

# **BOTANY ROAD CORRIDOR STRATEGIC REVIEW**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
community engagement and cultural  
heritage research**

**SUMMARY AND ADVICE**  
**February 2021**

## About this document

This document has been prepared by Aboriginal social change agency Cox Inall Ridgeway (CIR) for the City of Sydney Council (the City) as part of the strategic planning review of an area known as the 'Botany Road Corridor' (the Study Area).

CIR was engaged to undertake Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement, cultural heritage research (incorporating a historical study and archaeological assessment) and other research to support the strategic planning review. The outcomes from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused research and community engagement undertaken by CIR are presented as four separate reports:

- 1. Botany Road Corridor Strategic Review Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement and cultural heritage research – *Summary and Advice* (this document):** The *Summary and Advice* presents an overview of the research and community engagement undertaken by CIR. It identifies opportunities to support Indigenous place-making and the incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in future planning for the Botany Road Corridor and surrounding areas, particularly Redfern.
- 2. Botany Road Corridor Strategic Review Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement and cultural heritage research – *Project Report*:** This is the main project report. The *Project Report* presents what CIR heard from the community engagement, the Statement of Significance for the area, background and context about the area, 'Designing with Country' case studies and highlights from the research and other studies undertaken by CIR. The Project methodology and outcomes from the brief survey of Aboriginal organisations and local residents are included as appendixes to this report.
- 3. Brief Aboriginal Historical Study of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds:** The Brief Aboriginal Historical Study of the Botany Road Corridor and surrounds provides an overview of the history of the area, prioritising Aboriginal voices, views and stories. It profiles selected places and events which illustrate the rich and diverse social history of the area, drawing on knowledge about the local area which was collected by CIR and others from the Aboriginal community.
- 4. Archaeological Assessment Botany Road Corridor (Alexandria, Waterloo and Redfern):** The Archaeological Assessment of the Botany Road Corridor has been prepared by Urbis, with strategic input from CIR. It investigates the Aboriginal archaeological potential of the Study Area and presents other information about the history and heritage of the area.

The *Summary and Advice*, *Project Report* and *Brief Aboriginal Historical Study* have been authored by CIR. They reflect the independent insights and analysis of CIR, not the City of Sydney Council or any other organisation. While all care has been taken by CIR to ensure information is accurate, the documents may contain errors.

## Acknowledgements

CIR acknowledges and pays respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations of Australia. We acknowledge and thank the Elders, organisations, staff and community members who participated in this project and shared their advice, knowledge and insights.

Thank you in particular to: Gadigal Elders and descendants, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, the City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, and the City of Sydney Indigenous Leadership and Engagement team. Thank you also to the City's Strategic Planning and Urban Design staff, other staff who provided feedback and advice, and the TZG urban design and heritage teams.

## Copyright

Copyright for the documents prepared by CIR for this project is vested with the City of Sydney Council. Copyright does not extend to Indigenous cultural knowledge or other Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) collected through this project. Consistent with the terms of CIR's engagement with the City and commitment to Aboriginal stakeholders and community members: rights to stories, knowledge and ICIP remain with knowledge holder and custodians, and are not transferred or impacted as a result of being shared with CIR, or included in this document.

## Project team

The CIR project team was led by Dr Aden Ridgeway, the founding partner of CIR, and CIR Head of Research Sylvie Ellsmore. Other key project team members were: CIR Senior Consultant Tiernan Campbell-O'Brien, CIR Director Harpreet Kalsi, Urbis Associate Director Balasz Hansel, and Senior Historian Cameron Muir. Contributions to the research and project report were made by: CIR Associate Consultant Janis Constable, CIR Associate Consultant Julia Martignoli and CIR Researcher Conal Thwaites.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this document may contain images, names and references to deceased persons.

## Terms used in this document

While CIR acknowledges the many separate and distinct First Nations of Australia, including both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, CIR primarily refers to Aboriginal people, organisations, events and places at key points throughout the reports produced for the City.

CIR acknowledges that Torres Strait Islander people, and people with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, are residents of the Botany Road Corridor Study Area, and were actively involved in many historic Aboriginal organisations and movements in the area. This project was inclusive of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In primarily using the term Aboriginal, rather than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in the project reports CIR notes:

- The Study Area (the Botany Road Corridor) is located on Aboriginal land. The Study Area is part of the traditional lands and waters of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.
- Many of the historic organisations established in Redfern identify as 'Aboriginal organisations' (such as the Aboriginal Medical Service), although they are also inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.
- The term 'Aboriginal Redfern' is commonly used in the community in a way which is inclusive of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

At points in the reports the term 'Indigenous' is also used, to refer to either the First Nations of Australia collectively (both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) or the First Nations of other nations (such as Canada).



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| <b>PROJECT REPORT</b>                    | Separate document |
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| <b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT</b>         | Separate document |

# SUMMARY

## About the Project

Cox Inall Ridgeway (CIR), a specialist Aboriginal social change agency, was engaged by the Council of the City of Sydney (the City), to undertake Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement and cultural heritage research for an area defined as the 'Botany Road Corridor' (the Study Area) in inner-Sydney.

The Study Area is a central part of what has, for the last 100 years, become the most well-known and significant urban Aboriginal place in Australia - 'Aboriginal Redfern'. Aboriginal Redfern can be understood to include not only the suburb of Redfern but surrounding suburbs including Waterloo, Alexandria, Everleigh and Darlington. Redfern is acknowledged by the City for its historic and continuing status as a focus of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life in Sydney.<sup>1</sup>

It is a commitment under the City's local planning statement – *City Plan 2036* - to undertake a review of the planning controls affecting the Botany Road Corridor.<sup>2</sup> As the Botany Road Corridor experiences change and growth, the City is keen to better understand the significance of the place to Aboriginal people, but in particular local Aboriginal residents, local Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal community influencers and leaders.

In particular, the Aboriginal community engagement and cultural heritage study (the Project) undertaken by CIR for the City aimed to:

- Collate information about the identity, history, cultures, heritage and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community connected to the Study Area,
- Identify and report on places of cultural, archaeological, historical, heritage, social or other significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, within or connected to the Study Area, and
- Identify opportunities to acknowledge, celebrate and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, histories, cultures and aspirations in future planning instruments or policies for the Study Area and surrounds.

A key deliverable from the Project was the provision of advice for the City about opportunities to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, views and aspirations at the centre of future planning for the Botany Road Corridor.

## The 'Botany Road Corridor' Study Area

The Study Area centres on Botany Road, which is a major road that runs past Redfern Station through to Sydney Airport and Botany Bay. It adjoins Redfern Station, Redfern Street, the Waterloo public housing estate, Alexandria Park and the new Waterloo Metro Station (currently under construction).

The surrounding area has experienced significant change in recent decades, from an area characterised by low income housing and industrial land uses, to a hub for knowledge industries, urban renewal, increased residential density and rising property prices.



The Study Area has been identified through NSW Government and City plans as a major transport hub, an ‘Innovation Corridor’ to grow employment and industry, and as an area for ‘urban transformation’. Significant targets for the area have been set in terms of employment, residential and commercial development. The City advises that it: “has identified the Botany Road corridor as an opportunity to provide much needed employment and business space including office, retail, community and cultural uses. [Through the strategic review the City is] investigating planning changes to strengthen the employment role of the area and support night and day economic, social and cultural activity and safety. This may mean changes to building height, built form and land use controls to support employment growth.”<sup>3</sup>



*Map 1: CIR Map of the Botany Road Corridor Study Area, as updated August 2020 to include a small additional section at the top of Cope Street and Jack Floyd Reserve*

A small additional section at the corner of Redfern Street and Botany Road was incorporated into the Study Area in August 2020. The project methodology was designed prior to this change but, in any case, the Project generally took a view which was designed to identify and acknowledge nearby and connecting stories, places and significance, beyond the immediate Study Area, where possible.

## Project approach

CIR worked with research, planning and heritage consultancy firm **Urbis** to conduct the Project over May to September 2020. The Project was implemented in accordance with the City of Sydney’s *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols* (2012), the City’s *Community Engagement Framework* (2019) and the *Principles of Cooperation* agreement between the City and the

Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. Updates to the project contract were agreed early in the process, to ensure the protection of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).

The **literature review and desktop research** included a review of key planning and strategic documents, online sources specified in the project brief (including *Barani*, *Redfern Oral Histories* and the *Dictionary of Sydney*), primary and secondary historical material, published histories of the area and more. High level mapping was undertaken to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, businesses and cultural institutions based in or near the Study Area. Demographic and employment data were considered. Examples of Indigenous-centred design and placemaking in Australia and other jurisdictions were identified. In conducting the research CIR privileged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authored literature, research and reports.

