

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY REPORT

BLAYNEY MULTIPURPOSE SERVICE REDEVELOPMENT

August 2023

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We acknowledge the First Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge their many Countries, knowledges and cultures. We pay our respects to the cultural knowledge-holders who have guided us in the development of this project. We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional owners of the land of the Wiradjuri Country where this project is been conducted. From the lands and waters where we live and work, we acknowledge the: Wurundjeri (Melbourne), Gamaragal (Sydney) and Turrbal (Brisbane) peoples. Through our projects, we commit to helping support the health and wellbeing of Country by valuing, respecting, and being guided by Aboriginal people.

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Connection on Country Walks conducted with local Aboriginal artist and community representative Nyree Reynolds , Health Infrastructure and Design Teams - July 2022

CREATING A PLACE OF HEALING AND WELLBEING

This report has been informed by engagement through interviews and workshop discussions at focus groups with selected stakeholders including Traditional Custodians and health representatives. This document has been compiled by NBRS and we express our deep gratitude to the individuals and communities who have contributed to the development of this report.

PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT TYPE:
Health Redevelopment

LOCATION:
Wiradjuri Country
Blayney NSW

CLIENT
Health Infrastructure NSW

PROJECT SCALE
~1.38ha

YEAR: 2023
Design Phase: Design
Development

CONTRIBUTORS

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE BLAYNEY MULTIPURPOSE SERVICE REDEVELOPMENT

Blayney Health Service (BHS) operates as a Multipurpose Service (MPS) and is co-located with a HealthOne providing primary health care services. Blayney Health Service currently has 29 beds a mixture of high care residential beds, inpatient beds and four treatment bays within the Emergency Department (ED) treatment space. Major redevelopment of the Blayney MPS is proposed to meet the current and projected demand for services.

Key development considerations for Blayney Health Service include:

- Aged population and demand for residential high care,
- Provision of a range of outpatient care services integrated with the existing HealthOne,
- Provision of integrated emergency, acute and ambulatory care services, and
- Improved connectivity to existing services.
- Provision of landscape which is culturally inclusive and appropriate for aged care residents.

With this project being conducted on Wiradjuri land, NBRS and Health

Infrastructure (HI) have ensured to engage Wiradjuri knowledge holders within the community. This report explores the Blayney Multipurpose Service Redevelopment's (BMPSR) vision and design principles through its engagement with an Aboriginal focus group (AFG). This report outlines the Wiradjuri knowledge learned in our engagements to date.

DESIGN FOR COUNTRY

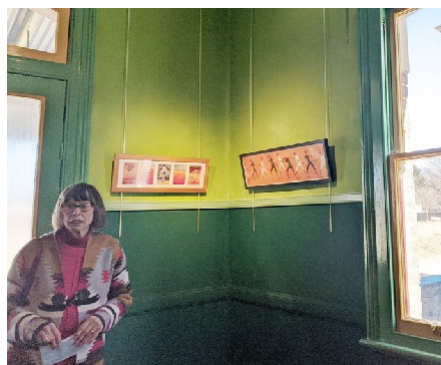
From the outset of the project, it was identified that Indigenous guidance and local knowledge is integral to the project's design, longevity and future use. To assist the design team in providing a best practice engagement and design outcome, strategies and protocols from the Connecting with Country Framework (GANSW 2023) and Australian Indigenous Design Charter (IDC 2018) have been adopted to guide the engagement.

The following points have been adopted to ensure cultural safety for participants and the design team for the life of the engagement.

- Indigenous Led: Ensure Indigenous representation in design practice is led by Indigenous.

- Community Specific: Respect for the rights of Indigenous peoples to oversee representation of their culture in design practice.
- Impact of Design: Always consider the reception and implications of all designs so that they are respectful to Indigenous culture.
- Shared Knowledge (collaboration, co-creation, procurement): Develop and implement respectful methods for all levels of engagement and sharing of Indigenous knowledge (collaboration, co-creation, procurement).
- Legal and moral: Demonstrate respect and honour cultural ownership and intellectual property rights, including moral rights, and obtain appropriate permissions where required.

The design and engagement process to date has resulted in NBRS establishing broader connections with the Wiradjuri community.

