

Causeway Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge Interpretation Strategy

Prepared for Causeway Link Alliance
29 September 2022 | 21-403

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Causeway
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Alliance

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the art and science of place

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WARNING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may contain the names and images of people that have passed away. In some communities this may cause sadness, distress or offence.

NOTES

The word Nyoongar is the generic term used today to define people of Aboriginal descent who occupy the south-western corner of Western Australia. The Nyoongar nation is made up of fourteen different language groups for which the Perth region is Whadjuk.

Variations in spelling occur. For this report we use the City of Perth's preferred spelling (e.g. Nyoongar), except when referencing an external agency, organisation or source that uses alternative spelling.

Document ID: /Volumes/Graphics/2021/21-403 Causeway Pedestrian Bridge/00 Report/01 Draft - Heritage/00 InDesign/00 INTERP/21-403 Causeway InterpStrat D2 220907 Folder/21-403 Causeway InterpStrat D4 220929.indd

Issue	Date	Status	Prepared by	Approved by	Graphics	File
1	01.09.22	Draft	Carmel Given	Flavia Kiperman	MS	D1
2	07.09.22	Draft	Carmel Given	Flavia Kiperman	SA	D2
3	08.09.22	Draft	Carmel Given	Flavia Kiperman	MS	D3
4	29.09.22	Draft	Carmel Given	Flavia Kiperman	MS	D4

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar nation as traditional owners of the lands, waters and skies of Boorloo (Perth).

We acknowledge and respect their enduring culture, their continuing connection to Country, the contribution they make to the life of this city, and Elders, past and present.

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1. Introduction

This Interpretation Plan has been prepared by Element Advisory Pty Ltd (**element**) for the Causeway Link Alliance.

1.1 Background

The site of the Causeway bridge has been a significant crossing point over the Swan River since well before the arrival of colonists in 1829. The shallow flats in the vicinity of what is now known as Heirisson Island provided a natural junction to traverse between the northern and southern banks of the river. In 1843 the first Causeway bridge was opened, followed by successive programs of bridge upgrades and replacement in 1865 and finally completion of the current construction in 1952.

Plans to incorporate a dedicated pedestrian and cyclist bridge alongside the existing traffic bridge have been ongoing, receiving funding for delivery as part of the Perth City Deal. Communicating the cultural heritage values of the site as part of this development requires a well-considered interface between history, place and design.

This Interpretation Plan has been prepared to explore and express the cultural context of the site via interpretation strategies, and to identify the appropriate media and locations to facilitate that messaging.

1.2 Study area

The proposed Causeway Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge (CPCB) spans the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) from the eastern banks of Point Fraser within the City of Perth, touching down on Heirisson Island before continuing to McCallum Park in the Town of Victoria Park. The site is on Whadjuk Nyoongar boodja (Country) with the area in the vicinity of the Causeway bridge having a high level of integrity as a continual and significant river crossing point throughout the history of Boorlo (Perth).

Heirisson Island, the central stopping point of the bridge, is a registered Aboriginal Heritage Site recognised for its ongoing significance as a mythological, camping, hunting and meeting place, and as a significant plant resource site. The island originally consisted of six land masses that were amalgamated or removed during programs of alteration and reclamation works which took place on the river between the 1900s and 1940s. Other than the existing Causeway bridge and minor infrastructure facilities, the island is largely natural reserve. The existing Causeway bridge represents the third bridge structure built across this location, with remnants of the second bridge still extant and visible within the surrounding waters.



Figure 1. Study area

■ Study Area — Proposed CPCB



Figure 2. Heirisson Island study area

■ Study Area — Proposed CPCB



Figure 3. Point Fraser study area

■ Study Area — Proposed CPCB



Figure 4. McCallum Park study area

■ Study Area — Proposed CPCB

1.3 Objectives of the Interpretation Strategy

Interpretation is an interactive communication process involving the visitor, through which heritage values and cultural significance of a place are revealed. Interpretation uses a variety of techniques to enrich the visitor experience, enhance enjoyment and increase understanding.

An interpretation strategy is a tool that provides appropriate strategies for transmitting messages about the heritage values of a place to visitors. It identifies the most significant themes and stories about a place and the media most suited to exploring them.

An interpretation plan provides guidelines for implementation of the strategies, and a framework for managing visitors, while also ensuring the heritage values, including significant fabric of the place, are upheld.

The objectives of the Interpretation Strategy are to:

- Reveal the history of this site to maximise opportunities for future place making.
- Integrate the interpretation of key stories into the visitor experience in the new landscape
- Provide a clear and implementable series of strategies to guide development of interpretive initiatives.

1.4 Study Team

1.4.1 Element Advisory

- Flavia Kiperman
- Marc Beattie
- Carmel Given

1.4.2 Matagarup Elders Group

Name	Family names A-Z
Tanya Bodney	Representing Bodney family
Herbert Bropho	Representing Bropho family
Bella Bropho	Representing Bropho family
Marie Taylor	Representing Collard family
Neville Collard	Representing Collard family
Vanessa Corunna	Representing Corunna family
Kevin Fitzgerald	Representing Fitzgerald family
Farley Garlett	Representing Garlett family
Stanley Headland	Representing Headland family
Karen Jacobs	Representing Jacobs family
Kay Walley	Representing Walley family
Richard Walley	Representing Walley family
Trevor Walley	Representing Walley family
Marlene Warrell	Representing Warrell family
Richard Wilkes	Representing Wilkes family
Gladys Yarran	Representing Yarran family

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1.4.3 Project team

The wider team in this project involves:

Organisation	
Hassell, Principal, Landscape architect	Anthony Brookfield
Hassell, Associate, Landscape architect	Jill Turpin
element , Public Art	Kate Parker

1.5 Guidelines

- Interpretation, Heritage Council of WA, 2019
- Interpretation - Practice Note Version 1. ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Presentation Australia ICOMOS, 2013
- ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites, Ename Charter 2008

1.6 Key supporting documents

- Archae-aus, 'Heritage impact assessment and archaeological management plan for the installation of a pedestrian/cyclist bridge near the causeway bridges, East Perth WA', May 2021, for Main Roads WA.
- Horizon Heritage Management, 'Regulation 10 Consultation with the Whadjuk Noongar People for the proposed MRWA Geotechnical and Geophysical Assessments for a new Causeway Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge over Heirisson Island (Matagarup) and the Swan River (Derbal Yerrigan), April 2021', for Main Roads WA.

1.7 Methodology

An integral part of our methodology is to coordinate project team meetings to workshop the interpretive strategies. We discuss concepts that draw on successful international case studies but address the unique history of the site. The methodology includes:

- Consultation with the First Nations people to understand the Cultural Context
- Brief historical research using documentary sources
- Development of vision and common themes
- A demographic study and exploration of potential
- Key interpretive themes and site stories
- Project team workshop/s
- Strategies to guide interpretation

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2. Cultural heritage

2.1 Aboriginal Heritage Listings

Aboriginal heritage sites and objects are protected under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021* (ACH Act) (currently in a transitional phase from the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*).

Aboriginal sites in Western Australia are listed on the Register of Aboriginal Sites which is managed by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). Information pertaining to these sites and their status is available via the Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System (AHIS).

This database shows that there are two Aboriginal sites which intersect with the project area as follows:

Table 1: Aboriginal Heritage Listings (Registered Sites)

ID	Place Name	Type	Location	Restrictions
3536	Swan River	Mythological	Within Project Area	No
3589	Heirisson Island	Mythological, Camp, Hunting Place, Meeting Place, Plant Resource	Within Project Area	No

2.2 Historic Heritage Listings

Historic heritage places are protected under the *Heritage Act 2018* (the Act). The State Register of Heritage Places is managed by DPLH. Information pertaining to these sites and their status is available via the Heritage Council database (inHerit).

This database shows that there are three historic sites in or within the immediate surrounds of the project area as follows:

Table 2: State and Local Heritage Listings

Place Number	Place Name	Level	Relevant Legislation
03631	Causeway Bridges	State Register	Heritage Act 2018
03915/VP17	McCallum Park	Town of Victoria Park Local Heritage Survey and Heritage List	Planning and Development Act (2005) Town of Victoria Park Town Planning Scheme 1 (TPS1)
11472	Yagan's Statue	City of Perth Local Heritage Survey and Heritage List	Planning and Development Act (2005) City of Perth City Planning Scheme 2 (CPS2)



Figure 5. The proposed CPCB in relation to the surrounding places of heritage value. (element 2022)

2.3 Analysis of Historic heritage significance

Under the assessment process, whether it be for State or Local heritage places, a statement of significance is written and becomes a summary of the heritage assessment. They read as follows:

2.3.1 Causeway Bridges

Statement of Significance:

Causeway Bridges consisting of two bridges, one over the eastern channel of the Swan River between the eastern shore and Heirisson Island and the other over the western channel between the Island and the western shore and connecting roadway, has cultural significance for the following reasons:

the place consists of the first bridges in Western Australia constructed of steel and reinforced concrete materials using advanced principles of structural analysis to produce efficient structures of lasting durability;

the place is representative of the bridge building technology of the period during which they were constructed, with its structural, balustrading and bridge pier treatment design. The 1952 bridges were also innovative in lighting design;

the place represents almost 120 years of continuous bridge building endeavour up to the completion of construction in 1952;

the place is important as the river flats presented a navigation barrier to early explorers and settlers, and from the establishment of the settlement of Perth, work was carried out at the site to improve river navigation and provide a river crossing;

the place has associations with E. W. C. Godfrey, who designed and supervised its construction, and with the Department of Public Works and the Main Roads Department. The place also has historical associations with Surveyor General J S Roe, Superintendent of Works Henry Trigg and Major F C Irwin, who designed and modified the first Causeway opened in 1843, and with Richard Roach Jewell, who designed the second Causeway that was built by convicts and opened in 1865:

the place represents a continuous point of crossing between the eastern and western shores of the Swan River, traditionally for Aboriginal people and then for European settlers; and,

the place is part of an important road link in the history of Western Australia connecting Perth with the southern suburbs and providing access to inland areas. The place is highly valued by the community in providing a link over the river for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle transport and access to the adjacent landscaped recreational areas.



Figure 6. Eastern Causeway Bridge, with remnants of the second bridge in the foreground. (element 2021)

2.3.2 McCallum Park

Statement of Significance:

McCallum Park has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

The place has social value as a gathering place for the local and broader Western Australian community; and

The place has historic value for its association with Alexander McCallum, who was the Minister responsible for much of the reclamation of the river foreshore during the 1920s.



Figure 7. McCallum Park (Image: Town of Victoria Park website)

2.3.3 Yagan's Statue

Statement of Significance:

Yagan's Statue has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

It has aesthetic and historic significance as a powerful statue representing the history of the original inhabitants of the Swan River area;

It has associations with Yagan, a tribal leader who defended his lands against the Europeans and was later captured and killed;

it has associations with the campaign led by local Swan River Aboriginal groups for the return of Yagan's head from England; and,

the place has rarity value as a site recognising the life and battles of Yagan as well as the history of armed conflict between Aboriginal people and Europeans as a result of the displacement of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands.



