



Transport for NSW

Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework

Transport for NSW
acknowledges the traditional
custodians of the land on
which we work and live.

We pay our respects to
Elders, past and present
and celebrate the diversity
of the Aboriginal people
and their ongoing cultures
and connections to the
lands and waters of NSW.



A message from the Deputy Secretary



**“Our aim is for
Aboriginal culture,
heritage and co-
design to become an
everyday part of the
way we do business”**

Warimi Ngani. Hello, how are you? (Darug)

In 2019, Transport for NSW launched its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Infrastructure and Place are leading the delivery of a number of RAP actions including: “Develop a Cultural Heritage Framework for all of Transport for NSW’s work in the community” and “Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-design principles across Transport cluster projects”.

After reflection, consultation and discussion across Transport, this Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework is our delivery on those two actions.

Aboriginal culture and heritage are woven through the landscape across NSW. The community and government expect that the tangible items and intangible values belonging to the world’s oldest living culture are managed sustainably; and this is best achieved by valuing, respecting and being guided by Aboriginal people.

With its vast range of services and projects, Transport can play an important role in this endeavour. The following framework provides simple commitments and principles to assist Transport staff develop greater understanding and engagement with Aboriginal culture, heritage and co-design. Our aim is for Aboriginal culture, heritage and co-design to become an everyday part of the way we do business.

I look forward to working alongside our staff to put this framework into action as a powerful step forward on our Reconciliation journey.

Camilla Drover

Deputy Secretary
Infrastructure & Place
Transport for NSW

Reconciliation Action Plan Ecosystem





Why an Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework?

Increasingly, Transport for NSW projects are embracing an Aboriginal co-design approach which has positive community and place-making benefits. It is important to build on these successes and identify ways to further improve the incorporation of Aboriginal culture and heritage into Transport's projects and services.

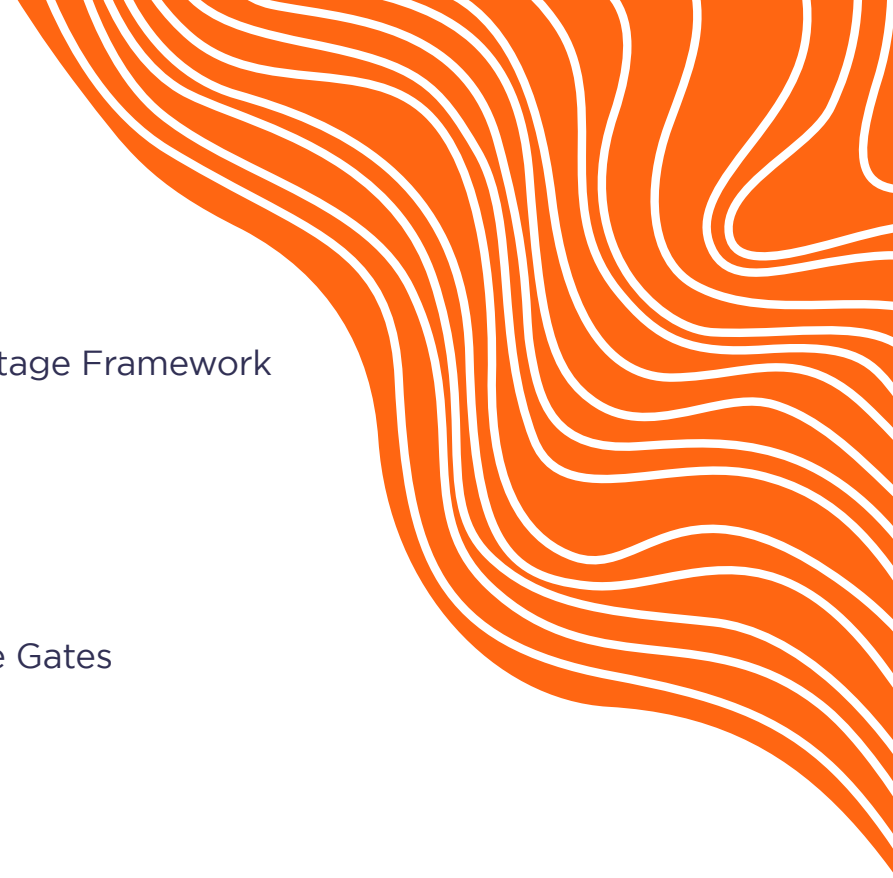
Accordingly, the culture and heritage commitments and co-design principles contained in this framework are designed to assist Transport for NSW staff embed Aboriginal engagement, culture and heritage into their ways of working acknowledging that:

- Aboriginal people are best placed to provide guidance on their needs and requirements
- Aboriginal culture and heritage is important and valued by the community
- Enhanced place-making occurs by incorporating Aboriginal voices into planning and decision making



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Definitions

Aboriginal

Aboriginal person means a person who:

- i. is a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia, and
- ii. identifies as an Aboriginal person, and
- iii. is accepted by the Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal person.

For the purpose of this document, use of 'Aboriginal' is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal co-design

A two-way learning process where Aboriginal people partner with Transport staff to learn and understand Aboriginal culture and in turn, staff invite the Aboriginal people to learn about their work so both parties come away from the exchange with new knowledge, respect and trust for each other.

Aboriginal culture

Ways of being, doing, expressing and relating to others, that are at the centre of Aboriginal identity. Aboriginal culture is living and continually growing in harmony with the spirit of its peoples.

