70-100% weed infestation and rubbish)
- **CHANGED** (Heavily modified, cleared)
- **GOOD** (Contains 70-100% native vegetation)
- **MODERATE** (Has remnant vegetation, park like)
- **RECOVERING** (Has had impacts, and contains 70-100% regrowth)

Such assessments as vegetation intactness, riverbed condition, species viability and water quality are also a component of country biocultural health assessment.

Impacts of urban change (Re-interpreting Landscape or built environment)

CATEGORIES OF BIO-CULTURAL LENS:

1. **Cultural Use** – Place, meaning, language, food and living resources, transport, seasonal rotation.
2. **Sharing History** – Opportunity exists for co-design of interpretive or design, truth telling.
3. **Bio Cultural Indicators** – Cultural keystone species, Cultural kin/relationships/ biocultural indicators for health and monitoring.
4. **Cultural Landscape Restoration** – Reciprocation and regenerative context.
5. **Connecting Community** – Activation and co-design.




3.5 CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK MATRIX FOR PRC SITES

This Matrix is the result of the Connecting with Country Framework assessment for eight sites across the Parramatta River Catchment (PRC). We have considered the dominant elements of Country at the site, the cultural significance, the landscape variables, the biocultural knowledge, cultural sites present in the landscape and the overall landscape health.

The next section of this document expands these findings and makes recommendations for key opportunities and interventions to improve the health of Country across these sites.

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Callan Point Inner West Council	Sky, Non-Human Kin, Wind, Deep	Yes	Oysters and mussels	Yes	Moderate	Erosion	C: 1,2,3,4
Bedlam Bay Hunter's Hill Council	Non-Human Kin, Move with Country, Water	Yes	Mussels	Yes	Changed / Moderate	Mangrove destruction	C: 1,2,3,4,5
Bayview Park City of Canada Bay Council	Move with Country, Water, Sky	Yes	Water value high, future swimmable site	No	Good / Moderate	Ferry wash and mangrove destruction	C: 1,2,3,4,5
Putney Park City of Ryde	Move with Country, Water, Non-Human kin	Yes	Great water access and extensive views, bushland and bush tucker	Yes	Good / Moderate	Erosion, disconnected bushland	C: 1,2,5
Silverwater Park City of Parramatta Council	Non-Human kin, Wind, Water	Yes	River confluence, Mangroves, open parkland	Yes	Moderate	Urban noise, mangrove destruction	C: 1,3,4,5
Wategora Reserve Cumberland City Council	Non-Human kin, Deep, Water	Yes	Bush tucker, bushland	Yes	Messy	Major erosion, Water logging, disconnected bushland, rubbish	C: 1,2,3,4,5
Maluga Passive Park City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council	Move with Country, Water, Non-Human kin, Sky	Yes	Bio filtration system, remnant vegetation and weaving species	No	Recovering	Compounded soil, rubbish, disconnected bushland	C: 1,3,4,5
International Peace Park Blacktown City Council	Sky, Non-Human kin, Water, Move with Country	Yes	River headwaters, polluted water, community park	No	Changed / Moderate	Riparian destruction, rubbish, polluted water	C: 4,5



MAPPING THE CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES IN PRC

Please note that these design concepts are suggestions and starting ideas based on initial co-design workshops with community. Community involvement throughout the entirety of the process is integral for authentic First Nations design. We recommend additional consultation.

4.1 OVERVIEW MAP



Map created on Mapbox

4.2 INTEGRATED PROGRAM KEY



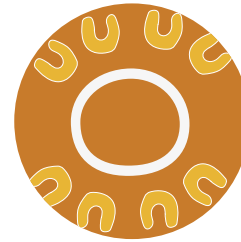
Acknowledgement



Amenities



Bush Food Garden



Ceremony



Communal Space



Employment Opportunity



Interpretive Art



Mangrove Rehabilitation



Mindfulness



Nature Play



Picnic Space



Platform Nodes



Proposed Boardwalk



Providing Views



Regeneration



Re-Vegetation



Sensory Experience



Sharing Stories



Smells of Nature



Sounds of Nature



Sustainability



Swimming Spot



Upgraded Accessibility



Water Play

4.3 CALLAN POINT: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

Callan Point is located in the suburb of Lilyfield and is a part of the Inner West Council Local Government Area. The site itself is a small outcrop of land that extends out into a southern portion of the Parramatta River. It includes an 1800s colonial estate that was used for the treatment of mental health disorders. The buildings are surrounded by trees, with a few generous open grass areas. The land itself is bordered by a concrete seawall to the west, and a set of small rocky cliffs to the north that lead down to a small secluded beach. The cliffs are significant as they include an Aboriginal carving of a bull shark. Other archaeological sites in the area include midden mounds in caves and coves around the bay, that tell the story of a cultural maritime community landscape used extensively for livelihood and sustenance. Scattered throughout the site are also plaques that outline the Indigenous history of the area.

Elements

Sky: Being north-west facing, Callan Point has unobstructed views of the sky and sunset, therefore making Sky Country a relevant element for this site.

Non-Human Kin: Callan Point is a breeding ground for significant species such as bull sharks and electric rays, therefore making Non-Human Kin a relevant element for this site.

Wind: Being an outcrop of land with multiple large open spaces, wind is very apparent on site. Therefore making Wind Country a relevant element for this site.

Deep: Callan Point has sandstone cliffs, and is a midden site, housing thousands of years of Indigenous history in shells and sediments, therefore making Deep Country a relevant element for this site.



Yerrabingin Site Photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Callan Point Inner West Council	Sky, Non-Human Kin, Wind, Deep	Yes	Oysters and mussels	Yes	Moderate	Erosion	C: 1,2,3,4

4.31 CALLAN POINT: BIO-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

BioCultural Indicators: Bullshark

An interesting feature of Callan Park is the sandstone engraving of a large marine creature. This carving has been the subject of much curiosity, controversy and debate. Some believe that it was carved by a hospital patient from the nearby psychiatric facility and others state that it has Aboriginal origins and depicts a bull shark. The water off the outcrop containing the sandstone engraving is deep and a potential bull shark breeding area. Multiple shark attacks have occurred at the site, some of which have been fatal, dating back to 1888 and as recently as 1997.

Cultural Use: Black Wattle, The Mother Tree

Drew Roberts is the President of Friends of Callan Park and Managing Director of Shared Knowledge, an organisation that provides customised Aboriginal cultural heritage tours. Drew states that the Sydney Golden Wattle (*Acacia Longifolia*) or Black Wattle is a defining tree of this Country. Black Wattle is a Mother Tree that offers a variety of uses, and according to Drew “tells you what to eat; it cleans you and helps you, like your mother does”. It is a seasonal indicator that tells us when the whales will migrate, when it is the right time to eat oysters and pippies, as well as when the fish have swum down the Parramatta River and into the ocean, no longer tasting like mud.

Cultural Use: Middens

Middens at Callan Park are coastal middens containing mussel and oyster shells and are estimated to be upwards of 4,500 years old. Middens were often large and dense, at a couple of metres tall and hundreds of metres wide. In the early years of colonisation, brick buildings were made using lime, derived from shells found in middens. Convicts would work in shell gangs to haul and crush the shells, which would then be burnt to form lime. The middens at Callan Park were so dense that shell gangs of over 30 men were still collecting shells from the foreshore 40 years after ‘settlement’. This demonstrates that even the physicality of the colony was built off the destruction of Aboriginal culture.

Image Sources:

1. Yerrabingin 2022, Callan Point Bullshark engraving
2. Australian Plants Society NSW 2017, *Acacia Longifolia*
3. Yerrabingin 2022, Middens



