



First Nations Engagement Strategy 2025 – 2030

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Warning

This document contains references that could be upsetting for First Nations People(s).

In discussing land use, the term “Crown land” is used within this strategy. We acknowledge that this terminology may bring up painful reminders of colonisation, dispossession, and the continuing impacts of land ownership and management practices on First Nations communities. We respect and recognise the enduring connection First Nations People have to Country, and we are committed to approaching this work with care, respect, and a focus on building meaningful partnerships and healing.

Referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People(s)

Using ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ is most often considered best practice.

- *‘Aboriginal’ (and less commonly accepted variants such as ‘Aboriginals’ or ‘Aborigines’) alone is not inclusive of the diversity of cultures and identities across Australia, for which reason it should be accompanied by ‘People(s)’ in the plural.*
- *Similarly, as a stand-alone term, ‘Aboriginal’ is not inclusive of Torres Strait Islander People(s), and reference to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People(s) should be spelt out where necessary.*
- *The acronym ATSI should be avoided as this can be seen as lacking respect of different identities.*

First Nations and First Peoples

Other pluralised terms such as ‘First Nations’ or ‘First Peoples’ are also acceptable language and respectfully encompass the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures and identities. Metropolitan Memorial Parks has chosen the term First Nations as the term to be used in this document.

Acknowledging diversity

Pluralisation should extend to generalised reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ‘histories,’ ‘perspectives,’ ‘ways of being,’ ‘contributions,’ and so forth. This acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People(s) are not homogenous.

Indigenous

In some parts of the country, the term ‘Indigenous’ can be considered offensive. That is, it has scientific connotations that have been used historically to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People(s) as part of the ‘flora/fauna’ rather than the human population of Australia. It can be seen as a problematically universalising or homogenising label for what are highly diverse identities.

Reference: *Inclusive and Respectful Language*
www.reconciliation.org.au



Metropolitan Memorial Parks

The 8 memorial parks managed by Metropolitan Memorial Parks (MMP)

have been a place of connection and remembrance for over 150 years, dedicated to serving all Australians. Established as a for-purpose, self-sustaining organisation under NSW legislation, MMP manages Crown reserves on behalf of NSW Crown Lands, providing interment services with a commitment to compassion and excellence.

Our memorial parks offer peaceful spaces where families can honour loved ones, reflect, and cherish memories. Guided by core values of Genuine Care, Respect for Diversity, One Team, and Delivery Excellence, we ensure that each site remains a lasting tribute, meeting the cultural, spiritual, and personal needs of the communities we serve.

MMP operates the following 8 cemeteries and crematoria in Sydney and Newcastle.

- **Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park | The Bidjigal People**
12 Military Road, Matraville NSW 2036
- **Field of Mars Cemetery | The Wallumattagal People**
Quarry Rd, Ryde NSW 2112
- **Frenchs Forest Bushland Cemetery | The Gai-mariagal People**
Hakea Avenue, Davidson NSW 2085
- **Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery | Cammeryagel People**
Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065
- **Macquarie Park Cemetery & Crematorium | The Wallumattagal People**
Corner Delhi Road and Plassey Road, North Ryde NSW 2113
- **Rookwood General Cemetery | The Dharug People**
Hawthorne Avenue, Rookwood NSW 2141
- **Sandgate Cemetery | The Worimi and Awabakal People**
116 Maitland Road, Sandgate NSW 2304
- **Woronora Memorial Park | The Dharawal People**
21 Linden Street, Sutherland NSW 2232





MMP is governed by the *Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2013 (NSW)* and the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*.

Objectives of the Cemeteries & Crematoria Act

- a. To recognise the right of all individuals to a dignified interment and treatment of their remains with dignity and respect.
- b. To ensure that the interment practices and beliefs of all religious and cultural groups are respected so that none is disadvantaged, and adequate and proper provision is made for all.
- c. To ensure that sufficient land is acquired and allocated so that current and future generations have equitable access to interment services.
- d. To provide for the operation of a consistent and coherent regime for the governance and regulation of cemeteries and crematoria.
- e. To ensure that the operation of cemeteries and crematoria demonstrate satisfactory levels of accountability, transparency and integrity.
- f. To ensure that cemeteries and crematoria on Crown land are managed in accordance with the principles of Crown land management specified in Section 1.4 of the *Crown Lands Management Act 2016 (NSW)*.
- g. To promote environmental sustainability of the interment industry, including provision for natural and private burials.
- h. To promote that cost structures for burials and cremations are transparent across all sectors of the interment industry.
- i. To promote affordable and accessible interment practices, particularly for those of limited means.

