

## Aboriginal Advisory Committee

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, 07 May, 2024

**Location:** Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra

## Minutes Attachments

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## Nowra Bridge Project

Aboriginal Interpretation Panels

Transport for NSW – May 2024

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## Nowra Bridge Project – Background

- The project developed an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report in 2018, this formed part of the project Review of Environmental Factors (REF)
- The project REF was determined in 2019
- Included in the REF was a safeguard for the project to prepare and implement an Aboriginal Heritage Interpretation Strategy that addresses the cultural significance of the proposal location within the landscape and archaeological finds from the study area. The strategy is required to be developed in consultation with the project's Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)
- The project opened to its final traffic configuration late last year
- Transport for NSW engaged Artefact Heritage to develop the Aboriginal Heritage Interpretation Strategy
- Key themes of the strategy are:
  - Water is life
  - Caring for country
  - Bridging Nowra and Bomaderry
- The strategy has been developed in consultation with the project's RAPs and knowledge holders in the community

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## Nowra Bridge Project – Aboriginal Interpretative Panels

# The Shoalhaven River

You are standing on the bank of the Shoalhaven River, at a place where saltwater and freshwater Country meet. For thousands of years, fish have swum through these waters, birds and animals have gathered on these banks, and oysters and mussels have grown in the mudflats. Trees like the cabbage tree, grey gum and swamp oak grew near the riverbank, their tall silhouettes reflected in the waters.

For thousands of years before the construction of Nowra Bridge, the Aboriginal peoples of the Shoalhaven region skilfully navigated the Shoalhaven River in bark canoes.

The first bridge at Nowra that crossed the Shoalhaven River was made of iron and opened in 1881, and a second concrete bridge was opened in 1981. The third bridge was opened in 2023 with a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country during the opening event.

The Shoalhaven River continues to be the heart of the local community. Shell middens, rock shelters, hand stencils and stone tools found along the riverbanks are physical reminders of how families lived here for many generations. Today, the stories of Country are still handed down from Elders to children.

Look at the sights of Country, smell the salt of the water.



Construction of Shoalhaven Bridge, Bomaderry Side, Samuel Elyard, 1879 (Shoalhaven Regional Gallery)



Smoking ceremony at the opening of Nowra Bridge, 2023 (Andrew McLeod, Doonooch)

The new Nowra Bridge opened in February 2023 and Auntie Ruth Simms Senior, AM, gave the Welcome to Country:

*'I am so proud to be an Aboriginal woman, I am very proud to be an Australian and at this very moment I share that honour with every single person who is here today, who has walked the bridge to make history, all of us as Australians.'*

Kangaroo graphic, Anne-Marie McIntosh, Nowra TAFE, 2023

Speak the language of Country

In Dhurga language, *duraya* means river.

In Dharawal language, *dharaggang* means river.

The Panels have been developed in consultation with our Registered Aboriginal Parties. Outlined in the Nowra Bridge Aboriginal Heritage Interpretation Strategy.

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## Aboriginal Interpretative Panels

# Living by the Shoalhaven River

Aboriginal people have lived in the Shoalhaven region for tens of thousands of years, passing down knowledge of Country for generations. The lives of the communities here centred around the water, a key source of food, tools and stories.

Traditionally, men would fish with spears and women with shell hooks and lines woven from tree fibres. Fisher people paddled in bark canoes on the Shoalhaven River, often fishing at night. A small fire was lit in the middle of the bark canoe to cook fish on the water. As well as fish, the river was a source of oysters and mussels.



Shoalhaven River from Coolangatta Mountain, Samuel Elyard, c1875  
(Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, Nowra)

During the 1800s, after the arrival of British colonists to the Shoalhaven region, people continued to fish, with colonists reporting night fishing at Red Point and women diving for lobsters at the mouth of the Shoalhaven River. Many people adapted their traditional skills to survive in the new economy, working in the whaling and fishing industries.

