



# KURNELL PLANNING PROPOSAL

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

FRAMEWORK REPORT | NOVEMBER 2023

CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY

## BACKGROUND

### *Beginning with Country*

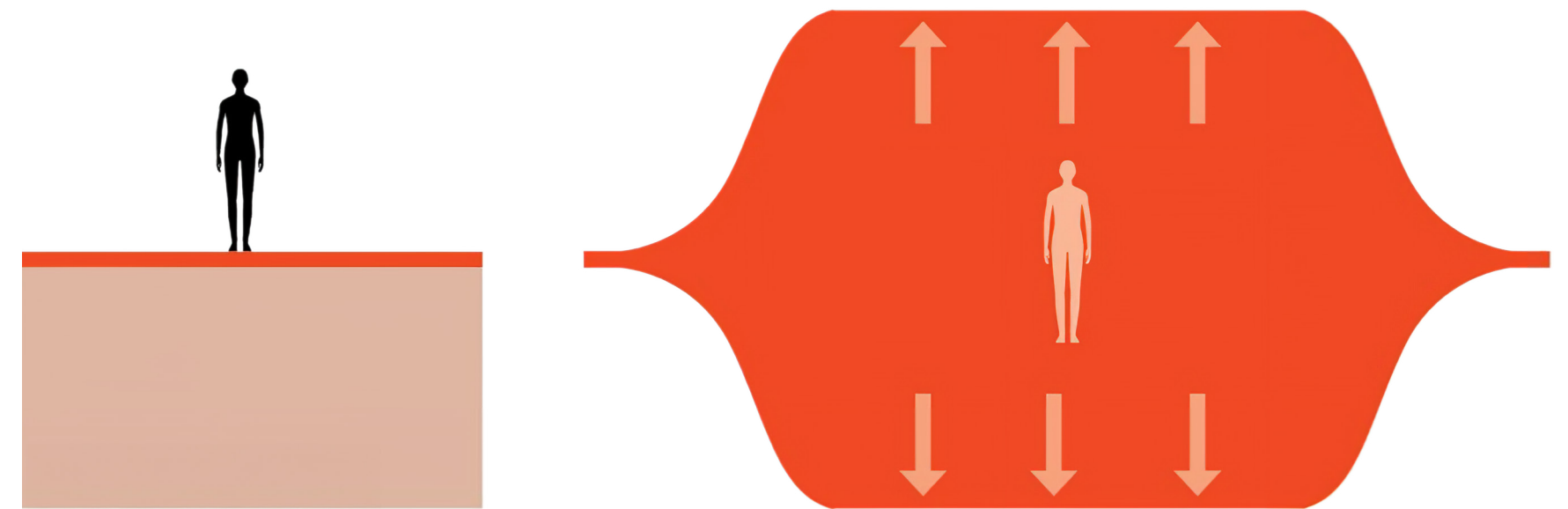
We inhabit and are inhabited by Country. This project offers an opportunity to celebrate the all-encompassing nature of Country. Its infinite reach into and across the earth and into the sky. She guides and nurtures us and is the inspiration and repository of knowledge. Being connected to Country transcends language and culture, a connected system of action, emotion, and experience, as a Custodian of Country.

Its unique and distinctive elements are connected and open to everyone, a connective tissue, the interstices that flows between Water, Sky, Earth, us and our Non-Human Kin. We are part of the system of Country, our actions must always be Country positive, the path, health and spirit of water is integral to all life and Cultural practice and at its centre is the river, a living being.

All actions flow into it and all life flows out of it, this is true of all Elements of Country and if considered collectively in our actions. We are an element of Country, within it and it is our responsibility to future generations.

To connect with Country is to be grounded in the landscape and to practice the cultural knowledge stored within it. This encourages physical and emotional wellbeing. In order to maintain this connection, it is imperative that Country contains endemic food and medicinal species, cultural resources, as well as keystone species and their habitats.

