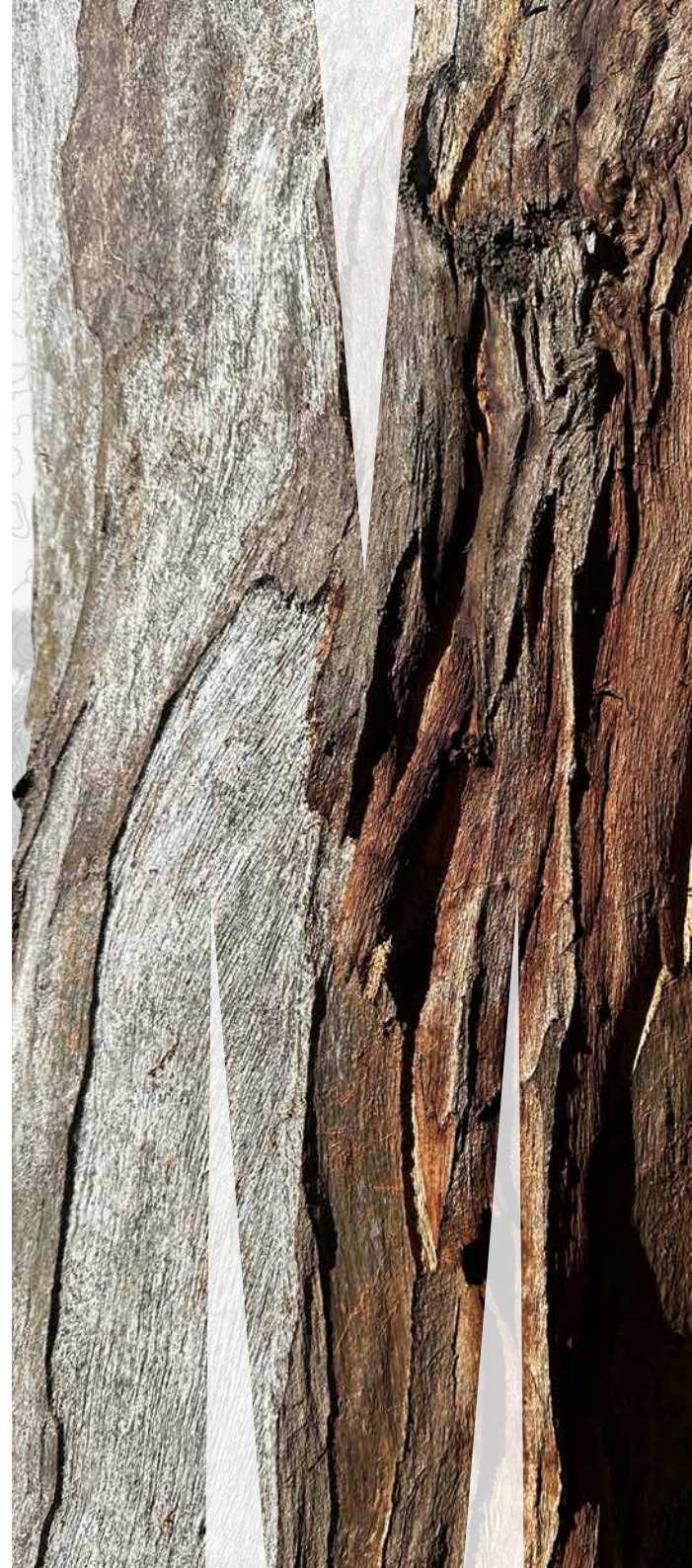




**MONASH**  
University

# UNDERSTANDING COUNTRY

EMBEDDING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE INTO CAMPUS DESIGN





**IF WE CARE FOR COUNTRY...**

A dense forest of trees with a warm, orange-brown color overlay. The text "COUNTRY WILL IN TURN CARE FOR US." is centered in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**COUNTRY WILL IN TURN CARE FOR US.**

## WHAT IS COUNTRY?

**Country (capital C) encompasses all. It is the land, water and sky. The tangible and intangible.**

Indigenous communities have deep physical and spiritual connections to Country. Through generations Indigenous communities have centered their spiritual Identity around caring for and maintaining Country. Despite ongoing effects on communities as a result of colonisation, forced removals and suppression of culture, Indigenous people have maintained an ongoing connection to Country.

The relationality that Indigenous people have with Country is expressed in many forms. The sections in this document on language, art, song lines, storytelling and community, provide insights into the important relationships Indigenous people have with Country. The expression will vary from individual to individual, community to community, depending on the knowledge and learnings passed down through generations.

It is important that Indigenous communities are engaged with from the outset when designing on and with Country. It is a fundamental right, as declared by the United Nations, that Indigenous people are involved in maintaining and caring for Country.

### Article 25

**“Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.” (UN, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007)**

### **“Country is everything” Jude Barlow, Ngunnawal Elder**

Country encompasses the tangible land, sea and sky that we interact with on a regular basis. It is the flora and fauna that inhabit those spaces whilst also extending to the intangible elements. Language, connection and culture all contribute to what makes Country unique to specific language groups across Australia.

We as a Monash community have a responsibility to Country. When designing and building on Indigenous land, we must treat the area and its contents with a level of respect that understands and values the knowledge and practices of Traditional Owners and, with permission, apply this knowledge to foster a more inclusive and culturally-aware campus. We must consult with the appropriate people when working on land and water, and deeply listen to Indigenous voices as a normative part of community engagement. We should respect Country and understand the depths of connection which the Indigenous people have in order to do right by Country.

### **Perspectives of Country**

To help inform this document, a series of engagement sessions were undertaken with the Monash Indigenous community in order to identify key cultural elements that contribute to understanding Country. Indigenous staff and students across the University discussed ways to connect, advocate for and communicate Country. Representatives from the following Monash departments and faculties contributed to these engagement sessions:

- William Cooper Institute
- Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and Senior Vice-President
- Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and Senior Vice-President
- Buildings and Property
- Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) and Senior Vice-President
- Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice-President
- Portfolio of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Senior Vice-President
- Faculty of Education
- Human Resources
- School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine
- Monash Sustainable Development Institute
- Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture
- Virtual and Augmented Reality Services

**“MORE THAN A PHYSICAL PLACE / LAND”**

“CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY” “DEEP FEELING / MEMORY / TIME”

“ALWAYS CHANGING” **“HAS AGENCY”**

“COUNTRY IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PLACE, PEOPLE AND SOULS”

“THE INTERSECTION OF DREAMING, CULTURE, COMMUNITY, PEOPLE AND PLACE”

**“TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE IDENTITY WITH ELEMENTS CONNECTION,  
COMMUNITY, NOT ALWAYS THINGS YOU CAN SEE, FEEL...”**

“COMMUNITY/ MOB PEOPLE AND THE CONNECTION TO THAT PLACE”

“AN AREA OF LAND WATER AND SPACE THAT I BELONG TO”

**“EVEN IN BUILT UP CITIES, WE ARE ON COUNTRY”**

“IT IS ETERNAL, IN THAT IT SUSTAINS AND TEACHES US IF WE SUSTAIN IT”

**“PEOPLE / COMMUNITY / MOB = THE CENTER OF WHAT WE DO”**

**“COUNTRY FOR ME IS HOME AND MY COMMUNITY / FAMILY”**



**MONASH UNIVERSITY RECOGNISES THAT ITS  
AUSTRALIAN CAMPUSES ARE LOCATED ON  
THE UNCEDED LANDS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE  
KULIN NATIONS, AND PAYS ITS RESPECTS TO  
THEIR ELDERS, PAST AND PRESENT.**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Monash University acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and Boon-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners of the lands in which our campuses are located. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present. We recognise their continued connection to the land and waterways, their unique ability to care for Country, and their deep spiritual and physical connection with Country.

Monash University acknowledges that Indigenous sovereignty has never been ceded, and we extend our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who interact and engage with our campuses across the country.

COVER IMAGES: Jock Marshall Reserve, Clayton campus

## **LANGUAGE**

This document may contain culturally-sensitive wording and descriptions.