### Take what you need, not what you want

*'The Jerrinja people have always cared for the Shoalhaven. As a young boy from the age of five I started learning from my dad and my uncles, helping to manage the ecosystems of the river. I worked for 20 years in commercial fishing.*

*Now I work on two levels: as an advisor to the Minister for Industry, Science and Resources and also as a native person making sure everything is done right. It is important that cultural laws don't get mixed up with government laws.*

*We look after the mangroves on the Shoalhaven – mangroves are there to protect our smaller fish. We also work on river regeneration after bushfires, and we take care of the balance between saltwater and freshwater. It is a unique ecosystem. It is also important to teach the young ones. I always say to them: take what you need, not what you want.'*

(Graham Connolly Jr, Jerrinja Tribal spokesperson, NSW Fisheries)



Members of the Jerrinja Tribe welcome OceanWatch Australia staff during a tour discussing the impacts of bushfire on aquatic environments.  
L to R: Simon Rowe, Claudia Santori, Ronald Carberry, Graham Connolly Jr, Adam Crosley  
(Photo: OceanWatch Australia)



Crab graphic, Ann-Mariee McIntosh, Nowra TAFE, 2023

#### Speak the language of Country

In Dhurga language, *bidhanga* means oyster.

In Dharawal language, *bidina* is the word for oyster.

## Aboriginal Interpretative Panels

# Bundle and the Shoalhaven River

When British colonists arrived in the Shoalhaven region in the early 1800s, local Aboriginal people generously used their traditional skills and knowledge of Country to act as guides. A local South Coast man, Bundle, who spoke Dhurga and Dharawal languages, played a key role in several expeditions in the early 1800s. Bundle guided Charles Throsby into the Illawarra region in 1815 and brought surveyor James Meehan safely from Liverpool to Jervis Bay in 1818.



Shoalhaven River near Nowra, Henry Grant Lloyd, 1857-1888  
(Dixon Library, State Library of New South Wales)

In 1812 Bundle accompanied surveyor George William Evans from Jervis Bay to Appin. Evans' surveying party attempted to cross the Shoalhaven River at Cabbage Tree Flat, just west of Nowra Bridge. Evans could not swim the river, so the resourceful Bundle ferried the surveying party and their baggage across the river in bark canoes, ensuring they arrived safely on the other side.

The story of Bundle's skill and endurance continues to be told by his descendants like Uncle Ivan Wellington, and Bundle's relations still live all along the south coast.

*'Bundle was found at Morton Bay Sydney Harbor when he was only four years old. His mother had been killed by sharks and his dad killed by white men in boats – that's what he said when he was found.*

*The gudjarga (young boy) began to hone skills and knowledge from the old men of the tribe.*

*Bundle led the first successful expedition by foot from Parramatta to Jervis Bay in 1812, when they surveyed the way for a road that we drive on today. Bundle had a young boy named Broughton with him. They made six bark canoes in two hours to cross the Shoalhaven River.*

*Old Man Bundle (Wulmurry) was the last Chief, also known as Head Man or Leader, of the Cow Pastures (Camden) Tribes. His son Trumalong (Young Bundle) was Chief of the Five Islands Illawarra Tribe. Old Man Bundle was the retainer of the Macarthur family at Camden, a translator of his language, a guide, and he sailed around Australia and overseas. It was written in Macquarie's papers that Old Man Bundle was a superior Aboriginal man, both on land and sea.*

*Old Man Bundle knew the Aboriginal ways and what the white man wanted, and Old Man Bundle was a clever man.'*

(Uncle Ivan Wellington, Elder of the Dharawal and Jerrinja Tribal People)



Young Bundle's Axe  
(Australian Museum, reproduced with permission.  
Photography Stuart Humphreys)

### Speak the language of Country

In Dhurga language, *garudja* means canoe, and *walawaani* means safe journey.

In Dharawal language, *wulban* means a canoe designed to carry a cooking fire in it, and *nuwi* is a canoe without a cooking fire.

Fish graphic, C. Taylor, Nowra TAFE, 2023

The Panels have been developed in consultation with our Registered Aboriginal Parties.

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## Aboriginal Interpretative Panels – Example of Installation at Mount Pleasant (G2B project)

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# Aboriginal Interpretative Panels – Potential Location

Northern side of the River – Illaroo Road (south side)



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AA24.7 - Attachment 1

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Questions

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AA24.7 - Attachment 1



# Community Engagement Framework



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# Community Engagement Framework



## What

Produce a handbook for Council staff to ensure consistency and best practice for community engagement is provided.

