

# Cockatoo Island / Wareamah

**DRAFT  
CONCEPT  
VISION**



**Cockatoo  
Island™**

Harbour Trust



Australian Government  
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

# Message from the Chair

## Nowhere else in Australia has in one place the story of our nation.

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah is the geographic pivot point in Greater Sydney. At the heart of Sydney Harbour, linking Sydney's 'global city' to the dynamic growth of Sydney's Central City at Parramatta and beyond to Western Sydney.

At 18 hectares in area, Cockatoo Island is the largest of the harbour islands. Here we can find our nation's layered history from First Nations occupation of the Eora Nation, colonial convict, to industrial and maritime Sydney. The Island is an UNESCO World Heritage site, considered one of the best surviving examples of convict transportation and forced labour.

With two of the world's most recognised icons of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House across the water, there is an opportunity for Cockatoo Island to play a larger part in the Harbour's role in Sydney's position on the global stage.

The Harbour Trust continues to be guided by the values and principles that formed the basis of its establishment and is committed to the proper and sensitive activation of the Island, in conjunction with government and the community. This Draft Concept Vision provides an opportunity to further progress the conversation on the future of Cockatoo Island and seek feedback from the community.

In 2019, we spoke to our community about their vision for the island's future. We heard that people valued Cockatoo Island's many historic layers and stories but wanted to see its untapped potential realised. The community told us that it wants more from Cockatoo Island, with more diverse experiences for more diverse audiences, and we heard that more needed to be done

to respectfully acknowledge the Island's First Nation's past as a sacred women's place and in identifying Cockatoo Island as a place of cultural connection.

This Draft Concept Vision presents a 10-year vision for Cockatoo Island / Wareamah; an ambition for the Harbour Trust to work towards. The vast nature of the island and the many precincts means that it is likely to be delivered in several stages over the coming decade. Each stage must necessarily add to the story and draw more visitors to support the overall achievement of the island's potential.

The Harbour Trust cannot achieve this vision alone. We will look for support from governments as well as from committed corporates and benefactors, who are attracted to the opportunity to deliver some of the unique precincts outlined in this Draft Concept Vision, in partnership with the Harbour Trust.

We also recognise that access and awareness of the Island are crucial elements to activation. In particular, we recognise the need to work closely with the New South Wales government to ensure transport links and access to the Island match growing visitor levels, as well as tourism and event links to increase visibility of this unique site.

I encourage all members of the community and our stakeholders to provide feedback on the Draft Concept Vision to help shape the future vision and direction of the site. What will follow is further future engagement through a detailed masterplan for the Island.



**Mr Joseph Carrozzi**  
Chair, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

### Balls Head Reserve

An original section of shoreline and ecological habitat on Sydney Harbour.



# Acknowledging Country

## **The Harbour Trust respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Cockatoo Island / Wareamah.**

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah connects to the waterways and homelands of the Wallumedegal, Wangal, Cammeraygal and Gadigal people. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah remains a place of significance to First Nations Peoples from Sydney and other regions, believed to be a sacred women's place. It holds a significant geographic position in Sydney

Harbour — at the mouth of the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, intersecting with multiple First Nations. It is a unique place not exclusively associated with one particular clan group, but rather a place visited and used by many.



# Connecting to Country

## Developing cultural awareness is key.

Connection to Country refers to the ways in which we exist in relationship to the lands and waters on which we live and work on.

Dr Danièle Hromek says that:

// 'Country' has a specific and significant meaning for First Nations peoples. In the First Nations sense of the word, Country relates to the nation or cultural group and land that we belong to, yearn for, find healing from and will return to. However, Country means much more than land, it is our place of origin in cultural, spiritual and literal terms. It includes not only land but also skies and waters. Country incorporates both the tangible and the intangible, for instance, all the knowledges and cultural practices associated with land. People are part of Country, and our identity is derived in a large way in relation to Country. //

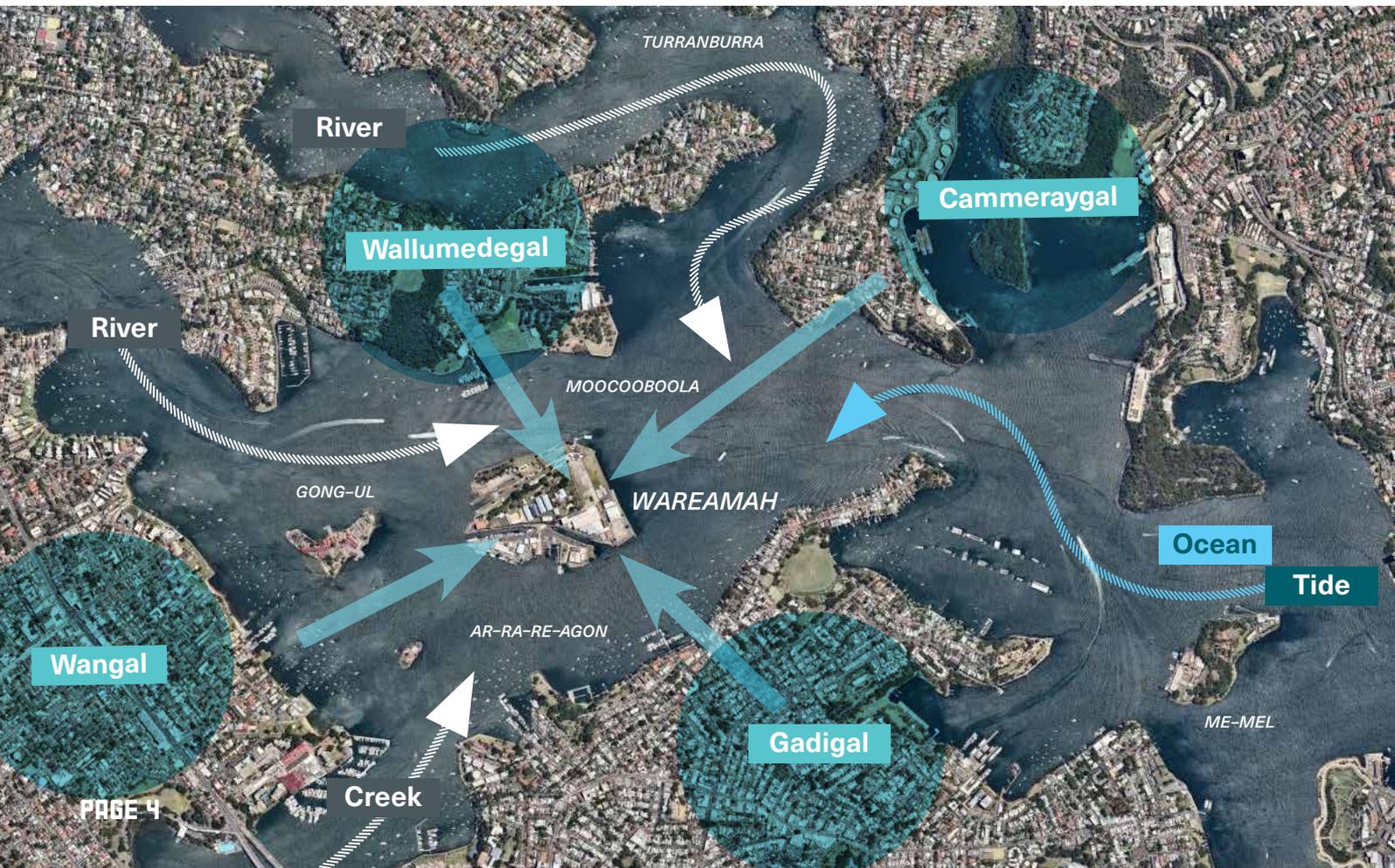
DRAFT CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK  
NSW GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT

There are different pathways to Connecting with Country which depends on the context and history of place, the state of the lands and waters, the community which resides there and, most importantly, the traditions and values of the Traditional Custodians of that place.

Connecting with Country can also include supporting or reclaiming cultural expressions (including performance, ceremony, dance, song and language), building a relationship with Country (e.g. through using ecosystems thinking to reduce stress on our environment), reawakening memories of cultural landscapes (engaging with places through our senses) and knowledge-sharing (integrating First Nations' knowledge systems with Western scientific knowledge).

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah, has traditionally been a meeting place and women's place. This Country has been a place between the boundaries of four different clans (Wangal, Wallumedegal Cammeraygal and Gadigal), where land meets sea and sky.

IMAGE: NEARMAP



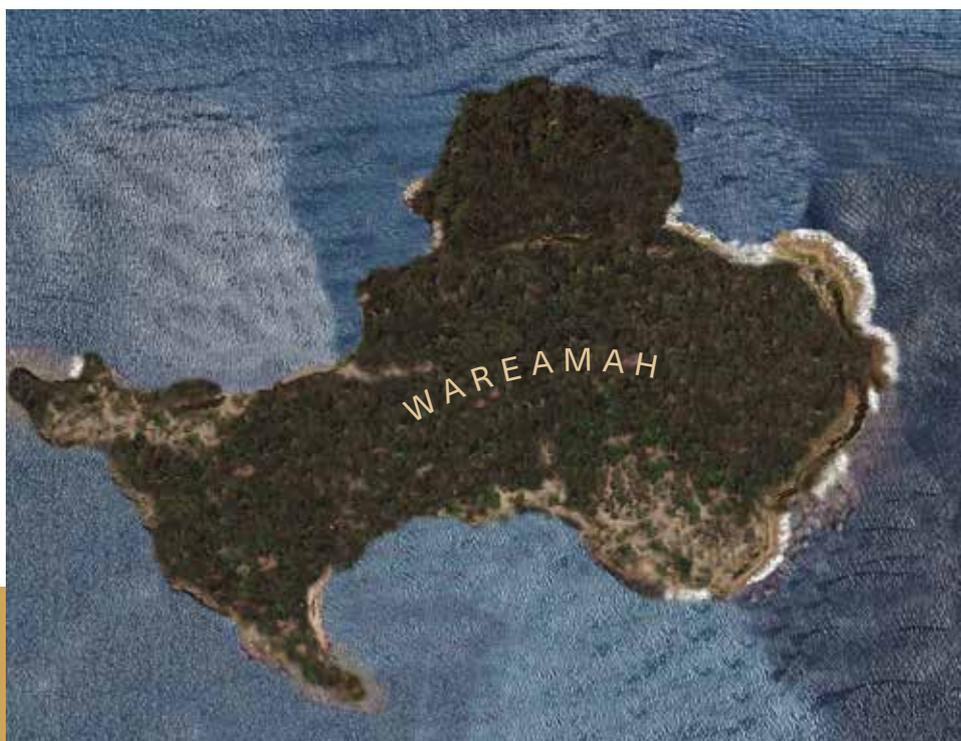
# Country as Meeting Place

Our vision for Wareamah is to connect future with past and merge divergent cultural histories; for the island to be a healed and rejuvenated landscape where people meet and come together, celebrate, share knowledge, learn from, and experience Country. We will work closely with Traditional Owners in creating this vision.

