

NOWRA RIVERFRONT

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY

FRAMEWORK REPORT | OCTOBER 2023



We acknowledge all Aboriginal peoples of the Shoalhaven, the Jerrinja, Wandj Wandian, Wodi Wodi, Bherwerre, Murramarang, Budawang, and Aboriginal members of Roseby Park and Wreck Bay communities.

We acknowledge and value their long, rich cultural and spiritual connections to the Shoalhaven area. This is evident in the stories and ceremonies, the natural landmarks and the sacred objects embedded in the landscapes and waterways throughout this region. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



We are guided by the inspiration of Country, the stories and knowledge a place contains and gifts us. We acknowledge its contribution to wellbeing both mental and physical, providing a refuge and safe place to learn and share.

Our Vision is that sensing and caring for Country is something that transcends cultural differences and highlights the many values that are similar across the cultures of our contemporary communities. Supporting a socially inclusive, resilient, and innovative community based on, honouring the wisdom and kinship of all cultures, captured through the lens of custodianship.

Yerrabingin brings a focus on solutions through empathetic design, our company seeks a diversity of partnerships, connecting ideation with the wisdom of our culture. Custodial allies to connect and innovate with and to reciprocate knowledge with. Centered on a cultural approach to collaboration and a responsibility to bring Australian First Nations design narratives to the Australian natural and built landscape.



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AUTHORSHIP

This Framework Report has been created by Yerrabingin for Shoalhaven City Council.

At Yerrabingin, we acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians and ancestors of the lands we walk across. The terms First Nations, Indigenous and Aboriginal are used interchangeably throughout this report. When referring to a specific group or individual, nation or language group names are used.

LIMITATIONS

This report is the culmination of Yerrabingin’s extensive program that has deeply engaged with First Nations community members to explore Connecting with Country opportunities within this project. The Framework Report is the summation of our program to date and seeks to inform how the project can design with Country.

COVER IMAGE

Figure 1. Aerial image of the Nowra Riverfront and surrounding topography | Google

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Nowra Riverfront

The Nowra Riverfront Precinct activation project will see the redevelopment and activation of the riverside area near the south of the New Nowra bridge.

The project will revitalise the area by creating a precinct that encourages the community to come together and interact with the river. There is a strong focus on enhancing the user experience by creating spaces for people to engage and connect with the natural landscape in order to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of Country.

As part of the project, Shoalhaven City Council has engaged Yerrabingin to develop this Framework report which explains Designing with Country and Identifies key opportunities for activation on the site.

This report has been informed by co-design sessions between Shoalhaven Council, Yerrabingin and members of the local Indigenous Community in order to develop a thorough understanding and design framework for the site.





CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

What is Country?

Country is all encompassing. Everywhere we go, we are within the connected system of Country. Everything we do impacts everything around us, and everything that happens around us, influences us. Country is often misunderstood as just the ground we stand on, but it's so much more. It can be thought of as a reciprocal series of interconnected elements that reaches deep into the earth, and all the way into the sky.

Our knowledge is stored within the landscape and nurtured through an oral tradition, through dance, stories, song, and art, carefully designed and maintained. The natural cycles of Country inform our lore, telling us when it is the right time to engage with certain species and how to look after Country. In return, Country looks after us, providing refuge, comfort and wellbeing, both physically and mentally.



“Country is a responsibility, not a right and it 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 her, we can always sense her and again feel her embrace.”

- Christian Hampson, CEO Yerrabingin



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

Beginning with Country

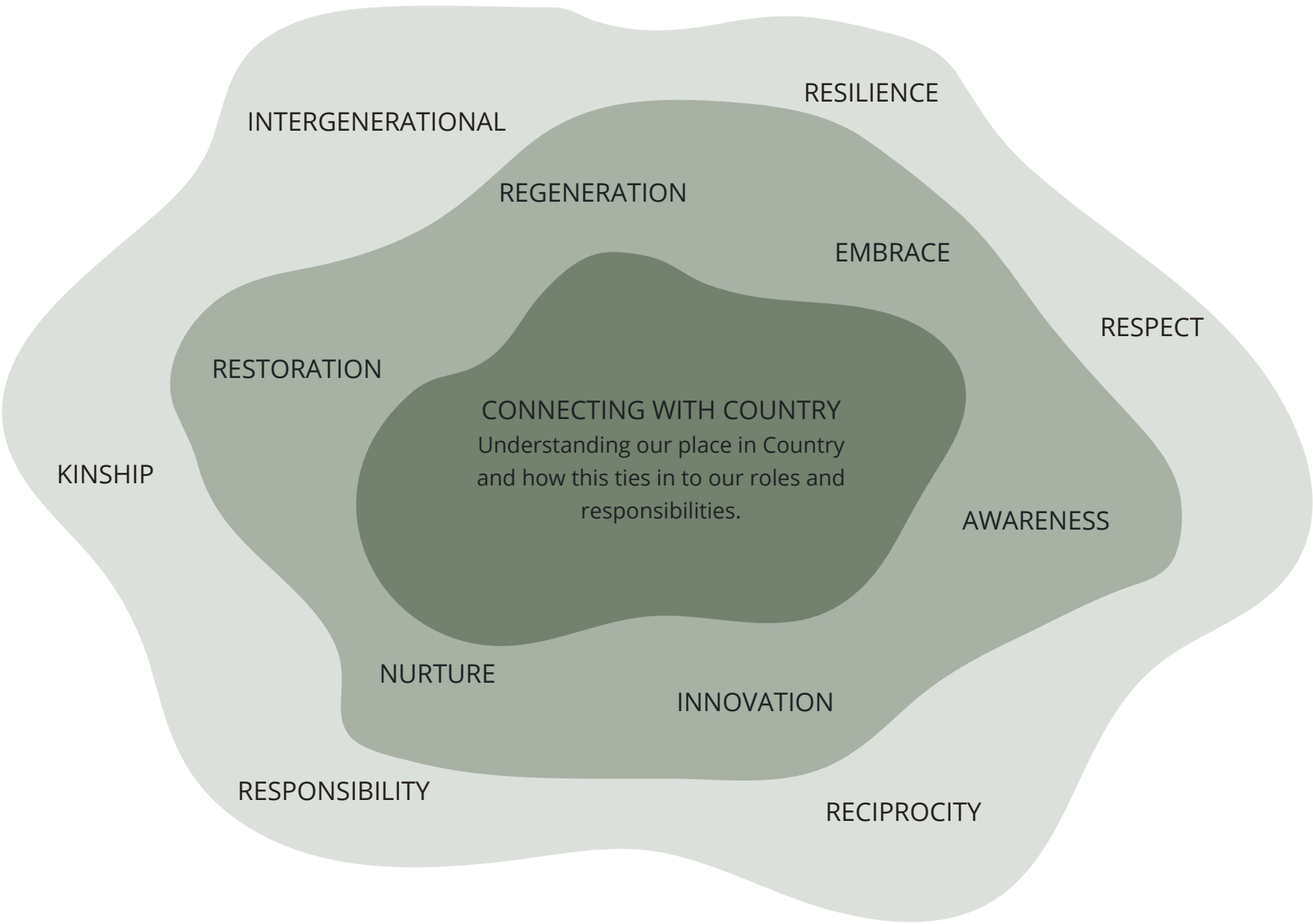
Being connected to Country transcends language and culture, it is an interlaced system of action, emotion and experience. It highlights the many values that are similar across the cultures of our contemporary communities. Everyone can feel connected to Country.

