



# KURNELL PLANNING PROPOSAL

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY  
FRAMEWORK REPORT | NOVEMBER 2023

**COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH**



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Overview

This section outlines the engagement process and outcomes synthesised by Yerrabingin for the delivery of an authentic design approach to the Kurnell Planning Proposal. It recounts the process of collaborative design innovation between Besmaw, Group GSA, Urbis, Yerrabingin and members of the local First Nations community. It explains the purpose of the design methodology, how the outcomes for creative and culturally sensitive placemaking were reached, and recognises and applies the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework.

The key attribute Yerrabingin offers is a focus on empathetic design solutions. Throughout the project, we engaged with different partners, connecting innovation and ideation with the wisdom of our cultures.

Yerrabingin engages with partners we can learn from and create alongside, resulting in First Nations narratives that reflect the Country the project takes place on. Unlike traditional consultation or engagement, Yerrabingin ensures First Nations peoples are active co-designers of the project, fostering the collective voice of the community.

For the development of the Kurnell Planning Proposal, ideation was explored through the lens of design thinking and using collaborative events such as a Walk on Country, Design Jam, and Community Feedback Session.

The key first step was identifying needs, desires, and apprehensions whilst discussing the opportunities for meaningful engagement throughout the all stages of the development.

Although not all discussion could occur on site, the cultural landscape and context of Gweagal Country was maintained at the front of mind during community engagement. The empathetic design approach ensured that First Nations cultures remain at the core and foundation of the project. The collaboration with the First Nations community members and multidisciplinary design team brought a diversity of ideas and knowledges to the design thinking process. The community engagement identified key insights, recommendations, and areas of opportunity for Kurnell.



## COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

### Wanggani Dhayar - Listen to Country

The Wanggani Dhayar process is fluid, with reiteration and organic formation of the design throughout. Developed by Yerrabingin, the design methodology aligns with the principles outlined in the GANSW Connecting with Country framework. Yerrabingin draws from Wanggani Dhayar to guide the co-design process, ensuring site specific First Nations cultural heritage values are incorporated into the design:

*“Our culture is embedded in the landscape, and environmental consciousness. Sharing this tacit knowledge and wisdom through a cultural landscape, at this point in time when our Earth is under threat, must be a principal for future design approaches.”*

- Christian Hampson, CEO Yerrabingin

The graphic to the right represents the stages of the Wanggani Dhayar process, including framing the design, identifying the audience/users, the Design Jam, logic and assumption testing, cultural checking and sharing the solution through the pitch.

The process has been used to inform and review all design decisions for the project.

*“When people talk about Country it is spoken of like a person: we speak to Country, we sing to Country, we worry about Country, and we long for Country.”*

— Connection to Country, Common Ground First Nations, GANSW, Connecting with Country Framework, 2023, p.21





## COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

### *Walk on Country*

Beginning community engagement with a Walk on Country, Yerrabingin invited the project team, client, and First Nations community members to walk the site together.

The Walk on Country enabled community members to physically experience and connect with the site, whilst also providing an opportunity to ask questions and discuss initial ideas, stories, and concerns.

Below recounts the details of the session:

- When: Thursday 9th March, 2023
- Where: 251, 278 and 280-282 Captain Cook Drive
- Time: 9:00am - 1:00pm





## COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

### Design Jam

The Design Jam brings together divergent styles of thinking by creating focus groups with a mix of local First Nations community members, the project team and often the client. This results in innovative design solutions inspired by local stories and narratives to be interpreted across the site.

The Kurnell Planning Proposal presents a range of opportunities to embed and showcase First Nations cultures throughout the precincts. The Design Jam looked to explore these opportunities further, using the following question to guide the session: *'How might we create a place to share the value of Country with all the community?'*

Below recounts the details of the session:

- When: Wednesday 22nd March, 2023
- Where: 1R Harnleigh Ave, Woollooware NSW
- Time: 9:00am - 2:30pm





# COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

## Design Jam Outcomes

Post Design Jam, Yerrabingin collated the data from the session, identifying significant ideas and recurrent topics. Key outcomes and sub themes have been grouped based on the Data Report and discussions from the day.