IMAGE: ARCHER KING

*Before 1822*  
Archer King  
Sydney, 2021

Aerial imagining of Wareamah prior to settlement as a penal colony, using aerial photographs of Sydney Harbour and the 1822 survey of Port Jackson by John Septimus Roe.



## FIRST NATIONS DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### Community engagement

Designing with Country requires that Traditional Owners and other First Nations community members and stakeholders are central to the design process, for the life of the project. Early consultation with First Nations communities has informed design thinking for this project, and we will continue to be guided by the aspirations of the community.

### Reawakening memories of cultural landscapes and creating opportunities to care for Country

There is a strong desire from the Traditional Owners and the First Nations community of Wareamah to be 'cleansed' from the significant toxic residues from previous use. We see multiple opportunities to remediate parts of the island, removing disused buildings and concrete in favour of rewilding, native plantings or bush tucker gardens more closely resembling what the island would have previously looked like.

### Providing space for ongoing cultural expression

Facilitating contemporary First Nations performance, art and storytelling through permanent installations, collaborations, pop-ups and potentially site-walking apps will allow for cross-cultural learning and ongoing connection with Country. Contemporary First Nations cultural expressions (as opposed to memorialisation) express the living and dynamic nature of Country.



**1822 Survey of Port Jackson**  
John Septimus Roe  
London, 1826

One of the oldest survey maps available of Cockatoo, Spectacle and Snapper Islands. on a 2021 aerial photograph. (Appears incorrectly labeled Banks Island, as Cockatoo is seen on Goat Island to the east).



**Changing Form**  
Overlay of island shoreline, docks and wharfs 1822—1945

Since first European occupation of the island, and commencement of quarrying and cut and filling of the foreshore, the overall land area of the island has grown by 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> (5 ha) to the present day 179,000 m<sup>2</sup>. As the island grew the upper sandstone plateau area continued to shrink as new lower apron areas were constructed to accommodate new buildings, wharves and slipways, and stone was quarried for building and sea walls.

The original plateau was around 10 ha, which was reduced to around 6 ha by 1857 when Fitzroy Dock was completed. Further blasting and quarrying occurred for dockyard expansion in WW1 and WW2, leaving the plateau at around 3.5 ha in 1942, which is similar to its current day arrangement.

**As the island grew in size by an additional 50% the upper island plateau reduced by around 66% over a period of 100 years**

# After 1788

## The island has had dramatic changes in form and use

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah is the largest island in Sydney Harbour at the confluence of the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers. In its original state, it was a heavily timbered sandstone knoll, rising to 18 metres above sea level. Since colonisation the island grew from 12.9 to 17.9 hectares through extensive quarrying, reclamation and landfill. Almost all of the original ecosystems of the island were removed, and the current vegetation includes endemic plants growing on cliff faces and introduced species in gardens.

The island is characterised by a diversity derived from incremental development over a long period of time. This diversity, combined with the topography make it difficult to perceive the island as a unified entity. A convict-built prison was commenced in 1839 and until 1909 the island was a place of incarceration — a convict prison for secondary offenders, reformatory and Industrial School for Girls, and a gaol to ease overcrowding at Darlinghurst Gaol. The industrial character of the island dates from the mid-nineteenth century with construction by convicts of the Fitzroy Dry Dock and workshops. From that time, the institutional character of the island co-existed with ship building and ship repair.

Small scale shipbuilding began in the 1870s. In 1880 work began on the construction of the larger Sutherland Dock. In 1913 Cockatoo Island became the dockyard of the Royal Australian Navy, and during World War I up to 4,000

men were employed building warships and converting merchant ships for war service. In 1933, the Commonwealth leased the island to a commercial consortium known as the Cockatoo Dockyard & Engineering Co.

During World War II, Cockatoo Island became the major shipbuilding and dockyard facility for the south west Pacific and underwent significant additions. After the war, it continued as a major dockyard, building a variety of ships including the docking and refitting program of the Oberon class submarines associated with HMAS Platypus in Neutral Bay (Sub Base Platypus).

The docks closed on 31 December 1991 and the island lay vacant until 2001, over which time many buildings deteriorated. Many buildings and wharves were demolished after the closure of the dockyard which resulted in the large open and unimproved areas on the northern and eastern aprons. Some areas still contain contamination and industrial hazards from this extended period of shipbuilding. The lower areas of the island accommodate a range of buildings, concrete pads and remnants of demolished buildings, cranes, dry docks and other wharf related structures.



*1857 Survey of Cockatoo Island*

Showing Fitzroy Dock, new buildings, gaol, silos, barracks, gardens and new areas of 'made ground'.

# EDRA NATION

## 1849 CONVICTS AT COCKATOO ISLAND



**Canary Birds**  
Convicts Letter writing at Cockatoo Island N.S.W. "Canary Birds"

CREATOR: PHILIP DOYNE VIGORS, 1849  
IMAGE: MITCHELL LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

## 1861 COCKATOO ISLAND



## 1869 FITZROY DOCK



IMAGE: JOHN JEREMY AM

**Map**  
Plan of Cockatoo Island for Committee on Public Prisons

CREATOR: GOTHER KERR MANN, 1861

### PRE 1788

A place for meeting and fishing for millenia for local First Nations people of the four clans, Gadigal, Wangal, Wallumedegal and Cammeraygal.



IMAGE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

### 1839

Cockatoo Island set up as a penal establishment. The gaol is constructed from stone quarried from the island. Significant changes occur to island shape and flora.

### 1857

Fitzroy Dock and workshops built using convict labour, completed after seven years of construction.

### 1870

Prisoners relocated to Darlinghurst Gaol and island is used for an Industrial School for Girls and Reformatory.

### 1880

Shipbuilding activities are expanded and the Sutherland Dock is built by Public Works and opened in 1890.

### 1888

Prisoners return to island through to 1908.

## HMAS HOBART SUTHERLAND DOCK

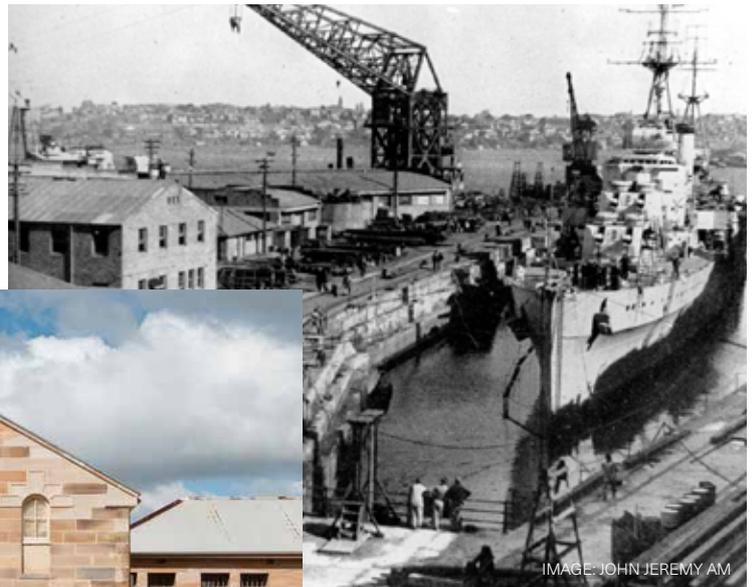


IMAGE: JOHN JEREMY AM



**Convict Barracks Courtyard**

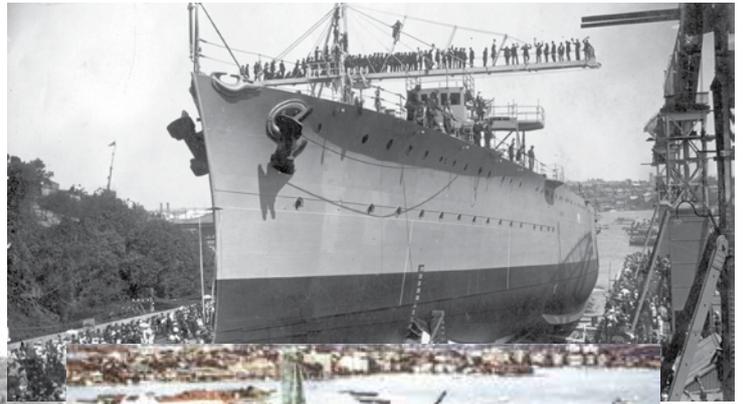
IMAGE: STEPHEN FABLING

**HMAS HOBART  
SUTHERLAND DOCK**



IMAGE: JOHN JEREMY AM

**1915 HMAS BRISBANE**



**1984 LAST SHIP HMAS SUCCESS**

IMAGE: JOHN JEREMY AM

**1913**

**1923**

**1933**

**1939-45**

**1945-70**

**1986**

**1991**

The Commonwealth purchases dockyard from NSW Government. Activities increased to support the WW1 war effort, then known as the Commonwealth Naval Dockyard. Builds Australia's first steel warship. Over 4000 jobs by 1919.

Dockyard transferred from Navy to Commonwealth Shipping Board.

Leased to private company Cockatoo Docks & Engineering Company. Jobs on the docks fall to around 560 due to the Great Depression.

Major upgrades and changes during WW2, including new Turbine Shop, to become the main repair base of the South Pacific over which time 19 ships built and 40 allied ships repaired.