## **DECEASED PERSONS**

This document may contain, reference or refer to deceased persons. This may include photographs, films and books, and recordings.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL COPYRIGHT**

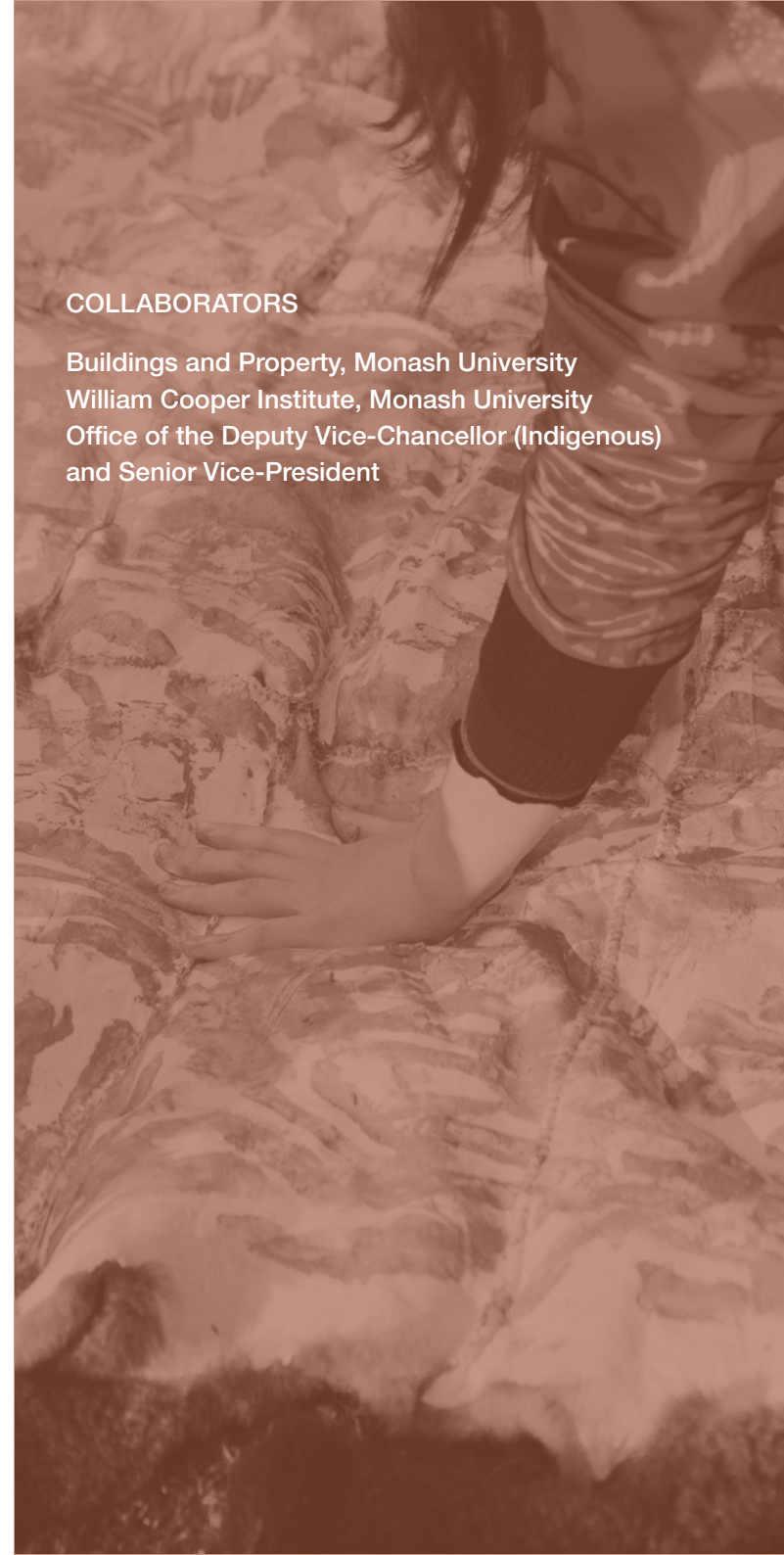
All cultural and intellectual copyright remains with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Any material contributed to the development of this research and resulting education resources cannot be used for any other purpose without express permission from the contributing individual and/or community.

## **A LIVING DOCUMENT**

Understanding Country is a living document with the purpose of being open for amendment. This document's aim is to provide guidance for architectural consultants to actively engage with Country across all project phases. Monash University aims to seek ongoing feedback from Traditional Owners and consultants and make amendments to this document as necessary.

## **COLLABORATORS**

Buildings and Property, Monash University  
William Cooper Institute, Monash University  
Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)  
and Senior Vice-President



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# 01 INTRODUCTION

**Indigenous communities are spiritually, physically, socially and culturally connected to the land. Country is both a place of belonging and a way of believing, and is notably different to how non-Indigenous peoples have perceived and treated land in Australia as a commodity. Monash University's campuses span several Indigenous nations and encompass diverse Indigenous experiences, yet there remains limited visible connection to Country across the campuses.**

To further our commitment to improving ways to honour and respect the histories and cultures of our Indigenous communities, Monash University seeks to better connect its campuses to Country. This is intended as an introductory document to help embed Indigenous narratives into our infrastructure design and the fabric of our campuses.

## **Key objectives**

Specific objectives are to:

- Support Monash University's Strategic Plan, *Impact 2030*, and its commitment to Indigenous peoples.
- Facilitate ongoing consultative and collaborative processes in partnership with the William Cooper Institute and various stakeholders, both within and outside the University.
- Provide inspiration and guidance for planning and designing culturally-sensitive buildings, spaces and places.
- Embed Indigenous engagement, consultation, and enquiry-by-design processes into the delivery of projects involving public realm works and new facilities.
- Foster a deeper understanding and recognition of Indigenous Australians and the historical and cultural significance of the land on which Monash campuses are located.
- Identify ideas for various types of spatial interventions across landscape, building design, and public art.
- Create campuses that more visibly reflect and recognise Indigenous Australian cultures in ways that are welcoming, inclusive, engaging, and integrated into the Monash University campus experience.

## Scope

The scope of this document covers Monash University's Australian campuses (Clayton, Caulfield, Parkville, and Peninsula) addressing both the physical campus areas and their surrounding contexts, with particular attention to significant, culturally relevant aspects.

## Audience

This document serves as a foundational resource to guide consultants in the planning, design, and delivery of infrastructure, building, and campus development projects across Monash University.

## Strategic context

Understanding Country is, underpinned by Monash University's Strategic Plan, Impact 2030, through its commitment to Indigenous peoples, and by the *Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019–2030*, Pillar Four, which prioritises fostering an environment with a tangible Indigenous presence.

### Impact 2030

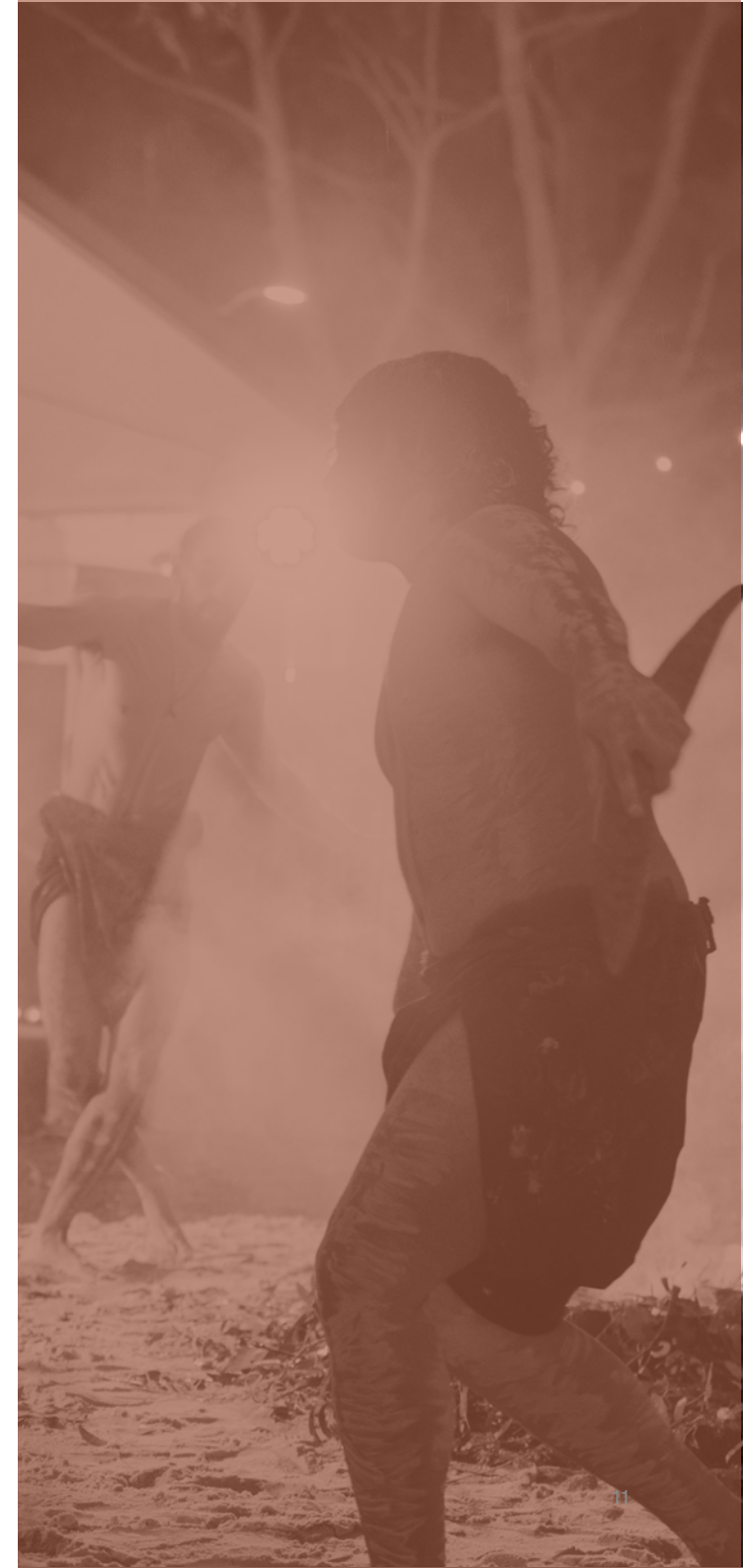
*Impact 2030* emphasises our commitment to fostering a society that recognises, respects and includes Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge, where Monash has a campus or major presence.