Aboriginal heritage

The interaction of Aboriginal people with the environment and each other through cultural practices, knowledge, resources, tangible and intangible objects & places.

Aboriginal object

Any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft made for sale) relating to the Aboriginal habitation of New South Wales, before or concurrent with non-Aboriginal people. This includes Aboriginal remains as defined in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

Aboriginal place

Any place declared to be an Aboriginal place under section 84 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

Connecting with Country

A process of joining together with Aboriginal people, places, environments, stories and knowledges that are characteristic to a certain place or area.

Country

A physical area or region that holds special cultural and spiritual significance for an Aboriginal person including, but not limited to, a birthplace, family home, local language area, hunting or fishing region, place of ceremony, or an area that forms part of a songline or Aboriginal cultural map.

Designing with Country

An Aboriginal knowledge and culture-led activity that incorporates the human and intangible characteristics of an Aboriginal place into the design process.

Transport

Transport for NSW cluster.

Vision:

Connect with Country by engaging with the Aboriginal community and proactively incorporating Aboriginal culture and heritage into our projects, services and initiatives



Five Commitments of the Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework

Aboriginal co-design principles

Aboriginal Engagement Guiding Principles supporting and informing

We are all
always on
Country



Purpose of the Culture and Heritage Framework

Aligning with Transport's Reconciliation Action Plan and Aboriginal Engagement Framework, this Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework seeks to:

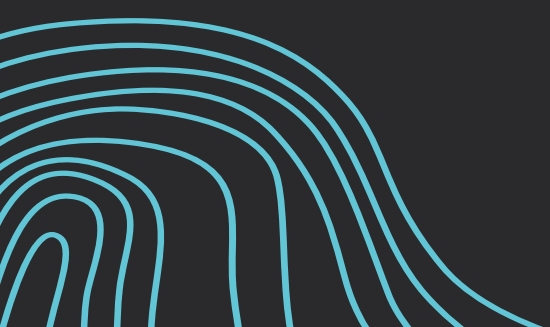
- Increase the understanding of staff, delivery partners and other stakeholders about the importance of Aboriginal culture and heritage
- Identify key Transport commitments to Connecting with Country
- Provide guidance about how staff can use an Aboriginal co-design process to incorporate Aboriginal culture and heritage into Transport projects
- Inspire the acknowledgment and celebration of Aboriginal culture and heritage in our projects, services and initiatives by identifying practical examples and case studies for place-making
- Recommend future action to grow the integration of Aboriginal culture and heritage into our Transport ways of working



Transport for NSW's Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Commitments

Informed by Transport's Reconciliation Action Plan and consultation inside and outside of the cluster, the following commitments focus on key ways of working to support the implementation of Aboriginal culture and heritage into Transport projects, services and initiatives.

Achieving these framework commitments will require dedicated implementation plans that identify specific actions and requirements for each Transport division.



Five Commitments of the Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework



Leadership

The management of Aboriginal culture and heritage should be led by Aboriginal people



Living Culture

We acknowledge that Aboriginal culture is a living, breathing and dynamic collection of community inspired thought, beliefs, action and knowledge at the centre of Aboriginal identity



Designing with Country

In Designing with Country, Transport staff will connect with Aboriginal knowledge, culture and the local environment to guide and inform the design process



Community Knowledge

Aboriginal cultural knowledge and values should be recorded and communicated in ways that are accessible by the community where appropriate



Responsibility

Transport for NSW staff will understand and meet the requirements of Commonwealth and NSW legislation that maintains and protects Aboriginal culture and heritage across NSW

The framework icons above use air, leaves, fire, water and wood that are culturally significant for Aboriginal people and part of being “on Country”



Leadership



Acknowledge

Acknowledge the historical and contemporary values and application of Aboriginal knowledge

Respect

Respect the role of Aboriginal Knowledge Holders and their connection to Country

Demonstrate

Demonstrate leadership by supporting Aboriginal people as key contributors in Transport's decision-making processes

“It’s important to walk on Country with Traditional Custodians ”

Dillon Kombumerri, Office of the NSW Government Architect

Living Culture



Understand

Understand that cultural practices include tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural values in Country and the sharing of community resources

Commence

Commence by visiting Country as early as possible in your project to map and record cultural values and landscapes in partnership with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders

Encourage

Encourage the sustainable use of Country so that Aboriginal cultural values and landscapes may be conserved for future generations

“We need to be engaging with Aboriginal people from the beginning”

Warren Steadman, Transport for NSW



Designing with Country



Connect

Connect to Country by understanding how Aboriginal people view, interact with and value Country

Partner

Partner with Aboriginal people to harmonise your project plans with Aboriginal knowledge and culture

Engage

Engage regularly with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to seek feedback about your design process

“You can’t design with Country unless you have Aboriginal voices participating in your project”

Cheryl Brown, Heritage NSW

Community Knowledge



Renew

Renew the living record of Aboriginal culture and heritage by identifying Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to engage with your project

Record

Record Aboriginal culture and heritage information with respect and sensitivity in partnership with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders

Share

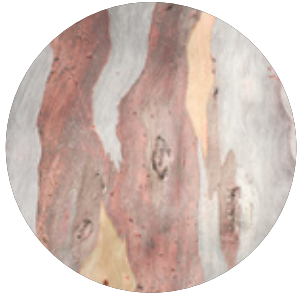
Share Aboriginal cultural knowledge with the broader community in a manner that educates and increases understanding about Aboriginal culture and heritage where appropriate

