



Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre

INDIGENOUS DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

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South Australia

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PREFACE

This report was commissioned by the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) South Australia as part of the preliminary design process for the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre. This report aims to provide deeper understandings of the Indigenous design issues for the design team including preliminary comments to inform the design process which are not exhaustive. This report is not intended to replace direct consultation or discussion on various aspects of the design.

This report was prepared simultaneously to reports prepared as part of the design processes for Aboriginal Children and Family Centres at Whyalla and Ceduna. Sections for each report may include similar material where appropriate.

The terms 'Aboriginal' and 'Indigenous' have been used throughout this report to refer inclusively to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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INTRODUCTION

This project involves the design and construction of an Aboriginal Children and Family Centre to be located on an identified site within the existing Christies Beach Primary School.

The final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Commonwealth of Australia 1991) outlined the issues facing Aboriginal people in contemporary Australian society. Australian Aboriginal people generally experience poorer socio-economic and health status and lower levels of educational achievement than those experienced by the non-Indigenous population with resultant social and family issues. The *Bringing Them Home Report* highlighted the issues confronting Aboriginal families (Australian Human Rights Commission 1997). The report outlined the successive government policies which removed Aboriginal children from their families, resulting in an erosion of the integrity of the family and an undermining of the strength and capabilities of the Aboriginal community.

The breakdown of Aboriginal family structure and a decline in parenting skills is generally viewed as trans-generational and the practice of removing children from their families over several generations has impacted attachment and parenting capacity in the Aboriginal community (Australian Human Rights Commission 1997).

One strategy for tackling Aboriginal disadvantage has been through education. From a health perspective, it has been found for every year of education an Aboriginal person receives one additional year is added to their life (NSW Department of Education and Training 2004) and education is seen as a mechanism to close the 17-year gap between Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal life expectancies and improve the socio economic position of Aboriginal people in Australian society.

Participation in education from an early age can have a number of benefits. The Centre for Community Child Health (2000) reviewed studies of various methods in addressing the risk factors in early childhood associated with adverse outcomes and found that participation in a preschool program promotes cognitive development in the short term and prepares children to succeed in school (Boocock 1995) and preschool experience appears to be a stronger positive force in the lives of low income than advantaged children (Boocock 1995). The Victorian Government Department of Human Services stated:

Preschool is important because it provides developmentally appropriate programs that further the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and language development of children and encourages the involvement of families. International and Australian research indicates that attending preschool improves the quality of children's experiences in their later schooling. Participation in preschool ensures children establish foundations to assist them for life. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of Aboriginal children do not have this early experience of such literacy precursors. They do not attend playgroups, early child care or preschools and might be severely disadvantaged in comparison with other ...children when they enter school after the age of five. Universal community agencies, such as preschools and schools, are uniquely positioned to effectively support parents in the task of raising children (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2004 p. 30).

There were also other methods in addressing risk factors in early childhood that appear to have positive impacts. The Centre for Community Child Health (2000) found that:

- Maternal employment and participation in out-of-home care, even during infancy, appear not to harm children and may yield benefits if the child care is regulated and of high quality (Boocock 1995).
- Early childhood and development programs can produce large increases in IQ during the early childhood years and sizeable, persistent improvement in reading and maths, decreased need for grade retention and special education, and improved socialisation for disadvantaged children (Barnett 1995).
- Anticipatory guidance, a common feature of child health surveillance programs, can improve nutrition, some aspects of behaviour and development, and parenting (Dworkin 1998).
- Home visiting programs can be effective, particularly for very disadvantaged women, but there have been great difficulties in implementing and operating these programs (The Future of Children 1999).
- Group- based parenting education programs, particularly those taking a behavioural approach, can produce positive changes in children's behaviour (Barlow 1997).

- Community based group education programs for parents produce more changes in children's behaviour and are more cost effective and user friendly than individual clinic- based programs (Barlow 1997).
- Early intervention programs for children with a developmental delay or disability increasingly focus on broad family outcomes rather than specific developmental gains for children (Guralnick and Neville 1997).

The Council of Australian Governments has committed \$564.6m over six years to improve Indigenous early childhood development across Australia. In partnership with the Commonwealth Government, the Department of Education and Children's Services (South Australia) have taken the role as the lead agency in establishing four Aboriginal Children and Family Centres in various locations in South Australia (Government of South Australia date unknown). The development of Aboriginal Children and Family Centres intends to provide a 'one stop shop' that delivers the programs and services to address the needs of the child from birth to 5 years and their family.

The Aboriginal Children and Family Centres will be developed as:

...integrated centres ...offer[ing] care, education, health services, family support and community development activities (*ibid* p. 2).

The design of the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre provides an opportunity to make a statement on the importance of education and caring for children.

There is also a capacity for the Centre to meet the socio-spatial needs of Aboriginal users. Indigenous people have differing and varying environmental needs. Understanding and translating the significant aspects of the culturally specific responses of Indigenous people to educational settings may produce educational environments which better meet the needs of groups and minimise the adverse effects commonly caused by poorly designed environments. For this to occur, a proficient knowledge of the relevant cultural properties of people, landscapes, objects, and buildings is a pre- requisite. A lack of such knowledge can potentially lead to culturally inappropriate design with resultant problems for the users. Environments act as stress-modulating devices; preferences for particular environments can be partly interpreted in terms of stress reduction and poorly designed environments may lead the users to experience high degrees of stress. To successfully design environments for Aboriginal peoples, designers must understand the nature of Aboriginal lifestyles. It is not the aim to identify an architectural solution for individual behaviours, but to highlight a series of behaviours and the associated issues for the design of the project which may require consideration by a designer. At the same time, the design of appropriate educational environments may provide opportunities to address socio-economic marginalisation.

To understand the principles of designing in this context, it must be understood that Aboriginal learning styles and child rearing practices are often distinct from those of non- Aboriginal peoples. Penman (2006) summarises reports of Aboriginal attitudes to children and child- rearing practices for Aboriginal people living traditional or semi-traditional lifestyles and those in an urban environment. Common themes include that:

- Children are not viewed as helpless and in need of adult- imposed routines. As Penman notes Yapa¹ and Anangu:²

¹ 'Yapa' means 'the people' (as distinct from animals, land, plants) in Warlpiri language (traditional lands located north and north-west of Alice Springs, Northern Territory) (Priest et al 2008).

² 'Anangu' (*alt sp* Anangu or Arnangu) is the Western Desert language word for 'Aboriginal person'. The word 'Anangu' has come to be closely associated with the Western Desert language speaking people (e.g. Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Southern (Tijikala) Luritja, Pintupi Luritja, Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra) who use it to the extent that it is now commonly used to refer to them, both by non-

...see babies and young children as small adults who have a set place in the family and community with all the responsibilities of law and culture. This is reflected in how they are addressed from the very beginning - for example, as 'my young auntie' or 'my mother again' (Penman 2006 p. 33).

- Children are kept close and their needs met as they arise.

For example, Penman (2008) notes:

Anangu and Yapa children sleep, eat and play whenever and wherever they choose. If babies cry they are immediately picked up and held, it is considered cruel to do otherwise. Furthermore, the Kardiya (non-Aboriginal) practice of putting babies and young children to sleep in a room on their own is considered inhumane. Yapa children never sleep on their own, and it is rarely a quiet environment for sleeping because they are always with their mother and other family members (Priest 2008 p. 128).

- Children are cared for by the whole extended family.
For Yolngu, looking after children meant they were not left alone, that family members spent time with them, they were washed, kept clean and well fed, they were given what they wanted, and they were taught ceremony and singing. This looking after has to be done by the whole (extended) family: it is everyone's responsibility, but especially that of the mother and father (Penman 2006 p. 34).
- Cultural learning is on-going.

Penman (2006) concludes that traditional child-rearing practices are still used and valued and that the core of these values and practices are obvious in urban settings and states:

...while these traditional practices are being challenged and, in some instances, broken down by mainstream non-Indigenous culture, there is the capacity for them to re-flourish (*ibid* p. 35).

The Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre has the capacity to provide a setting that supports Aboriginal child-rearing practices, the complex family and kin relationships, and the on-going education provided by different community members. They may accommodate particular practices. For example, an existing child-care centre has adapted their sleeping room based on Indigenous sleeping practices.

[i]nstead of using cots, the centre has baskets on the floor and babies and young children choose when they want to sleep, crawling in and out of the baskets as they desire (Priest, 2005 p. 22).

This project also presents excellent opportunities to address the often neglected design issues for Aboriginal peoples with the potential for the building to be designed, structured and staffed to promote and facilitate the enhancement of Indigenous wellness and provide improved outcomes for Aboriginal children and families.

Aboriginal people and the speakers themselves. Used in this way, the term appears to be never used to refer to any traditional grouping but rather to a collection of Western Desert language speaking people (Goddard 1992; Glass and Hackett 2003).

PART 1: PRECEDENTS AND 'BEST PRACTICE' DESIGN

The Design of Early Learning, Child-care and Children and Family Centres for Aboriginal People

There is a wealth of material about policy and programs related to Aboriginal families and children: however there is a paucity of literature that specifically addresses the physical design for various services (Weeks 2004 p. 30) and material that evaluates the success of different environments.

A wide range of work related to Aboriginal early learning and child-care centres and children and family centres was examined to identify design precedents and examples of best practice. The information fell into two main categories:

- reports of Aboriginal views of what works and what doesn't, and of practices and beliefs that may have physical design implications, and
- images and descriptions of buildings.

This review focuses on Australian work but also includes examples from New Zealand and Canada. Both countries have examples of early childhood programs that cater for Indigenous children and their families, with similar aims, namely improving health and education outcomes. Often the New Zealand and Canadian models have additional aims such as the maintenance (or renewal) of culture and language.

In New Zealand, the *Te Kohanga Reo* ('language nest') centres began in the 1980s in response to fears that Māori language and culture was being lost. The centres cater for children aged 0 - 6 years of age with immersion language and cultural education. The centres are child-focused, community run and have had more than 60,000 children 'graduate'. These centres are seen as one of the most important Māori initiatives in recent decades.³

In Canada, the *Generative Curriculum Model* involves a team of university-based researchers and First Nation Elders delivering training to community members in early childhood care and development. The model is community-based and designed to incorporate 'cultural practices, values, language and spirituality'.⁴

One of the central ideas of these approaches is that traditional values, culture and knowledge alongside the benefits of western education and health services.

The Warrki Jarrinjaku project team believe that if service models respect the cultural integrity of Indigenous communities then health and wellbeing indices for Indigenous people will improve. To do this, there must be 'both ways learning' (Penman 2006 p. 18).

Conceptions of Quality

A number of researchers have investigated Aboriginal attitudes to child-care and ideas regarding what constitutes 'quality' (Priest 2005; Hutchins 2007; 2009; Bowes 2010). Hutchins (2009) identified several different conceptions:

- A safe place,
- A respectful place,
- A child-centred place,
- A place that supports Indigenous cultures, and
- A culturally-safe place.

³ For more information see <http://www.kohanga.ac.nz/>

⁴ For more information see <http://www.fnpp.org/fnppov.htm>

Bronwyn Coleman-Sleep, a Gugada (*alt sp.* Kokatha, Kokata) woman says:

Important things to look at and make happen in an Indigenous child care service from an Indigenous way of seeing things are:

- Time,
- Space,
- Relationships,
- Family,
- Tjukulpa⁵ and
- Children's learning and giving and getting messages from other people

(Coleman-Sleep quoted in Priest, Coleman-Sleep et al 2005 p. 30).

Coleman-Sleep described 'best practice' in terms of what the child care service environment stating:

[t]he environment needs to be uncluttered/not 'junked up', relaxed, friendly, warm, and trusting giving a feeling of being free and makes a person want to do things and learn (Priest 2005 p. 32).

Hutchins states "...culture is at the core of high-quality Indigenous services, without the acknowledgment and respecting of culture there is nothing" (Hutchins 2009 p. 15). This reflects the findings of Bowes et al (2010). They investigated the reasons for low representation of Aboriginal children in child-care and found that:

...the most highly discussed reason for not participating was lack of recognition of Aboriginal culture and negative attitudes towards Indigenous families (Bowes et al 2010).

This is a recurring theme in the literature: organisations that offer services to Aboriginal people need to recognise, respect and reflect Aboriginal culture (Bowes 2010; Hutchins 2007; Priest, Coleman-Sleep et al. 2005).

Signs of culture can be 'concrete and explicit' or 'implicit and subconscious' (Terreni 2003). It is the explicit signs of culture that we are likely to see referenced in examples of Aboriginal pre-schools and family and children centres in architectural books, magazines, and the websites of architectural firms. Features such as the physical form of the building, the materials used, the internal layout, colours and artwork are routinely depicted in images and textual descriptions of buildings. In contrast to explicit signs of culture, Terreni (2003) maintains that:

...the *implicit and subconscious* assumptions individuals hold about existence determine the beliefs, norms and attitudes of a culture. These lie beneath the concrete and explicit manifestations of the culture and are often more difficult to identify or be aware of (Terreni 2003).

This is certainly the case with representations of architecture where it is more difficult to illustrate these implicit signs of culture - the nuances of family relationships and obligations, avoidance behaviour,⁶ spirituality, law and custom etc. These issues may be manifest in the process of design (collaboration) and in the spatial relationships that underlie the design but need explanation to the observer.

⁵ Meaning the principles and practices handed down from generation to generation.

⁶ In many Aboriginal cultures, kinship rules dictate certain relatives must avoid one another, thereby strictly controlling personal relationships. The Australian Legal Reform Commission (1987) state that as children reach adolescence, brothers and sisters are expected to behave in a reserved manner towards one another. Similarly, brothers-in-law are expected to adopt a rather formal attitude to one another and maintain a degree of physical distance from one another (Fryer-Smith 2002). Fryer-Smith states:

The strongest kinship avoidance rule is that which exists between a man and his mother-in-law. In its strictest form this rule prohibits a man and his mother-in-law from seeing or speaking to one another, and even from uttering each other's name. The apparent purpose of this rule is to prevent a woman and her mother competing for the affection of the same man: there may be a risk of such competition where a man is approximately the same age as his wife's mother (Fryer-Smith 2002 p. 2.13).

Precedents: Pre-Schools, Kindergartens, Child and Family Centres

The precedents in the following pages were sourced from architectural journals and websites. The buildings often display explicit signs of Aboriginal culture in their form, the colours and symbolisms used and may provide visual statements about the importance to Aboriginal people of education, maintaining culture and caring for children.

In each of these precedents, collaboration with local Aboriginal people was an important component in the development of the design.

Kulai Aboriginal Preschool

The Kulai Preschool is located in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales and was completed as an extension to an existing preschool.

The architects state:

[t]he aim was to create an environment in which Aboriginal values and culture could be taught in a preschool context. The design is focused on providing a generous and organically shaped envelope in which the activities take place. The internal spaces were intended to give a strong sense of shelter and security, a feeling of roundness and a gentle flow of movements. The organic shape of the floor plan was inspired by Aboriginal paintings of Echidnas, which is the meaning of the word Kulai. Curved walls and a curved ridge beam form a wavy roof. A forest of tree trunks holds up the roof (Schimminger Architects 2011).



Figure 1: Kulai Aboriginal Preschool, Coffs Harbour (Architect Schimminger Architects) (Photograph: Schimminger Architects).

The Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School

The Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School is located in Picton, south of Perth, Western Australia and was designed by Edgar Idle Wade Architects. The architects note that:

[f]lora, fauna, art, music, performance, dance, language, fire and food - all elements that have been clearly used to define the place as a Noongar place for the children, the elders and the Bunbury community at large. Colours and textures of the land provide a back drop to an enriching learning environment, together with the maintaining and re-establishment of the bushland setting {Edgar Idle Wade Architects 2004 p. 20}.

The architects consulted with the Noongar community to represent their “aspirations and visions” and to “engender a sense of ownership.” Aboriginal culture has a central place at Djidi Djidi and to emphasise this, the architects have placed the cultural centre (offering music, art, language and large hall) in the middle of the school.



Figure 2: Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School (Photograph: Edgar Idle Wade Architects).



Figure 3: Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School (Photographs: Edgar Idle Wade Architects).