Figure 8. Yagan's Statue

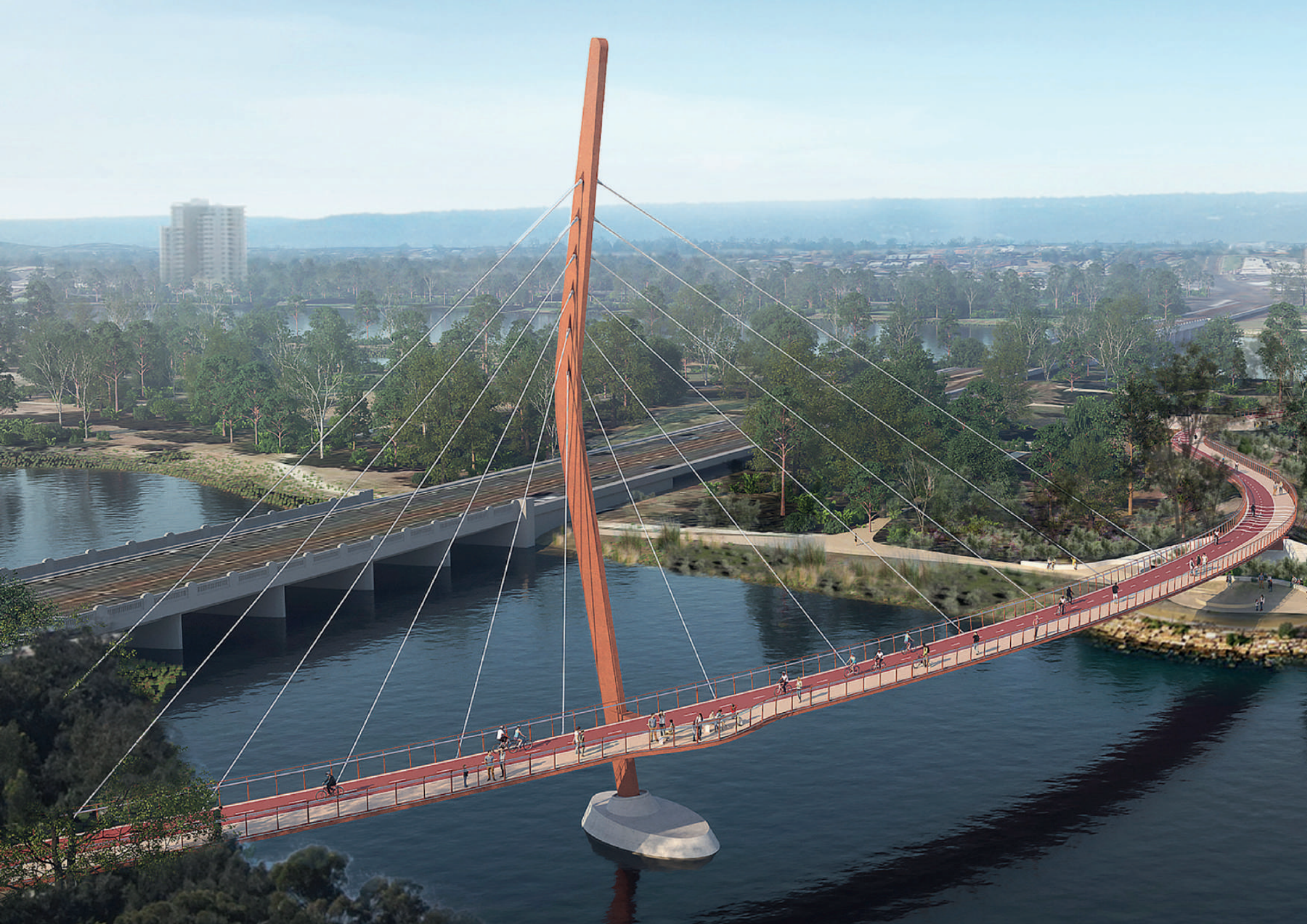
2.4 Summary of constraints

The *Causeway Bridges* is a place protected under the State Register of Heritage Places. A Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared by **element** as part of the Development Application regarding the new CPCB and its impact on the values of the place.

McCallum Park has value at a local level, and includes a tram sculpture by Kath Wheatley, installed 2001. This will not be removed or relocated for the new CPCB. As a part of the local, already established and valued community open space, it will remain an integrated feature of the McCallum Park landscape.

Yagan's Statue is within the Heirisson Island Aboriginal Registered Site. There have been discussions with the MEG about relocating it to within the study area as part of the interpretation outcomes. If this is the case it will require submission of a Section 18 application to DPLH. However, the MEG agrees that a decision about this is beyond their scope and they wish to seek support from the wider Whadjuk community. Whether agreement from all Whadjuk groups is achieved in a timely manner for this to occur within the timeframes of the CPCB project is an unknown factor. (To be updated after MEG meetings #5 & #6.)

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3. Consultation

3.1 Whadjuk Engagement process

The work to date has involved much the same people that are in the current MEG. As part of the preliminary ethnographic survey work for the CPCB it was recorded that some of the Whadjuk Traditional Owners expressed shock and horror at the drilling into the river.

When the MEG was established to move to the building design phase, much of the early discussions involved technical information sharing. Meetings with the MEG have been held over a time period of xx months. After each MEG meeting, the project team documented and shared the stories discussed.

3.1.1 Meetings 1-4: (Technical)

- MEG Meeting #1 – 29 February 2021
- MEG Meeting #2 – 30 May 2022 (on site)
- MEG Meeting #3 – 28 June 2022
- Meeting (Women only) – 18 July 2022 (on site)
- MEG Meeting #4 – 23 August 2022

Over the first four MEG meetings the group were presented with technical information about soil testing, geotechnical and archaeological explorations, the civil engineering requirements and so on. The main concerns expressed at the end of these meetings were:

- Landscape interventions must consider their impact on country carefully, particularly around their interactions with the river.
- Safety of workers and cultural safety to the Whadjuk Noongar people and Country is paramount and the MEG will want to hold a smoking ceremony before ground works commence.

- Site monitoring will be carried out throughout the project in case of the discovery of artefacts and other cultural heritage materials.

Meeting (Women only):

- Tree removal to be kept to an absolute minimum. Trees hold the memories and spirits of people that have lived and died on Country. The group suggested holding a singing ceremony before removal of the trees. They will carry the songlines of the trees with them. At the end of the project when the tree re-vegetation happens, the ceremony is to be repeated and the spirits will be returned to the trees.

3.1.2 Meetings 5-7: (Collaborative design)

Hassell and element workshopped design and interpretation concepts in preparation for beginning the 'designing with country' process.

Over the following three MEG meetings the group were presented with stories heard to date, the common themes were drawn out, and workshopped into specific strategies. The concepts were re-presented to the MEG at each meeting for feedback and support.

- #5 20 September 2022 - Visions and themes
- #6 25 October 2022 - Workshop concept designs
- #7 22 November 2022 - Presentation of final interpretive designs for support from the MEG.



Figure 9. MEG Meeting #2 on Heirisson Island. (element 2022)



Figure 10. Women's meeting on Heirisson Island (element 2022)



Figure 11. MEG Meeting #3 (element 2022)



Figure 12. MEG Meeting #4 (element 2022)

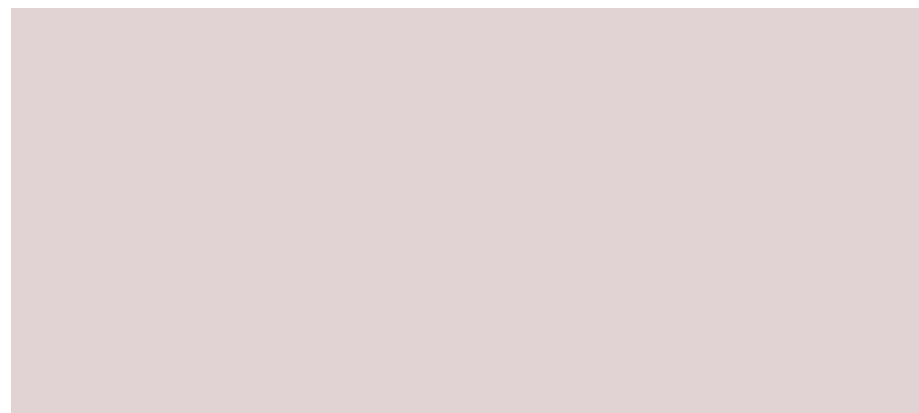


Figure 14. MEG Meeting #6 (element 2022)

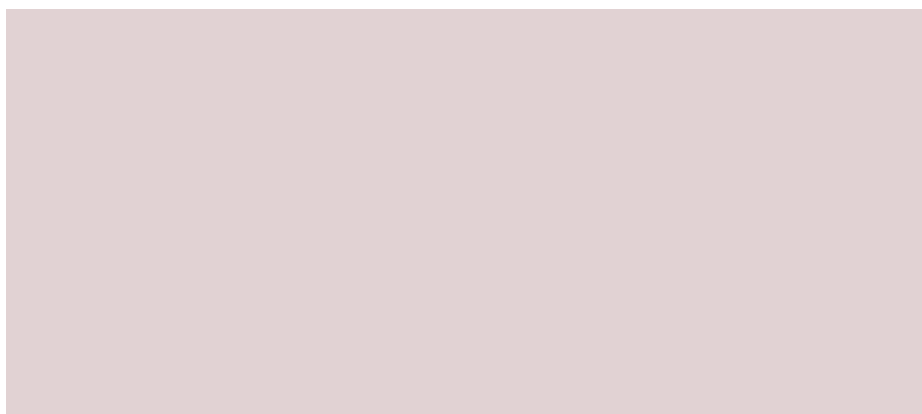


Figure 13. MEG Meeting #5 (element 2022)

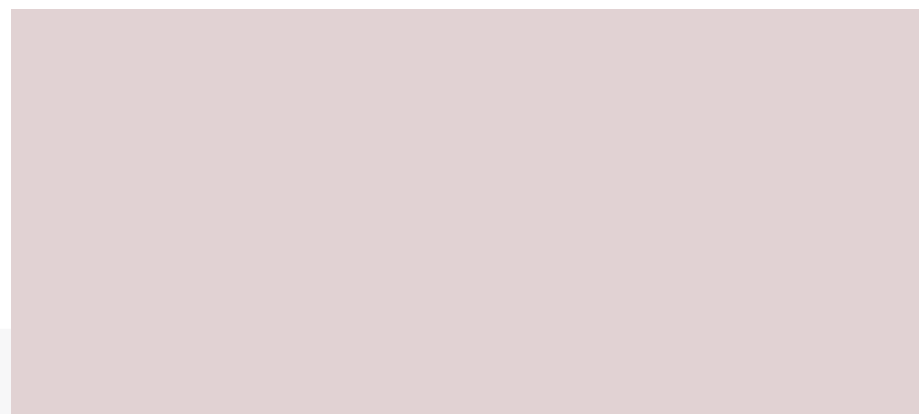
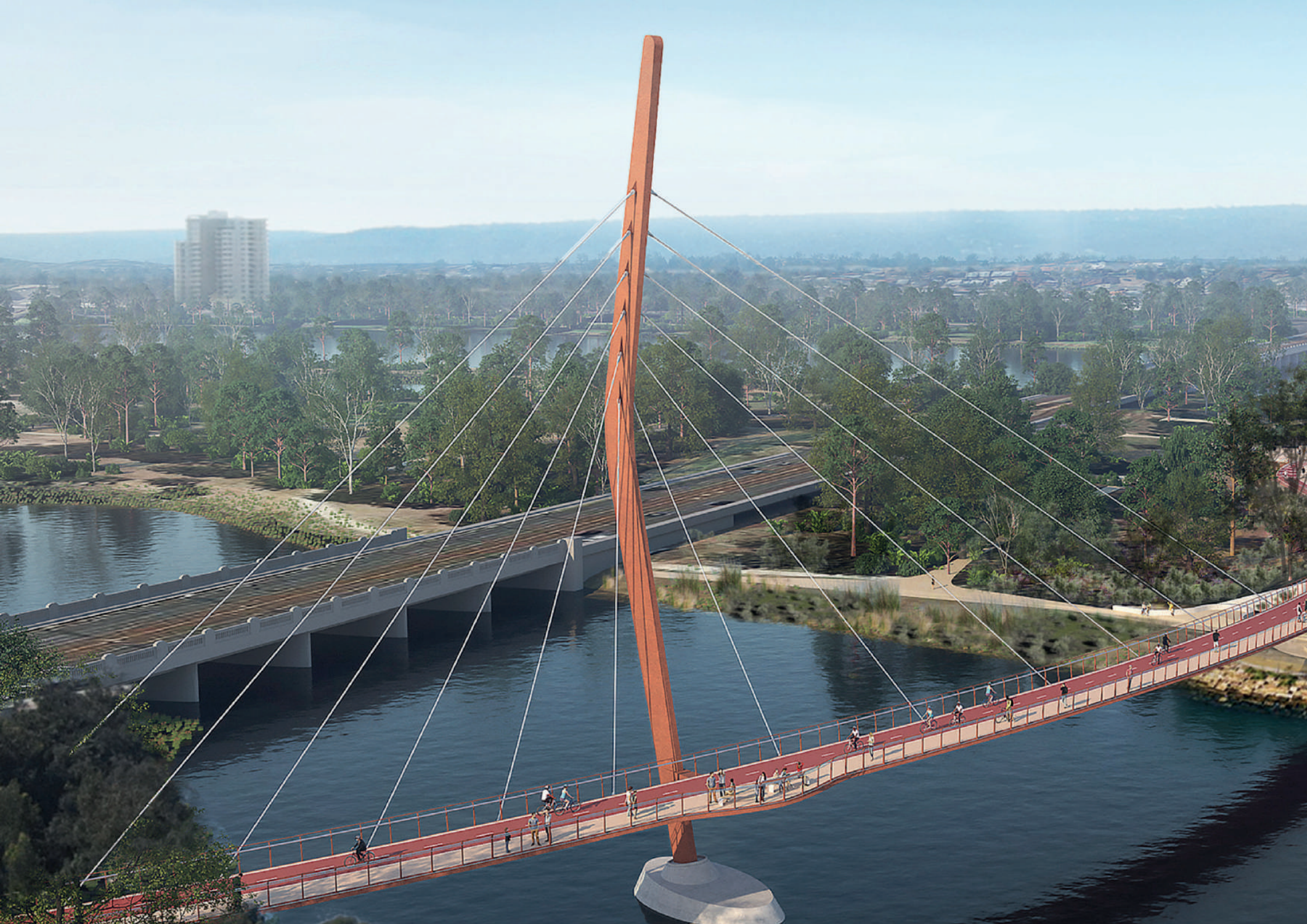