## How

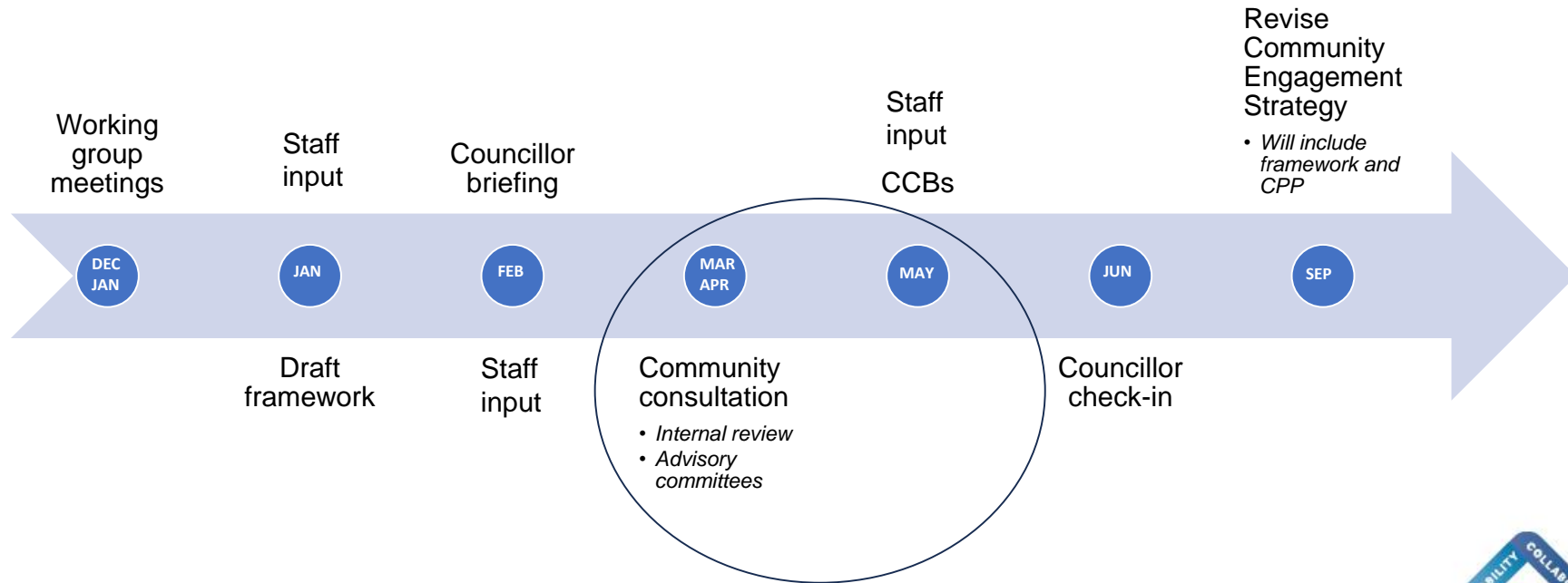
Applying professional experience, industry best practice, research, and consultation with staff and community.



# Community Engagement Framework



## When



# Community Engagement Framework



## The importance of Committees

Apply personal and professional expertise to matters brought to them by Council.

Build relationships between community members and Council.

Share information among network groups.

Encourage participation in community engagement opportunities.

Spokesperson for diverse groups.



# Recent engagement examples



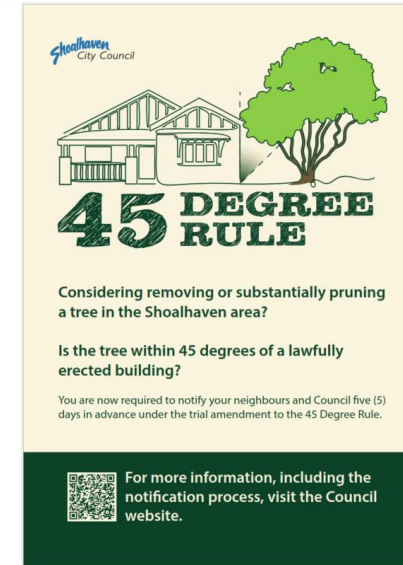
### Dog access at Narrawallee Beach

- Get Involved survey
- Paper surveys in Council buildings
- Signage with QR codes at the beach



### Concept design for Bay & Basin Leisure Centre

- Pop-up information sessions onsite
- Get Involved survey
- Paper surveys in Council buildings
- Signage with QR codes on site



### 45 Degree Rule trial

- Industry information sessions
- Animation video on the website
- Radio advertisement