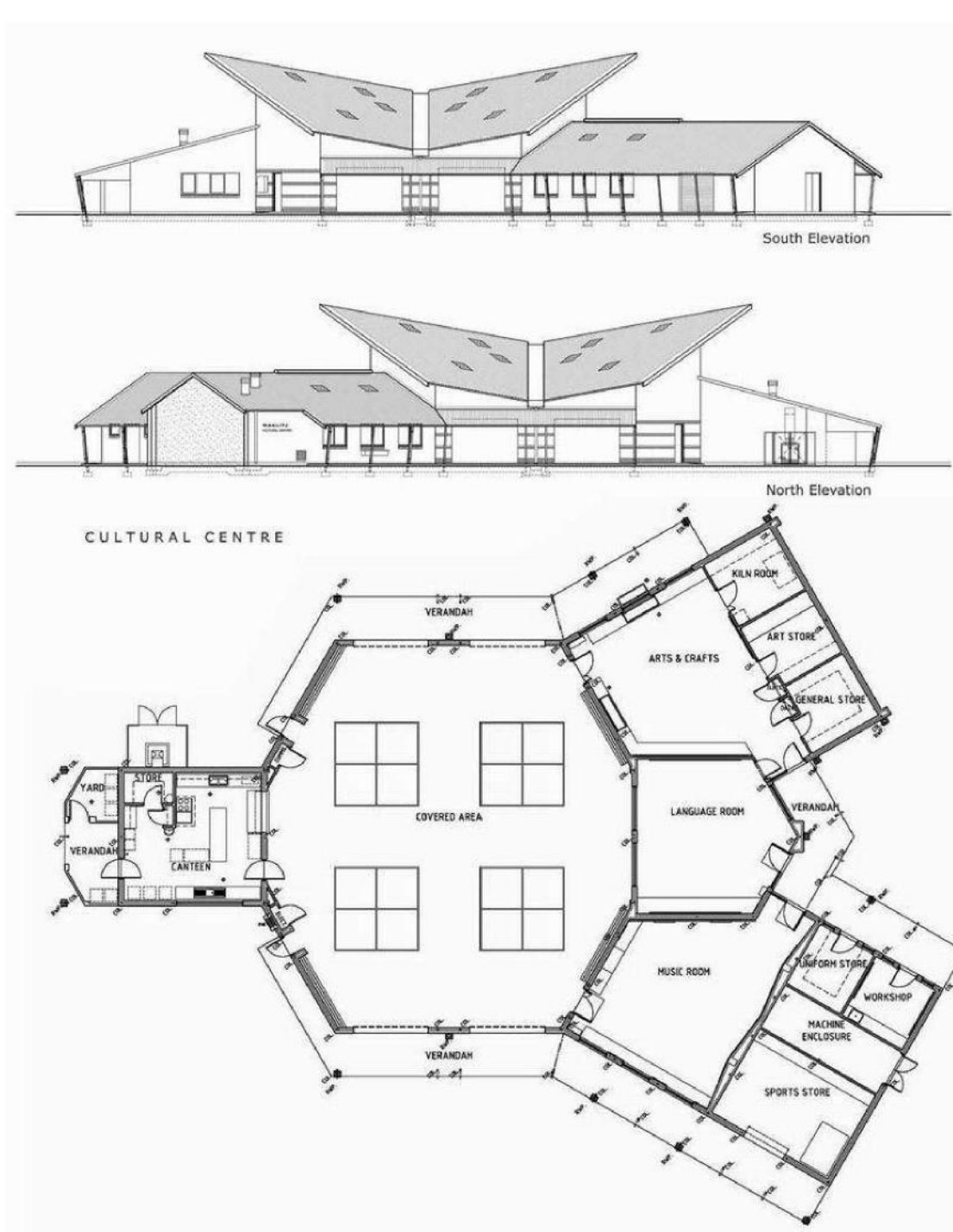


Figure 4: Plans and Elevations, Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School (Plans: Edgar Idle Wade Architects).

Waimea Kohanga Reo Victory School

The Waimea Kohanga Reo Victory School is a development under the Te Kohanga Reo or 'language nest' model and consists of a transformation of an existing hall in Nelson, New Zealand. The renovation incorporates symbols of Māori traditions and legends with a stained glass window, floor decorations and timber fretwork. The existing hall has been transformed to a "Marae inspired whare⁷ abounding with the Māori legends of the Creation" (Jerram, 2007).



Figure 5: Waimea Kohanga Reo Victory School (Photograph: Jerram, Baker and Barron Architects).



Figure 6: Waimea Kohanga Reo Victory School (Photograph: Jerram, Baker and Barron Architects).

⁷ 'Whare' is the Māori word for house. In the ethno architectural form, whare were traditionally small with a tiny door and as they were only considered as sleeping houses, the building was rarely tall enough for a person to stand upright. The ethno architectural form consisted of a wooden frame with walls and roof constructed of tightly woven dry grass and flax.

Mnjikaning First Nation Early Childhood Education Centre

The Mnjikaning First Nation Early Childhood Education Centre is located in Rama, Ontario and designed by Teeple Architects. The architects state that:

A circular playground is scribed onto the landscape. It forms the focal point of the design. The centre arcs gently about this central point with all playrooms facing eastward, overlooking this space. The building is envisioned as a canopy that is fixed to the ground along the road, while opening out to the playground along the opposite side. Indigenous mythical beliefs are subtly woven into the design; including the Circle of Life, the Fish Face and the association of children with the easterly axis of the Cardinal wheel (Teeple Architects, 2011).



Figure 7: Mnjikaning First Nations Early Childhood Education Centre (Photograph: Teeple Architects).



Figure 8: Mnjikaning First Nations Early Childhood Education Centre (Photograph: Teeple Architects).

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

The Native Child and Family Services of Toronto Centre was designed by Levitt Goodman Architects. The project consists of the refurbishment of a four storey building in Toronto to contain a range of services for urban Aboriginal children and families.

The architects collaborated with Aboriginal artists, a graphic designer and a landscape architect to define the centre with art, environmental graphics, natural materials and plantings that are native to the Great Lakes region. These features give the building its cultural identity and also soften its institutional nature (Minner 2011).

Bozikovic notes:

[a]n important aspect of the building is the incorporation of a Longhouse near the lobby, and healing lodge and fire circle in the rooftop garden. These spaces traditionally accommodate important First Nation gatherings. In this building they have been given a modern interpretation. The Longhouse is constructed from computer-designed cedar lamellar sections. ...As you enter, you smell the sage and sweet grass that are burned during meetings and counselling sessions. The light comes from pendants ...that are made with burnt-out fluorescent tubes - a 21st-century substitute for the campfires that would traditionally burn within (Bozikovic 2010).



Figure 9: Reception area - Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (Photograph: Jesse Colin Jackson).



Figure 10: The Children and Family Centre in Toronto has incorporated healing lodge, a fire circle and native planting in rooftop garden (Photograph: Jesse Colin Jackson).



Figure 11: Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (Photographs: Ben Rahn).

Mana Tamariki, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Mana Tamariki was established in late 1989 as a te reo⁸ Māori speaking unit with the principle aim of developing Māori language skills in young children and their parents. The design incorporates Māori ethno architectural forms with themes commonly seen in marae⁹ such as a gabled archway faced with split ponga trunks; pou (pillars) around the courtyard and the carved figure with paepae (seats) at the front. Open central spaces were also a feature of the design. The built environment is linked to natural surroundings which are utilised for activities such as outdoor learning, sport, and hangi (Ministry of Education New Zealand 2006).



Figure 12: The playground at Mana Tamariki, Palmerston North is shared with the local community (Source: Ministry of Education New Zealand 2006).

⁸ 'Te reo' literally means the language.

⁹ In Māori usage, the marae is technically the open space in front of a whareniui or meeting house (literally 'big house'). However, it is generally used to refer to the whole complex, including the buildings and the open space. An unambiguous term for the area in front of the whareniui is marae ātea. This area is used for pōwhiri - welcome ceremonies featuring oratory. The meeting house is the locale for important meetings, sleepovers, and craft and other cultural activities. The term used for the speaker's bench is paepae. The wharekai (dining hall) is used primarily for communal meals, but other activities may be carried out there. Many of the words associated with marae in tropical Polynesia are retained in the Māori context. For example, the word paepae refers to the bench where the speakers sit; this means it retains its sacred and ceremonial associations. The Marae can have special occasions such as weddings and funerals held in it, a Marae can also differ in size with some being a bit bigger than a double garage and some being as big a town hall or bigger.



Figure 13: Natural light and indoor/outdoor flow at Mana Tamariki, Palmerston (Source: Ministry of Education New Zealand 2006).



Figure 14: Open central spaces are a feature of the design, as is the linkage of the built campus with its natural surroundings which are used for outdoor learning, sport, and hangi. Te Kura-a-iwi o Whakatapuranga Rua Mano (Source: Ministry of Education New Zealand 2006).

Existing Aboriginal Children and Family Centres in South Australia

There are several existing Aboriginal childcare or parenting centres in South Australia servicing the needs of Aboriginal children and families. Examples include the Kurna Plains Early Childhood Centre, Kura Yerlo Children's Centre (Largs Bay), and Minya Bunhii (Ceduna). It appears that these precedents have not been specifically designed to take the socio-spatial or cultural needs of Aboriginal users into account. For the most part, Aboriginal users have attempted to change the environments by layering the environments with Aboriginal signs, colours and symbols (see below). The significance and appropriateness of the particular symbols and signs to the specific users are unknown.¹⁰



Figure 15: Children's sleeping room and outdoor area, Kura Yerlo Children's Centre (Largs Bay), where the environment has been acculturated with commonly used Aboriginal colours and symbols such as the Aboriginal flag (Photographs Save the Children, Australia)

Two projects, the Kurna Plains Family Centre, Elizabeth and Tinyeri Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, Murray Bridge have been constructed under the same funding as this project. Another, project Pukatja Aboriginal Children and Family Centre is currently under construction.

Kurna Plains Family Centre, Elizabeth

This facility was one of the dedicated Family Centres developed for Aboriginal people in South Australia. It is co-located on a site with existing facilities (i.e. Kurna Plains Childcare Centre, Kurna Plains Preschool, and Kurna Plains School). The prefabricated building (reminiscent of architectural types found on remote Aboriginal communities in South Australia) also houses services for the local council. The project provides useful lessons for the design team of this project. According to anecdotal information, a breakdown in communications with the Aboriginal community led to adequate consultation in the project with subsequent design compromises being made. Deficiencies are evident in various areas. Waiting and reception areas designed are of an insufficient size and lack the socio-spatial aspects required by Aboriginal users. This has led to static security measures being installed in the post-construction period to provide staff with adequate security to enable them to handle stressed or aggressive clients. The crèche area does not have a visual link to the program area which appears to present operational difficulties. There are insufficient storage areas and no external area for community functions. The children's and program areas do not appear to meet

¹⁰ It should be noted while the use of the Aboriginal flag to acculturate environments is very common across Australia; the flag is protected by copyright and should only be reproduced in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with the permission of Mr Harold Thomas (Australian Government 2011). Permission however is not required to fly the Australian Aboriginal Flag.

the needs of the users and there are considerable constraints in the operation of the facility.



Figure 16: Kaurna Plains Family Centre, Elizabeth (Adjacent to the Kaurna Plains School) (Photograph: Grant).

Tinyeri Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, Murray Bridge
Tinyeri Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, Murray Bridge was completed in 2010 (architects Hardy Milazzo). The centre is located on a discrete site on the easterly aspect of the Murray Bridge South Primary School. The centre was always recognised as an Aboriginal centre due to the high percentage of Aboriginal enrolments, the brief did not direct architects to address the cultural and socio-spatial needs of Aboriginal children needs in the design. While this created some limitations in the design, it is extremely important to note that staff and the Aboriginal community had input into the design and are extremely proud of their accomplishments including the Aboriginal influences throughout the complex.

The Centre has a large open reception and waiting area. The staff room is accessible from the reception point and functions as a community drop in area. Clients are distinctly directed to the family and children's services areas from the reception. The majority of the building is designed to operate as a pre-school facility. Co-located to the preschool facility is an occasional care area, sleeping/program room, storage and children's ablutions. A kitchen and wet/dry play areas form part of the large children's program area. There are several external areas for children. A discrete outdoor dining area is located on the southerly aspect of the building. The play areas are located on the westerly aspect. A bike track is located as a discrete area from other children's play areas.

Cultural representation is made within the centre through the colour scheme with Ngarrindjeri cultural beliefs and plant life being represented through the use of purple and green (purple representing the colour of native hibiscus and green providing a connection to outdoors). Staff at the preschool noted that the design of the Centre was broadly based on 'Pen Green principles'¹¹ where children are encouraged to develop a sense of value and are connected through play. They had hoped to instill a sense of calm through the centre. The design team used natural materials where possible.

There are a number of facilities within the family services section of the building. There is one shared office space, two consulting rooms (one operating as child therapy room), an access toilet and a community meeting space equipped with a kitchen. The northerly external aspect of the building is to be developed as a community space at a future time.



Figure 17: Children's Areas, Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families, Northamptonshire (Photographs: Pen Green Development, Training, Research Base and Leadership Centre).

There are lessons to be learnt from the development. The auditory performance of the children's program space may not suit the needs of people with fluctuating hearing loss (prevalent in the Aboriginal community), the air-conditioning units could have been located more sensitively and a more thoughtful choice or placement of fencing (perhaps with accompanying planting) may have diminished its visual impact.¹²

¹¹ For further information on Pen Green Development, Training, Research Base and Leadership Centre see <http://www.pengreen.org/pengreencenter.php>

¹² Note the fencing used in this project is to the DECS children's standard.



Figure 18: Tinyeri Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, Murray Bridge (Photographs: Grant).



Figure 19: Reception/Waiting Areas and Staff Room, Tinyeri Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, Murray Bridge (Photographs: Grant).

Pukatja Aboriginal Children and Family Centre

The Pukatja Aboriginal Children and Family Centre is currently planned for construction at Pukatja (formerly Ernabella), an Aboriginal community in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in far north South Australia. The new Children and Family Centre will be linked to the existing Child Care Centre and will match the colour and design of the existing buildings. The following images of the existing preschool were located online.



Figure 20: External and internal images of the Pukatja Child Parent Centre (Photographs: The Anangu Lands Paper Tracker).



Figure 21: External images, Pukatja Child Parent Centre (Photographs: The Anangu Lands Paper Tracker).

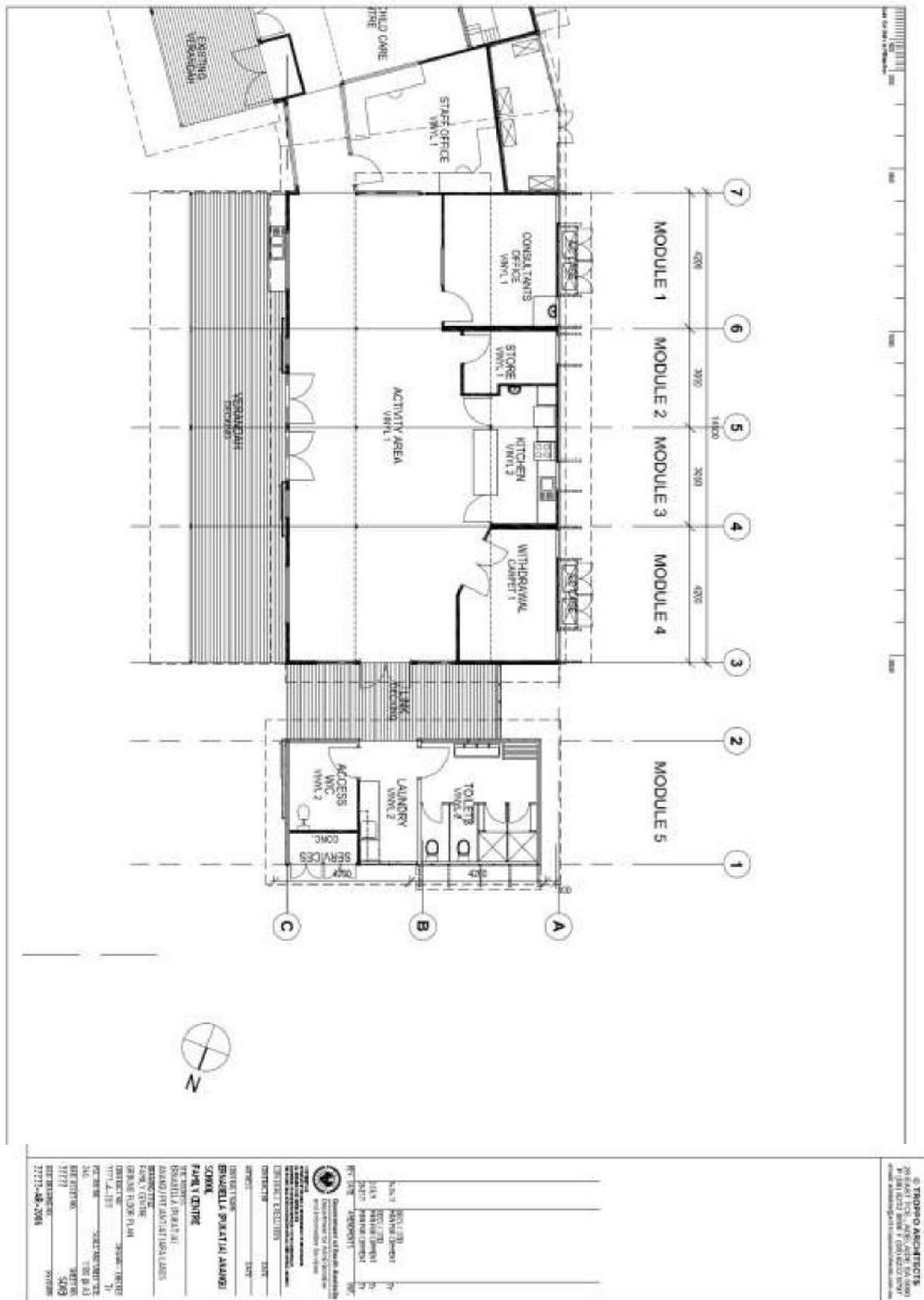


Figure 22: Plans Pukatja (Ernabella) Aboriginal Children and Family Centre to be linked to existing Child Care Centre (Source DECS).

PART 2: SITE ANALYSIS

Introduction

The site for the proposed Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre is in Christies Beach, a southern suburb of Adelaide. Christies Beach is located approximately 30 kilometres from the CBD, adjacent to the suburbs of Christie Downs and Noarlunga Centre to the east, Port Noarlunga to the south and O'Sullivan Beach to the north.