Vickers Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Pty Ltd formed in 1948. Additional buildings constructed, to allow refit of submarines and build new Navy destroyers; HMAS Voyager and Vampire. Island continues to refit submarines and supports Oberon class submarines based at Neutral Bay.

Last ship built at Cockatoo, supply ship HMAS Success commissioned for Australian Navy.

HMAS Orion last submarine to be refitted at Cockatoo in June. All dockyard activities wound up and closed 31 December 1991, after 135 years of continuous operation.

**1947 DOCKYARD APPRENTICES**

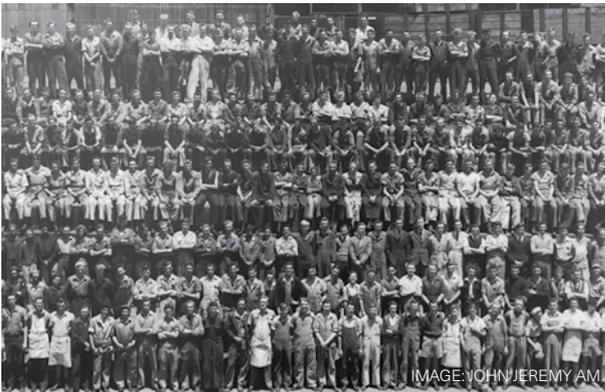


IMAGE: JOHN JEREMY AM

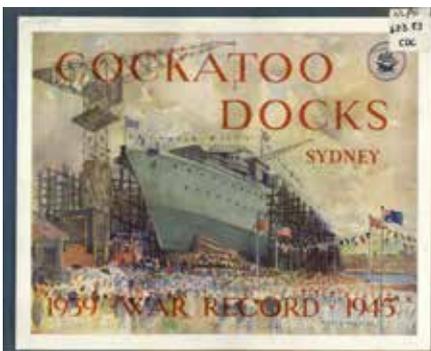
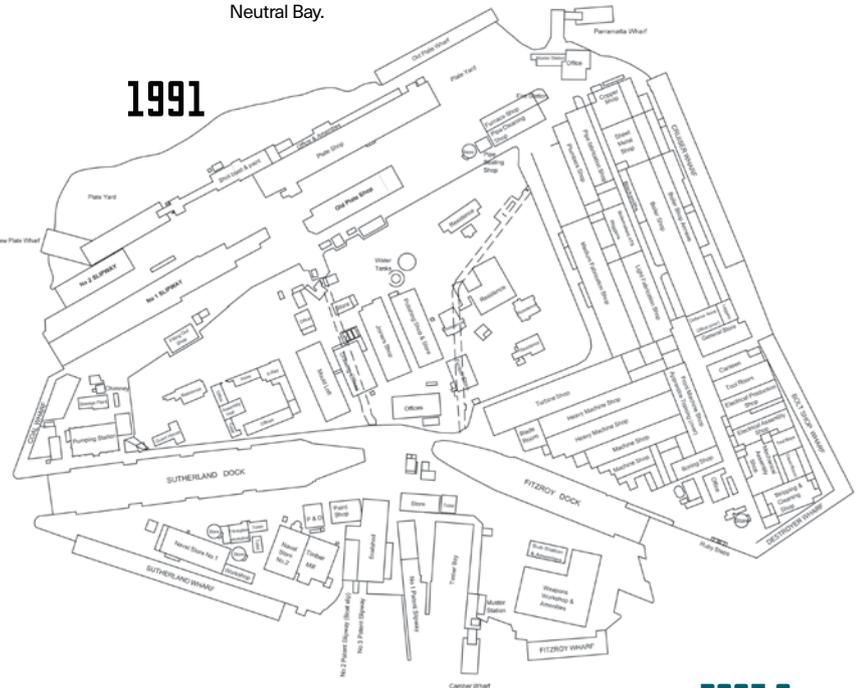


IMAGE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA



# Custodian since 2001

The Harbour Trust has managed the site, providing public access and established new activities.

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah has become a landmark Sydney attraction and an important cultural venue. It has hosted a number of major events in partnership with a range of cultural organisations, as well as many sporting and large scale entertainment events, concerts and film productions. It is well known for its campground and guided tours, making it in high demand for school groups and visitors. In the Management Plan the Island is divided up into four main precincts, being:

## Eastern Apron

The Eastern Apron has two main areas — the entry area and a group of workshops further to the south. The entry area includes the Parramatta Wharf, the former Administration Building, Muster Station and remnants of a memorial garden and a large, east facing open area with an imposing sandstone cliff as backdrop. The second area houses a series of waterfront workshops arranged to create a street between them. These buildings include the stone convict-built workshops, Turbine Shop, Pattern Shop, Tool Store, Canteen as well as several other industrial buildings and Bolt Shop Wharf.

## Southern Apron

The buildings on the Southern Apron are the most intact of the maritime aprons. These include the two dry docks, a number of robust industrial buildings, wharves, slipways, cranes and other maritime related infrastructure.

There is no clear order in the layout of these buildings, however, many are built of similar materials and are similar in scale and this gives the area a cohesive built character.

## The Plateau

The Plateau or Upper Island includes three distinct sub precincts. At its western end there is the 19th century convict gaol, sandstone buildings and walls. The central area includes a cluster of multi-storey workshops that were built on the sites of the former convict water tanks and quarry yard. The eastern end is characterised by a group of residences, and the Convict Superintendent's Quarters 'Biloela House', with backyards that meet forming an arrangement of lawns, garden beds, introduced plants and trees. This area also includes the subterranean convict grain silos, WW2 searchlight tower, water tower and 2000 Tent Embassy site, gardens, residences used for short-term stays.

## Northern Apron

The Northern Apron faces Parramatta River and the Woolwich peninsular. It is a large open area with only a few remaining dockyard structures. From the harbour it appears as a parkland type open space with a lush green backdrop on the cliff face. To the west there are two large slipways and associated cranes used for shipbuilding and repairs. Adjacent to the slipways are the Powerhouse, brick chimney and sewage treatment plant. An extensive sea wall and breakwater to create the western shore replaced wharfs that were demolished when the island was vacated in the 1990s. Much of the Northern Apron has been landscaped and is used as a popular campground with lawns, barbecues, public amenities and covered dining areas.

Today, the island welcomes up to 375,000 local, national, and international visitors per year.



**Australian Convict Sites**  
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2010

2001	2005	2007	2008	2010	2019	2021
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust launched by an Act of Parliament.	Three day music festival, 'Cockatoo Island Festival' held March 25—27.	Following remediation works Cockatoo Island is opened to the public in 2007.	First used as a Sydney Biennale arts venue. (16th Biennale, and for following six events, 17th—22nd Biennale.	Island is added to the UNESCO World Heritage List for Convict remains as part of a serial listing.	Community consultation to understand community values and aspirations for Cockatoo Island	New Draft Concept Vision.

# Community Consultation

## Process and insights — What you have told us so far

In 2019, the Harbour Trust continued conversation with the broad community and First Nations stakeholders through the *Cockatoo Island Dialogue*.

The following suggested actions were revealed:

### Engaging and reimagining community benefit

- Achieving significantly more benefit from Cockatoo Island while continuing to preserve its important qualities.
- Bringing First Nations' stories and culture to life.
- Balancing time and space on the island for contemplation verses entertainment.
- Not being too timid about change.

### Appealing to more diverse audiences

- The experience of Cockatoo Island should extend to a greater diversity of Sydneysiders and visitors to our city.
- The island is rich and broad, its reach however is narrow.

### Offering more diverse experiences

- Enhancing heritage interpretation and experiences.
- Enabling diverse education, learning and engagement experiences.
- Creating everyday draw cards to help create a day-to-day community on the island.
- Offering spaces and facilities for recreation and play.
- Offering spaces for production not just consumption.
- Providing a wide range of accommodation options.

### Focusing on what is unique to this place

- Its multi-layered and evolving identity.
- Opportunities for people to enjoy peace and quiet.
- Opportunities for new experiences and fun.
- A place for respite, recreation and play.

### Respectfully enhancing this place

- Respectful but not precious enhancement of this highly valued gem.
- Maintaining the raw industrial energy and spirit.



# First Nations Consultation

**Conversations with First Nations communities and cultural leaders in 2019 revealed a number of important themes.**

**Respecting and acknowledging Cockatoo Island / Wareamah as a sacred women's place**

- Including First Nations women in the visioning, decision making and governance of the island.
- Allowing First Nations women the opportunity to cleanse and heal Country.

**Importance of caring for Country and identifying Cockatoo Island / Wareamah as a place of cultural connection**

- Connecting with Country, embrace culture and ancestors, and revive the Island's physical beauty.
- Promoting health and wellbeing among First Nations peoples and their children.
- Providing an opportunity for non-First Nations people to learn about First Nations' culture including Sydneysiders and visitors more broadly.

**Using Cockatoo Island / Wareamah as a place that provides opportunities to care for and heal Country**

- A place to escape the 'concrete and shadows' of the city and to reconnect with Country.
- Renature with native flora and fauna.

**Bringing culture to life**

- Reverting to using the island's traditional name Wareamah.
- Creating event spaces: Bunggal ground, open air education space, fire pits.
- Cultural programs: healing and wellbeing.
- Permanent First Nations public art.

**Using Cockatoo Island / Wareamah as a place that provides access to commercial opportunities for First Nations businesses.**

- Providing opportunities for First Nations employment on the island through tourism and sharing of culture.
- Providing commercial leases for First Nations tourism operators and other businesses.
- Hosting events with a focus on sustainability and the health of the island.



IMAGE: SYDNEY LIVING MUSEUM



# Vision Principles

The vision for each precinct is informed by the following principles:

1. Consistency with the legislated objects of the *Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act 2001*.

2. Precinct thinking with people at the core — life, space, buildings.

3. Emphasis on strengthening interpretation of the site's layered history, with an elevation of interpreting the First Nations heritage.

4. Leverage the *Connecting with Country Draft Framework* for developing connections with Country that can inform the planning, design, and delivery.

5. Balanced future investment across a mix of public realm and commercial activation, delivered over time and in partnership with other Government agencies, commercial operators and community organisations.