“The cultural mapping of Country needs to be driven and led by Aboriginal people”

Cheryl Brown, Heritage NSW



Responsibility



Inform

Inform yourself about Aboriginal culture and heritage & seek advice about the relevant legislation and regulations used in its conservation and protection

Comply

Comply with the applicable legal requirements, Transport policies and procedures

Extend

Extend your project outcomes beyond the minimum requirements for Aboriginal culture and heritage acknowledgement, engagement and protection where practicable

“When consulting with the Aboriginal community, be prepared to listen and build a relationship”

Deborah Swan, Transport for NSW

If we care for
Country – it will
care for us





Aboriginal co-design principles

The following Aboriginal co-design principles are provided to help Transport for NSW staff apply and incorporate collaborative ways of working with Aboriginal people in a variety of Transport settings, projects, programs and initiatives

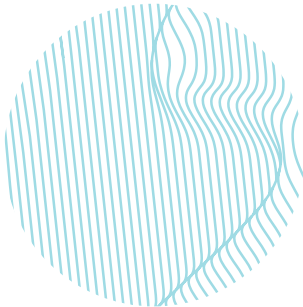
“A core strength of Aboriginal culture is the continuity of Aboriginal peoples’ connection to Country. Greater focus needs to be placed on the uniqueness of Aboriginal voices and the authority they bring to a full understanding of place”

Peter White, Create NSW

Aboriginal co-design principles



**Early & Ongoing
Engagement**



**Connect with People
& Country**



Embed



Partnership



**Aboriginal
Empowerment**



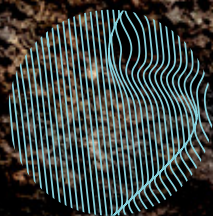
**Two-way Sharing &
Capacity Building**

The design approach for the co-design icons above draw from the importance of cultural landscapes and Connecting with Country to Aboriginal co-design.



Early & Ongoing Engagement

Aboriginal co-design should occur as early as possible in the life-cycle of your project, service or initiative to allow appropriate time and space for Aboriginal engagement that should be ongoing. Staff should approach such engagements with a desire to listen, respect and include Aboriginal voices.



Connect with People & Country

Allocate time to walk on Country with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders and hear stories that belong to the place you are working in. Observe the Aboriginal cultural themes that emerge, ask questions and understand the context.





Embed

Co-design is a normal part of project development in the same manner as engineering design, surveying, community engagement and environmental planning. Project schedules should embed, organise and commit time for Aboriginal co-design & allocate an appropriate budget.



Partnership

Effective co-design requires roles, responsibilities and mutually beneficial outcomes to be clearly defined and established at the outset. Working together in a spirit of partnership and respect, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people should maintain a high level of collaboration throughout the co-design process.



Aboriginal Empowerment

Aboriginal co-design requires the empowerment and inclusion of Aboriginal people to participate in our work process and should consider how the finished project or service will meet the needs of both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community.



Two-way Sharing & Capacity Building

Aboriginal co-design requires the two-way sharing of knowledge, capacity and capability between Aboriginal people and Transport staff. When co-design is successful, both parties emerge from the relationship with new domains of knowledge and expertise creating a positive legacy, both in the community and also for the Transport cluster.

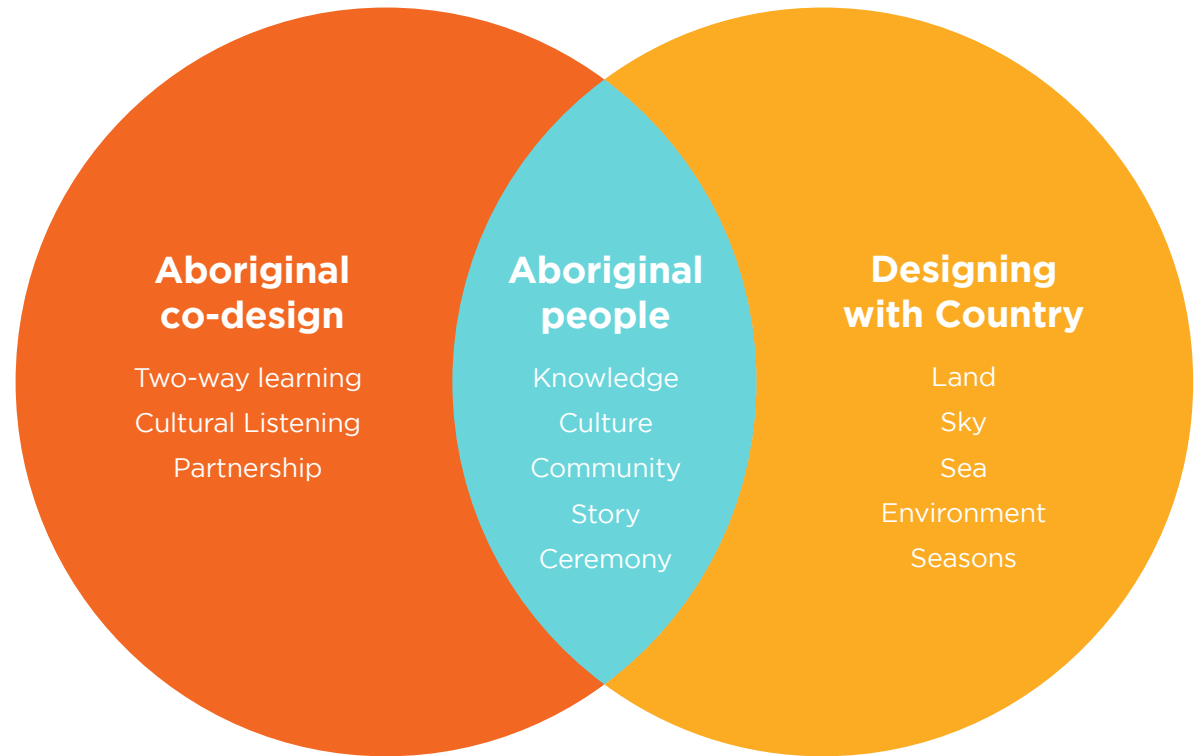
An aerial photograph capturing a multi-lane highway as it curves through a vast, dense forest. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset, with the sun low on the horizon behind a range of mountains. The highway is filled with traffic, including cars and trucks, moving away from the viewer. To the right of the highway, a river or stream winds through the trees. The overall atmosphere is serene and scenic.