The **Aboriginal-focused cultural heritage review** undertaken by CIR and Urbis incorporated an Aboriginal-focused historical study, archaeological assessment and review of heritage registers. CIR collaborated and shared research and insights with other consultant teams engaged for the strategic review, particularly the urban design team (TZG) who were engaged to undertake the formal Heritage Study for the strategic review.

Community engagement informed the *Brief Aboriginal Historical Study of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds* which was completed by CIR, the *Archaeological Assessment Botany Road Corridor (Alexandria, Waterloo and Redfern)* which was completed by Urbis, and the Project in general. In addition to information collected through the community engagement, a large number of previous historical studies, heritage reports and archaeological assessments relating to developments in the area were undertaken, and a search of existing heritage databases, including the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS).

Existing heritage management frameworks were critically examined. Projects and planning which integrate Indigenous design principles were identified. In particular, CIR considered the ‘Designing with Country’ Discussion Paper and resources developed by the NSW Government Architect’s office.<sup>4</sup> Further details of the research approach and sources are included in the Methodology, which is included as an Appendix to the *Project Report*.

## Community engagement

CIR sought to build on existing reports and previous consultations, which captured the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in relation to the significance, history and cultural heritage of the area. In addition to the protocol documents noted above, resources reviewed by CIR included:

- The City of Sydney’s Eora Journey website, *Eora Economic Development Plan* and *Eora Journey Harbour Walk Storytelling Report*,<sup>5</sup>
- The *First People’s Dialogue Report* (2019), which was undertaken by the City as part of the consultation for the development of the *Towards Sustainable Sydney 2050* plan,<sup>6</sup>
- Notes from a local NAIDOC Caring for Country consultation (July 2019),<sup>7</sup> and
- Notes from previous consultations undertaken by CIR in Redfern in 2019.

CIR developed a detailed **Community Engagement Plan**, incorporating stakeholder mapping, areas of inquiry and community engagement tools (including a Discussion Guide for interviewees). The plan was finalised following feedback from various City staff including the strategic review project team (Strategic Planning and Urban Design) and the Indigenous Leadership and Engagement team.

Consistent with the *Principles of Cooperation* agreement feedback was sought from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. CIR provided updates to the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel in August 2020.

The original scope of the community engagement was in-depth, targeted conversations or workshops with between 20 and 30 individuals, prioritising: Gadigal Elders; the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council; other Senior Elders within the community; Aboriginal organisations with offices directly in or adjoining the Botany Road Corridor, or who have long running knowledge and history of the area; public housing tenants; and local Aboriginal families and organisations working with families living in the area.

The community engagement was undertaken from August to September 2020. The original timeline for the community engagement phase of the Project (Phase 1) was extended from 6 weeks to 14 weeks (including preparation of materials). Engagement was in the form of email invitations and phone calls to priority stakeholders, meetings; individual interviews; a group workshop; a presentation; and an online survey (15 August to 11 September). Engagements were held remotely to ensure safety with COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

In total CIR received in-depth advice or feedback from 23 Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander individuals or organisations (including one non-Indigenous staff member), with approximately 14 hours of interviews completed. The online survey was completed by 279 people, including 28 people who identified as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander. The City supported the community engagement through a 'Have Your Say' webpage and submission process, a letterbox drop and ads promoting the survey on Koori Radio. CIR is not aware of any submissions authored by Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander people or organisations.

Detailed insights from the community engagement and survey are included in the body of the *Project Report*.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and history

The research and community engagement undertaken by CIR confirmed what was already known by the City and is reflected through its cultural protocols and plans: that the part of the inner city which was the focus of this project has a very important Aboriginal and shared history, and is at the centre of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life in the city today.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a long history with the inner Sydney suburbs of Redfern, Waterloo and Alexandria, and the place defined as the Botany Road Corridor. The Aboriginal history of the area provides a rich source of tradition, wisdom, stories and knowledge for the whole community. It demonstrates the longevity of the connection of Aboriginal people to the place they call home. This place and wider landscape have been constant in their ability to nurture and nourish the Aboriginal soul. It is also a place which affirms cultural identity and instils a sense of enormous pride. It is the centre of what can be understood as the urban cultural landscape known as '**Aboriginal Redfern**'.

The area is part of Gadigal Country, within the Eora Nation. The Gadigal clan is one of the 29 Aboriginal clans of the Sydney basin which make up the Eora nation<sup>8</sup>. Aboriginal people lived and used local resources for many generations prior to invasion and colonisation by the British. They used the heath and wetlands in this area to camp, hunt, fish, construct tools, keep and share knowledge, create art, and harvest plant foods and medicine. They maintained pathways through



the dune heath that connected coastal and inland clans. When the British invaded, Aboriginal people sought refuge here.

Significantly impacted through displacement, disease and frontier conflict, Gadigal people and other clans and nations based in the Sydney basin adapted and responded. Indeed, Aboriginal people were part of the working life of the colony. As the colony of Sydney expanded, Aboriginal people became an integral part of the city, adapting, negotiating, and forging shared histories. Despite the impacts of invasion and colonisation, Gadigal descendants remained living in or close to the area, and continue to live in or close to the Study Area today.

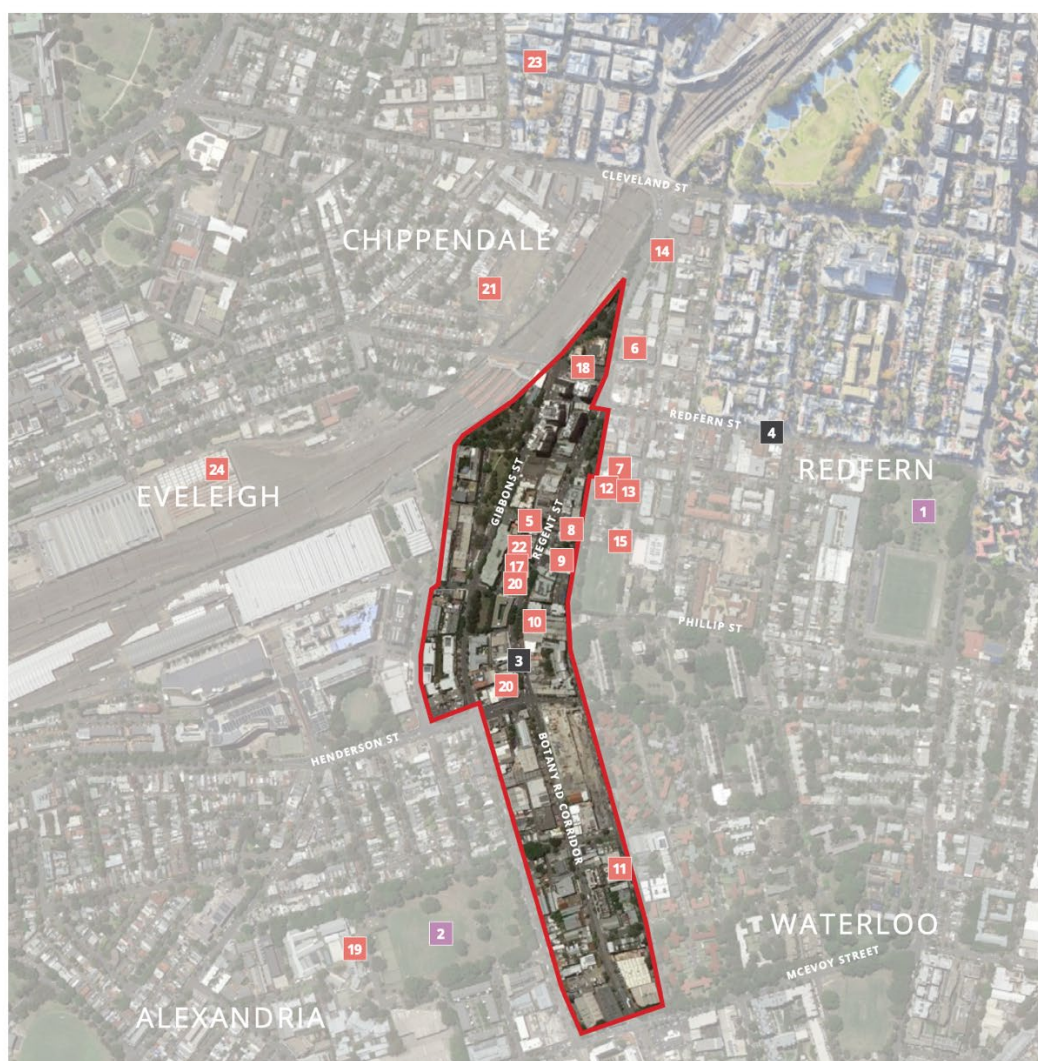
In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the area centred around Redfern became “the heart of the Aboriginal struggle for land, justice, co-existence and recognition.”<sup>9</sup> In the early part of the century as the area became Sydney’s busiest industrial precinct, Aboriginal people from across New South Wales and Australia migrated here to find work in the Eveleigh railway workshops, glass factories, and myriad of other manufacturing jobs.