6. Reflective of the *NSW Public Spaces Charter*, the principles will focus on delivering a future vision through the following pathways:

- Reconnecting
- Repairing
- Repurposing
- Renaturing



# A meeting place of many stories.

## BALMAIN

### CREATIVE PRECINCT

A vibrant, active arts and creative industry hub for performance, exhibitions, events and hospitality.

PAGE 30

### FITZROY DOCK

Reflection and interpretation around the dock with adjacent art precinct with exhibitions pavilion and food and drink.

PAGE 36

### WAREMAH TIDAL TERRACE

A new meeting place for Sydney with gardens, lawns, picnic areas, water play, sculpture and boardwalk. PAGE 20

IRON COVE

## COCKATOO DOCKYARD

A maritime precinct for boats, education, innovation and work.

PAGE 40

SNAPPER ISLAND

## THE PLATEAU

Convict sites, workshop space, accommodation options, dining, gardens and city views.

PAGE 44

## SLIPWAYS PLAYGROUND

A new major playground with adventure play, water play, maritime interpretation and environmental education.

PAGE 54

## COCKATOO CAMPGROUND

Bush camping in the city's backyard with additional tents and new improved facilities. PAGE 59

## ARRIVAL

Upgrades to entry and site orientation experience, starting the journey to acknowledge Country and the Traditional Owners on arrival. PAGE 18

WHARF

# Vision

## Reconnect

For thousands and thousands of years, Cockatoo Island / Wareamah was visited, understood, cared for and nurtured as a special meeting place, located between four clans of Eora on Sydney Harbour. For around 200 years this important connection was interrupted by the colonial and industrial activities on the island. The Harbour Trust is seeking to return the stories and connections to Country, alongside the colonial, maritime and industrial history which has long been a focus. It is important to elevate the elements that reconcile, interpret and assert the long connection of First Nations people to the island and the surrounding harbour and waterways.

## Repair

Repairing where possible will involve an improvement in ecological and environmental outcomes on the island. Repair will bring water back to the land, allow for ongoing remediation and healing of places that have faced severe changes or impacts. Repairing will continue to restore buildings and find new uses, while also repairing important artifacts, machines and relics, allowing existing and new stories to be told through these spaces.



## Repurpose

Making new experiences in existing public spaces and buildings through rethinking and reimagining activities will strengthen the purpose of the island as a significant regional, national and international destination. Compressing and consolidating some activities will encourage an improved feeling of place, as well as increased levels of activity and community on the island.

## Renature

With over 50% of Cockatoo Island hard paved or roofed, it can present a harsh and inhospitable experience — one that contributes to temperature and microclimate extremes. Large areas of building and hard paving can be modified through new approaches to planting, gardens and urban tree canopy that will help to significantly regreen and renature the island. This approach will improve amenity for visitors, but also provide a much needed increased habitat for local fauna, that connects into Sydney's wider metropolitan 'green grid.'



# Arrival

## Precinct Overview

Arrival area of the island significantly renewed as an important space in its own right.

New visitor and interpretive information centre adjacent to a new public square and arrival space that promotes Convict, maritime and industrial history.

Point of orientation and access to Tidal Terrace, Dog Leg Tunnel, Campground, Creative Precinct, The Plateau and Slipways.

New gardens, play spaces, amenities and pavilions.

Opportunities for commercial partnerships to deliver retail and dining experiences.

## Connecting with Country

Wareamah visibly signed at entrance and dual language used wherever possible across the site.

Audio welcome and story telling from First Nations women.

Large, visible elements Acknowledging Country and the Traditional Owner groups provides information about historic and contemporary land use by these groups.

Design elements of the arrival experience to be Country inspired using native materials, and tones to be developed further with Traditional Owners.

Space or pavilion for smoking ceremonies to be used to welcome people to Country by Traditional Owners for gatherings and annual events.

Visitor app available to give users an interactive experience while walking Wareamah and learning stories of place.

Contemporary First Nations cultural expression tells the living and dynamic nature of Country.



*Fishing by Torchlight, Other Aborigines beside Camp Fires Cooking Fish.*  
Joseph Lycett (c.1775–1828)

NLA.GOV.AU/NLA.PIC-AN2962715-S8  
IMAGE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA



**M-Pavilion**

Amanda Levete A LA for  
Naomi Milgrom Foundation  
Melbourne, 2015



**Welcome to Country.**

The arrival place at Cockatoo Island / Wareamah will provide a sense of orientation spatially to the island and the precincts on the island. It is the first and last point of call for most visitors to the island. Most importantly the arrival place will herald a new and vital connection to Country, with symbolic presence and stories, a smoking circle for Welcome to Country ceremonies and interpretive information. Dual language is to be used where ever possible.



*Edge of the Trees*  
Fiona Foley & Janet Laurence  
Museum of Sydney, 1991  
IMAGE: SYDNEY LIVING MUSEUM

*End-of-trip facility and cafe*  
Searle x Waldron Architecture  
South Melbourne, 2021

*Aboriginal Flag*  
Cockatoo Island / Wareamah, 2021

# Wareamah Tidal Terrace

## Precinct Overview

New major parkland with water at heart of the place that interprets the original foreshore and island edge.

Significant First Nations design input and interpretation deeply embedded in process and physical outcomes.

Tidal harbour water used on sandstone terrace providing new access to water and natural harbour habitat.

New plantings, lawns and gardens provide shade.

Significant tree canopy and ground permeability.

New boardwalk links island harbour promenade.

Links Creative Precinct to Arrival and Ferry Wharf.

## Connecting with Country

The Tidal Terrace offers opportunity of new connections to Country through nature based play.

Clan poles rising out of the Tidal Terrace to be explored further in collaboration with Traditional Owners, marking the meeting point of the four clans.

Contemporary First Nations cultural expressions including artwork, performance and seasonal rituals express the living and dynamic nature of Country.

## First Nations integrated in design

Bringing back the island edge

A great playground for the city

Meeting space for all

Gardens, lawns and shelters



The word Corroborree originates from the Dharug word *garaabarra*



Original Harbour Foreshore  
Rodd Point, Iron Cove  
Sydney



# GARAABARA



Coastal rock pools  
Clovelly Beach,  
Sydney



Sand dance circle  
Yabun Festival 2018,  
Victoria Park, Sydney

# HARBOUR WALK CITY VIEWS



## Water is Country

The waterways of Sydney Harbour are an important part of Country and form a continuous connection to the landscape that was formed over thousands of years of occupation. It was and will be again a significant place of sustenance, movement, connection and meeting.

Spearing fishing, crayfish diving,  
a party seated beside a fire cooking fish  
Joseph Lycett (c.1775-1828)  
NLA.GOV.AU/NLA.PIC-AN2962715-S17  
IMAGE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA



## Earth is Country

The vast concrete slabs and lawns of the Eastern Apron will be renewed and rebuilt to include a new Tidal Terrace that brings the seawater of the harbour back close to line of the original sandstone foreshore, healing Wareamah.



EXISTING EASTERN APRON

# CONNECTING TO WATER

## A place of landscape, play and reflection

As a significant public space, the Tidal Terrace will provide a platform for all visitors to engage with the harbour edge qualities of the island. Due to the extensive quarrying and reworking on the island in the 19th and 20th centuries there are few places on the island where visitors can directly connect with water or touch it.

The Tidal Terrace will work on multiple levels providing an innovative park and play space, water play, meeting spaces with First Nations concepts and stories deeply embedded in the design of the terrace.



Original Sandstone Foreshore  
Rodd Point, Iron Cove, 2021

Tidal Terrace  
Gosford Foreshore  
Darkinjung Country, 2021



# MEETING PLACE

Bunggal Circle  
Gosford Foreshore  
Darkinjung Country, 2021



## A meeting place for First Nations

Wareamah was a women's meeting place. It was shared country. The island can again become a place of meeting, sharing and understanding as a place to learn the First Nations story of Sydney, between the ocean peoples of the east and the river peoples of the west, and between the Hawkesbury / Dyarrubin to the north and Botany Bay / Kamay and Georges River to the south.

Eastern Apron and  
Parramatta Wharf  
Cockatoo Island, 2021



# THROUGH THE TREES



## Creative Parkland

A new public parkland north of the Creative Precinct will establish an enlivened public domain that supports the Tidal Terrace and events in the industrial and dockyard buildings. First Nations concepts, art and stories will be strong focus of the park. Opportunities for commercial partnerships to deliver restaurants, cafes and bars, which can open out to the park.



## Learning from landscape

New gardens, rain gardens, grasslands and arbor forests will be planted with plants endemic to Cockatoo Island / Wareamah. A range of flora will be used to provide park amenity and educational insights to the Eora seasons, plant uses, plant names and cultural connections to species.





# Creative Precinct



Artwork by Geoff Nees & Kengo Kuma NGV Gallery



## Intimate Scale

Planting, gardens, structures, retail and other street level uses will help to humanise some of the large public spaces and aprons in the Creative Precinct. These will increase the sense of intimacy creating more human scaled places that invite visitors to occupy and wander through. Public domain and landscape will play a significant role in the articulation and successful use and inhabitation of the precinct.

## Precinct Overview

Upgrades to buildings and facilities, retaining the raw industrial feel.

Public domain upgrade to the north–south laneway.

Outdoor event and performance spaces.

Possible commercial partnerships to deliver new dining, retail and bars.

Significant increase in green space, trees and softscape.

## Connecting with Country

Opportunity for permanent, contemporary First Nations artworks, murals and installations.

Collaborations with First Nations artists to include residencies for artists with exhibitions to launch their work.

Cross-programming with NAIDOC week and other events to promote regular calendar of First Nations activities.

Contemporary First Nations cultural expression tells the living and dynamic nature of Country.

Commitments to First Nations business opportunities in the precinct including tourism, arts and hospitality.

A hub with many things going on  
 Celebrating makers, creators, performers  
 Big event possible, small event normal  
 Compressed activity on an urban lane

# CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ARTS TOURISM & EVENTS





## Indoor and outdoor venues of all sizes

Buildings within the Creative Precinct feature exposed steel beams, soaring ceilings and sandstone details. The interconnected buildings that make up this historic precinct assert a gritty industrial atmosphere that are appropriate for contemporary uses. Made up of 15 buildings of various sizes and heights, the nearly 10,000m<sup>2</sup> in total area provides opportunities to realise a multiuse model from small meetings to large scale events.