Bull shark



The Mother Tree

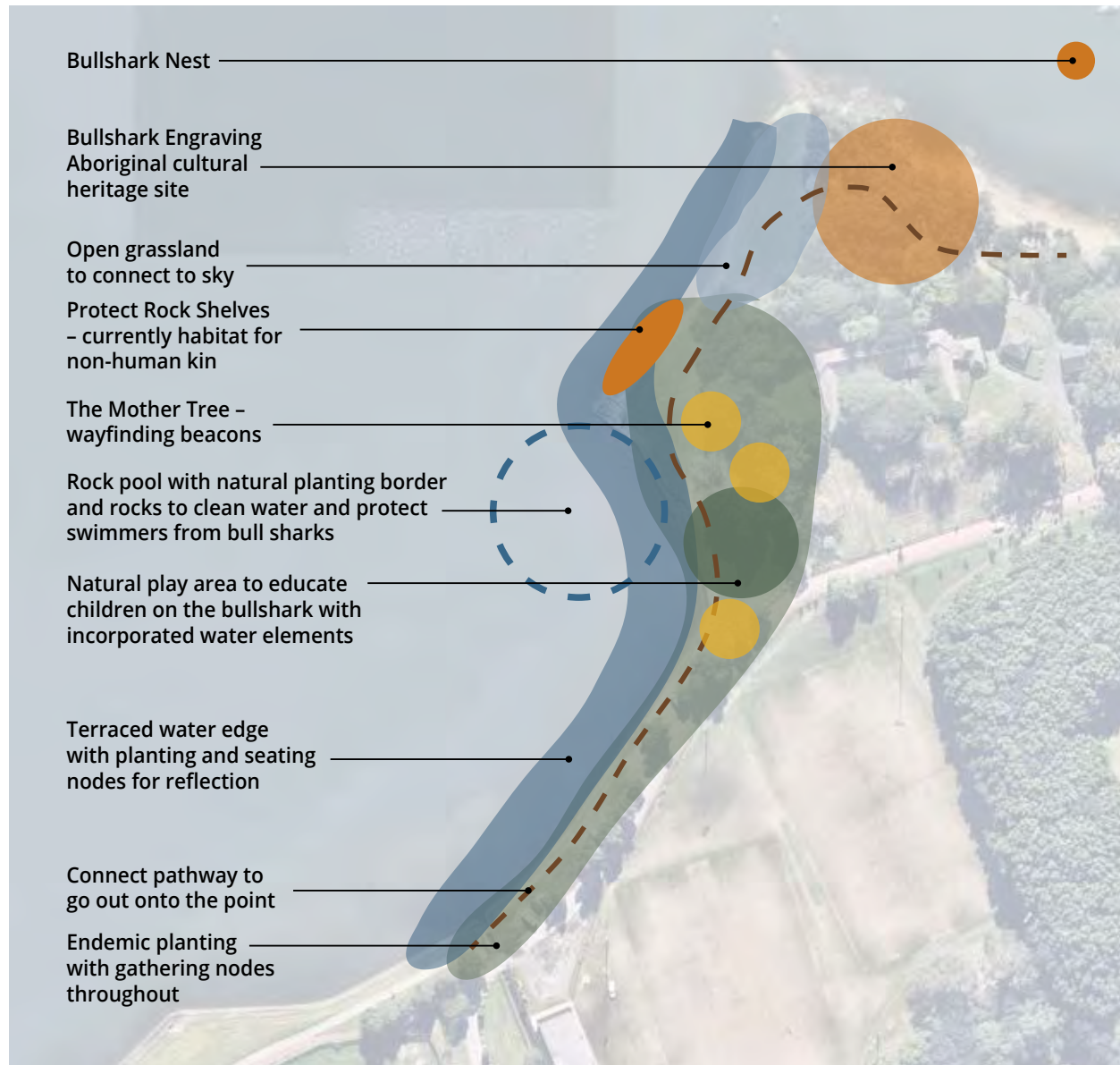


Middens

4.32 CALLAN POINT: RECOMMENDATIONS



Refer to key on page 27.



The engravings are a significant part of visitation and the numerous eroding walking tracks are not only dangerous, but also cause significant damage to the remnant stand of casuarinas through root stompage and exposure. A formalised trail connecting around the point and a viewing platform would assist in directing people to view the carving without damaging surrounding vegetation and the site itself.

A nature play space educates children on the bull shark life cycle. Incorporating shark egg structures and water play, coupled with shadow play along the ground, will create a multi-sensory experience.

Planting culturally significant species will enable the return of Aboriginal ecology or notions of Country back to the site. Species such as the black wattle, lilli pillis, yams, grass trees, port Jackson figs and she-oaks should be considered in the revegetation of elevated sections of the site.

The shape of Country shows the playing fields sit at a lower elevation and were likely home to water and water birds. Water bird species can be reintroduced into the foreshore space by replacing the stone sea wall with a terraced edge that facilitates natural estuarine processes and marine life functionality. This will also allow the river to ebb and flow with seasonal cycles and provide an interactive space for visitors to connect with the river.

Language Opportunities:

Guru - Deep water

Bugi - Bathe or swim

Mugadun - Sleepy lizard

Yara - Crab

Business Opportunities:

Cultural heritage tours - middens, engravings, keystone species; Aboriginal owned food truck/coffee van

4.4 BEDLAM BAY: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

Bedlam Bay is located in the suburb of Gladesville and is a part of the Hunter's Hill Council Local Government Area. The site sits on the northern side of the river, and borders the site of the old Gladesville Mental Hospital. It includes a large sports oval surrounded by a tiered grass amphitheatre, community garden, boat jetty, and a river side walk that leads down to a small secluded beach to the south-east of the site. The land surrounding the sports oval is filled with trees including a large fig tree along Campbell Drive that acts as a feature piece of the site. The site also offers great views of and across the river to Abbotsford Point.

Elements

Non-Human Kin: Bedlam Bay included a large group of mangroves as well as a large amount of shell remnants, therefore making Non-Human Kin a relevant element for this site.

Move with Country: Bedlam Bay is a calm space that allows people to have a personal connection to Country, therefore making Move with Country a relevant element for this site.

Water: Bedlam Bay includes a quiet, secluded beach that allows people to physically experience the river, therefore making Water Country a relevant element for this site.



Yerrabingin Site Photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Bedlam Bay Hunter's Hill Council	Non-Human Kin, Move with Country, Water	Yes	Mussels	Yes	Changed / Moderate	Mangrove destruction	C: 1,2,3,4,5

4.41 BEDLAM BAY: BIO-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Connecting Community: Wellness

Bedlam means “a scene of uproar and confusion”. Synonyms include pandemonium, mayhem, unrest, disarray, turbulence and chaos. Alternatively, it is a word used to refer to an institution that cares for people with mental illness. Due to the historical use of the site as a psychiatric hospital, it is understandable how the current name came to be. This project presents an opportunity to move away from this derogatory term and outdated attitudes towards people experiencing mental illness.

Much of the landscape and vegetation at Bedlam Bay was incorporated as part of Frederick Norton Manning’s ambition to use nature and gardening to treat patients with mental illness. Dr Manning was the Superintendent of the Gladesville Hospital in the mid eighteenth hundreds and was a pioneer in providing humane treatment to the mentally ill.

Cultural Use: Resource Place

Bedlam Bay is a resource place. It is unique from other sites in the number of mussel and oyster shells that can be found on the sands of the swimming cove. These would have been used as fish hooks and formed a staple part of the diet of the Wallumedegal People who lived here for countless generations. Line fishing was predominately undertaken by women, who would fish from their canoes, often accompanied by their babies and kept warm by a fire. The presence of kangaroo carvings demonstrates they would have been a dietary staple. Mangrove wood was used to make a variety of tools and weapons, including boomerangs and clubs. The remnants of mangroves still exist and move into a southerly facing aspect, where rainforest is wanting to emerge, but an effort to remove weeds is needed (primarily Asparagus Fern). In this location, sitting on the water’s edge and listening to the cool breeze flowing through the rainforest behind, one can imagine the clan group here looking into crystal clear water and enjoying the flavours of Country.



Wellness



Resource

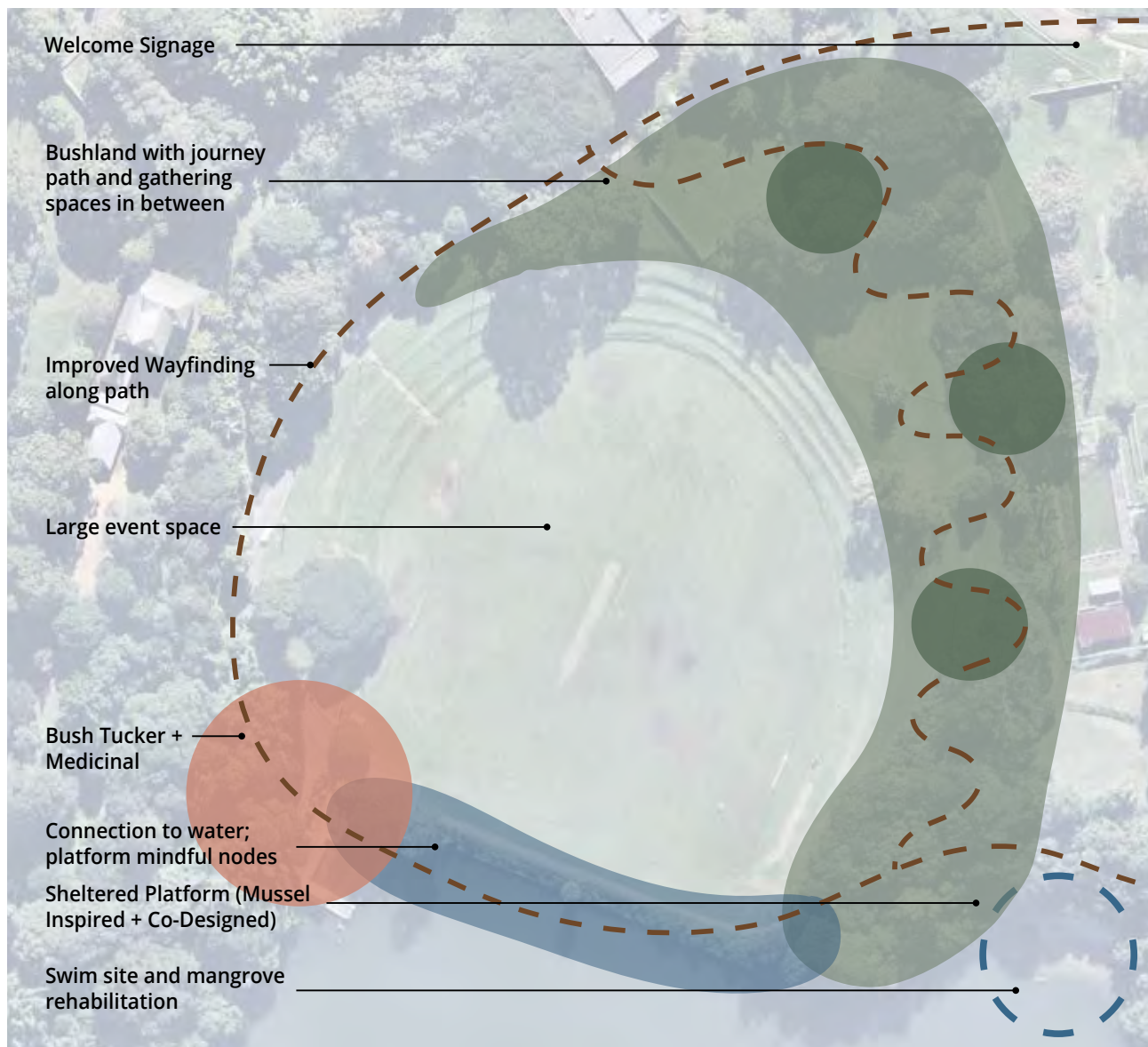
Image Sources:

1. Yerrabingin 2022, Bedlam Bay seating platform
2. Yerrabingin 2022, Middens

4.42 BEDLAM BAY: CWC RECOMMENDATIONS



Refer to key on page 27.