### Monash Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Framework

The *2019-2030 Framework*, particularly Pillar Four, prioritises supporting an environment with a tangible Indigenous presence in our spaces, events and activities, integrating Indigenous perspectives and knowledges into our buildings, gardens and landscaping works in prominent and visible positions.

### Campus Masterplans

Future campus Masterplan updates embed Indigenous culture and heritage within campus planning and includes principles for the recognition and respect of Indigenous peoples, fostering a sense of inclusion.



## 02 CONTEXT

**Indigenous communities have lived within Country for generations, understanding the interrelationship between the natural occurring elements of Country. An Indigenous understanding of Country stems from a deep interconnection between identity, spirituality and community, spanning beyond the physical conception of place.**

Country is a living entity that compasses the tangible factors of place, the intangible elements of spirituality and connection, thus informing Indigenous knowledge systems as it pertains to kinship structures, values, rights and lores. This system heavily emphasises the relationality between all life forces and the connection those forces have with Country and shapes our understanding of the world.

Mapping Country involves a careful analysis of what lays on, under and surrounding a site. It is a visual and succinct way to order and look at information at a readable scale for the desired purpose. It also enables the visualisation of the intangible aspects of Country, enhancing understanding. This practice ensures Country-oriented thinking is at the forefront of a project and sets a precedent for future projects to embed this practice.



Jock Marshall Reserve, Clayton campus



NOTE: This diagram aims to categorise elements of Country that can be best reflected in the practices of the built environment and is not intended to communicate the full complexity and breadth of what constitutes Country.

## EASTERN KULIN CONTEXT

**Monash University's four major campuses are located on the lands of the Kulin Nation. Three of the campuses sit on Boon Wurrung Country, while the fourth is on Woi Wurrung Country.**

The name kulin is derived from 'kuli/guli', meaning 'man, person', that is used to refer to the collective languages that use this word. It is often used in reference to the 'Kulin nation' (Clarke,1997).

Comprised of five language groups - Dja Dja Wurrung (1), Wathaurong (2), Taungerong (3), Woiwurrung (4), Boon Wurrung (5) - the Kulin Nation spans across central Victoria as far west as Donald and as far east as Bright, encapsulating the great dividing range, down to Port Phillip Bay (Neerm). Kulin people have been living within the region for over 60,000 years, connecting with Country as it has gone through copious periods of change. From volcanic activity to great floods, the Kulin song-lines speak of key historical events within the area that have shaped the way in which they have cared for Country throughout generations.

For generations, the five language groups of the Kulin nation have evolved a deep spiritual, philosophical and scientific understanding of Country. Clans' needs were met by sharing resources found across the Kulin nation, through exchange and trade between neighbouring clans and beyond. This stretched from the immediate context to the broader southeast Australian region.

For the purposes of this document, focus will be placed on the Eastern Kulin, where the four major University campuses are located. The lands of the Woi Wurrung and the Boon Wurrung, Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung refer to the languages and dialects spoken by the clans of the Eastern Kulin. 'Boon' meaning 'no' and 'Wurrung' meaning 'language, tongue, or lip'.

Indigenous languages are oral languages rather than written, and as a result, various spelling variations will be found across various publications involving Aboriginal history within Victoria and Indigenous history more broadly.

The Woi Wurrung are fresh water people. Howitt describes the boundary of Woi Wurrung Country as; The junction of the Saltwater and the Yarra Rivers, along the course of the former to Mount Macedon, thence to Mount Baw Baw, along the dividing Range, round the sources of the Plenty and Yarra to the Dandenong Mountains, thence by Gardiner's Creek and the Yarra to starting point (Howitt 1904: 71).

The boundary of Boonwurrung Country is described by Howitt as:

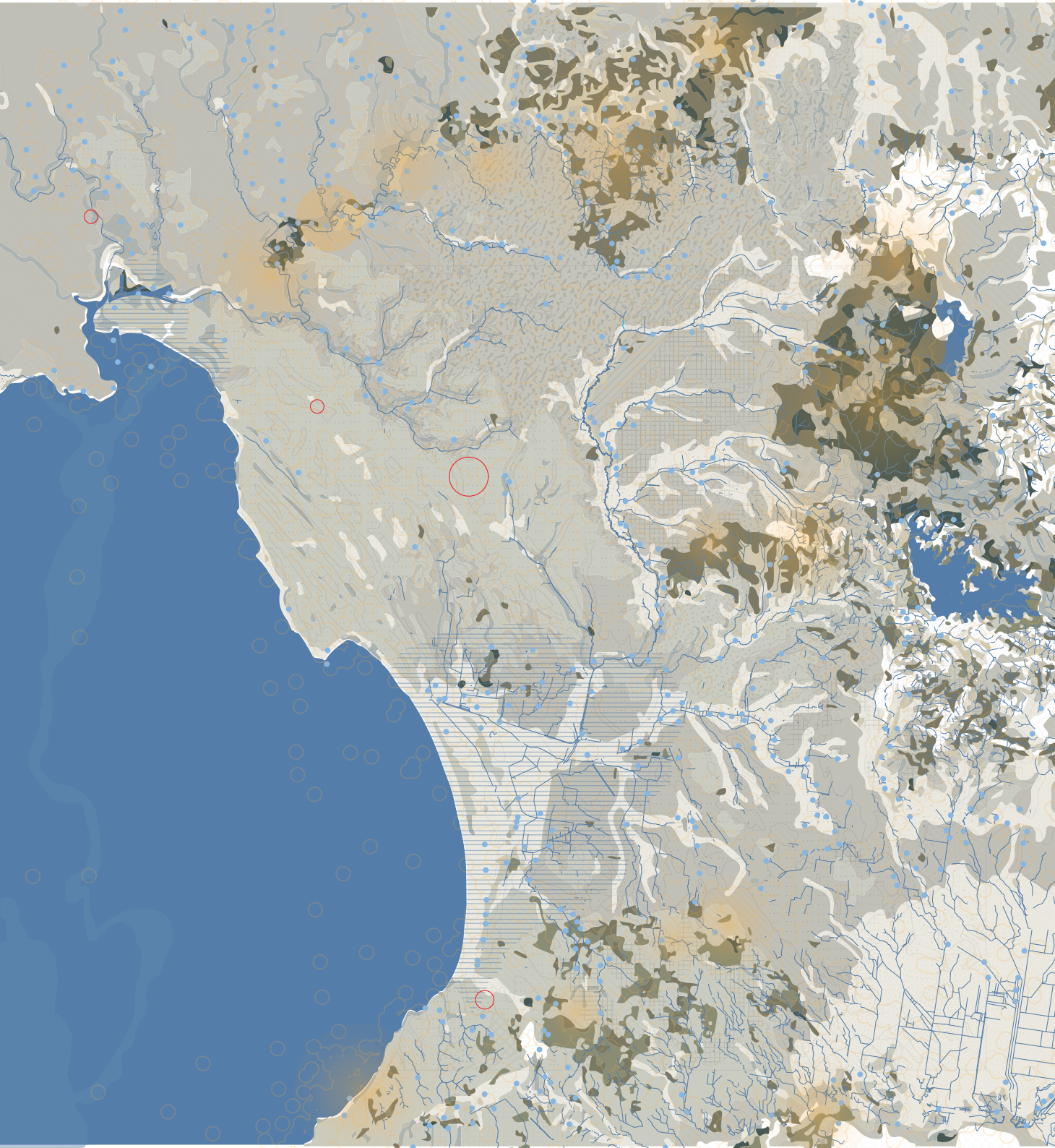
A strip of country from the mouth of the Werribee River and including what is now Williamstown and the southern suburbs of Melbourne, belonged to the Bunurong (Boon Wurrung); a coast tribe, which occupied the coast line from there round Hobson's Bay to Mordialloc, the whole of the Mornington Peninsula, and the coast from Westernport Bay to Anderson Inlet (Howitt 1904: 71).

The maps shown throughout this document depict the four major Monash University campuses and their relation to the surrounding context of Melbourne. These maps inform some of the many natural elements that contribute to Country, whilst superimposing cultural elements of Country within this context.



























The cultural maps were a result of an engagement process involving Monash University staff, and other key Indigenous stakeholders.

This mapping should not be used or reproduced in any other context outside of the University.