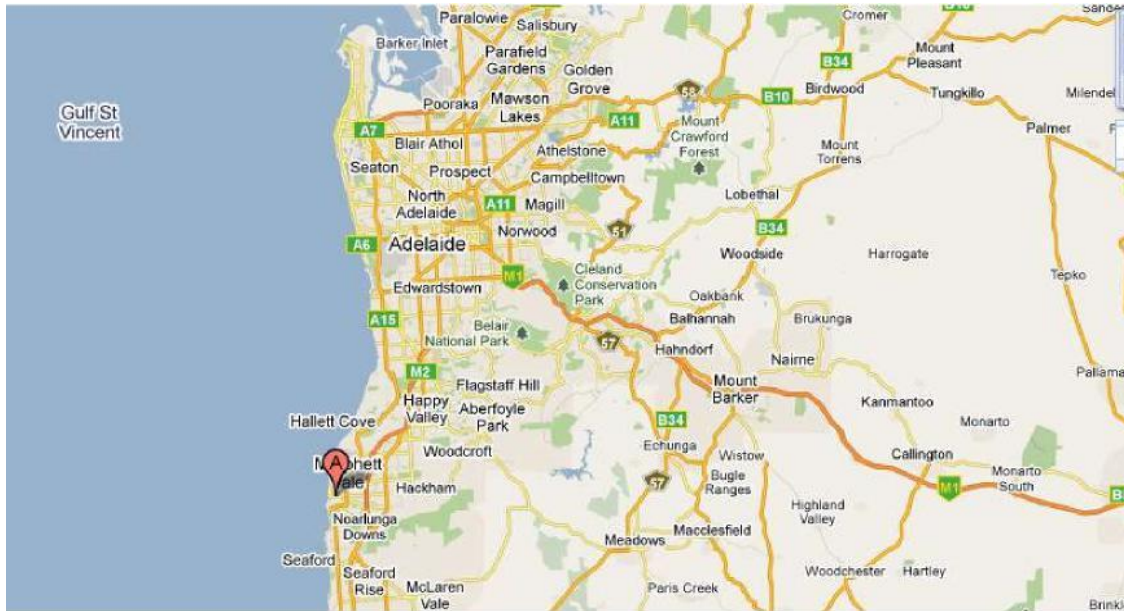


Figure 25: Location of Christies Beach in relation to Adelaide (Source: Google maps).

Christies Beach occupies the southern third of a two kilometre long west facing beach that extends from Witton Bluff in the south to Curlew Point in the north. The southern half of the beach is backed by the growing residential area called Christies Beach, while the northern half is backed by O'Sullivan Beach.



Figure 26: Aerial View of Christies Beach and view up Beach Road retail and commercial area (Source: http://www.gotocourt.com.au/SA/Magistrates_Court_Christies_Beach).

Christies Beach features one of the few remaining main roads classified as an esplanade in Metropolitan Adelaide, providing direct access to the beach with various vantage points. Land uses and key features of the suburb include a significant retail strip along Beach Road, an adjoining suburban residential area, a more contemporary residential development along the Esplanade, a long sandy beach,

Christie Creek, the Surf Life Saving Club, sailing club, a boat ramp, a tourist/caravan park and the headland and cliffs at Witton Bluff. Horseshoe reef is located off shore and forms part of the Port Noarlunga Reef Aquatic Reserve (City of Onkaparinga 2004). Christies Beach is on the Tjilbruke Dreaming Trail.¹³ Witton Bluff is an important site for the Aboriginal community with links to the Mullawirrabirka Pingyallingyalla (Creation) Dreaming story.¹⁴



Figure 27: View along Christies Beach to Witton Bluff (Photograph: Grant).

Christies Beach has a commercial strip running the entire length of Beach Road identified as a primary coastal node within the Adelaide Metropolitan area (Planning SA, 2007). Christies Beach in the vicinity of the intersection of the Esplanade and Beach Road has been identified as having 'the potential to be a primary retail and commercial node' (City of Onkaparinga 2004). The area is currently characterised by small-scale intimate retail outlets which compliment the shopping nodes at Noarlunga Centre and Port Noarlunga surrounded by a large developed residential area. It is identified as one of three primary nodes along the entire metropolitan coastline in the State Government's 'Adelaide Metropolitan Coast Park Concept Plan'.

Christies Beach has a hot Mediterranean climate with mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Rainfall is unreliable, light and infrequent throughout summer. The average in January and February is around 20 millimeters but completely rainless months are by no means uncommon. In contrast, the winter has fairly reliable rainfall with June being generally the wettest month of the year, averaging around 80 mm (Bureau of Meteorology).

¹³ The Tjilbruki Dreaming Trail will be discussed later in this report.

¹⁴ It is said that:

Mullawirraburka stood on the cliff between Christies Beach and Port Noarlunga, threw his spear into the water south of the bluff to bring fish closer to the beach for his people to catch. As he did, the top part of the spear broke. The spear became a reef with one part longer than the other and attracted and provided a habitat for fish. Mullawirraburka's people never went without seafood in the summer again (Government of South Australia, date unknown p. 2).

The landscape of the area features rugged cliffs at Witton Bluff, sea/horizon/sunset views along the coastal front from the Esplanade and down Beach Road, soft undulating landforms to the north of the Surf Life Saving Club, sloping approach along Beach Road to the sea with Norfolk Island pines planted along Beach Road.

Site Description

The Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre is to be located on an undeveloped area within the grounds of the Christies Beach Primary School. The school is bordered by Beach Road, Fuller Terrace, Maturin and Price Streets. Public transport access is via bus routes located on Beach Road. The school is located on a relatively large site with considerable existing infrastructure (see Appendix 1).

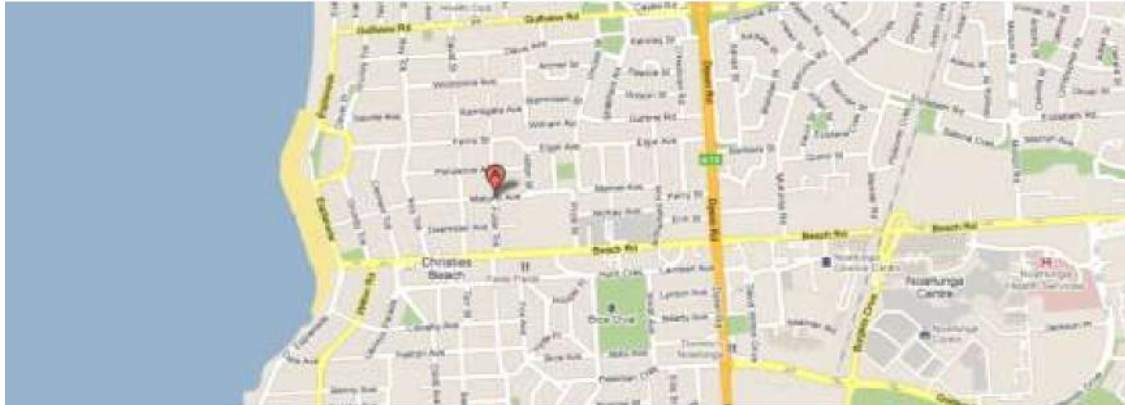


Figure 28: Location of Christies Beach Primary School (Source: Google maps).

It is stated that:

[t]he school is situated on well-maintained grounds and consists of the original buildings that house classrooms, the staffroom and administration. There is a separate Resource Centre, canteen building and an Out of School Hours Care Centre/Vacation Centre. In 2010 a new gymnasium and a three teacher unit were built, with an old four teacher wooden transportable demolished. The grounds shed has been relocated and the 27 year old pool removed. The southern side of the school has been completely redeveloped. There are extensive grounds that include landscaped gardens including an Aboriginal garden (Bunborendi Garden), a soccer pitch, football oval, netball court, basketball court, numerous play areas and hard play areas. A 500 metre synthetic fitness track and fitness stations were developed in 2002, in collaboration with the City of Onkaparinga Council. This track is positioned around the outside of the soccer field and the football oval and is used by the local community after hours (Christies Beach Primary School 2010 p. 5).

The school has 450 students (of which approximately 10% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent) enrolled with approximately 50 teaching and ancillary staff (*ibid* p. 1). In the four year period from 2004 to 2008 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments at the school rose from 4 to 43 children (Dare to Lead 2010).



Figure 29: Burnborendi (meaning 'to embrace each other') Aboriginal garden located within the school grounds (Photograph: Grant).



Figure 30: Location of Site (Source: Google maps).

The site laid aside for the project¹⁵ is located in the north eastern corner of the school grounds bordered by Maturin Avenue and Price Street. It is intended that the rectangular site will be bounded by the school boundaries (east and north) the existing school buildings (west) and the oval (south). It includes the staff car park (to be relocated to another area within the school grounds), the junior primary play area (to be relocated to an area between existing teaching buildings and adjacent to the gymnasium). The site has a slight rise to the north east corner and has a number of mature trees along northern and eastern boundaries.

¹⁵ It should be noted that this is not the site preferred by all members of the Christies Beach Children and Family Centre Enabling Group. Some members would prefer that the centre be located on or near the school oval on the western aspect of the school grounds. This is however the site determined by the Christies Beach School Council.

The alternate sides of Maturin Avenue and Price Street are residential with housing located relatively close to the site. The impacts of the development on the adjacent residential area should be considered in the design phase.



Figure 31: North- westerly view of site from boundary including junior play area which is to be relocated (left). South westerly view of site (right) with view of gymnasium and staff car park (latter to be relocated) (Photographs: Grant).



Figure 32: View west from staff car park (left). It is intended that the existing junior primary play area be located in the area between buildings. Existing mature trees on line the east and north aspects of the site (right) (Photographs: Grant).

A Brief History of the Area

In order to understand the significance of the area to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people it is important to be aware of the historical context of Christies Beach and surrounding areas. These will be briefly outlined in this section.

Pre- European History

The original inhabitants of the Adelaide Plains were the Kaurna people. Their country extended from Crystal Brook in the north to Cape Jervis in the south, with the Mount Lofty Ranges and Gulf St Vincent (Wongayerlo) forming natural borders to the east and west (Santich 1998, p. 7). Living in independent family groups, Kaurna People travelled over their land (pangkarra) according to the seasons (Woerlee 2000). In summer Kaurna people gathered along the coast and river mouths where fish were abundant, occasionally going inland for plant foods. In autumn the Kaurna moved inland, where

firewood was more plentiful, and more substantial shelters could be constructed (Santich 1998, p. 8 - 9). Larger groups, made up of various pangkarra became a yerta and were linked through complex religious, cultural and economic matters. Winnaynie was the name given to the yerta/area between Glenelg and McLaren Vale (Woerlee 2000).

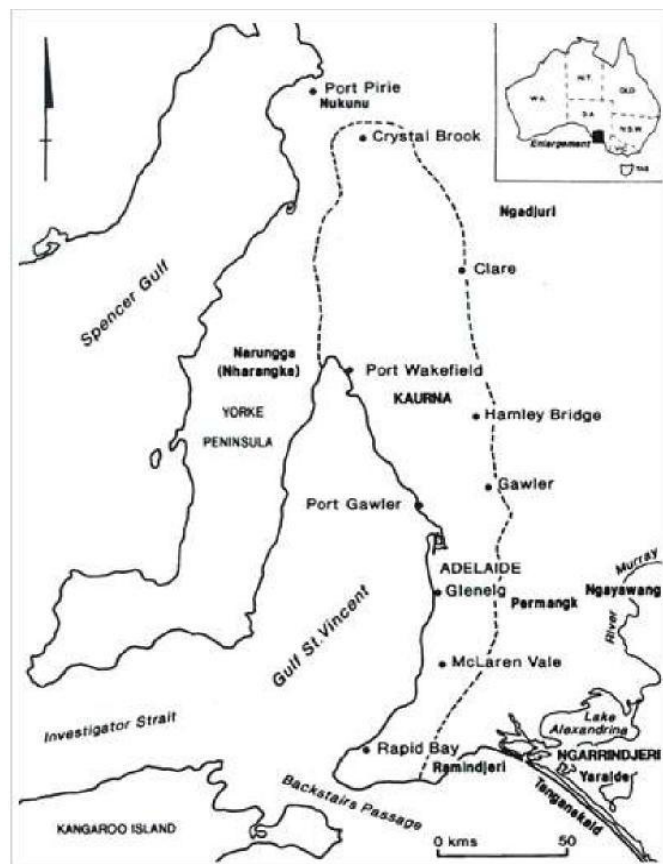


Figure 33: Kaurna territory and neighbouring languages (Source: Amery, 2000 p.xiv).

It is noted that Kaurna people had good skills as facilitators who ran conferences for other groups. A recently rediscovered Kaurna word 'Banba-banbalyarnendi' means 'to hold a conference' (O'Brien 2007 p. 7). The scope of the Kaurna network was extensive and included the Ngarrindjeri (lower Murray) the Permangk (Adelaide Hills) Ramindjeri (Victor Harbor and Cape Jervis), the Narungga (Yorke Peninsula), the Wirangu and Mirning, (West Coast) and the Nauo and Pangkala peoples (Eyre Peninsula) (*ibid* p. 8). The conferences were for settling disputes, marriage arrangements and other similar matters (*ibid* p. 8). Crafted objects, for example animal skins, and raw materials were traded with others. Such exchanges could have important symbolic aspects. Gifts were given to fulfill kinship obligations, to acknowledge services and to mark the settlement of disputes (Foster and Gara 1986 p. 76 - 77).

The Kurna people were primarily hunters and gatherers with labour divided accorded to gender. Generally it was the responsibility of the men to gather animal foods and of the women to gather the plants. Success in hunting and gathering depended on an intimate knowledge of the seasons and of plant and animal species. Almost all Australian animals, reptiles, birds and fish are edible and the Kurna people knew their habits, life cycles, the location of feeding grounds and the best methods of catching them. Birds, lizards, snakes and eggs provided important sources of protein. Men undertook much of the hunting, using wooden (red gum or hardwood) tools such as spears, spear-throwers (sheoak), clubs and shields. When hunting, a hide made of stones or foliage might be used in order to ambush animals and men would cooperate to stalk and kill larger animals (Foster and Gara 1986 p. 69). Cooperative techniques aided successful hunting and gathering of fish, shellfish and crustaceans.

Living on the coast, the Kurna were accomplished fishermen and used several methods of catching fish. Methods included spearing, stone fish traps (still in situ near Normanville) and net fishing. Spears, clubs, traps and nets were used to hunt animals such as kangaroo, emu and burrowing animals. Ducks, geese, swans and other water birds were sometimes snared using nooses. Tools included spears, spear-throwers, throwing sticks, stone knives, digging sticks, grinding stones and wooden dishes. The boomerang was not used either for hunting or as a weapon. Plant foods formed the major part of the everyday diet but meat was preferred and it was divided up among the band on the basis of kinship and ritual obligations. Women collected food such as eggs, shellfish, frogs and lizards. Women, helped by children, also gathered a wide range of roots, tubers, leaves, fruits and berries and these were distributed to the immediate family, by contrast to meat products which were divided up among the members of the band (*ibid* p. 67- 68). Plant foods, collected by the women included muntries (sweet berries) from the sand dunes, quondong and native cherry. From river mouths and swamps, bulrush roots were collected to make cakes, with the reeds being used for nets. Inland, root vegetables, such as yams and wild carrots were dug, while sweet treats included wild honeysuckle. River red gums, the home of possums and grubs, 'lerps' ('sweet scales of the psyllid insect adhering to the leaves') and honey, provided a unique source of food (Santich 1998 p. 12- 15). Fire-stick farming was also carried out in this area to facilitate hunting and gathering activities (*ibid* p. 12).

Throughout Aboriginal Australia, the family, consisting of men, their wife or wives, dependent children and on occasion older relatives, formed the basic social and food gathering unit (Foster and Gara 1986 p. 67). Above this level were two social groupings: the first being the local descent group which defined a person's spiritual relationship to the land and the second being the band which defined a person's economic relationship to it. The local descent group was the land-owning group. Its members were related to each other patrilineally. The group was linked to a sacred site or a group of sites by mythological and spiritual ties. The local descent group was more than just a land owning group as group ownership involved ceremonial responsibilities and thus it was also a 'land-renewing' and 'land-sustaining' unit (*ibid* p. 67- 68). A woman was required to marry outside her own group and after her marriage she lived with her husband's group. The male members were custodians and guardians of the sacred sites within the group's territory. They were responsible for performing ceremonies that ensured the continuing fertility of the land. Women also played a significant role in ceremonies.

A number of families formed a band. They might come from one or a number of different descent groups. In a fertile area such as the Christies Beach area, availability of food and water meant that the range of a band was relatively small compared to that of a much less fertile area. The band might have averaged twenty-five to fifty people but the composition fluctuated as members might leave to visit friends and relatives in other bands, to attend to ritual obligations, to collect raw materials for implements and weapons and sometimes would leave as a result of a quarrel. When

times were plentiful, members of another band might be invited to come and share the excess food that was available (*ibid* p. 68).

In the summer months dwellings made of simple windbreaks made of leafy branches (*wodli*) could be all that was needed but in winter solid huts covered over with leaves, bark or grass would provide more protection. Hides were often cured near Aldinga Scrub) (*Wangkondangko* meaning 'possum place') (Santich 1998 p. 20). Possums provided skins that could be sewn together to make small rugs. In addition Parnda (Kurna 'this ball') was a game played by the Kurna people using a stuffed possum skin and including skills such as kicking and marking (O'Brien 2007 p. 79).

Children's games often involved imitating adults, so boys imitated the men hunting with spears and girls played at preparing food. Accompanying the adults, children gradually learned which activities were safe and which ones were not, for example what plants could be eaten and which animals could be safely touched, as well as what behaviour was acceptable and what was not. Other adults besides their parents played a significant role in these experiences. As the children became older and reached puberty boys and girls were more restricted in their play. Boys' initiation rituals which usually commenced around puberty marking a transition from childhood involved spending time away from the main camp. For girls the initiation process was less intense but women had their own ceremonies that related to the initiation of girls, to pregnancy and to childbirth (Foster and Gara 1986, p. 83-85, 91). The Onkaparinga River is of special significance as it is identified as a 'women's river' (O'Brien 2007 p. 209).