To strip back the colonial layers and expose the original meaning of this place, one can look to the endemic vegetation formations for any further vegetation regeneration and new garden plantings. There is also nearby evidence of occupation and resource collection; the site type gives some indication that this area was rich in foods. This is still evident from the birdlife and the presence of oysters along the foreshore.

In order to increase access to this space, roads need to promote a sense of welcome; with inviting signage and wayfinding methods to help new visitors in understanding the public nature of the land and where they are on Country. This can be explored through the use of mussel shells at a continual motif woven through the design; sculpture, placed within pavement or concrete paths, the metallic reflection catching people's eye as they make their way down to the swim site where an abundance of naturally occurring mussel and oyster shells are present.

Yerrabingin encountered the word 'Burbangana' during the research process. 'Burbangana' means 'take a hold of my hand and help me up' in Dharug Language. This phrase emphasises the wellbeing nature of this place and creates a sense of calm and mindfulness. Creating a green place for people to participate and spend time in is important in creating a place of wellbeing.

Language Opportunities:

- Dalgal** - Mussel
- Damun** - Port Jackson Fig
- Burbangana** - Take a hold of my hand and help me up
- Gungun** - Basket
- Bara** - Fish hook made from shell
- Gili** - Shine

Business opportunities:

Bushfood workshops; Weaving workshops; Wayapa workshops

4.5 BAYVIEW PARK: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

Bayview Park is a part of the City of Canada Bay Council Local Government Area. It is situated in the suburb of Concord, on a small headland that reaches out into a southern portion of the Parramatta River. The Park itself is located next to a densely populated residential area. It includes an existing beach, ferry terminal, boat ramp, playground, fitness station, bathrooms, three small pavilions, substantial parking, and a riverside walk that follows the concrete seawall that wraps around the edge of the site. The site also offers great views of and across the river to Abbotsford and Waremba.

Elements

Move with Country: Being in such close proximity to a residential area, Bayview Park is a place gathering and for community to experience Country. Therefore making Move with Country a relevant element for this site.

Water: Bayview Park has an existing beach, boat ramp, and riverside path around the site that allow people to get close to and experience the river, therefore making Water Country a relevant element for the site.

Sky: The edge of the site riverwalk provides non-obstructed views of the sky, therefore making Sky Country a relevant element for the site.



Yerrabingin Site Photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Bayview Park Canada Bay Council	Move with Country, Water, Sky	Yes	Water value high, future swimmable site	No	Good / Moderate	Ferry swash and mangrove destruction	C: 1,2,3,4,5

4.51 BAYVIEW PARK: BIO-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Connecting Community: Rest and Relaxation

Bayview Park is close to a densely populated residential area, making it a convenient green space for lots of people to connect with Country and find rest. The mental and physical benefits of spending time on Country or in nature are well-documented and is an essential service Council provides to local residents. Although the site already has playground and seating facilities, Bayview Park's identity as a refuge can be improved. Council's efforts to make the site swimmable is an example of this. The site can be activated through the inclusion of other leisure activities such as kayak launch sites, bike paths and exercise equipment. Incorporating a bush food garden may also increase communal ownership of and contribution to the space. Relaxation can take many forms, and the more options or avenues available to people, the more likely they are to begin engaging with Country, benefitting from its embrace and reciprocating back to it.

Cultural Use: Wangal Dreaming

According to the Parramatta River Aboriginal Leadership: Community Engagement Report published by Shared Path Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for the Parramatta River Catchment Group, Bayview Park is the site of a Wangal Dreaming story. Council should undertake further Aboriginal community consultation to discern if this is appropriate to utilise for design inspiration. Initial desktop research performed by Yerrabingin has indicated limited information about this story online.

Sharing History: First Contact

Although not at the exact location of Bayview Park, Booridiow-o-gule or Breakfast Point at Mortlake was the earliest recorded local contact between colonists and Aboriginal people. On the 5th of February 1788 the diary of Lieutenant William Bradley notes:

"At daylight having a guard of marines, proceeded to the upper part of the harbour again, passed several natives in the caves as we went up and some on the shore near the place we left the beads and other things, who followed us along the rocks calling to us. We landed to cook our breakfast on the opposite shore to them. We made signs for them to come over and waved green boughs. Soon after 7 of them came over in 2 canoes and landed near our boats. They left their spears in the canoes and came to us. We tied beads etc. about them and left them our fire to dress mussels which they went about as soon as we put off."

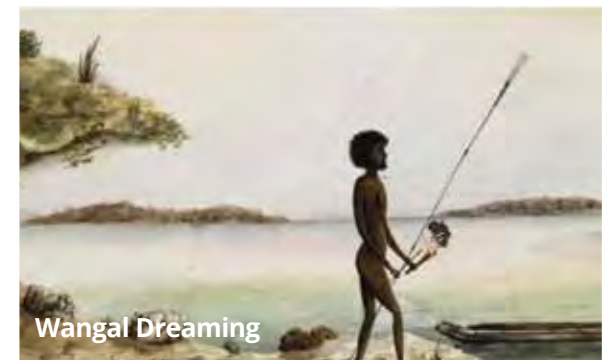
This story presents a truth-telling and educational opportunity for the users of Bayview Park.

Image Sources:

1. <https://www.visitphillipisland.com.au/blog/phillip-islands-top-nature-walks-for-families>
2. <http://findingbennelong.com/bennelong-the-wangal>
3. <http://cbhsyearfivehistory.weebly.com/british-aboriginal-relations-1788-1820.html>



Rest and Relaxation



Wangal Dreaming

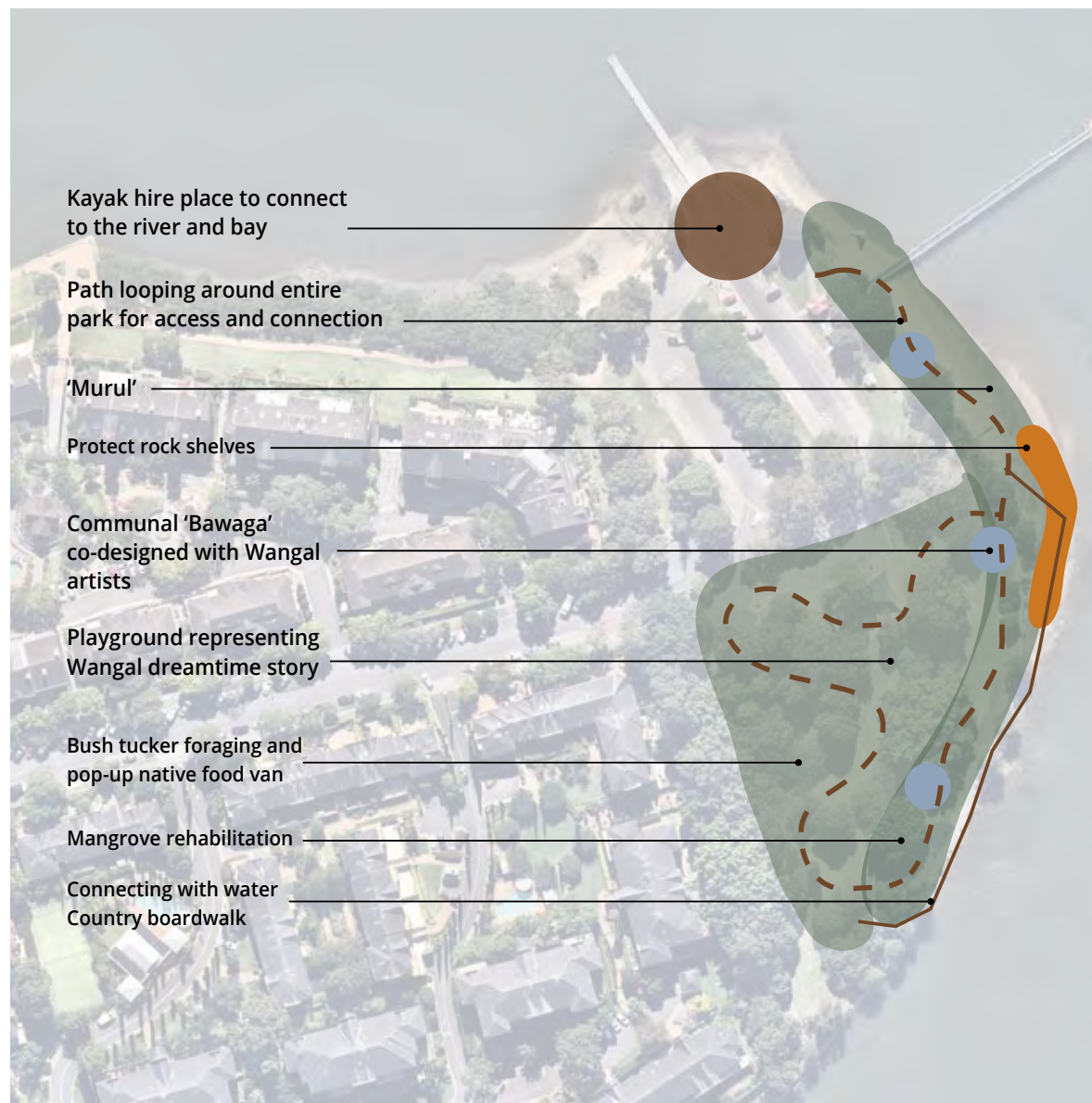


First Contact

4.52 BAYVIEW PARK: CWC RECOMMENDATIONS



Refer to key on page 27.