The principles and objects of Crown Land Management, in the Crown Land Management Act

The objects of the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* include:

1.3 Objects of Act:

- e. To facilitate the use of Crown land by the Aboriginal people of New South Wales because of the spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance of land to Aboriginal people and, where appropriate, to enable the co-management of dedicated or reserved Crown land.
- f. To provide for the management of Crown land having regard to the principles of Crown land management.

1.4 Principles of Crown land management:

For the purposes of this Act, the *principles of Crown land management are-*

- a. that environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crownland and
- b. That the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible, and
- c. that, public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged, and
- d. that, where appropriate, multiple use of Crown land be encouraged and
- e. that, where appropriate, Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity, and
- f. that Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interests of the State consistent with the above principles.

Cultural Sensitivity - The key to successful partnerships

In First Nations People(s) culture, an individual may not necessarily be able to speak on behalf of others.

It is important to identify people with rights and interests in a place, especially those authorised to speak for a place, considering that some will have differing degrees of knowledge about heritage places and their importance.

Men's and women's business are separate in First Nations People(s) cultures and beliefs.

Both men and women with rights and interests in an area should be identified because men and women may be responsible for different places and values. This is a complex area of First Nations Culture and is not universal between all tribal/language groups.

Identify interests of surrounding First Nations People(s) community and communities.

Activities that may affect and may have an impact on other communities.

Understand the rules and by laws.

It is critical to identify, understand and adhere to any processes or protocols that First Nations People(s) have established for consultation to ensure relationships are trusted and enduring.

New project = new consultation.

Community consultation should be undertaken for each new project as mandated by legislation.

Be flexible and allow enough time.

The business of family, community and country is a priority for communities

and meetings may be cancelled with little or no notice. Flexibility and enough time to ensure community members feel comfortable to engage needs to be factored into any community interaction.

Community may have differing perspectives.

Community consultation will involve the views of a range of different stakeholders within the community. In some instances, a consensus view may be required. The process of working for a consensus view may extend the timeframes of consultation.

Images of the deceased.

First Nations People(s) may not want images of the deceased in memorials or books or broadcasts, and may discourage this practice.



Our First Nations Engagement Values

Commitment to Reconciliation

We are guided by a vision of reconciliation, actively seeking ways to celebrate First Nations Cultures and to create meaningful opportunities for engagement, both within our organisation and with the wider community. Our goal is to provide welcoming, inclusive spaces that support the memorialisation, connection and reflection needs of First Nations communities across our memorial parks.

Empowerment

We are committed to building genuine partnerships with First Nations communities based on mutual respect, empowerment, and active collaboration. We value the guidance of Traditional Owners in shaping our spaces and practices, ensuring that each memorial park reflects the cultural significance and traditions of the Traditional Owners and First Nations People(s).

Inclusivity

Our approach recognises the diversity within First Nations communities. We offer a range of burial, memorialisation, and reflection options, allowing families to choose practices that are meaningful to them. This includes providing compassionate staff; to assist families during their time of grief.

Cultural understanding

We believe that a well-informed and culturally aware workforce is essential in serving Traditional Owners and First Nations Communities with respect and sensitivity. We are dedicated to ongoing cultural learning and training for our staff to build awareness and understanding of First Nations traditions and perspectives, ensuring respectful and thoughtful interactions.



Storytelling and placemaking

Our memorial parks are places for storytelling, cultural expression, and reflection. We recognise the importance of preserving and sharing the unique stories, the waterways, flora, fauna, and cultural significance that each site holds. We aim to create spaces where First Nations voices shape the narratives and placemaking activities, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Accessibility

We strive to make our services and spaces accessible to all, including affordable options that respect the financial needs of First Nations communities. By working with community Elders and First Nations advocacy organisations, we seek to establish appropriate price points and products that respect cultural practices and provide meaningful options for all families.

Our First Nations Engagement Purpose

Building trust and connection

The strategy aims to build genuine trust and confidence with First Nations communities by demonstrating MMP's commitment to reflecting cultural needs and recognising the significance of Traditional Custodians. This involves ongoing engagement and an open process of feedback, ensuring that the strategy is genuinely responsive to community needs.

Creating an inclusive environment

We seek to create a culturally inclusive environment where First Nations voices are valued, and central to MMP's core values of Respect Diversity, Genuine Care, One Team, and Deliver Excellence. This strategy underlines our commitment to inclusivity by making First Nations perspectives a foundational part of how we operate.

Supporting grieving First Nations families and communities

Recognising the unique needs of First Nations families during times of grief, the strategy provides guidance on how MMP can be supportive and respectful of cultural practices. It aims to ensure that First Nations families feel understood, comforted, and welcomed at our sites in a manner that respects their cultural heritage and beliefs.