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 reciprocity. 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.

Caring for and becoming a Custodian of Country means forming a strong relationship with the land that is based on respect, obligation and reciprocity. 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 place, 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.



CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

Inhabited by Country

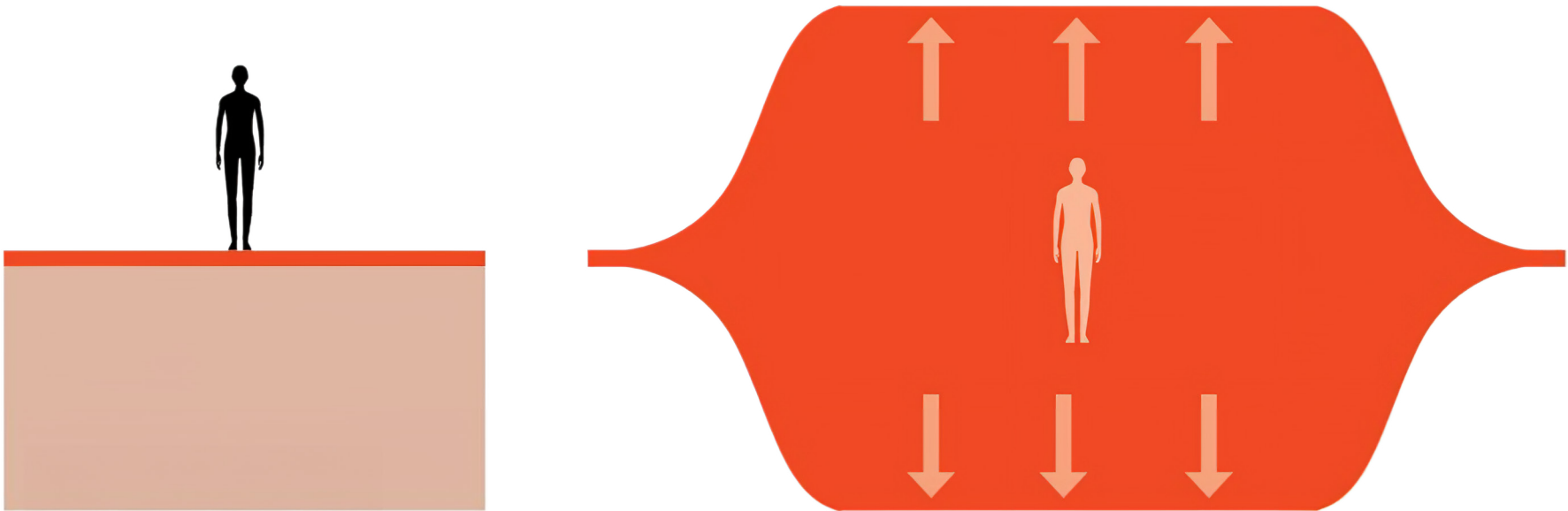
We inhabit and are inhabited by Country. The Nowra Riverfront project offers an opportunity to celebrate the all-encompassing nature of Country. Its infinite reach into and across the earth and into the sky. She guides and nurtures us and is the inspiration and repository of knowledge. Being connected 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. 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 center 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.

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. In order to maintain this connection, it is imperative that Country contains endemic food and medicinal species, cultural resources, as well as keystone species and their habitats.

Everyone can feel connected to 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. This innate symbiosis of being connected and integrated moves us into being eco centric rather than human centric, this functionality has been a long component of Aboriginal people’s ideology, a cultural value that places us in the ecological and landscape system, not as dominators but as caretakers and custodians. This function requires constant interactions and observation, being tuned to reactive requirements and response.



We inhabit and are inhabited by Country

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

Designing with Country

Country is our mother, our teacher, our library, 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 her, we can always sense her and again feel her embrace.

Utilising the Government Architect NSW (GANSW) Elements of Designing with Country will ensure the environmental and social wellbeing of the site is addressed in a way that will provide an enduring legacy for the place and community.

Nature is Country. Caring for Country must guide design interventions. Preservation, restoration and remembering - not replicating the natural landscape and allowing that to inform all future occupation.

Design should support and provide for the local community. Social initiatives must be consciously embedded in the outcomes for the project.

All design should appreciate the local vernacular. Draw upon and be inspired by Country, what has come before, what is required to sustain the future.

“If people and their needs are at the ‘centre’ of design considerations, the landscape and nature are reduced to second-order priorities. If design and planning processes consider natural systems that include people, animals, resources and plants equally - similar to an Aboriginal world view - this could make a significant contribution to a more sustainable future.”