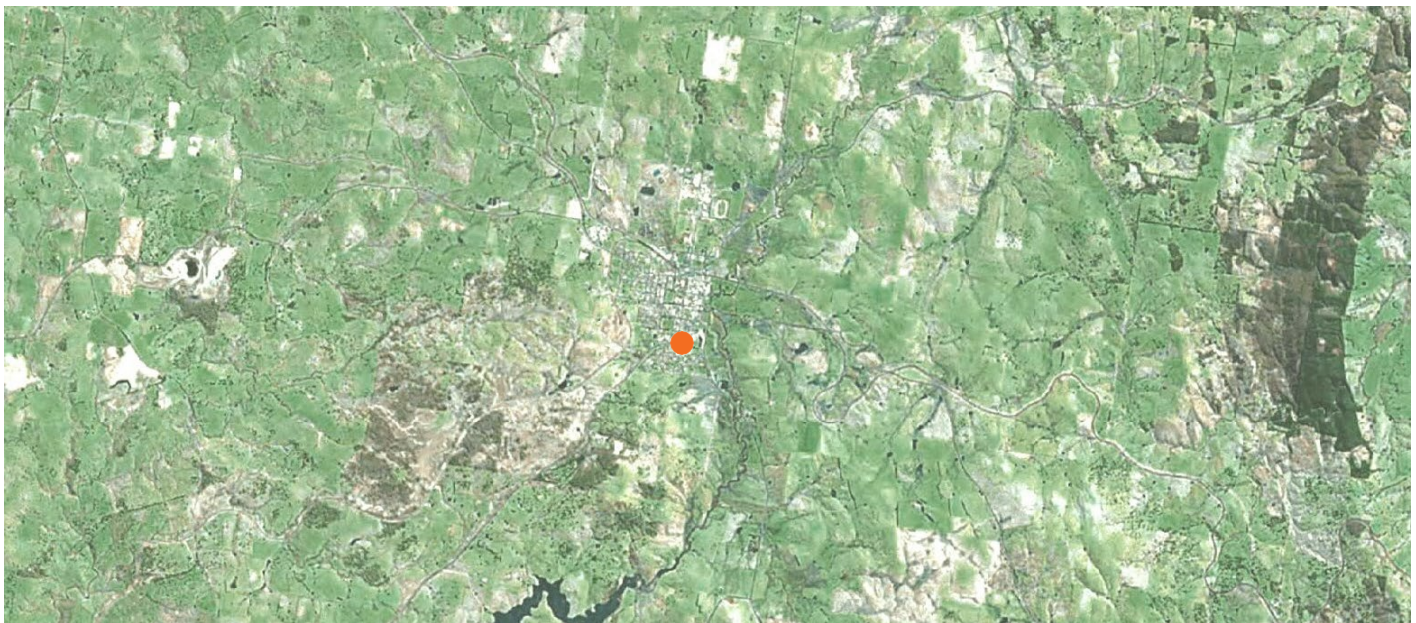


Connection on Country Walks conducted with Wiradjuri community, Health Infrastructure and Design Teams - July 2022

Pictured Left-Right: Tour of current Train station and exhibition | Artist Nyree Reynolds share knowledge and story of Country | Group visit of Kings Plain

2. CONTEXT

LOCALITY MAP



The project is located in the South Eastern Highlands Bioregion (SEHB) of NSW that sits within the Macquarie River catchment, which is a sub-catchment of the Murray-Darling Basin (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2003)¹.

The Wiradjuri people are known as the people of three rivers: the Wambool (Macquarie), the Kalari (Lachlan), and the Murrumbidgee, who travel periodically throughout the well-watered country²

Blayney, in close proximity to Belubula River, was originally home to the Mucare clan of Wiradjuri people, who were greatly disturbed by the arrival of convict overseers during the 1820s. The name Kings Plain was given to the area around Belubula River and proclaimed as Blayney³.



¹ Bioregions of NSW, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Hurstville.
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2003

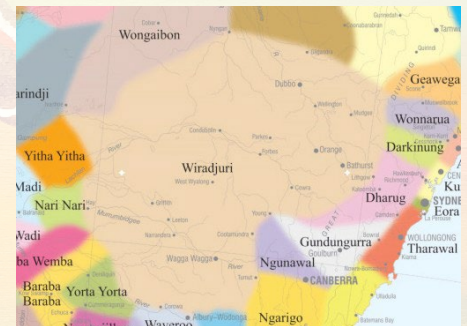
² Wiradjuri People, Bathurst Regional Council, ND

³ History of Blayney and Villages Blayney Shire Council, ND

1. WIRADJURI LANGUAGE GROUP

During the early stages of European settlement, the region of central-western New South Wales, encompassing areas such as Orange, Cadia, and Blayney, was home to the Wiradjuri people.

The Wiradjuri language group was connected to the lands surrounding significant river systems, including the Murrumbidgee, Macquarie, and Lachlan Rivers. It is known that within the Wiradjuri language group, there were at least 60 different dialects spoken by its people.