### Community and Culture

- Acknowledgement of history
- Community involvement and cultural practices
- Ideas on how life used to happen
- Camping ground close to freshwater
- Stream regeneration
- A space to share knowledge and stories
- A place to teach kids and adults about culture and ecology

### Nature and Sustainability

- Improve and restore ecological impressions
- Native garden space e.g. bush foods, weaving plants, healing plants
- Reintroduce lost flora and fauna
- Future environmental sustainability

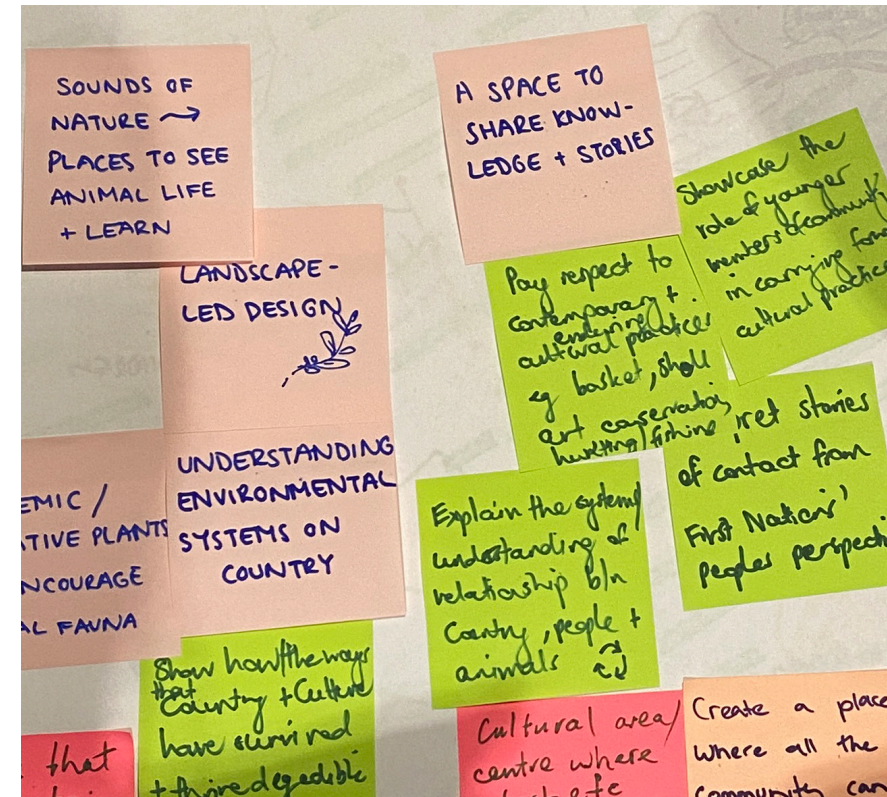
### Open Space and Access

- Maximise views internally within the site itself
- Make it a journey throughout the space
- Could use our dreaming stories or a walking track as an open library

### Additional notes

- All three teams had similar themes of involving community, culture, and sharing stories
- This included the rejuvenation of flora and fauna
- A lot of community members spoke highly of the space being significant to their childhood
- Extending the fishing enterprise back over to Kurnell
- Kurnell to be a tourist attraction to tell the truth about the history

The Design Jam highlighted the importance of celebrating and connecting to the natural landscape, the significance of water, and creating meaningful connections between the site and surrounding environment. The outcomes above informed the Connecting with Country Concepts Report.





## COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

### *Community Driven Principles*

Through the Design Jam process and in consideration of the initial contextual analysis, Yerrabingin developed three overarching Connecting with Country design principles.

Informed by the discussions between First Nations community members and the project team, the principles seek to incorporate community's input into a set of larger site specific principles and applications.

In relation to the Connecting with Country Framework, the Community Driven Principles look to encompass the five outcomes of success (Healthy Country, healthy community, protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage, cultural competency, better places) in varying degrees across the Planning Proposal.



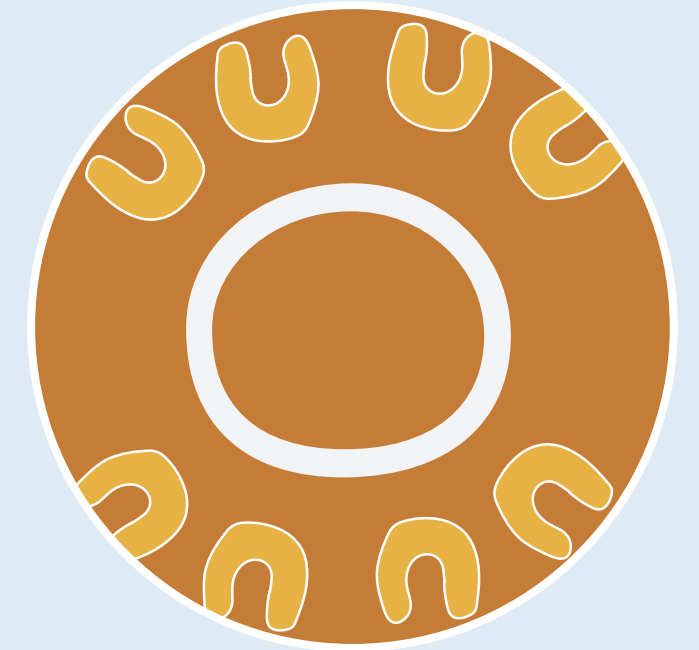
### **Regeneration**

Understanding the evolving nature of ecological systems on site. Consider how proposed design interventions interact with, and in turn, support the future success of these social, cultural, and environmental systems.