Commitment to cultural heritage and burial practices

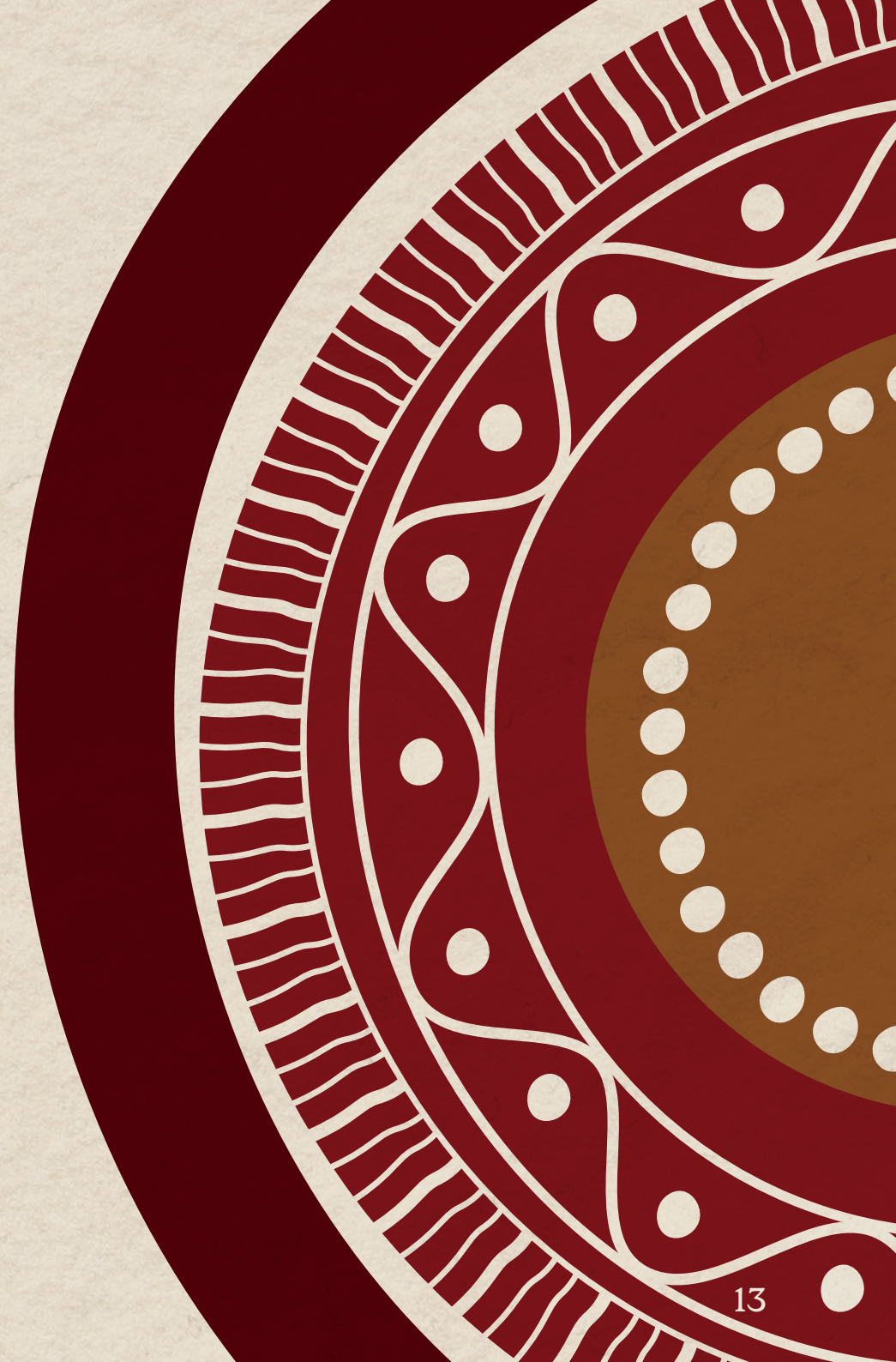
The strategy acknowledges the importance of preserving cultural heritage and respecting First Nations burial practices. By working in partnership with communities, MMP can provide spaces and services that recognise the connection of Traditional Custodians to the land.

Long-term and sustainable focus

The strategy aims to prevent the risk of short-term focus by embedding First Nations engagement as a core objective, supported by dedicated resources. It acknowledges that budget considerations are essential and ensures that adequate funding is allocated to support the implementation and sustainability of this commitment.

