

# COCKATOO ISLAND / WAREAMAH DRAFT CONCEPT VISION CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

4 MAY – 11 JUNE 2021

Many of you have visited Cockatoo Island / Wareamah and many more of you want to visit. And for good reason. Cockatoo Island / Wareamah is the setting for many different and overlapping histories. For 60,000 years, Wareamah served as a meeting place that intersects the lands of four clans the Wallumedegal, Wangal, Cammeraygal and Gadigal peoples. More recently an Aboriginal Rights group, set up camp on Cockatoo Island in support of a land claim then before the high court. The group stayed on Cockatoo Island for four months, leaving a series of artworks and murals as reminders of their stay.

Post colonisation, in 1839 the Island was established as a convict penal colony and convicts were put to work excavating the island's sandstone for the construction of buildings and a dry dock. In recognition of this important time in Australia's history the island was declared by UNESCO as one of eleven key Australian Convict Sites. In 1871, the convict facility was used to provide boarding and education for wayward or homeless boys and girls. The boys fared much better than girls who were housed in the buildings of the former penal establishment cells and subjected to dismal, unsanitary conditions.

The boys lived aboard a succession of ships moored off the island learning valuable nautical skills. The island subsequently became a hub for ship building and repair due to its drydocks and slipways. It was, at one time, the official dockyard of the Royal Australian Navy across both World Wars. As a result, Cockatoo Island played an integral part in the Australian war efforts.

This isn't a location that should be neglected or forgotten. Yet, more than half the island's buildings are not in use either for historical, business, or industrial purposes. Addressing that is a key part of the concepts we have shared. This unique site will be celebrated in all it's wonderful diversity.



## Background

In 2019, the Harbour Trust engaged with the broad community and First Nation's stakeholders through the [Cockatoo Island Dialogue](#) in an effort to understand community values and aspirations for Cockatoo Island. This consultation identified a number of community aspirations including engaging and re-imagining the community benefit, appealing to more diverse audiences, offering more diverse experiences, focusing on what is unique to the island, bringing culture to life and the importance of caring for Country and identifying the island as a place of cultural connection.

Building on these aspirations, the Harbour Trust developed a Draft Concept Vision for Cockatoo Island / Wareamah and invited community feedback. We asked about our successes and the areas in which we could improve. About how we could meet the ongoing challenge of creating more unique and meaningful ways of engaging with visitors, the community and our lands.

From early May to June 2021 we sought feedback on the [Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Draft Concept Vision](#). We asked what matters most, and how you perceived the concept, ideas and vision we are considering. These conversations built on prior community engagement processes over several years.

# Consultation Method

The Harbour Trust has been engaging with a wide range of people and organisations over many years to uncover the rich stories of Cockatoo Island / Wareamah and to understand community and stakeholder perspectives on the future of this important place.

This most recent chapter of this conversation involved local residents, visitors and the broader Sydney community, the Harbour Trust Community Advisory Committee and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, volunteers and guides, representatives of nearby councils, creatives and innovators, First Nations Community, businesses, organisations and staff of the Harbour Trust.

## How did we drive awareness?



**8+ million**

through digital and print advertising



**10.3+ million**

through 296 news articles



**23,487**

flyers delivered to

**55,000**

people

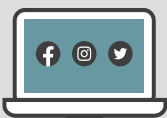


**7 eDMs**

sent to

**126,252**

subscribers



**64,041**

impressions on social media



**225**

notifications and invites direct to community

## Who did we engage with?



**730** people engaged at

**4** pop up sessions



**25**

people joined a walk-shop



**57**

First Nations Stakeholders directly engaged



**105**

people participated in 9 in-person / virtual workshops



**84**

People attended the webinar with

**398**

views online



**33**

people participated in group and one-on-one yarning sessions

## Who responded by survey or submission?



**530**

completed surveys *plus*

**38**

participating in our First Nations specific survey



**63**

Unique written submissions



**500**

people participated in a panel survey



## What we heard

At the heart of the feedback, is the desire to respect and honour history and our heritage – both of First Nation’s people, and Australia’s history post colonisation. You told us you want to see every facet of the island’s history respected and celebrated. You want the chance to learn of this history through experience, to know that the depth and breadth of this incredible Island’s story will be shared in a way that is living, vibrant, honouring and truthful. You don’t want a museum, you want a living, tangible experience.