Everyone can feel connected to Country. Being connected to Country transcends language and culture, it is an interlaced system of action, emotion and experience. It highlights the many values that are similar across the cultures of our contemporary communities. This innate symbiosis of being connected and integrated moves us into being eco centric rather than human centric, this functionality has long been a component of Aboriginal people's ideology, a cultural value that places us in the ecological and landscape system, not as dominators but as caretakers and custodians. This function requires constant interactions and observation, being tuned to reactive requirements and response.



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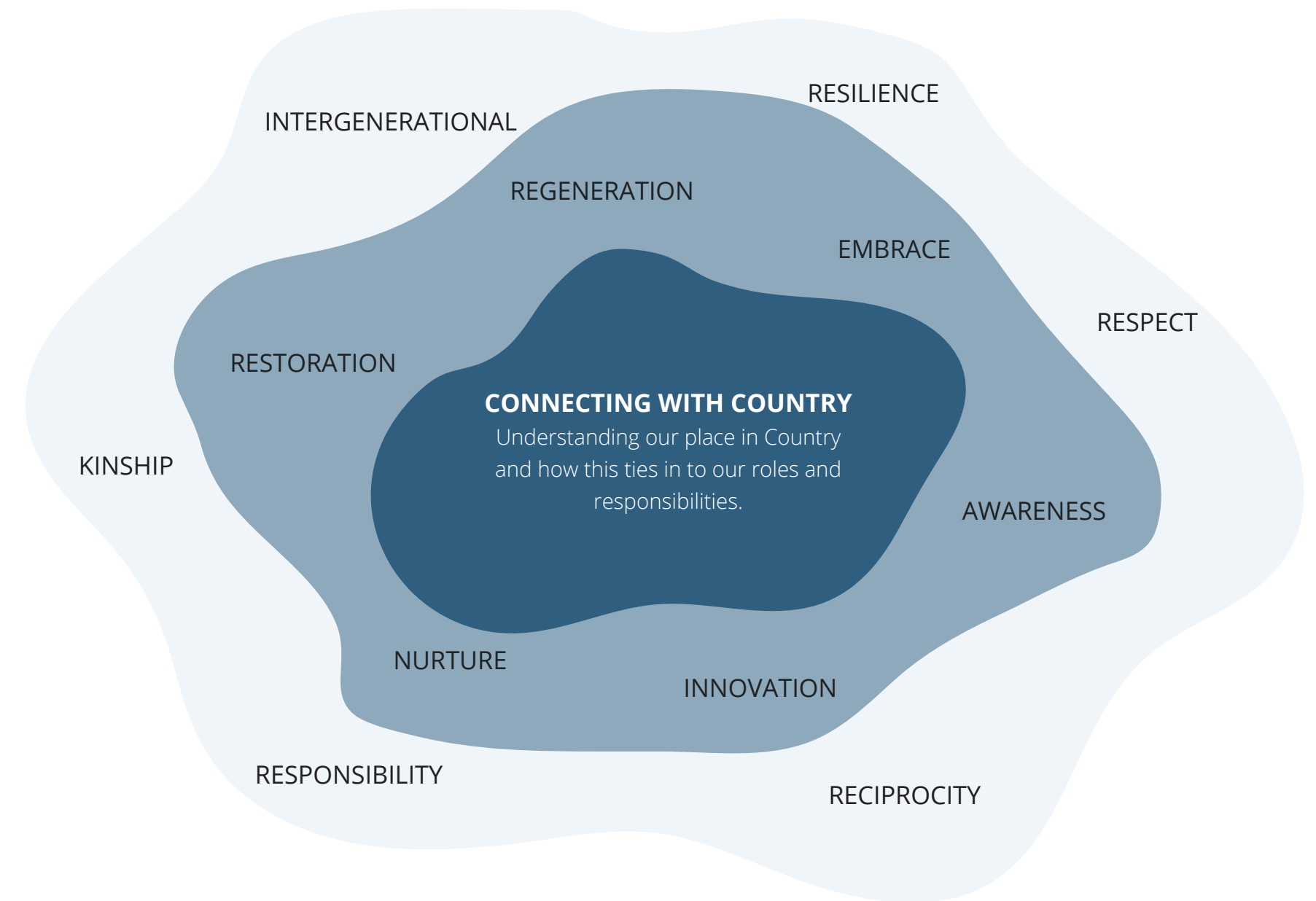
Being connected to Country transcends language and culture, it is an interlaced system of action, emotion and experience. It highlights the many values that are similar across the cultures of our contemporary communities. Everyone can feel connected to Country.