Moving beyond box-ticking

This strategy is not intended as a symbolic gesture but as a pathway to meaningful action. It reflects MMP's intention to go beyond compliance, listening to feedback, making tangible changes wherever applicable, and taking continuous steps to align with the needs and aspirations of Traditional Owners and First Nations communities.



Historical Milestones in Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007. Recognised as the most comprehensive international instrument on Indigenous rights, UNDRIP establishes a global framework of minimum standards that safeguard the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous communities. This Declaration builds on and expands existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply specifically to Indigenous peoples.

UNDRIP is of particular importance as it was developed in direct collaboration with Indigenous representatives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who contributed to its drafting. This involvement ensures that the Declaration reflects the aspirations, needs, and voices of Indigenous communities worldwide

The Redfern Speech

The “Redfern Speech” was a powerful speech delivered by the then Prime Minister Paul Keating on 10 December 1992 at the launch of Australia’s celebration of the 1993 International Year of the World’s Indigenous People, that in part stated:

“Because, in truth, we cannot confidently say that we have succeeded as we would like to have succeeded if we have not managed to extend opportunity and care, dignity and hope to the Indigenous peoples of Australia - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This is a fundamental test of our social goals and our national will: our ability to say to ourselves and the rest of the world that Australia is a first-rate social democracy, that we are what we should be - truly the land of the fair go and the better chance.

There is no more basic test of how seriously we mean these things. It is a test of our self-knowledge of how well we know the land we live in. How well we know our history.

How well we recognise the fact that, complex as our contemporary identity is, it cannot be separated from Aboriginal Australia. How well we know what Aboriginal Australians know about Australia.

That is perhaps the point of this Year of the World’s Indigenous People: to bring the dispossessed out of the shadows, to recognise that they are part of us, and that we cannot give Indigenous Australians up without giving up many of our own most deeply held values, much of our own identity - and our own humanity.”

Prime Minister Paul Keating
10 December 1992

View the full speech:
**Prime Minister Paul Keating -
Launch of International
Year of the World’s Indigenous
Peoples, 1993**

National Apology to the Stolen Generations

On the 13 February 2008 the then Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, offered a national apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples, which follows:

"Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations - this blemished chapter in our nation's history. The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologise

especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry..."

Kevin Rudd
13 February 2008

Excerpt from speech of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

View the full speech:

National Apology to the Stolen Generations



Stolen Generations Memorial at Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park

On 26 May 2017, Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park (ESMP) officially opened a new memorial dedicated to the Aboriginal Community, remembering Aboriginal children who were taken away from their parents, and those parents who were laid to rest at ESMP before their children returned home.

The monument commemorates all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families. These children are known as the Stolen Generations. It also commemorates parents who are buried in the memorial park before their children returned home. La Perouse Elder, Auntie Barbara Simms-Keele campaigned for years to have the monument built.

The monument incorporates elements symbolic to the La Perouse Aboriginal community. Elements include fish and

shells all known to the area, and elements relating to men's business, including the boomerang, shield, nulla nulla and spear. Seating in the shape of a fishing boat commemorates the community's saltwater connections. A child's footprints are etched in the monument, growing into adult feet, signifying the journey of children leaving and returning home.

The Stolen Generations (also known as Stolen children) is a term used to describe the children of First Nations People(s) who were removed from their families by the Australian Federal and State government agencies and church missions, under acts of their respective parliaments. The removals occurred in the period between approximately 1869 and 1969, although in some places children were still being taken in the 1970s.

Many of the children removed from La Perouse were taken to a children's home near Nowra in Southern New South Wales. In recognition of those connections, soil from the location of the Bomaderry Children's Home and from the Kinchela Boys' Home and the Cootamundra Girls' School was sprinkled over the monument during the official unveiling.





Objective 1: Consultation and collaboration with Traditional Owners and First Nations People(s)

Guiding principles

- We recognise and embrace our different skills and knowledge to work collaboratively and create positive outcomes with a common purpose.

Outcomes

- A framework for ongoing consultation and collaboration with First Nations communities.

Action	Example KPIs
1. Establish a First Nations Working Group (FNWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FNWG established in 2024
2. Conduct consultations to inform and implement a First Nations Engagement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of consultation activities • Finalised First Nations Engagement Strategy • Review feedback from Traditional Owners and First Nations community regarding satisfaction with consultation activities which have informed the FNES. • Ongoing amendments made to First Nations Engagement methodology based on satisfaction levels
3. Conduct consultations to inform and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participate in information sessions organised by Reconciliation Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of consultation activities • Finalised Reconciliation Action Plan • Review feedback from First Nations Community regarding satisfaction with consultation activities which have informed the RAP • Amendments made to First Nations Engagement methodology based on satisfaction levels
4. Explore funding opportunities with First Nations representative bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of grant opportunities that are appropriate and available • Develop a list of available grants and suitable MMP projects requiring funding. • Number of grant applications
5. MMP to organise an annual meeting of Traditional Owners and First Nations People.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of Traditional Owners and First Nations People held annually • Review feedback from Traditional Owners and First Nations community regarding satisfaction with each annual meeting

Objective 2: Respect for Lore, Culture, Diversity and Acceptance


Guiding principles

- We are developing a culturally aware and culturally competent workforce.
- We seek to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander burial sites, places of significance and associated cultural artifacts.

Outcomes

- Collaboration with Traditional Custodians and community representatives to map the cemetery sites for their cultural and spiritual significance.
- Staff cultural competence initiatives developed with First Nations People(s).
- First Nations People involved in sustainability, ecology and biodiversity initiatives.

Action	Example KPIs
1. First Nations Cultural Awareness program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staff to participate in annual training and experiences to enhance their understanding of Traditional Owners and First Nations People(s) b. New staff orientation will include First Nations Cultural Awareness training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff participation rate • A survey to evaluate staff training effectiveness • Use feedback from First Nations clients and communities to measure the changes in behaviour • Identification of policies and procedures that are amended to reflect cultural and spiritual needs of First Nations clients
2. Acknowledgement of Country (AOC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integration of AOC into internal and external events b. AOC featured on MMP website c. Investigate spaces for AOC signage at each site d. Each site includes a Torres Strait Island Flag as well as the Aboriginal Flag e. Investigate other opportunities to acknowledge First Nations People(s) within public facing areas. f. Investigate the possibility of MMP uniforms which incorporate acknowledgment of the Traditional Owners 	<p>All business units acknowledge Country as part of all regular events Have a welcome to Country at public events where possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate opportunities for acknowledgement signage at all sites • Ensure the Acknowledgement is on the MMP website • All Sites should feature the Torres Strait Island flag • Consider options and consult with First Nations stakeholders to acknowledge Country in all reception and customer service areas via small flags, signage or
3. Conduct staff development workshops for Horticultural outdoor staff with First Nations knowledge holders. Explore the opportunity to deliver this training to non-horticulture staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of workshops for horticultural staff • Participation rate of targeted horticultural outdoor staff • Conduct research with staff to assess any changes to horticultural practices at each site.



Action

4. Develop and implement a Cultural Plan of Management

- Identify potential locations for opportunities for First Nations Community to gather or for totem signage
- Development and implementation of an interpretation signage and storytelling plan that is specific to each Metropolitan Memorial Parks site

5. Explore the possibility of working with Traditional Owners and First Nations People(s) to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People interred at each of the memorial parks.

MMP to investigate.

- a. The development of a database of Traditional Owners and First Nations People interred at each memorial park
- b. Booking system with appropriate security and privacy measures, which captures the information of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People who will be interred or cremated at our memorial parks.
- c. The possibility of developing a process for Traditional Owners and First Nations People in conjunction with other stakeholders that will account for Kinship structures and the effect of colonisation, dispossession and the impact of the stolen generations on genealogy and record keeping

Example KPIs

- Undertake mapping with Traditional Custodians of cemetery sites for cultural and spiritual significance
 - Investigate opportunities for signage which incorporates artwork and storytelling capability
-
- Number of representations made in partnership with Traditional Owners and First Nations People(s) to the regulator regarding the authorisation process
 - Feedback from Traditional Owners and First Nations People regarding any representations that may need to be made to the regulator regarding the authorisation process

Objective 3: Engaging with purpose

Guiding principles

- We are committed to meaningful engagement with First Nations People(s)
- Our approach to working with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island People is informed by principles of self-determination and co-design
- We will continue to develop our relationships to mutually achieve and celebrate cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes

Outcomes

- Community education initiatives co-designed with Traditional Owners and First Nations People
- Consultation with First Nations communities to meet expectations around memorialisation
- Our spaces are safe and welcoming
- Death literacy projects which aim to enhance the wellbeing of First Nations People(s)
- First Nations community partnerships and participation within the Memorial Parks
- First Nations People involved in sustainability, ecology and biodiversity initiatives.

Action	Example KPIs
1. Annual internal staff engagement program for Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of partners involved• Number of participants• Review feedback from staff and community participants to assess satisfaction levels
2. First Nations public education and engagement programs <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Increase opportunities for storytelling and engagement from First Nations People to staffb. MMP to consider having a presence at externally organised NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events and National Sorry Day to support our key stakeholder network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of programs• Number of partners• Number of participants• Review feedback from staff and community participants to assess satisfaction levels• Number of times MMP has participated in NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day events held in the community
3. Consultation to explore and inform First Nations interment and memorialisation areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation activities• Number of partners• Memorialisation project outcomes• Review feedback from First Nations community regarding satisfaction with consultation

Action

4. MMP Placemaking strategy to incorporate historical and storytelling projects for each of the cemetery sites.

- a. Develop memorialisation projects dedicated to notable First Nations People interred at MMP sites

Example KPIs

- Number of historical projects
- Number of storytelling projects
- Number of partnerships
- Review feedback from community and First Nations people regarding satisfaction with storytelling projects

5. Develop death literacy initiatives for First Nations communities in partnership with First Nations Peoples.

- b. Deliver events and activities in partnership with First Nations People and organisations around forward planning and death literacy.
- c. Attend First Nations events in community to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People around forward planning

- Number of Death Literacy Initiatives
- Number of Partnerships
- Review feedback from project partners and First Nations People(s) regarding satisfaction with death literacy initiatives / projects

Objective 4: Creating opportunities for economic empowerment

Guiding principles

- We are committed to advancing reconciliation through economic empowerment and innovation

Outcomes

- MMP will support First Nations-owned businesses and encourage employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People through procurement of goods and services.
- A commitment to providing fulfilling and sustainable employment opportunities for First Nations People.

Action	Example KPIs
1. Annual internal staff engagement program for Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week a. Join associations that will support our mission to engage and support First Nations businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of First Nations Suppliers engaged
2. Investigate the development of an MMP First Nations supplier list a. Buy NSW has First Nations Procurement Policy Training for buyers b. Buy NSW also has lists of First Nations suppliers and buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of First Nations Suppliers• Number of First Nations suppliers entered into supplier database
3. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island employment opportunities a. Investigate the First Nations Apprenticeship Scheme and other employment pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of initiatives developed• Increase in number of First Nations staff
4. Explore the potential to develop a First Nations employment strategy which: a. Identifies number of First Nations employees b. Identifies possible roles that could require an employee to be First Nations c. Identifies if there are career pathways for staff from identified roles to move across and up in MMP d. Delivers support and mentoring for First Nations employees e. Investigates how MMP can recognise community responsibilities outside work that may decrease availability for work (eg. sorry business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of initiatives developed• Initiatives developed to understand cultural composition of workforce• Review satisfaction of First Nations staff



Methodology and timeline

Methodology for developing the MMP First Nations Engagement Strategy (FNES)

This methodology outlines the phased approach for developing the First Nations Engagement Strategy (FNES) through structured engagements with the First Nations Working Group, Elders, and the broader MMP community. Each phase is designed to encourage active participation, gather meaningful input, and ensure that the FNES aligns with MMP’s commitment to cultural competency and inclusive practices.

Initial Engagement to mark NAIDOC Week	<p>Objective: Establish the First Nations Working Group.</p> <p>Date: 16 July 2024.</p> <p>There was a gathering of staff during NAIDOC week who had expressed interest in becoming members of MMPs inaugural First Nations Working Group. The meeting was facilitated by MMP First Nations Advisor, Susan Moylan Coombs, and the discussion centered on the group’s significance and objectives.</p>
Online Consultation Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objective: Provide foundational knowledge on strategy development, consult on the draft objectives, actions and KPIs.• Session 1 (25 September 2024):<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Format: Teams Meeting, led internally, lasting 30-45 minutes.◦ Agenda: Explain the rationale behind establishing the FNES, review an introductory booklet, and discuss initial parameters, including budget, resources, and timeframes.• Session 2 (October 2, 2024):• Format: Teams Meeting, lasting 1 hour.• Agenda: Examine MMP’s previous strategy from Northern Metropolitan Cemeteries NSW, detailing specific feedback requirements for upcoming workshops. Set clear actions and outcomes and confirm members’ understanding of the consultation process.
Consultation Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objective: Facilitate a collaborative workshop to gather insights and establish strategic initiatives.• Date: 5 November 2024, Rookwood Boardroom.• Format: Externally led by Susan, lasting 2.5 hours.• Agenda:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Present revised strategy and review each participant’s insights.◦ Establish consensus on strategic initiatives, ensuring that these align with MMP’s goals and community needs.
Elders Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objective: Conduct in-depth discussions with Elders to refine the FNES draft based on their perspectives.• Date: 7-14 November 2024.• Format: Individual or group meetings, lasting approximately 2 hours each.• Agenda:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Review the preliminary FNES draft with Elders, detailing strategic parameters (budget, resources, time) and seeking their feedback.◦ Integrate Elders’ insights and feedback into the evolving draft, enhancing its relevance and cultural sensitivity.