- GANSW, Connecting with Country Framework, 2023, p.23

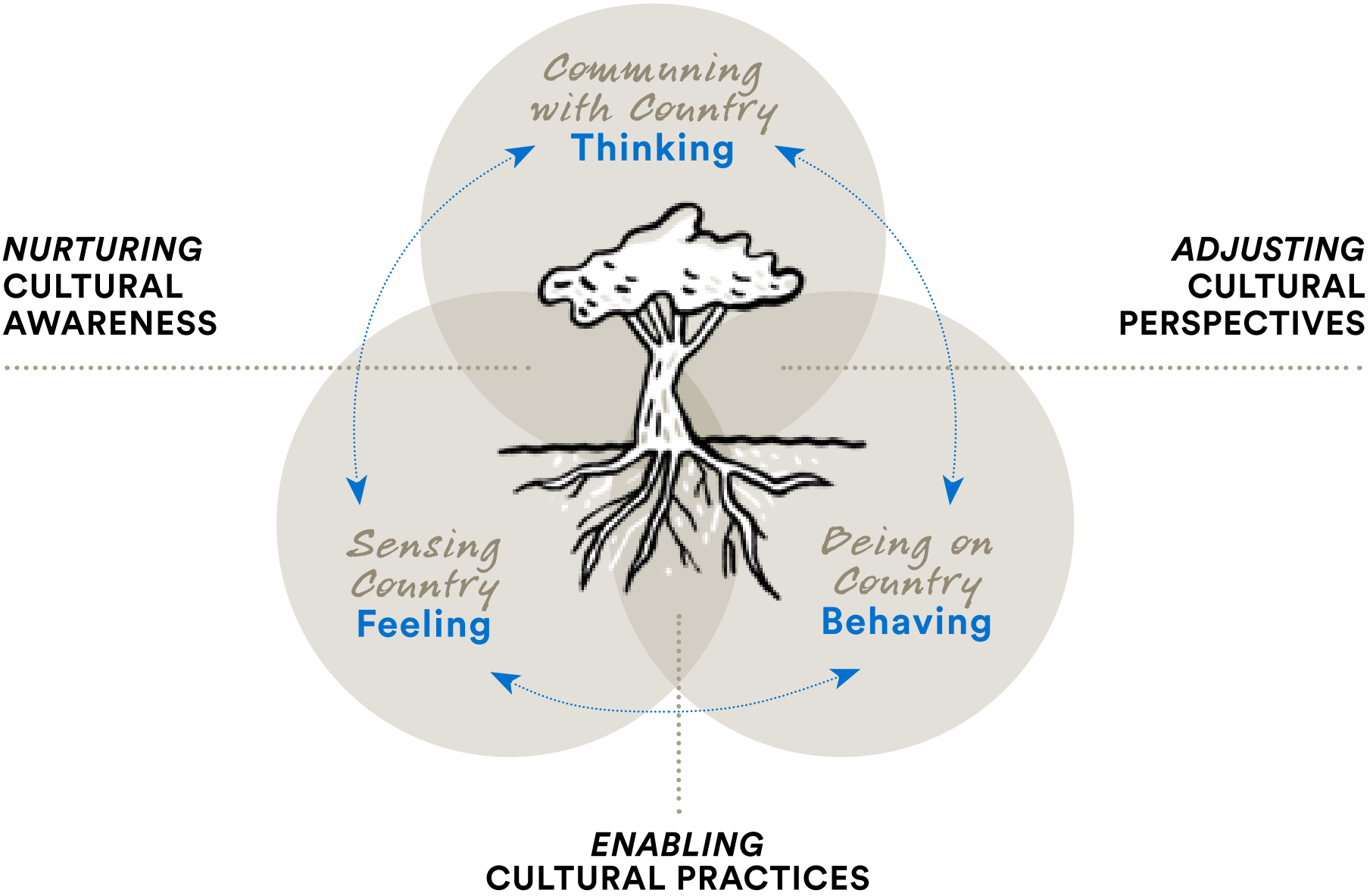


Figure 2. Combining cultural practice and behavioural change systems | GANSW 2023



CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Themes and Stories

Preliminary cultural mapping was completed during the early stages of the planning process. Yerrabingin conducted initial research and a review of existing documents in order to synthesise local knowledges, archaeological reports, and cultural heritage assessments to inform the community engagement process, and ultimately, the design opportunities within the site.

Relevant Reports:

- Nowra Bridge Project, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report, 2018
- Shoalhaven Hospital Redevelopment, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment, 2022
- An Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the Bundanon Trust Properties, 2011
- A Documentary History of Cullunghutti Mountain, Aboriginal People and the Shoalhaven (1770 to 1920)



Recorded Aboriginal sites associated with Shoalhaven. Source: OEH 2011

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Initial Understanding

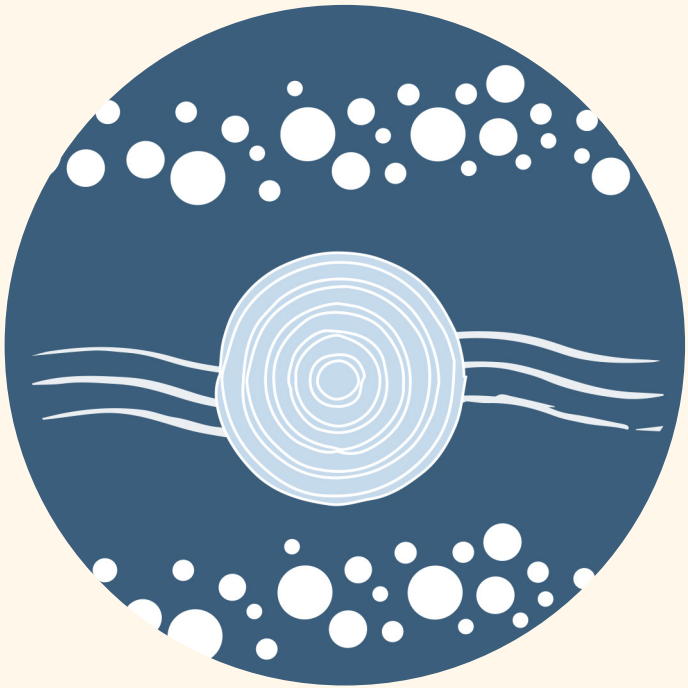
The Shoalhaven region is rich in culture and spirit. Tangible and intangible elements of Country are integral features of the region and must be considered and embedded within the Nowra riverfront masterplan.

The Shoalhaven River has been a significant part of First Nations history and culture for thousands of years, forming a symbiotic relationship with First Nations people to sustain life in the region. This relationship has been destroyed with colonistaion causing the health of the river to be neglected.

The river gives life. It has inherent value in and of itself. If deserves respect.

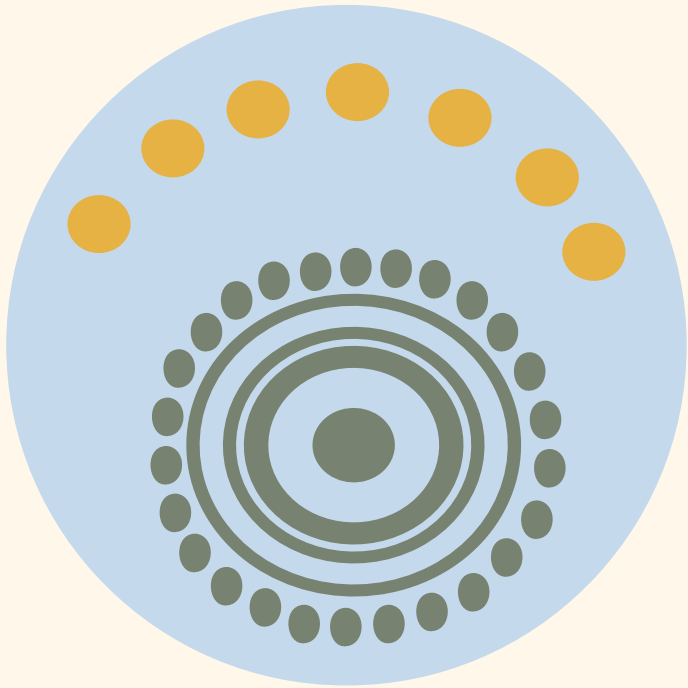
Yerrabingin’s initial understanding of the site uncovered three key ideas that could help inform the project. These are:

- Salt and Freshwater Connections
- Significant Physical and Spiritual Places
- Creation Stories



Salt and Freshwater Connections

Water stories underpin and connect First Nations knowledges and practices. Salt and Freshwater stories are significant to Nowra and must be considered and embedded within the creation of the riverfront masterplan.



Significant Physical and Spiritual Places

The Shoalhaven region is beautiful Country and home to many spiritual places. Identifying and understanding the significant stories of these places will enhance the cultural outcomes of the masterplan.



Creation Stories

Creation stories serve important social, cultural, and environmental purposes for First Nations communities. The masterplan has the opportunity to draw upon local creation stories to guide a meaningful and community centered design.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Elements of Country

“Country as made up of a series of interconnected elements that come together to form the environmental, cultural and social system of a place. To design with Country is to design with the elements of Country.”