## Legend

-  Campus
-  CHSZ
-  Creek
-  River
-  Pre Colonial River
-  Nerrm
-  Ancient Waterway
-  Pre Colonial Wetland
-  Code Island Silt
-  Newer Volcanic Group
-  Coastal Dune Deposits
-  Melbourne Formation
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-  Alluvium
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-  Wind Blown Silt
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-  Plains Grassy Woodlands
-  Valley Heathy Forrest
-  Heathy Woodland/Sand Heathland Mosaic
-  Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland
-  Coastal Saltmarsh
-  Floodplain Riparian Woodland
-  Swampy Riparian Woodland
-  Coastal Alkaline Scrub
-  Coastal Banksia

## NATURAL CONTEXT

### Geology and hydrology

**Despite the devastating effects of colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have expressed a deep and ongoing connection to land and water. The significant elements of land and water also speak to the Indigenous conception of what defines the extent of Country for particular clans. Large mountain ranges, coast lines, large bodies of water, rivers and creeks, all speak to the connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to place.**



The tangible elements of Country, their relationality to one another, and their changing characteristics, can be understood when first looking at Country's foundation. The underlying geology and the presence of water has, over the course of millions of years, shaped the landscapes, mountain ranges, rivers and lakes we see today. The movement or stagnation of water along geological surfaces dictate the areas in which other natural elements of Country can begin to form.

Geology has offered a resource to aid in supporting life within Country. Various sediments provide evidence of economic trade amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. Song-lines within certain communities speak to key historical events and changing landscapes: volcanic eruptions, shifting tectonic plates and great floods are embedded in geology, as well as oral history and cultural practice. Water is something that is a constant throughout the history of the Kulin Nation: the flooding of Nerrm (Port Phillip Bay); the vast reach of Carrum Carrum Swamp and its connection to the Dandenong Ranges in the south-east; the Birrarung (Yarra River), Wirribi Yaluk (Werribee River), and Dandenong Creek are key freshwater sources that sustain life, not only for people, but also for flora and fauna. Large numbers of artefacts have been found throughout this region, emphasising the physical and spiritual connection Kulin communities have to these systems.

Colonisation and urban development have precipitated significant degradation of these ancient water courses. Water, like many other natural elements, was seen as a resource to be commodified. With that, water was diverted, swamplands were drained and rivers were dredged, all contributing to vast changes in landscapes across

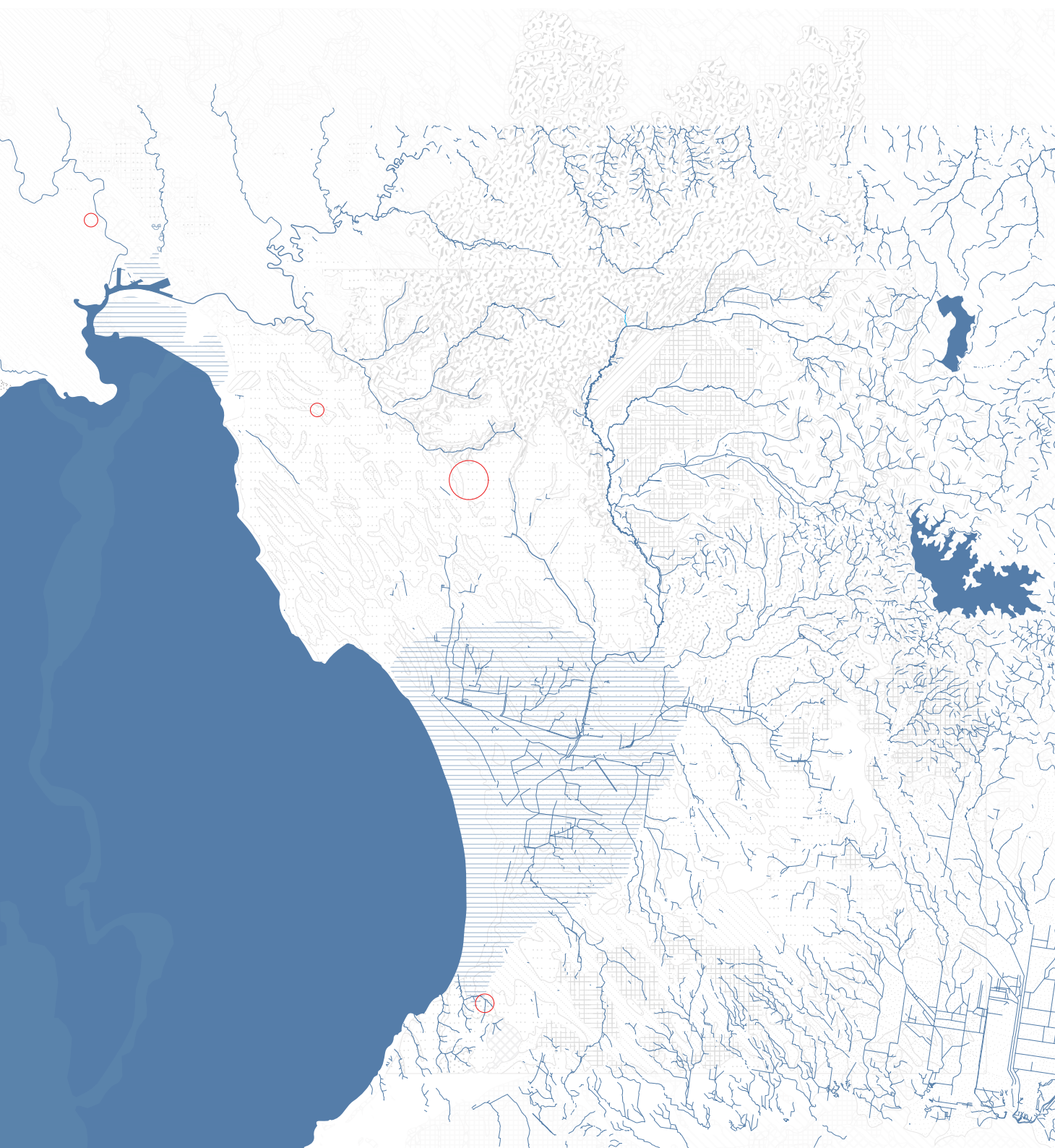


Melbourne, and the south-east. Undulating landscapes were leveled to accommodate the development of cities and infrastructure. Communities living along the rivers and creeks, moved to reserves and missions and the lands were taken for economic gain. This recent change has dramatically altered the appearance of the landscape of the region, which makes it even more imperative that we understand Country.








The University's south-eastern campuses (Caulfield, Clayton and Peninsula) sit within a vast Red Bluff sand deposit that spans across a wide area of central and southeastern Melbourne. The Red Bluff cliffs, located in Sandringham, is a type of locality for the tertiary rocks of a vast region of Boon Wurrung Country. Parkville campus sits within the Melbourne formation, comprising of sandstones and siltstones. The Melbourne formation's unique colour and structure occurs as a result of curves in waterways.

1 Forest Secrets – Melbourne Museum ([museums.victoria.com.au](http://museums.victoria.com.au))

2 Waters are our spirit – ([aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au](http://aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au))



## Legend

-  Campus
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-  Colluvium
-  Inland Dune Deposits
-  Swamp and Lake Deposits
-  Wind Blown Silt

## NATURAL CONTEXT

### Flora and fauna

Indigenous peoples of Australia have, for thousands of years, maintained a unique and spiritual connection with the flora and fauna of Country. Expressed within Kinship structures, totemic relationships and Dreaming stories, the relationship that Aboriginal people have with these elements go far beyond the tangible.

Flora and fauna have long been central not only to the physical health of Country, but also to Dreaming, serving as significant sources of spiritual guidance reflected in values, lore, and cultural practices. Totems are given to clans, tribes and language groups through cultural practice in order to preserve cultural knowledge and responsibility, define marriage lines, and ensure individuals have a broader understanding of their obligations to Country.



Kulin communities have a unique understanding of the relationship between the climate, flora and fauna. The interrelation between these elements is crucial in understanding how to care for Country. The presence of fauna in some areas act as “engineers” within a particular site. Turning over soil to reduce compaction and provide a foundation to bring new life to the region.

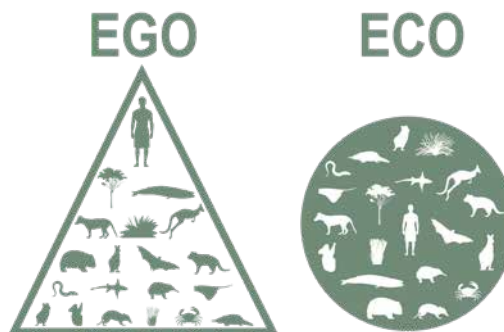
Seasons are not dictated by the changing of dates, but rather the life cycles of beings and the availability of natural resources. This understanding identifies seven key movements of Country in the Kulin context over an annual cycle.

The seasons are as follows:

- luk Eel Season (March)**
- Waring Wombat Season (April to July)**
- Guling Orchid Season (August)**
- Poorneet Tadpole Season (September to October)**
- Buath Gurru Grass Flowering Season (November)**
- Kangaroo-apple Season (December)**
- Biderap Dry Season (January to February)**

Monash University’s *Nature+ Plan* delves deeper into the understanding of the Kulin calendar as it pertains to ecological reference and implementation.

Connection to Animals and Country | Common Ground Plants and animals | ([aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au](http://aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au))  
 Forest Secrets – Melbourne Museum ([museums.victoria.com.au](http://museums.victoria.com.au))  
 Foraging by an avian ecosystem engineer extensively modifies the litter and soil layer in forest ecosystems – Maisey – 2021 – Ecological Applications – Wiley Online Library.