Figure 15. MEG Meeting #7 (element 2022)

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4. Historical summary

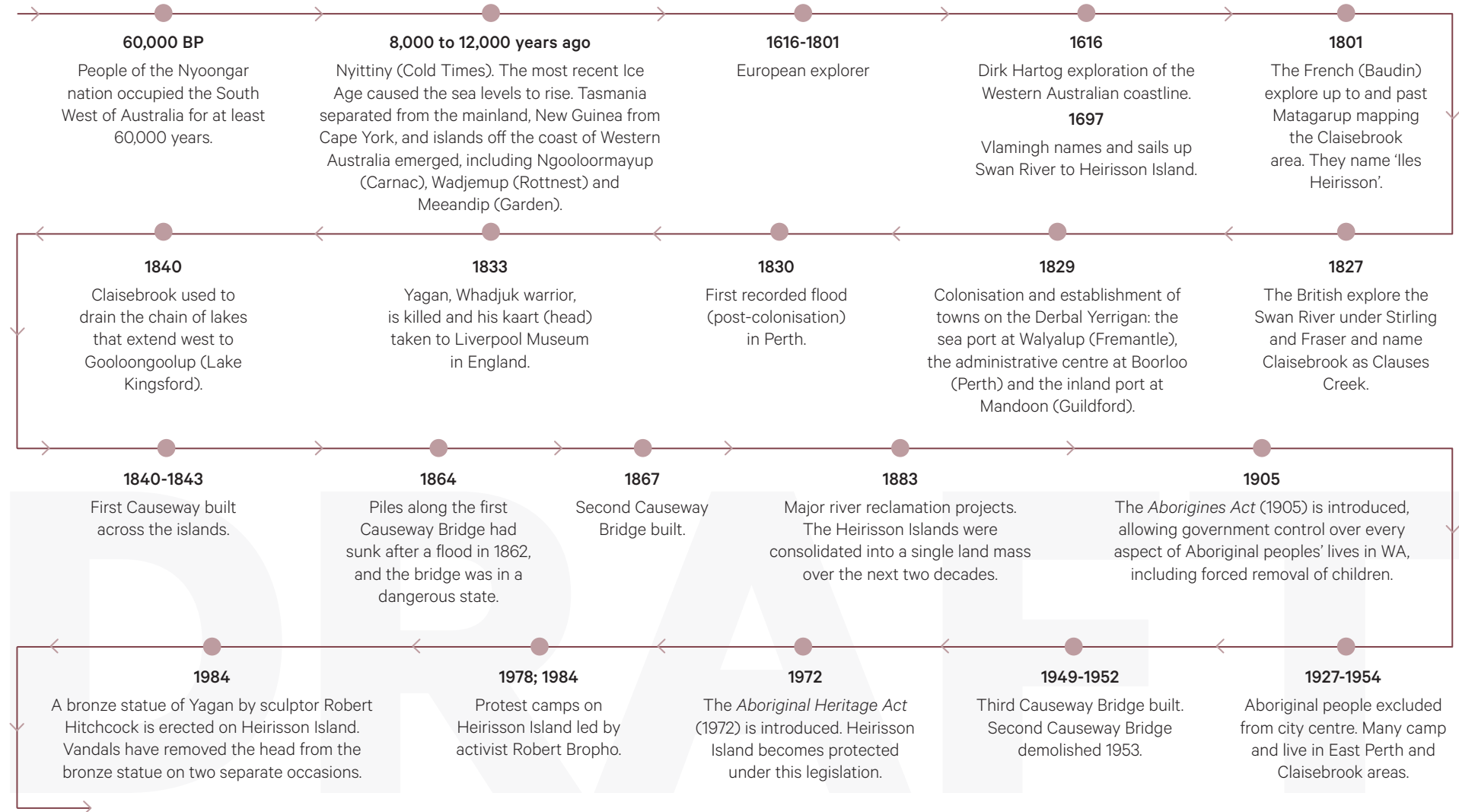
4.1 Research process

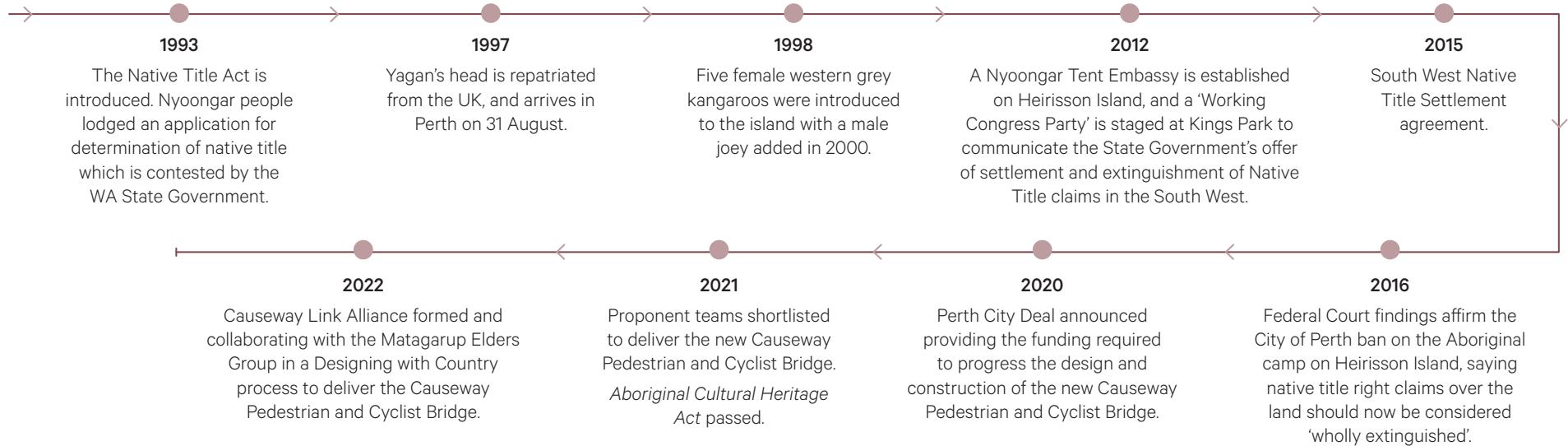
Reference was made to credible sources (refer to the Bibliography), as well as research at the State Library of Western Australia, State Records Office of Western Australia, and use of the National Library of Australia's 'Trove' repository.

The historical development, including events that have impacted the study area over time are summarised in the following timeline, and expressed through imagery.



4.2 Timeline





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4.3 Outcomes

Outcomes of the workshops included:

- Development of the Vision Statement
- Confirmation of content in site-specific stories
- Refinement of the interpretation strategies
- Potential locations
- Agreement of interpretive strategies (conceptual only)
- Implementation Strategy i.e. who will be responsible for overseeing the design development and installation

4.4 Site-specific stories

4.4.1 The Waugal and the Derbal Yerrigan

Nyoongar stories of creation say that boodjar (country), began during the Nyittiny (cold time), when the world was flat, featureless and dark. During this time ancestral spirits dwelt and wandered drifting in and out of their spirit forms, into the material world. The Waugal (rainbow serpent) was the first to become 'real' lifting the sky and moving across the land forming hills and valleys along the way. At times the Waugal would tunnel under the ground and explain why the landscape and waterways are essential to Nyoongar spirituality. They are the tracks of ancestral spirits who travelled across the country.¹

When the Waugal was moving towards the wardan (ocean) creating the bilya, he became stuck and shook off his scales in the mud. These scales are said to be the island 'Goonagar.' The place has particular significance as a Waugal song line which runs all the way to Uluru.²

Respecting the home of the Waugal is an important part of the ecological system which purifies the land and the family.

To Nyoongar people it is impossible to talk about country and people as separate entities.

People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, grieve for country and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, and feels sorry or happy. Country is a living entity with a yesterday, a today and tomorrow, with consciousness, action, and a will toward life.³

Therefore to look at the land is to understand the spirit in all life forms. Plants, birds and animals have stories and ancestral spirits attached to them which necessitate a requirement to care for country in a way which will sustain the environment and in turn sustain the life of the people upon it.

Nyoongar people are aware of the balance in all things through the concept of reciprocity. This has been demonstrated for millennia of caring for country, laws, lore and value systems including an understanding of the Nyoongar six seasons which help to maintain cultural practice, knowledge and spirituality of the people, culture and land.

As a consequence of the routine and seasonal movement between the swamps and lakes there would have been a number of key bidi (paths) in the area. The bidi connected important places, allowing for the seasonal movement of groups from their inland camps to the coast and river area for hunting, camping, fishing and ceremonial and cultural businesses.

¹ Stocker, L. L. Collard & A. Rooney (2016). Aboriginal world views and colonisation: implications for coastal sustainability, *Local Environment*, 21:7, 844-865, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2015.1036414>.

² Horizon Heritage Management, (April 2021), 'Regulation 10 Consultation with the Whadjuk Noongar People for the proposed MRWA Geotechnical and Geophysical Assessments for a new Causeway Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge over Heirisson Island (Matagarup) and the Swan River (Derbal Yerrigan), p.17.

³ Rose, D, S. D'Amico, N. Daiyi, K. Deveraux, M Daiyi, L. Ford & A. Bright 2002, *Country of the Heart: An Indigenous Australian Homeland*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra. p. 14



Figure 16. The Whadjuk Nyoongar six seasons. (element 2022)

4.4.2 Plants, animals, sustenance

The islands and year-round mud flats were ideal hunting and fishing grounds. Water birds, koolya (frogs) gilgies (fresh water crayfish) and yakan (turtles), fish, crabs and other crustaceans, snakes, rats, mice, a variety of bird life and a range of edible plants could also be found seasonally in bountiful number. During the Nyoongar season of Djeran (approx. April-May), the yorgas (women) used *wanna* (digging sticks) to gather the edible root of the yangeti (bulrushes) found throughout the mudflats.⁴

Swamp and marsh environments are known biodiversity hotspots, supporting a variety of plant, animal and insect life, and in turn supporting the populations who depend upon these living systems.