### **Resilience**

Exploring how we can nurture cultural and spiritual connections to Country through a decolonial, interpretive, and educational lens. Bringing First Nations community back to Country with a focus on rehabilitating both environmental and social relationships.



### **Reignition**

Providing place and space for First Nations peoples and the wider community to reactivate Country. Opportunity to support, foster, and develop sociocultural exchange through microbusinesses, social enterprise, cultural land management, and productive landscapes.



## COMMUNITY DRIVEN PRINCIPLE

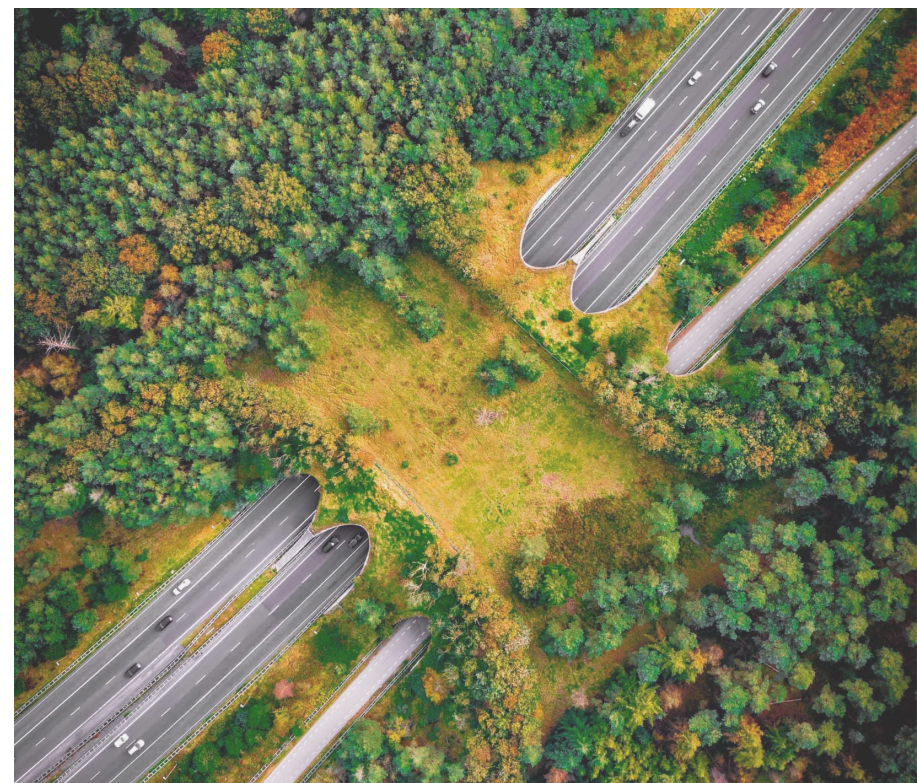
### *Regeneration*

The Kurnell Planning Proposal provides a range of opportunities to regenerate Country. Creating a healthy place and healthy community, the site can maximise regenerative outcomes through a holistic approach to the built form and landscape.

Both the Design Jam and contextual analysis highlighted the significance of water and its role within the unique environment of this place. The current wetland systems can be expanded to emphasise and support saltwater / freshwater connections on the north side of the precinct through biofiltration planting and a considered ecological strategy.

Creating a green bridge to strengthen ecological links from north to south of the site was well received by the community. Ensuring the regeneration and ongoing care for the land, whilst also providing viable access points across the site was a key discussion point and important to the overall user experience of the site.

The precedents (right) capture the look and feel of the ideas presented by community and represent how locals and visitors may explore connections to Country both individually and collectively at Kurnell.





## COMMUNITY DRIVEN PRINCIPLE

### *Resilience*

The Kurnell Planning Proposal has the ability to facilitate a landscape for non-human kin; encouraging pollinators, habitat, and connections to the broader context of the site.