## Activity

### 1. What is the best way to reach you and other people in the Aboriginal community?

- Committee briefings
- Through Elders
- Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Letters in the mail
- Online (website, newsletter, social media etc.)
- Community group presentations
- Schools
- Local Aboriginal businesses





## Activity

### 2. How should we be receiving feedback from the Aboriginal community?

- Online survey
- Paper survey at a Council facility
- Pop-up stalls at markets
- In-person workshops
- Working group opportunities
- Onsite tour or visit of the site
- Presentation to Advisory Committee





# Questions

If you would like to share anything additional, please email  
[CommunicationsTeam@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CommunicationsTeam@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au)





# Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Planning Proposed Toolkit & Mapping

Aboriginal Advisory Committee Briefing  
7 May 2024



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# Presentation Overview

1. Proposed project overview and possible objectives
2. Current Aboriginal Cultural Heritage requirements / practices
3. Benefits of the proposed project
4. Initial Council staff response
5. Examples of how other Councils are approaching
6. Opportunities to improve Council practices
7. Challenges and considerations
8. Suggested next steps



# Proposed Project & Possible Objectives

**Proposed project: develop new planning tools to help ensure that Aboriginal cultural heritage is properly considered early in new projects and developments.**

Possible project objectives:

- Expand on existing limited provisions/guidance around the consideration of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in local planning documents (e.g. the DCP).
- Assist Council staff to properly consider Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in Development Applications, Planning Proposals & Council projects, by incorporating it into an assessment toolkit.
- Encourage Council project managers, developers, and community members to engage with local Aboriginal community from early on in projects.
- Assist Council staff, developers and the community to understand the occurrence of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage & circumstances in which detailed investigations are likely to be needed/appropriate.
- **Ultimately help to improve protection of culturally significant sites & places.**



# ACH Requirements Currently in Place

Council must consider Aboriginal Cultural Heritage when assessing and determining DAs, PPs and Council works, under mechanisms including (but not limited to):

## State

- EP&A Act 1979 – Section 4.15 “likely impacts of development”
- The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW) - the primary legislation for managing and conserving Aboriginal objects or places.
- Ministerial directions
- *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* (OEH 2010)
- *Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in New South Wales* (OEH 2011)

## Local

- Shoalhaven LEP 2014, Clause 5.10(8) *Aboriginal Places of Heritage Significance*.
- Shoalhaven DCP 2014 Chapter 2: General and Environmental Considerations.

# Shoalhaven DCP 2014: Chapter 2

## 4.2 Objectives

The objectives are to:

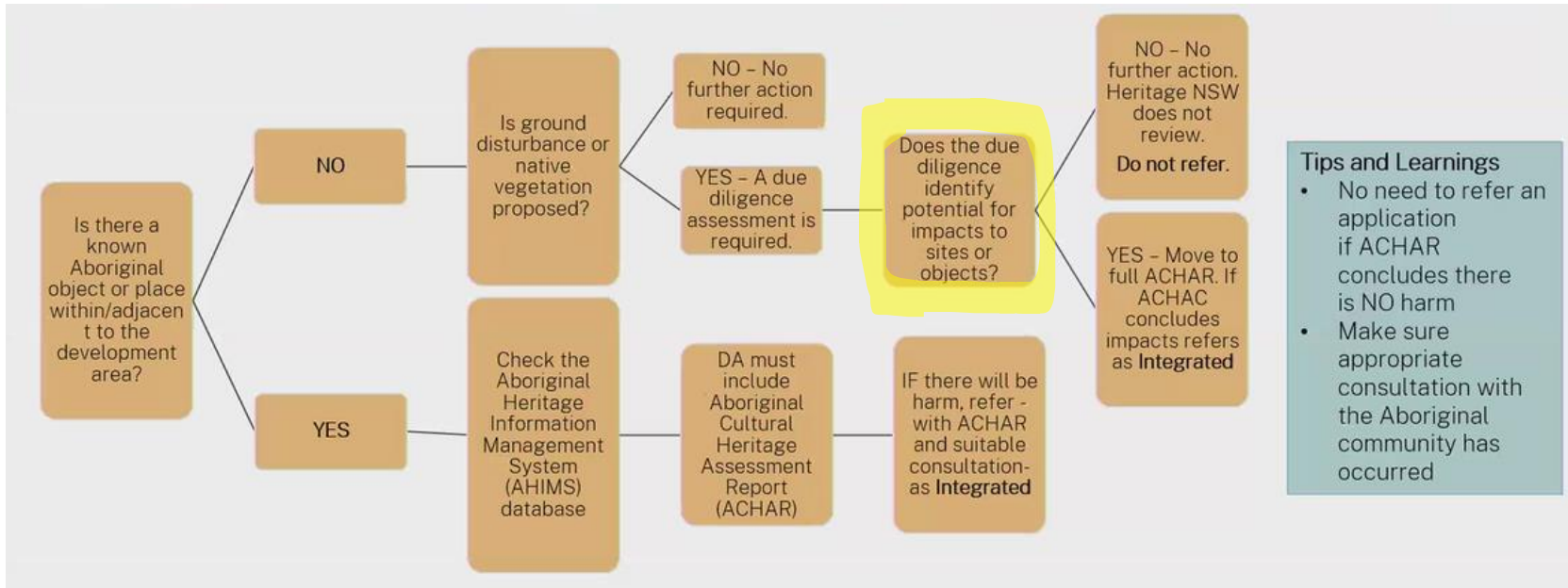
- i. Consider the effect of the proposal on the heritage significance of any Aboriginal object or **site known or reasonably likely** to be located at the site.