Source: Map of indigenous Australia, aiatsis.gov.au, 2023

2. KINGS PLAIN

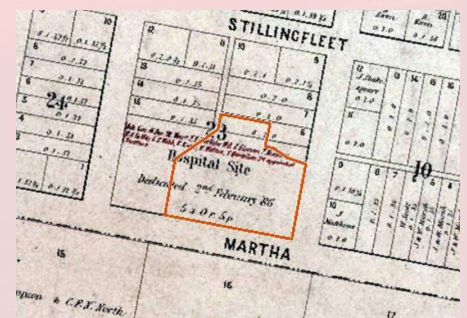
Originally known as Kings Plains, the region of Blayney in Australia witnessed its first land grants in 1823, as stated by the Blayney Shire Local & Family History Group Inc. The Church and School Estates were relinquished in 1833, allowing for private settlement, which officially commenced in 1837. The towns of Kings Plains and Carcoar were established in 1828 and 1829 respectively, with Carcoar eventually becoming the primary settlement in the area.



Kings Plain Source: ABC Central West: Luke Wong

3. BLAYNEY COTTAGE HOSPITAL ('BREVITIES' 1909)

Based on a Crown Plan from 1885, Section 23 of Blayney Village was designated as the site for a hospital. The dedication of this land took place on February 2, 1886. However, despite the allocation of land, no hospital buildings were constructed until 1909. The plans for the Blayney Cottage Hospital were approved by the Chief Secretary's Department, as reported in 'Brevities' (1909). On November 2, 1910, the Blayney Cottage Hospital officially opened by the Honorary G.S Beeby, Minister for Public Instruction.



Source: NSW Land Registry Services, Crown Plan B37.232

3. WALKING ON COUNTRY

CONNECTING TO WIRADJURI COUNTRY

Walking Country is an Aboriginal cultural practice of moving through, sensing, and listening to what Country is telling us.

- Connecting with Country Guide, GANSW

Walking on Country is an immersive activity that awakens senses and involves the sensory experience, encompassing sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, which informs a profound and deeper understanding of the Country we are on.¹

Walking on Country is usually carried out within a group setting to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and encourage connections to the land we are on. When led by Aboriginal people, this practice can also provide cultural and design guidance to project teams.²

Incorporating such cultural practices can enhance the process of gathering, understanding, and applying knowledge in the design of projects. One instance of integrating cultural practices into design methods is by engaging in walking Country alongside Aboriginal

knowledge-holders.³

In addition to the common approached site analysis, integrating the Aboriginal cultural tradition of walking Country can enhance this process by providing a more profound and tangible comprehension of the land, both in terms of its sensory experience and spatial aspects.⁴ The walks on Country to date has promoted relationships between the project team and local knowledge holders.

With the guidance of Wiradjuri knowledge holders who have long-founded affiliations with the land, the engagement was able to capture aspects of their histories and decisions that have affected Wiradjuri Country.

¹ Sensing Country Connecting with Country, GANSW, 2023

² Sensing Country Connecting with Country, GANSW, 2023

³ Sensing Country Connecting with Country, GANSW, 2023

⁴ Sensing Country Connecting with Country, GANSW, 2023



Walking on Country conducted with Wiradjuri community, Health Infrastructure and Design Teams - July 2022

Just as trees, mountains and rivers contain stories, the design of new places, objects and systems can be a purposeful extension of Country and imbue meaning and story into them, so that as we engage with them over time, multiple narratives are strengthened.

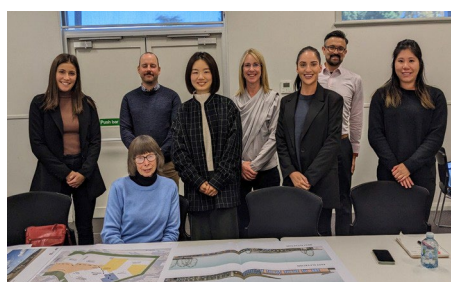
Alison Page, Design: Building on Country, Alison Page and Paul Memmott, 2021



Walking on Country conducted with Wiradjuri community, Health Infrastructure and Design Teams - July 2022

4. ABORIGINAL FOCUS GROUPS

IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITIES



Aboriginal Focus Group session - May 2023

Wiradjuri community members and Knowledge Holders were invited to participate in discussions during the development of the design of the BMPSR. Focus group sessions were held in November 2022, May 2023 and July 2023.