The principal focus is to support activation, improve connectivity and increase the overall cultural offering for the precinct. This may include public space improvements, pop-up activities, permanent food and beverage opportunities, alongside flexible and adaptable spaces that serve a wide variety of commercial, community and cultural needs throughout the year.

Specific opportunities within the precinct include:

- Large flexible space to accommodate major events, concerts, conferences, large scale exhibitions, as well as a range of auditoriums with lighting and acoustic specifications for performances and conferences.
- Performance/event support spaces such as a box office, reception, registration, green room, make up and change areas, backstage workshops and storage.
- Infrastructure and activation for artists-in-residence and other cultural and community offerings.
- Professional kitchen and catering facilities.
- Additional permanent food and beverage offerings.

Initiatives could include acoustic treatment to isolate spaces; installation of climate control; and reconfiguration to service multiple events in the same space, at the same time.

**EVENTS HAVE A WIDE REACHING AUDIENCE AND BRING PEOPLE TO THE ISLAND WHO MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE VISIT.**

**THEY ATTRACT COVERAGE THAT SIGNIFICANTLY BOOSTS THE SITE'S PROFILE, REPUTATION, AND BUILDS WORD-OF-MOUTH ENDORSEMENT.**

## Activation through Artists in Residence

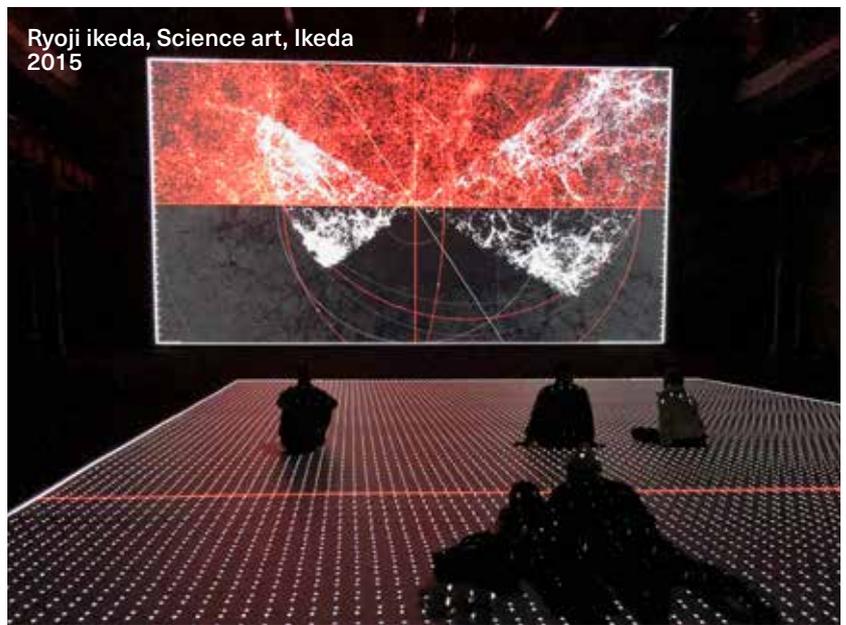
The creative industries can play an ongoing role in activating and using spaces across the precinct for working, exhibiting and meeting. A wide variety of spaces may be suitable for all sorts of artists, writers and performers working insitu where exhibitions and events will complement the work space activities. Permanent and short-term art installations can be curated to add a layer of creative energy, interest and delight to the spaces.



Ernst and Young Event  
2018



Biennale  
2016



Ryoji Ikeda, Science art, Ikeda  
2015



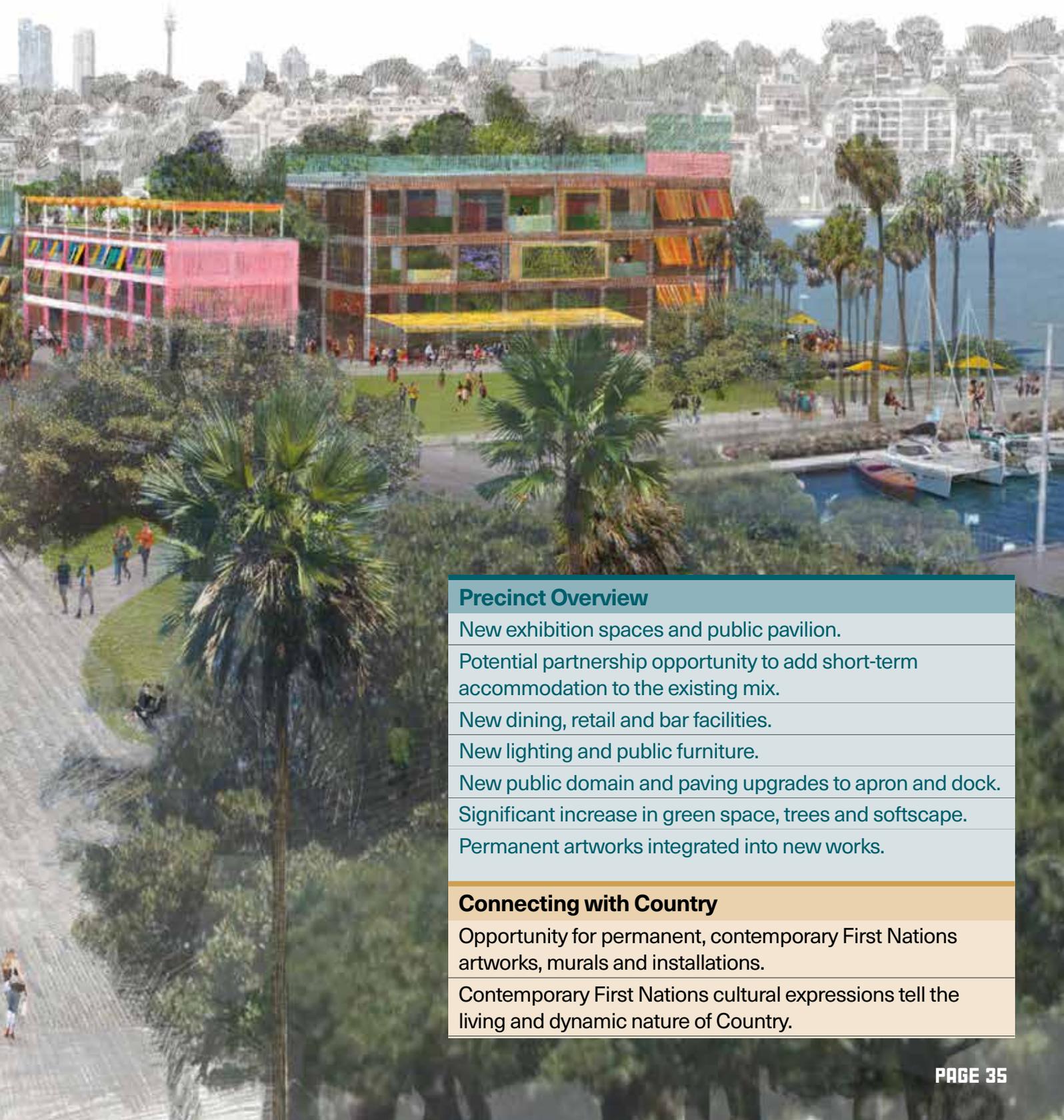
**Remember Me**  
Reko Rennie  
Carriageworks  
2020-2022

2020 marked the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook's first landfall at Botany Bay and the HMB Endeavour charting of the east coast of Australia. In a climate marred by tension and division as to how this history is acknowledged,

Rennie's work at the entrance to Carriageworks is a reminder to the frontier wars, the massacres and the survival of the real sovereigns of this country, the First Nations people of Australia.



# Fitzroy Dock



## Precinct Overview

New exhibition spaces and public pavilion.

Potential partnership opportunity to add short-term accommodation to the existing mix.

New dining, retail and bar facilities.

New lighting and public furniture.

New public domain and paving upgrades to apron and dock.

Significant increase in green space, trees and softscape.

Permanent artworks integrated into new works.

## Connecting with Country

Opportunity for permanent, contemporary First Nations artworks, murals and installations.

Contemporary First Nations cultural expressions tell the living and dynamic nature of Country.

# CAISSON PAVILION



The caisson is the steel watertight lock gate that allows water to be pumped from the dry dock. The caisson will be returned to its original position in the Fitzroy Dock to create a bridge to the Creative Precinct and enable some interpretation for the convict built dock. A new public pavilion overlooking the dock will provide shelter, toilets, and opportunities for commercial partnerships to deliver exhibition, conference, dining and small bars spaces.

# FUNCTIONS AND SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION



Possible short-term accommodation. This will provide an additional level of accommodation suited to short-term stays, small conferences, work retreats, special events, weddings and weekend getaways. Roof gardens and courtyards will team with endemic local plants, palm trees and ferns, providing a green outlook.

# Cockatoo Dockyard



A working island connects to wider working harbour  
Docks are a key legacy  
Innovation and education  
Allows public access



A SHIP IN HARBOR IS SAFE, BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT SHIPS ARE BUILT FOR.

— JOHN A. SHEDD

# A PART OF SYDNEY'S WORKING HARBOUR

## Precinct Overview

Ongoing use as a working dockyard.

Upgrades to buildings and facilities.

Public domain upgrades with access provided.

Partnership opportunities for new buildings and equipment to support maritime activities.

## Connecting with Country

Opportunity for permanent, contemporary First Nations artworks, murals and installations.

First Nations economic opportunities including business and procurement.

Waterways and oceans management that harness First Nations knowledge and resources.

Encourage related First Nations businesses to locate and operate from Cockatoo Dockyard.