Aboriginal people from across Sydney and NSW migrated to the area to find work, connect with other Aboriginal people, and for those impacted by forced removals, to get support and information about their families and people. By the mid to late 1960s the Aboriginal population of the area was around 35,000. It was the heart of the Aboriginal diaspora. In the words of Gary Foley (Indigenous rights advocate and writer) Redfern and surrounds became the biggest Aboriginal community that’s ever existed in the 60,000 year history of Australia.

The area was the birthplace of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, which have since grown to become national organisations, and continue to be based in the area. The Aboriginal rights movement gave rise to the establishment of the Aboriginal Legal Service in 1970, the Aboriginal Medical Service in 1971, and the Black Theatre in 1972, all on Regent Street within the Study Area. The movement also provided impetus for the Aboriginal Embassy, established in Canberra in 1972. The Block, just outside the Study Area, was one of the first major urban land grants to Aboriginal people. Murawina was the first childcare centre run by and for Aboriginal people. These served as inspiration for self-determination among other Indigenous communities around Australia.

Redfern and surrounds was the place where Aboriginal people came together to hold important meetings, such as the first NSW Aboriginal Land Council meeting, and attend large social events, such as the Koori Knockout rugby league competition. Police treatment of Aboriginal people spawned activism against discrimination and over-policing. Young Aboriginal activists and intellectuals, frustrated at the lack of progress after the goodwill of the 1967 referendum, shared literature associated with the United States’ Black Power movement.

Aboriginal Redfern was also a key birthplace of important contemporary artistic and cultural movements including Aboriginal theatre, dance, music, art, radio and film. Several of the first Aboriginal-controlled artistic institutions were based in or directly adjoin the Study Area. The Black Theatre brought Aboriginal voices and stories to mainstream audiences and launched the careers of actors, filmmakers, and other creative artists. The Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre was the forerunner to the world-leading Bangarra Dance company. A cluster of Aboriginal cultural institutions continue as part of the Study Area today, including Koori Radio (Gadigal Information Services).



- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 Redfern Oval  | 9 First Black Theatre site (181 Regent Street)                         | 17 Former Palms Milk Bar (approx. 140 Regent St)     |
| 2 Alexandria Oval   | 10 Former Clifton Hotel (1 Botany Rd)                                  | 18 Former Lawson Theatre (1 Lawson Square)           |
| 3 Early Aboriginal trade route (approx. Botany Road)                | 11 First NSWALC office (184 Cope St)                                   | 19 Former Federal Match Factory (7-11 Park Road)     |
| 4 Early Aboriginal trade route (approx. Redfern Street)             | 12 Former Radio Redfern (27 Cope Street)                               | 20 Former South Sydney Community Aid (142 Regent St) |
| 5 Former Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service shopfront (142 Regent St) | 13 Former Black Theatre site (31 Cope Street)                          | 21 The Block   |
| 6 Former Empress Hotel (87 Regent St)                               | 14 Former Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs (approx. 21 Regent Street) | 22 St Luke's Church (118 Regent Street)              |
| 7 Former Black Theatre (27 Cope Street)                             | 15 Former Redfern Public School (160-202 George St Redfern)            | 23 Former Boomalli (14 Meagher St)                   |
| 8 Former Aboriginal Medical Service shopfront (171 Regent St)       | 16 Former Cricketer's Arms Hotel (56-58 Botany Road)                   | 24 Former Eveleigh Rail Yards                        |

*Map of selected places of history and memory, compiled by CIR for the City. Discussed in more detail in the Project Report.*

Today while the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the area has decreased, it remains one of the significant resident populations in the city. There is a powerful sense of ownership and cultural connection by Aboriginal and Torres Islander people to Aboriginal

Redfern and the Study Area. This sense of ownership and cultural connection exists very strongly for those who have lived, or who have family who lived in the area, who have worked in the area, or were part of organisations formed in or still based in the area.



- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 Redfern Station   | 11 Former Aboriginal Medical Service shopfront (171 Regent St) | 20 NTSCORP                                   |
| 2 New Waterloo Metro Station  | 12 First Black Theatre site (181 Regent Street)                | 21 Gadigal Information Service               |
| 3 Alexandria Park   | 13 First NSWALC office (184 Cope St)                           | 22 Tribal Warrior                            |
| 4 Redfern Park  | 14 Former Radio Redfern (27 Cope Street)                       | 23 NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce        |
| 5 The Block   | 15 Aboriginal Housing Company                                  | 24 Aboriginal Employment Strategy            |
| 6 Early Aboriginal trade route (approx. Botany Road)                | 16 Mudgin-gal Womens Place                                     | 25 Wayanga Aboriginal Aged Care              |
| 7 Early Aboriginal trade route (approx. Redfern Street)             | 17 Aboriginal Medical Service Cooperative Redfern              | 26 National Centre for Indigenous Excellence |
| 8 Former Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service shopfront (142 Regent St) | 18 Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council                  | 27 Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)        |
| 9 Former Empress Hotel (87 Regent St)                               | 19 Redfern Aboriginal Children's Service                       | 28 Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern          |
| 10 Former Black Theatre (27 Cope Street)                            |  |  |

*Map of selected Aboriginal organisations as of August 2020 and selected other local landmarks, compiled by CIR for the City*

Strong local connections extend to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families based in nearby inner-Sydney suburbs of Surry Hills, Glebe, Newtown, Erskineville, as well as other parts of Sydney where significant groups of Aboriginal people lived (some as a result of colonisation) such as La



Perouse, or more recently were relocated as a result of government policies relating to public housing and gentrification, such as Mount Druitt.

A large number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, cultural bodies and businesses today are based in or near the Study Area. Community events continue to be regularly held to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people together and keep connections to the area strong. At the same time, the increasing population of non-Indigenous people and gentrification has led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to feel the Aboriginal identity of the area is being lost.

The history of the area is explored in more detail in the *Brief Aboriginal Historical Study of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds* prepared by CIR for the City (December 2020).

## Cultural heritage and significance of the area

As outlined in the **Statement of Significance** for the Study Area,<sup>10</sup> which is included in the *Project Report*, CIR has assessed the Botany Road Corridor Study Area as highly significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, not only for those who live in, work or visit the area, but those based across Sydney, NSW and Australia.

Indigenous cultural heritage values need to be understood differently than the way heritage values are currently recognised under existing Australian planning and heritage management frameworks. Indigenous cultures are living cultures. They are practiced and passed on through generations. The practice of culture and passing on of knowledge maintains the connection to Country across history and time. This is how cultural heritage values connected to place are protected, maintained and revived.

Existing heritage frameworks tend to prioritise the protection of built form, particularly in urban areas. This approach often fails to consider the stories, knowledge and intangible values connected to place. It can also fail to acknowledge the importance of protecting the Indigenous community's ability to use, access and pass on knowledge about places, and the connection between places.

The level of surface disturbance or development in an area is important, but it does not mean that Country or place lose their significance or connection to the past. This is true in urban areas just as it is in areas where the natural topography and environment of an area has been protected (for example through a national park or Indigenous Protected Area).

Initiatives such as 'Designing with Country' seek to ensure Indigenous understandings of Country are embedded in planning processes. They move beyond site-specific understandings of cultural heritage, and emphasise instead the connections and relationships to Country, to people and to the wider cultural landscape.

Crucially, current legal frameworks for the protection of heritage including the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and related policies and due diligence guidelines, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1974* and the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* provide limited rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to determine impacts on cultural heritage. Under current laws the consent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is not required before identified cultural heritage is impacted or destroyed through development.

Indigenous understandings of the cultural heritage values in relation to the significance of the Study Area and surrounds were evident throughout the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement conducted by CIR. Ensuring ongoing access and the ability to use the area and pass on stories about the area were identified as priorities. In many cases, the importance of places were identified because of their history and use by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, even though original buildings where events or organisations existed had been demolished.