The islands were composed of a rich deposit carried down by the river in flood. Their edges were covered with *Metrosideros* and *Casuarina glauca*, and their interior with seaside succulent plants. Salt marsh plants, *Sarcocornia quinqueflora*, *Suaeda australis* and *Samolus repens*, were common on the flats, as well as on the Perth foreshore and at Mill Point with *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* as the most dominant species. Common sword sedge (*Lepidosperma longitudinale*) and the knotted club-rush (*Isolepis nodosa*) lined the banks and backed the sandy beaches. The flooded gum (*Eucalyptus rudis*) graced the alluvial flats.

The isles and their surrounding mud flats were environmentally significant due to two distinctive foreshore ecosystems, which occurred next to one another. They formed a natural barrier, which was occasionally breached by the winter water flow. Upper and lower estuaries were identified to the north and south. The upper estuary had the character of a tidal river.

To the south east of Matagarup was a permanent freshwater spring called Mindeera. This, along with the mid flats, and changes to the natural river shoreline have been impacted by development. The river reclamation and infill of the islands has also impacted the flora and fauna. Today many species are now seen only on the few remaining wetlands of the Swan Coastal Plain.⁵

⁴ Seddon and Ravine (1986), *A City and its Setting*, p. 76.

⁵ Moodjar Consultancy (2017), Report on a cultural heritage assessment of Wellington Square, East Perth, WA, p. 30.



Figure 17. Changes to the natural environment and landscape over time: 1935, 1958, 1973 and 1983. (SLWA)

4.4.3 Matagarup

Matagarup (meaning shin-deep or knee-deep place) is the name for the shallow crossing point comprised of six individual islands interspersed with mud flats which is now a man-made landscape called Heirisson Island.

Matagarup was a known area of gathering between different family groups and visiting tribes from outside of Whadjuk country. The permanent spring at Mindeera in present-day Victoria Park, now covered over, provided fresh water, and was where many people camped. The whole area was neutral territory, where people came together in harmony for trade, social interaction and ceremony.⁶

The following names are currently understood to be associated with the islands⁷: This information TBC at MEG meeting # 5-6:

- **Goonagar** was the southern most of the original islands. It was prone to flooding yet still able to be crossed and was one of the key stepping stones.
- **Kakaroomup** derives from the Nyoongar word *kakar* which means slippery and may relate to the difficulty of walking across the mud flats. It was the middle island between Goonagar and Yoondoorup.
- **Yoondoorup** was the northern-most island which was reclaimed to form part of the Burswood peninsula.
- **Mindeera** was a permanent freshwater spring in the Victoria Park area.

A midden on the island is evidence of people gathering and holding celebrations over thousands of years.

⁶ Hughes Hallett, Debra (2010), *Indigenous history of the Swan and Canning rivers*, p. 43.

⁷ Gnarla Boodja Mil Mili. Our Country on Paper. Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. <https://gnarlaboodjamap.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/#/welcome>.



Figure 18. Places in and around the study area. (Gnarla Boodja Mili Mili)

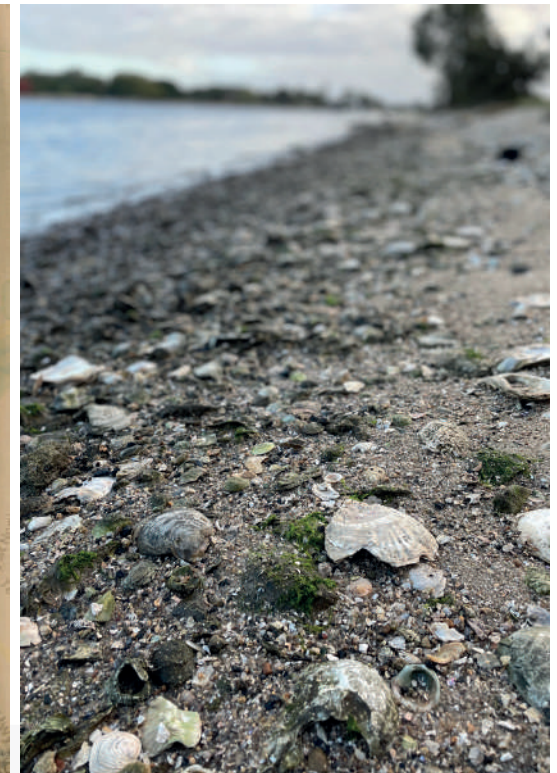


Figure 19. Midden on Heirisson Island. (element 2022)

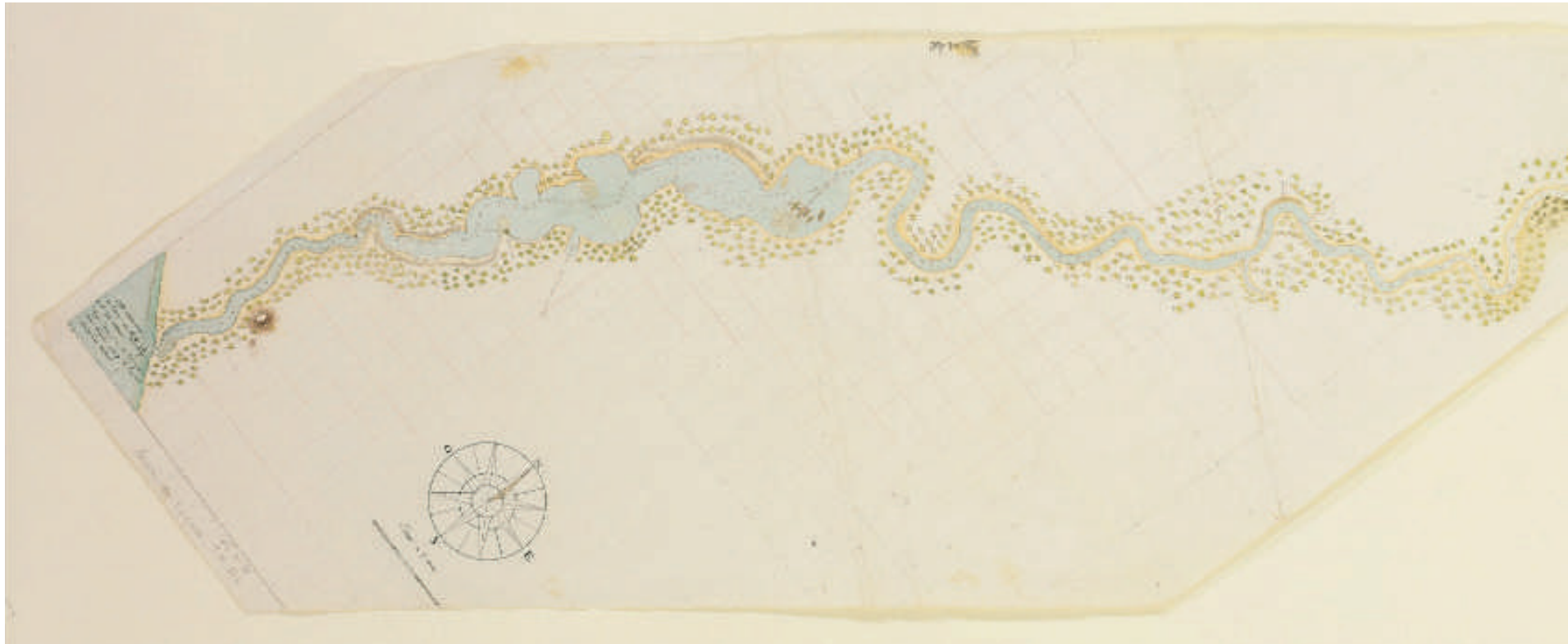


Figure 20. Chart of the Swan River by Francois-Antoine Boniface Heirisson, 1801, showing the original islands and Point Fraser. (SLWA)

The first European to visit the river as far as Matagarup was explorer Willem de Vlamingh in 1697. It was at the mudflats that Vlamingh's party saw the footprints of Nyoongar people, which were described as being 'of an extraordinary large size'.⁸

Accounts of French explorer Nicolas Baudin on the French ship *Le Naturaliste* created the first detailed chart of the Swan River during a scientific exploration in 1801.

*On the 18th, at daybreak, the party continued up the river, meeting flocks of pelicans. They killed two. They soon ran aground in soft, thick, clinging mud and spent much time dragging their boat through it. The river was barred at this point by a group of low, swampy islands which they named Iles Heirisson after their commanding officer. After passing these islands they saw black swans for the first time, swimming majestically on the water.*⁹

8 Playford, Phillip E. (1998). *Voyage of discovery to Terra Australis : by Willem De Vlamingh, 1696-97*, p.89

9 State Library of Western Australia, Freycinet collection, <https://slwa.wa.gov.au/freycinet/swan-river>.

4.4.4 Building new crossings

Early explorers in the Swan River Colony found the shallow flats at Matagarup a formidable barrier to navigate further upstream. They also considered the city's wetlands as obstructions to progress and development, being uninhabitable and unhealthy environments, which required suppression through land reclamation processes. In the first decade after colonisation, Perth's inner-city swamps and lakes were drained, filled, reduced in size, significantly altered or otherwise reclaimed for urban expansion.¹⁰

A canal was built in 1839 along the western side of the Heirisson Isles, further improved in 1895 to aid in the transportation of brick and timber.¹¹

In 1883 the Heirisson Islands were consolidated into a single land mass. By 1930 the island had expanded to its current size through dredging and the dumping of building rubble, sand and soil.¹² Fill material included mud and shell dredged up from the riverbed however rubbish, and building materials were also dumped in the area. In one case, the rubbish dumped by Perth City Council self-combusted causing a subterranean fire that burnt out of control for at least eight years.¹³

While the existing Causeway was constructed in 1952 the island generally remained an undeveloped site, with the dumping of waste material continuing until the 1960s. Major landscaping works were undertaken in the 1970s which transformed the island into an inner city parkland for low impact recreational activities. In 1975, the 25-hectare island was vested to the City of Perth as an A-Class Reserve¹⁴.

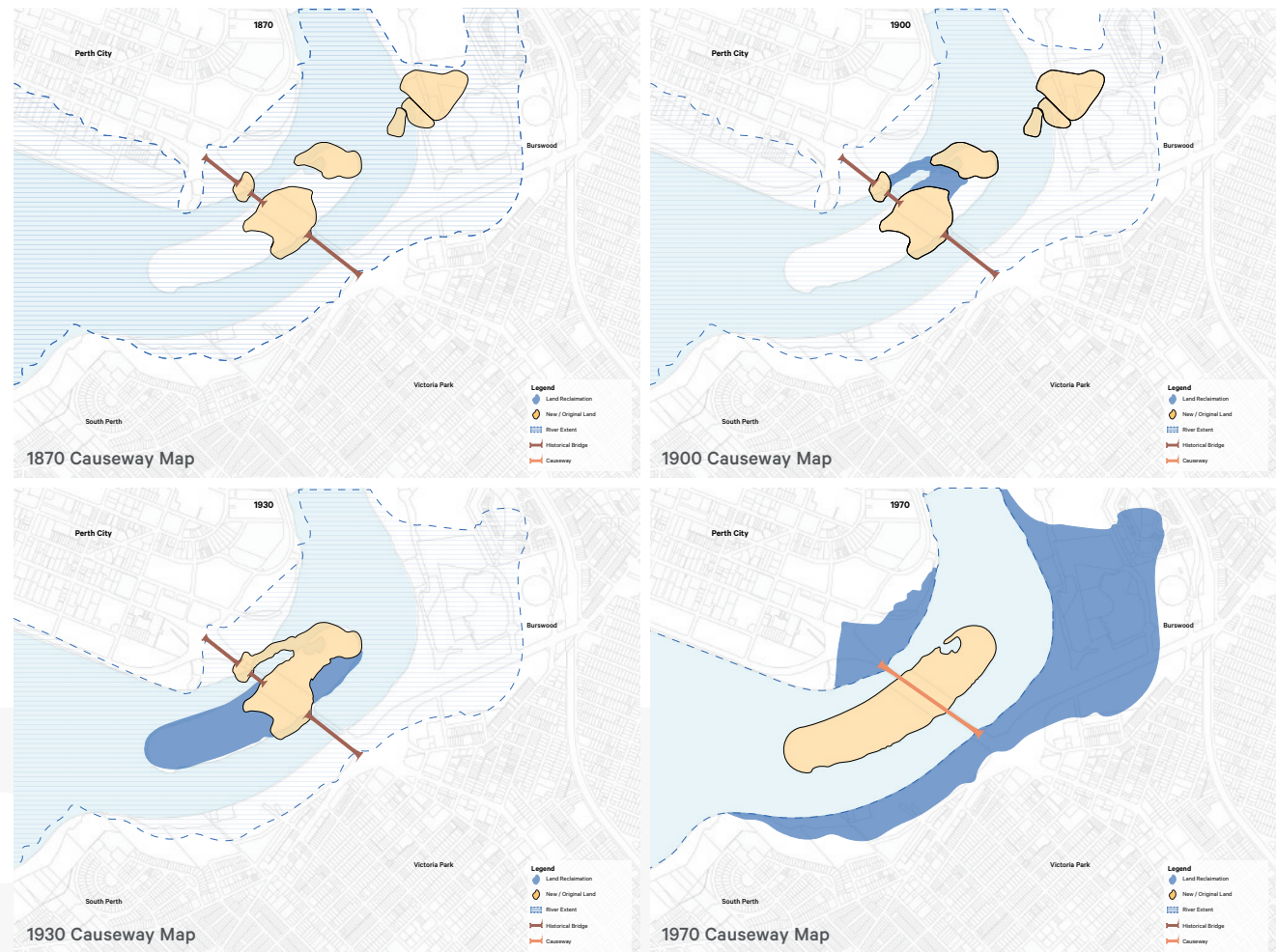


Figure 21. Landfill of Matagarup over time. (element 2022)

10 Ryan, Brady, Kueh (2016) *Where Fanny Balbuk Walked: Re-imagining Perth's Wetlands*, p. 4.

11 O'Neill, G.R (1999) *The changing form and function of Claisebrook – East Perth*, p. 67.

12 Seddon and Ravine (1986), *A City and its Setting*, pp. 81-82, 177.

13 *West Australian*, 12 July 1838 p. 16. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article42095247>.

14 City of Perth (2008) Heirisson Island Sculpture Park Masterplan p. 9.

Like the Whadjuk Nyoongar, the colonial government recognised the strategic importance of the mud flats to provide access from one side of the river to the other. The natural crossing point soon formed part of an important transport route for the establishment of the colony.

A newspaper article in June 1833 suggested that the construction of:

*a causeway across the River flats, a short distance above Perth, with a bridge over the deep water, thus a line would be formed from the sea Port, Fremantle, through the towns of Perth and Guildford to the very head of the river, a proposal of infinite advantage to the Colony...*¹⁵

The current Causeway Bridges were built in 1952, the third iteration of a road bridge to traverse the river connecting Perth and Victoria Park. Evidence of the second bridge (1867) can be seen in the river on the eastern side of Heirisson Island. (Refer to the Archae-aus report)

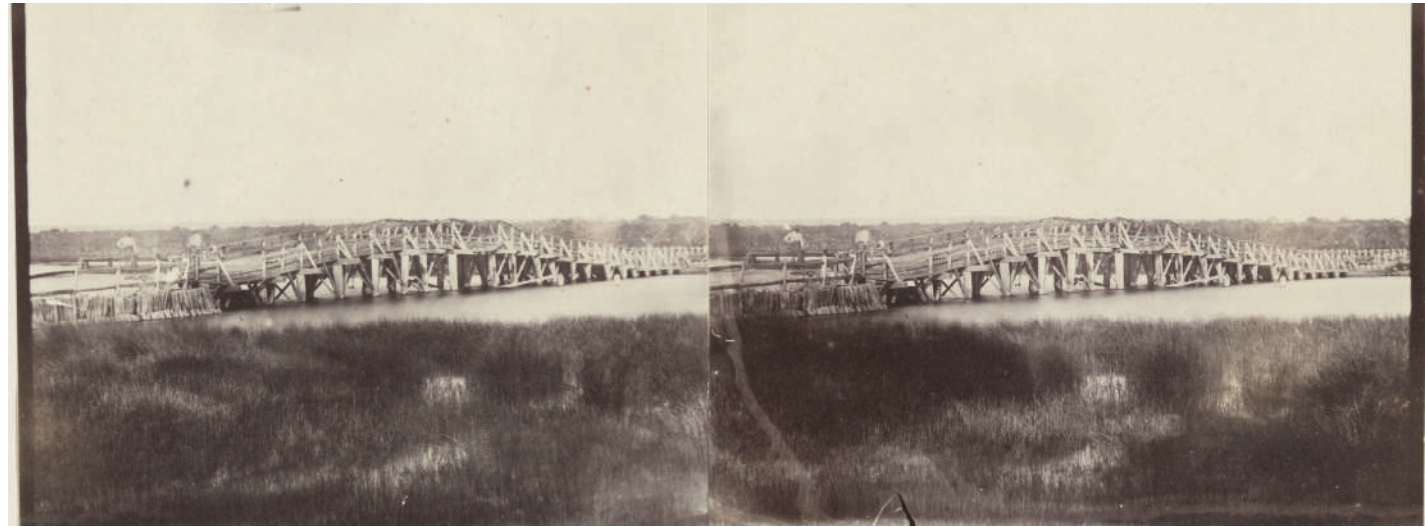


Figure 22. The first causeway, c. 1862. (SLWA 6923B/194)



Figure 23. The second causeway, c. 1905. A tramway crossing is being constructed on the south side. (SLWA 006166PD)



Figure 24. Today's causeway under construction in 1951. (SLWA 235184PD)

¹⁵ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, 1 June 1833, p. 86. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article642052>.

4.4.5 Yagan: resistance leader

Yagan is an iconic figure in the fight for Nyoongar rights and recognition. Born c. 1795 he was a Nyoongar leader and resistance fighter during the early years of the Swan River Colony. Yagan found notoriety due to his courage and daring in resisting the colonisation of Nyoongar land eventually being declared an outlaw after the spearing of two settlers. In 1832 he was imprisoned on Ngooloomayup (Carnac Island). Yagan escaped and a correspondent reported an exchange he had with Yagan around May 1833:

Yagan stepped forward and leaning with his left hand on my shoulder while he gesticulated with the right, delivered a sort of a recitation, looking earnestly in my face, — I regret I could not understand it, I thought from the tone and manner that the purport was this : — “You came to our country — you have driven us from our haunts, and disturbed us in our occupations. As we walk in our own country we are fired upon by the white men, why should the white men treat us so.”

Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, 1 June 1833, p. 87.¹⁶

Yagan eluded capture until July 1833 when he was shot by two brothers William and James Keats around Upper Swan. Yagan's head, was removed from his body and preserved. It was then taken to England aboard the *Cornwallis* to be held at the Liverpool Museum. It was buried in Liverpool in 1964.

In 1984 a bronze statue to commemorate the life of Yagan was unveiled on Heirisson Island. Since its installation, the statue has been vandalised on at least two occasions with the head of the statue being removed and reinstated.

In 1997 Nyoongar Elders led by Ken Colbung, Richard Wilkes amongst them, led a campaign to have Yagan's head returned. They traveled to England and returned with it to Perth in August 1997. The head was buried in 2010.¹⁷



Figure 25. Yagan statue on Heirisson Island. (Wikimedia Commons)

¹⁶ *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, 1 June 1833, p. 87. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article642055>.

¹⁷ BBC News online 10 July 2010: <https://www.bbc.com/news/10585852>.

4.4.6 Balbuk's bidi

Born in 1840, Balbuk (also known as Yooreel) had ancestral bonds to the surrounding landscape. Yoonderup (Heirisson Island) was the birthplace of her mother.¹⁸ Balbuk's regular 'run' as part of her cultural responsibilities extended from Yoonderup to Gooloongoolup (Lake Kingsford).

Even after the construction of the Perth Railway Station, draining of the Perth lakes and addition of other structures along her bidi, Fanny Balbuk was known to break down any fence, and walk through any house, yard or building, to continue her journey through and maintain her rights to country.

"... from there (between the lakes and Heirisson Island), a straight track had led to the place where once she had gathered jilgies and vegetable food with other women [Nyoongar yorgkas]... [climbing] over fences and walking through [the property of Wedjelas]. When a house was built in the way, she broke its fence palings with her digging stick [wanna] and charged up the steps and through the rooms ..."¹⁹

To the end of her life she raged and stormed at the usurping of her beloved home ground.²⁰



Figure 26. Determination of Fanny Balbuk's Journey between Yoonderup (Heirisson Island) and Lake Kingsford, traversing what is now the central business district of Perth on the Swan River (2014). (Reproduced from Ryan et al. (2016). Where Fanny Balbuk Walked: Re-imagining Perth's Wetlands.)

18 Ryan, J. C., Brady, D., & Kueh, C. (2016). Where Fanny Balbuk Walked: Re-imagining Perth's Wetlands. *M/C Journal*, 18(6). <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj1038>.

19 Collard, L., Palmer, D. (1998) *A Noongar Interpretive History of the use of Boodjar in the Vicinity of the UWA*. Aboriginal and Islander Studies, WA: Murdoch University.

20 Bates, D. 1938 'Last of the Bibbulmun Race', in *The Passing of the Aborigines: A Lifetime Spent Among the Natives of Australia*, John Murray: London.

4.4.7 Protest camps

From the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth centuries, laws specifically targeting Aboriginal people's rights forced people away from their traditional lands and placed restrictive conditions on those visiting from other areas.²¹ This included the introduction of the Prohibited Zone around the Perth City limits from 1927 to 1954. As a consequence of this, areas along the river in East Perth became a refuge for camping and cheap accommodation, allowing ease of access to the city centre during working hours.

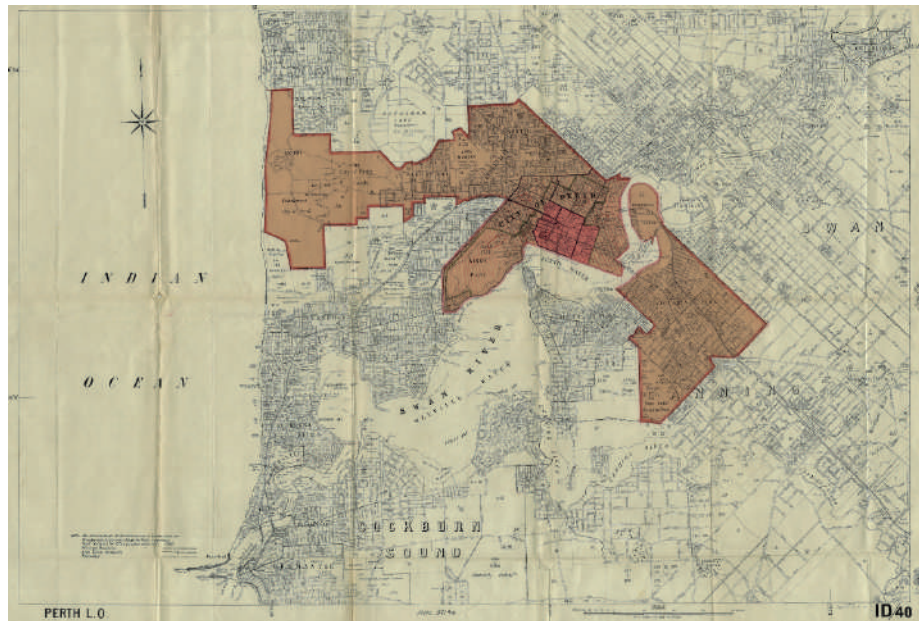


Figure 27. This plan shows the City of Perth's boundary and the prohibited areas that applied to Aboriginal people from 1927 to 1954. (ID 40, State Records Office of Western Australia)

The South West Native Title settlement became the focus of an Aboriginal tent embassy gathering on Heirisson Island in 2012. The Nyoongar Tent Embassy, which formed as a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Canberra Tent Embassy in 1972, soon emerged as an important and alternative Aboriginal voice to the SWALSC and WA state government native title settlement deal. The choice of location was influenced by the island's centrality, its significance as a site of previous gatherings, and its status as a state-registered Aboriginal Heritage site.²² The tent embassy was only on the island for a month or so before being removed by police.

In March 2015, more than 100 Aboriginal protesters and homeless people, led by Nyoongar woman, Bella Bropho, established a 'refugee protest' camp at Heirisson Island. The protests objected to the state government's \$1.3 billion native title offer to the Nyoongar people, the closure of remote Aboriginal communities, and traditional land rights. Occupation and 'de-camping' efforts by the City of Perth and police over the course of several months resulted in ugly scenes and violence.²³ In 2016 the Federal Court affirmed the ban on the Aboriginal camps on Heirisson Island, stating that native title right claims over the land should now be considered 'wholly extinguished'. The camp was removed in April 2016.



Figure 28. Herbie Bropho and other protesters on Heirisson Island, 2016. (WA Today online, H. McNeill, 21 January 2016)

21 Haebich, A (2011) 'Forgetting Indigenous Histories: Cases from the History of Australia's Stolen Generations,' *Journal of Social History* 44,4, p. 1036.

22 Jones, Cox & Cozens, (2016) *Unsettling Planning in Perth: Indigenous Planning in a Boom*, p.144.

23 WA Today news online, Heather McNeill, 21 January 2016: <https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/aboriginal-protesters-return-to-heirisson-island-for-refugee-camp-20160120-gmaco5.html>.

4.4.8 Community use

Heirisson Island and the Causeway by their proximity to the river and surrounding foreshore parklands sit within a popular recreational zone. Surrounding recreational uses include McCallum Park to the immediate south with open parklands, playgrounds and sporting functions, Point Fraser to the north with bike hire, walking trails and dining options, and a designated powered water sports area immediately adjacent to Heirisson Island.

Today, local visitors enjoy the locality for its sporting, recreation and community activities, while interstate and overseas visitors marvel at its picturesque, natural setting. The area of Buneenboro (Perth Water) is defined by a network of lively activity nodes, expansive green spaces and open water that is visually and physically accessible to all; a place where people can connect with nature in Western Australia's capital city.

The future Aboriginal Cultural Centre to be located on Langley Park provides an opportunity for this project to create a sort of unofficial entry point and invitation for visitors to continue their educational journey about Whadjuk Nyoongar culture.



Figure 29. View of Heirisson Island from the Burswood peninsula. (element 2021)

5. Development

5.1 Principles of Interpretation

1. Interpretation should be site specific and of its place, revealing both the tangible (if possible) and intangible heritage of the site.
2. Interpretation should be designed within a framework that celebrates the history of the site.
3. Interpretation infrastructure should support the vision and collectively address all the key themes, messages and stories. Individual pieces of infrastructure may address one or multiple messages as part of the overall user experience.
4. Interpretation should be relevant and engaging and cater for a diversity of learning styles and demographics.
5. Interpretation outcomes should be of a high quality, commensurate with the heritage significance of the site, its location and its intended use.
6. Interpretation installations should be carefully located. They should make a positive contribution to the physical environment both in design and quality.

5.2 Vision Statement

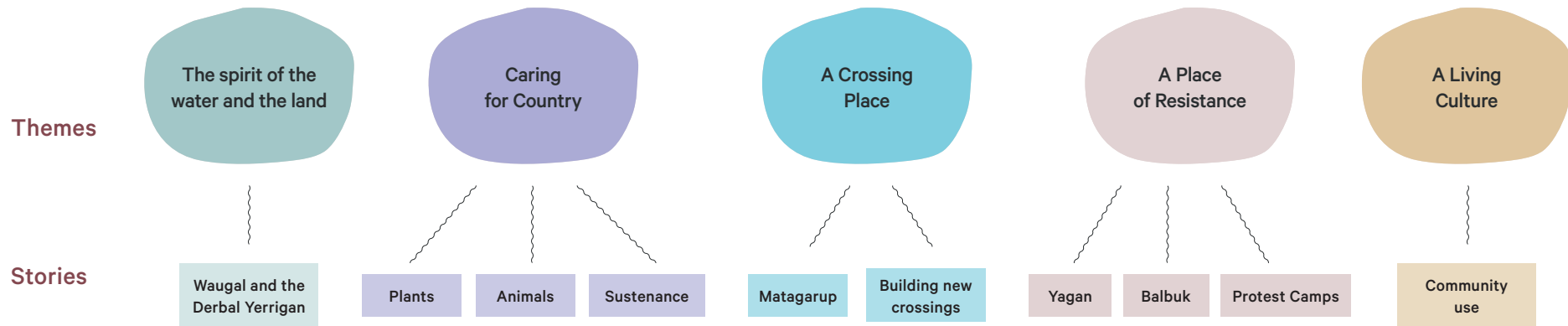
The heritage values of the place are diverse and layered in nature. The design of the bridge and its surrounds responds to the diversity of heritage and environmental values across the site, but with focus on the Whadjuk Nyoongar values.

Therefore, the aspirational vision for the project is:

Through interpretive architectural and landscape design and beautiful public art, this place will showcase Whadjuk Noongar culture to the world.

5.3 Key Themes

Key interpretive themes and site stories






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5.4 Target audience

Interpretation is most effective when it is targeted specifically to audience needs in terms of information offered, and when it responds to known audience behaviours.

Note: The following is generic information about audience/visitor profiles and user groups based on Guiding Documents. No social surveys or local community consultation engagement has taken place.

5.4.1 Catering for different audiences

Audience	
<p>Passers-by</p> 	<p>Typical capture time: 3 seconds</p> <p>The largest audience for the site is those that are to travel or walk over or past it every day and night. They are likely to be engaged by striking design, and interpretive elements that provoke an interest.</p> <p>Who are they?</p> <p>Anyone and everyone</p>
<p>Incidental Users</p> 	<p>Typical capture time: 10 seconds</p> <p>This group will primarily come from those who work on the site as commercial operators, or those who are involved in the provision of services. This group will be subliminally aware of the interpretive mediums as part of their daily activity. This group does not need to be marketed to or targeted in any way other than providing subtle pieces of interpretive media, allowing them to appreciate information on the site's heritage value and previous uses.</p> <p>Who are they?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with little cultural interest • Commercial operators • Hospitality and retail users • Workers • Service providers
<p>Recreational Visitors/Patrons</p> 	<p>Typical capture time: 30 minutes</p> <p>This is the most significant future user group and these people are likely to interact with the site through, for example, recreation and tourism pursuits.</p> <p>This user group will be looking for opportunities for authentic and engaging interpretive mediums that draw their interest when both interacting with the site and passing by. Providing direct and indirect opportunities for site interpretation, to enhance user understanding, and learning about its history and former uses will be essential.</p> <p>Who are they?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families • Tourists (local/interstate/international) • Recreational and sporting users • Photographers

Audience	
Cultural Engagers 	Typical capture time: 3-5 minutes It is likely that there will be a group who will be looking for specific opportunities to learn about the culture and history of the site. This is a niche group who are interested in heritage and history and embrace subtle as well as overt interpretation. Who are they? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heritage interest groups and specialists• Art and design enthusiasts
Educational Users 	Typical capture time: 30 minutes This user group will seek specific educational outcomes around the ecological and cultural significance of the site. This group will look to engage with interpretive mediums that provide opportunities to connect with curriculum and research based outcomes. Providing opportunities for guided and self-guided learning outcomes through site interpretation, to enhance user understanding, and learning about its history and significant biodiversity will be key. Who are they? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School groups• Researchers• Local interest groups and individuals• Sustainability enthusiasts

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5.5 Opportunities

Tangible: The interpretive potential for the site that is related to fabric and land.

Intangible: The interpretive potential for the site that is related to the historical and social history of the site that cannot be obviously understood without further interpretive devices.



6. Interpretation Strategies

Contemporary delivery of heritage interpretation provides methods that are in keeping with the aesthetic and function of the urban environment. These examples provided illustrate how broad and varied the approach to interpretation can be as well as how simple approaches can also result in the successful presentation and evocation of key themes and stories.

Based on the themes and opportunities identified, the following interpretative strategies are set out to inform the design. While the implementation of these interpretive devices may alter as the design context continues to develop, it is intended that the key messages and themes will remain constant.

The strategies are categorised as follows:

1. Public art
2. Bridges design response
3. Landscape design
4. Signage and Wayfinding
5. Lighting
6. Nomenclature
7. Event spaces

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6.1 Public art

Key Themes and Site Stories	TBC at end of MEG Meeting # 5/6
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Totem markers (three)• Bridge paving pattern at specific points.
Resources and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare a Public Art Plan as part of the design process to integrate strategies into the design documentation for the project.• Artwork to draw on both the historical interpretive elements and broader site influences, including social, cultural and natural environments.• Public artists to be selected to design key piece/s as informed by this report.

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Kent Street Weir by Justin Martin



Indooroopilly Roundabout Upgrade by Jenna Lee



Artwork by Lena Nyadby at the Westin Perth



Moonee Ponds Creek Totems by Glen Romanis



Totem Pole by Darren Wighton

6.2 Bridges design response

Key Themes and Site Stories	TBC at end of MEG Meeting # 6
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curved nature of the bridges to represent the sinuous movement of the Waugal • Design of the three piers to look like a duwak (killer boomerang) and wannas (digging sticks), representing Yagan and Balbuk as representative male and female Whadjuk people. • Minimise water disturbance through sensitive and minimal pylon design • Careful consideration of bridge landing and structural load points • Embedding pause points and opportunities for nodes of interpretation into the bridge design • Connectivity with the river, highlighting historic patterns of movement, crossing and connections and recreational pursuits and uses
Resources and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead design team to further develop bridge proposal informed by this report considering locations, content, and proposed interpretive design approaches to ensure holistic integration into the proposed structure.



Duwak

Wannas

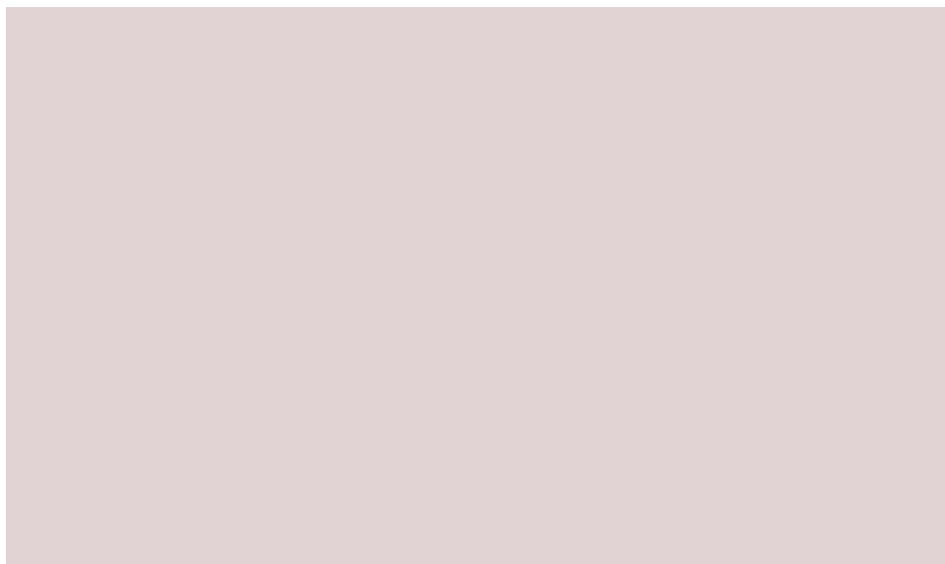
Figure 30. The bridge design has been inspired by the stories heard in the MEG meetings. The curved nature of the bridge represents the sinuous movement of the Waugal. The design of the pylons represent the duwak (killer boomerang) used by men and the wannas (digging sticks) used by the women. (CLA 2022)



Duwak (Killer boomerang)



Wannas (Digging sticks). (Note: to be superseded by amended design with a more rounded top like the shape of a wanna.)



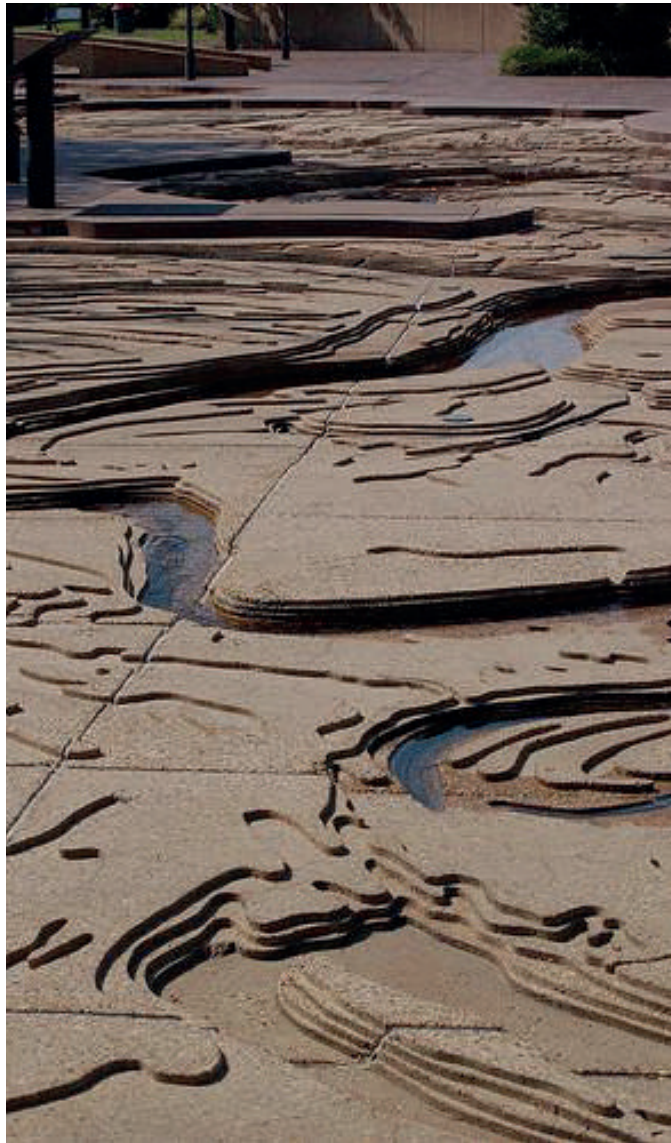
Wannas on the eastern span (foreground) and the Duwak on the western span. (CLA)



Waugal story

6.3 Landscape design

Key Themes and Site Stories	TBC at end of MEG Meeting # 6
Opportunity	<p>Landscape treatments combining interpretive elements which could take the form of:</p> <p>Planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plantings with a place-specific focus, design which encourages native biodiversity, particularly birdlife, reintroduces cultural land management practices, and references the marshland history of the site. • Retain existing mature plantings, especially native species, wherever possible. • Seed collection from endemic plants elsewhere on the island to be used on revegetation. Alternately, procure seeds from an Indigenous-owned plant nursery if possible. <p>Bridge abutments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface areas of bridge abutments can incorporate historical narrative through textural inlays and materiality. <p>Public gathering spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating, walls and paving to reference historical narratives in their design and form, imagery, and materiality . • Landscape interventions designed to accommodate specific user groups and cultural practices such as yarnning circles, dance and meeting points, a dedicated area for Bridiya meetings.
Resources and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop with Landscape/Urban Design team to integrate strategies into the design approach for the project, and to propose locations and content. • Design teams to carry out cyclic feedback and revision between MEG meetings to seek feedback and support. • If using historical images and/or phrases of text from the site stories ensure all copyrights and intellectual property contributions are fully acknowledged. • Landscape/Urban Design architect, lead design team and heritage consultant to collaborate on final design and content, but must be approved by MEG.



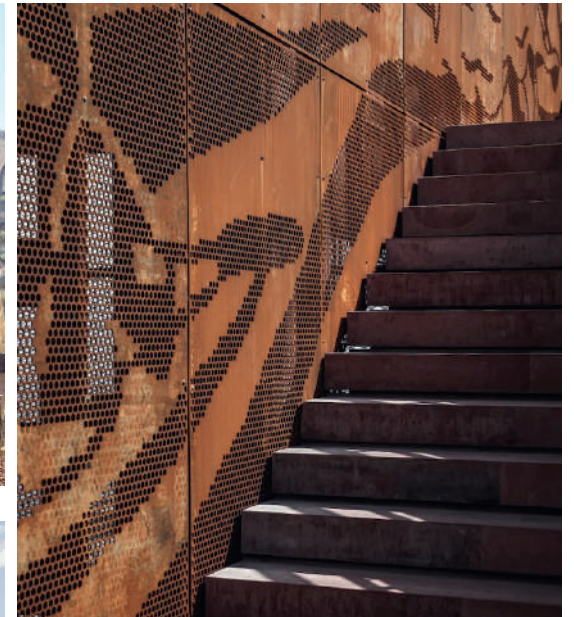
Memphis Model. (Pinterest)



Yarning Circle South Australia



Sydney Park Water Turf Design 2016



Rama Studio Park'n'Play. (JaJa Architects)



Nexus by Chris Nixon at Satterley's Gallery development.
(Laundon Peacock)

6.4 Signage and wayfinding

Key Themes and Site Stories	TBC at end of MEG Meeting # 6
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive signage and wayfinding to be delivered in unison with landscape response to ensure an integrated approach. • Form and design of signage and wayfinding elements to be informed by the cultural narratives of the site. • Provision for hierarchy of interpretive signage to cater for different audiences and user groups. (Two types/sized signs) • Welcome to Country at entry/crossing points (three locations) • More informative signage at river's edge public gathering spaces (four locations) • Pause points on the bridge (three locations) to address the current and remnant Causeway Bridge; the dowak, and the wannas. • Signage at entry and disembarkation locations to reflect and engage with the natural surrounds and interpretive elements. • Signs can include directions and names of Nyoongar places and connections to adjacent country around the site. • Nyoongar island names and locations where these could be incorporated to interpret the original landforms prior to formation of the one Heirisson Island.
Resources and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage and Wayfinding Strategy/Plan to be prepared as part of the design process to integrate interpretive strategies into the design documentation for the project. • Signage designer to prepare wayfinding strategy informed by this report. • Signage designer to collaborate with MEG and Landscape/Urban Design architect for Welcome to Country approach. • Content of signs to be prepared in collaboration between signage designer and heritage consultant.



Port Arthur, Tasmania. (element)



Kaju Yatka (Kalbarri Skywalk). (Creative Spaces 2021)

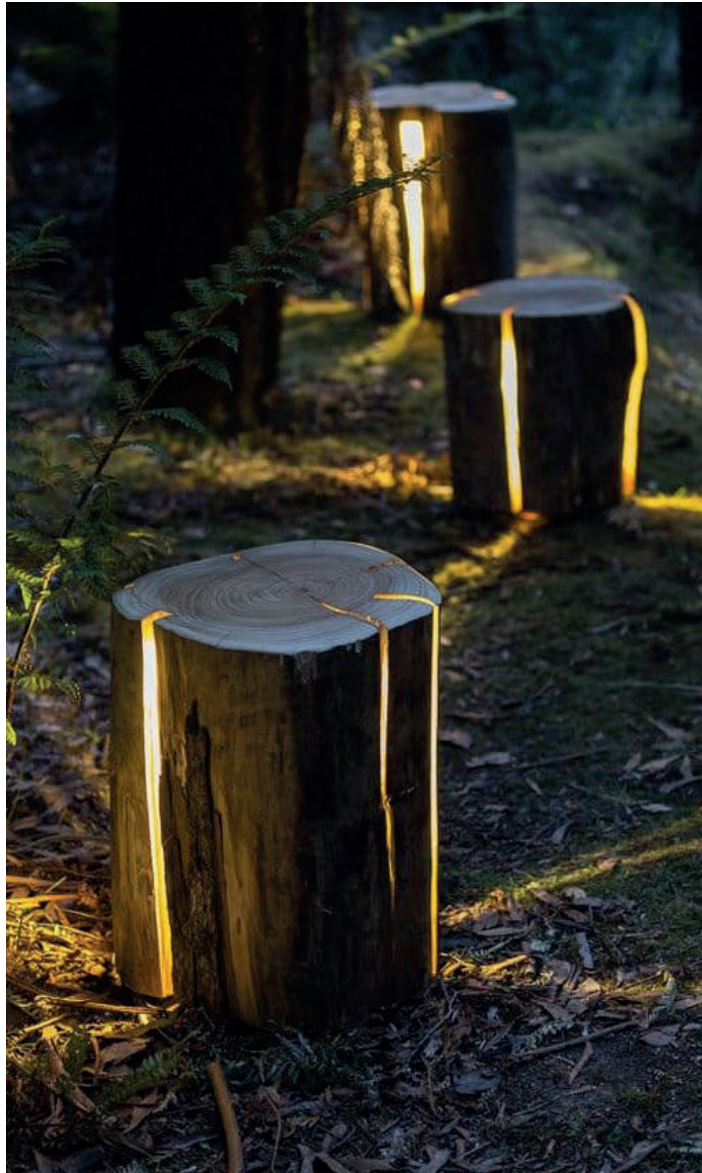


Pirrama Park. (Deuce Design Aspect Studio 2010)

6.5 Lighting

Key Themes and Site Stories	TBC at end of MEG Meeting # 6
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lighting to highlight key bridge design features e.g. pylons, connection points between land and water• Soft lighting of landscaping and planting features incorporating security and passive surveillance
Resources and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation of a Lighting Plan as part of process to integrate strategies into the design documentation for the project.• Lead design team to work with lighting consultant, informed by this report, to specify locations and content.

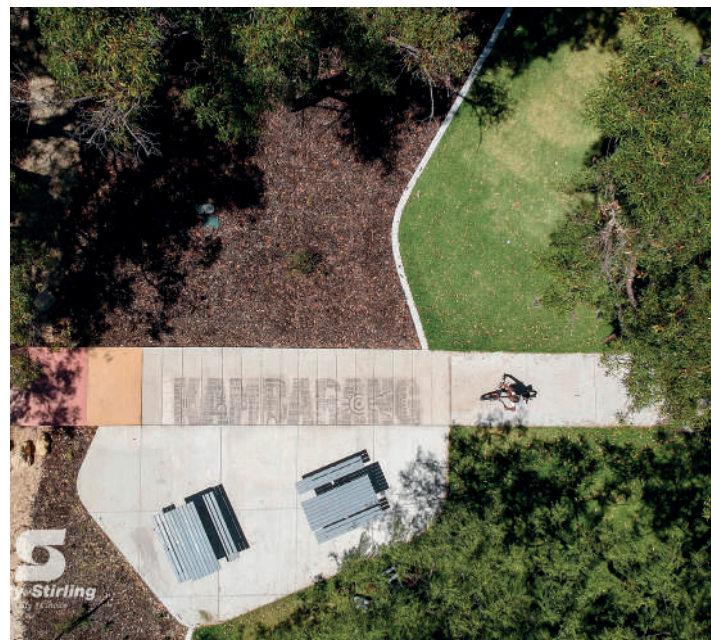
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6.6 Nomenclature

Key Themes and Site Stories	TBC at end of MEG Meeting # 6
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retaining or raising awareness of the names associated with the place builds a sense of place based on shared cultural values• Naming the CPCB.• Dual naming possibilities for Fraser Point, Heirisson Island and McCallum Park.• Sign/compass showing directions and names of Nyoongar places and connections to adjacent country around the site.• Nyoongar island names and locations where these could be incorporated to interpret the original landforms prior to formation of the one Heirisson Island.
Resources and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nyoongar place naming to be determined and supported by the MEG.• Design team to collaborate with Landscape/Urban Design architect and signage designer, so nomenclature can be integrated into delivery.

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6.7 Events spaces

Key Themes and Site Stories	TBC at end of MEG Meeting # 6
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space for small and large scale events/ festivals for diverse range of people and cultures. • Riverside gathering spaces for seasonal events, on-water events, reinforcing current and historic site usage. • Considering potential for links to and use for established events: NAIDOC Week, Heritage Perth weekends etc. • Self-guided tours across the CPCB and along waterfront/s to be delivered in unison with heritage trail conveying Nyoongar history and stories.
Resources and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tours and cultural engagement to be led by Aboriginal-owned businesses. • Community-led events to be informed by this report. • Opportunities for guided walking tours, educational programs, podcasts and self-guided discovery to be considered in conjunction with landscaping and signage design.

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7. Potential locations

The possibilities for interpretation, informed by this strategy and as the design develops, will enable this project to tell the stories associated with the heritage values of the place. Interpretive outcomes will respect existing heritage assets, and highlight interesting new viewpoints and moments where users can engage and learn from the project.

The design team, in consultation with **element**, has set out potential locations for interpretation strategies for the CPCB project. They provides a diversity of interpretative experiences.

TBC after MEG #6

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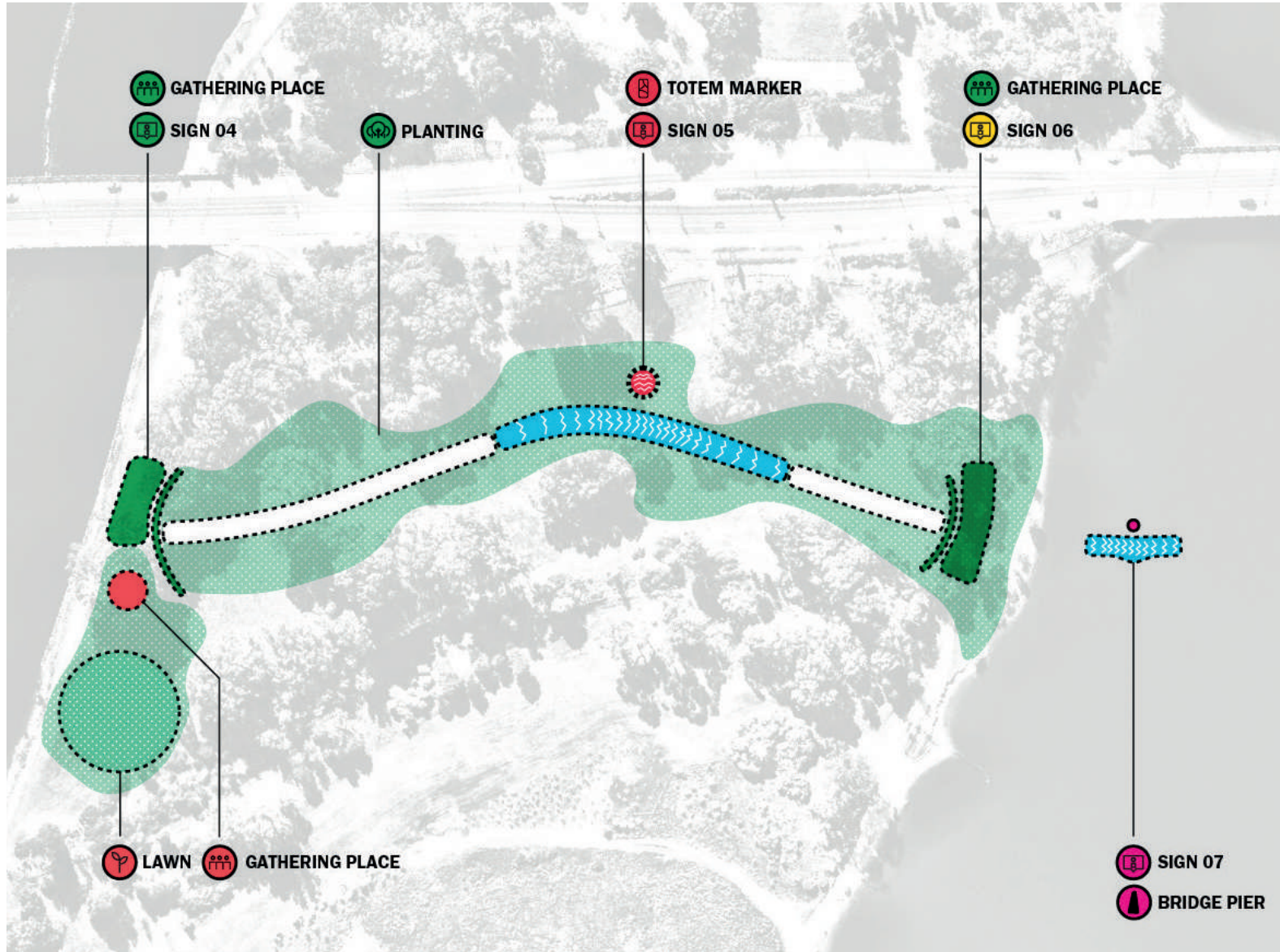
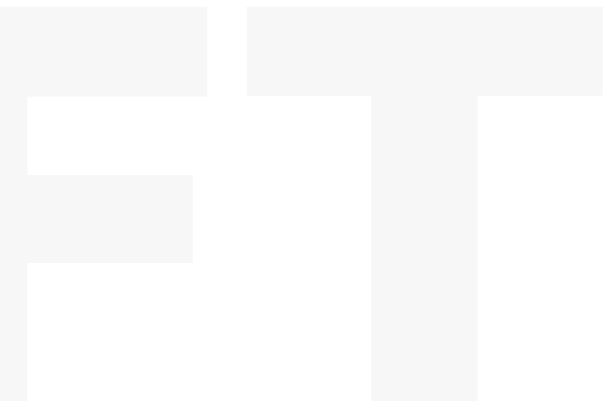


Figure 31. Heirisson Island potential locations





Figure 32. Point Fraser potential locations



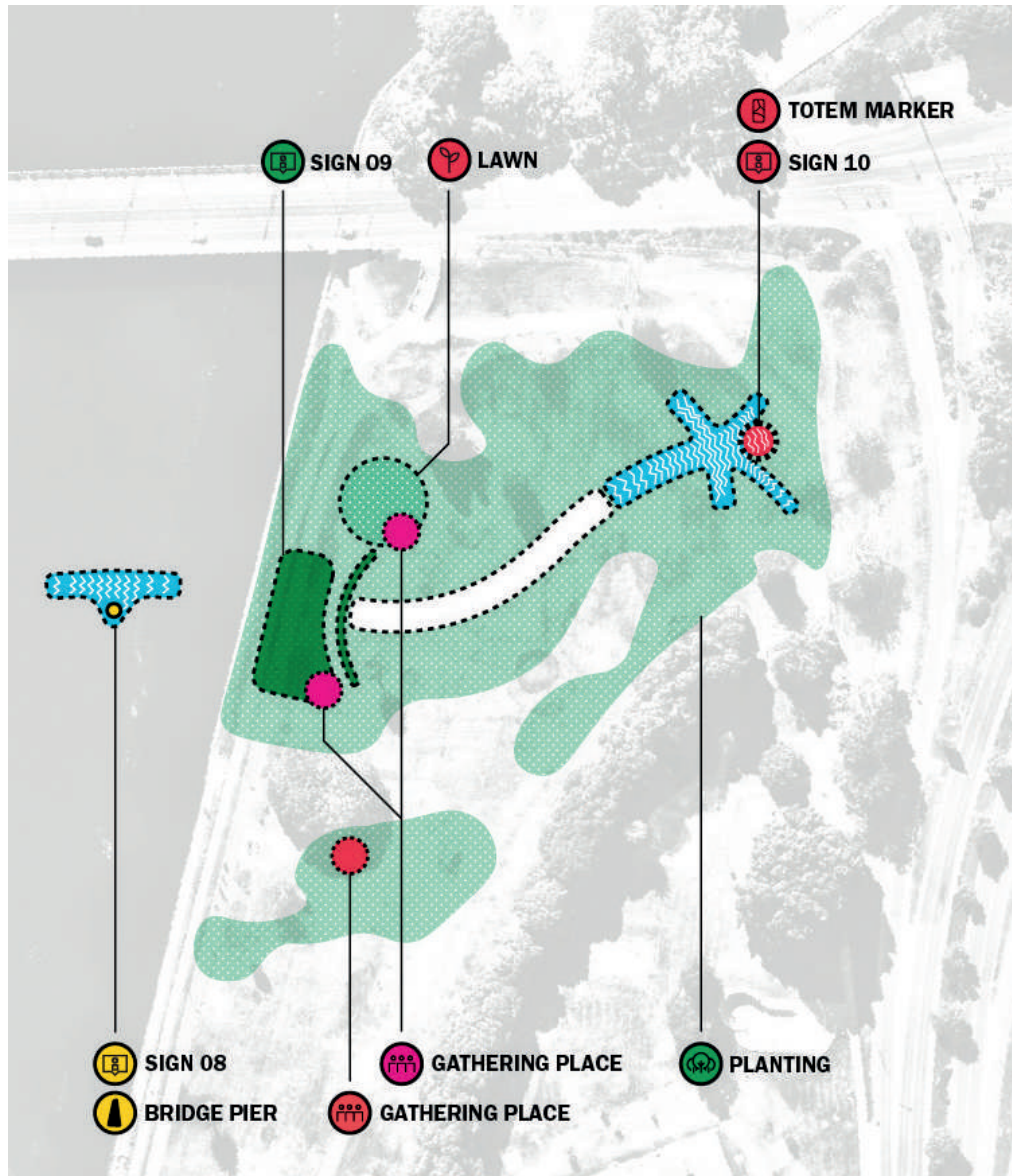


Figure 33. McCallum Park potential locations

8. Implementation Plan

A key part of the interpretation implementation is to incorporate the interpretive projects into the redevelopment design process. To assist with that interconnectivity, this document is to be passed on to the owners and future tenants to allow consideration of the interpretive projects in the future management of the site.

The following table is intended as a guide to inform when projects could be implemented and who will be responsible for overseeing the design development and installation.

Table 5: Implementation guide

Strategy	Design Integration	Implementation
Public Art	Public and Community Art strategy/plan	Included as part of civil and urban design works
Design response	Architectural/Civil Design Plan	Included as part of civil and urban design works
Landscaping design	Landscaping/Urban Design Plan	Included as part of landscape and urban design works
Signage and Wayfinding	Public and Community Art Signage and Wayfinding strategies/plan	Included as part of landscape, urban design and public artworks
Lighting	Feature/Architectural Lighting Plan	Included as part of civil and urban design works
Nomenclature	Naming strategy/plan	Included as part of landscape and urban design works
Ephemeral events	TBC	TBC

Implementation detail is TBC.

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