Kinship provided many of the guidelines for correct behaviour between individuals. In Aboriginal society tradition was law; the social, moral and religious values established in the Dreaming provided the model for accepted social behaviour. The fully initiated mature men had the most authority and influence. Gathered information and wisdom was passed from generation to generation providing a life-long education (Mattingley and Hampton 1998).

Post- European History

The first European development along the Christies Beach coastline occurred in the 1830s. A whaling station was constructed along the coast, influenced by the rising price of whale bone overseas, the Southern Right Whale population during the summer breeding season and the vantage point of Gulf St Vincent from Witton Bluff. By the 1840s the seasonal whale population had dwindled down to unprofitable levels. The whales changed their migration route and the whalers left the area to pursue other activities (Colwell 1972; Towler 1986).

In 1838, an area of surveyed land covering Glenelg to Witton Bluff (known at that time as District B) was made available for settlement. Many farmers took plots of land along the Anderson Creek (now known as Christies Creek). In 1895, Lambert Christie and his wife Rosa established a farm that covered the area where Christies Beach is now situated. Population remained minimal until the 1890s, with expansion commencing in the 1920s. The entire area had remained a land of farming communities until 1923 when Rosa Christie created the first subdivision in the area (entitled Christies Beach). With this subdivision and other such residential allocations in the area road and rail transportation was improved. The improvement in transportation south of Adelaide gave Christies Beach an increase in tourists and holiday makers who were looking for a coastal experience. Many tourists decided to build cottages and holiday shacks on Witton Bluff and down on the beach itself (City of Onkaparinga 2005).

With the influx of visitors and new residents to the area the Christies Beach Progressive Association was formed to provide foreshore amenities, such as beach access, toilets, showers, etc. Foreshore developments led to the creation of new shops and services on the Esplanade and nearby Gulfview and Beach Roads. By the late 1950's demand for residence in the area skyrocketed, this propelled commercial and industrial developments in the Lonsdale district with the opening of Port Stanvac Oil Refinery and Chrysler (later Mitsubishi) engine plant and also in Noarlunga with the relocation of the train line and the construction of Colonnades Shopping Centre (Colwell 1972; City of Onkaparinga 2005).

Across South Australia, other events occurred that would eventually result in groups of Aboriginal people locating to the south of Adelaide. An urban migration of Aboriginal people began in the 1950s encouraged by government assimilation policies. The majority of Aboriginal people came from the southern missions, especially the two larger reserves of Raukkan (Port McLeay) and Point Pearce. People from these missions were primarily belonged to the Ngarrindjeri¹⁶ (*alt sp.* Narinjeri, Narinyeri, Narrinjeri, Narrinyeri, Ngarrinyeri. Narinyerrie, and Narrin'yerree) and Narrunga¹⁷ (*alt sp.* Narungga, Narrungga) language groupings. The movement of people gained impetus when Aboriginal people gained citizenship and other rights in the 1960s enabling people to move freely from reserves and missions. Most Aboriginal families settled in the northern suburbs of Adelaide and around Port Adelaide due to growing family connections, the availability of public housing and a growing private rental market in those areas but small numbers settled in southern suburbs such as Christies Beach forming strong Aboriginal communities.

Rapid growth took place around Christies Beach between the 1950s and 1970s, aided by public housing construction. The urbanisation of the southern region commenced with the establishment of the Lonsdale industrial area and residential subdivisions at Christies Beach, Morphett Vale and Hackham. In the 1960s and 1970s the South Australian Housing Trust built large areas of public housing in the southern region of Adelaide to house the large number of migrants from the United Kingdom settling in the area. The availability of public housing and employment opportunities made Christies Beach and the surrounding suburbs attractive to a number of Narrunga and Ngarrindjeri families. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s residential subdivision continued into the foothill areas of O'Halloran Hill, Happy Valley, Flagstaff Hill and Woodcroft. By the early twentieth century, the area's wine making and beaches enticed holiday makers from Adelaide. Coastal townships of Port Noarlunga, Moana, Port Willunga, Sellicks Beach and Aldinga became popular tourist towns with tourism becoming a seasonal support for these communities. The population declined slightly during the early 1990s, and then was relatively stable from 1996, a result of little change in dwelling stock and average household size.

¹⁶ 'Ngarrindjeri' is the name of the language group. Ngarrindjeri are a nation of eighteen groups (*lakinyeri*) comprising of numerous family clans who speak similar dialects of the Ngarrindjeri language and are the traditional Aboriginal people of the lower Murray River, western Fleurieu Peninsula, and the Coorong of southern, central Australia. European Missionary, George Taplin used the term as a collective name for the Lakinyeri following colonisation. In Ngarrindjeri grammar the nyeri or ndjeri suffix means *belonging to* a specific place or area. Some members are now choosing to use dialect names to describe themselves.

¹⁷ The Narrunga people's traditional lands are located on Yorke Peninsula roughly between the towns of Port Broughton and Port Wakefield.

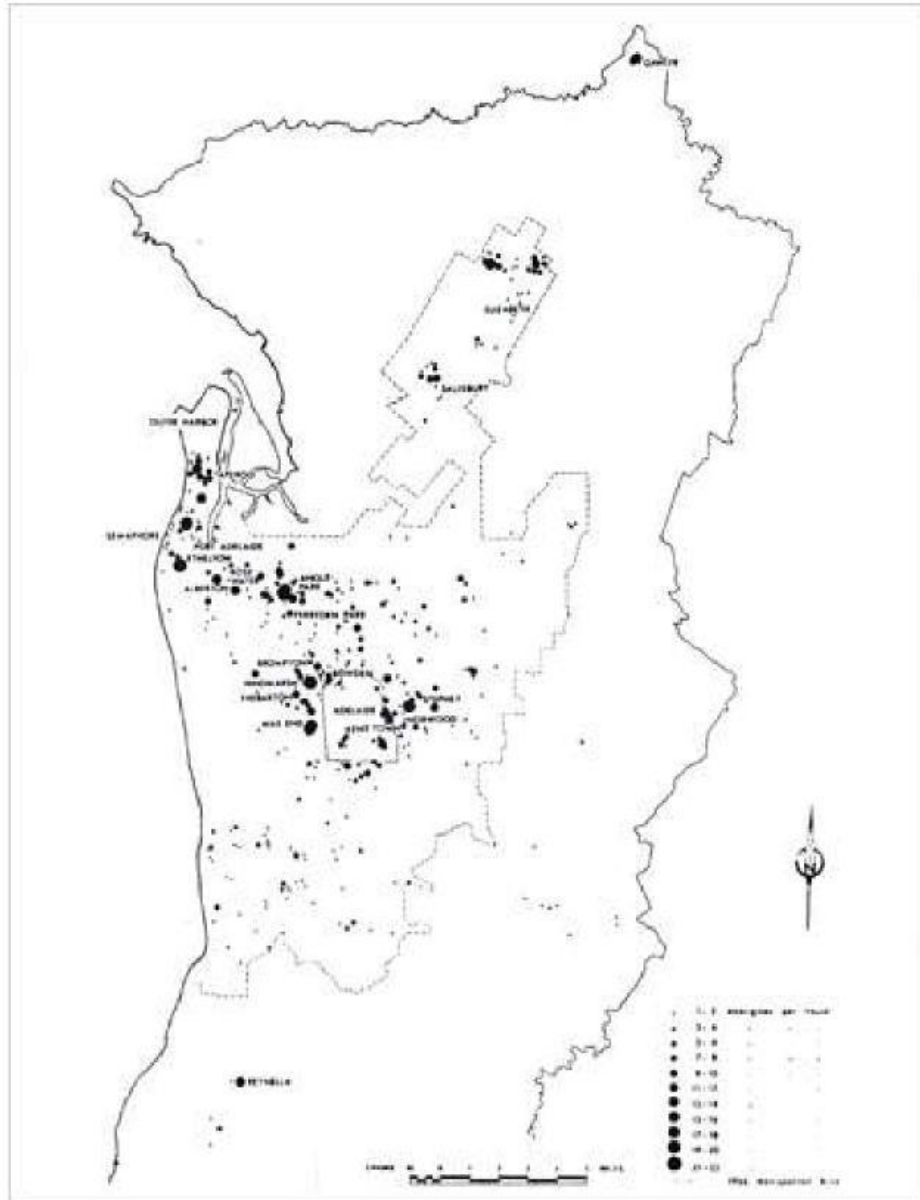


Figure 34: Distribution of the Aboriginal population in the Adelaide Metropolitan Area showing a relatively small Aboriginal population in the southern regions (Source: Gale 1972 p. 100 - 101).

Aboriginal people from further afield have also chosen to reside in the southern region of Adelaide. Christies Beach is home to people from a variety of language groupings including Adnyamathanha (*alt. sp. Adynyamathanha*), Noongar People and those from both intra and interstate and Torres Strait Islander People.

There has been a growing awareness and cultural revitalisation of the area around Christies Beach, partially because of the Aboriginal significance of the area but also because of political agendas, native title and cultural regeneration occurring within Kurna and other Aboriginal cultures. Many projects are addressing the protection of Aboriginal sites and areas of significance and attempting to reconcile relationships between Indigenous people who have lived there for thousands of years and descendents of European settlers. Across Adelaide a growing number of projects acknowledge Kurna people as traditional owners and custodians of the land.



Figure 35: Statue marking Kurna People as the original inhabitants of the Land. The statue is located at West Torrens (Source: <http://www.wtcc.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1389>).

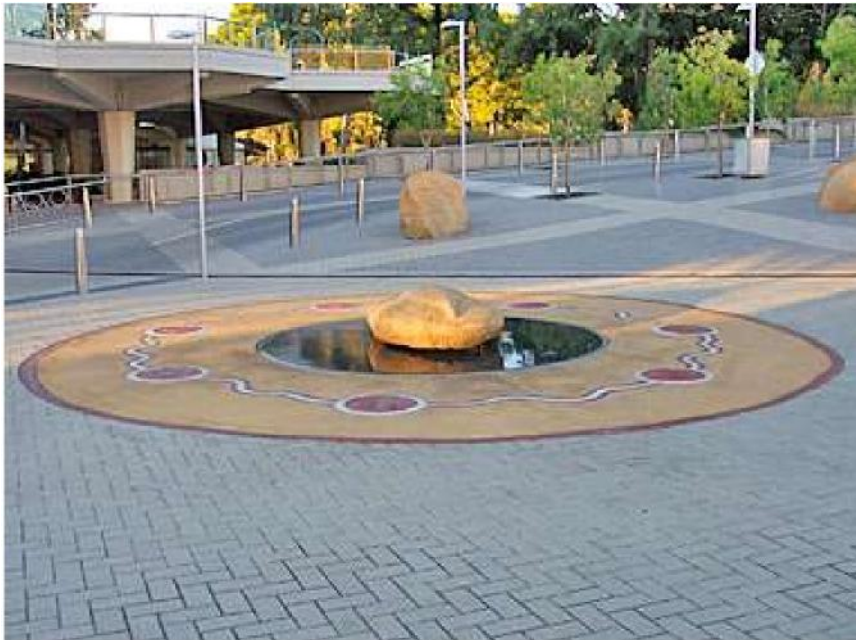


Figure 36: Kurna Meyunna, Kurna Yerta Tappendi – Festival Theatre. This sculpture represents some of the Kurna meyunna story and acknowledges continuous Kurna culture and history. It was designed by Kurna artist Eileen Karpany, Aboriginal artist Darren Siwes and local artist Tony Rosella with the sandstone components sculpted by Donato Rosella (Source: <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/public/art/>).

Recent times have seen a number of Kurna groups come together and form the Kurna Heritage Board to work on key areas such as:

- Developing leadership, governance and administration capabilities;
- Recognizing traditional ownership;
- Promoting Kurna identity, culture and values;
- Protecting significant places;
- Returning culturally important land to Kurna control;
- Creating sustainable economic opportunities;
- Developing the Tjilbruke Dreaming Track (Government of South Australia and Kurna Warra Pintyandi 2010).

More recent times have also seen a number of historical developments in the southern region of Adelaide involving Aboriginal people. The Kurna Heritage Board (formally representing the Kurna people) and the councils of Onkaparinga, Marion, Holdfast Bay and Yankalilla (representing over 300,000 South Australians who live and work in southern Kurna country) developed the Kurna Tappa Iri Regional Agreement 2005–2008. The agreement has a particular focus increasing the capacity and opportunity for Aboriginal people to influence and determine issues that are critical for their well-being and a strong emphasis on practical outcomes, such as the establishment of a business centre, protection of significant places, improving influence and holding of culturally important land and establishing guidelines for developers (Government of South Australia and Kurna Warra Pintyandi 2010).

Cultural Significance

The author has reviewed the available published literature regarding Aboriginal historical, social and cultural knowledge of Christies Beach and adjacent areas to assess knowledge which may be used as design triggers for the project.

In the first instance it is appropriate to consider Kurna cultural knowledge as they are the traditional owners of the land for the project. O'Brien states "Dreamings explain how we know, understand and come to terms with our own country" (O'Brien 2007 p. 10). Central the Kurna people is Tjilbruke Dreaming story which tells "...of law and law in the land" (Williams 2002). The story shared with Tindale in 1934 told that:

One day some men of the Putpunga (meaning 'place of the south') group decided to hunt emus in an area to the north of their region, adjacent to the area of the Tandanja [sic] local group. They knew there would be plenty of emus as the emu was the totem of the Tandanja and not hunted. Taking part were Kulultuwi and his two half- brothers, Jurawi and Tetjawi, all nephews of Tjirbruki, a well respected member of the Putpunga group. Tjirbruki did not accompany them but travelled northwards along the coast, catching fish for his group to eat. On one of his brief excursions inland he found tracks of emus and hunters heading north, and the fresh tracks of a male bird which he decided would be his hunt.

Tjirbruki [sic] pursued the emu as far as Witawili (Sellicks Beach), where he lost the trail. Meanwhile, the three nephews had killed and eaten one emu and were on their way back to Putpunga land when they came across fresh tracks and found an emu. Kulultuwi killed this bird, and they prepared an earth oven to cook it.

Attracted by the smoke, Tjirbruki arrived, annoyed that 'his' emu had been killed by another in contravention of the customary code; once one person had located an animal it was rightly his. He claimed Kulultuwi should have

recognised his footprints. Kulultuwi apologised, saying he had not known the bird was his uncle's. Tjirbruki then continued on his journey.

The emu was cooked in a stone-lined pit, with water poured over the stones to make them steam. Testing to see if the emu was cooked, Kulultuwi cut out the head, and was blinded by a sudden rush of steam from the beak. At this, his two half-brothers, who had been jealous of Kulultuwi's popular esteem in the community, speared and killed him on the pretext that he had broken the law in killing his uncle's emu. They took his body to Warriparinga (Sturt Creek) to be dried and smoked, in the traditional preparation for burial. To explain his absence they then spread a story that Kulultuwi, fearing his uncle's anger, had left on a hunt.

Tjirbruki went looking for Kulultuwi. He suspected that his nephew was dead, and later found where the body had been. Having collected some good spears, he arrived back at his group's camp, where Jurawi and Tetjawi acknowledged Kulultuwi's death but blamed it on people from another tribal group. That night Tjirbruki lit a fire around the sleeping group and, as Jurawi and Tetjawi tried to flee, speared both of them. He took Kulultuwi's dried body to Tulukudank, a freshwater spring (at Kingston Park), and completed the drying process. He then set off south with the remains.

As he rested at Kareledum (Hallet Cove), Tjirbruki burst into tears thinking about his nephew and a spring welled up on the spot. From this site Tjirbruki travelled south with his nephew's body, and at each of his resting places along the coast –Tainbaran (Port Noarlunga), Potartan (Red Ochre Cove), Ruwarun (Port Willunga), Witawili (Sellicks Beach), Karikalinga (Carrickalinga) and Konaratinga - Tjirbruki's tears created freshwater springs. He continued to Cape Jervis, then placed Kulultuwi's remains in a cave below the cliffs, just north of the Cape.

Tjirbruki followed the cave underground to emerge near Mount Hayfield; the yellow dust he shook off became a deposit of yellow ochre. He then turned towards the ocean and arrived at Lonkowar (Rosetta Head). Believing he no longer had reason to live as a man, he smeared himself with fat from a grey currawong, tied its feathers to his arm and began to fly. As befits a creator of springs, he became a bird of the wetlands, either a glossy ibis or a blue crane. His spirit continues in these birds (quoted in Santich, 1998, p. 4 - 6).

The story is multi-layered and is concerned with creation, law and relationships. One aspect of the story explains geographical features along the trail. Fresh water springs appear at the various resting places along the coast where Tjilbruke rested and cried as he carried the body of his nephew to Cape Jervis. These include Kingston Park, Aldinga and Wiitawili (Sellicks Beach) (O'Brien 2007 p. 206; Santich 1998 p. 6). Other important places include Red Ochre Cove (Potarten) which is a significant men's site and source of ceremonial ochre (O'Brien 2007 p. 207). A further deposit of ochre is found near Mt Haywood where Tjilbruke shook off dust after emerging from a cave (Santich 1998 p. 6).