The focus groups were presented with diagrams and architectural visualizations (Appendix 01) and discussed how the site is intended to function, its opportunities and constraints. Conversations were held in an open forum manner to enable in-depth discussions about the site's history, stories of personal connections to the hospital and Wiradjuri cultural knowledge.

The intent of the engagement was to learn of the stories that are significant to the community and could be explored and interpreted in the design process. At the end of each focus group, participants were asked for verbal feedback and recommendations.

A few key feedbacks received from the past listening sessions:

- Rich reflection on Blayney's heritage
- Provide holistic space
- Yarning Circle a is key to the community
- Native plants that draw people to outdoor and Nature
- Community is key as a whole
- Consideration be given to the scar trees, also known as canoe trees or shield tree
- Consider Wiradjuri astronomy in the design

The following table collates the common lessons learned from each session.



Aboriginal Focus Group session - July 2023

WHAT WE HEARD

CONTEXT/ENVIRONMENT

- Aboriginal artwork, in particular Wiradjuri art, is not always in dot format as we often see commercially
- The article focuses on 'The theory of supportive design' with study of Indigenous people's perception and experiences when waiting for health care was shared with the design team
- 'Sorry Business' is the kinship and family meeting before, during, and after the passing of a loved one.
- Inspiration from Mountains and Rivers (i.e. Fitzgeralds Mount and Belabula River)
- Consideration be given to the scar trees and Wiradjuri astronomy

CULTURE/ MATERIALITY

- Culturally sensitive room and external landscape
- Certain plants are reciprocal and it is important to plant them together.
- Important to protect existing trees
- Endemic planting – Brian Parker from Blayney Shire Council is a good contact for sourcing plants
- RAC courtyard preferred for yarning circle,
- Focal courtyard should be green (ideally trees) with artwork secondary
- Landscaped areas should reflect unique local community, homelike environment in RAC courtyard and be multisensory – sight, smell and sounds
- Need plants that change so you can appreciate the seasonality
- Plants with movement and bird attracting
- Water feature – possibly a drip water feature
- Should be a strong natural element

INTERPRETATION/ DESIGN

- Welcome to Country to be displayed at front entry
- Artworks could tell a story from the entry right to the foyer guiding you through the site
- Artworks can be contributed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists
- Provide opportunity for interactive artworks
- Art curation principles to be finalised
- Signage should reflect current LHD plan

DESIGN RESPONSE

- Ensure that archaeological and Indigenous consultants are engaged by APP (Project Manager)
- Ensure the contractor incorporates an unexpected finds procedure within the management plans as identified within the SOHI.
- Develop arts strategy that incorporates and showcases Indigenous livelihoods and cultural significance
- Palliative care area to include patient bed access and to have direct access to courtyard promoting connection with the landscape.
- Reflect Sorry Business and culturally important sites
- Draw inspiration from Nature in spatial and design language
- Group gathering areas (indoor and outdoor) designed to be shared by community
- Spaces that provides culturally safe environment
- Signage to reflect local cultures and to include Indigenous language
- Include seasonal and sensory planting to courtyards and in a cultural space (ie, yarning circle)
- A place to hold smoking ceremonies, local dance groups, history talks.
- Source plants locally where possible
- Provide opportunity for community to contribute plants to the site
- Design landscape to promote endemic planting that provides seasonal marks and movement
- A dry creek bed to be incorporated for seasonal water feature
- Focus on natural materials and select materials that embed the memory of place.
- Paving with graphic/abstract interpretation of River
- Design elements that symbolise some of the important cultural elements, such as the the Belabula (River)
- Art strategy to include broad engagement with community by the project's local Arts Working Group as part of Health Infrastructure's Arts in Health program
- Signage to draw inspiration from local cultures and include Indigenous language use and first placenames
- Designs should seek to reflect the spiritual significance of the rivers.

5. APPENDIX 01

ABORIGINAL FOCUS GROUP PRESENTATION MATERIAL

LANDSCAPE DESIGN APPROACH



CONNECTION WITH COUNTRY

- Respect and respond
- Early engagement
- Country-centred approach
- Expression of Identity



THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPE

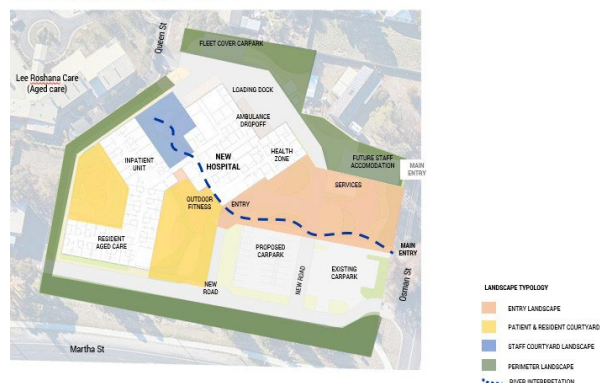
- Diverse spatial and materials in landscape
- Create social and passive places
- Provide safe and inclusive courtyard



