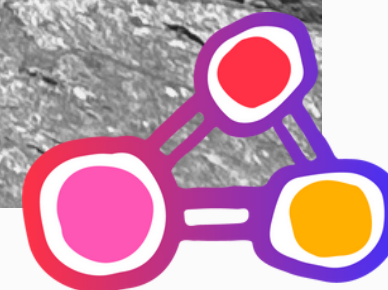


ENDORSEMENT

DESIGNING WITH COUNTRY

DHIIRA - APRIL 2023



Acknowledgement of Country

Page **01**

Acknowledgement

Dhiira recognises that this project was completed on the unceded lands of the Worimi and Awabakal People, we pay respect to our elders across past, present and future.

We recognise that the cultural, historical and nuanced knowledge, conversation and research shared as part of this project is sacred and thus pay respect to the community members as part of this project for their willingness to build to the future.

Leroy Wilkinson-Maher
Managing Director



Endorsement

Endorsement

Dhiira Pty Ltd was engaged by Iris Capital to lead the 'designing with country' practice for the East End stage 3&4 development.

Dhiira as the lead agency in the process went through rigorous community engagement in the complex environment to source 4 endorsed community representatives as leaders within their respective parts of community coupled with their respective areas of expertise.

The Community group once assembled, led by Dhiira went through a hard and fast learning journey on what parts of their respective areas of interest translate to architecture and design for this project in particular. Dhiira's main job was to not only draw on collective genius through ideation and culturally responsive methods of accessing information, history and culture but also to curate content that was transient to inform the built environment.

This document as a final submission to our client, Iris Capital, for the purposes of further DA submission is a formal endorsement from Dhiira Pty Ltd on their satisfactory and exemplary participation in a highly sensitive and impactful designing with country process.

Leroy Maher
Managing Director
Dhiira Pty Ltd

Consultation Process

The consultation process required the engagement of key community members to be able to co-design the 'designing with country' model for the East End development.

Selecting the right community representation is a process that is complex in its own right, in this project we modelled a cross section of strong community leaders with insights to

- History of place
- Research
- Language
- Culture and Heritage

The community members who graciously agreed to participate are:

- Dr. Ray Kelly Snr, Academic, Community Linguistics (languages from the East Coast of NSW)
- Prof. John Maynard, Purai Global Indigenous History Centre
- Theresa Dargin, Spiritual Waterways
- Peter Townsend, Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council

Cultural Intellectual Property

Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property rights are the rights that Aboriginal peoples have to their cultural heritage, also known as Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP).

This includes traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expression, cultural objects, secret and sacred material as well as documentation of Aboriginal peoples' heritage in all forms of media such as films, photographs, artistic works, books, reports, records taken by others, sound recordings and digital databases.

Cultural heritage includes both the tangible (objects, artwork, physical items), and intangible (knowledge, storytelling and techniques)

ICIP applies to the workshops, report and further engagement as part of this project.

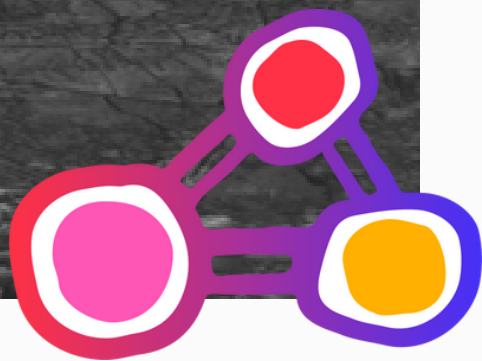
For more information on ICIP refer to:

<https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/our-agency/staying-accountable/aboriginal-cultural-and-intellectual-property-acip-protocol/>



SEGMENTS

@seaside.snaps
(Local Aboriginal photographer)



Segments

The following segments were developed to pocket areas of interest and value throughout the workshop series.

Integration of History, Culture and Language

How the notions of story telling are embedded into the built environment, through subtle and direct means

Materiality

The materials used and the look and feel of the material paying homage to country and history of place.

Use and Participation

How the local Aboriginal community will use, interact and participate in the space both through social and economic interests.

Landscape Architecture and Native Plant

The landscape architecture with respect to country, landform and water as well as the use of native plant species.



Dominant Themes

As the workshops progressed into the segments, three evident themes for integration emerged.