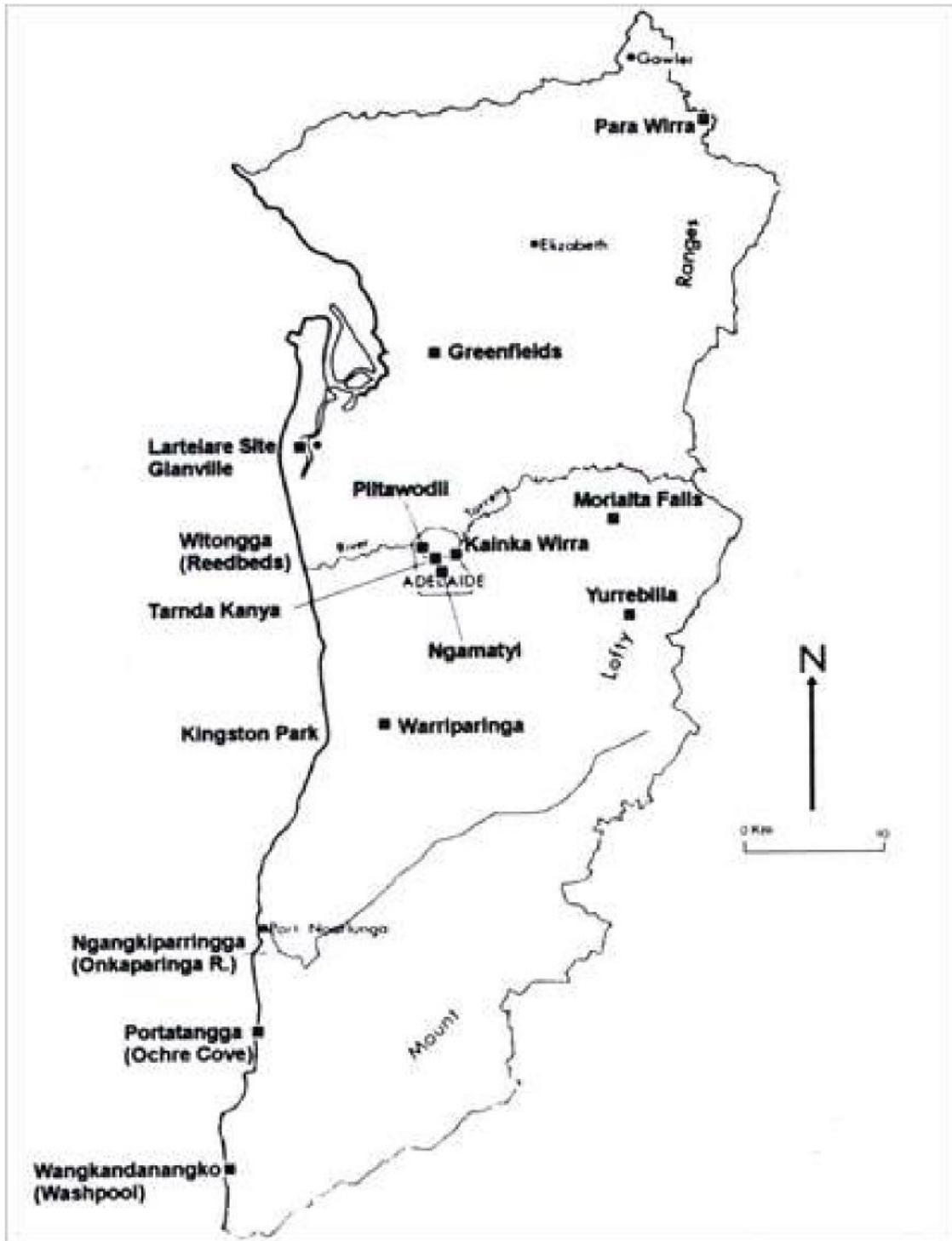


Figure 37: Kurna Sites of Cultural Significance in the Metropolitan Area (Amery 1998 p. 376).

It is important that the designers for the Centre note that various sites along the Tjirbruki Dreaming Tracks have been marked and in certain instances monuments have been erected to demonstrate the significance of the sites. The transmission of oral knowledge through the built form and landscape is highly valued in this arena.

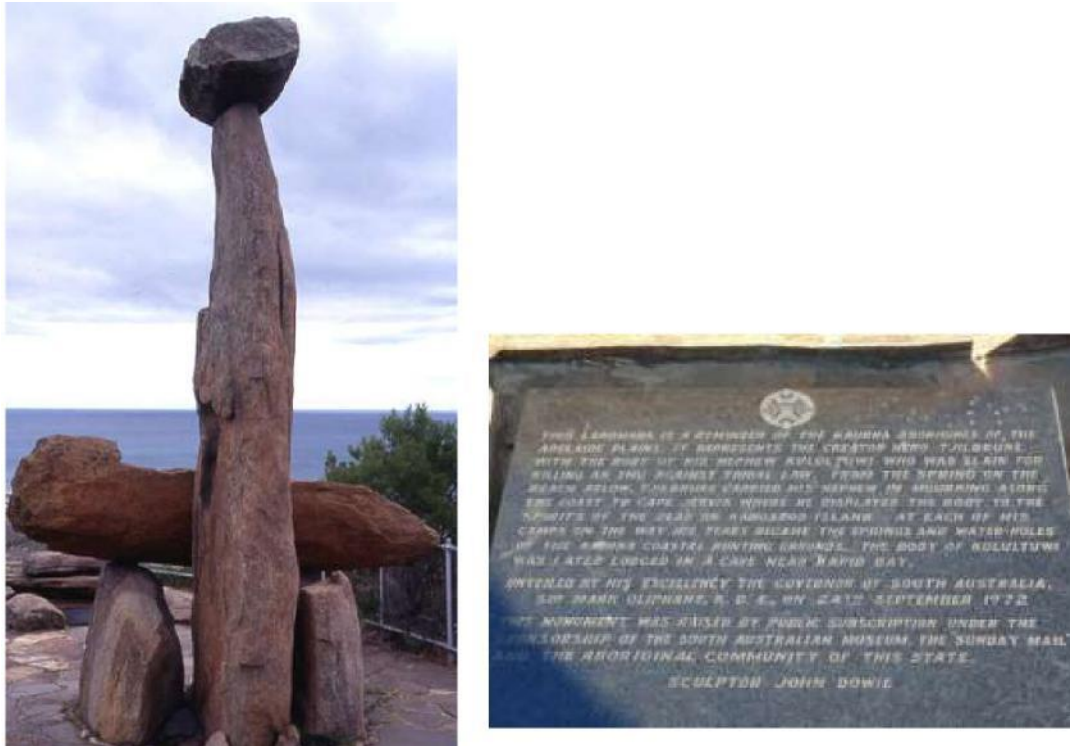


Figure 38: Tjilbruke Monument, Kingston Park, a representation of Tjilbruke bearing his nephew. Created by John Dowie (Photographs: Grant).

The Warriparinga Living Kurna Centre is a further indication of the importance of transferring cultural knowledge through the built form for the potential users of the project. The Warriparinga Living Kurna Centre was developed in 2001 under a Federal Government funded Reconciliation project in partnership with the City of Marion and the Kurna Community (Dixon and Williams Clans). Cultural and spiritual knowledge were represented in various forms including the architecture, landscape architecture and the inclusion of public art.



Figure 39: Warriparinga Living Kurna Centre building and site plan. Cultural knowledge was used to develop the master planning and the form of the building (Photograph Grant, Plan: City of Marion).

There is a range of other Kurna cultural knowledge which may be incorporated into the project. A Kurna language reclamation project¹⁸ has been operating for a number of years. Research has been completed on Kurna seasonal calendar and traditional plant types and use.

There is other relevant cultural knowledge pertinent to the area. It is said that the Rainbow Serpent originated from the coloured sand deposits around Maslin's Beach (O'Brien 2007 p. 209). The area around Christies Beach was called Tailkurrendi, while Noarlunga was called after the bend in the river (*Kurna Warra* nd; Santich 1998 p. 7).



Figure 40: Warriparinga Bridge Mural with representations of the Rainbow Serpent. Murals were produced by a group of young Indigenous people in the 2006 Adelaide Fringe Festival. The design and planning work under the guidance of artist James Cochran (Source: <http://adelaide-in-photos.blogspot.com/search/label/Indigenous%20Australians>).

It may be very pertinent for the designers to consider the use cultural knowledge from other language groups who may be potential users of the project. In particular, the project may be layered with cultural knowledge from Narrunga, Ngarrindjeri, Adnyamathanha and other groups may be layered to Kurna cultural knowledge. It is however imperative that traditional owners and custodians of cultural knowledge are involved in any process in using cultural knowledge as design generators for the project.

¹⁸ See <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/>.

PART 3: PROFILE OF THE USER GROUP

Introduction

The Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre will be located in an area where a growing proportion of the users are likely to be of Aboriginal descent.

At the 2001 census, it was estimated that there were 22,003 Aboriginal and 778 Torres Strait Islander people living in South Australia (ABS 2002). By 2006, the figure had increased to 24,080 Aboriginal people and 1,045 Torres Strait Islander people (ABS 2007). The increase is partly due to improved identification and enumeration of Indigenous people and high mortality rates, but also represents a resurgence of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. If the growth is projected forward, the estimated Aboriginal population of South Australia in 2007 is approximately 26,000 and growing at a rate of about 1000 persons per year in excess of 3% per annum. The Aboriginal population in South Australia in 2007 is approximately 26,000, with almost 60% under the age of 25 years.

Approximately half of the Aboriginal population in South Australia (12,500 people) live in the greater metropolitan area with the balance of the population split evenly between rural centres and the remote areas of the State. The majority of Adelaide's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population reside in the northern suburbs and Port Adelaide and surrounding suburbs however there is a small (and growing) Aboriginal population residing in the southern suburbs of Adelaide.

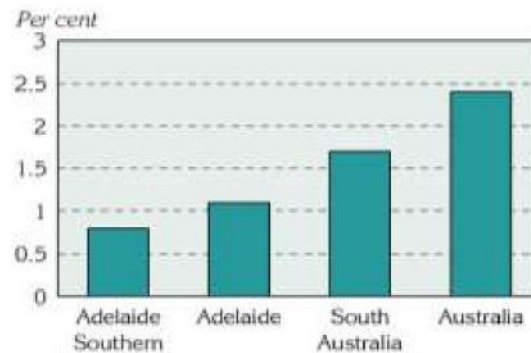


Figure 41: Indigenous Population as a percentage of the total population in the southern region of Adelaide as compared to percentages in Adelaide, across South Australia and nationally (source: PHIDU 2005).

It is important to note that while the Aboriginal population of the region represents a below average proportion of the total Australian population, the Aboriginal population in the region is substantial.

It is important to note that the southern region profile also shows above average proportions of younger people and people aged between 45 and 64 years. The median age of persons within the state and the region is 39 years; for the Aboriginal population it is 22 years. There are a high proportion of families with children and the population is predicted to grow at a rate higher than that for the rest of South Australia.

Population*	Southern Adelaide		South Australia
	Population	%	%
Youth (15-24)	48,167	13.9%	13.7%
Mature (45-64)	93,695	27.1%	26.3%
Aboriginal	2,680	0.8%	1.7%
Disability (15-64)	5,749	2.7%	2.7%

Figure 42: Southern Region - Key Populations. Age groups are based on the latest available Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data; Aboriginal and Disability populations are based on 2006 Population Census (Source: Government of South Australia 2010 derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics).

The users of the project are likely to live locally and may be socially and economically disadvantaged. Christies Beach and the surrounding areas are a mix of 'blue collar' and 'lower middle income' households with significant pockets of underemployment and unemployment. Significant areas of public housing have been developed within the region.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has developed a number of indexes to allow ranking of regions and areas, providing a method of determining the level of social and economic well-being in each region (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). Each index summarises different aspects of the socio-economic conditions of people living in an area and based upon a different set of social and economic information from the census data (*ibid*). The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage is derived from attributes such as low income, low educational attainment, high levels of unemployment, employment in relatively unskilled occupations and variables that reflect disadvantage rather than measure specific aspects of disadvantage (e.g., Indigenous status and whether people are separated/divorced). High scores on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage occur when an area has few low income households and few people with little training or in unskilled occupations. Low scores on the index occur when the area has many low income families and people with little training and in unskilled occupations. Christies Beach records a score of 922.6 on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, a score which indicates considerable numbers of disadvantaged households (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). There are likely to be higher proportion of disadvantaged Indigenous families. For example, rates of unemployment for Indigenous people residing the southern area were considerably higher (20.2 %) as compared to the area's non-Indigenous employment rate of 5.5% (Government of South Australia 2010).

Regional Mobility Patterns

It is important to understand the regional mobility patterns of potential users of the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre to ascertain the numbers, needs and characteristics of users of the centre. Understanding regional mobility patterns allows greater understandings of the specific needs of the user groups (including their health, access, socio-spatial and domiciliary needs). The range of local factors such as history, geography, regional mobility patterns, and regional facilities (Habibis et al 2010 p. 2) needs to be understood to appreciate users' needs in regard to the project.

The geographical movement of individuals and groups impacts the level of demand for various services. Demand for services will change dependent on "...the spatial and temporal dimensions associated with how and where people move, for what purpose, and for how long" (Habibis et al 2010 p. 2). There is a high degree of mobility among the Indigenous communities. Memmott et al (2004) note:

[t]he lives of Aboriginal people in rural and remote Australia are characterised by marked inter and intra-community mobility, with circular movements within a 'mobility region', and a high rate of travel to places (including regional centres) within the region for relatively short periods of time (Memmott et al 2004 p. 1).

Memmott et al (2010) found that the design of services needed to consider the visitation and use by residents. Generally, there are ten areas of service provision which have been found to be intertwined with mobility patterns. These areas are identified as: recreation and sports, shopping and store services, employment, training and social security, visiting traditional country, health services, education services, police, court and correctional services, housing and accommodation services, aged care and funerals, transport and road services (Memmott et al 2010 p. 4).

The majority of permanent migration of Aboriginal people into the region occurred in the 1960s and 70s as Aboriginal people from South Australian missions (in particular, Raukkan and Point Pearce) into Adelaide, predominately to the northern and western suburbs of Adelaide. A large number of Ngarrindjeri and Narrunga families migrated during this period. Some Aboriginal families have moved from the northern suburbs and western areas of Adelaide to the southern regions due to the availability of housing (e.g. opportunities in the public housing and private rental markets), employment opportunities or to escape family conflict. There is a paucity of research on the recent regional mobility patterns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the southern districts of Adelaide. User consultations also indicated that there are a growing number of Noongar¹⁹ families living in the area, some Adnyamathanha people and some Torres Strait Islanders. One may conjecture that regional mobility may occur in response to family and cultural obligations and therefore the regional mobility pattern may include some parts of rural South Australia and Western Australia. The urbanised nature of the Aboriginal population in the area suggests that the regional mobility patterns are likely to be shorter periods of time and directly linked to the locations of other family members.

Age Demographics of Users

The Enabling Group defined the target group for the Centre as people aged between 0 – 100 years. More precisely, there are a number of identified user groups for the project. These are:

- Children 0 – 6 years in age,
- Families and caregivers of the children, and
- Employees of programs delivered through the Centre.

Profiling of the area profile shows above average proportions of younger people and people aged between 45 and 64 years. It is important to note that users for the Centre may include parents in a younger age bracket and caregivers who may be much older than the norm. The needs of the people from a diversity of age groupings will have to be incorporated into the design of the Centre.

¹⁹ 'Noongar' (*alt. spelling*: Nyungar, Nyoongar, Nyoongah, Nyungah, Nyugah and Noonga) literally means Aboriginal people from south-west corner of Western Australia. 'Noongar' is also the name for the common language.

Language Groupings of the Users

It is important to understand the socio- spatial and domiciliary practices, preferences and cultural norms of the potential users of the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre Project. This is generally conducted by developing a profile of the numbers of people from different language groupings for a project by user consultation (Zeisel 1993) and overlaying empirical research with user consultation to understand the socio-spatial requirements, domiciliary practices, preferences and cultural norms of the particular group/s. Developing a user profile of Indigenous users is particularly complex. Government agencies do not generally collect statistical data regarding the specific language groupings of Indigenous users.

Users for the project will come from a number of language groupings including Kurna, Ngarrindjeri, Narrunga, Adnyamathanha and a number of intra and interstate language groupings with English as their first language. Most users are likely to be urbanised Aboriginal people and may have strong links with their traditional community in a mixture of traditional and modern ways.

Characteristics of the Users

One of the user groups for the project are children up to five years of age. Various sources note a number of characteristics of young Aboriginal children suggesting that they are a vulnerable group. The Australian Bureau of Statistics notes:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children generally experience poorer health than their non- Indigenous counterparts in Australia. Several factors contribute to this outcome including the relatively poor socioeconomic status and social disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families as well as the health- related behaviours of the mother during pregnancy (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010).

The MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education (2001) developed a discussion paper, which examined a range of health, education and wellbeing issues for Aboriginal children. Following high level advice, the report summarised nine health issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged from birth to eight years. Those issues are:

- lower life expectancy at birth,
- low birth weight and failure to thrive,
- poor quality diet,
- high disease rates, especially chronic ear and respiratory infections,
- social and emotional wellbeing,
- substance misuse,
- childhood trauma, and
- childhood injury (MCEETYA 2001 p. 15).²⁰

The parents of Aboriginal children tend to have a number of commonalities. Generally it is shown that people may come from a background of socioeconomic disadvantage with significant issues with housing. The MCEETYA Taskforce noted that parents of Aboriginal children are likely:

- to be a single parent,
- to have a young maternal age,
- to suffer from depression or other mental illnesses,
- to live within a environment of family disharmony, conflict or violence,

²⁰ The MCEETYA report highlighted the impact of new evidence of the importance of early childhood and the impact a poor beginning to life has on children. It proposed strategies to improve outcomes for children aged from birth to eight years. The general evidence base does not separate the needs of Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal children; however, research notes the risk and resiliency factors and the impact of multiple risk factors on child development which many Aboriginal children in South Australia experience.