Kayak hire place to connect to the river and bay

Path looping around entire park for access and connection

'Murul'

Protect rock shelves

Communal 'Bawaga' co-designed with Wangal artists

Playground representing Wangal dreamtime story

Bush tucker foraging and pop-up native food van

Mangrove rehabilitation

Connecting with water Country boardwalk

Bayview park is a place of relaxation, coming together, and education. It is both a passive and active site that could host several activities, events and businesses. There should be quiet spaces for activities such as weaving, mindfulness, stretching and reflection. Active sites include swimming spots, exercise equipment and gardening. There is also potential for bush food gardens and tours in this space.

The Wangal Dreaming story, once spoken about with the Wangal community, could be represented on site, through textures, forms, colours, wayfinding, experience and planting.

Sheltered cooking spaces and sharing food is a phenomenon that transcends cultures. Cooking outside will draw visitors into shelter structures co-designed with Wangal people. Employing a Wangal artist to create the above would further enhance this unique feature and wayfinding piece within the park.

The movement of Water Country and the way it interacts with the light of Sky Country can be celebrated throughout the site. This relationship can be utilised in footpath form and patternations, for example. Having a connection to the water is important in growing people's appreciation for the river. Incorporating a boardwalk along the water's edge will enable people to get close to the water without interfering with natural habitats or rock shelves. It creates a quiet and mindful space for reflection and relaxation.

Language Opportunities:

Bayinmilyi – To cool oneself

Murul – Sand or beach

Ngarunga – A calm in the water

Bawaga – Shelter

Business Opportunities:

De-privatise the ferry service; Aboriginal owned food truck/coffee van; Kayak rental business; Mural; Live performance

4.6 PUTNEY PARK: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

Putney Park is located in the suburb of Putney, and is a part of the City of Ryde Local Government Area. It is situated on a piece of headland on the northern side of the river. The site includes multiple large open grass areas that are surrounded by trees, multiple playground structures, barbeque facilities, bathrooms, substantial car parking, and boat storage facilities that the Ryde Dragon Boat Club uses to store their boats. The site is bordered to the east by a stone seawall that includes a sandstone staircase leading down to a small beach on the edge of the river. The site also offers great views of and across the river to Kissing Point and Wangal Reserve.

Elements

Move with Country: Putney Park is a place focused on community and gathering amongst Country, therefore making Move with Country a relevant element for this site.

Water: Putney Park includes a large stone seawall and staircase leading down to the water that allow people to get close to experience the river, therefore making Water Country a relevant element for this site.

Non-Human Kin: Putney Park sits on Wallumattagal land. Wallumattagal people are snapper people and have lived and learned with and off of Country, therefore making Non-Human Kin a relevant element for this site.



Yerrabingin Site Photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Putney Park City of Ryde	Move with Country, Water, Non-Human kin	Yes	Great water access and extensive views, bushland and bush tucker	Yes	Good / Moderate	Erosion, disconnected bushland	C: 1,2,5

4.61 PUTNEY PARK: BIO-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Cultural Landscape Restoration: Connection to Water

Council has undertaken steps to increase visitors' access to the water and indicated plans to make Putney Park a swim site, creating a local beach for nearby residents. It is encouraging to see the site being used to gain access to Water Country by the people fishing and the Ryde Dragon Boat Club.

The calm waters and nearby play equipment make it an ideal place for parents with young children. Play spaces would be improved by drawing inspiration from the river and how Aboriginal people interacted with it for thousands of years, enabling children to learn through play. Education possibilities range from the anatomy and habits of specific animals to broader First Nations values and concepts, such as only taking as much as you need.

Putney Park would further enhance its reputation as a destination place by caring for non-human kin and fostering the habitat they live in. Creating habitat for non-human kin will increase their populations and the ecosystem services they provide, contributing to a cleaner river and additional reasons for people to come visit.

BioCultural Indicators: Wallumedegal

The Custodians of the Ryde area are the Wallumedegal People. The Wallumedegal flourished for countless generations living amongst the river flats, creeks and mangrove swamps, fishing with pronged spears and hand lines, feasting on shellfish, hunting birds and small game, and bush foods. The Wallumedegal got their name from the word 'wallumai' meaning snapper fish. Combined with the suffix 'gal', Wallumedegal means people of the snapper, indicating snapper was their totem. This is similar to how the burra, or eel, is the totem of the Burramattagal from Parramatta. Snapper are integral to the identity of this place and snapper inspired motifs should be recurring throughout the park.

Sharing History: Bennelong's Resting Place

Less than 1.5km away from Putney Park is thought to be the location of Woollarawarre Bennelong's grave. Bennelong was a Wangal man who acted as an intermediary between his people and the British during the early years of colonisation. He lived his life moving between the Sydney Cove settlement and Kissing Point. Bennelong developed a close relationship with Governor Phillip and was the first Aboriginal person to visit Europe and return. Despite attempts to coerce him into a European lifestyle, Bennelong's heart was with his Country and people. He passed away a respected leader and was buried with his wife, Boorong. In August 1821, Nanbarry, Bennelong's nephew, passed away and at his request was buried with Bennelong and Boorong.

In 1816, Bidjee Bidjee was appointed leader of the Kissing Point Tribe by Governor Macquarie. He was given a brass breastplate and fishing boat. Bidjee Bidjee means river flat and is another key figure who can be acknowledged within the park's narrative.

Owing to the proximity of Putney Park to the possible location of Bennelong's final resting place, it is integral that his legacy be acknowledged on site. There is potential that Bennelong, Boorong, Nanbarry and Bidjee Bidjee would have visited this place to fish, camp or relax. They would have come here to share a meal or watch a sunset, just as we do today.



Connection to Water



Wallumedegal



Bennelong

Image Sources:

1. <https://www.archdaily.com/967765/melbournes-national-gallery-of-victoria-samples-the-future>
2. <https://www.curriecommunications.com.au/projects/fishing-for-change/>
3. <https://australian.museum/about/history/exhibitions/trailblazers/woollarawarre-bennelong/>

4.62 PUTNEY PARK: CWC RECOMMENDATIONS



Refer to key on page 27.

There are many ways connection to water should occur across the site. Living sea walls would reveal with the rise and fall of the tide and how creatures are creating a home within the rivers system.

Where sea walls aren't required, naturalising the river's edge through terracing and plant implementation would create an ephemeral environment where the rise and fall of the tide would conceal and reveal seating spaces or walkways.

The site slopes East to West with a play space in the centre. This currently has an element of water woven into it but has the opportunity to educate children on the importance of caring for the waterways leading into the Parramatta River by allowing the water in this space to flow through the park and into the river. Incorporating biofiltration planting would then clean the water before it goes in and provides a space for the community to participate in cultural activities such as weaving.

The snapper should be a wayfinding element throughout the whole park; sand blasted into concrete pathways, sculptural elements, playground structures, shelters inspired forms and textures, or colours of park elements.

Bennelong and Bidgee Bidgee are to be also represented here, through art, sculpture, or language. These elements are to be co designed with local Wallumedegal artists and community.

Language Opportunities:

Buma Bennelong – Bennelong's resting place

Guwing burragula – Sunset

Dyanmila – Play

Wulumay – Snapper

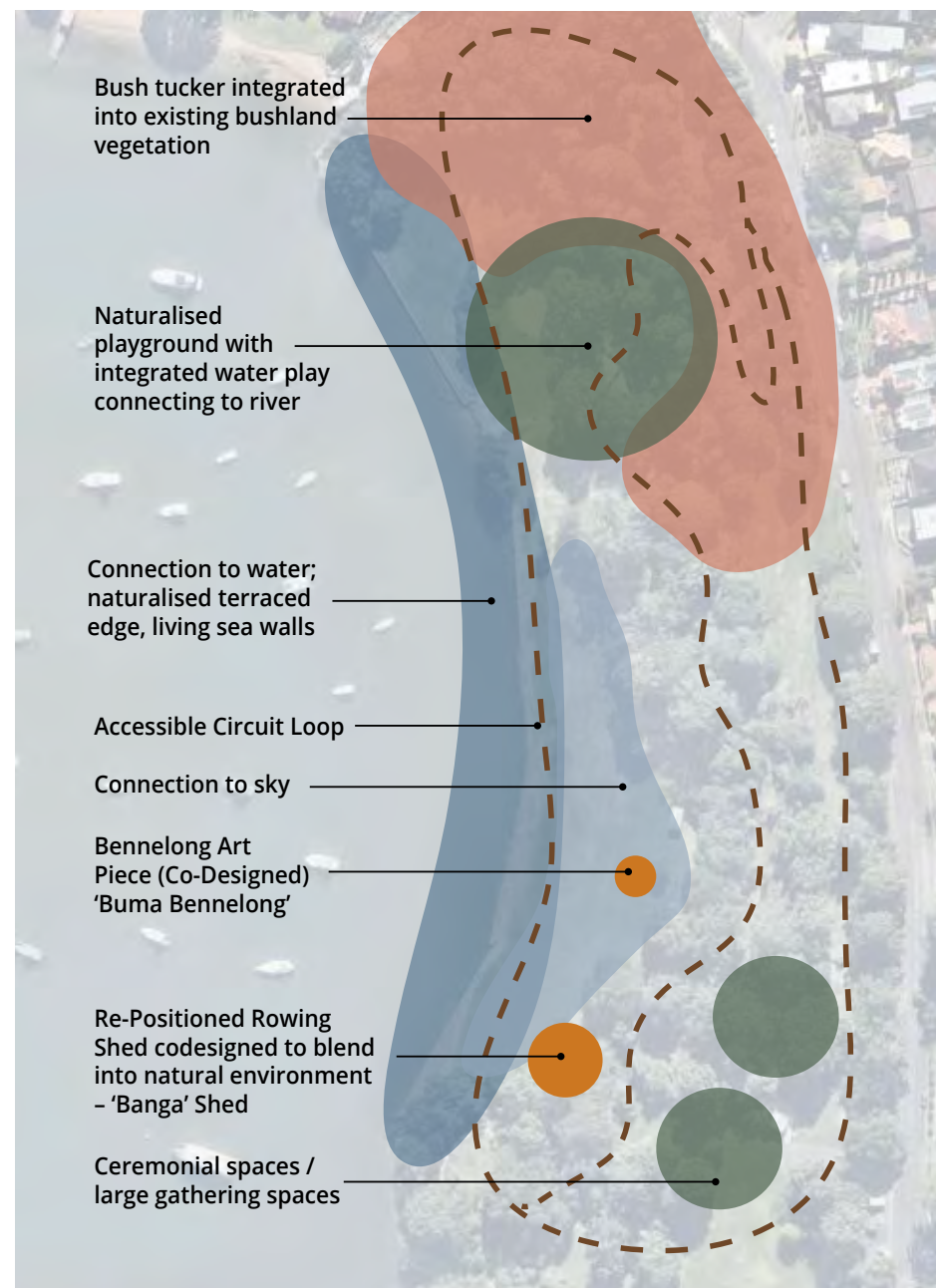
Badangi – Sydney Rock Oyster

Banga – Paddle or row

Muru – Path or road

Business Opportunities:

Mural; Landscape/construction; Saltwater habitat improvement



4.7 SILVERWATER PARK: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

Silverwater Park is located in the suburb of Silverwater, and is a part of the City of Parramatta Council Local Government Area. It sits adjacent to Silverwater Road, and is on the confluence of the Parramatta and Duck Rivers. The site includes two large open grass areas, a playground, boat ramp, pavilion, carpark, and has groves of trees scattered throughout. The park is bordered by existing mangroves to the east, and a concrete seawall to the north. There is also an existing river walk that runs from Silverwater Park to Sydney Olympic Park. The site currently suffers from a large amount of noise pollution from Silverwater Road and the adjacent concrete factory.

Elements

Non-Human Kin: Silverwater Park is home to a diverse range of estuary flora and fauna, ranging from large groups of mangroves, to freshwater fish and bird species, therefore making Non-Human Kin a relevant element for this site.

Wind: Silverwater Park currently suffers from a large amount of noise pollution from Silverwater Rd and adjacent factories, but has the potential to harness the natural sounds of Country such as wind, therefore making Wind Country a relevant element for this site.

Water: Silverwater Park sits in the confluence of the Parramatta and Duck Rivers. The confluence of rivers were significant Indigenous spaces as they were a place of ceremony, and water stories, therefore making Water Country a relevant element for this site.



Yerrabingin Site Photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Silverwater Park City of Parramatta Council	Non-Human kin, Wind, Water	Yes	River confluence, Mangroves, open parkland	Yes	Moderate	Urban noise, mangrove destruction	C: 1,3,4,5

4.71 SILVERWATER PARK: BIO-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Mangrove Regeneration

The banks of the Parramatta River were once filled with lush mangroves, but over the years changes that have been made to the river have been extremely detrimental to them. Mangroves are an essential part of the saltwater ecosystem as they play a major role in allowing the area to thrive. They naturally protect shorelines by preventing erosion, help maintain water quality, and also provide feeding and breeding habitats for our Non-Human Kin. Mangroves were also significant to Indigenous life on site, providing countless resources that helped sustain the people of the area, such as medicinal uses of the trees oils, or the timber being used to make weaponry.

Fixing this will require a significant financial and stakeholder engagement resourcing commitment from the council. Steps will need to be taken to minimise the number of large boats on the river. This will give the river time to rest and heal. A size restriction for water vehicles could be enacted, the river could only be open to motorised vehicles at specific times of day and speed limits could be consistently enforced.

The Confluence of Two Rivers

Silverwater Park is located in a significant place as it sits on the confluence of the Parramatta and Duck Rivers. The meeting of two rivers were important sites to First Nations people as they were places where people would come together and ceremonies were held. Confluences are also significant for resources as they were great spaces to fish, providing an abundance of aquatic life from multiple sources.

The Parramatta River's health is reliant on the wellbeing of the waterways that feed into it. Duck River needs to be cared for individually in order for it to thrive and contribute to the overall health of the Parramatta River.



Mangrove Regeneration



The Confluence of Two Rivers

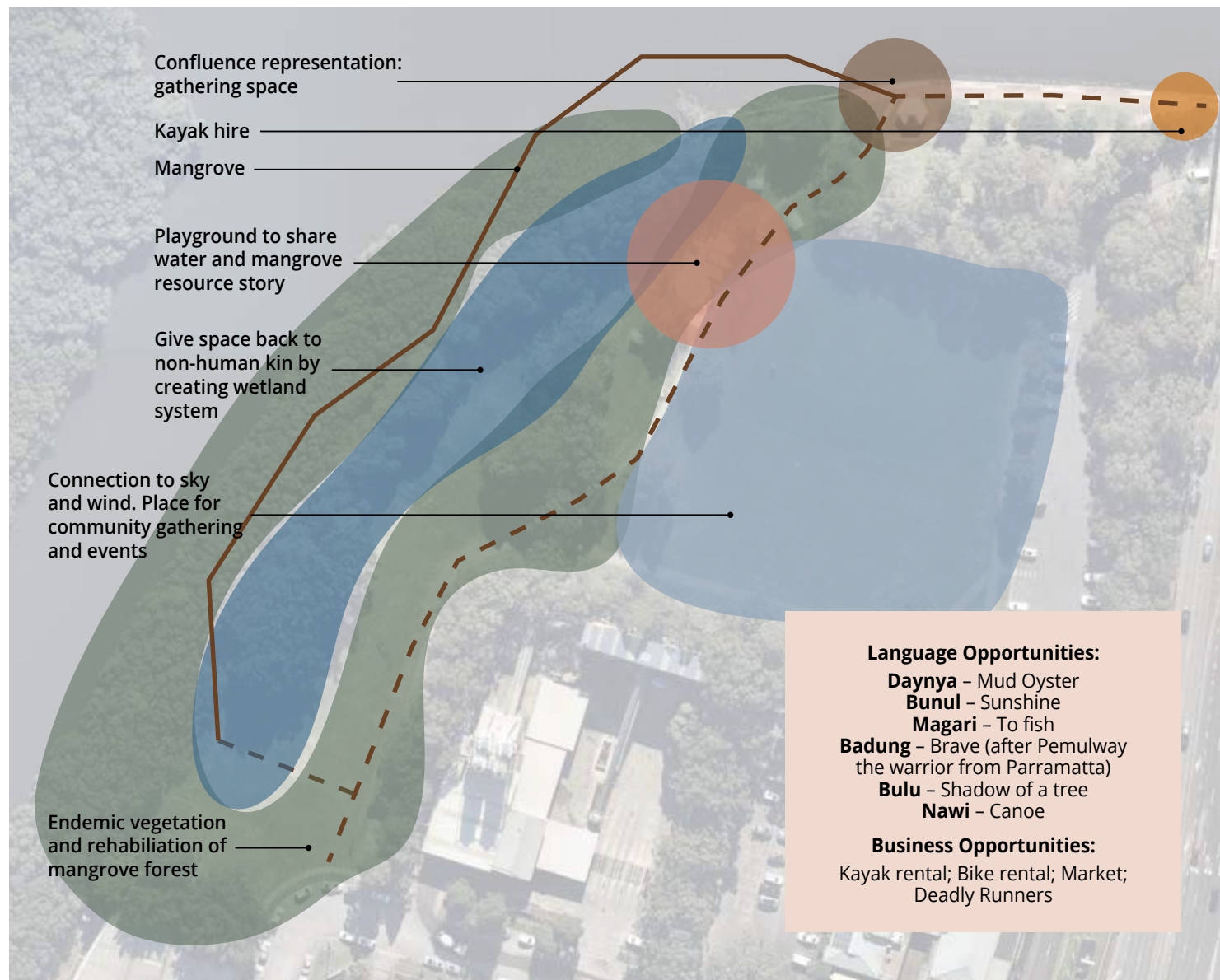
Image Sources:

1. <https://www.sopa.nsw.gov.au/sitecore/content/Global-Library/Data-Repositories/Things-To-Do-Items/2016/11/Wetlands-and-Woodlands>
2. Nearmaps 2022, Duck River

4.72 SILVERWATER PARK: CWC RECOMMENDATIONS



Refer to key on page 27.



The entry pathway represents the Duck River, meandering amongst the mangrove and endemic forest as it makes its way towards the Parramatta River. Along the edge of the park, the path here represents the Parramatta River and at the confluence is a gathering space for people to look out on the river and enjoy the fresh breeze.