Managing the cultural heritage values of an urban area like Aboriginal Redfern requires consideration of new ways and new practices, to better identify and recognise those things of significance and value to Aboriginal people. New ways and new practices are needed to consider the significance and values in any assessment process, and in a proactive, meaningful and forward-looking way.

## What we heard

The *Project Report* provides highlights of what CIR heard from local Aboriginal Elders, organisations and the community. A brief summary of the feedback and advice CIR collected is below.

CIR heard that ‘Aboriginal Redfern’ is the most significant and well known urban Aboriginal place or precinct in Australia. The Botany Road Corridor is centrally located as part of this Aboriginal precinct.

The precinct is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia. Aboriginal Redfern was the place that Aboriginal people from many nations came together – particularly from NSW but also from other parts of Australia. Through this coming together, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people drove important changes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

*“All those mobs who came down there, built a life, and then go home. The history of that is really wonderful. That’s really special, those people who came here from NSW, and Australia too – but we know mainly from New South Wales.”* Gadigal Elder, Interview with CIR, August 2020

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who aren’t currently local residents feel strong connections to the area through having lived there in the past, through their family, through being part of local organisations, because they visit local Aboriginal-run services, because they have attended local events including cultural events and protests, or because their lives have otherwise been impacted by change driven by Aboriginal rights movements that grew out of Aboriginal Redfern.

There are many important places of memory and connection. These include places connected through family, working life (such as working together through factories and on the railways), social life (such as through sports, pubs and cafes where people gathered, fell in love, discussed politics, and forged communities) and through political campaigns and organisations.

The cultural heritage value and significance of these individual places needs to be understood in context, and in connection to each other.

*“There’s a landscape of significance really. There’s ... the history of activism and mobilisation by metro-based Aboriginal people and that being in the heart of Redfern. I feel really strongly about the significance of Waterloo and Redfern in particular. The concentration of Aboriginal people*



*in the city area, that is unique. What we have been able to achieve as a consequence of that presence. And creating a sense of community around those [Aboriginal community-controlled] organisations.”* Aboriginal organisation representative, Interview with CIR, August 2020

CIR heard consistently that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can't afford to live in the area, and that this has been a trend for some decades. Affordable housing was the most common and urgent need within the Aboriginal community that was reported to CIR.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations who own property in the area face challenges meeting the needs of communities, including through limited space to provide the level of services sought from the community. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations also risk being priced out of the area through high rents.

*“It's much more expensive [for our organisation] that 10 years ago.”* Aboriginal organisation staff member, Interview with CIR, August 2020

It was reported to CIR that there are not enough open spaces or community spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the area. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also reported that the gentrification has led to Aboriginal people feeling increasingly unwelcome in the area.

*“There's a fear that people won't want to come [to Redfern], won't feel welcome with the gentrification. If have a very expensive shop next to Aboriginal Legal Service shopfront, where people get stared at, they won't want to come to [that] office. I've seen that in the area. Out of the front of fancy bars – security guard give you the eye, so you don't want to go in.”* Local Aboriginal organisation Board member, Interview with CIR, September 2020

Aboriginal Redfern was a place of great struggle and racism. CIR heard that the truth in history should be recognised, but ultimately the Aboriginal Redfern story is one of strength.

CIR heard that the history and achievements of Aboriginal Redfern should be acknowledged and celebrated, particularly the history of Aboriginal Redfern as a central birthplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civil rights and self-determination.

CIR heard that place making for the precinct must both recognise the past and celebrate living cultural heritage and communities. There was some concern that future planning for the area could be tokenistic in its recognition of Aboriginal people, history and cultures, if it didn't ensure that the spaces within the Study Area remain open, welcoming and actively used by Aboriginal people.

*“We need to recognise the living community, the now, the future.”* Aboriginal community CEO, Interview with CIR, August 2020

There was clear and consistent feedback that there needed to be ongoing Aboriginal community engagement by the City, about the next steps for the area. While there were consistent, clear messages from the community engagement, it was also emphasised that the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is diverse, and not everyone gets along. This diversity needs to be acknowledged, and there shouldn't be an expectation that the Aboriginal community will speak with one voice, or have only one view. Diversity makes community engagement more challenging,

but there isn't an expectation put on other communities to have one view, and this expectation shouldn't be placed on the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The feedback and advice that CIR collected was also generally consistent with what the Aboriginal community has advised the City in the past (for example through the *First People's Dialogue Report* (2019), which was undertaken by the City as part of the consultation for the development of the *Towards Sustainable Sydney 2050* plan.

For example, the *First People's Dialogue* reported that it is necessary for Aboriginal people to have visibility and space in the City of Sydney "not just for daily cultural engagements but to reinforce a sense of Aboriginal community in Sydney, learning from elders, establishing an identity for young people, creating a broader story as First Nations people and be connected to place, history, heritage and culture" (at page 20).

Bringing bring Aboriginal concepts into planning and development was one of the "1st Priority Aspirations" from the First People's Dialogue. Ways to recognise Aboriginal concepts in planning and development, and celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage included: by recognising Aboriginal connections to Country and place, by recognising cultural authority as part of the planning process, by valuing Aboriginal cultural knowledge including by sharing of benefits with Aboriginal people from use of their knowledge, by renaming rename places, suburbs, streets, new suburbs, and by recognising connections to the natural environment and Country including waterways that run or previously ran through the City.

Through the survey conducted by CIR for the Project, CIR also heard a strong desire from the non-Indigenous community to acknowledge and celebrate the Aboriginal history of the area. "Recognising Aboriginal history and cultural heritage?" in the future planning for the area was considered 'Very important' by 120 people who answered the survey (65%) and 'Somewhat important' by 48 people (26%). It was the fourth most important thing in terms of planning for the future of the area, after 'Protecting and growing parks and green spaces' (94% said this was Very Important), 'Spaces for the community to come together and connect' (71% said this was Very Important) and 'Preventing overdevelopment' (67% said this was Very Important).

When asked "The area has an important history, being one of the first and oldest roads in Sydney, and the birthplace of many important people and organisations. Can you think of any events, places, people or groups whose stories should be celebrated, connected to the area?" non-Indigenous responses included:

*"The very clear representation of Aboriginal culture in artwork in the area - that's unique and gives the neighbourhood its character and distinctness to other inner-city suburbs."*

*"This area has a close connection to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. I feel their stories should definitely be celebrated and shared."*

## Recommendations and opportunities for action

Outlined below is advice developed by CIR for the City about opportunities to put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, views and aspirations at the centre of future planning for the Botany Road Corridor. The advice draws on the insights from both the research and community engagement. It considers the goals and targets of the City of Sydney's existing strategies, particularly the *City Plan 2036* and the *Eora Journey Economic Development Plan*.

The advice and recommendations seek to address the main areas of inquiry for the Project. They are grouped and presented as follows:

- Key findings and recommendations (K1 to K9)
- Planning, placemaking and design principles (P1 to P10)
- Culture heritage and site protection (CH1 to CH6)
- Archaeological sites and potential (AA1 to AA10)
- Other opportunities (OP1 to OP25)

## Key findings and headline recommendations

Strong local connections extend to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families based in nearby inner-Sydney suburbs of Surry Hills, Glebe, Newtown, Erskineville, as well as other parts of Sydney where significant groups of Aboriginal people lived (some as a result of colonisation) such as La Perouse, or more recently were relocated as a result of government policies relating to public housing and gentrification, such as Mount Druitt.

A large number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, cultural bodies and businesses today are based in or near the Study Area. Community events continue to be regularly held to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people together and keep connections to the area strong. At the same time, the increasing population of non-Indigenous people and gentrification has led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to feel the Aboriginal identity of the area is being lost.

The history of the area is explored in more detail in the Brief Aboriginal Historical Study of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds prepared by CIR for the City (December 2020).

- K1 Significance of the Study Area:** The Study Area and surrounds are highly significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The significance of the area should be recognised formally through planning instruments, placemaking and design.
- K2 Recognition of Aboriginal Redfern:** The Study Area sits at the heart of the cultural landscape that is 'Aboriginal Redfern'. The Study Area should be acknowledged as part of this wider cultural landscape, with key pathways and points of connection to other areas acknowledged in future planning, heritage, tourism and other placemaking initiatives. In considering the recommendations for the Study Area, the City should consider whether there are opportunities to achieve the same goals in surrounding areas, such in Redfern Street or the Waterloo precinct.
- K3 Designation of an Aboriginal precinct:** The Study Area is part of one of the most significant and well known, if not the most significant, urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander precincts in Australia - Redfern. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significance,

history, cultural heritage and community of the Study Area present valuable cultural, social and economic opportunities for the City of Sydney. The City should investigate the Study Area and Aboriginal Redfern being formally designated as part of an 'Aboriginal precinct', in order to strengthen and promote its cultural, social and economic values.