## 4.3 Assessment considerations

Aboriginal sites may exist on a parcel of land in the Shoalhaven even though they have not been recorded in AHIMS. For this reason, you should exercise **due diligence** under the NPW Act and you should consider submitting an aboriginal heritage assessment if your application is affected by any of the following:

- Recorded Aboriginal objects or places on AHIMS; or
- within 200m of a waterbody; or
- within a sand dune system; or
- on a ridge top, ridge line or headland; or
- within 200m below or above a cliff face; or
- within 20m of or in a cave, rock shelter, or a cave mouth.

# Overview of Process



**Tips and Learnings**

- No need to refer an application if ACHAR concludes there is NO harm
- Make sure appropriate consultation with the Aboriginal community has occurred

(Heritage NSW)





# Benefits of Proposed Toolkit & Mapping



- Would address current gap in guidance in local planning documents at the early ‘due diligence’ stage.
  - Shellharbour, Kiama and Wollongong have the Illawarra Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Development Assessment Toolkit.
  - Other Councils, specifically coastal, have released guidance in this space.
- Would also address requests for Council to be more proactive rather than reactive e.g., from Local Aboriginal Land Councils, community members.
- Project would help Council / developers / community members move towards better / earlier engagement with Aboriginal community.



# Initial Council Staff Response

- Review of best practice & approaches at other Councils.
- Councillor briefing to begin discussions (Aug 2023).
- Briefing to Council's RAP and Aboriginal Protocol Guide project team leads (March 2024).
- Now seeking feedback / guidance from the Committee on the proposed project & approach and how it would like to be involved

# Examples from other Councils

## Tweed Shire Council Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan

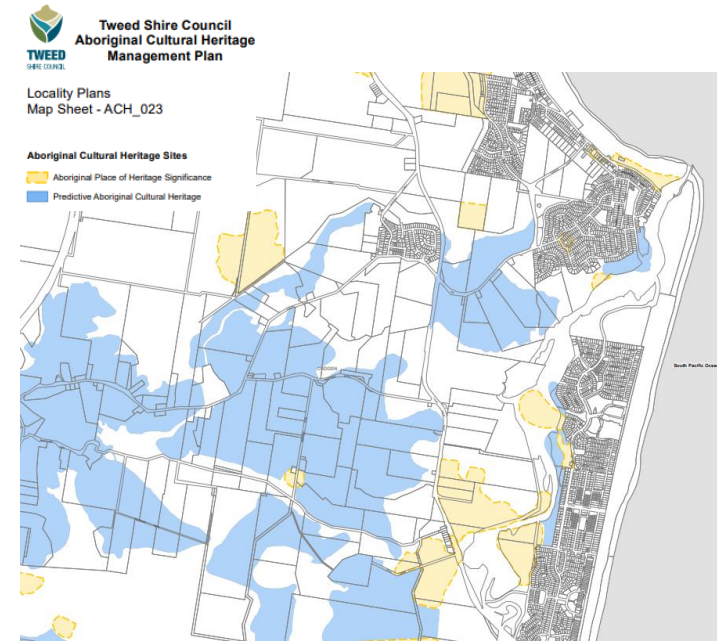
Could be considered current best practice.

