



MEETING NOTES

FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
THURSDAY 15 AUGUST 2024 | 2.00PM – 4.00PM

Attendees:

First Nations Advisor Group Members:

Alison Page (Chair)
Peter White
Lloyd Walker
Bryce Liddell (online)
Jessie Longbottom (online)

Harbour Trust:

Janet Carding, Executive Director
Kathryn Roberts, Director, Marketing & Visitor Experience
Susan Thompson, Head of Engagement & Experience
Daniel Sealy, Director Planning
Graham Izod, Director Assets and Parklands

Invited guests (for relevant presentation and discussion):

Terri Janke & Co (Dr. Terri Janke and Adam Broughton)
Coast History & Heritage (Dr. Paul Irish and Dr. Michael Bennett)

MEETING OPENING

1. Welcome to Country and Apologies

Lloyd Walker (LW) opened the meeting with a Welcome to Country. Alison Page (AP) welcomed attendees. Nathan Moran, Chris Ingrey and Donna Daly sent apologies.

The First Nations Advisory Group (FNAG) members agreed to approve the meeting notes from the previous April meeting.

2. Executive Director Update

The ED gave an update on the recent Cockatoo Island open day which went well. The Harbour Trust worked with Gujaga Foundation on the presentation of the Buriburi story which was successful. The ED thanked Uncle Lloyd for performing the Welcome to Country. The island welcomed over 2,800 visitors throughout the open day.

In planning updates, Mosman Council have submitted a DA to upgrade the amenities block at Middle Head Oval. The Harbour Trust have also commenced implementing the masterplan at Middle Head (see agenda item 5).



The Management Plans for each site will undergo regular review, the first one is Woolwich Dock with the intention to complete a heritage management review and also to include First Nations content.

The Cockatoo Island / Wareamah master plan has been completed and will be published shortly.

A whole of harbour roundtable conversation is in progress with the Chair of the First Nations Advisory Group and the Harbour Trust's Executive Director leading and participating respectively, discussing matters such as what does good cultural governance look like. The conversation captures the latest thinking with designing with Country and its flow through to placemaking.

Action: Minutes from the previous meeting were endorsed

3. First Nations Strategy Presentation and Discussion

A presentation by guest attendees, consultants Terri Janke and Company. The presentation commenced with an Acknowledgment of Country and introductions. It was followed by a summary of progress to date that 2 workshops had been completed with FNAG, staff and guidance provided to the HT. The strategy has a proposed timeframe of a 3 years.

The consultants brought an initial draft strategy for discussion, based on the workshops. It outlines Harbour Trust commitments such as partnering with and developing relationships with First Nations organisations.

Embedding principles of respectful engagement in the Strategy will be important and the Group referred to their own Terms of Reference for guidance on this. The Group noted that Connecting with Country is a NSW Government initiative, and it is important to note that the Harbour Trust is not obliged to follow it, but is following in good faith.

The Group commented that feedback on the draft Strategy will constitute focussing in on the specifics of the Harbour, the Harbour Trust as an organisation, guidance from the Aboriginal Languages Trust and other relevant policies.

The Group noted that Harbour Trust sites are one part of a broader cultural landscape, and Harbour Trust engagement with communities is to ensure cultural governance is completed in the correct way with a coordinated approach across what yarns are told where. This can only be achieved with formal governance and led by cultural owners.

It was noted that case studies are a good way of demonstrating best practice, and a good and recent example of best practice has been the licensing of the Buriburi story, where culturally appropriate consent was sought to maintain the integrity of the story.

Aligning the strategy with the Harbour Trust Corporate Plan will be important as well as endorsement by the Members of the Trust. It was discussed that the document would probably remain an internal document, as it is a document that will be for the use of staff to become better at their jobs, however some sections may be published externally to demonstrate the Harbour Trust's commitments to Community.



The Group agreed that while there is still some work to be done to complete the Strategy, that interactions with the FNAG and interactions with staff in the workshop were positive.

Action: The Harbour Trust to further develop the deliverable actions in the strategy

Action: TJC to break down the actions into short, medium and long term and pull out the targets outlined in the strategy

Action: TJC to add the comments from today's discussion and provide a further version of the draft Strategy for review to the First Nations Advisory Group.

4. Coast History & Heritage Report Discussion

Following Introductions, invitees, Coast History & Heritage presented an overview of their updated draft report to the group. A level of background knowledge of the work was assumed so the presentation summarised the updated reports. The History report has a theme – that Middle Head looks out to the whole of Sydney harbour and can be a place to tell its stories as well as Middle Head's own stories.

Both the history and the heritage report were well received by the Group who agreed that the research opens up possibilities of telling not only the stories of Middle Head but also the places around the harbour that it looks out across.

The interpretative footpath of the master plan lends itself to being a place for this approach and is an opportunity, as it will be one of the first parts of the master plan to be implemented. It was noted that the report will be helpful to bring out the cultural values of the site as well, as the history of the First Nations service men/women, which is also a very interesting history and military story to tell.

Stories such as the formation of the harbour and the story of first contact could be told from the perspective of Middle Head.

The FNAG discussed that once the report is finalised, the next decision will be how the information is used. It was noted that the interpretative walk could be the report's first usage, but requested that the reports themselves would not be published, as the information may be taken out of context and stories not told from a First Nations perspective.

Action: FNAG to provide final comments so that the reports can be finalised



5. Master plans implementation update discussion– Middle Head – Graham Izod update.

An overview of the Middle Head master plan stage one funded works was provided, including the interpretive footpath that would likely be raised boardwalk and fully accessible and would ring the plateau area and link to the NPWS walking track to create a larger looped path of the whole headland.

The interpretation plan opens the opportunity of what stories to tell where and why – a walk that looks at MH from a First Nations perspective. There is an opportunity to inform the interpretation and design with the material heard earlier in the meeting. A First Nations Landscape design consultant is currently being procured and when appointed will work directly with the HT and the FNAG. Based on advice from the Group, the First Nations Landscape Architect would develop concepts drawn from the First Nations research for the design team.

The FNAG discussed that it is likely that in the first stage of this work that interpretation opportunities will be more limited, and the more difficult stories addressed over time.

Curatorially it is important to access the right information and opportunities. The walk has the potential to tell the stories of the research, and the places occupied by First Nations peoples on Middle Head. It will be an opportunity for visitors to learn about the place while on the walk. As discussed, there are also opportunities to also leverage sight lines and visual connections to other places to tell their stories and learn about the harbour.

Action: Add the Middle Head First Nations Landscape Architect consultant to the meeting agenda for the next meeting

6. AOB

Nothing noted.

The meeting closed at 4pm