- K4 Cultural heritage protection:** A key aspect of the Study Area's significance arises from its history as the centre of urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civil rights struggles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. Potential heritage listing and zonings for the area and individual sites should be explored further, to determine whether they can meaningfully assist with protecting and promoting the cultural heritage values of the area. Any heritage protections implemented must consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's ability to access, use and pass on knowledge about places of importance in the area.
- K5 Celebration of people and cultural heritage:** The visibility of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and organisations is at risk from the large-scale development and change already underway in the area. Measures should be taken to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultural heritage and people remain highly visible in the area, including through Aboriginal-run shopfronts in prominent locations at the street level, public artworks, place and street naming, historical signage, and programs of public events.
- K6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents:** Urgent action is needed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to live in, and feel welcome to visit and work in, the Study Area and surrounds. With a fast-growing non-Indigenous resident population, if the area is to remain an Aboriginal precinct measures are needed to increase (not just maintain) the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local residents. Availability of low income and affordable housing is the main issue impacting the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to live in the area. The City should work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, housing providers, the NSW Government and others to ensure development in Redfern, Waterloo and other areas in the city provides culturally appropriate affordable and social housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- K7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations:** The Study Area is home to a cluster of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, historic community organisations, newer community organisations and cultural institutions. Measures should be investigated to strengthen the Aboriginal Redfern precinct that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait businesses and cultural industries, but also historic and emerging Aboriginal community organisations, as not-for-profit organisations are a key reason Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to visit and work in the Study Area.
- K8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-centred planning:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should play a leading role in determining how their cultural heritage, history and identities are best recognised in the Study Area and surrounds. The strategic directions and specific opportunities identified through this project should be further explored through a co-design or other process led by Gadigal people, conducted in collaboration or partnership with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, and which facilitate the involvement of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations with connections to the area. The City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory

Panel should be involved early and consistently in the development and implementation of the co-design process.

- K9 Indigenous knowledge protocols and benefit sharing:** In order to progress with placemaking and design initiatives that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and knowledge, a framework is needed to ensure community control of Indigenous knowledge. It is understood that the City of Sydney is currently developing a protocol or framework, which could be trialled or implemented in the Study Area.

## Planning, placemaking and design principles

Indigenous planning can be understood as Indigenous people making decisions about their place (whether in the built or natural environment) using their knowledge, values and principles to define and progress their present and future social, cultural, environmental and economic aspirations. Aspects of Indigenous planning, placemaking and design that should be considered include:

- Cultural protection and enhancement,
- Social cohesion and wellbeing,
- Environmental quality and quantity,
- Economic growth and redistribution, and
- Political autonomy and advocacy.

In the advice below CIR has sought to identify principles for planning, placemaking and design which reflect a people-centred approach, consistent with Indigenous concepts of planning. Any design principles should be further tested, refined and agreed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community before being implemented.

- P1 Cultural landscape:** The Botany Road Corridor should be recognised as part of the broader cultural landscape that is 'Aboriginal Redfern'.
- P2 Celebration as an Aboriginal precinct:** Planning, placemaking and design should celebrate and promote the Study Area as an Aboriginal precinct.
- P3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners:** Planning, placemaking and design should acknowledge the Gadigal people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the area.
- P4 Contribution of many nations:** Planning, placemaking and design should acknowledge the connection and contribution of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the area, and particularly the contribution of Aboriginal people from NSW nations to the area's urban development and civil rights history.
- P5 Living cultures:** Planning, placemaking and design should acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as living cultures. They should support the practice and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and languages for current and future generations.
- P6 Enlivening Country:** Planning, placemaking and design should acknowledge and where possible revive or enliven the pre-development landscape and traditional uses of Country, including the waterways and native vegetation. It should acknowledge and privilege knowledge of Country held by Gadigal descendants.



- P7 Inclusion and welcome:** Planning, placemaking and design should facilitate and secure the area as a place of welcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in relation to the use of public places and access and use of sites of significance.
- P8 Strengthening community:** Planning, placemaking and design should seek to facilitate and strength a sense of community, by creating opportunities for the community to come together and connect.
- P9 Place of rights and self-determination:** Planning, placemaking and design should celebrate and promote the achievements and identity of the Study Area as part of the historic, urban birthplace of self-determination and Indigenous rights movements. These movements had a national, and even international, impact.
- P10 Storytelling and truth in history:** Planning, placemaking and design should facilitate the sharing of stories and knowledge about the area for current and future generations, including re-addressing the existing imbalance caused by the historical exclusion of formal recognition of the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Islander people to the area.

## Cultural heritage and site protection

Despite the rich Aboriginal history of the area, there is currently little planning, legal or other formal recognition of culturally significant places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Study Area. Through this project a large number of specific places (or sites) with historical and heritage significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were identified within, and connected to, the Study Area. Selected sites are listed in the Mapping section of the *Project Report* and briefly profiled in the *Brief Aboriginal Historical Study of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds*.

With the advice and recommendations below CIR has sought to identify opportunities to make visible, protect and promote the Aboriginal cultural heritage within the Study Area, which could be further explored with the community. The suggestions are consistent with the ongoing goal of the *Eora Journey Economic Development Plan* to: “Facilitate greater recognition of Aboriginal history and culture in the public domain” (at 4.8).

Some of these sites have State and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significance, particularly those sites associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and civil rights struggles. A number of sites within the Study Area also have heritage significance for non-Indigenous Australians, particularly those that led changes to Australia’s national laws, and influenced Australians’ understandings of the nation’s history.

- CH1 Existing heritage listings:** Existing heritage listings of sites within the Study Area do not reflect their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and significance. Heritage listings for these sites could be updated to reflect a more accurate and complete record of their history and heritage.
- CH2 Potential additional heritage listings:** Further consultation should be undertaken with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to determine whether national, State or local heritage listing should be pursued as a mechanism to protect and promote the heritage values of other sites and ‘places of memory’ within the Study Area.
- CH3 Mapping of sites:** The City of Sydney should consider updating existing provisions of its Local Environment Plan, such as the Site Specific Provisions, or the creation of an Aboriginal cultural heritage mapping layer, to include sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance identified through this project.
- CH4 Intangible values:** As identified above, heritage management should seek to acknowledge the importance of stories and intangible values associated with specific sites, and facilitate their protection and maintenance. One important way to do this is through protecting the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access and use sites for cultural activities, particularly the sharing of stories with future generations.
- CH5 Layers of history and heritage:** Heritage recognition should consider the various intersecting and connected layers of history and heritage. These include: Aboriginal people’s working life (e.g. employment in rail yards and local factories), social life (e.g. the Empress, Palms Milk Bar), sports (e.g. Koori Knockout), contemporary Indigenous theatre, dance, art and music (e.g. Black Theatre, Aboriginal Dance Theatre, Koori Radio), political history/ civil

rights (e.g. first Land Council meeting) and the first community controlled organisations (e.g. Aboriginal Medical Service, Aboriginal Legal Service).