## Nawi tied bark canoes to *HMAS Success*

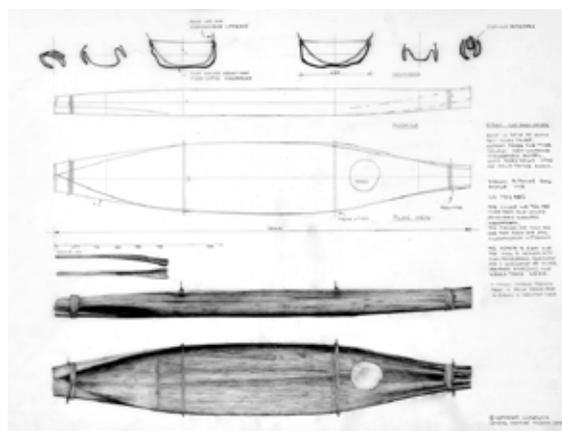
The adjacent deep waters around Cockatoo Island / Wareamah make it a perfect place for maritime industry. At one time the island had five operational slipways, two dry docks and numerous wharfs. This precinct recognises and maintains the island's industrial history and achievements, and the fundamental connection to water, travel and navigation. There is considerable history on Cockatoo Island / Wareamah that reveals what human endeavour, innovation, hard labour and invention can achieve. The maritime history of Cockatoo Island / Wareamah is steeped in timber and steel ship building — it is vital to keep this alive on a working dockyard. Through training and education these skills can be learned, nurtured and passed on to future generations.

Canoe and ties made from Blue Leaved Stringybark, *Eucalyptus Agglomerata*. Frames and pegs, Black She Oak, *Allocasurina Littoralis*. Hearth is clay and the hull is sealed with clay, paperbark, bees wax and combination of ochre, Ironbark King and Grass Tree Resin. A typical paddle was formed from a palm frond base.



**Nawi—Tied Bark Canoe**  
Built by Owen Talbot, Anthony Jones, Tyler Ronan with Dean Kelly NPWS and David Payne ANMM, 2014

IMAGE: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM COLLECTION NC702982



**Nawi—Tied Bark Canoe, Drawings**  
David Payne, Australian National Maritime Museum, 2016

IMAGE: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM COLLECTION NC702982

# Keeping the Working Harbour working

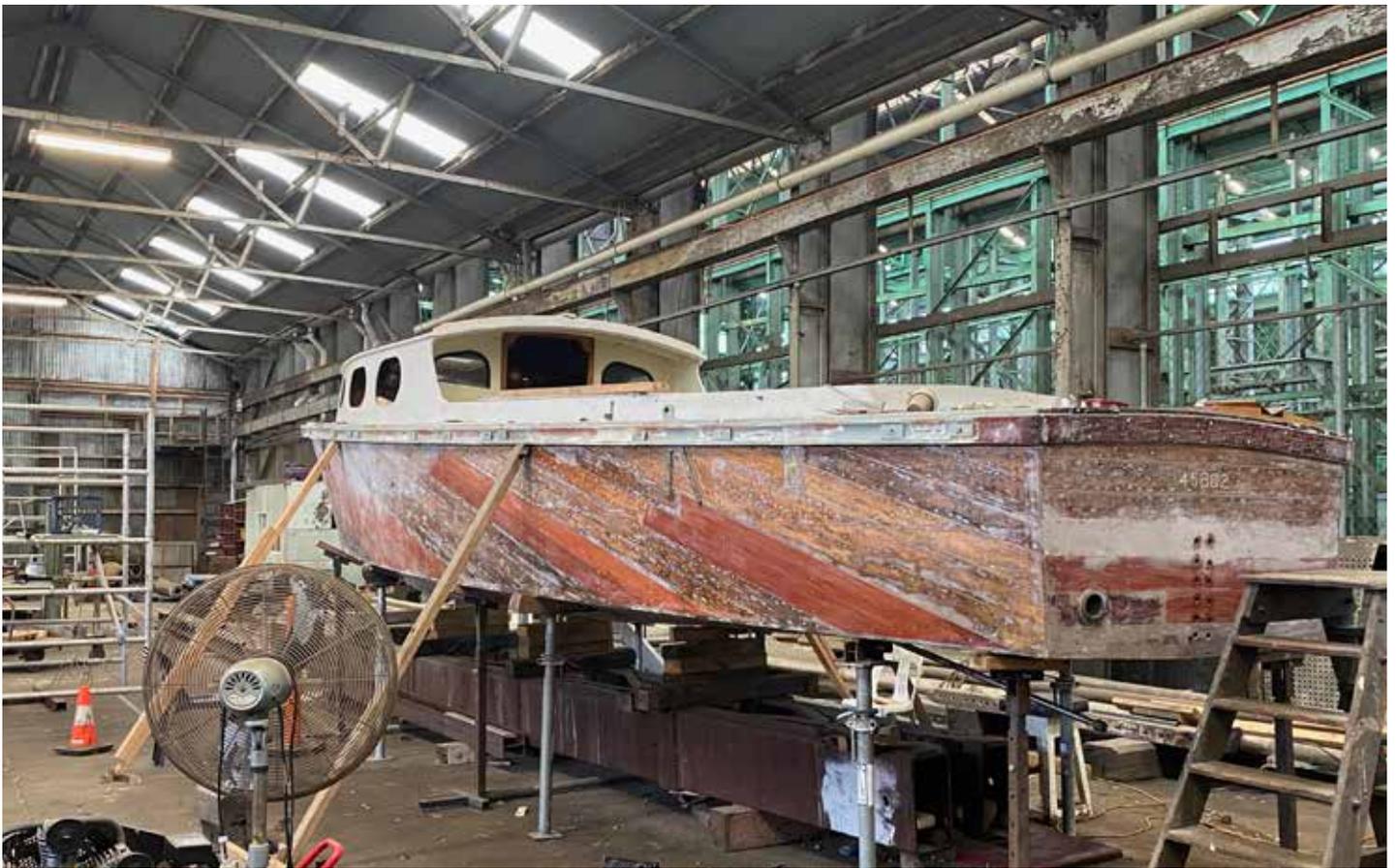
Currently the western end of the Southern Apron comprises areas of hardstand for boat repair, boat storage, marina and the large Sutherland Dock as well as a range of stand-alone and largely disused structures. It is widely accepted that Sydney Harbour is the international face of Australia, what is less understood is the role it plays in keeping the city operating. According to the Committee for Sydney's recent report *Sydney Harbour Our Greatest Asset 2019*, demand for maritime trade, transport and support services is growing, yet foreshore space for the necessary back-of-house facilities is not keeping pace.

According to UrbanGrowth NSW's *The Bays Precinct Sydney: Transformation Plan 2015*, Sydney Harbour is at or near capacity for on-water storage of recreational vessels. Maritime businesses are vulnerable to being squeezed out of prime foreshore sites in favour of higher return uses, particularly residential redevelopment. Anticipated future uses include berthing, boat repair, outside hardstand, undercover storage and maritime trade training. Access will be ensured to allow the public to engage with aspects of the dockyard and the working harbour in a safe way.



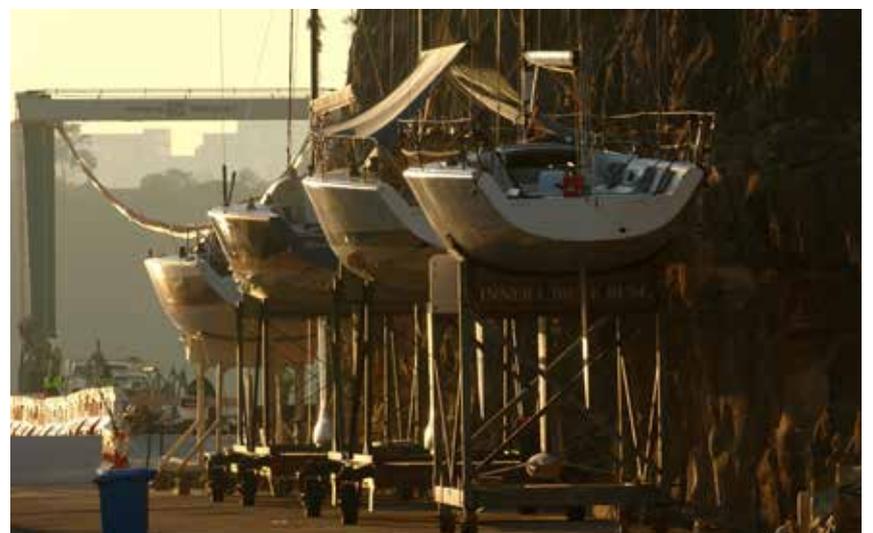
**TOP IMAGE:** Dock activities, Woolwich Dock  
New equipment and machinery are used on the dock as part of day-to-day operations.

**BOTTOM IMAGE:** Woolwich Dock  
Built between 1899 and 1901 it is a rare surviving example of a private graving dock and one of the largest in Australia.



## Connecting to the harbour.

For many Sydneysiders, the harbour is a symbol, but for many it is never experienced on the water. Allowing and encouraging more people to connect to the waterways of Sydney through sailing boats, yachts, motor cruisers and kayaks will bring new visitors and encourage new lifelong enthusiasts to the Dockyards.



# The Plateau

## Precinct Overview

World Heritage assets protected and the visitor experience enhanced through interpretation and curatorial approaches.

Public domain upgrades around the Convict Gaol and Central Plateau Campus and rationalisation of paths and gardens.

Potential for investment in workshops for a range of potential uses such as education/training facilities and short-term accommodation.

Upgrades to buildings, infrastructure and facilities including lifts, stairs and ramps.

New furniture, seating and lighting.

An increase in green space, trees and softscape.

Permanent and temporary artworks in existing spaces.

## Connecting with Country

Use the east end of the plateau to demonstrate native and endemic rewilding, creating an Eora Garden.

The Plateau could include areas which are rewilded with native grasses, with native edible gardens alongside. These could be harvested for a unique restaurant which could include a seasonal menu of bush tucker inspired foods.

Opportunities for First Nation urban market gardener to oversee the gardens and run workshops and tours which tie in with the use of the area as an education space.

A native plant nursery could be operated which hosts workshops on native edibles, plantings and sells seedlings and plants on market days.

Opportunity for permanent, contemporary First Nations artworks, murals and installations in landscape.

## The island on the island.

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah is a meeting place not only for people but of many histories. The Plateau holds First Nation history, both ancient and recent, colonial history from convict carved silos in solid stone to cell blocks, yards and buildings.