- to lack housing security or live within crowded or substandard housing,
- to abuse alcohol or drugs,
- to have rapid successive pregnancies, and
- to have come from a large extended family (Centre for Community Child Health 2000).

Socio- spatial Needs of Users

There is a large body of research which indicates that there are common socio-spatial needs shared by many Aboriginal people. These included:

- The need to have an environment which supports people focused on living within a pre- existing social/family group that promotes continuing contact with family and kin,
- Maximum contact with the external environment while retaining comfort,
- The need for appropriately designed spaces to avert feelings of 'shame' and the need for appropriate spaces to retreat when feeling 'shame',
- A need for private spaces when dealing with 'private' matters.

There is a paucity of research on the environmental needs of Aboriginal children, women or family groups in public settings. The socio-spatial and domiciliary needs of Aboriginal children and Aboriginal families in early childhood educational settings cannot be identified through the literature. The socio-spatial and domiciliary needs of Aboriginal women may be partially identified or implied from research in other settings. For example, Bell (1998) provided descriptions of various camps established by single Warlpiri women. The various groupings of camps occupied by single women fell into a number of categories which included:

- Single girls who were reluctant or too young to go to their promised husbands.
- Women who were seeking a safe environment while visiting the community without their spouses.
- Women who, following a dispute had temporarily vacated the camps of their spouses.
- Women who were ill, or in need of emotional support.
- Those not yet through the final stages of mourning.
- Women's children and dependents (Bell 1998).

Keys (1995; 1996; 1998; 1998) conducted research on the socio-spatial and domiciliary needs of Aboriginal women. While much of the research is fieldwork in desert regions of Australia (and in particular within the traditional lands of Warlpiri People) and it is not known if the work is transferrable to other regions of Australia, there are salient points which may be useful in the consideration of women's areas within the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre. Keys articulated that Warlpiri women required various areas to meet their social, cultural and spatial needs. Central to this was an external flexible area which functions included:

- A focal point for contacting and gathering together of women.
- A place for women to meet and discuss ceremonial responsibilities.
- An area for food preparation and cooking (Keys 1995 p. 4).

Keys (1995) notes women required gathering areas for "...resting, talking, teaching, cooking and caring" (p. 5) and were best placed in areas for good visual surveillance of arriving visitors with some areas that were 'very private' to allow women "...to talk and prepare for women's business" (*ibid* p. 6).

From examining the age demographics and characteristics of the specific user groups it appears likely there are a number of shared socio- spatial needs. These will include:

- The need to have spaces which allow people to dissipate or be separated quickly and discretely at times of conflict.
- The need to have flexible spaces which can be used by several smaller or larger groups of people.
- The need for spaces specifically designed for people with fluctuating hearing loss, foetal alcohol syndrome, cognitive impairment or suffering trauma (e.g. people in cycles of grief and loss, and victims of domestic violence).
- The need for spaces to be designed for people with complex health issues.
- The need for spaces to be designed to take into account the needs of bariatric users with consideration of how environmental characteristics present barriers that hinder or support healthy habits.
- The need for spaces to be designed for people with a range of mobility issues.
- The need for way finding mechanisms throughout the building to support young users.
- The need for spaces to be adequately supervised without intruding on personal privacy.
- The need for flow between internal and external areas and flexibility in use.

In summary, the data and anecdotal information indicate a number of characteristics of the users which need to be taken into account as part of the design process.

PART 4: DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The project brief devised by the Government of South Australia directs that:

[t]he planning and design of the centres provides an aesthetically pleasing physical environment for children from birth to age 5 that supports children's learning. This includes a focus on providing natural light, connection to outdoors, natural outdoor play spaces and ecologically sustainable principles and initiatives (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 6).

The project brief indicates the centre needs to accommodate a range of functions including:

- Child care,
- Preschool,
- Early years for schooling (where possible),
- Health service provision,
- Family and community programs, and
- Administration (*ibid* p. 4).

The project brief also contains an identification of facilities requirements. The Government of South Australia indicates that the project will need to include the following:²¹

- Reception,
- Staff Room,
- Children's Space,
- Learning Together/Community Room,
- Consulting Rooms,
- Meeting Room,
- Drop in area/resource area,
- Laundry,
- Kitchen,
- Outdoor Space, and
- Car Park (*ibid* p. 6 - 7).

The following sections will present guiding principles for the design of Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre. Further sections will review the current literature, precedents and present the results of consultation with local users to develop some 'best practice' design recommendations in relation to the design of each proposed area for Aboriginal users. The enabling group also identified that the project should include the following:

- A children's sleep room
- A child friendly toilets and shower area.
- A dedicated staff toilet
- A Mothers feeding area (with baby change table etc).

The project brief devised by the Government of South Australia directs that:

[t]he planning and design of the centres provides an aesthetically pleasing physical environment for children from birth to age 5 that supports children's learning. This includes a focus on providing natural light, connection to outdoors, natural outdoor play spaces and ecologically sustainable principles and initiatives (*ibid* p. 6).

²¹ The project brief states that "...[t]hese requirements will be discussed with the Enabling Group and may be modified to reflect the needs of each location" (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 6)

A design team to work with the architectural design team for the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre project was decided during the user consultations. This group was chosen for its knowledge of the project in hand, experience with similar projects and experience and knowledge of early childhood learning environments and the local conditions. The team is to include:

DECS Community Coordinator (Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre): Mrs Susan Roberts,
 DECS Project Manager: Mr Matt Mercorella,
 Principal Christies Beach Primary School: Mr. Ian Filer,
 DECS Senior Project Officers: Ms Deb Moyle and Mr Michael Austin,
 Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre Enabling Committee members: Ms Kirstie Edwards and Ms Asta Wanganeen (Parent Representatives).

In sessions with the author, the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre Enabling Group defined their vision for the centre. They envisaged a place that would be:

- Culturally Welcoming,
- Inclusive of people from all ethnic backgrounds especially from local Aboriginal people and families.
- A place for mothers/sisters/aunties/father/uncles/grandfathers to drop in and feel welcome,
- A showcase for Aboriginal cultures, values, traditional and contemporary customs,
- Accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewpoints and perspectives,
- Child friendly and focused,
- A place for the Aboriginal community to come together,
- A place of healing, wellbeing and relationship building,
- Committed to student learning and welfare,
- Culturally appropriate design, following the land and environment,
- A beautiful exemplar design (both the building and landscape),
- A showcase and statement on the importance of education to Aboriginal people,
- A place where the inclusive partnership of the Aboriginal community and government services was evident and transparent,
- Responsive and proactive to community and individual needs,
- The first port of call and referral point for health, education and other services (including social) with an Indigenous and holistic approach.

The Enabling Group also envisaged that the Centre would promote:

- A sense of belonging,
- Aboriginal perspectives on child rearing, and
- Dreaming stories through its design.



Figure 43: Gunada Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University. This Aboriginal Learning Centre is located adjacent to the main entrance of Curtin University in a purpose designed building. The position of the building, architectural form and contrast to the surrounding buildings makes a very visible statement about Curtin University's commitment to Aboriginal education and social justice outcomes (Source: <http://karda.curtin.edu.au/about/place.cfm>).



Figure 44; Riawunna Aboriginal Education Centre Launceston (Peter Elliott Pty Ltd Architects) The architectural form of this building makes a very visible statement about the commitment to Aboriginal education (Source: <http://oak.arch.utas.edu.au/projects/aus/479/default.htm>).

The project brief indicates the centre needs to address the requirements of a range of functions including:

- Child care,
- Preschool,
- Early years for schooling (where possible),
- Health service provision,
- Family and community programs, and
- Administration (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 4).

The project brief also identifies the facilities required. The Government of South Australia (date unknown) indicates that the project will need to include the following:²²

- Reception,
- Staff Room,
- Children's Space,
- Learning Together/Community Room,
- Consulting Rooms,
- Meeting Room,
- Drop in area/resource area,
- Laundry,
- Kitchen,
- Outdoor Space, and
- Car Park (*ibid* p. 6 - 7).

The following sections will present guiding principles for the design of Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre. Further sections will review the current literature, precedents and will present the results of consultation with local users to develop some 'best practice' design recommendations in relation to the design of each proposed area for Aboriginal users.

General Principles

There are a number of general principles that were gleaned from the literature. The contrast between Aboriginal child-rearing attitudes and practices with the structured routine of traditional early learning settings may be unsettling for Aboriginal children. Creating visual connections to the surrounding community may be one aspect of addressing this.

[S]ervices could be seen, by both children and staff, as somewhat separate and alien places to the rest of the community. Some of the services considered their community to be embedded in terms of what children and staff could see through the fences and what other community members could see of the service from the outside, overcoming to a degree any feeling of separateness. When they were consulted, communities helped to design their children's service to be 'open', emphasising visual and physical access to the surrounding community. This openness allowed local community people walking by to call out to the children or staff inside, to drop in spontaneously when it was morning tea time or to chat through the fence about community business (Fasoli 2007 p. 268 - 269).

This idea of transparency also allows people approaching the centre to know what is going on and who is inside in case avoidance relationships need to be observed.

The Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre will accommodate a range of services and this can foster informal connections between family and community members.

The services created space for engagement around community issues related to child rearing. For example, mothers attended one service to access community education programs even when they had no children currently attending the service. Fathers came to one service to eat lunch with the children. A group of young people undertaking a tourism training program in one community made regular visits to the child care service. They brought animals and fish they had caught on field trips for the children to eat and as a way to share their knowledge with the younger children (*ibid* p. 270).

²² The project brief states that "...[t]hese requirements will be discussed with the Enabling Group and may be modified to reflect the needs of each location" (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 6).

At another site, the community noted that:

The wonderful thing about having many different programs offered in the one centre is that we can work together. An example of this is when the Aboriginal Elders work with the children. Elders show the children some traditional cooking such as how to cook kangaroo tail and fish on a camp fire, and then share food for lunch afterwards (White 2008 p. 14).

Fantin (2011) notes that there are a number of essential elements to the spatial design of Aboriginal environments which include:

- Socio- spatial groupings, location and orientation considered in dwelling and settlement design.
- Visual and aural surveillance of local and broader external environment maximised.
- Avoidance relations considered in organisation and placement of ablutions and other areas including access and egress to public areas and amenities.²³
- Security of personal possession against access and misuse by others (reduce potential for sorcery).²⁴
- Embodiment of cultural reference or identity: if appropriate (Fantin pers. comm. quoted in Grant 2011).

It is strongly suggested that by supporting and responding to cultural imperatives in the design, a more supportive environment that generates less stress for users will be created.

To expand on the concepts, the socio- spatial groupings, location and orientation should be considered in dwelling, institutional and settlement design in terms of orientation to country and orientation to family/kin. Visual and aural surveillance of local and broader external environment should be maximised to allow the:

- Ability to see/hear other dwelling/activity,
- Ability to see/hear other kin activities,
- Ability to use sign language, and
- Ability to see/hear/smell/feel country, weather, fauna and flora.

Avoidance relations should be considered in organisation and placement of ablutions and other areas including access and egress to public areas and amenities and include:

- No dead hallways,
- Multiple entries and exits to all communal spaces sleeping areas, and
- Screened and separated ablutions (gender specific).

The embodiment of cultural reference or identity should be included if appropriate. It should take into account the language groups associated with specific projects. References to ancestral histories may be relevant; however these references should be used with caution, sensitivity and always in consultation with custodians of cultural knowledge.

There are guiding principles for designing 'best practice' environments for Aboriginal users which have been formulated in the institutional and housing context (see Memmott 1998; Memmott and Reser 2000/01; Memmott and Chambers 2002; Memmott et al. 2003; Memmott 2007; Memmott 2009) which the architects may consider as guiding principles for the design process.

²³ This is not relevant to all Aboriginal user groups and avoidance relationships may not be practised by the user groups of this project, however a consideration of the elements such as avoiding dead hallways, multiple entry points and screened and gender specific ablutions are very useful for the socio-spatial planning of this project as levels of conflict between users may be reduced.

²⁴ This is not relevant to all Aboriginal user groups and as many of the users for this project are from urban backgrounds it is unlikely to be applicable.

- Recognise that the Indigenous users for the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre Project will be diverse and contain people from a number of distinct language groups with varying needs. The architectural scale and forms, and choice of materials and finishes should be informed by knowledge of preferred Indigenous lifestyles. All spaces should allow Indigenous users an acceptable degree of personal control over their immediate environment with regard to natural ventilation, views out, temperature, illumination and privacy. Different kin/language groups generally wish to gather as distinct social groups. It is important that the design allows opportunities for people to socialise in pre-existing social/family groups and there should be sufficient separation to dissuade mixing between social groups and the design should allow visual separation and some acoustic privacy. Consider the use of external private spaces for Indigenous users experiencing shame²⁵ and/or in need of stress relief. Particular regard should be paid to the significant impact that being 'out of country' may have upon some Aboriginal users. Consideration should be given to areas being planted with a range of regional plants and vegetation, the use of regionally specific artwork which contact people to traditional lands.
- A large number of the users will have a range of complex pre- existing health and mental health conditions affecting general health, mobility and feelings of well- being. There will also be a significant proportion of older users coming to the centre as employees, relatives and carers of children. Given the significant gap between the life expectancies of Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal people, the design requirements of this group should be identified and incorporated into the project. The centre needs to have adequate heating and cooling. Poor temperature control can frustrate users and in severe cases contribute to temperature- related sicknesses. Most Aboriginal users will choose radiant heat (wood burning ovens are generally preferred option although this may not be possible). Note: thermal preferences are likely to be different for Aboriginal people from other user groups (Grant 2008; Hansen et al. in review).
- Recognise the ability to embrace Indigenous spirituality and culture as a key design trigger. Built environments can respond to the cultural identity, history and spirituality of Indigenous users. Design generators can incorporate relevant aspects of contemporary Aboriginal cultures (e.g. sport, music, etc). While the design should be characterised by Indigenous symbolism and meaning, integration with the landscape should occur to show Indigenous connectedness with the land. It is important to note that architectural symbolism (literal or implied) should only result from an informed and culturally-appropriate design process and avoid tokenism in the design process (i.e. building in random Indigenous symbols simply for the sake of having them) (see Memmott and Reser 2000/01).

²⁵ Aboriginal constructs of shame are markedly different from the western norm (Hutchings 1995) and those experiencing feelings of shame may display a range of behaviours.



Figure 45: Kalkadoon Aboriginal Sobriety House, Mount Isa (architect: Deborah Fisher). Using appropriate signs and symbols is crucial. Often the most appropriate symbols are not elaborate. An archway of crossed spears is located above the Kalkadoon Aboriginal Sobriety House entrance gateway as a modest monument. The Kalkadoon are described as the people of the Eyre region, well known for the ferocious and courageous 1884 battle fought against the Native Police (Photograph: Architecture Australia).



Figure 46: Wilcannia Hospital Redevelopment (Merrima Indigenous Design Unit) Architecture Australia noted “[t]he architects designed the new building as an insertion into the story of the river landscape, with tectonics developed from the river’s living qualities” (Photograph: Power House Museum).

- The use of natural materials and organic designs may promote positive links with the natural environment, and are generally worth exploring as an architectural approach. However, the use of natural surfaces, natural materials and finishes needs to include due consideration of other factors such as dust²⁶ control. Consider locating the building to take advantage of maximum breeze but it is important to avoid strong winds and again, dust.

²⁶ High levels of dust in the air cause abrasion and inflammation of soft tissues of the body. The soft tissues are more likely to get infected. Dust in the air contributes to respiratory, skin and eye diseases; for example, dust aggravates the eyes, causing inflammation of the conjunctiva. Dust also carries bacterial and viral infections, so levels of respiratory disease, skin infection, TB and asthma are also affected.

- Consider domestic-scale buildings and outdoor settings in order to humanise the scale, rather than large-scale complex types. There is some evidence to suggest that Aboriginal users may be architecturally conservative in relation to residential buildings (Memmott 2003) but it is unknown if this extends to public buildings (the conservatism generally does not extend to the selection of colour for external finishes).
- Views to natural landscape (both inside and beyond the perimeter of the complex) from all spaces will be beneficial. Visual and aural surveillance of local and broader external environment should be maximised, allowing users to see/hear other dwelling/activities, the activities of other people in the language group cluster, to see/hear/smell/feel country, weather, fauna and flora and allow the users to use sign language (Indigenous people generally prefer to maintain adequate sight lines from all spaces in their day-to-day activity pattern).²⁷ Consider orientation to the potential views when positioning and orientating buildings and other spaces. Generally the preferred view is to the horizon (although this is not always possible). Maximise users' access to external environment, allowing users to experience climatic elements. Feeling the sun on one's face is important. Check whether the Centre provides a place where the Aboriginal user can choose to sit/lie and feel the sun on their face if they choose (Grant 2008).



Figure 47: Gunung Willam Balluk Koorie Learning Centre, Kangan Batman TAFE (Architects: Greg Burgess). This precedent demonstrates the use of cultural knowledge to generate form and the extensive use of natural materials. The description of the building states “[i]t was requested that the building forms express something of the local Wurundjeri Culture, which can be seen in the eagle like form of the roof, and to celebrate water, canoes, as these are river people. Rain water free- falls from the large beak spout onto rocks, and inverted- canoe skylights cast pool patterns under the entrance canopy. The building opens out on to landscaped gathering spaces in the north and a public park in the south” (Photographs: www.gregoryburgessarchitects.com.au).