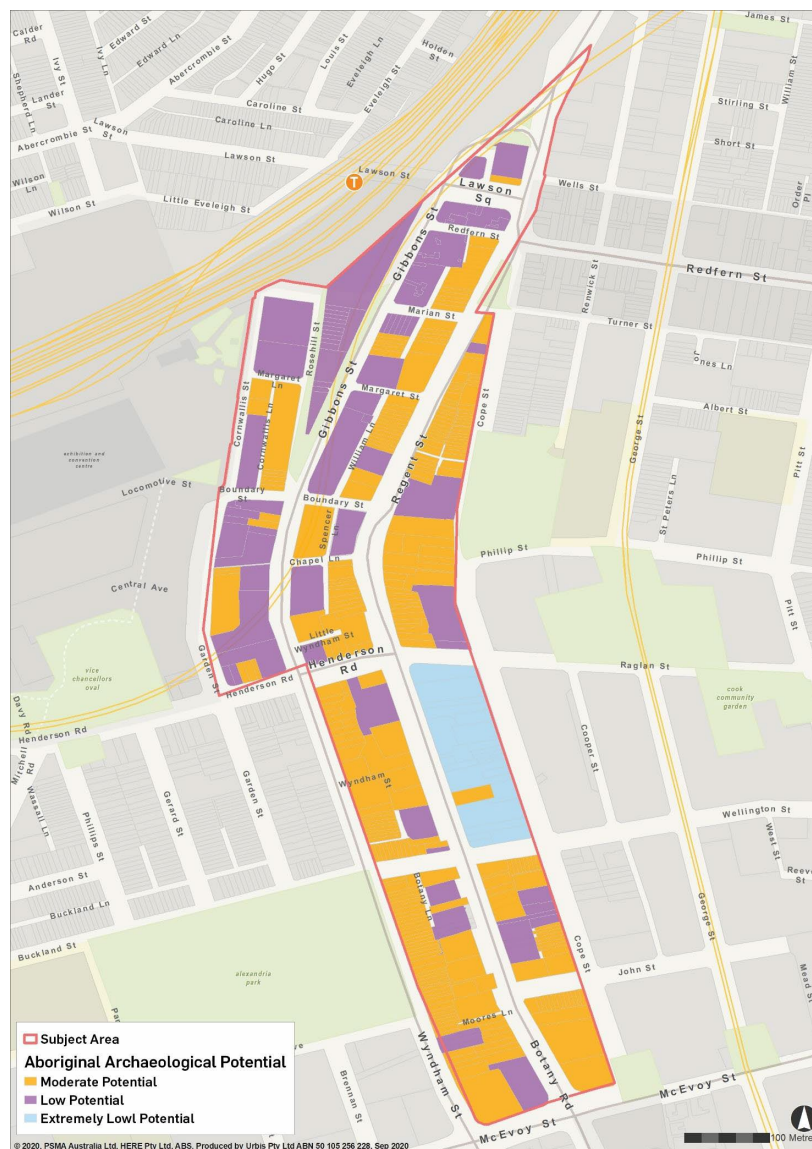
**CH6 Cultural heritage strategy and/ or protocol:** Noting the limitations of the current legal framework for identifying and protecting cultural heritage, the City should consider the development of an LGA-wide Aboriginal cultural heritage strategy and/ or protocol, to embed early identification and consultation about heritage impacts, and to provide practical guidance to developers about the community's and the City's expectations around the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Case studies identifying examples of cultural heritage strategies and protocols implemented in other jurisdictions are included in the *Project Report*.

## Archaeological sites and potential

The archaeological assessment for the Project was completed by Urbis for CIR. The *Archaeological Assessment Botany Road Corridor (Alexandria, Waterloo and Redfern)* found that the Study Area has been impacted by various levels of historical land use since colonisation, especially by the growing urban development of the late nineteenth century and all through the twentieth century, that has transformed the original natural environment into a densely built urban environment. Urbis concluded that the Study Area has various levels of potential for historical archaeological resources ranging from extremely low to high.

The map below identifies potential for historical archaeological resources by site. Recommendations AA1 to AA10 (below) outline advice about the steps needed to meet the requirements of the existing law, if development is undertaken. Refer to the *Archaeological Assessment Botany Road Corridor (Alexandria, Waterloo and Redfern)* prepared by Urbis for the City (December 2020) for more details.



*Aboriginal Archaeological Potential Map (Figure 14), from Archaeological Assessment Botany Road Corridor (Alexandria, Waterloo and Redfern) by Urbis for CIR (December 2020)*

## Further inquiries

**NOTE:** Some of the terms used in recommendations AA1 to AA9 (below) are outdated, and do not reflect understanding or descriptions of Aboriginal cultural heritage used elsewhere in this report and within Aboriginal communities (e.g. 'relics'). The terms have been included in recommendations AA1 to AA9 so the advice is clear about the steps needed to meet the requirements of the existing law, if further development of the area is undertaken.

**AA1 Post-contact archaeology:** The archaeological assessment considered only the tangible aspects of pre-contact Aboriginal cultural heritage and not the cultural heritage values of place or Country more broadly, or post-contact archaeology. It is recommended that additional archaeological research and investigation should be carried out to further detail the archaeological potential and significance of the subject area. This research should consider archaeological resources in a holistic way to understand the nature and extent of human occupation (both pre- and post -colonial) within the subject area.

## AIHMS listed sites

**AA2 Shell midden:** There is one Aboriginal site (AHIMS ID#45-6-2597 also known as 'Wynyard St midden') recorded within the subject area. No other specific archaeological sites were identified through the Project. It is concluded that the GPS location of the site in AHIMS is wrong, and the site was likely actually recorded in Gibbons Street Reserve. The archaeological assessment includes the recommended updated location for this site. The City of Sydney should update the information in the AHIMS to rectify the location of AHIMS Site ID#45-6-2597 also known as 'Wynyard Street Midden' to ensure the appropriate protection of the site.

## Due diligence and assessments

The primary framework for managing and impacting Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW is the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. Practical advice and legal requirements for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in relation to cultural heritage sites is provided through the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW* and the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents*. The primary framework for managing and impacting 'historical heritage', which can include sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage, is the *Heritage Act 1977*. While a standalone Aboriginal cultural heritage law is under development, there is no current timeline for its approval and implementation. The advice below aims to ensure compliance with the current legal requirements.

**AA3 Extremely Low Potential for Aboriginal archaeological resources:** Areas that have been identified as having Extremely Low Potential for Aboriginal archaeological resources, as a minimum, should be the subject to an Aboriginal Objects Due Diligence Assessment for any development and before any physical impact is approved, to ensure that no Aboriginal objects are harmed. As a minimum, consultation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council should also be carried out.

**AA4 Low Potential for Aboriginal archaeological resources:** Areas that have been identified as having Low Potential for Aboriginal archaeological resources, as a minimum requirement



should be the subject to an Aboriginal Objects Due Diligence Assessment and consultation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council for any development and before any physical impact is approved, to ensure that no Aboriginal objects are harmed. Should the due diligence assessment identify the presence of potential Aboriginal archaeological resources, an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment and consultation with the relevant Aboriginal people should be carried out to further investigate the identified archaeological resource. Should the presence of Aboriginal objects be confirmed, and impact could not be avoided, an application for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit under s90 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* might be necessary.

- AA5 Moderate Potential for Aboriginal archaeological resources:** Areas that have been identified as having Moderate Potential for Aboriginal archaeological resources, as a minimum requirement should be the subject to an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment and consultation with the relevant Aboriginal people for any development and before any physical impact is approved, to ensure that no Aboriginal objects are harmed. Should the presence of Aboriginal objects be confirmed, and impact could not be avoided, an application for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit under s90 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* might be necessary.
- AA6 Extremely Low Potential for historical archaeological resources:** Areas that have been identified as having Extremely Low Potential for historical archaeological resources should be the subject to a Baseline Historical Archaeological Assessment for any development and before any physical impact is approved to ensure that no relics are harmed. Should the potential for relics is confirmed, a Historical Archaeological Assessment should be carried out to assess the significance of those relics in accordance to the relevant guidelines under the *Heritage Act 1977*. Should the presence of significant (locally or state) relics is confirmed, an application for an excavation or exemption permit might be necessary under the *Heritage Act 1977*.
- AA7 Low to Moderate Potential for historical archaeological resources:** Areas that have been identified as having Low to Moderate Potential for historical archaeological resources should be the subject to a Historical Archaeological Assessment in accordance to the relevant guidelines under the *Heritage Act 1977* to assess the potential and significance of any archaeological resources for any development and before any physical impact is approved to ensure that no relics are harmed. Should the presence of significant (locally or state) relics is confirmed, an application for an excavation or exemption permit might be necessary under the *Heritage Act 1977*.
- AA8 Moderate to High Potential for historical archaeological resources:** Areas that have been identified as having Moderate to High Potential for historical archaeological resources should be the subject to a Historical Archaeological Assessment in accordance to the relevant guidelines under the *Heritage Act 1977* to assess the potential and significance of any archaeological resources for any development and before any physical impact is approved to ensure that no relics are harmed. Should the presence of significant (locally or state) relics is confirmed, an application for an excavation permit might be necessary under the *Heritage Act 1977*.
- AA9 High Potential for historical archaeological resources:** Areas that have been identified as having High Potential for historical archaeological resources should be the subject to a

Historical Archaeological Assessment for any development proposal and before any physical impact is approved to ensure that no relics are harmed. Should the presence of significant (locally or state) relics is confirmed, an application for an excavation permit might be necessary under the *Heritage Act 1977*.