The Plateau offers a place for learning and for teaching. It is a place where people can come together and understand the rich and layered history of our nation and the island in close proximity to each other.

# Convict Sandstone Gaol, Biloela & Silos

**A reimagined experience**  
**New interpretation**  
**Improved grounds**  
**Improved curtilages**

Convict Barracks.

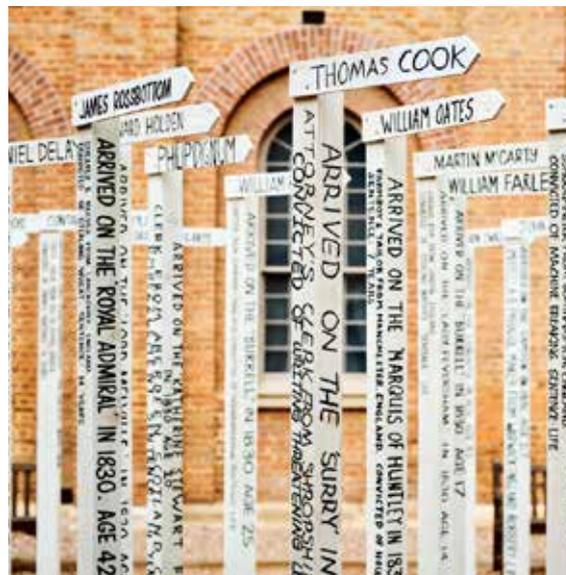


Convict Barracks.  
Image: Rob Mulally



*untitled (maraong manaówi)*  
Jonathon Jones  
Hyde Park Barracks, 2020

The artwork looks at the similarly shaped symbols of the maraong manaówi (emu footprint) and the English broad arrow as a way of understanding history and cultural relations.



*Who goes here?*  
Fiona Hall  
Hyde Park Barracks, 2021

More than 300 painted totems profile stories and identities of past residents and workers of the Barracks between 1819–1887: convicts, immigrants and asylum inmates, and the officials who controlled their lives; it includes the distance travelled from their 'home' calculated with assistance of colonial records and modern GPS. Each post will occupy the building's courtyard for two months complemented by drop-in activities and a series of public talks.

## Making Sandstone Shine

Cockatoo Island Gaol was hand built of sandstone by convicts from materials quarried from the very island on which they were imprisoned. The 2010 UNESCO World Heritage listing has elevated the precinct as a highly important site and

destination that tells the story of convict labour, law and order and tribulations of the new colony. The gaol precinct is to be improved through new interpretation, better visitor experiences and preservation works and updated public spaces around the site. Contemporary art and historical interpretation can be used to tell stories and histories integral to landscape and buildings.

# Central Plateau Campus

**Opportunities for investment in adaptive reuse to deliver campus spaces**

A landmark Angophora Costata in front of Building 12, Joiners Shop, Upper Island, Cockatoo Island, 2021



## Campus Overview

Potential for investment in workshops for a range of potential uses such as education/training facilities, short-term accommodation, office space etc.

Upgrades to provide universal access to all areas.

Public domain upgrades to areas around the campus.

New gardens, furniture, seating and lighting.

Permanent and temporary artworks in existing spaces.

## Connecting with Country

Premier site for national First Nations gatherings and events.

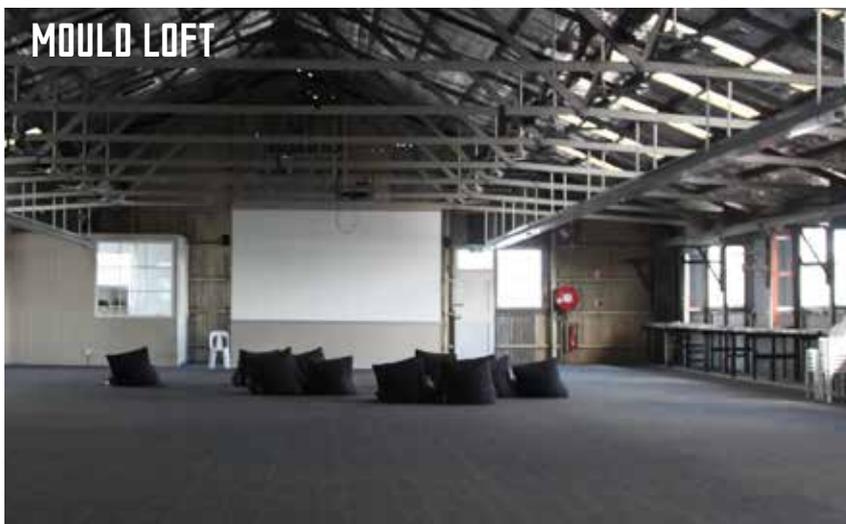
Utilising space for mentoring and leadership programs especially for First Nations women.

First Nations education and scholarships as a key offering.

Opportunity for permanent, contemporary First Nations artworks, murals and installations in building and landscape.

## Future Forward.

The cloister of five large sheds in the former Ship Design Precinct sits in the middle of the Plateau. It provides easy access to the Cockatoo Island Gaol precinct, the elevated walkway to the sandstone silos, and the Eastern Plateau residences and gardens. Through careful adaptive reuse these large floor plate sheds could be configured to provide classrooms, breakout spaces, conference facilities, workrooms, sleeping quarters, mess hall and separate outdoor spaces for gathering and entertainment.





**DRAWING OFFICE**



# Eastern Plateau Eora Gardens



## Growing up and out.

The Plateau is the greenest part of the island, with a mix of open lawns, large trees, designed gardens and mix of introduced and native species. There is real potential to increase the greening and number of endemic species, repairing the landscape where possible, whilst also maintaining the intimacy of the smaller domestic gardens and existing cultural landscapes.



## Eastern Plateau Overview

Public domain upgrades and rationalisation of paths and gardens with improvements to access.

Increase in endemic and native species to supplement fauna habitat.

Continue a mix of uses including accommodation, dining, exhibition and gathering spaces.

## Connecting with Country

Celebrate the Tent Embassy site and mural.

Use the east end of the plateau to demonstrate native and endemic rewilding to create an Eora Garden.

Plant areas which are rewilded with native grasses, and native food gardens nearby for use in island restaurants.

First Nations gardeners could oversee the process with workshops and tours that could build on the use of Upper Island as an outdoor classroom.

A native plant nursery could be operated which hosts workshops on native edibles and local plants and sells plants on market days.

Encourage related First Nations businesses to locate and operate on the Upper Island.



Rewilding of the eastern plateau sandstone terraces and cliff area



# North Apron

NORTH SYDNEY

KIRRIBILLI

ME-MEL

BIRCHGROVE

## COCKATOO CAMPGROUND

Bush camping in the city's backyard with additional tents and new improved facilities. [PAGE 59](#)

## SLIPWAY HILLS

Slippery dips for kids of all ages with towers and climbing structures all over the hill. [PAGE 56](#)



SYDNEY

BARANGAROO

PYRMONT

BALMAIN

## POWERHOUSE

Powerhouse to become an activity node with hospitality and events

PAGE 58

## SLIPWAYS PLAYGROUND

Slipway No.1 and No.2 to be adapted to include water play, flying foxes, sand play, swings, First Nations and maritime interpretation and educational gardens. PAGE 54



# CONNECTING TO WATER

# Slipways Playground

**A large ‘destination playground’**  
**Interactive water and sand play**  
**Slides, climbing nets and swings**  
**Embedded environmental education**  
**A place of rich site interpretation**

The significantly altered landscape of the Northern Apron which largely consists of reclaimed land on fill, hardscape paths and former shipbuilding slipways is the ideal location for a new harbourside playground. In an age where many kids are constantly on screens, outdoor activities that need two hands and a full imagination are highly sought after by parents, grandparents and carers.

The site offers the opportunity to interpret First Nations history, local flora and fauna, biodiversity and of course the ship building activities of the former Slipways on the Northern Apron. This interconnected series of playgrounds, play spaces and gardens in this very unique location will be a sought after destination by locals and visitors alike.

## Slipways Overview

Large and significant public playground and park precinct for all ages.

New pedestrian bridges across the Slipways provides a continuous harbourside promenade around the island.

Extensive swings and rope play, climbing areas, flying foxes, sand and water play and wild play located in Slipway No.1 using First Nations stories, industrial relics, and elements from the site.

Educational, sensory and exploratory gardens, grass lands, rain gardens located on Slipway No.2.

Significant increase in green space, trees, shades, gardens and softscape.

New picnic structures, sunshade and furniture.

## Connecting with Country

A multi-use fire circle located between Slipways Playground and the Campground.

Waterways and oceans management focus that harnesses First Nations knowledge and resources.

Use the east end of the Slipways to demonstrate native endemic rewilding.

Opportunity for permanent, contemporary First Nations artworks, interpretation and playground design.

# SLIPWAY HILLS



Governors Island  
Hudson River,  
New York City

**"THE MOST  
EFFECTIVE KIND  
OF EDUCATION  
IS THAT A CHILD  
SHOULD PLAY  
AMONGST LOVELY  
THINGS."  
—  
PLATO**

## Slip, Slop, Splash!

In a city of over 5 million, playgrounds have never been busier nor more interesting and well designed. The Slipways Playground can take the layered history and spaces on Cockatoo Island / Wareamah and make it interesting and never-tiring in its appeal to kids from all ages, from all over the city.