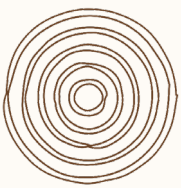
- Yerrabingin

Being connected to Country transcends language and culture, a connected system of action, emotion and experience, as a Custodian 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, Non-Human Kin Country, Deep Country and Wind Country. This allows us to look at different parts of Country and the role they play in an overall system.

Caring for Country is acknowledging these elements, their place on Country and the processes they are involved in. We inhabit and are inhabited by Country. The Nowra Riverfont development offers an opportunity to celebrate the all-encompassing nature of Country. It’s infinite reach into and across the earth and into the sky.

Elements of Country:



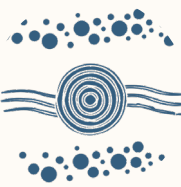
Move with Country:

Enduring custodianship of Country through knowledge sharing and record keeping through story, song, dance and art.



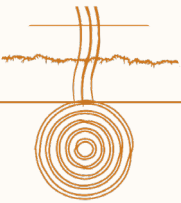
Non-Human Kin Country:

Country is comprised of our kin: the animals and plants. We celebrate the connection of all living things and the intricate responsibilities within this web of connections.



Water Country:

Water is the connective tissue, the circulatory system, the confluences and paths within and between Country. The meeting of salt and fresh water.



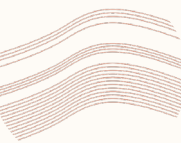
Deep Country:

The most Ancient of connections and one that we honour for the many gifts it shares, the tools we create and the others we use to paint.



Sky Country:

This is place of spirits and the ancestors. It holds knowledge of navigation, the seasons, time and Songlines. It allows engagement with our ancestors and spiritual beings.



Wind Country:

Wind carries the messages of the seasons, the songs and words of our ancestors across Country. The landscape and light vibrates to a rhythm; the trees, the grass, and the clouds racing across the sky.

Elements of Country - Nowra Riverfront:

Move with Country:

Creating safe and welcoming communal spaces for people to come together, perform custodial roles, share knowledge and celebrate culture.

Non-Human Kin Country:

Regenerating the natural landscape to support the regeneration of endangered communities and to restore and protect threatened species.

Water Country:

Creating spaces for people to connect and appreciate the river, and celebrating water as a precious and valuable resource by implementing systems that capture and naturally clean water for reuse.

Deep Country:

Use of local geology within built environment. Use of art and other cultural practices to demonstrate the connections between the earth and all other systems.

Sky Country:

Encourage story telling around the site, and preserving view lines to designing spaces to allow people to physically connect to sky.

Wind Country:

Use of plants to highlight seasonal change, and promoting a collective environmental consciousness by highlighting change and impact of climate.



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Wanggani Dhayar - Listen to Country Process

The Wanggani Dhayar (Listen to Country) design methodology developed by Yerrabingin is aligned with the principles outlined in the GANSW Connecting with Country framework. The process was used by Yerrabingin in co-designing options to incorporate Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the site into the design. The process is fluid, with reiteration and organic formation of the design throughout.

The below graphic represents the stages of the Wanggani Dhayar process, including framing the design, identifying the audience/users, the Design Jam, logic and assumption testing, cultural checking and sharing the solution through the pitch.

This process has been used to inform and review all design decisions for the project.

“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.”

- Christian Hampson, CEO Yerrabingin



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Walk on Country

FEBRUARY 21 2023

Beginning with a Walk on Country, the project team and local First Nations community members see the extent of the site and talk through initial conceptual ideas. During this time, community members are able to ask questions and discuss potential concerns.

The Walk on Country is also an opportunity to get a sense of scale and see the surrounding environment and landscape, highlighting where key points of activation may occur. Allowing time to sit with Country, the project team and community are able to visualise the potential experiences across the site.

Being able to walk the site is crucial to the engagement process. It allows all attendees to physically experience and connect to the site and ensures that local First Nations community members are provided with ample opportunities to contribute their ideas.

The Nowra Riverfront Walk on Country was an enriching experience and productive session. First Nations community members flagged several areas for activation as well as feedback for future user experiences across the site.

Key comments and questions from the session included:

- “Will the site be accessible to everyone?”
- “Consider the impact the project will have for future generations.”
- “Make sure the buildings work with the natural landscape instead of disrupting it.”
- “Will there be a space dedicated to Indigenous people?”



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

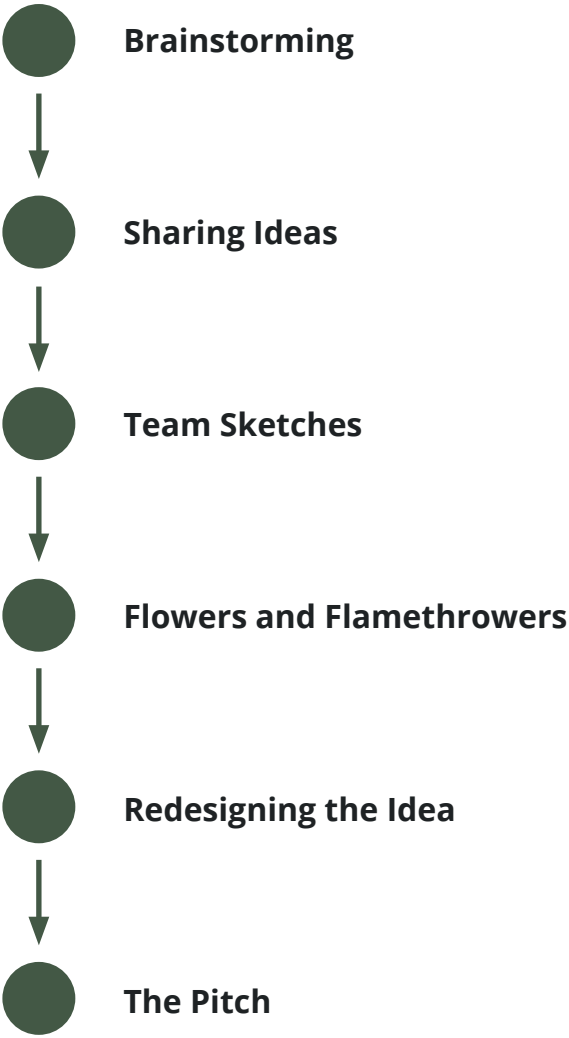
Design Jam

FEBRUARY 21 2023

This section recounts the community engagement process completed in the development of this Framework. It should be noted that community members who participated in meetings and workshops were remunerated for their time and expertise.

The Design Jam brings together divergent styles of thinking. In small groups containing local First Nations community members, the design team, and often the client, Yerrabingin facilitates several sessions throughout the day that look to provoke thought and inspire collaborative design discussions.

The first stage of the design process, Framing the Design, is about bringing clarity and focus to the design space. The goal of this stage is to craft a meaningful and actionable challenge - this is what we call point-of-view or ‘How might we’ question. The ‘How might we’ question posed at the Nowra Riverfront Design Jam was: “How might we create a unique place with new experiences that connect locals and visitors to the wider river context and showcases healthy Country?”



This sets the scene for the workshop. It is then followed by a series of small exercises that allow the participants to collaboratively explore design solutions.



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Design Jam Outcomes

Post Design Jam, the Yerrabingin team collects all of the data from the session and pulls out the key outcomes and discussion topics from the day, which are then collated to develop the key themes and considerations for the project.