Incorporates:

- Overview of 'What is Aboriginal Cultural Heritage'.
- Thematic history - themes identified as important to the Aboriginal community.
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Mapping, developed in consultation with local Aboriginal communities.

Note:

- One LALC (Tweed-Byron LALC).
- 13 separate community consultations.
- Six+ years to complete management plan (2012-2018).
- Consultants engaged to facilitate parts of the plan.



## Examples from other Councils

### Tweed Shire Council Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Mapping (informs the Management Plan)

Map based on Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) data, community held knowledge and landscape characteristics.

Two principal map layers:

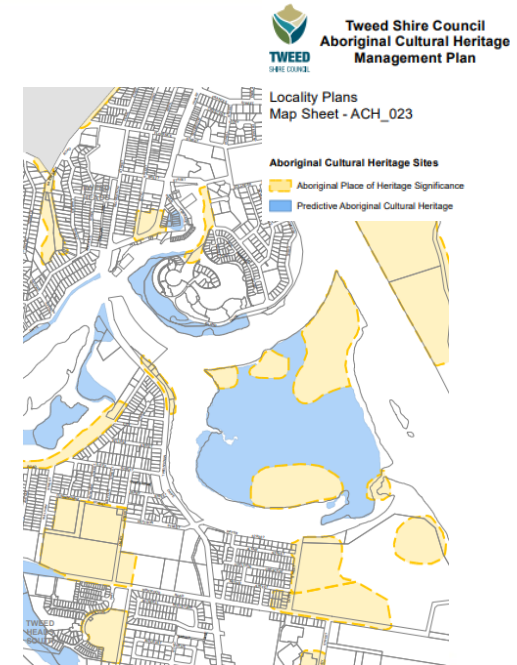
#### *Mapped Aboriginal Place of Heritage Significance*

- Sites registered on AHIMS & identified by community.
- Generally requires an ACHA with the DA & consultation with the LALC.

#### *Predictive Aboriginal Cultural Heritage mapping*

- Maps landscape features that correlate with higher probability of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.
- ACHA not automatically required with DA. Consultation with LALC maybe required.

Land that is unmapped still requires due diligence in accordance with *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974*.



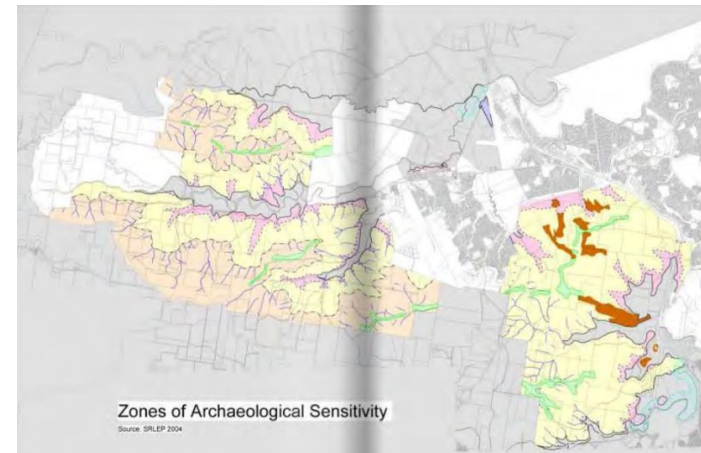
# Examples from other Councils

## Illawarra Councils Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management DA Toolkit

- Developed for Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council and Kiama Council.
- Establishes a step-by-step process and accompanying guidelines for Council staff to identify and apply appropriate level of consideration of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in DAs and Council works.
- Does not include mapping layers.

Shellharbour has an additional DCP Chapter:

- Guidance on the level of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment required when planning and assessing a DA.
- Predictive Mapping.



# Opportunities to Improve Council Practices

## Possible actions (subject to consultation and engagement with all stakeholders):

- Expand guidance in Council's DCP around the consideration of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in DAs.
- Develop a Planning Toolkit with procedures & practical guidance to assist Council assessment staff and project managers to identify and apply appropriate level of assessment.
- Develop Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Mapping to assist with identifying known, and predictive, sites of cultural significance:
  - Known – sites registered on AHIMS; LEP listed items; sites identified by local Aboriginal community.
  - Predictive – landscape & other features correlating with high probability of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

# Challenges & Considerations

- Timeframe for completion given other priorities.
  - Planning toolkit possibly more straightforward than the mapping.
- Managing expectations & achieving consensus.
  - Five LALCs in Shoalhaven LGA.
  - Additional stakeholder groups.
- Respecting cultural protocols & sensitivities
  - E.g. level of detail disclosed on mapping.
- There will be a range of internal stakeholders / users – assessment staff, project managers etc.