Start with Country

Designing with Country and place-making

Improved place-making and community outcomes can be realised when projects, services and initiatives incorporate a strong connection to Country.

In order to Design with Country, staff should engage with Aboriginal people as part of the Aboriginal co-design process to embed Country into their projects, services and initiatives.

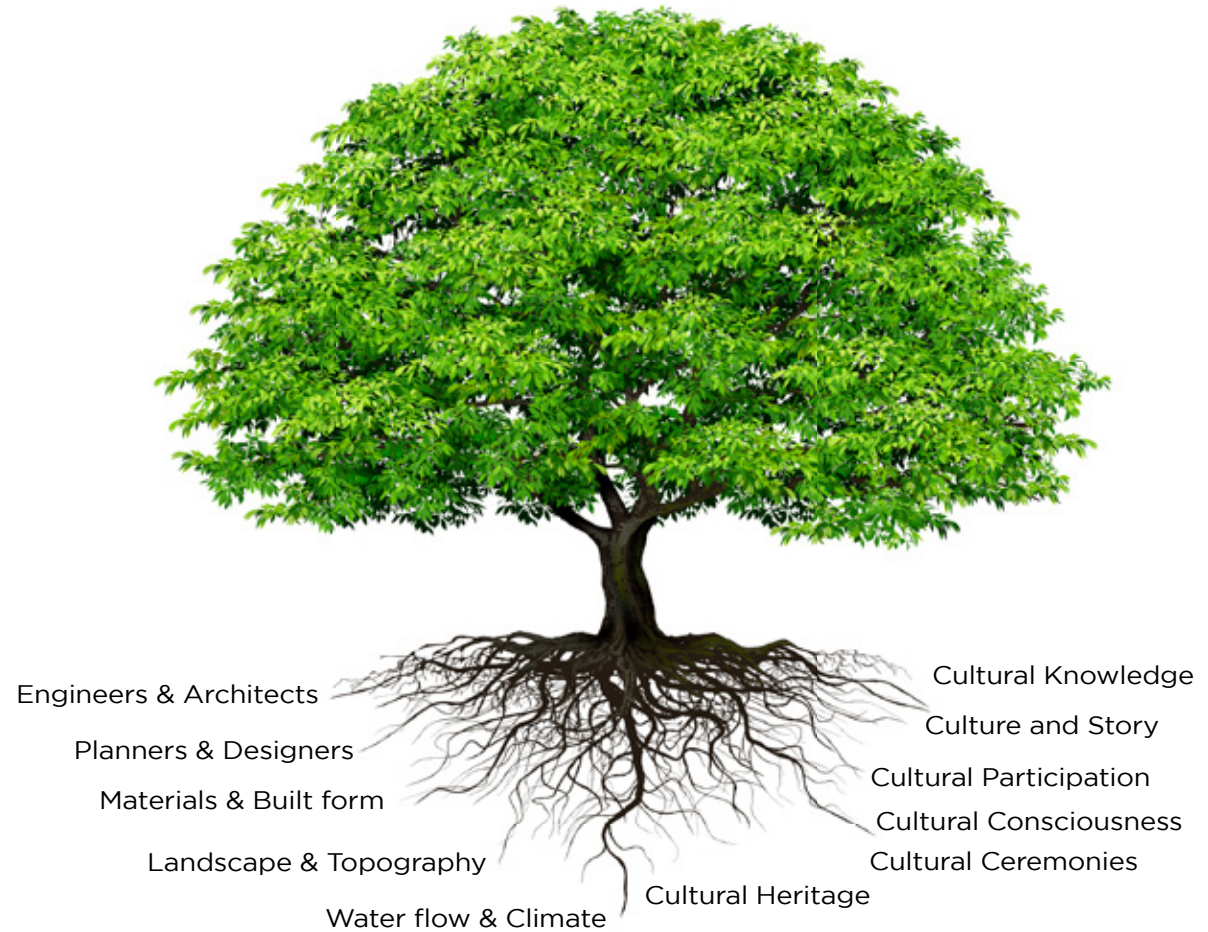


“Aboriginal people are at the centre of both Designing with Country and Aboriginal co-design”



Designing with Country and place-making

Aboriginal knowledge of the land, its peoples, history and cultural practices informs the process of Connecting to Country and Designing with Country. In Designing with Country, we are incorporating culturally and Country responsive Aboriginal elements into our projects, services and initiatives as part of our ways of working.