ACCESSIBILITY & WAYFINDING

- Provide inclusive access
- Provide clear wayfinding and navigation
- Ensure security requirements are achieved

LANDSCAPE CONCEPT



ENTRY LANDSCAPE



PATIENT AND RESIDENT COURTYARD



STAFF COURTYARD



PRELIMINARY PLANTING SELECTION



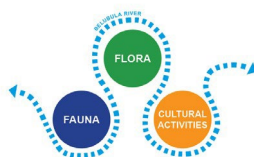
TYPICAL RAC ROOM LOOK AND FEEL



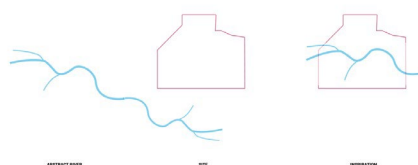
APPENDIX 02

ABORIGINAL FOCUS GROUP PRESENTATION MATERIAL

KEY COMPONENTS



INSPIRATION BELUBULA RIVER



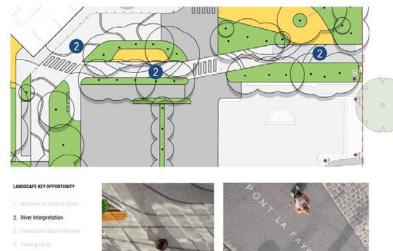
DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES



DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES



DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES



DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES



DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES



DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES



PLANTING LIST

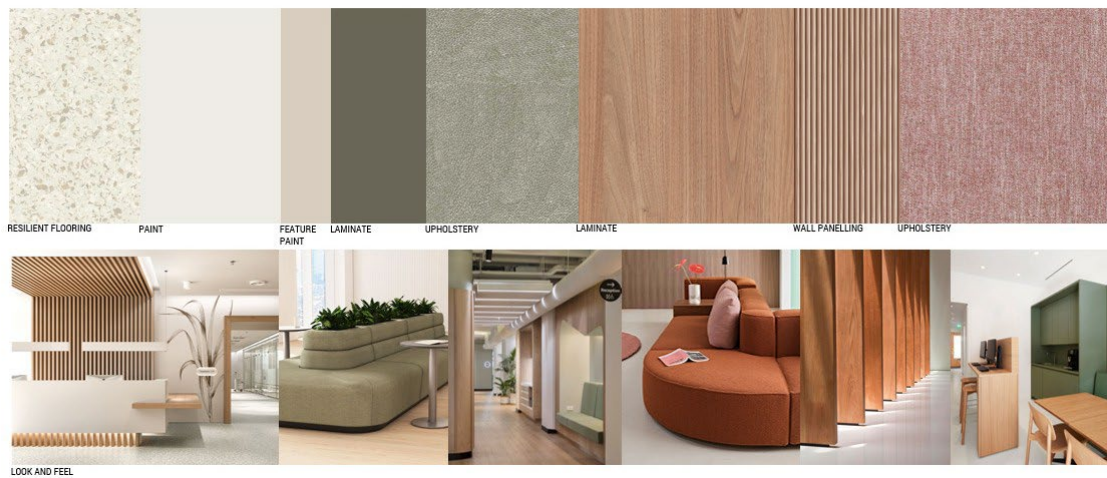
KEY TREE SPECIES

1. Black Wattle
2. White Cypress Pine
3. River she-oak
4. Apple Box Broad-leaved Peppermint
5. Mountain gum Red
6. Stringybark Yellow Box

KEY PLANTING SPECIES

- Purple Wiregrass
- Speargrass
- Cut Leaf Daisy
- Sweet Bursaria
- Tall Sedge
- Yellow Buttercup
- Rock Correa
- Longhair Plume Grass
- Kidney Weed
- Sticky Hop Bush
- Climbing Saltbush
- Knobby Club Rush
- Hoary Guinea Flower
- Australian Indigo
- Common Rush
- Yellow Tea Tree
- Many-flowered Mat-rush
- Rice Flower
- Grey Tussock Grass
- Common Buttercup
- Wallaby Grass
- Kangaroo Grass
- Tall Bluebell

RECEPTION AND WAITING



RAC LOUNGE AND DINING