Caring for and becoming a Custodian of Country means forming a strong relationship with all elements of Country that is based on respect, obligation and reciprocity. In order to create and maintain interconnection, it is imperative that Country contains endemic food and medicinal species, cultural resources, as well as keystone species and their habitats. These interdependent systems and relationships provide a framework for holistic infrastructure design, meaningful environmental policies and land management practices that are adaptive and regenerative.

Importantly, including First Nations knowledges of land and culture at the onset of a project leads to design responses that are derived from knowledge of landscape variables and bio-cultural knowledge, creating meaning in placemaking conceptualisation and function.

Caring for and becoming a Custodian of Country means forming a strong relationship with the land that is based on respect, obligation and reciprocity. These interdependent systems and relationships provide a framework for holistic infrastructure design, meaningful environmental policies and land management practices that are adaptive and regenerative. Importantly, including First Nations knowledge of lands and culture at the onset of a project leads to design responses that are derived from place, creating meaning in placemaking conceptualisation and function.

Connecting to Country supports a socially inclusive, resilient, and innovative community that cherishes the wisdom and kinship of all cultures, captured through the lens of custodianship, creating wellbeing for all.



## CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK

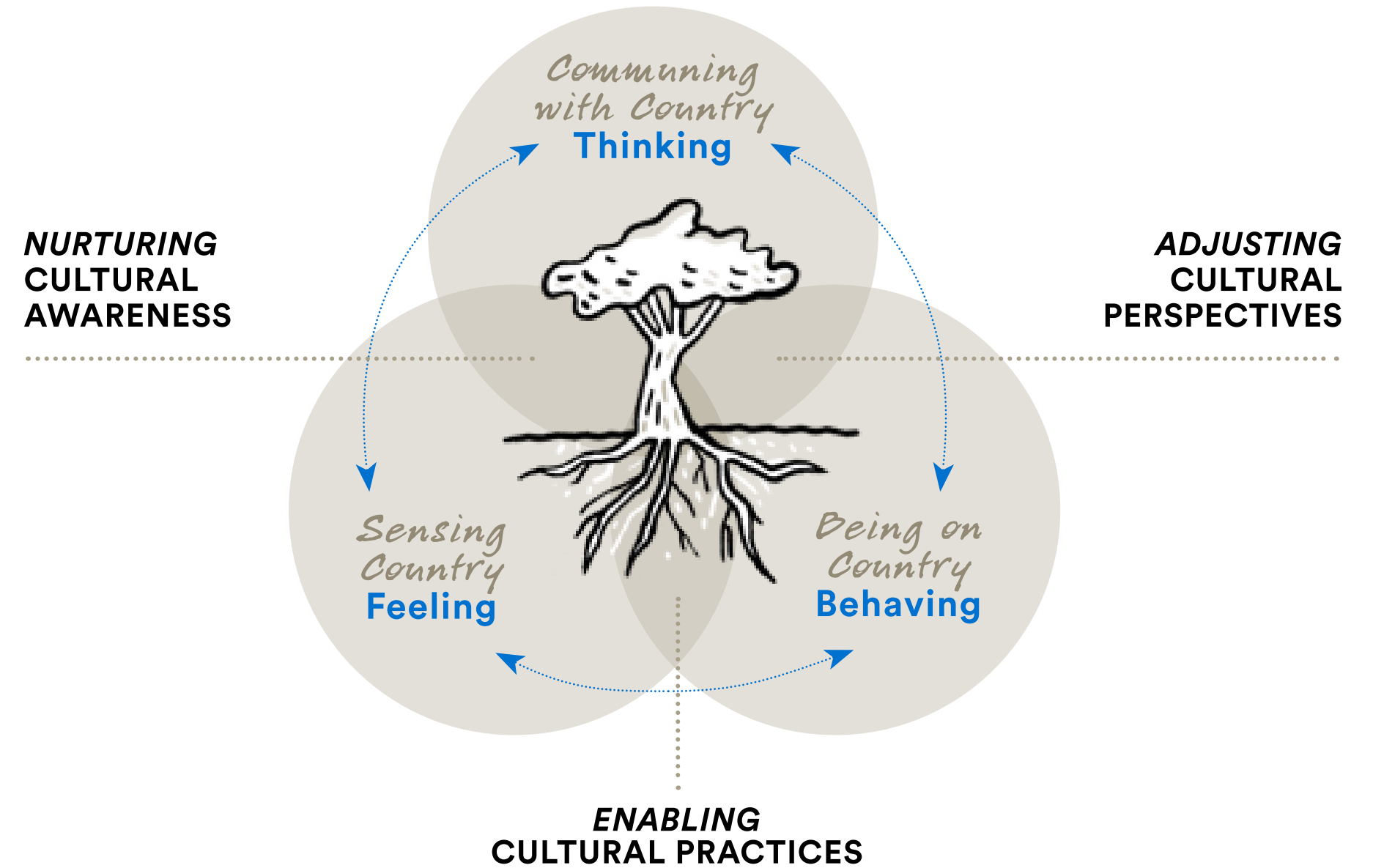
### Designing with Country

**Country:** is our mother, our teacher, our library, our kin it sustains, inspires and surrounds us. The experience of Country is both individual and collective, both new and familiar. From her we learn, share and flourish, continuing to care for country is central to our being, our identity. Country is a responsibility, not a right and is there for all who respect and cherish her. Today we may not always be able to see country instantly, but if we call to her, we can always sense her and again feel her embrace.