Designing with Country and place-making

Designing with Country can be applied to our projects, services and initiatives in various ways including:

- Project siting, form and corridor alignment
- Naming, language and geographical information
- Heritage identification and protection
- Heritage and cultural interpretation
- Community needs and local patterns of movement
- Architectural form, materials and public domain
- Landscape, flora and fauna
- Public art
- Activities such as song, dance and ceremony
- Incorporating acknowledgement of Country into signage and asset openings
- Branding and graphic design



Law and Regulation

Commonwealth

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
- Native Title Act 1993

NSW

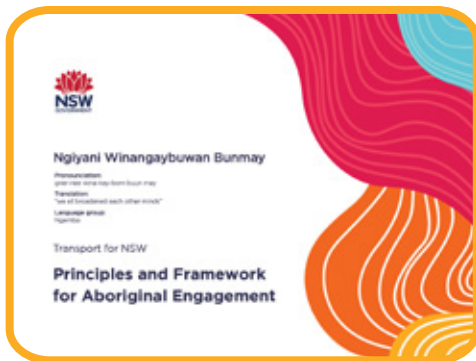
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974
- Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983
- Native Title Act 1994
- Heritage Act 1977
- Crown Land Management Act 2016
- Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991

The adjacent list of legislation is not exhaustive, meaning there may be other laws that impact on Aboriginal heritage associated with your project.

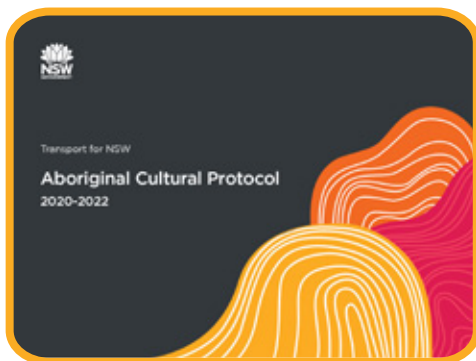
For more information, staff are encouraged to seek assistance from Transport's Environment & Sustainability Branch and the Aboriginal Engagement and Property Teams.



Key resources



Transport for NSW's Aboriginal Guiding Principles and Framework for Aboriginal Engagement assists with the process of organising, managing, delivering and evaluating effective engagement with Aboriginal people.



Transport for NSW's Aboriginal Cultural Protocol assists staff with a number of practical hints and tips for engaging with Aboriginal people in communities.

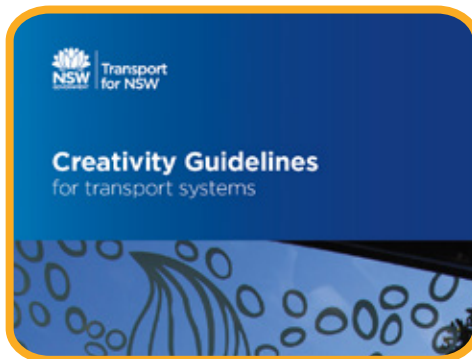


The Procedure of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation and Investigation (PACHCI) provides minimum standards for cultural heritage impact assessment for staff of Roads and Maritime Services projects within Transport for NSW.

Key resources



Transport for NSW's Beyond the Pavement is a multi-modal urban design resource that lays the foundation for how design and art should be integrated into major roads and other Transport infrastructure in NSW.



Transport for NSW's Creativity Guidelines offer processes for the planning and delivery of design, art and innovation in Transport projects with examples such as public art, digital art, bespoke public domain elements, lighting and graphics.



Sydney Metro Art Masterplan provides guidance on the vision, objectives, curatorial approach, governance structures and commissioning process and parameters for artistic excellence of public art in Transport projects.

Key resources



The Sydney Trains Heritage and Interpretation Guidelines focus on inspiring and increasing heritage interpretation at railway places in NSW by improving customer experience, place-making, conservation and education across the rail network and heritage portfolio. The guidelines recognise that Interpretation projects should include an Acknowledgement and consideration of the Aboriginal people who are associated with each place or Country.

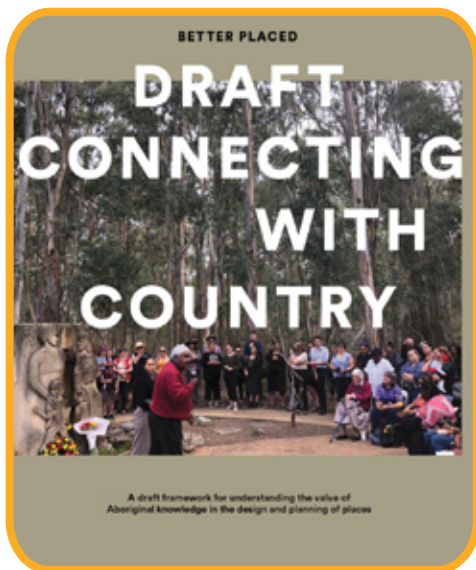


The 2021 NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap is an annual requirement under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. It outlines NSW-specific actions to achieve the Priority Reforms and socio-economic targets, and to ensure strong accountability for meeting the NSW commitments under the National Agreement.

Key resources



Designing with Country is a publication by the NSW Government Architect that helps to examine what we mean by “Designing with Country” in an Aboriginal context.



NSW Government Architect’s Draft Connecting with Country is an exploration of “Connecting with Country” that includes a number of urban design and construction case studies.