²⁷ Much on the emphasis on sight lines is related to hearing loss as well as cultural preference. Aboriginal people are likely to experience up to 10 times the prevalence of ear disease compared to the male non-Indigenous population. By adulthood hearing loss can be present in up to 70 per cent of Aboriginal people in a community.

- The height of accommodation buildings to accommodate the various groups should be ascertained through direct consultation (if possible) or investigated through other means. Generally it is advocated that low ceiling heights are avoided (Memmott and Eckermann 1999). Accommodation for desert people should be single storey and provide a strong visual connection to the ground. The use of decks is possible but their application should be consulted with the users (Grant 2008).



Figure 48: Warriparinga Kurna Living Cultural Centre, Marion (Architects Phillips/Pilkington Architects Pty Ltd in association with Habitable Places) A number of features in the building ensure the user stays firmly connected with country. Boardwalks are integrated into the flooring providing a physical, visual and sensory link to the ground below, as well as operating as a way-finding mechanism (Photograph: Grant).

- Internal layout, circulation and links between major spaces need to be easily read for way finding and orientation. Blind corridors are best avoided. Include external spaces when developing relationship diagrams. Any rooms or spaces that are intended for the joint use of both men and women must be planned with at least two entry points to allow the continuance of avoidance behaviours. Consider multiple entries and exits to all communal areas. Consider apertures in doors or close to doorways that allow some form of transparency allowing occupants or new entrants to be recognised prior to physically meeting. Consider providing sight lines between rooms so Indigenous users can keep visual contact when confined in room. At the same time, privacy should be provided (Grant 2008). Ablutions should be screened and provide privacy. Provide continuous internal spaces with distinct thresholds and clear visual links.



Figure 49: Port Augusta Court Complex (Architect: Denis Harrison, Government of South Australia). The Indigenous artists employed on the project used a representation of a serpent (chosen through consultation) and depicted it in the external areas continuing to the interior of the building to increase legibility and way-finding. This is an example only and more appropriate approaches may be found for the project (Photographs: Ben Wrigley).

- There are indications that Aboriginal involvement in colour selection may lead to interesting results.

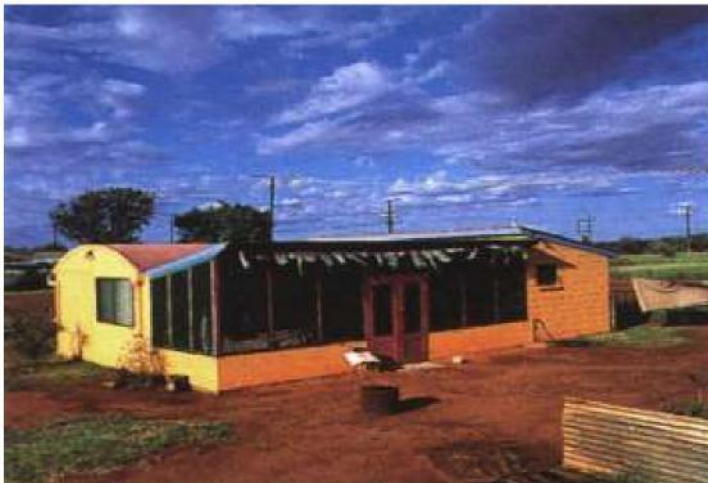


Figure 50: The Lolly House (Architects: Tangentyere Design, Alice Springs). The Aboriginal design experience has shown that Aboriginal users when consulted tend to select a range of colours for external areas of buildings outside those generally seen in public architecture (Photographs: Tangentyere Design).

General Design Recommendations ascertained through user consultation.

The potential users for the centre stressed that:

- The building should be circular shape (people consulted ranged from having the view that the building should have a circular shape to having an organic form).
- The centre should include visual signs of Aboriginality including: flags, symbols, artwork and natural fibres (especially weaving to represent the tradition of Ngarrindjeri cultures). It is very important that the Kaurna sea and land are represented. Children consulted felt the building should be acculturated with the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander Flags and other Aboriginal signs and symbols. Children commonly thought the flags should be flown from the top of buildings and items such as swing seats should be acculturated.

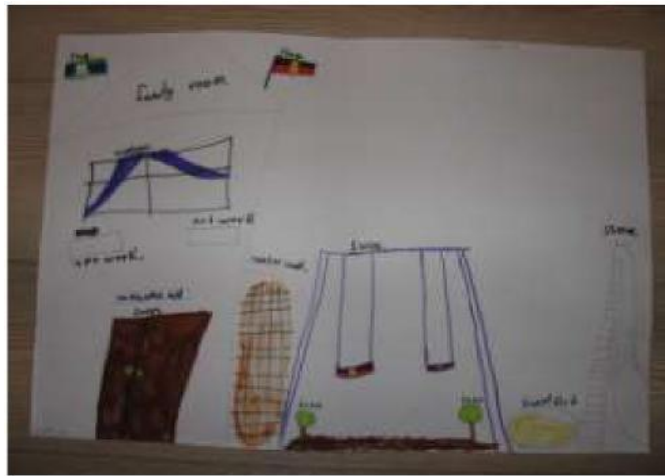


Figure 51: A drawing done by a child during the user consultations displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags flying on the top of buildings and swing seats acculturated with the Aboriginal flag.



Figure 52: Children consulted said that the Centre could be acculturated with a range of signs and symbols that emphasised the Aboriginality of the building. The drawings depicted of animals, the Aboriginal flag and people. It should be noted that depictions of people may be problematic for this setting.

- The inclusion of verse in the interior design of the centre may provide excellent prompts for cultural learning. One user suggested Kaurna language could be incorporated as an art element.
- Relationships between the internal and external environment should be strong and allow internal areas to fully open out to external areas (use sliding or bi-fold doors or similar).
- The building should have lots of windows (children consulted particularly stressed this element).



Figure 53: The children consulted typically drew the centre with numerous windows. This child explained that "the building should have lots of windows at different heights" (Note: this is not a multi-storey building).

- The building and landscape should have a strong link to Kaurna culture. The connecting theme of land, river, sea, sky, plants and animals should run through the design of the building and landscape.
- The design should be unique.
- The design should be showcase the principles of environmentally sustainable design and include water tanks (could form the dual use as wind breaks), a vegetable garden.

Design Recommendations for areas within the Aboriginal Children and Family Centre Entry

The project brief does not outline requirements for the entry area to the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre. This is a critically important area and it may be useful to consider the following points in the design of the approach and the adjacent external area:

- Consider developing a hub for public transport and passenger drop-off points next to the entrance. Consider visitors with children, elderly family members, those with mobility impairment, etc.
- Considering having discrete sheltered waiting areas for visitors outside where people can gather and have some visual and auditory privacy (consider families in conflict when designing). Sometimes people may wait for extended periods outside (being dropped off early, awaiting transport etc).
- Consider incorporating a grassed area with shady trees if possible.
- Consider having a safe place for children to run around outside the centre. Having to closely supervise children in public places due to inappropriately designed environments can be highly stressful.
- Consider how users may access a telephone (to arrange pickup or to contact family).
- Consider incorporating a series of way-finding mechanisms for visitors from the exterior to the internal environments.

Design Recommendations for Entry ascertained through consultation with potential users

- The entrance should be welcoming and provide a focus for children.
- It should present the image of an Aboriginal person at reception as the first visual contact (this requires placing the emphasis on the reception point as the first visual contact for the user).
- The entrance should be provide shelter allow people to have a 'yarn' outside while being protected from the elements.
- The entry should include three flagpoles (Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags).
- The reception should be a large airy space with comfortable seating.
- The reception area should focus on the importance of the child – visual links to the children's areas and display areas for children's artwork.
- A secondary use of the centre either as a handover point for access visits for children was discussed. This may involve using the entry for children to wait during the interchange or for the entry area to be used for supervised access visits outside operating hours.



Figure 54: Port Augusta Courts Complex (Architect: Denis Harrison, Government of South Australia). The external areas designed around the courts complex provide discrete waiting and gathering areas for traditionally oriented Aboriginal people. Note: Photograph taken prior to vegetation being planted (Photograph: Ben Wrigley).

- A number of the potential user groups identified that the entry would also have to act as hub for transport and allow users' convenient and safe access to the Centre.

Reception

The project brief indicates that the reception area should contain two work stations, storage and a manager's office (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 6). In consideration of Aboriginal people's requirements, the design of the reception area needs to be handled with considerable sensitivity as this is often the first point of contact between staff and families/caregivers and children and where users are likely to be most apprehensive and potentially stressed. There are a number of areas for consideration:

- The reception area should be designed to promote a high degree of human interaction between staff, children and families/caregivers.
- Provide view of external waiting areas from the reception area.
- Minimise static security elements and soften environment to promote meaningful human interaction.
- Consider the way different user groups may be streamed at reception. It may be useful to conceptualise users into two streams being those accessing children's areas and those using family services. Some people using family services may need to have limited or no contact with children using the centre.

- Consider employing appropriate Aboriginal signs, colours and symbols in the area so it may be viewed as an Aboriginal friendly space.



Figure 55; Waiting Area, Balgo Airport. Soft furnishings, staff interaction and appropriate Aboriginal signs and symbols may be used beneficially in the reception and induction areas (Photograph: Grant).

- Consider incorporating furniture and furnishings with a high degree of comfort and access to beverages within the reception area.
- Consider including an electronic notice board as part of the reception areas to inform users on programs.
- The design of the reception area should have strong relationship with the external environment and have adequate natural ventilation.
- Consider vantages from the entrance perspective. Providing an internal view into the children's play area may provide a vantage and emphasise the importance of children.
- Consider the acoustic environment. Ensure it is not too sharp and consider features which will allow the entrance of natural sound. Consider the needs of people with fluctuating hearing.²⁸
- Consider seating in regard to the size of family groups and the possibility of families in dispute being present at the same time.
- Consider how people can be adequately separated and led into other areas with limited fuss should family conflict occur.
- Design the area so children do not have to be highly supervised (e.g. consider how to minimise 'escapes' by young children).

Local consultations introduced a number of additional design recommendations for the reception area.

- Users stated that the area must afford a high degree of comfort.

²⁸ The users consulted for the Whyalla Aboriginal Children and Family Centre suggested that their project be fitted with a T Coil network. This may be worthy of consideration for this project.

- Adjacent pram storage.
- Potential users suggested the reception must be spacious and welcoming and offer a high degree of human interaction.
- It was suggested that groups should be streamed at reception into two groups – those using areas connected with family services and children/parents accessing children’s areas (e.g. preschool and occasional care areas).
- Reception should have an informal area where parents and others can have a ‘cuppa’.
- Users consulted that a toy library area should be incorporated (not within brief at this point).
- Areas should offer access to storage for personal possessions should parents require this service.

Staff Room

The project brief indicates that the staff room should accommodate up to 15 adults in a shared space (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 6). There is a potential for the staff room to also be used as an informal meeting area for community (see the precedent of the Tinyeri Early Children’s Centre at Murray Bridge). As noted in the literature, it is planned that a variety of services will be delivered from the Centre which will bring:

...different people into them [the centre] in addition to the parents receiving care for their children. This was seen in the way meetings that involved the whole community occurred in some services or, more informally, when people dropped by to have a chat or cup of tea (Fasoli 2007 p 270).

There are no design recommendations in the literature however it should be noted that staff members may require a discrete ‘time-out place’ or place to retreat should a user come into the centre that a staff member does not wish to have contact with. It is also assumed that the general principles relating to design in an Aboriginal context also relate to design for Aboriginal employees.

The potential users felt staff should have a separate non- public area which includes a secure area to store valuables, kitchenette and table seating for 7 – 8 people.

Children’s Space

The project brief indicates that the children’s space should have capacity to accommodate 50 children with the capacity to divide areas to two areas: area one to accommodate 15 children aged two years and under and 35 children aged over 2 years of age. The areas are to comply with child care licensing requirements and have a withdrawal sleeping room, staff preparation area, office, kitchenette, bottle preparation area, store, nappy changing facilities, toilets, direct access to outdoor play, verandah and shade (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 6).

Consideration should be given to the criteria set out in this brief and adjustments made wherever possible. The centre will operate a pre- school and occasional care/crèche and may not have to fit the requirements of long day child care (although it may be useful to consider designing the building so child care being delivered at a later stage). It was noted through the consultations that separate areas for babies may not be required as users would prefer that children and babies and not physically separated.

In general, education areas for Aboriginal people tend to be less formalised and provide more opportunities for social interaction than settings designed for non-Aboriginal users. Much of this is about reducing the often negative experiences of traditional class room settings, a preference for the 'hands on learning style' and the need for users to be socially connected prior to undertaking education. Much emphasis is generally placed on interlinking learning and social spaces and the connection to the external environment as being integral to the learning experience.

Most 'best practice' educational programs delivered to Aboriginal people are not delivered solely from a literacy and numeracy perspective. For example, many remote and rural community schools retain a community advisor or Elder to direct and advise teaching staff on the direction of their teaching. Many schools often split teaching periods to include cultural learning either as a distinct period of teaching or may integrate cultural learning into mainstream teaching. Many schools in urban centres retain the services of Aboriginal liaison officers (or similar) to advise teaching staff and provide support for students. Over the last decade, there have been attempts to integrate cultural learning into the mainstream education of Aboriginal people and to deliver programs in appropriate spaces and places. There seems to be a very valid case for considering this perspective in the preschool context.

The integration of cultural knowledge into the education area may significantly enhance this project. Mainstream education could complement cultural activities. There may be a potential for both to be integrated. It should be noted that cultural learning in structured environments is often difficult and many early learning centres noted that they took

...children 'out bush' to swim in water holes, to teach them about bush tucker, to share knowledge of country or simply to get away from the centre and spend some time in the bush was a common practice undertaken in diverse ways depending on the context. These trips were much more than mere 'excursions'; they were considered to be critical opportunities for cultural learning (Fasoli 2007 p. 268).

Parents and staff at child-care centres also commonly state children often prefer to be outdoors (Rogers 2004). It is stated that

Many Indigenous children and adults find the bricks and mortar place of learning stifling/choking ...[and] unhelpful for learning to happen at its best. There is a preference for the outdoors (Priest, 2005 p. 31).

It seen that:

[i]mportant to the development of the child's 'spirit' is the ability to relate to the physical worlds including the land, water, air, bush, sky, rocks and weather patterns (Hutchins, 2007 p. 41).

Images of outdoor areas associated with family and children's centres illustrate plantings of bush tucker plants or native species, use of natural materials and the incorporation of outdoor meeting spaces. There are also many references to having good visual connection between indoors and outdoors.



Figure 56: Otaki Kindergarten, New Zealand. The outdoor play area is constructed from natural materials (Photograph: Meade 2006).

General Recommendations – Children's Space

- The children's area should be a calm and soothing area. The planning design, and fit out should achieve a calm and ordered environment. Consider the use of colour, acoustics and other aspects of the design to this aspect.
- The appearance of this area should look 'Aboriginal' to show the importance of education. Consider cultural knowledge as the basis of the design (consider spaces as story telling opportunities and consider putting prompts and links for children to engage in using language, use of colour palette from the local environment).



Figure 57: Warriparinga - Living Kaurra Cultural Centre, Marion (Architects Phillips/Pilkington Architects Pty Ltd in association with Habitable Places). Part of the walking path around the building incorporates the re-telling of an important oral history through various sculptural pieces, vegetation and the walking trail itself. At the entrance to Warriparinga is the Tjilbruke (or Tjirbruki) Gateway. This 'forest' of dead tree trunks was created by Kaurra artist Sherry Rankine and working with Margaret Worth and Gavin Malone and tells the story of the Kaurra ancestral being Tjirbruki. Materials used include coloured sands from the Red Ochre Cove area, morthi (Stringbark) trunks salvaged from plantation timber and other gums felled for the Southern Expressway. Circles around the tree trunks symbolise the fresh water springs formed from Tjirbruki's tear drops. The flow patterns on the ground refer to the gully winds for which the area is known, as well as the flow of the river and of life (Photograph: Grant).

- Provide areas for cultural activities (e.g. fire pit, and external gathering area).
- Major spaces should link to the external environment. Consider the free flow between spaces required to manage children with foetal alcohol syndrome and other cognitive impairments.
- Maximise the use of natural materials. Use natural materials wherever possible in preference to resorting to other finishes
- Maximise the sensory environment. The use of elements which engage the child with sound, smell (plants etc), tactile elements through the natural environment are to be encouraged. The use of elements such as water course, and textual/sensory plantings were seen as very important.
- Consider the acoustic needs of children with fluctuating hearing loss. This is a highly neglected area.
- Limit the use of obvious barriers such as fences. When fencing is required consider sensitive choice, placement and plantings so that external area does not look like a series of yards.
- The joint use by Aboriginal male and female parents from traditionally oriented backgrounds of facilities should be carefully assessed to ensure that traditional avoidance practices are not breached and do not act to deter people's participation.

Local consultations introduced a number of design recommendations for the children's space/s.

- The spaces should be circular and 'get away' from rectangular design.
- Play areas should be designed as the 'best of their type' and be constructed of natural materials while adhering to the highest safety standards.
- A small forest should be planted to give children a variety of seasonal experiences of plants (e.g. plant with deciduous and evergreen trees).
- The play area should provide hiding areas for children.
- The outdoor space should have no fixed structures (shade should be provided from trees if possible).
- Users felt the crèche area could be incorporated into the preschool area and there was no reason to have a separate 'babies' room.
- The inclusion of sculpture elements into children's outdoor areas would be seen as beneficial. Musical elements could be included in such sculptures.



Figure 58: Designers should consider play equipment constructed of natural materials that connects the child with the natural environment (Photograph: unknown).