# Suggested Next Steps - for discussion

## 1) Seek feedback / guidance from the Committee on:

- Proposed scope and objectives
- Possible governance structure (working group?)
- How would the AAC like to be involved and kept updated on the project?

## 2) Have initial discussions with key stakeholders on the project scope, objectives & approach (possibly with the assistance of a facilitator):

- LALCs
- Other local Aboriginal stakeholders
- Internal users (assessment staff, project managers etc)

## 3) Report to Council to endorse the proposed project & consider allocating budget etc.



# Questions / Discussion





**Local Government Regional  
NAIDOC Awards 2024**

Hosted by Shoalhaven City  
Council

***In Partnership with:***

 Shellharbour  
CITY COUNCIL

 wollongong  
city of innovation

 KIAMA  
MUNICIPAL  
COUNCIL



## Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to recognise the First Peoples of the Shoalhaven and their ongoing connection to Culture and Country. I acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living culture and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



# Overview

- Background
- NAIDOC 2024 Theme
- Celebrating Culture
- Award Categories
- Nominations
- Funding & Sponsorship
- Promotion & Engagement
- Event
- Ticket Sales



## Background

- Shoalhaven and Illawarra Council Partnership
- NAIDOC Planning Committee
- Cultural guidance & decision making
- Thirteenth year re-launch
- Collaboration



## Keep the fire burning! Blak, Loud and Proud

Unyielding spirit of our communities and invites all to stand in solidarity, amplifying the voices that have long been silenced.

The fire represents the enduring strength and vitality of Indigenous cultures, passed down through generations despite the challenges faced. It is a symbol of connection to the land, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we honour this flame, we kindle the sparks of pride and unity, igniting a renewed commitment to acknowledging, preserving, and sharing the cultural heritage that enriches our nation.

"Blak, Loud and Proud" encapsulates the unapologetic celebration of Indigenous identity, empowering us to stand tall in our heritage and assert our place in the modern world. This theme calls for a reclamation of narratives, an amplification of voices, and an unwavering commitment to justice and equality. It invites all Australians to listen, learn, and engage in meaningful dialogue, fostering a society where the wisdom and contributions of Indigenous peoples are fully valued and respected.

Through our collective efforts, we can forge a future where the stories, traditions, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are cherished and celebrated, enriching the fabric of the nation with the oldest living culture in the world.



## Celebrating Culture & Being Respectful

- Focus on reconciliation
- Relationship building
- Sharing language & story telling
- Cultural ceremonies & performances
- Showcasing local Aboriginal performers
- Partnership with local Aboriginal artist





## Award Categories

- Elder of the Year
- Outstanding Contribution to Community (Paid/Voluntary)
- Young Achiever of the Year
- Organisation of the Year (Not-For-Profit/For Profit)
- Outstanding Contribution to Reconciliation (Aboriginal/Non- Aboriginal)
- \*NEW\* Caring for Country and Culture



# Nominations

- Nominations campaign
- Community capacity building approach
- Improved, clearly defined process
- Significant increase in submissions



**Funding Sources**

- Grants
- Sponsorship
- Operational budget
- Ticket Sales
- Partner council contributions
- NAIDOC Committee float



## Sponsorship

- New sponsorship campaign
- Sharing culture sponsorship gained \$64,000
- Opportunities will remain open until EOFY

