

Warrawong Community Health Centre

Outcomes Report

Yerrabingin acknowledges the First Nations knowledge holders and Traditional Custodians of Warrawong, the Dharawal peoples. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and honour their legacy throughout the design process.

This document outlines the process and key outcomes synthesised by Yerrabingin for the delivery of authentic design narratives for the Warrawong Community Health Centre. The document recounts the process of collaborative innovation between members of the local First Nations community, Yerrabingin, Cox Architects and Health Infrastructure.

The key attribute Yerrabingin offers is a focus on empathetic design solutions. Throughout the project, we engaged with different partners, connecting innovation and ideation with the wisdom of our culture. Yerrabingin engages with partners we can learn from and create alongside, resulting in First Nations design narratives that reflect Country.

Unlike traditional consultation or engagement, Yerrabingin ensures First Nations Peoples are active co-designers of the project and a collective voice is presented, instead of individuals. Ideation was explored through the lens of design thinking, using collaborative events such as a walk on Country, design jams, and community feedback sessions.

All discussion occurred on site with the cultural landscape and context of the area maintained at the front of mind. The collaboration between First Nations community members and the multidisciplinary design team brought a diversity of knowledge and perception to the design thinking process.

The process realised rapid prototypes for broader user testing framed by cultural protocols and key project principles. Drawing from the cultural narratives presented during the design jam, the below section outlines the key insights and outcomes from the day.

Outcomes of the Session

Health Infrastructure has the opportunity to showcase First Nations cultures throughout its redevelopment of the Warrawong Community Health Centre. Through a consideration of local knowledges, stories, and species, the landscape has the potential to function as a haven for both the community and non-human kin. Below summarises the key outcomes that best represent conversations from the design jam:

Water:

- The Warrawong Community Health Centre provides a range of opportunities to create an inclusive and accessible experience of Country. Through considered pathways, planting, and key activations (seating, wayfinding, art etc.), the site has the ability to foster and develop connections to water and water stories.
- All groups referenced the significance of water, discussing the cultural, social, and environmental functions of the element. For instance, the landscape can explore the natural water course on the front corner of the site, creating dry creek beds to capture and redistribute fresh rainwater.
- Connections may be deepened through intuitive pathways, signage, and strategically placed garden beds. Designed to contextualise the site within nearby salt and fresh waterways, the landscape should harness the slopes and connect view lines (to saltwater Country) and acknowledge Lake Illawarra.



- Showcase and celebrate water through art and sculpture. Consider the benefits of a water sculpture in facilitating water connections both culturally and sensorially for all users (e.g. soothing sounds and visuals).
- Groups tasked with exploring narratives focused on how water flows through the site, discussing how this natural flow should consider upper and lower catchments to guide the landscape design. The history of fishing and the freshwater/saltwater connections were also highlighted and may be incorporated within different elements of the site.



Outcomes Continued

- Groups tasked with exploring the spatial design identified opportunities for interpretive design in reference to water. With touches inside the building and across the landscape (e.g. frosting on windows with shapes of land and sea, water features, dry creek beds etc.) the site can look to provide moments of interaction for all users.

Stories:

- First Nations stories are woven within Warrawong and the Illawarra. Meaning *windy hill/wind on hill*, Warrawong is inherently guided by Country. The Community Health Centre therefore has the ability to facilitate and strengthen these connections, educating and engaging all users about the significance of place.
- Understanding the multicultural nature of the Warrawong community is important to the functionality of the site. With a range of dual learning opportunities within the landscape and building interior, the Warrawong Community Health Centre should draw from First Nations stories (e.g. Burri Burri, 5 islands etc.) to create moments of meaningful interaction.
- Establish a series of landscape pocket nodes that service different users. For instance, create small nodes for personal reflection, as well as, larger seated areas designed for conversation and collaboration (think Yarning circle).



- Nodes present further opportunities for activation and could facilitate partnerships and collaborations with local First Nations community groups or other health-related groups.
- Groups tasked with exploring narratives identified the significance of the birthing tree/fig tree and how this story may be communicated to create a safe and welcoming space for patients. Bringing the 'outside in,' groups also discussed how Sky Country could be better incorporated into the site (e.g. skylights reflecting narratives, and guiding users across the site).
- Groups tasked with exploring the spatial design focused on several design solutions that looked to embed stories within the site. For example, stories could be imprinted into seating, the landscape could include sculptures of native animals or totems, there could be designated areas for men's and women's business, and draw from Dharawal colour palettes (both with plants and the interior).



Outcomes Continued

Ecologies:

- Celebrate local species through planting scheme, considering how different textures, smells, and sights will contribute to the user experience. Building on this, ensure pathways interact with the landscape to encourage and guide people seamlessly across the site.
- Groups tasked with exploring narratives highlighted a range of opportunities to develop the landscape ecologies of the site, touching on different species and environments (estuary, reeds, nurseries, riparian zones, lemon-scented gum, melaleucas etc.).
- Groups tasked with exploring the spatial design also identified local species (e.g. Gymea Lilly, Pig Face, Illawarra Flame Tree etc.) in addition to creating Community Gardens and productive land (bush tucker uses). In particular, Group 2 discussed how the landscape could be designed in a way that speaks to the Four Islands. Expressed as four garden beds, with the building functioning as the fifth (Big Island), the site could showcase the local story and create a welcoming and Country-centered place.



- The Warrawong Community Health Centre is a hub of ecologies with human and non-human kin interacting across the site. More specifically, the Community Health Centre has the ability to reignite landscape ecologies, resulting in positive outcomes for the environment and all users of the space (e.g. aesthetic and functional planting beds to create welcoming and sustainable garden spaces, additional planting to mitigate heat from the carpark and bush terracing).
- Consider how existing landscape structures across the site may be repurposed to improve environmental outcomes. For example, utilise the existing car park wall as a way to maximise planting on site.