Draft Review and Feedback Collection

- **Objective:** Board to review and endorse draft strategy.
- **Date:** Mid-December 2024.
- **Actions:** Endorsement given.

Draft Review and Feedback Collection

- **Objective:** Share the draft FNES with MMP Executives and staff across all business units for further input.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Actions:**
 - Draft FNES distributed via email and uploaded to the Vault for organisational review, with hard copies available at each cemetery site for accessible feedback.
 - Conducted a two-week feedback period, inviting all staff to provide comments and suggestions, which contributed to the finalisation of the strategy.

Draft Review and Feedback Collection

- **Objective:** Share the draft FNES with the Community Engagement Committee for further input.
- **Date:** April 2025.
- **Actions:**
 - Draft FNES distributed via email along with a link to provide feedback.
 - Conducted a three-week feedback period, inviting all members to provide comments and suggestions, which contributed to the finalisation of the strategy.

FNES finalised

- **Objective:** Finalise FNES and publish on the Vault.
- **Date:** 26 May 2025.

Commence RAP

- **Date:** 1 July 2025.

Glossary

Artefact

Any object made or modified by First Nations People(s), often stone tools or wooden objects. A group of artefacts (especially stone tools) located on the ground surface is referred to as an artefact scatter.

Assimilation

A 19th century idea that First Nations People(s) should be 'improved' by being 'civilised' and becoming Christians and learning how to work as Europeans did. From the 1930s assimilation became Government policy.

Colonialism

The forcible takeover of the land of First Nations People(s) globally and the exploitation of the land and the people, ignoring their rights.

Community

Important elements of a community are country, family ties and shared experience. Community is about connection and belonging and is central to First Nations People and their links to community. People may belong to more than one community.

Coolamon

The coolamon is a traditional, multi-purpose wooden vessel used by Aboriginal People, primarily women, for carrying food, water, or young children. Shaped from hardwood or bark and often decorated with engravings and symbols, in ceremonies, it may be used to hold sacred items, reinforcing its spiritual significance across different aspects of life.

Country

A term used by First Nations People to refer to the

land and/or water to which they belong and their place of Dreaming. Original First Nations People's language usage of the word Country is much broader than standard English.

Culture

The accepted and traditionally patterned ways of behaving and a set of common understandings shared by members of a group or community. Includes land, language, ways of living and working, artistic expression, relationships, intangible heritage and identity.

Custodian

A person charged with maintaining and passing on elements of Cultural significance (e.g. knowledge, stories, songs, dances, language, ritual and imagery).

Customary laws and Lore(s)

Also referred to as 'lore', customary laws are based on traditions and customs of a particular group in a specific region.

Decolonisation

Describes the ending of colonisation and the liberation of those who were colonised. The process includes dismantling the 'colonial state' and its laws. The goal is self-determination of those who were colonised. Those pursuing decolonisation start by reconnecting with kin and country and disengaging with the colonial system.

Discrimination

Unfair treatment based on perceived differences between people.

Dreaming

The Dreaming has different meanings for different

First Nations groups. The Dreaming can be seen as an embodiment of First Nations creation, which gives meaning to everything. It establishes the rules governing relationships between the people, the land and all things. A preferred term is creation stories as the word Dreaming is a Eurocentric term first coined by the Alice Springs' postmaster Frank Gillen, then an amateur ethnographer. The term was later taken up by Baldwin Spencer. It was initially used to describe and simplify the meaning of the central Australian language group Aranda word "Alcheringa".

Elders

Key persons and keepers of various knowledge within First Nations communities, Elders are the knowledge holders.

Heritage

That which comes or belongs to one by reason of birth, sometimes also understood as 'descent' when talking about identity.

Homeland

Homelands are located on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral lands with cultural and spiritual significance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People(s) who live there. Complex connections to land include cultural, spiritual and environmental obligations, including obligations for the protection of sacred sites.

Indigenous

Native to a place or area, originating in and characterising a particular region or country.

Indigenous people

The first People(s) to a land.

Kinship

An important part of First Nations People(s) cultures and values. It includes all relationships and being related to and belonging to the land. It can include relationships to flora and fauna.

Knowledge circle

First Nations People(s) knowledge refers to the cultural understanding, philosophy and skills developed over a long period of time, which informs day to day living. This is balanced with the interaction of the natural surroundings and spiritual belief. A knowledge circle is the coming together of knowledge holders to make collective decisions to provide a foundation for locally appropriate decision making.

Law

Social control based on consensus and individual rights being subordinate to the welfare of the community.

Land rights

The struggle by First Nations People to gain acknowledgment of prior ownership of this land both legally and morally and allowing all the accompanying rights and obligations which stem from this association.