Eco vs Ego – (Lehmann, 2010)

Fauna is seen as equal to humans within Indigenous ways of knowing. They have strong connections to the creation of Country, often taking the form of ancestral beings in creation or Dreaming stories. This connection has been likened to that of German architect, Steffen Lehmann’s diagram, ‘Eco v Ego, 2010’ within the New South Wales government’s ‘*Connecting with Country Framework 2023*’. Indigenous communities abide by the same principles of the eco side of the diagram. Understanding that all of Country stems from the same place, and as such, should be of equal importance.



## Legend

-  Campus
-  Plains Grassland
-  Plains Grassy Woodlands
-  Valley Heathy Forrest
-  Heathy Woodland / Sand Heathland Mosaic
-  Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland
-  Coastal Saltmarsh
-  Floodplain Riparian Woodland
-  Swampy Riparian Woodland
-  Coastal Alkaline Scrub
-  Coastal Banksia

## CULTURAL CONTEXT

### People and community

**Aboriginal kinship and family structures, based on extended networks and cultural obligations, strongly influence social roles, support systems, and interactions with services, often differing from Western norms.**



4

The Boon Wurrung / Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation are the Traditional Owners of the land that stretches from the Werribee River to Wilson's Promontory, taking in Westernport Bay, the Mornington Peninsula, and nearby islands such as French and Phillip Islands. They have lived on and cared for this land for generations. Living within Country, The Boon Wurrung people have strong understanding of the changes to seasons, native flora and fauna migration patterns, as well as a strong ongoing connection to the vast shore lines of Nerrm.

Today, the Boon Wurrung / Bunurong people continue to maintain their cultural practices and connection to Country, alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia who now live in the region. Recognising them as Traditional Owners is a vital part of acknowledging Australia's true history and showing respect for the world's oldest living culture. Their ongoing care for the land, waterways, and communities reflects a deep and enduring relationship with Country.

Aboriginal kinship and family structures are deeply rooted in traditional cultural values and continue to play a vital role in the lives of Aboriginal people across Australia. Unlike the nuclear family model, common in Western cultures, Aboriginal families are based on extended networks that include not only immediate family members, but also a wide range of relatives such as Uncles, Aunties, Cousins, and Elders. These extended family systems provide strong emotional and psychological support and are integral to an individual's identity and wellbeing. Kinship is not just about blood relations; it also encompasses social roles and responsibilities that guide everyday life, decision-making, and relationships within the community.



These kinship responsibilities can affect how Aboriginal people interact with engagement processes. Aboriginal stakeholders may not have cultural authority to speak on certain matters relating to a particular project context or function. This needs to be considered in engagement frameworks, as additional sessions may be required to ensure all community input is included.

In Indigenous engagement processes, there may be different interpretations of conflict of interest, especially where kinship ties overlap with project engagement principles. Understanding and respecting these cultural dynamics is crucial for effective engagement with Aboriginal communities.



- 1 Yalukit Willam
- 2 Ngaruk Willam
- 3 Maryune Balug
- 4 Bun Wurrung Balug
- 5 Yalluck Balug

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## CULTURAL CONTEXT

### Language and storytelling

**First Nations people's connection to Country, and their obligations to Country, are often communicated orally through Dreaming and creation stories.**



There are close to 500 Indigenous communities throughout Australia, with more than 250 languages spoken across various contexts. Principles, practices, lores and customs can vary depending on the context.



The practice of storytelling allowed complex structures of ancestry, lore, way-finding and ancient history to easily flow from generation to generation. Fauna and flora are often used as the catalyst to communicate sustainable practices and key life lessons. Significant sites and a community's connection to them are often communicated through these stories, defining boundaries to those who listen.

Throughout Victoria, creation stories often speak to a nation's totems and how they are important. They inform laws to abide by when visiting Country, and key historical events that have occurred as a result of not following those laws.




















When working within the built environment, best practices when working on Country can often be found in the values, lores and practices of a particular language group. Within the Kulin context, 'Bunjil the Creator asks to not harm Bunjil's children (the next generation) and to not harm the waterways'.

[www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ra-letstalk-factsheet-languages\\_final.pdf](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ra-letstalk-factsheet-languages_final.pdf)



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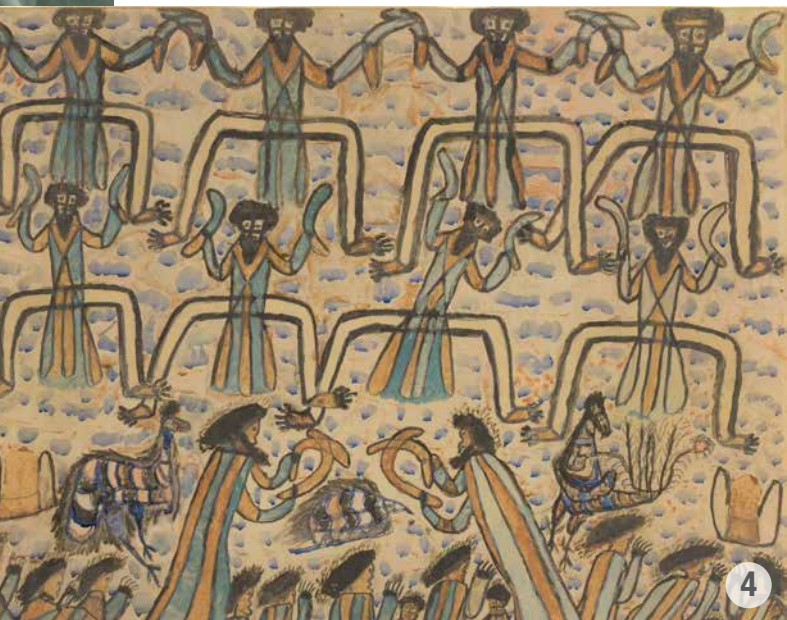
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## CULTURAL CONTEXT

### Art and design

**The expressions within art and design, have for thousands of years, communicated an individual or community's values, rights and lores as it pertains to Country and the relationship one has with the land and its inhabitants. These expressions provide key insights into generational connection to place and people.**



The term 'Art' is defined as the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. Indigenous 'art' within various context throughout Australia, aims to communicate connection to place, community, and to the dreaming. To reduce the expression to a purely aesthetic exercise would be reductive in its practice, and fail to recognise the immense layering of knowledge and connections it communicates.

When communicating Country through Indigenous ways of knowing, art isn't perceived to be the creation of an individual, rather it is an expression of connection passed down from generation to generation, heavily informed by Country. Therefore, when exploring Indigenous cultural representation within a specific project, it is imperative to understand the diversity of cultural expression that is dependant on context. It is critical to recognise that Indigenous art is specific to Country and not equivalent or transferable between Countries without careful consideration and research.

First Nations Australian art is far more diverse than what is commonly presented. Artists use a range of mediums, including acrylics and textiles, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of different regions. However, the growing popularity of this art has also led to significant issues with



unethical trade and cultural appropriation. In some cases, Indigenous designs are used without permission or proper payment; in others, artists are exploited when their work is bought cheaply and resold at high prices, often targeting vulnerable artists who may not fully understand their rights.

To support First Nations artists ethically, projects should ensure their engagement is genuine by looking for artists' information, building relationships directly with artists and identifying clear scope within the project outline to remove any potential for miscommunication. Being informed helps protect artists' livelihoods and preserves the integrity of Indigenous art.



The artist invites you to walk on  
Boon Wurrung Country

## CLAYTON

### Overview

Monash University's Clayton campus sits within Boon Wurrung Country. Clayton, 20 kilometers south-east of Melbourne, is the original campus of Monash University. It was established in 1958 and first opened its doors to 363 students in 1961.

The campus sits atop a Red Bluff sandstone deposit, formed over millions of years through the interaction of water and rock. The campus houses a single reminder of what used to be across the landscape – a single river red gum. A reflection of the grassy woodland Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) that used to span across the region is no longer. The EVC consisted of abundant flora supported by heavy, fertile soil, with the region locally dominated by eucalypts, river red gum, and yellow gum, and with narrow leaf tea tree also contributing to the