- The outdoor area should include a digging patch, an area to keep small animals, a vegetable and flower garden for both adults and children.
- The external play area should contain be designed with a water course to appear as a natural element.
- The inclusion of mounds for rolling, rocks for climbing and large trees for shade would be seen as favourable.

- There should be internal and external quiet spaces for both adults and children.
- The children consulted emphasised the importance of the development of the external play area. This was seen as the most important element of the children's area. Children consulted generally stated the design should include the following elements: swings (various heights), a sand pit, water play, slides, and some grass.
- Windows at children's height should be incorporated.
- Users consulted stated that it was important that parents would like to come and observe children participating at preschool and not be separated from the child. Seating to allow several family members to sit and observe indoor and outdoor play would facilitate this. Other measures to include the family where possible should be considered.
- Colours should reflect local area and nature and connect children with the sea, land and sky. The use of primary colours (including the play equipment) was not seen as appropriate all colours should be drawn from the local environment.



Figure 59: Nunkuwarn Yunti, Adelaide. The frontage of the building (a former retail showroom) has no signs indicating it is a community controlled health centre, but instead is decorated in specific colours and layered with symbols and icons (Photograph: Grant).

- External area should be able to be supervised easily by staff.
- Community members noted all external areas should be planted with Indigenous plants. Where possible plants with particular uses should be used as teaching tools (e.g., medicinal plants and bush tucker foods).
- Almost all children consulted emphasised that the children's area should have lots of windows and allow the user to move between the internal and external areas easily.

Withdrawal/Sleep Room for Children

It is important to question whether a separate withdrawal /sleep room is necessary given the current practices in Aboriginal child care centres and the body of literature which supports Aboriginal children being part of a group and not separated while sleeping.

- Many Aboriginal children sleep on mattresses at home and sleeping in a cot is likely to be a frightening and alien experience. Consider very low beds or mattresses on floor for resting or sleeping. Consider how an adult would lie/sit next to the child.
- Accommodate choices of sleeping arrangements if possible. Avoid sleeping direct on uncomfortable or thermally unsuitable surfaces.
- The position of the beds/mattresses should be flexible if possible.
- Aboriginal users generally prefer to have natural air flow over the head while sleeping.
- Consider a communal padded area for rest/sleep.
- The provision of an outdoor sleeping/rest area may be advantageous (note this may not be possible with the current brief).

Children's Ablution Areas

- The majority of children consulted indicated that separate toilets for boys and girls were preferable.
- It should be noted that toilet partitions may need to be higher than generally used in such centres to ensure privacy and dissuade children from climbing the partitions.
- Childcare staff indicated that a bath, shower and change areas were necessary inclusion into the children's area.
- The laundry areas may be usefully incorporated into the children's ablution areas for convenience for washing clothes.

Kitchenette in Children's Space

The brief has a kitchenette listed. It is wondered if the kitchenette is proposed for the staff area and a full kitchen is proposed for the children's area?

- Consultations noted that the kitchen should also be able to be used for cooking and dining with children and incorporated into the main learning space. The incorporation of workbenches and eating areas designed appropriately for children of preschool age should be included into the kitchen.
- An adjacent external dining area for children with servery and access from kitchen would be seen as an asset.

Learning Together/Community Room

The project brief indicates that a 'learning together'²⁹/community room should be included in the design. The room should accommodate up to 30 adults (with the capacity to divide the space). There should be direct access to outdoor play and shaded adult seating. The area should contain a verandah, kitchenette and wet area, data points, storage, four workstation office, access to public toilets and nappy change facilities (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 6). The literature notes that flexibility of such a space is important. Priest notes that:

[s]pace for people to be on their own where there is freedom to do what they want without worries. To think what they want to think without anyone else 'poking their nose in'. To give space that lets people make up their own mind where there does not have to be an answer or action coming from the thinking. Space to let people feel powerful inside themselves and do things in a way that is special to them, and space to share with others when ready to do so.

Talking together (dialogue) - Time to talk with others either by using body signs or talking words without feeling 'no good' or rushed. When talking it is important a person finishes what they are saying and never walk between people talking. This is rude; it is better to go behind and around. Truth, humour and indirect talk that leave out direct questioning are critical to quality talks (Priest 2005 p. 30).

Discussions with potential users around the learning together/community room presented the space as a flexible space where a number of activities could be conducted. Note some of the discussions around the various areas placed the 'drop-in area as connected to the reception. The type of activities suggested for this area ranged from cooking classes for parents to meetings and community celebrations. With these discussions in mind it may be useful to:

- Consider having a flexible internal/external area to celebrate community events and for other ceremonies such as NAIDOC, memorial services, musical performances, and as an exhibition space.
- Consider incorporating a larger external space (perhaps incorporating decks or wide sets of stairs with a dual function to act as a stage or podium to overlook the external area) for NAIDOC and other such events.

²⁹ 'Learning Together' is a DECS program for families with children aged birth to four, which has operated in South Australia since 2003. The program is based on national and international research affirming the crucial importance of the very early years of life in laying the foundation for children's learning and well-being.



Figure 60: Decks on Girrawaa Creative Work Centre (Architects: Merrima Indigenous Design Unit) provide Aboriginal users a place to sit in the sun and observe the surroundings and provide a podium for other events (Photograph: Grant).

- A cultural area should be developed adjacent to the community room. This should include a fire pit and Indigenous plants.



Figure 61: Fire Pit Area, Kanggawodli Caring House, Dudley Park (Photograph Grant).

- A kitchen where cooking classes can be conducted is envisaged by users for this space (note kitchenette listed in brief).
- A storage area for chairs and tables should be located adjacent to the learning together/community area.
- Good connections with the external environment are paramount.
- Access to this area without having to go through children's program space is important.
- Woman and men requested separate toilets with discrete entry points. It was requested that showers be installed for the occasional user who may require a shower.
- A separate external access to the community area may be useful so that people who may have issues can access programs discretely.
- Consider how ambulance service may access this area at times of emergency.

Consulting Rooms

The project brief indicates that two consulting rooms should be included in the design and these should be suitable for use for consulting, counselling and office functions. They should contain a hand basin, data points, adjoining door and store area. (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 7).

There is a paucity of published material and evidence based research which can be applied to this part of the project. No design guidelines have been devised, although a number of Aboriginal medical/health centres have been designed both for urban, rural and remote Aboriginal contexts. Given the little that is known about the design of consulting rooms for Aboriginal people, information about the design of such a building was sought. Local consultations introduced a number of design recommendations for the consulting areas

- Consideration should be given to having multiple entry points to be able to access the consulting rooms to cater for the cultural mix and age issues. Design would have to allow staff to be responsive if this is taken as an option.
- Consider providing one consulting room with direct access to the exterior to allow patients to leave (or arrive) very discretely as required.
- Consider providing external private court yards for consulting rooms.
- It is noted that the use of screens in waiting areas are generally pointless. Full walls offering acoustic and visual privacy are preferable.
- Consider providing audiovisual capacity to waiting areas to deliver preventative health information.
- Entrances to consulting rooms should not be visible from reception.

- Consider providing a consulting room with a separate examination room (each with its own entrance and a door between) for increased confidentiality and to reduce feelings of shame by users.
- If hard copy files are to be used ensure it is preferable that there is a separate enclosed area where people can work on the files without being seen.
- Consider providing the capacity to allow the operation of a range of appropriate software packages (the facility should allow the use of the Communicare Package and other appropriate programs).
- Consider how ambulance service may access the consulting rooms at times of emergency.
- The environment should promote a high degree of human interaction between patients and staff.

Meeting Room

The project brief indicates that the meeting room should accommodate up to six adults, and be suitable for use for meetings, counseling and meetings of small groups (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 7). There is no literature relating to Aboriginal use of such an area and local consultations did not specifically address this area.

Drop in area/resource area

The project brief indicates that the drop in/resource area should accommodate 8 – 10 adults, and be suitable for informal adult learning. It should contain comfortable seating, tea/coffee making facilities, accessible resources and data points (*ibid* p. 7).

Local consultations suggested that the drop in resource centre should be incorporated into the reception area for use by parents and families. It is unsure whether the brief intended that the drop in area be an area for visiting service agencies or for use by the general community (e.g. office space at the Centre). This should be clarified.

Laundry

The project brief indicates that the laundry should accommodate an industrial washer and dryer, a trough and shower (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 7). The literature notes that Children's Centres often offer laundry services:

...aimed to reduce scabies and other skin infections by washing all the children's clothes every morning and changing them into centre clothes which were then washed at the end of the day. This was a very time- consuming practice but one that everyone agreed was vital. In one centre it took a year to build up the children's health to the point where they were able to devote effort and attention to other areas of priority (Fasoli 2007 p. 268).

Note the users desired that this area be incorporated into the children's ablutions area. It may be pertinent to consider in remote housing design that the:

- Laundry should provide individual access to laundry washing and secure drying (to reduce potential for sorcery) (Fantin and Greenop 2009).

Kitchen

The project brief indicates that the kitchen area should be suitable for the preparation of meals for children and cooking classes for adults (Government of South Australia date unknown p. 7). Improving children's health outcomes is an important aim of the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre and the size, location and access to facilities for cooking and cleaning facilities are important concerns. Within the literature there was some mention of the capacity of improving health outcomes and it was noted that:

The types of kitchen equipment and food found in a remote Indigenous children's service are often not available within people's homes, making the service very attractive places to both adults and children (Fasoli 2007 p. 268).

These centres found that fundamental concerns about nutrition and health had to be addressed before more 'traditional' concerns of child care centres.

Anaemia, gut infections, dietary insufficiency and food affordability are also well- documented challenges to children's development and create constant stress for families. All of the children's services focused on reducing this stress through programs directly targeting childhood nutrition (*ibid* 2007 p. 268).



Figure 62: *Mana Tamariki, Palmerston North (New Zealand) (Architects: Tennent and Brown) Images show the kitchen and alcove for hand washing next to kitchen (Photographs: Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2006).*

Within the local consultations, the users and enabling group identified that three separate kitchens should be incorporated into the project - a kitchenette for staff, full sized kitchen for cooking classes and food preparation for children, a full sized kitchen for adult cooking classes. These areas have been discussed in other parts of this report.

SUMMARY

This project presents excellent opportunities to address the often neglected design issues for Aboriginal people in a project which has the potential to have very positive outcomes for the Aboriginal users. There is a capacity to achieve an exceptional design outcome which could be ground-breaking in the design of early learning environments and more generally in the genre of Aboriginal architecture and design.

The team should understand first and foremost that the Centre is located on Kurna Land and acknowledgement should be made of this in the design. A number of other language groups (i.e. Narrunga, Ngarrindjeri, Adnyamathanha, Noongar People, Torres Strait Islanders and others) have connections with area and their stories and cultural histories should be represented and may be usefully employed as design generators. There is a variety of Dreaming stories, and aspects of the various cultures which may also serve usefully as design generators. The Enabling Group is very keen that Aboriginal people from other areas should be welcomed and their cultural backgrounds and history respected and included. A dichotomy arose in the consultations regarding appropriate signs, symbols and colours for the design. Potential users discussed using the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and other similar symbols to acculturate the building while discussing the importance of using a colour palette which reflected the local environment and creating a calm environment which reflected nature. Designers should further consider appropriate signs, symbols and colours to acculturate the building and landscape.

The user group is predominately comprised of urban Aboriginal people. The users range from 0 – 100 years which present a range of factors which need to be considered in the design. From the needs analysis of the user groups, it is evident that the users may have complex physical and mental health issues which need to be addressed in the design. The design of the centre will have to cater for users with fluctuating hearing loss, cognitive impairment, varying levels of disability and mobility. Some users will be suffering trauma in various ways (e.g. as a result of domestic violence and grieving and loss) and therefore it is very important that it is a calm place which welcomes Aboriginal children and their family.

The inclusion of art is critical to the success of the project. The involvement of local Indigenous artists will add considerable value to the project. Developments in recent years have included artists moving between mediums. To maximise the design outcomes, it is suggested artists be involved from the preliminary design process and work with the architect, landscape architect and other designers through an experienced coordinator.

There are some areas in the brief which may require clarification. The brief is detailed with facilities to enable the Centre to conduct a preschool and crèche. The enabling group has indicated that it would like these two functions combined if possible. The clarification of services would be useful to allow the design team to fully consider what facilities the Centre requires. The brief also needs to detail other facilities. It does not detail change rooms and gender specific toilets for adults and children. The function of the 'drop in' centre is not clear and there is no reference to housing for the 12 person bus which will service the project. There also seems to be some confusion regarding the number and placement of kitchens. There needs to be identification of facilities: confidential spaces for files and chemicals, cultural spaces, shed and outdoor storage. It would appear very prudent that the brief is revisited and clarified by the architect with design team appointed for the project.

The design of the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre has the potential to accommodate environmental preferences of Aboriginal users. The design recommendations presented in this report focus on the importance of Aboriginal domiciliary practices, lifestyles structured around the social group and the need to maintain connections to country and kin for all Aboriginal people. The users of the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre represent some of the most marginalised members of Australian society. There is a capacity to improve the outcomes for Aboriginal people through design. Indigenous users have differing and varying cultural needs for the built environment. Understanding and translating the salient aspects of the culturally specific responses of Indigenous peoples to environmental settings may produce environments which better meet the needs of groups and in this instance enhance learning outcomes. To successfully design environments for Aboriginal people, architects and other designers must understand the nature of those lifestyles. It is not the aim to identify an architectural solution for individual behaviours, but to highlight a series of behaviours and the associated issues for the design of the project which may require consideration by a designer. The design of appropriate environments for the Christies Beach Aboriginal Children and Family Centre provides excellent opportunities to address socio- economic marginalisation and to make an architectural statement on the importance of the child and the family.

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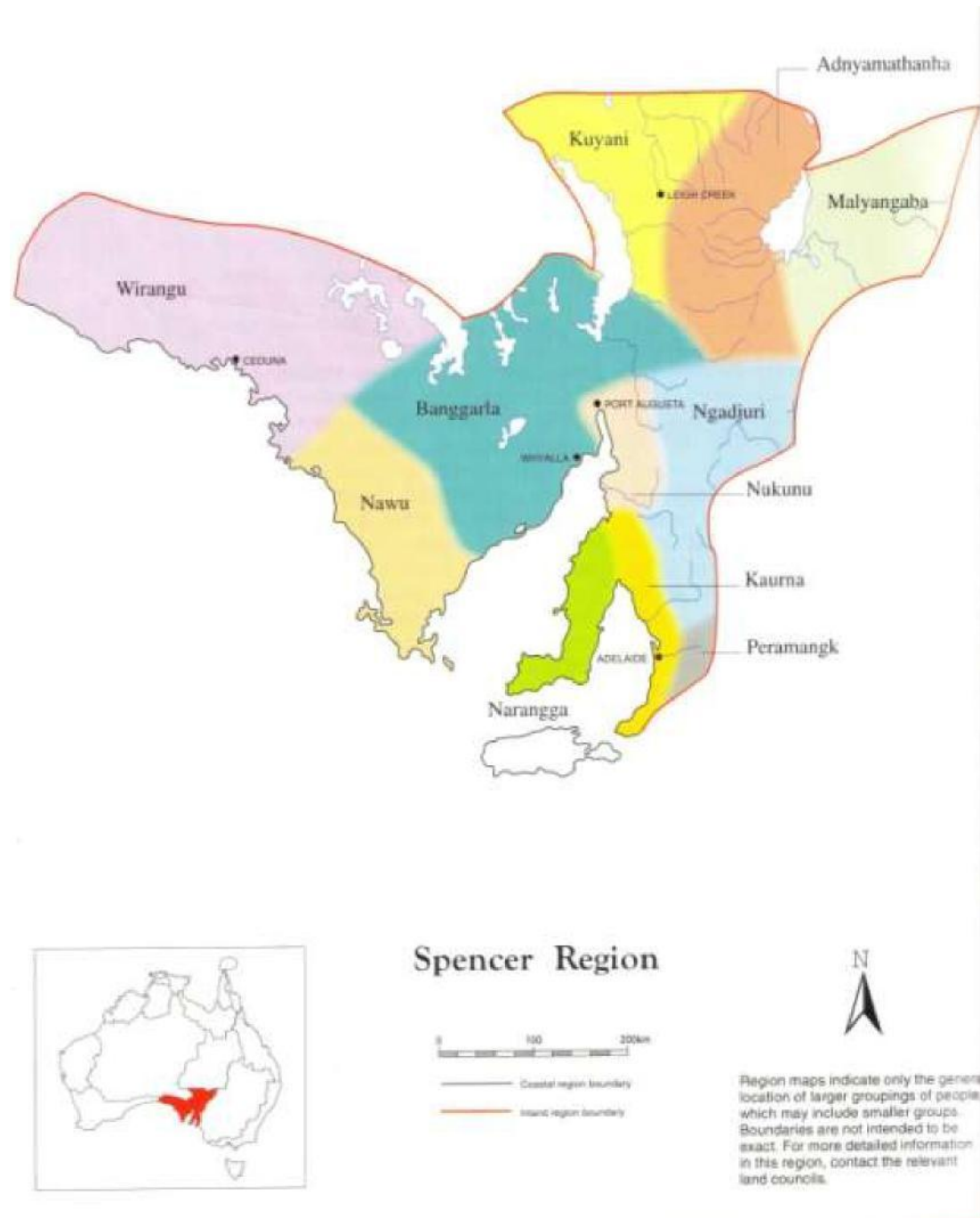
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APPENDIX 1: ABORIGINAL REGIONS & LANGUAGES - SPENCER REGION

(Source: Horton 1994).



APPENDIX 2: SITE PLAN