The key outcomes and discussions from the session were:

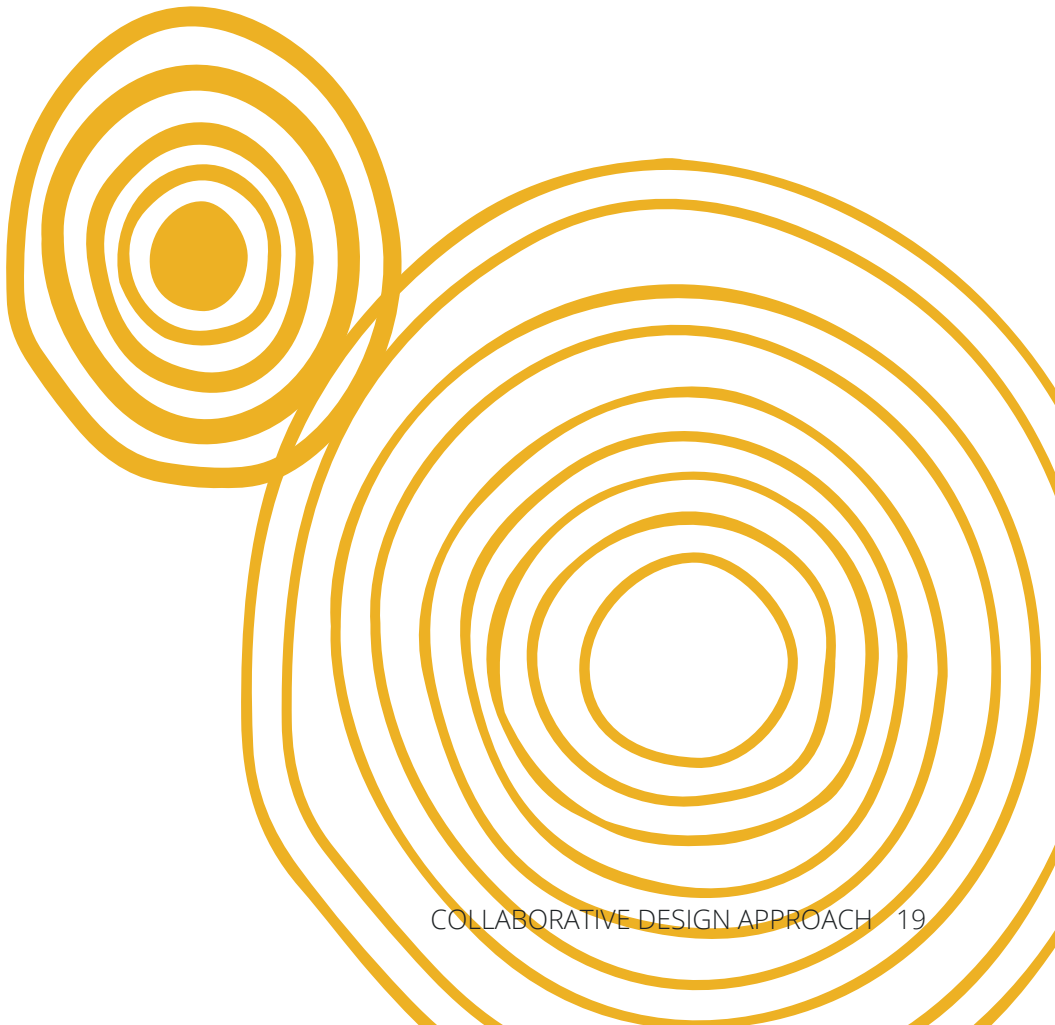
- Acknowledging and encompassing culture to inform a holistic design of the riverfront.
- Recognise the depth and diversity of cultural knowledges from First Nations community members, embedding this into the masterplan for present and future generations.
- Combine and link cultural knowledges to the natural environment, creating both an inviting and informative landscape for all to enjoy e.g., planting of endemic species with accompanying signage.
- Consider the cultural significance of surrounding sites e.g., Paringa Campground and its place within the context of this plan.
- Opportunity to recentre appropriate cultural figureheads and stories through public sculpture activations that work with the natural environment e.g., Bundoola, Black Cockatoo.
- Create connected spaces through accessible pathways

to support the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the community.

- From the bridge to the CBD, the riverfront is the gateway to Nowra. Create accessible and safe pathways that enable community members, young and old, to enjoy the riverfront and engage with the stories that exist in this space.
- Create a cultural centre / museum to showcase the rich history of First Nations peoples.
- Consider how best to integrate the Nowra bridge development into the masterplan, looking at safe walking routes connecting the bridge to the riverfront and into town.
- Utilise natural materials and endemic planting to create inviting pathways.
- Water and water stories are the connective tissue of the Shoalhaven community. Consider how these stories can be recentered within the masterplan, working to educate the wider community in addition to reconnecting to First Nations community members to the waterways.
- Understand how the river acts as the epicentre of culture, trade, exchange, and knowledge.
- Consider activating the riverfront with a sandbank, creating a safe space for community members to sit

and swim.

- Opportunity to redevelop the swimming pool, creating a free splash zone for the community that works to connect residents from the riverfront and into town.
- Embed water stories into the signage and wayfinding of the town e.g., room to explore use of QR codes or alternatives that work to engage and educate the community on important stories and sites in this area.
- Activating the waterways in an appropriate and informative way could include cultural boat tours, walking tours along riverfront, interpretive signage.
- Establish an engaging and interactive boardwalk that works to connect the community to the water stories.



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Community Driven Principles

Through the Design Jam process we have developed 3 overarching Connecting with Country design principles that have been informed by the discussions between the First Nations community members and the design team. The principles have been developed by incorporating all of the community's input and combining them into a set of larger principles that are more applicable to the site.



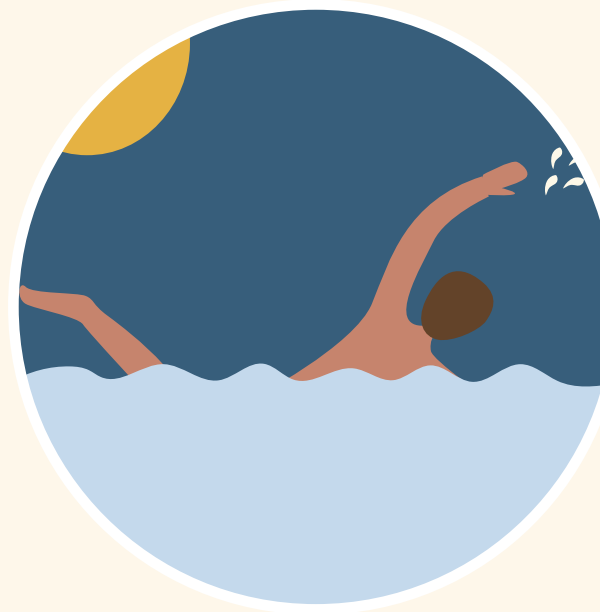
Cultural Landscapes

Acknowledging and encompassing culture to inform a holistic design of the riverfront was an important theme during the engagement for the proposed Nowra Riverfront Masterplan. Understanding the cultural significance of the local sites will deepen community connections with the land and one another.