# Sponsors

- djagula/djawula (Platinum) \_\_\_\_\_



- wayalad/ngaraora (Gold) \_\_\_\_\_



- gurimbaga/djiriwunj (Silver) \_\_\_\_\_



- Djamaga (Elder Appreciation Pack) \_\_\_\_\_





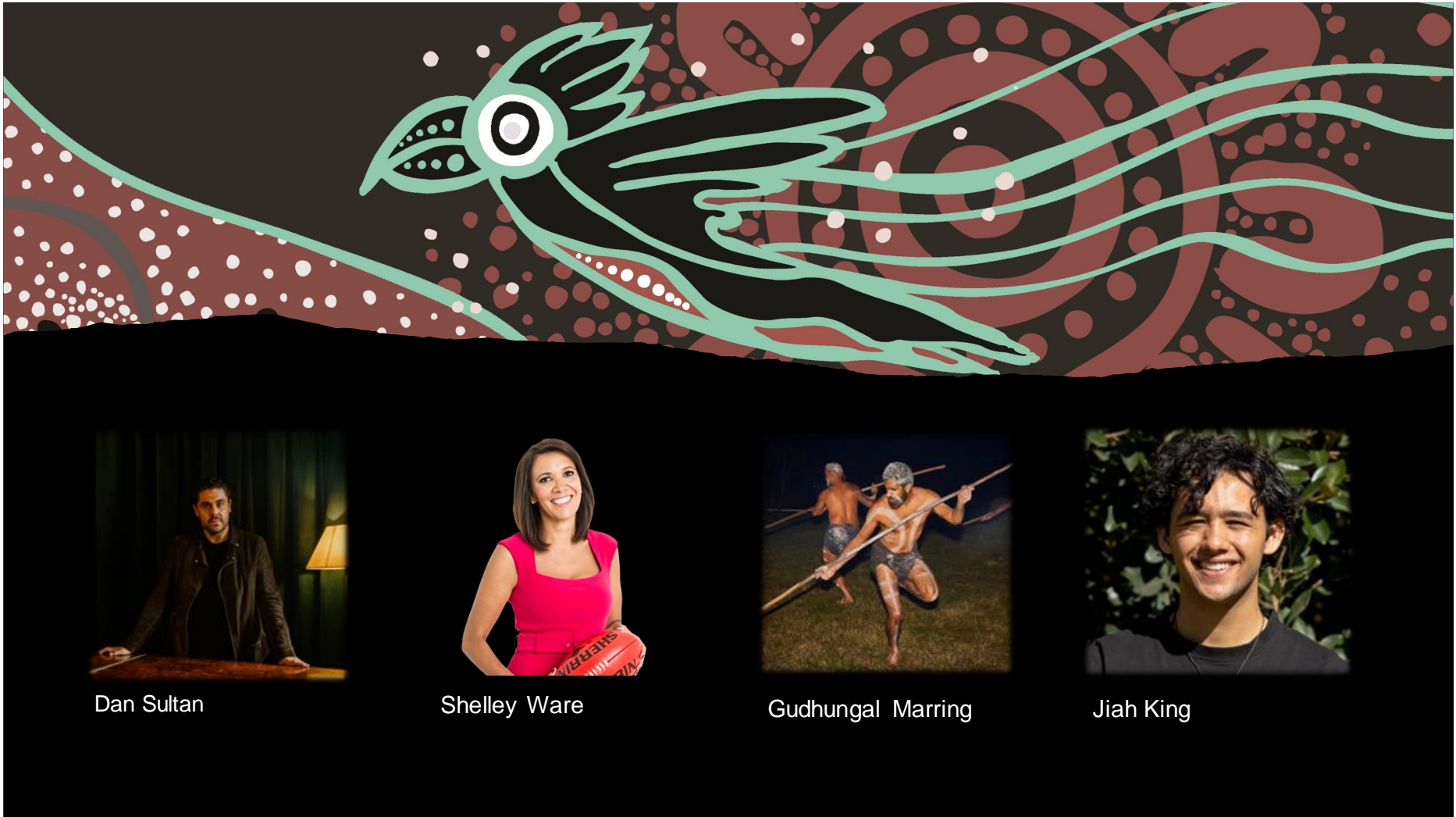
**Promotion & Engagement**

- Community networks
- In person
- Media channels
- Direct mail outs
- Web
- Print media
- Partner councils



**Event**

- Saturday, 27 July 2024
- Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre
- 4.30pm to 10.00pm
- Gala dinner style celebration
- Cultural ceremonies & performances
- Award winning headline act
- High profile media personality MC



Dan Sultan

Shelley Ware

Gudhungal Marring

Jiah King





## Ticket Sales

- Pre-sale for nominees 22 April – 5 May 2024
- General release tickets 6 May – 12 July 2024
- Tickets can be purchased through the below channels:

Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre Box Office:  
Bridge Road Nowra

Website: [Shoalhavenentertainment.com.au](http://Shoalhavenentertainment.com.au)

Phone: (02) 4429 5757