Key resources



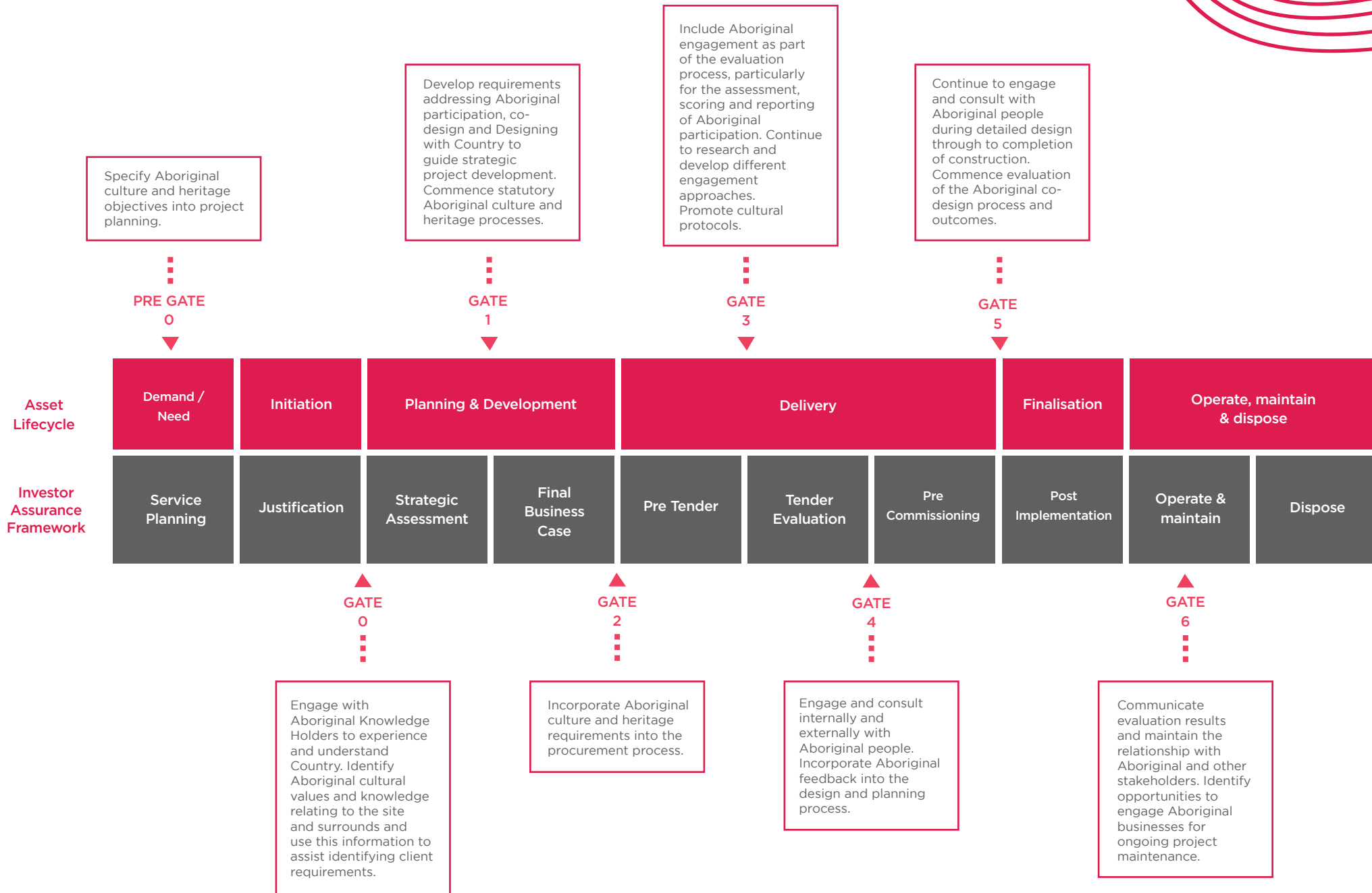
Heritage NSW has legislative responsibility for Aboriginal culture and heritage in NSW and facilitates the conservation of Aboriginal heritage values, places and objects.



Heritage NSW's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (ACHAC) provides advice on Aboriginal cultural heritage, including identification, assessment and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, heritage impact permit processes, management plans and legislative reform.



Mapping Aboriginal co-design to the INSW Assurance Gates





Recommendations

Recommendations

Focus	Recommended Action
Short term (within 1 year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine simple criteria about the applicability and scalability of the framework across different projects and initiatives• Communicate framework to the Transport cluster and externally• Agree on the long term ownership and yearly review of the framework• Embed the Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Framework commitments and Aboriginal co-design principles into strategic planning, client requirements and project specifications• Conduct a cross cluster review and alignment of key initiatives and targets• Develop a framework implementation plan for each division, outlining how they will address commitments and specific targets
Medium term (within 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate specific co-design actions into the Transport assurance gates and business processes• Develop a set of Transport wide design criteria and specific steps for Aboriginal place-making and community centred initiatives to be incorporated into Transport's urban design guidelines• Increase the awareness and take up of Aboriginal cultural training for Transport staff and our partners• Update operational documents such as PACHCI to ensure these reflect requirements and are applicable across the Transport cluster• Encourage documentation of Aboriginal co-design, cultural and heritage outcomes and identify award recognition opportunities• Develop and implement processes for how Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property is identified, managed (within projects) and protected for the ICIP holder by working with other agencies such as Create NSW• Support NSW Government Architect to embed Connecting with Country within INSW assurance gates
Long term (within 3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a consistent funding allocation approach to support positive Aboriginal culture and heritage outcomes on projects, eg % of project budget or a centralised funding approach





Case Studies

The following case studies are included to inspire Transport for NSW staff to take part in the strong community building and place-making opportunities generated by the inclusion of Aboriginal co-design, culture and heritage

Redfern Station

Intent

This Sydney Trains initiative created a renewed Redfern station forecourt at Lawson Street and atrium area on the Gibbons Street concourse that provided multiple spaces suitable for inclusion of public art.