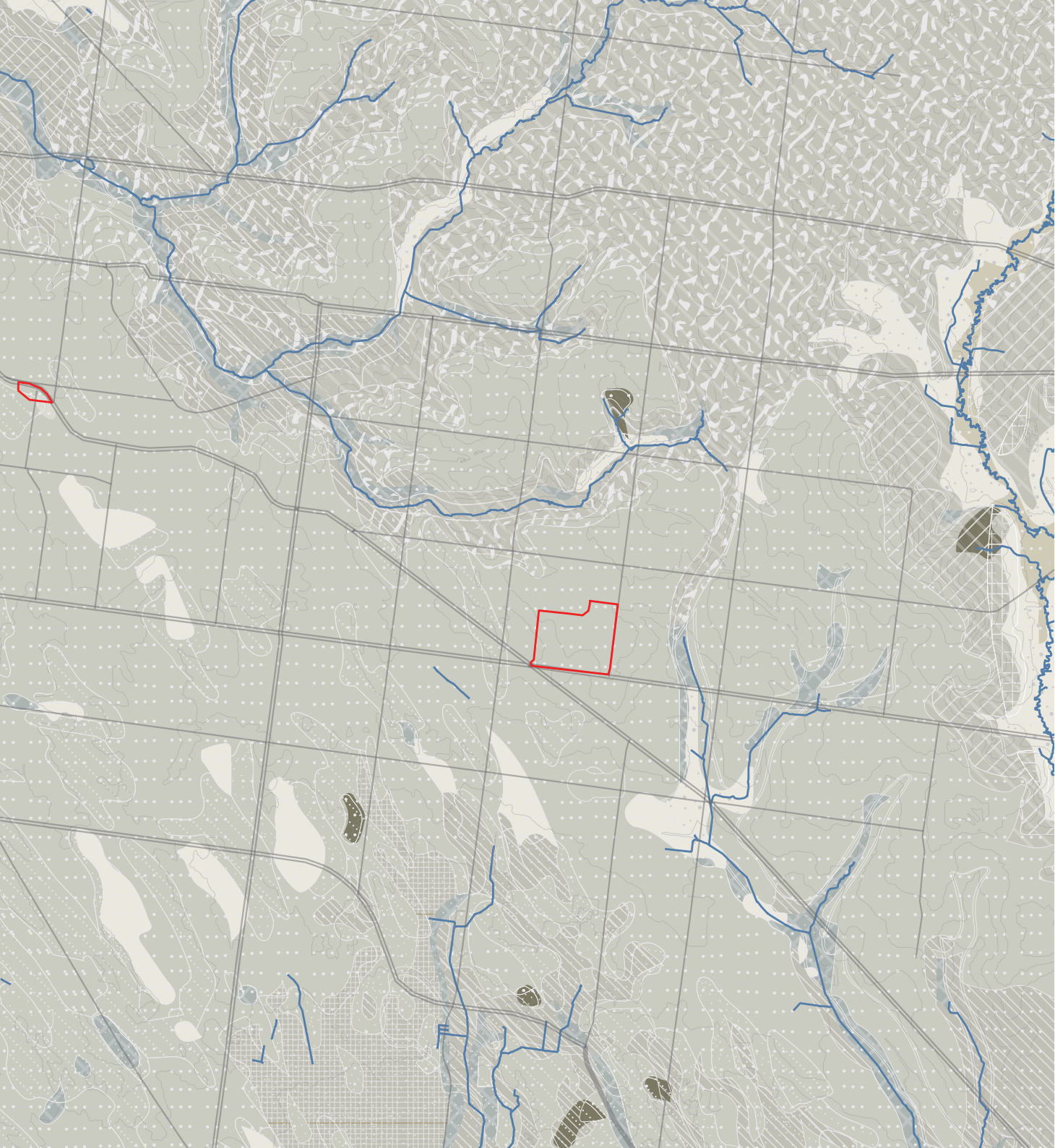
tree cover. The lower levels supported an abundance of herbs and grasses, with common cassinia appearing sporadically across the kangaroo grass plain.

The water flowed from two major sources. Scotchmans creek, an extension of the Birrarung, moving fresh water from the northern neck of Nerrm (Port Phillip Bay) across the now eastern and South-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The Dandenong creek, moving the water from the top of the Dandenong ranges south, fueling the foundation for Carrum Carrum swamp and subsequently running off into Neerm.





























With the expansion of stormwater management practices, weed invasion, tree clearing, and agriculture across the south-east, Country has been permanently altered.



Aboriginal garden – Clayton campus



### Legend

-  Campus
-  CHSZ
-  Creek
-  River
-  Pre Colonial River
-  Nerrm
-  Ancient Waterway
-  Pre Colonial Wetland
-  Code Island Silt
-  Newer Volcanic Group
-  Coastal Dune Deposits
-  Melbourne Formation
-  Sandstone
-  Anderson Creek Formation
-  Alluvium
-  Colluvium
-  Inland Dune Deposits
-  Swamp and Lake Deposits
-  Wind Blown Silt
-  Plains Grassland
-  Plains Grassy Woodlands
-  Valley Heathy Forrest
-  Heathy Woodland/Sand Heathland Mosaic
-  Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland
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-  Floodplain Riparian Woodland
-  Swampy Riparian Woodland
-  Coastal Alkaline Scrub
-  Coastal Banksia

## CLAYTON

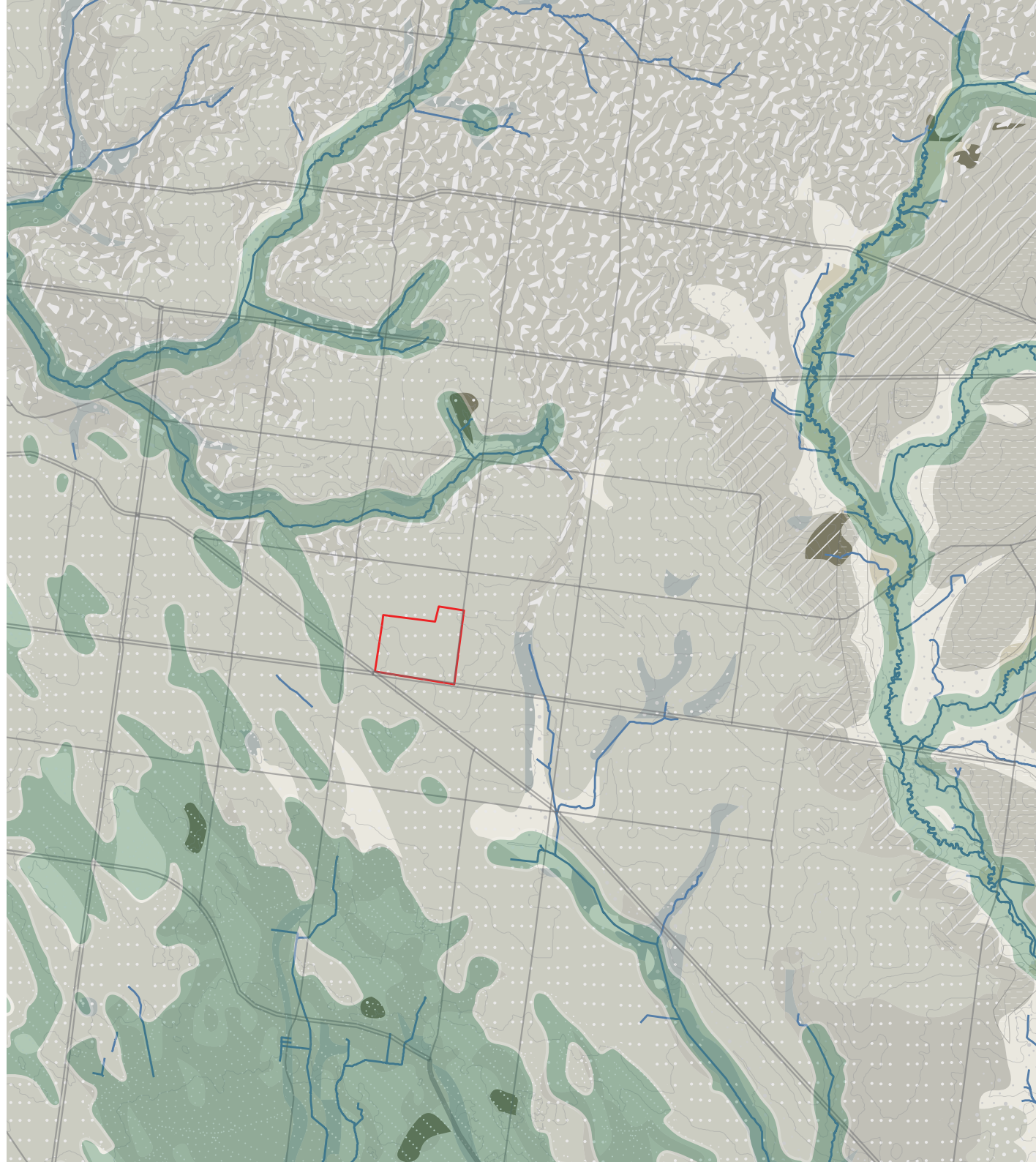
### Cultural heritage sensitivity zones

'Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity' are defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 (Vic) (the Regulations)* and relate to landforms and soil types where Aboriginal places are more likely to be located. These include land within 200 meters of named waterways and land within 50 meters of registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places.

The areas of cultural heritage sensitivity are used as a tool in determining when a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) must be prepared under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic) (the Act)*.

Within the Clayton context, the campus sits between two significant waterways: Scotchmans Creek and Dandenong Creek. Gathering places and places of ceremony have been identified within the Clayton context however, the campus footprint (due to extensive land disturbance) has no defined cultural heritage sensitivity zones.