Language group

Language is linked to geographical areas. The term 'language group' is often used in preference to the term 'tribe', and many First Nations People identify themselves through their language group.

Lore

The learning and transmission of cultural heritage. See also 'Customary Laws'.

Makarrata

Denotes a domestic treaty between the Commonwealth government and Yolngu people. It comes from a word in the Yolngu language meaning a coming together after a struggle, facing the facts of wrongs and living again in peace.

Missions

Areas originally set up and governed by different religious denominations for First Nations People to live. Today some people use the term to refer to First Nations People's housing developments. The terms "reserves" and "stations" are used as well.

NAIDOC

Stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee.

Nation

A nation is a group of people who share the same language and area of land, river and sea that is their traditional land.

National NAIDOC committee

The National NAIDOC Committee (NNC) make key decisions on national NAIDOC activities including the dates for the week-long celebrations, the focus city, the theme, the national NAIDOC poster competition winner and the national NAIDOC awards winners. The NNC is a voluntary committee independent of government and comprises of eight Committee members and two co-chairs. NNC members are appointed for a term of three years following a public expression of interest process.

Native Title

Form of land title which recognises First Nations People as rightful owners of that land.

Racism

Set of beliefs, often negative, held by one group of people or individuals, about another group of people or individuals and based on the perceived racial characteristics of that group or individual. Racism in Australia takes on many forms - attitudinal, institutional and cultural

Reconciliation

A Commonwealth initiative to promote reconciliation between First Nations People and the wider community and to redress disadvantage, with an original target date of 2001.

Reserves

Areas of land reserved by the Crown for First Nations People in the 19th century. Much of this land was later taken from people again. Until the 1970s the remaining reserves were administered and controlled by government. See also missions and stations as these terms are also used.

Self-determination

When First Nations People determine their affairs themselves, including decision making, interacting with non-Indigenous parties and creating the solution to a problem.

Site

Places of importance and significance to First Nations People because they provide a link to former or current traditions, people or practices.

Songline

A song line (also known as Dreaming Track) is a path across the land which marks the journey of creator-beings as they created the lakes, rivers, plants, land formations and living creatures during the creation

Glossary

times. Song lines are recorded in traditional songs, stories, dance, and painting. They explain the origins of the land and the laws people must live by. One of Central Australia's oldest intact song lines called the Ngintaka, or Perentie Lizard song line.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the ultimate power, authority and/or jurisdiction over a people and a territory. No other person, group, tribe or state can tell a sovereign entity what to do with its land and/or people. A sovereign entity can decide and administer its own laws, can determine the use of its land and can do pretty much as it pleases, free of external influence (within the limitations of international law). Sovereignty is a more precise term than self-determination.

Stations

Living areas established by governments for First Nations People on which managers and matrons controlled (and 'cared for') people.

Stolen generations

The stolen generations are children who were taken away from their families and communities as the result of past government policy. They were removed by governments, churches and welfare bodies to be brought up in institutions, and/or fostered out or adopted by non-indigenous families.

The removal of First Nations children took place from the early days of British colonisation in Australia. It broke important cultural, spiritual and family ties and has left a lasting and inter-generational impact on the lives and wellbeing of First Nations people.

Tangible and intangible heritage

"Tangible Cultural Heritage" refers to physical artefacts produced, maintained and transmitted intergenerationally in society. It includes artistic creations, built heritage such as buildings and monuments and other physical or tangible products of human creativity that are invested with cultural significance in a society. "Intangible Cultural Heritage" indicates "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003). Examples of intangible heritage are oral traditions, performing arts, local knowledge and traditional skills.

Terra nullius

A concept in international law meaning 'a territory belonging to no-one' or 'over which no-one claims ownership'. The concept is related to the legal acceptance of occupation as an original means of peacefully acquiring territory. However, a fundamental condition of a valid occupation is that the territory should belong to no-one. The concept has been used to justify the colonisation of Australia. The High Court decision of 1992 rejected terra nullius and recognises native title.

Traditional Custodians / Owners

'Traditional Owners' is an English term from the Northern Territory Land Rights Act and refers to First Nations People(s)' decision-making. It refers to a group of people who belong to a certain area of land ('country') and have the cultural obligation to maintain it.

The term 'Custodians' considers that in First Nations Peoples Culture the land owns its people (and not vice versa), while 'owners' gives credit to the fact that it is Indigenous land (both terms are in use).

Treaty

A negotiated agreement with the government to recognise that First Nations People have not lost any part of their sovereign existence and status, and that they have always maintained a property right in land and the natural resources according to their law and customs.





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