Half the site is to be given back to our non-human kin through rehabilitation, vegetation and incorporation of water and wetlands. This space is to bring in local fauna and create a sensory experience for people walking through.

A boardwalk allows users to get close to the mangrove forest, gaining an appreciation of their form and texture, as well as being educated on the importance of mangrove ecosystems.

The open space is to be dotted with shade trees, shelter from wind and large gathering spaces for community to enjoy. A local pop-up cafe or food van could be here on weekends as well as local markets and events.

Kayaks have been suggested as a design idea because they allow users to experience Country from a different and more intimate perspective. It allows people to explore shallow waters and get a closer look at the finer details of Country.

4.8 WATEGORA RESERVE: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

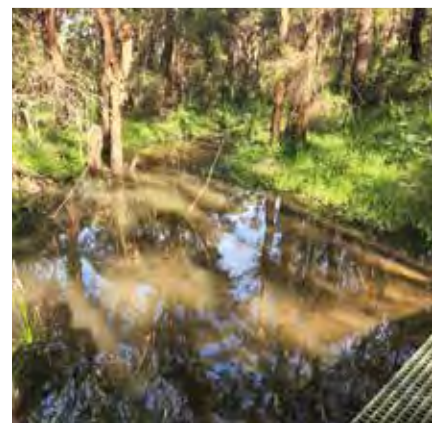
Wategora Reserve is located in the suburb of South Granville, and is a part of the City of Parramatta Local Government Area. The Duck River flows through Wategora Reserve and the pathway that runs through the reserve forms part of the Duck River Walk. It contains a gate which prohibits trail bike riders from entering the site, formal and informal walking tracks and some informative signage. Nearby is a local sports field. From a natural perspective, the Duck River is suffering from major degradation. There is significant erosion, posing a risk to the safety of people and Country, and a build up of plastic and other pollution along the river bank. There are hollow bearing trees and diverse birdlife. Wategora Reserve gets its name from the Aboriginal clan group whose traditional lands it is located on. It is believed that the Duck River was the border between the Burrumattagal of Parramatta and the Wategora.

Elements

Non-Human Kin: Wategora Reserve is home to a large amount of native flora and fauna, therefore making Non-Human Kin a relevant element for this site.

Deep: The riverbanks on the edge of the reserve currently suffer from a large amount of storm erosion resulting in the displacement of land and Country, therefore making Deep Country a relevant element for this site.

Water: Wategora Reserve flows through the reserve positively impacting the natural ecosystem, therefore making Water Country a relevant element for this site.



Yerrabingin Site Photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Wategora Reserve Cumberland City Council	Non-Human kin, Deep, Water	Yes	Bush tucker, bushland	Yes	Messy	Major erosion, Water logging, disconnected bushland, rubbish	C: 2,3,4,5

4.81 WATEGORA RESERVE: BIO-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Swamp Hens and Flying Foxes

In February 1788, soon after landing in Sydney Cove, Captain John Hunter and Lieutenant William Bradley sailed up Burramatta and came to the meeting place of the Duck River. They explored the tributary as far as the depth of water permitted. As they travelled up, they saw what they thought were ducks rising out of the swamp, covered with reeds. The birds were actually Eastern Swamp Hens, but the name Duck River stayed. Eastern Swamp Hens are a part of this place and have been recognised by Council in their coat of arms. They present a design opportunity that recognises our non-human kin and the colonial history of the Duck River.

Notably, there has been a temporary flying fox colony in nearby Clyde. The Dharug language word for flying fox is wirambi and it is the totem for men of the Sydney area. Knowledge of the wirambi would be stored in songlines and shared during men's corroboree. With permission from local First Nations men, flying foxes and related motifs could be incorporated into site design and activities.

Cultural Landscape Restoration: Rehabilitation

Captain John Hunter and Lieutenant William Bradley were the first Europeans to arrive in the area now known as Auburn. Colonial accounts suggest the depth of the Duck River allowed Hunter and Bradley to travel this distance inland via boat, as the surrounding bushland was too thick to navigate via foot. During visits to the site, it was evident that the water level and health of the Duck River had decreased since pre-colonisation. Parts of the river were stagnant and there was a significant build up of rubbish and debris along the banks. Extreme soil erosion had occurred, to the extent that the footpath from the golf course across the river had begun to fall away. This presents a risk to people and Country. Moreover, the 11ha reserve comprises critically endangered Cumberland Plains woodland and is home to a variety of animals. Notably, a group of red rumped parrots were feeding amongst the short grass during the site visit and once startled, retreated to a hollow bearing tree. Given the amount of time hollows take to form, this was exciting. Fallen tree trunks and branches created ground cover and homes for lizards, snakes and bugs. Future works within the reserve should focus on rehabilitating the river and endangered native flora.

Cultural Landscape Restoration: Burning for Biodiversity

An AHIMS search reveals that there are multiple Aboriginal cultural heritage sites at Wategora Reserve. Council should undertake further consultation with local Aboriginal community members about protecting these sites and discuss what cultural land management practices need to occur at the site. It is encouraging that there are native grasses at Wategora Reserve, however there is also an abundance of weeds. An Aboriginal ranger group could be employed to remove the weeds and perform a cultural burn. Cultural burning would improve the health of native grasses and encourage the return of other native species lying dormant in the soil. This would increase the overall biodiversity of the site.



Swamp Hens and Flying Foxes



Rehabilitation



Burning for Biodiversity

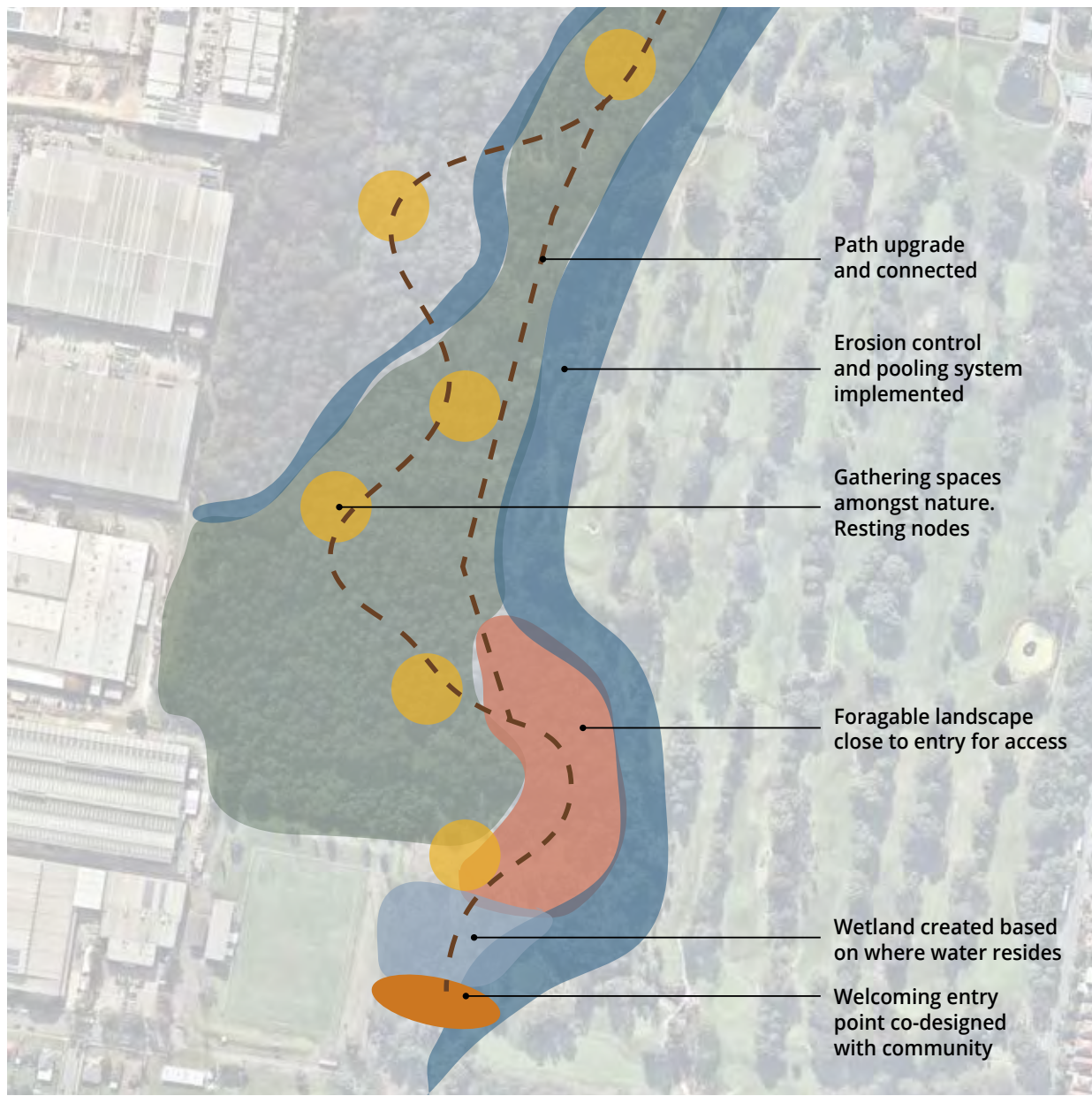
Image Sources:

1. <https://ebird.org/species/purswa6>
2. <https://www.earthcorps.org/hire-us/erosion-control/>
3. Yerrabingin 2022, Cultural Burning

4.82 WATEGORA RESERVE: CWC RECOMMENDATIONS



Refer to key on page 27.