[www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-sensitivity](http://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-sensitivity)



## Cultural Heritage Management Plans

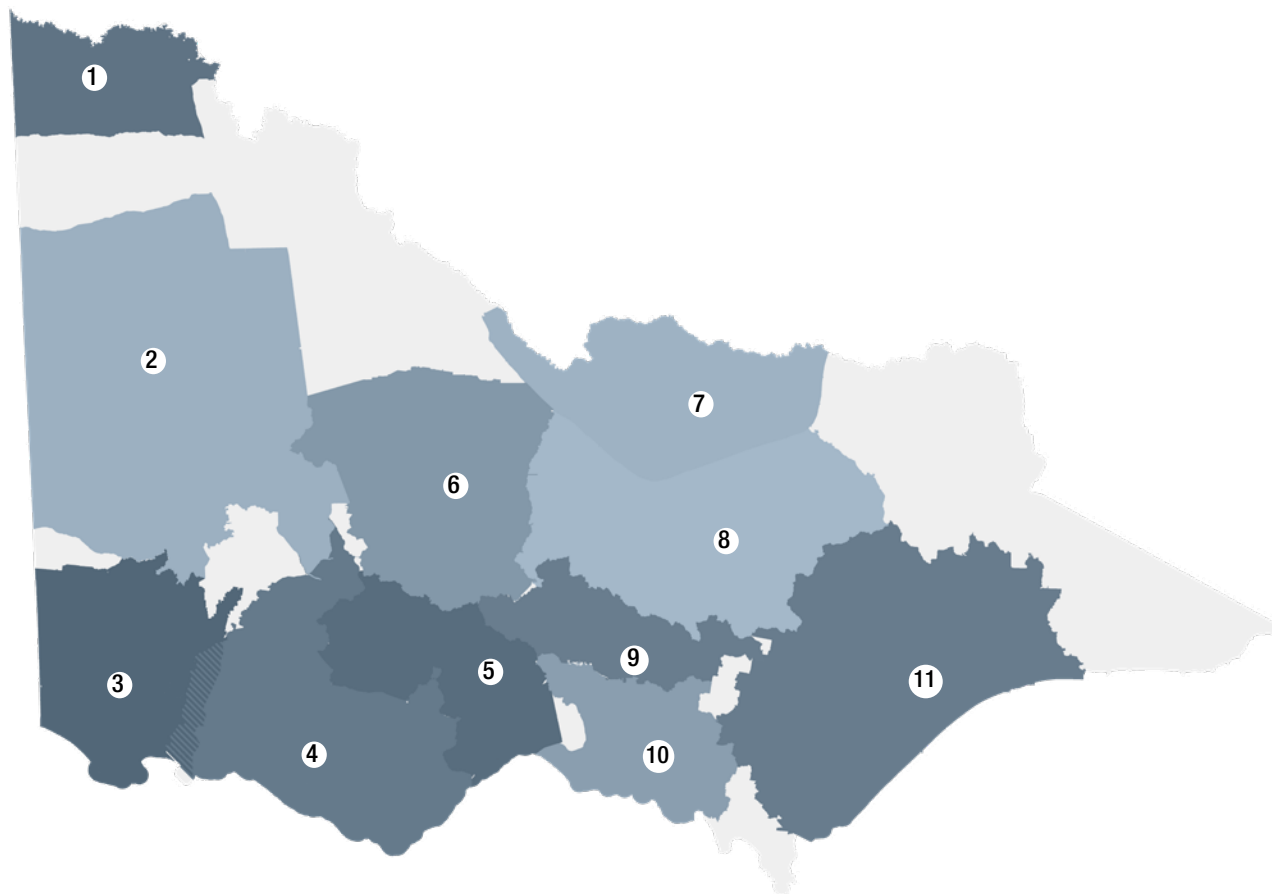
A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is a written report prepared by a Heritage Advisor. It includes results of an assessment of the potential impact of a proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritage. It outlines measures to be taken before, during and after an activity in order to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the activity area.

[www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-management-plans](http://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-management-plans)

Works planned in an area of 'cultural heritage sensitivity'. These terms are defined in the Regulations.

Heritage Advisors can be contacted through the registered Aboriginal party of the particular site of a project.

Within the Monash University context, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation manage matters in relation to Parkville campus. Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation undertake work for Caulfield, Clayton and Peninsula campuses.



1. First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation
2. Barengi Gadjin Land Aboriginal Corporation
3. Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
4. Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation

5. Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
6. Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
7. Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
8. Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation

9. Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
10. Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
11. Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

# 03 CAMPUS CONDITIONS

## CAULFIELD

### Overview

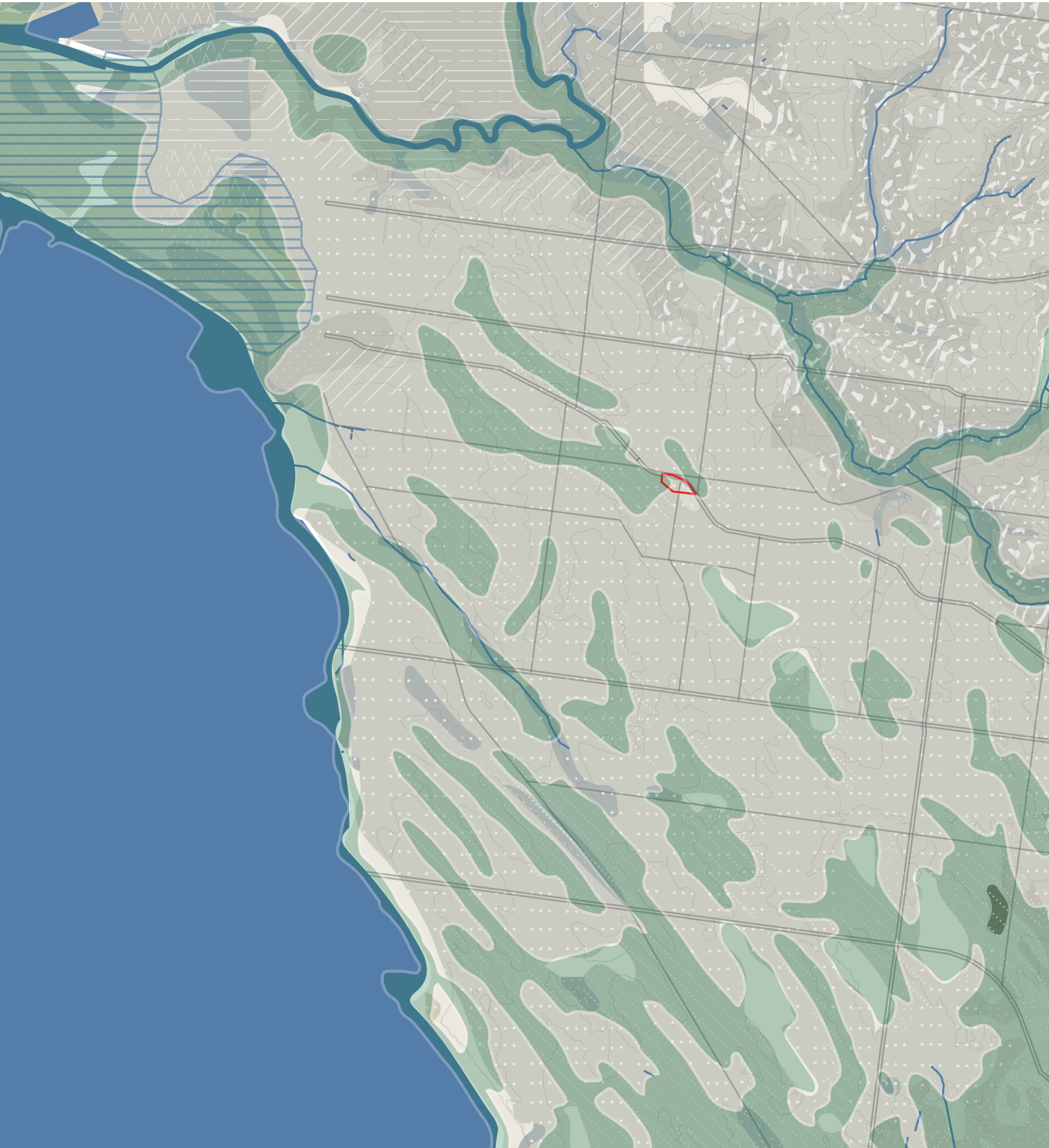
Caulfield is the second of three campuses located on Boon Wurrung Country. Beginning as the Caulfield Technical School in 1922, The campus has seen substantial growth, becoming the second largest campus across the University estate.

The campus sits within two sedimentary deposits (Red Bluff Sandstone and inland dune deposits) housing the foundations of the grassy woodland that spans across
















most of the south-east. The south east of the campus footprint encompasses a small pocket of swamp scrub EVC. This particular site sits between the two large wetland ecologies of Boon Wurrung Country. The carrum swamp, to the south-east, and the Yalukit Weelum, have both been extensively drained post colonisation due to the influx of agricultural practices on Country.