Accessibility

Connection and access to Country was a crucial factor for the community. Creating safe and accessible pathways to connect the riverfront to the Nowra CBD and areas upstream and downstream. Such consideration will enable greater engagement for people to interact with elements of Country.



Water

Activating the waterways in a culturally appropriate and informative way will encourage more people to use the space. Re-centering water stories within the masterplan will educate the wider community in addition to re-connecting First Nations community members to the waterways.

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Cultural Landscapes

Recognising the depth and diversity of local knowledge holders, the masterplan provides an opportunity to meaningfully embed culture from across the city onto the site. Through a series of activations that connect culture and environment, the riverfront has the ability to connect families and communities for present and future generations.

Creating a welcoming and safe space for the community to gather and share stories, the masterplan provides a range of opportunities to embed and reactivate through culture. Functioning as a hub of cultural exchange, the space should look to draw upon the endemic landscape, inspired by natural shapes and shadows to inform the design.

“We view the Nowra Riverfront Masterplan as a significant opportunity to recognise the value within our own community. All our initial ideas are underpinned by the notion that boundaries are not dividers, they are connectors.”

- First Nations community member and Design Jam attendee

Accessibility

From the bridge to the CBD, the riverfront is the gateway to Nowra. The masterplan should look to create accessible and safe pathways that enable community members, young and old, to enjoy the riverfront and in turn engage with the stories that exist in this space.

Permeable pathways that sit with Country have the ability to create connected spaces that support the physical, mental and spiritual health of the community. Establishing easy access points for residents and visitors to the riverfront will reignite the space and improve community connections and social outcomes.

“We feel that connectivity is the most important aspect of this project and should be the overarching theme of the masterplan. We must connect all these spaces together through safe and accessible pathways connecting the riverfront to town.”

- First Nations community member and Design Jam attendee

Water

Water and water stories are the connective tissue of the Nowra community. Recentering these stories within the masterplan enables both physical and spiritual connection to water. The river is the epicentre of culture, trade, exchange and knowledge. Drawing on water stories to create signage for wayfinding and educational opportunities should be considered.

Through a community centred approach, water stories can be emphasised and integrated across the masterplan. There is an immense opportunity to improve the experience and environment around the swimming pool and riverfront through the integration of public nodes and spaces for community members to enjoy.

Water creates an ephemeral experience changing with Sky Country and being explored in a variety of ways. Ensuring the health of the Shoalhaven river is the priority, all water entering the river should be clean and unpolluted. This can be achieved through wetland basins, raingardens, streams, etc., which then become elements of play and interaction throughout the masterplan.



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Design Application

The 3 Community Driven Principles have been developed to allow for the local First Nations Community's input to be physically applied to the design. This allows for a design that has Designing with Country incorporated throughout, allowing all users of the site to physically connect to Country.

This initial mapping exercise looked to consider and explore the opportunities to embed the community driven principles - cultural landscapes, water, and access - into the masterplan.



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

Community Feedback Session

JUNE 21 2023

Out of these workshops Yerrabingin gathered the ideations and combined them into key ideas, themes and design principles, as prototypes, as seen above in the design application.

The logic and assumption testing part of the methodology tests these ideas along with the project teams design development. We had an online discussion to talk through these outcomes and application of Design Jam ideas with Design Jam attendees, additional members from the local Aboriginal community, the design team, and the client. This was an opportunity to test the ideas with users through empathy research.

It is flexible to ensure that all appropriate cultural knowledge and experience can be accessed to ensure the form and design can deliver and maintain Country, as aspired by the project principles.

This feedback loop of ideate, prototype, testing will lead to the determination of the best solutions and opportunities. It starts off chaotic and cloudy, steamrolling towards points of clarity until a desirable, feasible and viable solution emerges

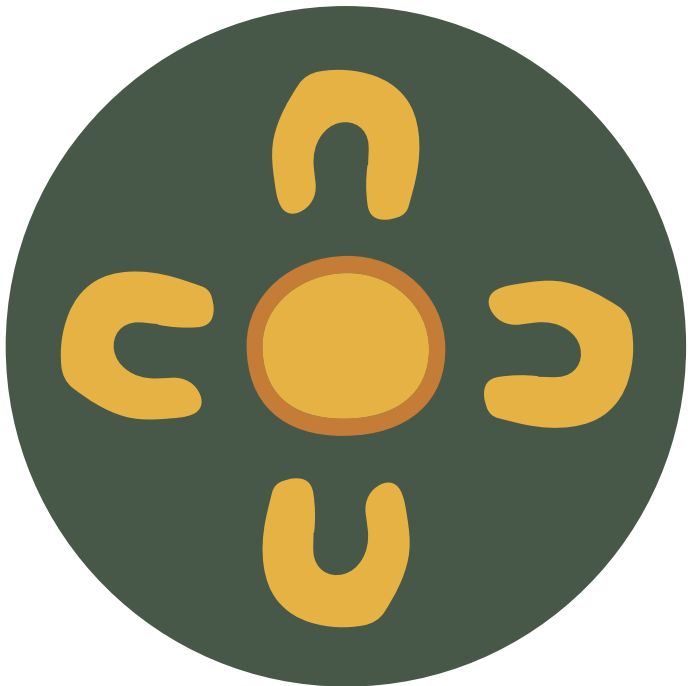
Community members who attended the Design Jam and any who missed out but still would like to provide feedback were contacted for a Community Feedback Session. During this session Yerrabingin ran through the engagement process to date and key design outcomes which came out of the session. The design team then presented how they have interpreted and incorporated these ideas across the proposed site.

A large proportion of these sessions are for community to provide feedback, raise any concerns and outline if what’s been presented has been assumed and incorporated correctly. This session was held online.

Some of the key comments were:

- “People do nothing but destroy the river this is our home I think something like this will give it respect”.
- “What about hand prints and footprints for our kids, when they grow up they’ll show and be a part of that long serving connection”
- “This is an opportunity for them to come to our classroom, this river is education”
- “We want them to walk through the space, we want a place where people can learn our culture and connect with our people”
- “We used to have a tourist information centre and cultural centre in town, everyone loved it and used it. Imagine having that here and now

- Welinesses around they will want to share and be a part of this”
- “Council will have to fix their water management, then we can jump on a canoe”
- “We need to celebrate the river it is our main source of food”
- “A place for community to utilize. You want to see the water when being part of the space”
- “Our culture is art”
- “We could have market stalls coming from the bridge”
- “Information coming off the bridge leading into the water”
- “Bridge needs to be the focus point”
- “Restoring our community for the future generations”
- “I love that its increasing healthy lifestyles and promoting it”
- “Parking, we want more people to utilise space”
- “It will be great to showcase this as it is close to the hospital - so much opportunity”
- “Pop up markets along the bridge or down the side of the river”
- “Office space and local business”
- “You could have safer access to Bomaderry to Nowra”
- “They currently do Blakmarkets, night markets and other things here but moving it on the bridge would be awesome”