Aboriginal History

Middens

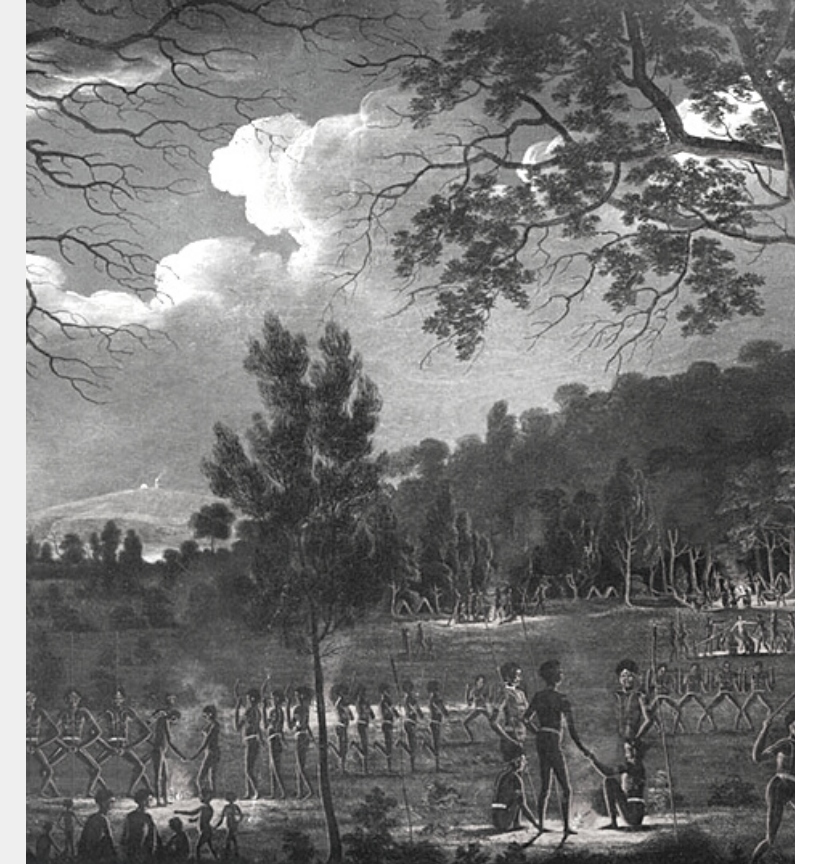


Integration of Aboriginal History, Culture and Language

Build the history in and on new development

Newcastle as the second penal colony from Sydney has a deep history with colonisation, *beneath* the built environment lies a rich history. This project provides an opportunity to tell the story of this place now on top of and within the built environment.

Embedding story, research and history into the built environment for the general population as an opportunity to learn.



Recommendations

- Engage research project to curate history and story of place to embed in the project by means of direct and indirect story telling mediums
- Representing the topography of the harbour before it was reclaimed, the general population do not widely know about the landform pre-settlement - the harbour, sand dunes, middens, formations and islands.
- Creating a true sense of place through history, utilising technology to preserve story. QR code the opportunity to read and hear (soundscape) stories about Newcastle's history.
- Use artistic expression of the water as means of a non-confronting element whereby people are immersed in history and furthering their access to learn more through intentional installations, mediums and technology integration.
- Pending advice from the Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council on the ability to bury artefact in a 'time capsule' beneath the building in land form that cannot be accessed again
- Engage linguist to develop language inclusion in the public space (consideration of stairs, above on awnings via metal cutouts etc.)

"we must pay respect to the history of our people whilst protecting the stories into the future"

Topography can tell the story of Whibayganba, the island before Nobby's breakwall and the natural land formation that once existed beneath our feet

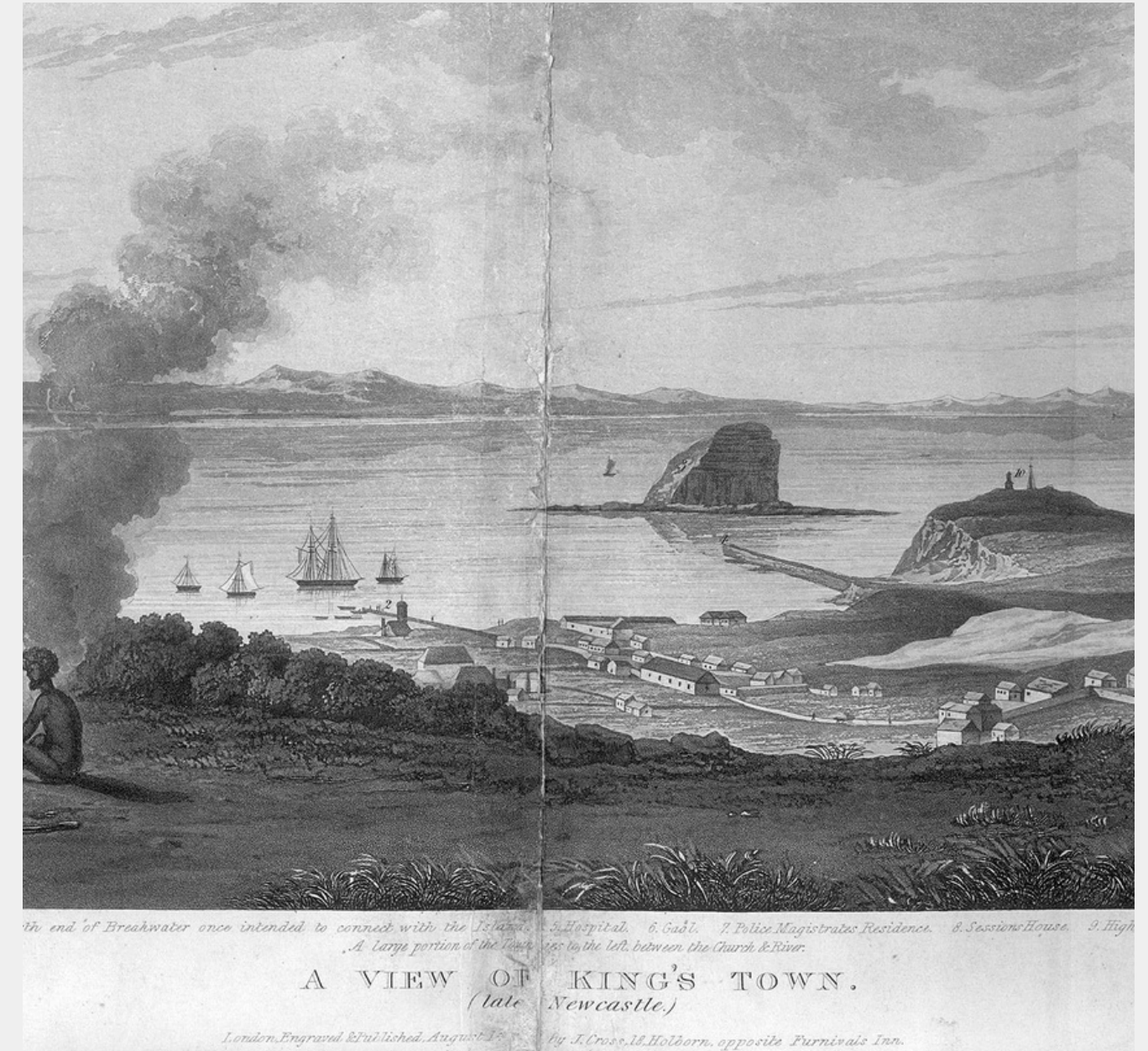
Rich History, RECORDED

Newcastle has a unique way of telling its story, we have access to a large amount of recorded sound files, more than a lot of places across the country. To capitalise on this unique way of telling story and sharing history we explored the idea of creating an interactive way to learn.

Interactive space to learn

The cohort ideated how we can preserve and share the rich research, knowledge and stories of this place, on top of the built environment, by way of fixture the concept of telling deliberate story through subtle text but linked through the use of QR code technology to a curated series of written articles, illustrations etc. coupled with readings and recorded audio files to not only further preserve the incredible resources we have access to but also to share these lessons with the general public and Aboriginal community alike.

This provides people too, the opportunity to not only see language as design features, but to also hear language recorded through their own devices.



Materiality



Evidence of life and an abundant seafood diet

Very large middens were found along the harbour of Newcastle rich with shellfish, oysters, lobster, fish and crab. The size and scale of these Middens evidence thousands of years of occupation by thousands of Aboriginal people.



Use of columns with different textures to represent water lines and the waters impact on rock

Artistic integration of the large middens that were largely present.

Recommendations

- Materiality of the build to reflect the contents and size of the middens, artistic and direct. Evidencing the scale of the middens and how the content of the midden at varying heights tell a story.
- Colour and application of colour to reflect the nature of the land, connected to the sea, the salt water people
- Exterior facades have the opportunity to tell the story of the importance of water with the heights of water through artistic expression as they wrap around the buildings external to internal
- Use of mediums of the stone and concrete to represent how the water interacts with rocks and stone over time, contrasting smoothness and roughness
- Privacy screens, precast - the opportunity to continue the theme of water into these mediums at intervals. Also pays homage to newcastle's drawing card, our world class beaches.
- Re-purposing of artefact drawn from this site and earlier stages through moulding and integrating into material



Use and Participation

Passion and Pride

Newcastle is home to a large population of Aboriginal people, from all across NSW and beyond as a rather transient location for Aboriginal People. Aboriginal people make up 4.4% of the population of the Newcastle LGA with 7,409 Aboriginal People as at the 2021 census. Looking to the future of this community, we think about health, social and economic prosperity which required incubation and deliberate contribution.



Recommendations

- Viability for a preferential tenancy agreement for a commercial space attached to the public space being designed by COLA studios where a non-factional Aboriginal social enterprise can be established to run hospitality, retail and tourism.
- By way of integration of history, culture, story and art, the space will become a place for Aboriginal people to gather, take their families, meet for a coffee or a feed and share in the rich, culturally integrated design and interactive nature of the scape and the interactive means of learning (QR code linking to developed research pieces and audio files)

As part of the City of Newcastle's 10 year local social strategy the community consultation told Dhiira that they want more space to connect and belong, that they didn't see themselves or feel like they were reflected in city in which they live, breathe and dream.



Landscape Architecture & Native Plants

The community group felt that through the use and application of native plants in the development, this will pay homage to the history of the place that once was whilst creating an environment free from exotic species where the community can interact with safe species of plant. The feel and smells of the environment tell a story of time before time.

By using edible natives the community have an opportunity to interact in a new way, that is not typical in Hunter St. or Newcastle more broadly. Safe for kids and safe for all.

Recommendations

- Endorsed the use of Native plant species over exotic plant species
- Encourage a lush, non-harsh environment rich in plant to soften the harsh built environment
- Creative use of all material to reference water and water play including the proposed 'water feature/stage'
- Integration of sharpening grooves in stone and/or integration of an interactive education tool (refer Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council educational tool)

Representing water through the application of the materiality of the ground.



The community group would like to acknowledge the amazing work of COLA studio, through the engagement of an Aboriginal Landscape Architect the initial scope was highly endorsed by the community with few recommendations.

Broader Project Recommendations

These recommendations sit outside of the scope of architecture and design of the space but offer an ongoing mechanism of pragmatic support to effectively develop and grow relationship, impact and contribution to the local Aboriginal community and Aboriginal economy.

Ongoing engagement

We recommend that Iris engage in a retainer contract with Dhiira and the 4 community members to be able to respond and react to the project as it is developed and to act too, as an advisory function to enable effective procurement, employment, community engagement and other core functions relative to Aboriginal Affairs.

Procure research and language

In line with the recommendations included in this interim report, contract and engage research and language as to be included in the physical space. This will take time.

Broaden idea of impact

In the interest of the project, work with community to understand the impact that can be made socially & economically through the work of the development and beyond.

Build legacy, during and after

Co-design with community, what legacy looks like at the jobs completion. What is left here when you leave?

Re-burying artefact

Burying artefact unearthed from this and previous stages of the development which are 10,000+ in number in the broken ground as to not be disturbed again.

Building Best Practice

Designing with country, is a unique and new application of Aboriginal Led co-Design within the development and infrastructure sector.

This project, is a legacy project. On behalf of the Dhiira and the community representatives as part of the consultation we applaud your bold vision to engage in a new way of doing things.

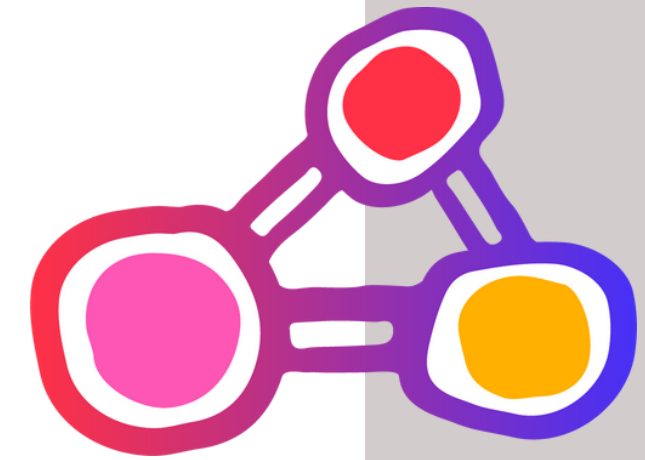
Over time, Aboriginal people have been directly excluded from participating in society and in the economy. This project represents change, the change that now Aboriginal voices are heard, we are part of the design, we are part of the space and we will use, interact with and see ourselves within the built environment.

We highlight that this is a very special moment in time, this model will likely be the best practice that will transform the way the sector operates with Aboriginal land and with communities across the country.

Keep the vision, feel the opportunity and grow the aspiration.



Thank you



A special thank you to

iris



durbach
block
jaggers

CURIOUS
PRACTICE



COLA
studio



Joseph Lycett, Aborigines hunting kangaroos (1820)

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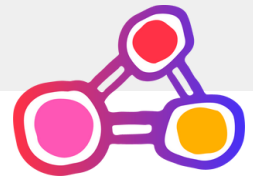
Social Media

@dhiiraco

East End Stage 3 & 4, Designing with Country,
Community Consultation Endorsement Report

Community Led co-Design

Cover Letter



**Iris Capital
East End Stage 3&4
Designing with Country**

Dhiira, as the Aboriginal consultancy firm engaged to lead the designing with country, community co-design for the East End stage 3&4 project provide this cover letter in conjunction with the endorsement report to provide a high level overview of the process, outputs and outcomes of the highly effective engagement.

We note, that this process is unfamiliar to our community here in Newcastle with developers on both private and government have not entered into such deep practices where community were brought on a journey to truly co-design the future of the built environment. This required a hard and fast process of bringing our community representatives through a process of learning, understanding and value creation.

The Community members, whilst initially sceptical of the process and their engagement, were able to see value in the project, where designing with country can be a way to preserve Aboriginal history, create meaningful place for our people and all people for generations to come and to re-write the narrative through architecture and development. Dhiira had to carefully curate the process to factor in the notions of distrust that our community were naturally attributed with and had to respond to their evolving needs, vision and aspirations for the outcomes and outputs.

The model we developed and followed was centred around organic parallel of interest, segments and their translation to the built environment. We separated the ask where community had their role to imagine, to surface story and history, to embed language and remember a place that once was, Dhiira and the Aboriginal architects were tasked with translating to architecture speak, assuring understanding of the value and importance of each segment, notion and idea and how the two culminated in creative reflection in design.

There were no rules for our community counterparts, meaning that community led the process. This highly effective process and model has not only been endorsed by our community partners but has now be observed by architecture firms with many looking to this process in particular to understand how they too can embed the practice and principles of this designing with country model. Our managing director, Leroy Maher was invited to speak at the Australian Institute of Architects, NSW Chapter, Regional committee to showcase this work, unpack the process and the model created to drive more interest and safety for other firms to meaningfully engage and advocate.

Overall this process was a wild success, the final submission will include and be reflective of community, their voice is now in design. This project not only created new ways of participating for our people, economic outcomes for the project team through ideation, a chance to imagine and shape the future of the city. The outcomes produced broadly through the design process are incredible conceptualisations of a place that was, this tells a story to all people who will be drawn and access this space and preserve this opportunity to engage for future generations in Newcastle.

We congratulate SJB, Curious Practice, Durbach Block Jagers and Cola Studio on their bold investment in relationship to change their thinking about design and a MASSIVE thank you to Iris Capital for being bold enough to invest in new, invest in our people and match commercial outcome with empowering Aboriginal people and communities.

This work has started a wild fire that will change the nature of community engagement and designing with country.

Leroy Maher
Managing Director
Dhiira

For further questions, contact Leroy Maher on 0450 393 145 or leroy@dhiira.com.au