You want to see:

- The island enhanced in a way that authentically allows people to learn about First Nation’s culture and a place that is welcoming to First Nations people, through economic opportunities, use of language, ceremonial spaces and cultural programs.
- The native environment brought back in a way that respects the industrialised, rawness of the island.
- Revival of maritime industry on the island and restoration of Fitzroy Dock for operational use.
- Experiences for visitors of all ages and backgrounds that allow people to be immersed in the Island’s rich history.
- Space to explore nature, the industrial network of buildings and the remnant convict structures and landmarks.
- Visitors be they local or international, attracted to the island and the experiences and events it has to offer.
- Respect as one of 11 significant Australian convict sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The history of Cockatoo Island is continually being written. It is an ongoing story without an ending. The Harbour Trust wants to ensure all who visit for work, or for recreation feel welcome; be it to earn their livelihoods, learn and experience history and nature, or simply play – touching land, water and sky. After all, the island always has been a gathering place for diverse groups of people. New investment that brings a new level of vibrancy and liveliness to the island will be an important part in making that happen.

View the [Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Consultation Outcomes Report](#) and [First Nations Cockatoo Island / Wareamah Report](#).

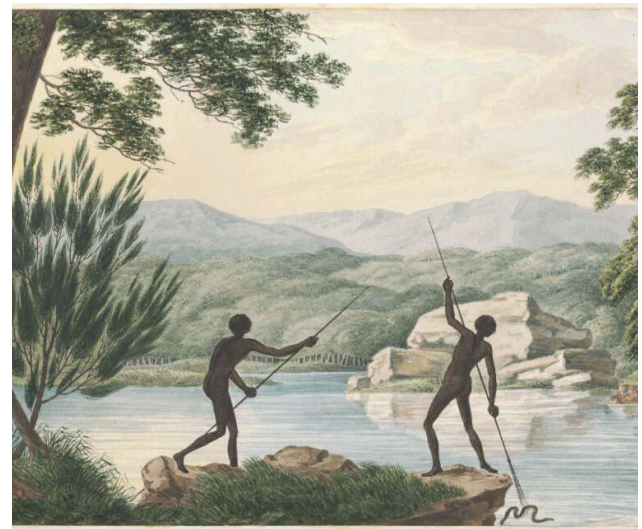


IMAGE: National Library of Australia



IMAGE: Convict Precinct



IMAGE: 1984 Last Ship HMAS Success  
PHOTO: Courtesy of John Jeremy AM

# Project and consultation stages

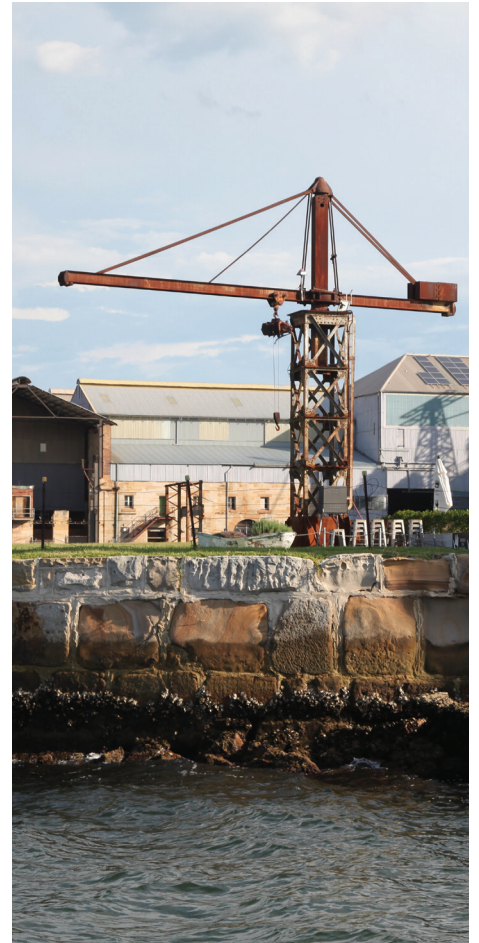
ENGAGE ON CONCEPTS

WE ARE  
HERE

INVESTIGATE FEASIBILITY

DESIGN PLANNING & STAGING

STATUTORY PROCESSES  
& PILOT PROGRAMS



## Next steps

The vision we have started to unfold for Cockatoo Island represents a journey spanning into the future.

We will continue to be guided by you as we mould and shape our final plans, updating and involving you as we go.

Scan the QR code to join our Cockatoo Island / Wareamah subscriber list to receive the latest updates.