Rope Play, Domain Creek  
Playground, Parramatta Park, 2016



Flying Foxes, Bungarribee Park  
Western Sydney Parklands, 2017

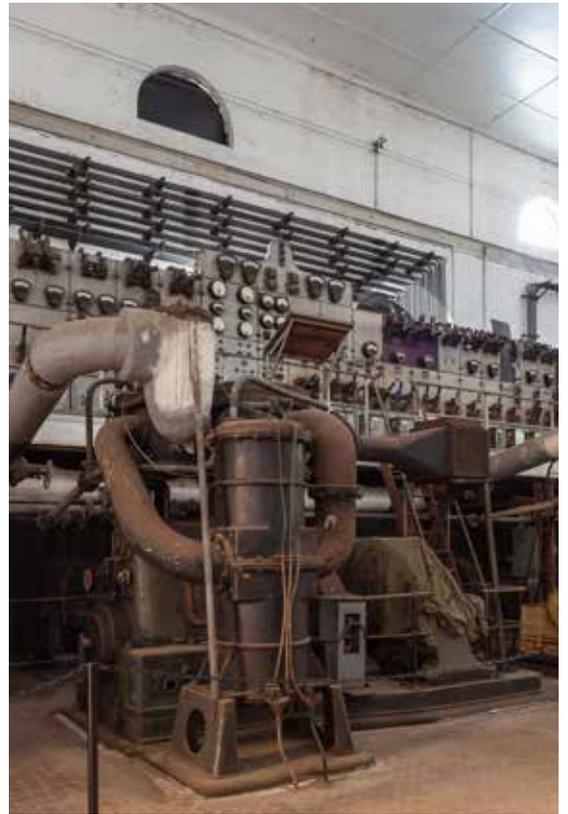
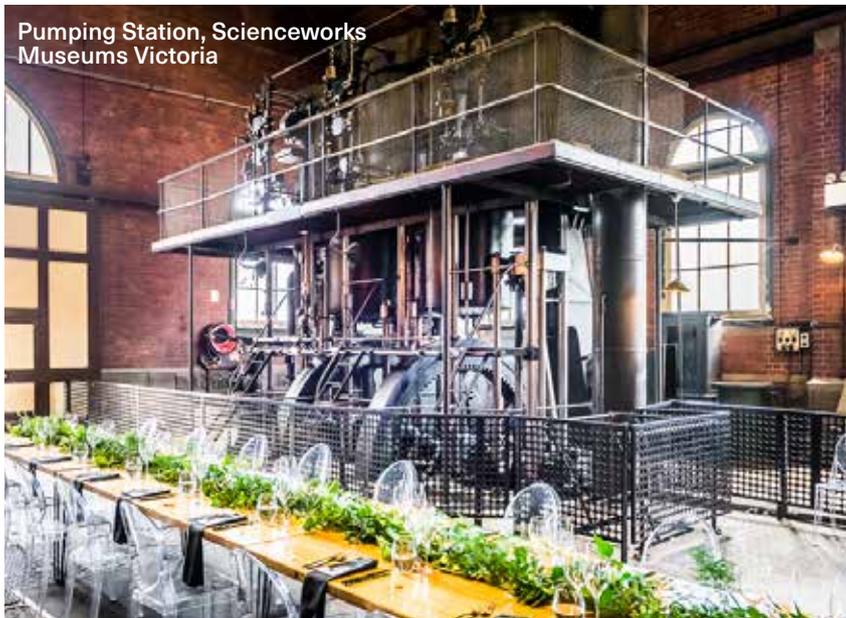


River Foreshore Playground  
Parramatta, 2010



Swings, Bungarribee Park  
Western Sydney Parklands, 2017  
PHOTO: WESTERN SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST

# COCKATOO ISLAND POWERHOUSE



## A destination hidden in plain sight between the Dockyard and Slipways.

The iconic brick Powerhouse chimney provides a marker to the associated building that is located at the western end of the Sutherland Dock near to the Slipways. The fine brick and terracotta tiled building and chimney was built in 1918 and provided power on the island until 1937. It also powered the pumps that emptied and filled the adjacent dock. There is opportunity to partner with a commercial operator to establish an outstanding events venue within the remarkable industrial, mechanical and maritime heritage site.



# Cockatoo Campground



## Sydney's Backyard Camping Getaway

Cockatoo Island / Wareamah has become synonymous with short stay tent based camping. The Campground is a popular destination for young families, school groups and travellers, looking for a unique experience in the middle of Sydney Harbour. Canvas tents are supported by toilets, showers and dining shelters and cooking facilities adjacent the campground. Tents are set out in rows on lawns with native gardens between and along pathways. It is intended to increase the level of planting and canopy in the camp area, to increase the sense of a natural bushland setting.

A small fire pit is currently located on the eastern end of Slipway No.2. It is proposed to construct a new larger fire circle area between the campground and Slipway No.1 that will have a number of uses depending on events, time of year and occupancy of the campground. Increased interpretation of First Nations themes and concepts are to be incorporated in the camping experience.

The camp can be rearranged to provide a more secluded experience, with a range of camping options from simple through to high-end 'glamping'.



### Campground Overview

Camping facilities to remain available.

Increase planting and gardens to create a more bushland setting for visitors.

### Connecting with Country

A multi-use fire circle located between the Slipways Playground and the Campground.

Opportunity for permanent, contemporary First Nations artworks, murals and interpretation.

### Green Camp

The campground planting will be complemented with a mix of endemic plant species and native grasses.

A redesign of the campground can improve the sense of retreating within a more natural setting, with the use of rocks, gravel, low planting and grasses carefully placed in the public domain.

# Balancing investments

Delivery requires partnerships with multiple levels of Government, the private sector, community organisations and philanthropy.

The Independent Review of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, released in 2020, provides an opportunity to reset priorities so that the objects of the legislation can be fully realised. The move from being a transitional entity to a permanent custodian of these significant historical harbourside sites is a reorientation of the role and operation of the Harbour Trust. The need to secure the ongoing sustainability of the Harbour Trust is perhaps the most significant aspect of this Review.

In reflecting on the future sustainability of the Harbour Trust comes a range of outcomes including securing government funding, as well being open to the possibility of accessing private sector capital and operating revenue, through the proper leasing and adaptive reuse of our buildings. There are also opportunities to work with partners to consider potential for co-investment and shared delivery of the activation of our sites.

However any such external financial support and investment must, in all cases, not overwhelm the character of the sites as community sites, nor negate the objects of our enabling legislation. We respect the many representations from the community that the objects of the Harbour Trust should be protected and any commercial activity should not be detrimental to the character of the Harbour Trust assets or sites.



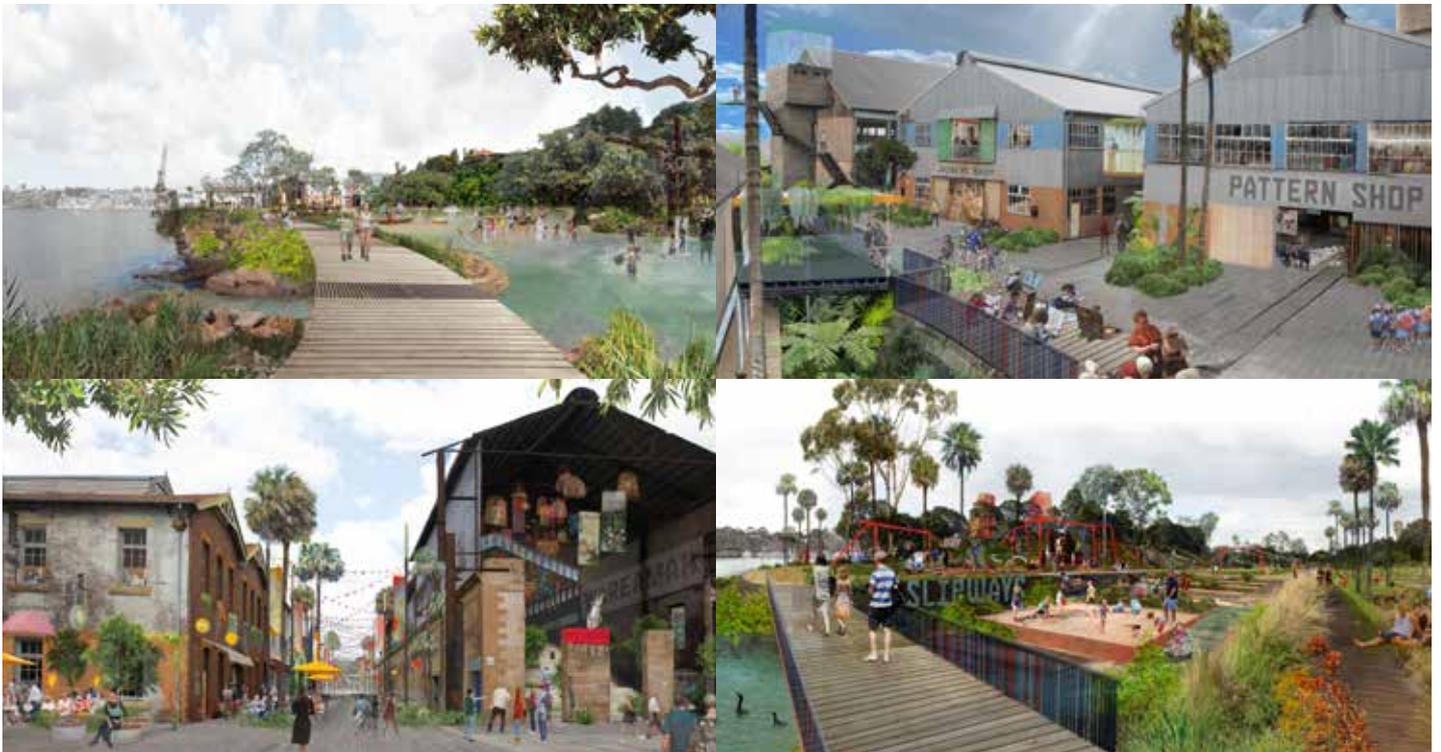
IMAGE: NEARMAP

# Next Steps

We've prepared a vision to explore what the future of Cockatoo Island / Wareamah could look like, drawing closely on what we heard from the community in 2019.

Your feedback on the Draft Concept Vision will help us find the right balance between celebrating Cockatoo Island /Wareamah's history, opening it up for more people to enjoy, and realising the places, facilities, partnerships and programs needed to make this possible.

This is only part of the journey, which started nearly 20 years ago with the formation of the Harbour Trust, the consultation on the Comprehensive Plan, the community conversation in 2019, and what will ultimately be engagement on a detailed masterplan for Cockatoo Island / Wareamah.



## Community feedback process for Cockatoo Island / Wareamah





**DRAFT  
CONCEPT  
VISION**



Cockatoo  
Island™



Australian Government  
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust