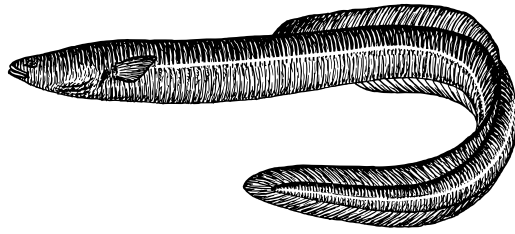


2024

# PARRAMATTA NORTH: FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY





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# INTRODUCTION

The Parramatta North First Nations engagement approach has been designed to ensure the Dharug and First Nations community have ongoing opportunities to build deeper and more meaningful connections to the Parramatta North Precinct. The process has continued to be led by Dharug Elders and Knowledge Holders to ensure that it is reflective of the Traditional Custodians of Country and representative of Dharug ways of knowing, being and doing.

The local First Nations community has also been an integral part of the engagement process as they too hold strong and enduring connections to the Country encompassing the Parramatta North Precinct. The process must recognise that First Nations community members each hold their own relationships with Country and have continued to act as it's custodians and advocates

Throughout 2023, the Dharug and First Nations community have warmly welcomed us onto their Country and allowed us to walk alongside them as we discover the cultural and historical significance of this site. Strong relationships have quickly formed through this process and we are now committed to continuing this journey with a new found sense of obligation to Country and community.

We look forward to continuing to learn from Country with Dharug and the First Nations community, as well as finding further opportunities to gain a deeper appreciation of the interconnectedness of Burramattagal and Dharug Country.

## **Report terminology**

First Nations languages are diverse and dynamic, with variations in spelling, pronunciation, and naming that reflect the rich cultural heritage and oral traditions of different communities. In the Dharug language, there is an acceptance of multiple spellings and names, including Burramattagal, Burramatta, Baramadagal and Baramada. This report will refer to 'Burramattagal' which is commonly used to refer to the people ('-gal' is a suffix denoting 'people of'), while 'Burramatta' refers to the place ('-matta' is the suffix for 'place of'). Dharug language is undergoing a significant cultural resurgence and future reports relating to the Parramatta North Precinct will reflect the accepted terminologies for community and Country.



# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



Throughout 2023, Ngurra Advisory and PDNSW held a number of First Nations focused Walks on Country and workshops to ensure the local Dharug and First Nations community were more closely connected to the Parramatta North Precinct.

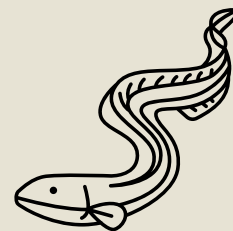
In these sessions we connected with Dharug Elders, Knowledge Holders and community members. This was undertaken alongside local First Nations community members with strong connections to Burramattagal Country to ensure the process was inclusive and respectful.

Key consultation dates included:

- Mon 10 July 2023
- Fri 11 August 2023
- Fri 10 November 2023

## First Nations Community members

Aunty Ros Fogg  
Aunty Cheryl Goh  
Uncle Paul Webb  
Aunty Jacinta Tobin  
Brendan Thomas  
Aunty Karen Maber  
Steven Ross  
Aunty Sue Pinkham  
Brad Moore  
Justine Coplan



# KEY THEMES

Following the Walks on Country and workshops with the Dharug and First Nations community at the Parramatta North Precinct, a number of key themes were identified that related to both design and operational deliverables associated with the project. These themes will play an important role in building a long term relationship with the Dharug and local First Nations community and should be used to guide for any future First Nations related outcomes across the development.



## **No. 01 – Caring for Country**

The ongoing care and health of Country should remain a constant priority for the Parramatta North Precinct. All future development within the masterplan should adhere to country centred principles that have been co-designed and led by the Dharug and First Nations community.



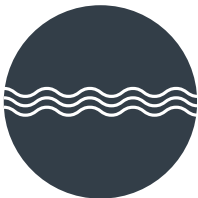
## **No. 02 – Celebrating Dharug**

The culture and history of the Burramattagal and Dharug people should be acknowledged and celebrated across the precinct to ensure that visitors to the site develop a more meaningful understanding of the Traditional Owners of the area.



## **No. 03 – A place for community & healing**

The Dharug and local First Nations community have expressed their desire for there to be a space within the Parramatta North precinct that is distinctly for First Nations people to gather, heal and actively participate in cultural activities.



## **No. 04 – Revitalising the Parramatta River**

The Parramatta River has been identified as the life blood of Burramattagal Country. Many community members, both Dharug and First Nations, hold stories of the river and its central place in traditional and modern cultural practices. The Parramatta North project has now been identified as an important mechanisms to create a more unified approach to improving the health of the river system.

# No. 01 – Caring for Country

The Parramatta North precinct presents a significant opportunity for both Dharug and local First Nations community members to meet their obligations to care and nurture Country. Community members who have actively participated in our Walks on Country have flagged Caring for Country opportunities as being their highest priority due to the cultural significance of the site and its position alongside the Parramatta River. There has also been a very clear message that both Dharug and First Nations people should be empowered to lead any Country centred revitalisation projects undertaken on the site.

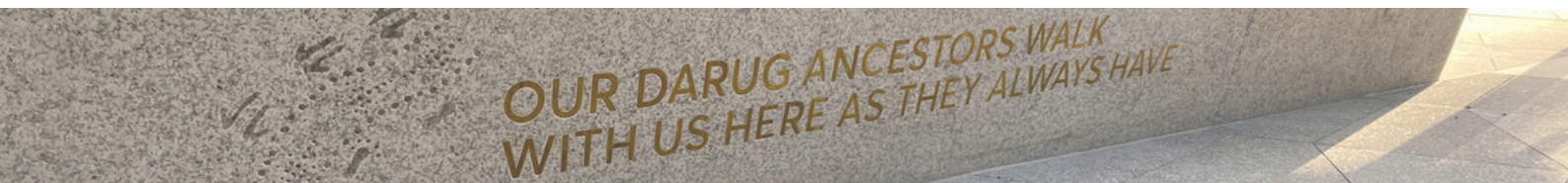
<b>Sub-Theme</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Prioritise the return of endemic plant species to the precinct</b>	There are a number of invasive plant species that need to be removed from the site. A transition plan must be established that allows for a gradual transition back to endemic species without impacting the sites ecosystem.
<b>Utilise Dharug and First Nations organisations / businesses for Caring for Country projects</b>	There are a number of local First Nations organisations who can undertake ongoing Caring for Country work across the site, particularly in relation to the river foreshore restoration.
<b>River foreshore revitalisation</b>	The Parramatta River foreshore requires considerable care and ongoing management to ensure it returns to a healthy form that's reflective of Dharug Country.
<b>Undertake cultural mapping of the precinct</b>	Dharug Elders and Knowledge Holders would like to be provided with the space, time and resources to undertake an extensive mapping of Country exercise across the precinct.
<b>Protecting and caring for non-human life</b>	The project must have a strong plan in place to ensure that local non-human life is prioritised. Local populations such as the bats need a lot of consideration and care to ensure their habitats aren't impacted by future development.
<b>Creating a place based approach to Caring for Country</b>	There is an opportunity to develop a First Nations led onsite nursery at Parramatta North that could meet the growing demand for plants that are the correct provenance for the site.



# No. 02 – Celebrating Dharug

As the Traditional Owners of Burramattagal Country, the Dharug community has been responsible for the ongoing care and protection of Country that is now known as the Parramatta North site. The new masterplan for the site presents an important opportunity to recognise and celebrate the unique culture and history of the Burramattagal and Dharug community through design, education and operations across the Parramatta North precinct.

Sub-Theme	Detail
<b>A strong presence of Dharug language and voices</b>	Dharug language is used across a number of project deliverables such as signage and wayfinding. Dharug perspectives are also shared via interviews and podcasts to ensure the communities culture and history is being shared through Dharug voices.
<b>Teaching Dharug history from the perspective of Traditional Owners</b>	The culture and history of Dharug is shared across the site using a range of education mediums that are co-designed and delivered in partnership with Elders and Knowledge Holders.
<b>Dharug are represented in First Nations governance</b>	The ongoing First Nations governance for the Parramatta North Precinct should have strong Burramattagal and Dharug representation.
<b>A strong presense of acknowledging Dharug Country</b>	The signage and wayfinding deliverables for the precinct should have a clear and considered approach to acknowledging that the site was, and has always been, occupied and cared for by Dharug.





# No. 03 – A Place for Community and Healing

Due to the cultural and historical significance of the site, Dharug and First Nations community members have expressed a strong desire for there to be spaces held within the site for First Nations occupation and use. These spaces would both enable Dharug-led cultural activities as well as facilitate processes of healing and reconnection for those with links to either the Female Factory or the Cumberland Hospital.

Sub-Theme	Detail
<b>Identify a space for Dharug and First Nations community</b>	Dharug and First Nations community members would like to see a dedicated space that is for First Nations community members to undertake a range of cultural and community focused activities. The space would be highly accessible and service a range of First Nations individuals and organisations.
<b>Develop a clear sense of what Healing looks like for First Nations people across the Precinct</b>	The Parramatta North site still represents a place of dispossession and trauma for many First Nations people. PDNSW should work closely with Stolen generations groups to understand how Healing can be supported and facilitated across the precinct.
<b>Strong cultural programming</b>	The precinct should have a strong presence of First Nations focused days of celebration and commemoration that are curated and lead by the local First Nations community.
<b>Establish a permanent First Nations advisory group</b>	A permanent First Nations advisory group should be established to provide ongoing advice and guidance for PDNSW.





# No. 04 – Revitalising Parramatta River

The Parramatta River is considered as the lifeblood of Burramattagal Country. Since time immemorial, it has sustained the Dharug people through its abundance of resources and Dharug returned this gift through their ongoing custodianship of its waterways. The river has since been largely neglected since colonial occupation and the Parramatta North Precinct has been identified as an important opportunity for Dharug to once again care for the river using deep understandings of Country held by the community.

<b>Sub-Theme</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Reconnecting people back to the river</b>	The local community have largely been excluded from accessing the river foreshore on the site due to invasive species and a lack of safe pathways along the rivers edge. Restoring this access will build closer connections with the River and a deeper appreciation of its significance to Country.
<b>Teaching Dharug movements and connections to the river</b>	Dharug connections to the Parramatta River, both historical and contemporary, should be shared and celebrated along the foreshore to educate the broader community on this important relationship based on reciprocity
<b>Connect Dharug and First Nations community to broader River governance mechanisms</b>	Dharug and First Nations community members who are actively engaged in the Parramatta North Precinct have an opportunity to share their aspirations and visions across local, state and federal governance mechanisms with oversight of the restoration of Parramatta River
<b>Establish a Caring for Country First Nations advisory group</b>	A Caring for Country First Nations advisory group should be established with First Nations representatives who can provide expert advice on plant species, landscape revitalisation and wildlife.



# Voices of Community

**“We need places and spaces for us to be Aboriginal people”**

Dharug Knowledge Holder

**“Caring for Country is understanding, firstly, it's about your relationship to Country through kinship and through understanding that not only are you related to other people in the landscape, but you're also related to other beings in the landscape. And those beings may be animals, the plants and vegetation communities that animals depend on, but they can be landscapes, they're part their areas of Country as well”**

Dharug community member

**“This project offers a rare opportunity for genuine and meaningful engagement on a site that has the scale and significance to embed Designing from Country principles that follows Country’s shapes, textures and the Dharug people’s ways of being on Country through practicing culture with rehabilitation of the waterways and communities spirit”**

Dharug community member

**“Our parents, grand parents and great grandparents have always been on Country, but have never had a voice for its care and protection like we do now”**

Dharug Elder

**“We must see this as an opportunity for restoration of Country and space where we can remove the historical barriers that have prevented us from having a unified approach to the care of Country”**

Dharug Elder

# NEXT STEPS



## **No. 01 – Commitment to action**

PDNSW has identified a number of key opportunities for short, medium and long term implementation. These opportunities should be collated and distributed to participating community members to enable a transparent tracking and monitoring process.



## **No. 02 – Establish ongoing governance**

A permanent First Nations advisory group should be set up that is tasked with maintaining oversight of the existing and future First Nations inspired design and operational opportunities for the precinct.



## **No. 03 – Share learnings with the community**

Share the findings from this engagement report and the commitment to action register with the community for their consideration and feedback.