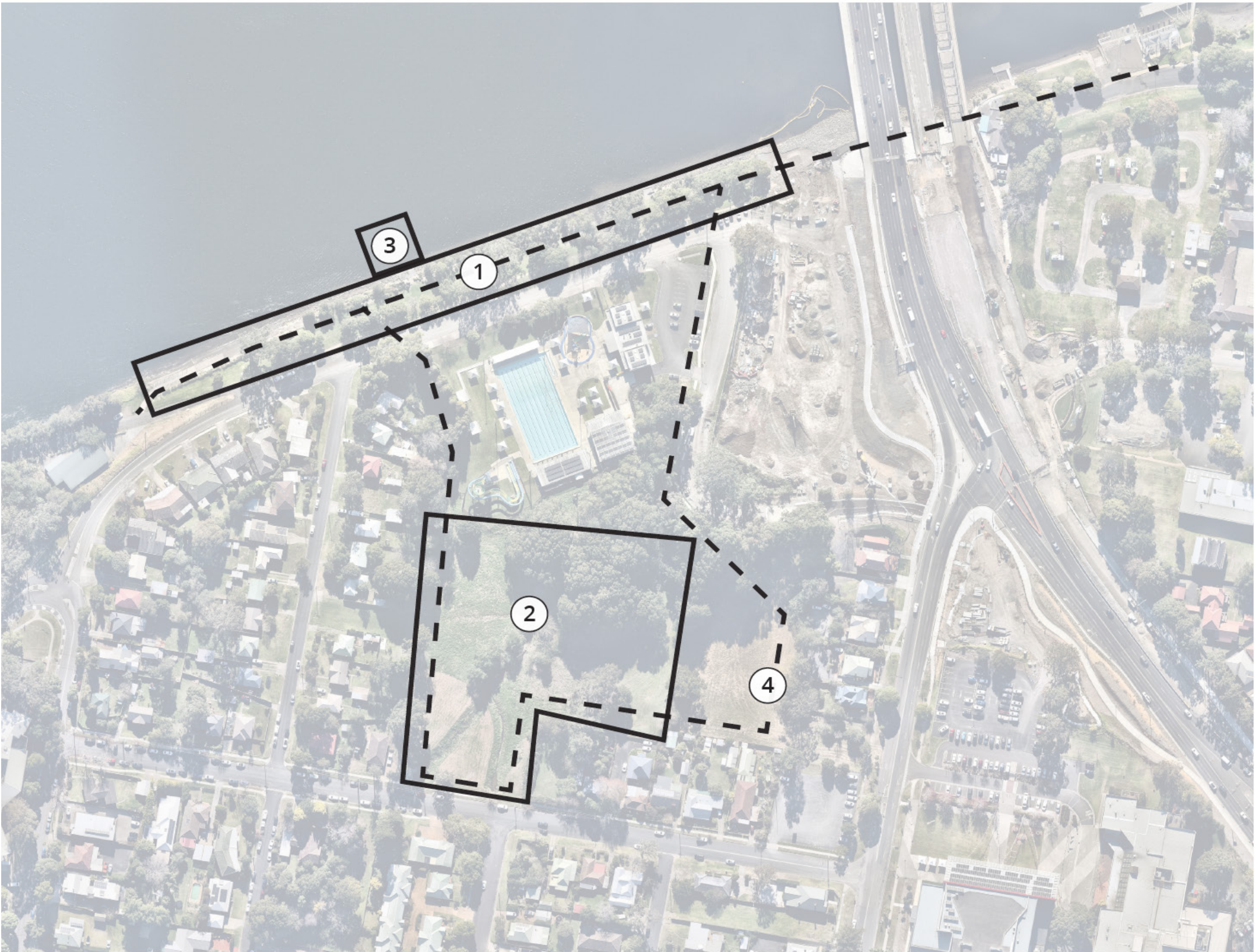


A VISION FOR NOWRA RIVERFRONT

A VISION FOR NOWRA RIVERFRONT

Key Interventions / Opportunities

The Typologies below have been developed to better understand the specific identities and user experiences across site. Focusing on each typology and their relationship with one another, the matrix provides a visual application that demonstrates how we can prioritse user experience through meaningful design.



A VISION FOR NOWRA RIVERFRONT

Riverfront

The Riverfront is the gateway to Nowra. Understanding the cultural context and uses of the river is integral to the functionality of the masterplan.



Cultural Landscapes

- Floating wetlands and bio-filtration planting to naturally clean the river and provide habitat for aquatic species.
- Natural vegetation regeneration.
- Opportunites for local Indigenous art.



Accessibility

- Wide accessible pathways (i.e. a boardwalk or shared paths).
- Providing direct access to the water, and spaces along the river for people to stop/gather.
- Bank stabilisation.



Water

- Swimming Spot on the river.
- Bank naturalisation/restoration.
- Kayak hire.



A VISION FOR NOWRA RIVERFRONT

Cultural Hub

The Cultural Hub exists as a space to share and appreciate the rich First Nations culture of the area. It provides a welcoming and community centred environment that draws people to the site.



Cultural Landscapes

- Native bush food garden.
- Space for ceremonies and events to occur on site.
- Seating and gathering spaces that can accommodate large families.



Accessibility

- Mixed material pathways to enhance the senses.
- Ensuring the cultural spaces are easily accessible and welcoming for all.
- Spaces that allow people to come together amongst nature.



Water

- Water/Nature play elements in the landscape.
- Biofiltration gardens to naturally collect and clean water.



A VISION FOR NOWRA RIVERFRONT

Nodes

Nodes are located throughout the site to provide a range of opportunities for users to engage with both one another and Country.



Cultural Landscapes

- The regeneration of native vegetation to create natural buffers for quiet spaces.
- Opportunity for educational elements in art and wayfinding
- Flowering plant species to attract pollinators and birds.



Accessibility

- Spaces for people to be amongst nature.
- Accessible by path and not too far from main path network for safety.



Water

- Creating quiet spaces for people to connect to the River.
- The incorporation of sensory elements such as misting



A VISION FOR NOWRA RIVERFRONT

Path Network

The Path Network acts as the connective tissue and pulls together all parts of the precinct. It provides an opportunity to create a connected experience of Country.



Cultural Landscapes

- Wayfinding and art elements along path.
- Open space for temporary events such as markets.
- Native and endemic vegetation to attract kin and create habitat.



Accessibility

- Seating and bike racks along path to allow people to stop and enjoy their surroundings.
- Natural materials and colours to be used in path network and wayfinding elements. e.g. gravel.



Water

- Raingardens to naturally collect and clean water.
- Sensory elements such as misting during the warmer months.
- Water interpretation along path.



NEXT STEPS

Future Guiding Principles

The Nowra Riverfront Precinct activation project provides an opportunity to consider and design in a way that is not only beneficial for users of the space, but also beneficial for Country. This Framework Report explains how Designing with Country can add both value and meaning to the project in a way that can revitalise the entire area.

It is integral that this understanding and appreciation of Country is carried through any future development in the area. This will ensure that all future development is considerate of and designed in conjunction with the existing cultural landscape.