Enhance the cool, shaded and mossy sanctuary that Country provided further along the walk. Create a welcoming and inviting entry point as currently it is cold and feels as though you are trespassing.

The health of grass species would be encouraged through traditional land management practices such as cultural burning. This is something Council should consider undertaking in partnership with an Aboriginal organisation, particularly in the grassy area behind the sports stadium.

There are opportunities to convert areas where water pools regularly into a connected wetland system. This would complement design principles that prioritise moving with Country and working with elements that already exist in the landscape. A recycled plastic grate walkway would increase safety and also allow for Country to move under without being restricted.

The erosion occurring currently needs to be addressed first. Removal of rubbish and then establishing a creek pooling system so that water can filter through a series of pools to remove any pollutants or rubbish would work well here. This also would have been how the waterway originally functioned and this would reference back to this well.

Language Opportunities:

- Birragu** – Hollow tree
- Gumir** – Hole in a tree
- Guriyayil** – Parrot
- Guwibul** – Dead tree
- Bayin** – Pleasantly cool
- Duga** – Thick forest around a watercourse
- Yana** – To walk or go

Business Opportunities:

Weaving workshops; Markets; Cultural tours; Landscaping; Bush rehabilitation; Bird watching

4.9 MALUGA PASSIVE PARK: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

Maluga Passive Park is located in the suburb of Birrong, and is a part of the City of Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area. As the site stands, it's a good example of what positive suburban sustainable design can be. It includes a network of large biofiltration ponds that work to capture and remove contaminants from stormwater before it re-enters the Georges River Catchment. The site also includes an adequate path network, playground, fitness station, and two large open grass spaces. The majority of the site is covered with trees that act to promote bird life in the area.

Elements

Move with Country: Maluga Passive Park is a great example of how humans and artificial design can work with and positively impact the natural environment, therefore making Move with Country a relevant element for this site.

Water: Maluga Passive Park's major purpose is naturally clean rainwater in its biofiltration ponds, therefore making Water Country a relevant element for this site.

Non-Human Kin: Maluga Passive Park is home to a large number of bird species that thrive off of the biofiltration ponds and large amount of tree coverage, therefore making Non-Human Kin a relevant element for this site.

Sky: Biocultural narrative connecting to Sky Country through 'Birrong' meaning star.



Yerrabingin site photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
Maluga Passive Park City of Canterbury-Bankstown	Move with Country, Water, Non-Human kin, Sky	Yes	Biofiltration system, remnant vegetation and weaving species	No	Recovering	Compounded soil, rubbish, disconnected bushland	C: 1,3,4,5

4.91 MALUGA PASSIVE PARK: BIO-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Water Sustainability

Caterbury Bankstown City Council contracted Bushland Management Services to protect a waterway within the Parramatta River Catchment from stormwater pollution. According to Bushland Management Services:

Stormwater runoff negatively impacts our natural environment. This occurs when rain falls on impervious surfaces, such as roads, roofs, car parks and other hard surfaces. The stormwater picks up contaminants, including fertiliser, engine oil and litter, and carries them to a drain, and ultimately to the nearest river or pond. To help reduce the damage, bioretention basins and swales are used.

Over 47,000 native plants were installed into the bio retention basins. These plants soak up and filter out the stormwater contaminants that would otherwise be delivered directly into the waterways. In addition, these plant installations create good habitat for waterbirds, small reptiles and amphibians who rely on healthy waterways for their survival.

This is an excellent example of designing with Country in mind and should continue to be celebrated, not only at Maluga Passive Park, but applied throughout the entire Parramatta River Catchment. In addition to utilising similar biofiltration systems, Councils can draw inspiration from the other plants and animals that benefit from their use in terms of form, patternation and use.

The Casuarina

Casuarina trees are a reminder of our grandmothers and aunties. When their leaves fall, it creates a soft place for children to sit, weave and listen to stories. Under the casuarina is a safe place to sit, because the ground coverage from the leaves means there is no undergrowth for snakes or lizards to hide in. This is why it can be referred to as a 'babysitter tree'. One of the stories told under the casuarina tree is about the casuarina's seeds. Small children are told to roll the seeds between their palms if they are worried or scared and blow on them three times. The bush spirits will then scare the bad thoughts away, causing them to get their feet stuck in the holes of the seed.

Boorong

Birrong: reputed to mean 'star'. The name recalls Boorong, the daughter of Maugoran, a Burrumattagal elder. Boorong was brought to Sydney from the Birrong area suffering from smallpox in 1789 and was cared for by Chaplain Richard Johnson and his wife Mary. She was adopted by them after she recovered. Boorong's three brothers - Ballooderry (Leatherjacket), Yerinibe and Bidgee Bidgee (River Flat), were later appointed 'chief' of Parramatta by Governor Lachlan Macquarie. Birrong was one of the first places in the Sydney region to be named after a female Aboriginal.



Water Sustainability



The Casuarina



Boorong

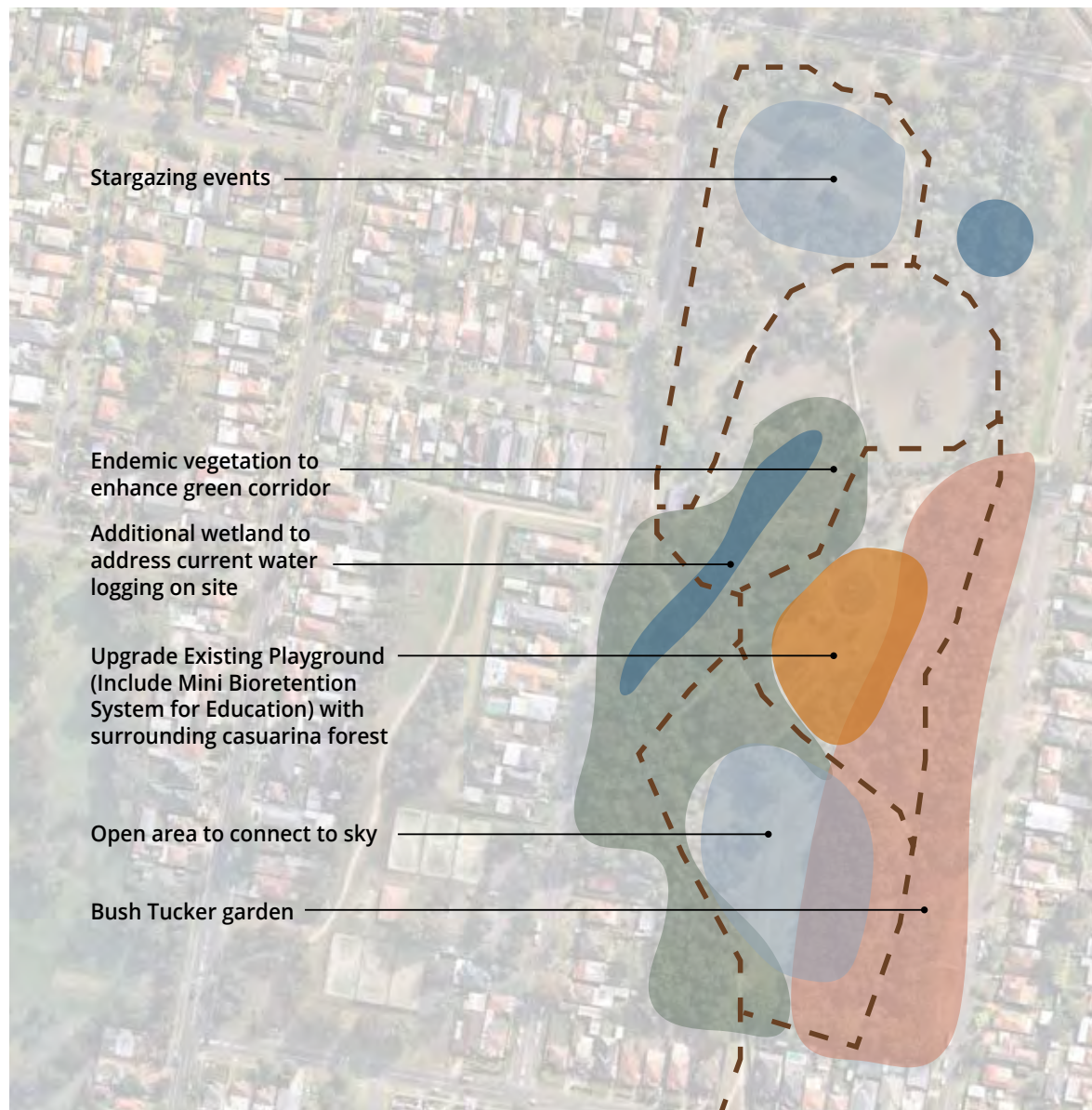
Image Sources:

1. <https://www.archdaily.com/952457/christiana-figueres-a-net-zero-future-is-now-under-construction>
2. https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/casuarina_glauca.htm
3. <https://www.timeout.com/sydney/news/how-to-make-the-most-of-stargazing-this-winter-in-sydney-070921>

4.92 MALUGA PASSIVE PARK: CWC RECOMMENDATIONS



Refer to key on page 27.



The bio retention systems at Maluga Passive Park are exemplar success and has the potential to be used as a case study for water sensitive urban design throughout the entirety of the Parramatta River Catchment. The park could benefit from building on existing signage by creating interactive opportunities for people to learn about the processes involved in biofiltration, the plants and animals that benefit from it and the associated cultural elements, such as language terms, resource uses and dreaming stories.

There was evidence of longer-term erosion damage in some areas of the park where soil was compounded and grass no longer grew. It is important to look after deep Country.