- AA10 Roads and other areas:** All areas covered by roads, laneways, plazas and footpaths and other open spaces, in general, and whether identified in this study or not, should be considered as having moderate archaeological potential and should be the subject of further archaeological assessment before any impacts below the existing disturbance footprint.

## Other opportunities

This section of the advice identifies other opportunities to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, views and aspirations at the centre of future planning for the Botany Road Corridor. It draws primarily on information and advice collected from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the community engagement for this project.

It is important to note that the information collected from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community about aspirations, priorities and suggestions for the area are initial considerations only. While some specific suggestions were canvassed, CIR did not present particular proposals or placemaking ideas, or seek community support or endorsement for any particular design or placemaking ideas.

Consistent feedback from the community engagement was that further consultation, and the involvement of a greater number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including families with long running connections to Redfern, is required. Further community engagement is particularly important in relation to any specific proposals that include Aboriginal language names, that reference Gadigal people, Country, stories or connections between places, or that include reference to particular people, families or organisations.

## Employment and economy

The Study Area is currently home to a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses, the Sydney office of the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, multiple Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative institutions (such as Gadigal Information Services), and community organisations (including historical Aboriginal community-controlled organisations such as the Aboriginal Legal Service). Some of these organisations have a permanent home in the Study Area, however most are renting, and are at risk of being priced out of the area in the future. There were no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shops, cafes, restaurants or bars identified in the Study Area.

The City has identified additional employment floor space and employment growth as key priorities under the *City Plan 2036*. Action P2.5 includes strengthening the economic and productive role of the ‘Innovation Corridor’ of which the Study Area is part by:

- a) prioritising and safeguarding space for specialised and knowledge-based clusters and businesses, including, health, education, creative industries, professional services and information media (and)*
- b) identifying and supporting opportunities to appropriately increase capacity for commercial and other enterprise uses particularly those contributing to specialised and knowledge-based clusters ... including the Botany Road Corridor ...*

The City’s *Eora Journey Economic Development Plan* includes a range of measures to support the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and aims to “promote Sydney as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business hub.” Major commitments under the *Eora Journey Economic Development Plan* include, to “explore models to facilitate access to affordable space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retailers.”

- Op1 Promotion of Aboriginal business:** The City should investigate how it can support the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to the Study Area. Strategies to ensure successful expansion should be implemented in partnership with existing businesses, the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, and other organisations which promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and social enterprises.
- Op2 Not-for-profit organisations:** Not-for-profit organisations are a major employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Study Area and surrounds, and a primary driver of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visitors to the area. Measures are needed to ensure the long-term tenancy of Aboriginal-run not-for-profit organisations in particular. These could include the development of inclusionary zoning, or measures to facilitate voluntary agreements with future developers.
- Op3 Creation of Aboriginal ‘high street/s’:** There are only a selected number of Aboriginal organisations, businesses and creative industries in prominent, street level positions on Botany Road, or on nearby Redfern Street (which is near but outside the Study Area). Prominent Aboriginal-run shopfronts on major roads would assist with the re-enforcement of the Aboriginal precinct. Measures are needed to ensure that priority is given to Aboriginal shopfronts, in the future development of the area. The City should investigate how it can encourage or require the inclusion Aboriginal shopfronts on Botany Road, Regent Street and surrounding high streets.
- Op4 Night-time economy:** Existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the area are focused on the daytime economy. CIR heard some reports that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not feel welcome in some of the restaurants, bars and pubs in the area, particularly those established in recent years. Measures are needed to ensure an Aboriginal presence in the night-time economy, both in terms of leading food, cultural, entertainment and recreation activities, and feeling safe to access existing or future night-time recreation and entertainment spaces. Voluntary programs developed with local business chambers have proved successful in installing a culture of non-discrimination and inclusion, in other areas.
- Op5 City-controlled properties and potential land acquisitions:** The City of Sydney Council should consider whether it has properties in the Study Area which it could make available for use by Aboriginal organisations in the Study Area; and/ or assist the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in efforts to acquire further properties in the area. Specific properties of interest were: the former church at 118 Regent Street, due to its scale and history as a site of important civil rights activities supported by the Uniting Church; the mechanics at 131 Regent Street, to allow expansion of public space near Jack Floyd Reserve; and the original Black Theatre site on Botany Road. CIR did not explore the viability of these suggestions, however it is noted that the City recently purchased 119 Redfern Street (the former Redfern Post Office) for the creation of a centre for the Aboriginal community.

## Housing

The City has committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, housing providers, the NSW Government and others to ensure development in Redfern, Waterloo and other areas in the city provides culturally appropriate affordable and social housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prevent their displacement from the area. Through community engagement, access to low income and affordable priority was identified as the most important factor influencing whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will continue to have a strong presence in the area into the future.

**Op6 Affordable housing:** As a priority, the City should work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, housing providers, the NSW government and others to ensure development in Redfern, Waterloo and other areas in the city provides culturally appropriate affordable and social housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Strategies should aim to both prevent Aboriginal displacement from the area, and ensure significant growth in the number of Aboriginal residents as the area in the future

## Green spaces and public domain

CIR heard through the community engagement that there are not enough open spaces, green spaces or community spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the area. There was concern that increasing density would put further pressure on existing green spaces in particular.

CIR heard that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need places where families can gather to reflect and connect with each other. Another key theme was that public spaces need to be welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and specific or earmarked places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may be needed. There were also reports that past green spaces in the area that were traditionally highly used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (like Redfern Park) had lost their 'community feel', partly as a result of measures undertaken to upgrade and 'curate' those spaces in recent decades.

There was consistent feedback that existing space at the top of Regent Street/ Botany Road and start of Redfern Street, including Jack Floyd Reserve, is under-utilised and should be rejuvenated. It represents the most obvious opportunity in the Study Area for public space improvement. This area also has the benefit of being opposite an existing cluster of important Aboriginal organisations at the top of Cope Street, including the former Black Theatre site owned by the Indigenous Land Corporation.

**Op7 Existing green spaces:** Protecting existing green spaces and recreation, particularly Alexandria Park, is a priority. The protection of existing and heavily used green spaces like Alexandria Park should be prioritised in future planning for the area.

**Op 8 Jack Floyd Reserve and surrounds:** The existing area on the corner of Regent Street and Redfern Street, including Jack Floyd Reserve, should be upgraded or changed to make them better and more friendly place for people to us, walk through, gather and rest/ reflect.

**Op 9 Gateway to Redfern:** The prominent corner of Redfern Street and Regent Street/ Botany Road could be considered as the location of an upgraded open 'square' or meeting place, featuring Aboriginal design elements.



## Enlivening Country

Placemaking can create the opportunity to revive and strengthen Indigenous knowledge and stories about places. CIR heard through the community engagement that planning for the area should recognise the pre-urban topography and environment of Country, and should create opportunities to share Indigenous knowledge about how Country was used. Any strategies to use Indigenous knowledge should be implemented in a way that is consistent with cultural protocols, including respecting the right of knowledge holders to control how knowledge is collected, managed and used.

- Op 10 Early track or trading route:** There are indications that Botany Road was established on or near an existing Aboriginal track or trading route. Recognition of Botany Road as an early pathway or trading route between Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay should be included in the placemaking strategies for the Study Area, following further discussions with Gadigal people, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council.
- Op 11 Waterways:** Water played an important role in the Study Area. Future planning and placemaking should recognise the pathways and role of waterways which been impacted by urban development.
- Op 12 Native plantings:** Native plantings should consider cultural uses, including as bush foods. Opportunities for further investigation and partnerships should consider Yerrabingin House at Everleigh, which includes an Indigenous rooftop bushfood farm.

## Traffic, transport, people movement

The *City Plan 2036* includes measures to create more walkable neighbourhoods, where space and priority is given to people walking. Through the community engagement CIR had the opportunity to 'test', albeit in a limited way, the suggestion that traffic on Botany Road be reduced or slowed down. There was consistent support for making Botany Road more pedestrian friendly. There was also support for making Botany Road more attractive for people to visit, including through more cafes, restaurants or other places to eat or gather.

One specific suggestion made from the community engagement that the north part of Regent Street/ Botany Road in the Study Area could be converted to a sort of boulevard featuring a civil-rights walk, incorporating wider footpaths, historic signage, plaques and native plantings. Prominent trees could be planted acknowledging the different Aboriginal nations which came together in Redfern through the twentieth century. CIR raised this suggestion with multiple interviewees, and it was consistently supported as a concept.