Approach

After a significant community consultation process, Balarinji facilitated an art workshop with 13 Aboriginal artists to develop the concepts.

Following the workshop, four of the Aboriginal artists worked to collaboratively to develop the concepts for the identified locations.

Team

Led by Sydney Trains, the following organisations were part of the consultation process: Metro LALC, Aboriginal Housing, Mudgin-gal, Gadigal Information Service, Redfern Elders and Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care.

Outcomes

- Use of Transport planning pathways to secure support and funding for the delivery of Aboriginal art in projects
- Contracting Aboriginal engagement and art specialists to leverage established relationships in community
- Integrating Aboriginal art into Transport infrastructure to acknowledge Aboriginal heritage





STATION

T

Western
Police
Station

GO BAL

Western Station
Legends - A New
Station Concept

Western Station
Legends - A New
Station Concept

The planning process
most involved!

Lower Hunter Freight Corridor Investigation

Intent

Ensure the rail corridor selection process was informed by Aboriginal cultural landscape values to maximise Aboriginal outcomes from the corridor development.

Approach

Transport for NSW's approach was based on the following principles

- Aboriginal people should lead delivery of cultural assessments
- Aboriginal stakeholders need to be engaged before route selection

Team

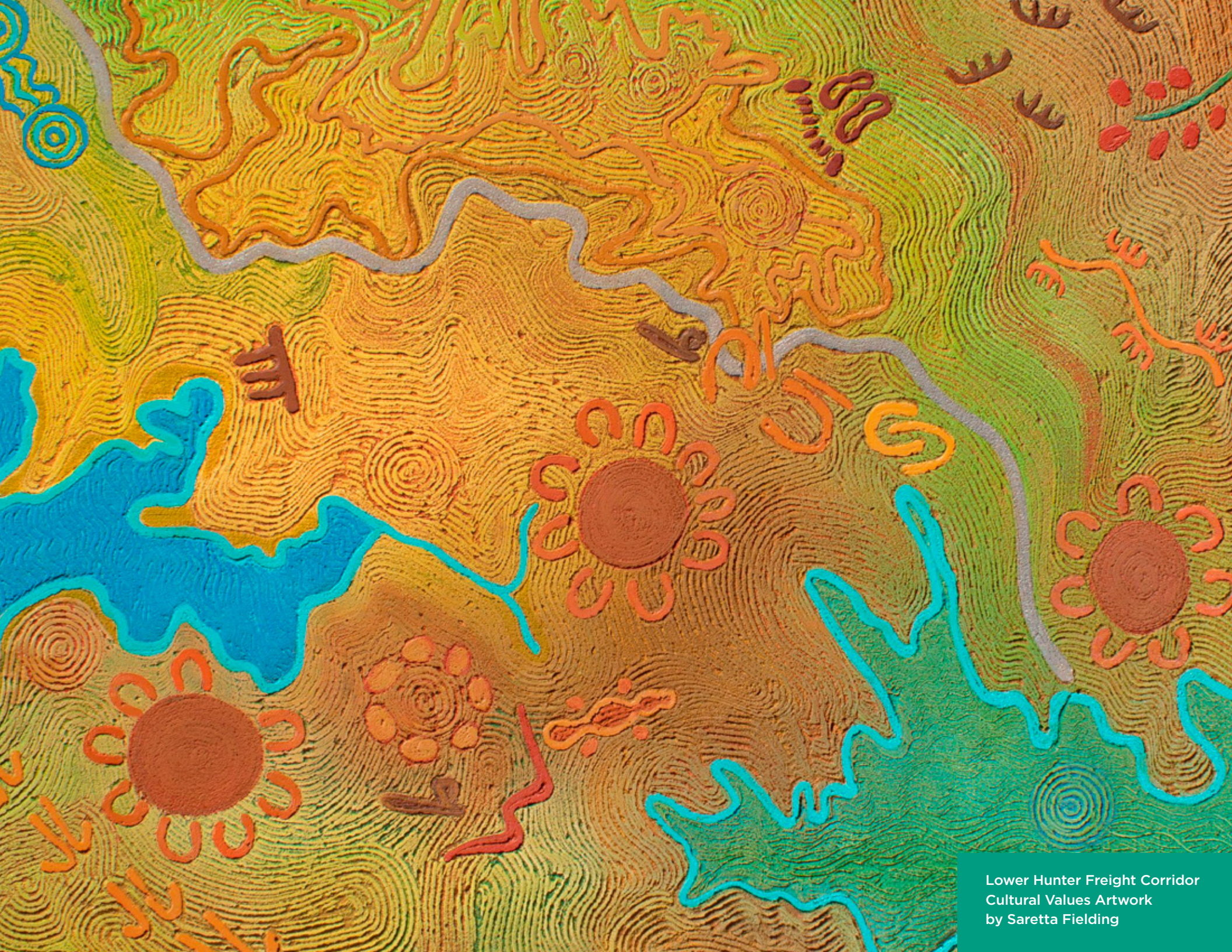
Transport for NSW engaged the following team to deliver the cultural values assessment; Professor John Maynard, Artist Saretta Fielding, Josh Gilbert and Ray Kelly Jnr.