The site could be maintained by an Aboriginal green team or community bushcare group, creating employment opportunities and fostering community ownership of the space.

Playground spaces or communal shelters can be updated to include casuarina influences. Their form and texture can be informed by the casuarina seed or the unique needle-like leaves.

Boorong's story can be told throughout the park by means of a statue, information plaques or star inspired wayfinding elements. By including Boorong's story, Council can embrace values of truth telling. Alternatively, Maluga Passive Park can be utilised as a space for stargazing and cultural storytelling events, inspired by this key cultural figure.

Language Opportunities:

Yarragul Badu – Clean Water
Djaramada – Scrub/dry forest
Binyang Buruwang – Bird Island
Ngurra – Birds Nest

Business Opportunities:

Landscaping; Public art; Citizen science;
 Kids boxing program; Deadly Runners

4.10 INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK: SITE OVERVIEW

Site Overview

The International Peace Park is located in the suburb of Seven Hills, and is a part of the Blacktown Local Government Area. It sits alongside Blacktown Creek which is considered the headwaters of the Parramatta River. The site includes existing sporting facilities, large open grass spaces, a playground, car parking, and a weir that attaches to the pathway that wraps around the site. It has trees sparingly spread throughout, and vegetation along the creek edge. Seven Hills Plaza, and Seven Hills Train Station are located nearby.

Elements

Sky: The large open grass spaces within the International Peace Park allow for a clear connection and view of the sky, therefore making Sky Country a relevant element for this site.

Non-Human Kin: Blacktown Creek runs through the site and is home to a large group of waterbirds, therefore making Non-Human Kin a relevant element for this site.

Water: Blacktown Creek is considered the headwaters of the Parramatta River, which are considered a significant moment in the river, therefore making Water Country a relevant element for this site.

Move with Country: The International Peace Park is located in an integral part of the community, and has the potential to hold community events connecting community with Country.



Yerrabingin site photos

Connecting with Country (CwC) Framework Matrix

LOCATION	ELEMENTS	PLACE STATUS	CURRENT USE OF THE PLACE	ABORIGINAL SITES EXIST (AHIMS)	SITE HEALTH	IMPACTS OF URBAN CHANGE	BIO-CULTURAL LENS CATEGORIES
International Peace Park Blacktown City Council	Sky, Non-Human kin, Water, Move with Country	Yes	River headwaters, polluted water, community park	No	Changed / Moderate	Riparian destruction, rubbish, polluted water	C: 4,5

4.101 INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK: BIO-CULTURAL

Headwaters

International Peace Park is the headwaters of the Parramatta River, therefore it is the beginning of the river's story and presents an opportunity to set the precedent for the entirety of the catchment area. Council can research if there are any dreamings attached to this place and incorporated this into the narrative of International Peace Park.

Community, Human and Non-human

The area surrounding International Peace Park is undergoing heavy construction. The increase in residential developments creates demand for community green space. It also means there will be additional pressure on our non-human kin to perform ecosystem services and live comfortably. Council should consider reaching an agreement with development companies to share the cost of improving the river's health and value adding to park facilities. International Peace Park could provide a gold standard for all future partnerships between developers and Councils.

There are existing sports facilities on site and it was encouraging to see community members utilising the park for group activities during site visits.

Kitty Colebee and the Meeting of the Two Waters

There were several Aboriginal clans that existed in and around the Blacktown area. The two most relevant to the International Peace Park site are the Cannemegal (Warmuli) and the Toongagal of the Toongabbie area. Toongabbie is said to come from an Aboriginal word meaning "meeting of two waters" referring to the confluence of Toongabbie Creek and Northmead Gully.

Kitty Colebee or 'Black Kitty' was a notable woman from the Cannemegal (Warmuli) clan of Prospect. Kitty was born in 1807 and in 1814, at the age of 7, was one of the first of five children to be transferred to Governor Macquarie's Native Institute in Parramatta. The purpose of the institute was to "civilise, educate and foster habits of industry and decency in the Aborigines". During her time at the institute, Kitty became friends with Maria Locke, another key figure from this period. Eventually, Kitty married Maria's brother Colebee. After marrying, Kitty and Colebee lived on a 30 acre block of land that had been gifted to Colebee by Governor Macquarie. This 30-acre block is located at Marsden park in the Blacktown LGA. Kitty and Colebee had one son together and after Colebee's death, Kitty remarried and moved North to the Liverpool Plains. Here she had 6 more children. Several of Kitty's descendents went on to serve in World War I and many remain active in the community today.



Headwaters



Community



Kitty Colebee

Image Sources:

1. Yerrabingin 2022, International Peace Park
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Muszyna_sp%C5%82yw_Popradem.jpg
3. Yerrabingin 2022, Blacktown Native Institute

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Refer to key on page 27.



Development within the park should be kept low. This is owing to the preference of waterbirds to be able to land in wide, open space.

Naturalising the river's edge is critical to its health as an ecosystem and can be done by implementing biofiltration planting schemes. Planting more reed species will also create key habitat corridors. The rock weir under the traffic bridge should also be included in this process. The dense leaves of a lomandra, for example, will increase the weir's ability to capture rubbish and stop it from travelling down the river. The community can be involved in this process through custodial events, such as planting days.

Installing circular platforms with seating on the river's edge will create relaxation nodes for people to rest and be embraced by Country.

The playground can draw inspiration from the biofiltration process performed by native reed species, water bird migration or the Toongagal identity of the meeting of two rivers.

The story of Cannemegal woman Kitty Colebee allows for an element of truth telling. A relaxation node named Kitty's corner could be one way of honouring her resilience or the physical representation of a timeline demonstrating the long history of Blacktown/ Seven Hills prior to colonisation. Moreover, several of Kitty's descendants served in World War I, at a time when they would not have been recognised as citizens. Raising awareness of the struggles of First Nations veterans, especially in the context of a peace park, is another design narrative to draw on.



APPENDIX

5.1 INDICATIVE PLANT SCHEDULE

Parramatta Local Government Area contains 17 unique ecological communities. Twelve of these are listed under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 as endangered or critically endangered ecological communities (EEC). This occurs due to urbanisation and the fragmentation of these community groups, making them disconnected and at risk of their future survival.

It is recommended that councils understand which ecological community their park sits within and ensure that the proposed plants are going to benefit that green link and reduce the fragmented green space across Parramatta.

These are a few of the species that can be found within the ecological communities, containing a vast array of colours, textures and forms.



Acacia decurrens



Angophora costata



Asplenium australasicum



Banksia spinulosa



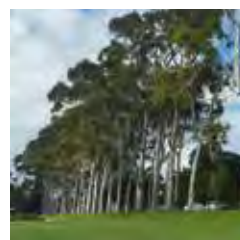
Carex appressa



Casuarina glauca



Ceratopetalum gummifera



Corymbia citriodora



Dillwynia retorta



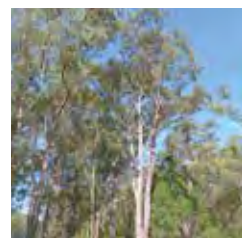
Dianella caerulea



Enchylaena tomentosa



Eremophila debilis



Eucalyptus piperita



Eustrephus latifolius



Grevillea



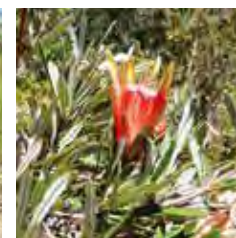
Hibbertia scandens



Indigofera australis



Juncus usitatus



Lambertia formosa



Leptospermum trinervium



Melaleuca ericifolia



Persoonia nutans



Pimelea linifolia



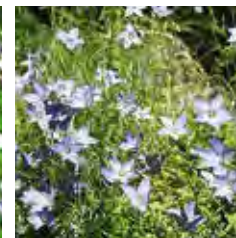
Scaevola albida



Themeda australis



Viola hederacea



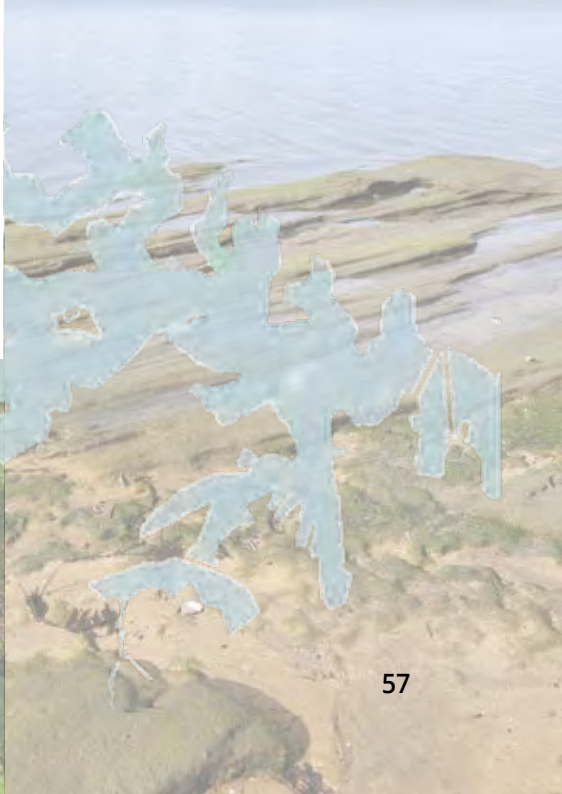
Wahlenbergia



Xanthorrhoea arborea



“Our culture is embedded in the landscape, and environmental consciousness. Sharing this tacit knowledge and wisdom through a cultural landscape, at this point in time, when our earth is under threat, must be a principal for future design approaches.”



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