Possible designing with country objectives & principles that could be included in a future precinct Development Control Plan Chapter:

Objectives	Controls
01. Development is designed in a way that Acknowledges Country and the interconnected nature of all elements of Country at the site and in the surrounding cultural landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw on cultural stories and knowledges to inform design and naming.• Plant appropriate vegetation to regenerate endemic waterway ecologies and improve river health.• Identify and restore endemic wildlife habitats across the site.• Designate ecologically sensitive zones across the site as nature refuges for natural wildlife.• Use a diverse mix of endemic vegetation in new planting areas to support seasonal change.• Limit the use of introduced species to reduce the impact on endemic flora and fauna.
02. Ensure diverse opportunities for connection to Country are considered and implemented during the development planning and design processes through meaningful engagement with First Nations groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A First Nations Engagement Strategy should be developed and followed throughout the entire development process.• Before any major milestones, invite the First Nations community to a smoking ceremony.• Before the beginning of construction, invite the project team and First Nations community
03. Create opportunities for capacity building and economic development for First Nations people and organisations across planning, design, construction and operation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that 5% of staff working within the precinct are of Indigenous descent.• Ensure that contracts are awarded to First Nations organisations and businesses.
04. Development is designed to proactively allow for opportunities to connect to Country and for First Nations people to continue to care for Country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spaces should be designed to accommodate for the strong communal nature and the specific needs of First Nations people, e.g. ceremonies, workshops, ecological restoration.• Create spaces that allow for First Nations people to participate in and enact cultural practice.
05. Recognise and reflect Aboriginal connection to Country by protecting and enhancing significant land features in and around the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw on the cultural uses and natural identities of the area when deciding on naming.• Design and placement of built form should draw on First Nations knowledge of the site.• Design in conjunction with natural forms, e.g. the river.• Create spaces that allow people to physically connect to natural land features.• Build walkways, seating areas and viewing platforms to allow people to visually connect and access the river.• Built form and hardscapes must not be within 30m of the river.• Built form and hardscapes must not impact endangered species habitat or sensitive ecological zones.• Built form must not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding environment.
06. Celebrate First Nations culture and language through Public Art and Placemaking across the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate dual language on wayfinding elements.• A First Nations Art Strategy should be developed and implemented for all public art and placemaking opportunities across the site.• Artwork and interpretive design should share significant local stories and narratives.

NEXT STEPS

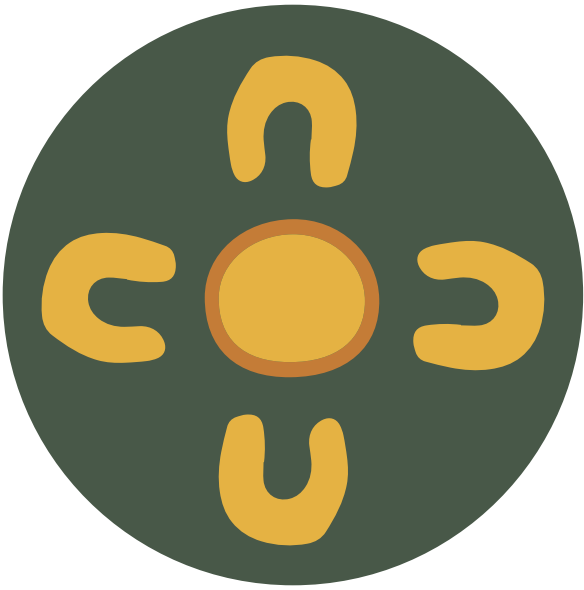
Ongoing Opportunities

The Nowra Riverfront provides a diverse range of opportunities for locals and visitors to engage and interact with Country.

Under the guidance of the Wanggani Dhayar (Listen to Country) methodology, Yerrabingin conducted extensive community engagement to explore and identify key areas of opportunities within the masterplan. Throughout the community engagement process, the significance of culture and importance of accessible facilities and water stories remained at the forefront of discussions.

In addition to Yerrabingin’s contributions, the masterplan has ongoing opportunities to further engage with the community throughout both the implementation and future activation of the development.

Such opportunities include:



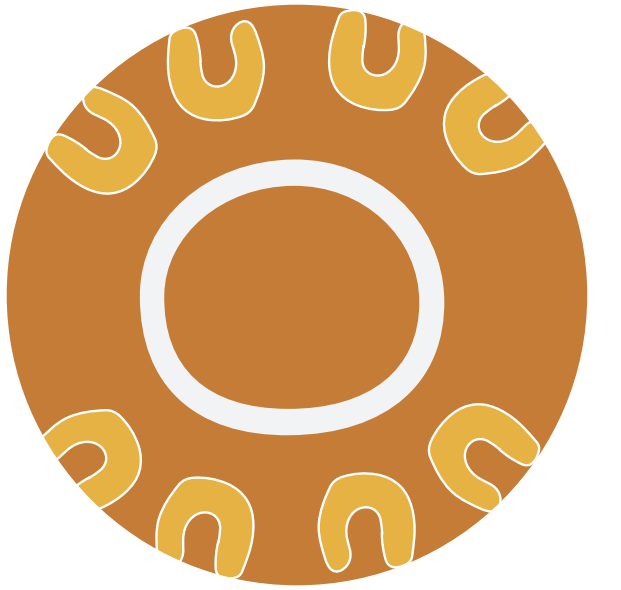
Continued Community Engagement

Continue consultation with community for the life of the project including during construction and post construction.



Language Workshops

Consult with First Nations community members regarding the use of language. Language workshops are recommended and to occur early in the design process to inform naming of buildings, streets and parks etc.



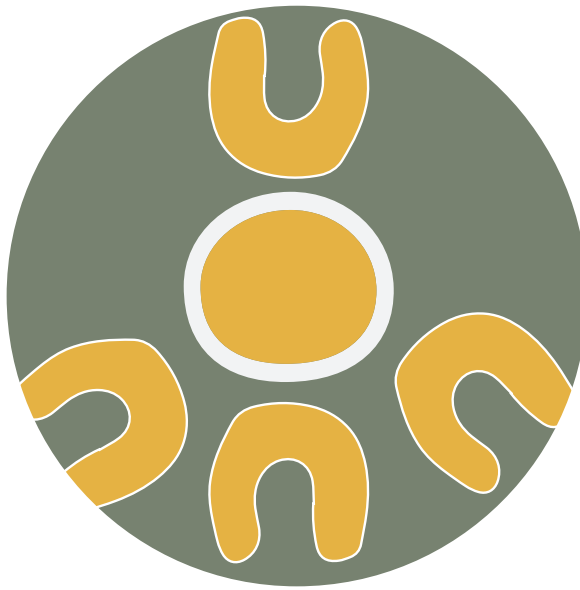
Wayfinding / Branding

Workshop wayfinding and branding with local artists to ensure a holistic and considered approach for the project and precinct.



Local Enterprise Opportunities

Partner with local First Nations businesses for the design development and construction stages of the project, as well as opportunities post completion.



Artist Engagement

Opportunity to engage with local First Nations artists and designers across key areas of activation throughout the masterplan. For example public spaces and significant infrastructure.



YERRABINGIN

WE ARE YERRABINGIN. WE WALK TOGETHER.