- Op 13 People friendly streets:** Traffic and transport should aim to make Regent Street/ Botany Road more pedestrian friendly, more attractive to visit and easier to cross.
- Op 14 Aboriginal boulevard:** Consideration be given to establishing the north part of Botany Road within the Study Area as civil rights boulevard, which includes recognition of NSW Aboriginal nations.
- Op 15 Accessibility:** Car parking was identified as an accessibility issue for people transporting Elders to visit local services, and for the older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resident

population. The transport needs for residents and visitors with low mobility should be further investigated in future transport planning for the area.

### Murals, sculptures and other public art

The Study Area and surrounds include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in the form of murals and street art. The long running and well-maintained murals in the area involve some of Australia's leading Aboriginal artists. They are installed on both building exteriors (such as the 'Mission Boy Dreams' mural by Roy Kennedy on the Wyanga building) and interiors (such as the Elaine Russell mural inside the NTSCorp building on Rosehill Street).

Although immediately outside the Study Area, the '40,000 years' mural on Lawson Street plays an important role in announcing to people leaving Redfern Station that they have arrived at an Aboriginal precinct. Several people CIR spoke to lamented the loss of the large Aboriginal flag mural which previously existed in the Block, just outside the Study Area, which had also been an important icon of Aboriginal Redfern.

**Op 16 Murals and street art:** Future placemaking and public art strategies should aim to protect important murals, and maintain spaces for street art. Opportunities should be explored for additional murals, including in the form of a permanent, prominent Aboriginal flag mural, which is similar to the previous iconic mural associated with the Block or the 'I have a dream' mural on King Street.

**Op 17 'Bower' artwork:** The large, non-Indigenous 'Bower' artwork is currently the most prominent public art in the Study Area. Consideration should be given to removing or relocating the 'Bower' sculpture to facilitate the creation of a more open, welcoming space on the corner of Redfern Street and Regent Street/ Botany Road.

### Place naming, history and tourism

Throughout the research and community engagement for this project, and through other recent projects, CIR has heard consistently that the story of Aboriginal Redfern continues to be largely untold and unrecognised, especially by the wider non-Indigenous community. It is not reflected through existing place naming, signage, plaques, public place design, or heritage listings.

The rich history and significance of place is held in the living memory of Elders and families who are from or are connected to the area, in community oral history projects, in the writings and other works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander historians, film makers and artists, and in the lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in, work in, volunteer in or visit the area.

CIR heard concerns that knowledge is at risk of being lost without measures to actively pass it on to future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to the wider community. CIR also heard that the current project was far too limited, in terms of providing an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, organisations and researchers to share their knowledge of Aboriginal Redfern with CIR and the City.

The suggestions below are consistent with the goal of the *Eora Journey Economic Development Plan* to: "Facilitate greater recognition of Aboriginal history and culture in the public domain" (at 4.8).

Other relevant goals and actions from the plan include to:

- Facilitate greater recognition of Aboriginal history and culture in the public domain.
- Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators to create new visitor experiences and sustainable tourism products.
- Raise the profile of Sydney as the gateway to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, arts and experiences.
- Build capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators by supporting opportunities that enhance entrepreneurial skills, business knowledge, and access to networks.

The City has a number of existing resources to support knowledge of Aboriginal Redfern, including the *Barani Aboriginal Sydney* website and the *Barani Barrabugu (Yesterday Tomorrow)* self-guided history walks resource.

**Op 18 Place naming strategy:** CIR heard that that it is important for places, streets and parks to be named in recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and history. Language names should also be considered. However, there were diverse views about the best way to achieve this. Further exploration should be undertaken with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel to develop a place naming strategy and approach which is inclusive, transparent and consistent with cultural protocols.

**Op 19 Historical story telling:** Historic photos, plaques and/ or signage should be implemented in the Study Area along Botany Road, to recognise the civil rights and other important history of the area.

**Op 20 Community figures:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations who played a leading role in the Aboriginal history of the area should be recognised. It is important to recognise not only well-known figures, but also people who were the quiet achievers who made, and continue to make, important contributions to their community. Importantly, the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women should be recognised.

**Op 21 Promoting important conversations:** Aboriginal Redfern was a place of great struggle and racism, but most importantly was and is a place of strength and self-determination. The truth of the area's history should be recognised, as well as ongoing issues facing the community such as deaths in custody. In developing a place naming strategies and other initiatives, the City should aim to facilitate important conversations about truth telling, and Australia's past and present.

**Op 22 Walking trails:** CIR heard consistent support for the promotion of walking trails or local tours, as a way to promote knowledge of the history and significance of the area both to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to the wider community. The existing *Barani Barrabugu (Yesterday Tomorrow)* self-guided history walking tour and map are strong resources, but did not appear to be well known or used in the community. It was suggested that an Aboriginal Redfern walking trail could be formalised use plaques, signage and/ or footprints included in the footpaths. Engaging local Aboriginal people with knowledge of the area to lead tours was also recommended.

**Op 23 Tourism opportunities:** It was reported that visitors often come to Redfern, looking for but unable to find out information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the local history and cultural experiences. It is recommended that the City work with local organisations and businesses to develop an Aboriginal Redfern tourism strategy.

### Site-specific development controls

The community engagement did not include specific proposals for building heights within the Study Area. CIR instead asked relevant stakeholders for their general feedback about increased building height and density in the area. As noted above, the protection of amenity at Alexandria Park was a key priority.

**Op 24 Cope Street:** The top of Cope Street is home to a cluster of important Aboriginal organisations. Several stakeholders identified the importance of ensuring that these buildings are not overshadowed by adjoining developments and that site lines across Redfern are protected.

**Op 25 National Centre for Indigenous Excellence:** The current NCIE site includes the former Redfern Public School heritage buildings, offices, a gym, pool and sports fields which directly adjoin the Study Area. The site includes some of the largest green spaces in the area. The amenity of the site should be protected in any future planning.

### Next steps

The Project sought to engage key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in, or connected to, the Study Area, and provided an opportunity for open community feedback in the form of an online survey. Wide ranging research, including review of past relevant consultation reports, was conducted.

While the Project met its engagement targets, throughout the project CIR received advice from the community about other organisations, families, individuals and researchers that hold important knowledge about the area, and would want an opportunity to have a say in any process designed to recognise and celebrate Aboriginal Redfern.

CIR has recommended a co-design process conducted between the City and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to progress the recommendations and directions outlined in this advice. The *Project Report* includes further specific and practical suggestions for the City which could be implemented in the next steps of the planning for the Study Area and surrounds.

The strategic review of the Botany Road Corridor represents an opportunity to implement Australia's first Designing with Country approach to a large urban precinct. Aboriginal Redfern has iconic status in Australia. The work undertaken through the review to date lays a strong foundation to ensure a genuinely Aboriginal-led planning process that will benefit future generations.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See City of Sydney (2016) *Eora Journey Economic Development Plan*, at <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/build-your-skills-and-knowledge/business-research-and-data/business-in-your-sector/cross-sector-themes/aboriginal-employment-enterprise#page-element-dload>

<sup>2</sup> See Action 2.5 of City of Sydney (March 2020) *City Plan 2036* at <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/development/strategic-plans-planning-controls/strategic-plans/city-plan-2036>

<sup>3</sup> City of Sydney (2020) *Have your say on the future of Botany Road and surrounds* webpage at <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/council/your-say/have-your-say-future-botany-road-surrounds>.

<sup>4</sup> NSW Government Architect *Designing with Country* webpage at <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/projects/designing-with-country>

<sup>5</sup> City of Sydney (2019) *Eora Walk Story Telling Report* [https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/318405/Harbour-Walk-Storytelling-Report-November-2019.pdf](https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/318405/Harbour-Walk-Storytelling-Report-November-2019.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> City of Sydney (May 2019) *First Peoples Dialogue Forum* at [https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/318664/first-peoples-dialogue-forum.pdf](https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/318664/first-peoples-dialogue-forum.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Notes provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel member to CIR.

<sup>8</sup> The 29 clans of the Eora Nation are acknowledged by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council through Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country, and by the City of Sydney. See also the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (AIATSIS) *Map of Indigenous Australia*, at <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>.

<sup>9</sup> Quote from City of Sydney *Principles of Cooperation with Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council*.

<sup>10</sup> The Statement of Significance was provided by CIR to the City of Sydney Council in August 2020.