**Designing with Country:** utilising the GANSW Connecting with Country will ensure the environmental and social wellbeing of the site is addressed a way that will provide an enduring legacy for the place and community. Nature is Country. Caring with Country must guide design interventions. Preservation, restoration and remembering - not replicating the natural landscape and allowing that to inform all future occupation. Design should support and provide for the local community. Social initiatives must be consciously embedded in the outcomes for the project. All design should appreciate the local vernacular. Draw upon and be inspired by Country, what has come before, what is required to sustain the future.

*"If people and their needs are at the 'centre' of design considerations, the landscape and nature and reduced to second-order priorities. If design and planning processes consider natural systems that include people, animals, resources and plants equally - similar to an Aboriginal world view - this could make a significant contribution to a more sustainable future."*

- GANSW, *Connecting with Country Framework*, 2023, p.32



## CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK

### *Outcomes for Country*

The GANSW provides project teams with five outcomes of success through a Country-centred approach. These outcomes should be revisited continuously throughout the design process, reviewed at project completion and as ongoing maintenance and objectives for the project.

#### **1. Healthy Country**

- Healthy ecology
- Physical form of Country remains recognisable and restored where possible

#### **2. Healthy Community**

- Strong cultural identity, connected to place and community
- Cultural Safety
- Relief for Aboriginal communities who are fatigued by the workload imposed on them by project teams seeking their advice on Country
- Training (Spatial design skills for community, financial supports including scholarships for built environment)
- Employment Opportunities

#### **3. Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage**

- Aboriginal cultural advisers guiding project teams and clients to better connect with Aboriginal community
- Project teams and processes for project delivery respect of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP)
- Access to Country is provided
- Aboriginal language and place names are used

#### **4. Cultural Competency**

- Ongoing cultural awareness training develops skills and competency in delivering Country-centred design projects

#### **5. Better Places**

- Planning and design projects create places that are connected with Country
- Planning and design outcomes support living cultural practices
- Original landscapes are repaired or restored