Outcomes

The following outcomes were achieved for the project

- Recording of Aboriginal cultural values of the corridor
- Recommendation of a culturally safe engagement process to attract participation of the Aboriginal community and Knowledge Holders
- Documentation and production of a culturally relevant artwork, mapping and digital materials to support Aboriginal community and stakeholder engagement





Lower Hunter Freight Corridor
Cultural Values Artwork
by Saretta Fielding

West Connex M4/M5 Road

Intent

Provide a Connection to Country by placing an Aboriginal artwork on the outside of the West Connex M4/M5 facility building at St Peters.

Approach

Transport's urban design team included a requirement for the development of a Connection to Country as part of the contractor's scope of works for the facility building. Once underway, the project's Design Review Panel that included Aboriginal people, provided advice to the project contractors CM+ who reported back to the project on a regular basis.

Team

The following people and organisations were part of the team: Transport for NSW Centre for Urban design, West Connex Design Review Panel members, Urban design Contractors CM+ and landscape architects.

Outcomes

- Unique expression of Connection to Country
- Integrated, Aboriginal co-design approach
- Designing with Country - Aboriginal cultural artwork is integrated with the trees in front





Ballina BP Travel Centre

Intent

The Transport for NSW Property Team included an Aboriginal heritage response in their construction brief for the first planned travel service centre as part of the Pacific Highway upgrade. The response from the contractor included Aboriginal information panels inside the centre. At a later time, the Transport Property team expanded the Aboriginal heritage response to include capacity for the development and display of an Aboriginal artwork.

Approach

Transport for NSW contracted Ballarinji to work with local Aboriginal artist, Marcus Ferguson, a Nyangbul man from Ballina and Cabbage Tree

Island, to develop the designs. Next, there was a process to determine the ideal location for the artwork that was eventually decided to be the service centre canopy (ceiling).

Team

The following people and organisations were part of the team that delivered the project: Marcus Ferguson, Nadira Yapa, David Doyle, Signspec, Ballarinji and BP.

Outcomes

- An Aboriginal Connection to Country reference point for the rest of the Pacific Highway travel service centres under development
- An Aboriginal artwork visible day or night providing a cultural journey experience for travellers

- Enrichment of the Pacific Highway travel environment that will also include bridges and rest areas
- Employment of a local Aboriginal artist from the Ballina area





shop

Mindyarra Dubbo Rail Maintenance Facility

Intent

To share Aboriginal culture by incorporating language and storytelling into the Dubbo Maintenance Facility.

Approach

The Aboriginal working group consulted with a Wiradjuri language expert to assist with decision-making about the Aboriginal naming process. Aboriginal team members also undertook comprehensive consultation by engaging with an extensive group of stakeholders.

The final name chosen for the maintenance facility was Mindyarra which means to fix or repair in Wiradjuri language. The project team also recorded the voices and instruments of

Wiradjuri artists in an animation that was used to announce the naming of Mindyarra.

Team

The Regional Rail Project team was responsible for the project. Cross-government collaboration was required between: Transport for NSW, Aboriginal Affairs NSW, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Three Rivers Regional Assembly, Training Service NSW, Department of Planning Industry and Environment, National Australians Indigenous Agency and Dubbo Regional Council.

Outcomes

- Use of Aboriginal language to name the maintenance facility
- Increased Aboriginal participation on the project
- Development of an Aboriginal Art Strategy for the project
- A successful Aboriginal co-design process





Mindyarra

Princes Highway Upgrade: Gerringong to Bomaderry

Intent

To conserve and celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage values associated with the upgrade of the Princes Highway between Gerringong and Bomaderry.

Approach

The Aboriginal community was consulted throughout the project to identify Aboriginal archaeological & cultural values and to explore methods to conserve and celebrate these values.

Team

Fulton Hogan heritage specialists Navin Officer & Kelleher Nightingale and the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPS).

Outcomes

- The Aboriginal community identified mature fig trees with high cultural values that were retained as part of the project's re-design
- Extensive archaeological investigation to explore Aboriginal land-use of the area with all artefacts returned to the land at the conclusion of works
- Interpretive signage installed at Mt Pleasant lookout, Gerringong, to celebrate Aboriginal cultural values





Informational panel with text and images, including a sunset scene.

Looking at the past
Informational panel with text and images, including a row of small objects.

Looking back, looking forward
Informational panel with text and images, including a historical scene.



Cessnock Road

Intent

Transport NSW were planning flood mitigation works at Cessnock road near Mount Sugarloaf and decided to carry out a test excavation to identify Aboriginal cultural landscape values and artefacts.

Approach

The project involved the engagement of an archaeologist who along with the local Aboriginal Knowledge Holders, carried out the excavation, undertook Aboriginal tool analysis and documented the process of Aboriginal tool construction and use.

Team

Kym McNamara from Heritage NSW, Deborah Swan and Elly Hutchinson from Transport for NSW, Aboriginal community members; Arthur Fletcher, Richard Edwards, Bobby Smith and from Jacobs Archaeologists; Andy Roberts, Alison Lamond and Jake Ferguson.

Outcomes

- 3,6620 items salvaged from the works
- Tool and residue analysis of Aboriginal artefacts with some cultural items being up to 27,000 years old
- Valuable new Aboriginal heritage data benefitting the local Aboriginal community and greater NSW





Aboriginal stone tool analysis