Ian Potter Sculpture Court – Caulfield campus



## Legend

-  Campus
-  CHSZ
-  Creek
-  River
-  Pre Colonial River
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-  Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland
-  Coastal Saltmarsh
-  Floodplain Riparian Woodland
-  Swampy Riparian Woodland
-  Coastal Alkaline Scrub
-  Coastal Banksia

## PENINSULA

### Overview

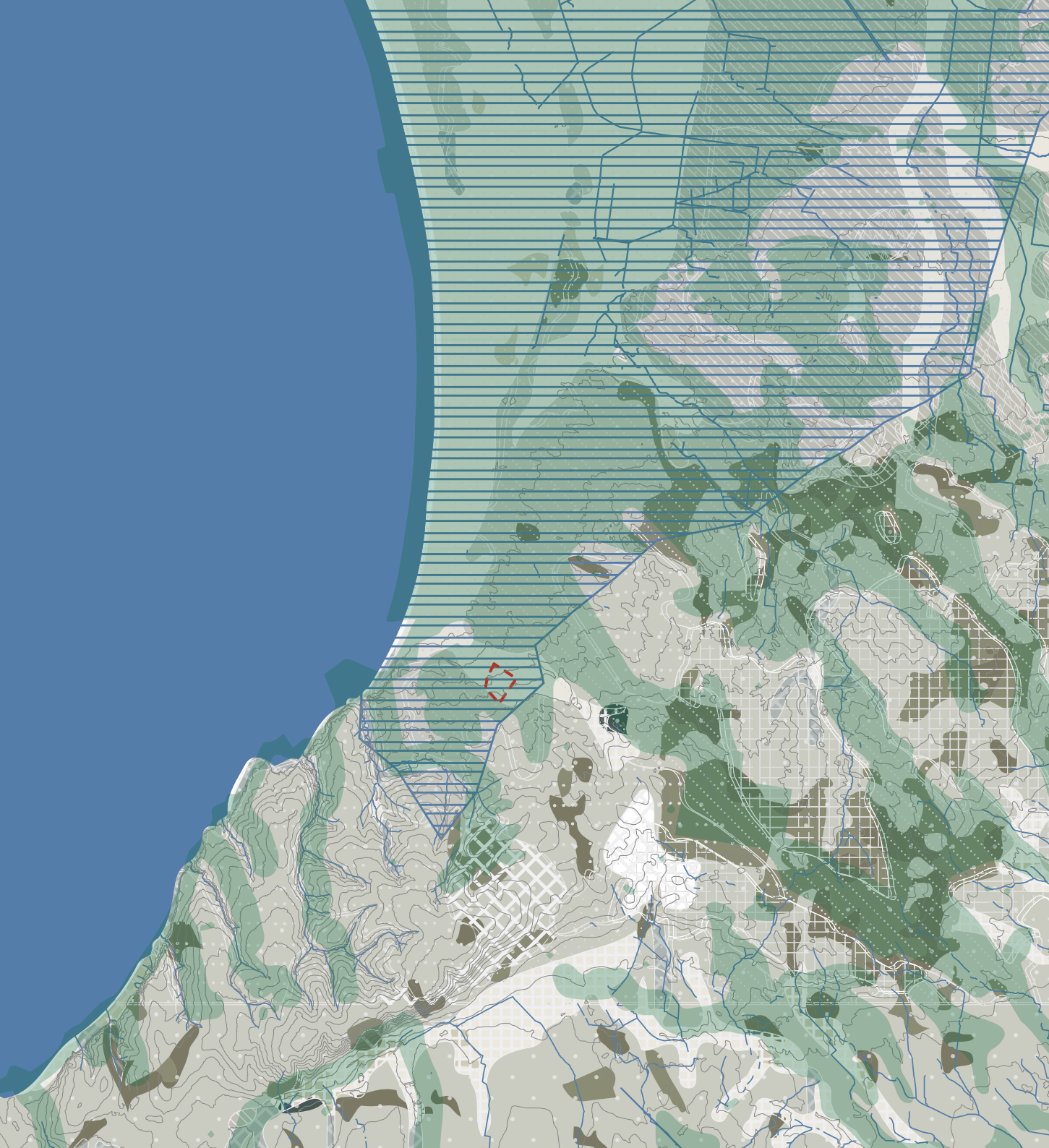
Peninsula is the University's third largest campus in Australia. Located on the lands of the Bunurong/ Boon Wurrung people, it has been administered by several tertiary institutions over the years, including the State College at Frankston and the Chisholm Institute of Technology.

The University's Peninsula campus sits upon an inland dune deposit (Qd1) encompassed by red bluff sandstone (Nbr) to the west, east and south of the campus. The deposits speak to a period of change across the coastal conditions of the south east and the interrelationship between geological conditions, and the EVCs it supports.











As the swamp scrub became more prevalent throughout the region, the sediments remained with more plant-life to withstand the natural forces of Country. Swamp paperback and wooly tea-tree provide a dense thicket ranging from 4-8 metres tall, which supports a ground condition dominated by herbaceous, moss, lichen and liverwort species throughout the high nutrient soil. The campus sits at the base of the Carrum Carrum swamp (refer to hydrology section for further detail), being drastically effected due to the draining of the wetland into the bay.



MPavilion – Peninsula campus



## Legend

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-  Coastal Banksia

## CURRENT ENGAGEMENT

### Overview

Monash University's Buildings and Property currently advise on engagement frameworks regarding Indigenous engagement. These frameworks vary depending on the scope and end-users of the project.

In collaboration with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and Senior Vice-President, and Buildings and Property, an Indigenous Working Group will be established comprising relevant Indigenous stakeholders internal to the University.

Where applicable to a project, Traditional Owner engagement will be coordinated by Buildings and Property, and will be conducted separately from the Indigenous Working Group.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

### Self-determination

The right to self-determination is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As an organisation we must understand that self-determination is enabled through: prioritising culture; addressing trauma and supporting healing; addressing racism and promoting cultural safety; and transferring power and resources to communities.

### Impactful

Monash's engagement activities should be aimed at providing maximum positive benefit for both the University and for Indigenous communities.

### Respectful

Monash representatives wanting to engage with Indigenous communities need to respect their histories, cultures and autonomy, and accept that University priorities may not match Indigenous communities' priorities.

### Transparent

When working with Indigenous communities, Monash representatives need to be open and honest about their motives for engagement and clearly articulate what opportunities will arise for communities as part of their engagement.

### Collegiate/Coordinated

As an organisation, Monash needs to ensure coordinated engagement across its many business areas and faculties to avoid duplication of consultation with the same Indigenous communities.

### Informed

Monash's engagement with Indigenous communities must be supported by strong cultural understanding through the various training and intellectual resources made available to them across the University and by the William Cooper Institute.

# PROJECT PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGING WITH COUNTRY

## DEEP LISTENING



Engagement should have an approach that prioritises conversations with Traditional Owners and the broader community. Understanding what the community values through hearing stories and connections between community and country.

## ALLOCATE TIME AND RESOURCES



Designing with Country and engaging Traditional Owners shouldn't have a transactional approach. Ensuring time within the project to build relationships will yield greater design outcomes in the long term.

## FIRST NATIONS LED



When designing on Country it is crucial to have First Nation engagement from the outset and throughout to ensure advocacy can be made on behalf of Country.

## ASSESS IMPACT



Understanding immediate and ongoing impacts a project will have on Country and its perception from the community.

## PROMOTE COLLABORATION



Engagement as it pertains to Country, involves ongoing consultation and collaboration with Traditional Owners and community. Ensuring community are welcomed to provide meaningful input into a project ensures better understanding of Country within a project.

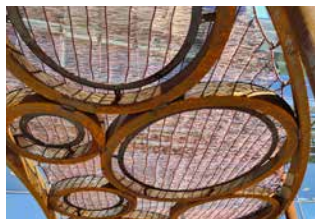
## CASE STUDIES



Darug Country  
Western Sydney University Indigenous Centre of Excellence  
Jackson Clements Burrows



Darug Country  
Walanga Muru pavilion  
Macquarie University



Palawa Country  
Riawunna Garden,  
University of Tasmania  
Wardle, T3D Studios,  
ASPECT



Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country  
Gathering Space: Ngargee Djeembana  
JCB Architects, Dr N'arweet Carolyn Briggs AM



Martu and Niabali Country  
Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical  
Service (PAMS)  
Kaunitz Yeung Architecture



Nyul Nyul Country  
Nyul Nyul packing sheds  
SJB Architects



Woi Wurrung Country  
North East Link  
BKK Architects, Greenaway  
Architects



Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung  
Atlantic Fellows for Social Equity  
(AFSE)  
JCB Architects



Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung  
Koorie Heritage Trust  
Greenaway Architects



Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung  
Ngarara Place  
Greenaway Architects



Gunditjmarra Country  
Tyrendarra IPA & Rec Reserve  
Cooper Scaife Architects



Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country  
In Absence, NGV  
Yhonnie Scarce and Edition Office



Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country  
North East Link  
BKK Architects, Greenaway  
Architects



Nyoongar Country  
Bilya Koort Boodja, Centre  
For Nyoongar Culture And  
Environmental Knowledge  
Iredale Pedersen Hook Architects



GunaiKurnai Country  
Wangun Amphitheatre  
Equity Office



Dja Dja Wurrung Country  
Bendigo Law Courts  
Wardle



Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country  
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(Photographer: Blair, Neil)

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ALLOCASUARINA VERTICILLATA – SOURCE: VICFLORA Flora of Victoria,  
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