Utilising endemic planting schemes (e.g. Southern Sydney Rockplate, Samphire Saltmarsh) to create a resilient landscape, the Planning Proposal can also function to support social, cultural, and economic opportunities for locals and visitors. For example:

- Bush food foraging trails
- Resource planting for culturage use (e.g. weaving)
- Microbusinesses (e.g. cafe to use bushfood from site)
- Endemic plants for resilient eco village

Community also discussed how the environment can be used for educational purposes, identifying the unique nature of the species on site. To create a resilient place, it was suggested to ensure that the site was accessible and usable, instilling a sense of shared custodianship for Kurnell.

The precedents (right) touch on the ways human and non-human kin will benefit and thrive from a resilient landscape.





## COMMUNITY DRIVEN PRINCIPLE

### *Reignition*

Kurnell is an iconic and historically significant location within Australia. Acknowledging this, the Planning Proposal has an opportunity and responsibility to create meaningful learning experiences for locals and visitors. Through the process of truth-telling, the site can be reignited and activated in a range of culturally appropriate and inclusive ways.

Discussions with community highlighted how the site can be activated to empower First Nations peoples and provide engaging experiences for all. Employment opportunities and partnerships can be developed and strengthened with the shared goal of caring for Country.

The precedents (right) encompass community's vision for the reignition of Kurnell. From experiences to practices, the precedents reiterate the possibilities to embed Country-centered strategies throughout the precincts. For example:

- Partner with local First Nations Rangers and Land Council to implement landcare strategy (burning, fishing, landscape maintenance)
- Create social enterprise opportunities for cultural tours (kayaking, camping, cultural centre)





## COMMUNITY DRIVEN PRINCIPLES

### Site Opportunities

The site opportunities map was developed post Design Jam and looked to capture the initial ideas and concepts expressed during the session.

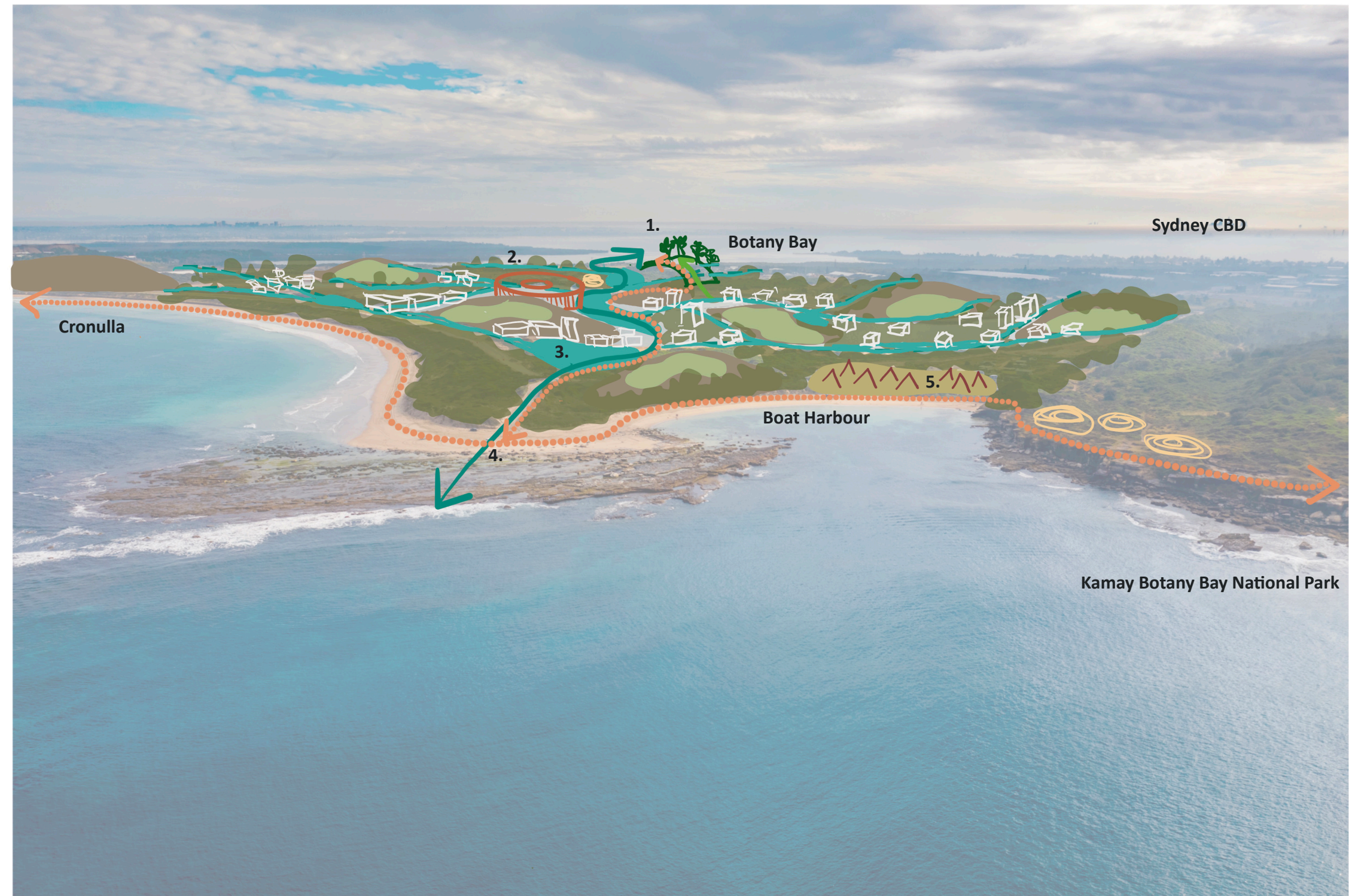
With an emphasis on regeneration, resilience, and reignition, the map explores site opportunities for locals and visitors to engage with Country.

Investigating a range of social, cultural, and economic outcomes, the site opportunities map provides a community focused reference point for the development of the Kurnell Planning Proposal.

Key ideas:

1. Green bridge creating north south ecological links
2. Suggested location for cultural infrastructure
3. Emphasis on fresh water / salterwater connections
4. Pathway network throughout site and beyond
5. Suggested location for public camping

Please note, draft iterations of the site opportunities map are located in the appendix.





## COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

### Community Feedback Session

Following the completion of the Design Jam and Connecting with Country Concepts Report, Yerrabingin facilitated a Community Feedback Session. Below recounts the details and feedback recorded during the session.

- When: Monday 25th September, 2023
- Where: IndigiGrow, La Perouse Nursery
- Time: 9:00am - 11:00am

The drop in session was lead by Yerrabingin and included members of the design team, client, and First Nations community members. Thanks to the generosity of IndigiGrow, Yerrabingin were able to facilitate the session within their outdoor nursery on La Perouse lands.

Here, the community were presented with project updates, the Connecting with Country Concepts Report, and latest A1 planning maps. All attendees were invited to discuss updates, annotate the plans, leave comments, ask questions, and generate ideas.

Referring to the logic and assumption testing portion of the Wanggani Dhayar methodology, the Community Feedback Session looked to explore the design developments in order to identify areas of further opportunity or concern.

This feedback loop of ideation and prototype testing is intended to be flexible and ensure that appropriate cultural knowledges and experiences are incorporated into the design. This process is community driven and allows for the determination of best practice and Country-centered solutions for the Kurnell Planning Proposal.

Following the session, Yerrabingin distributed a short survey and digital copy of the current plans to all First Nations community members engaged with the project including members who were unable to attend one or both of the sessions. The information collected has been anonymised.









## COLLABORATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

### Community Feedback Session

Below is the feedback recorded from the short survey provided to community via a QR code link:

What are your favourite features of the site?

- *"How open the design looks"*
- *"I love the aged care, pathway crossover. Connects the site nicely - they could take our old people for walks"*
- *"Elders resident, natural foot bridge and natural pool"*
- *"Plant habitat and regeneration opportunities for eco tourism - engagement with First Nations people and businesses - opportunities for education spaces"*
- *"The employment and enterprise opportunities - natural pool - space for recognition and regenerations for our Country, plants, and sharing practices"*

Thinking back to the design jam, do you feel as though your ideas have been actioned in the current plan? If not, what's missing?

- *"Yes"*
- *"Yes"*
- *"Yes"*
- *"Yes I see a lot of things brought up pushed through it looks great"*

- *"It hits the mark on things that are essential for learning, sharing, and walking on Country. Something that could be added is involvement with sea Country."*

Do you have any concerns about the current plans? If so, what are they?

- *"No"*
- *"Transport to and from the site - shuttle bus to the aged care"*
- *"No, just build it soon so I can go in the aged care"*
- *"Affordability of access to the area"*
- *"Making sure there's adequate staff to ensure safety of nature and community members"*

Lastly, please share any general feedback ideas, and questions below:

- *"Looks amazing, it's exciting that its coming to life"*
- *"Great design and love how community was consulted throughout the process"*
- *"All looks well :)"*

