

PARRAMATTA
ARTISTS'
STUDIOS

FIRST NATIONS
ENGAGEMENT
FRAMEWORK





Acknowledgement of Country

Waramidyu. Ngyilagwai birung. Waramibangun Dharug nurawa. Burawangiwi ganunigangdyi birung ngubadi wugura nurawa. Gulbangadyiwi nunanglanung ngangamay, Dharugdalong, magalyinyara, mudjin djarra djarra bannang ngurawa. Bimul bannangdyiwi guwanra wurraira marri ngalyadyu. Gulbangamawa gurugal ngiwi. Guwugunyiwi ngana ngalawama burbuga nagbaywa Mudungngun dyalgala Dharug ngalawan guwagu birung ngubadi ngurang yalabi dayalung Ngayariba budyari gumada Dharug nurawa, yanaba mardinyila, badjidju Wiyanga Bimul, gulbanga Ngurang Dharug yura Yilabara nagbaywa.

Hello/greetings. Wherever you have come from, we welcome you to Dharug country. We honour our old ones and their custodianship of this country, for they hold the Dreaming, the Language, Lore and the Kinship of this country. We pay respects to our Ancestors and Elders, both past and present, as they are our knowledge holders. We also acknowledge those who will arrive in the future. May we all keep Dharug culture alive, to continue our custodianship of our land and traditions. To bring good spirit to Dharug country, we ask that you tread lightly respecting Mother earth, honouring the land of the Dharug people now and into the future.

Written and translated by Dharug women, Corina Marino and Julie Jones.

The design elements for this document have been adapted from the artwork *Wagan - Crow* by First Nations artists Shay Tobin and Jason Wing.

Artwork

Wagan – Crow is a collaborative painting by First Nations artists Shay Tobin (Dharug), and Jason Wing (Biripi), presented as part of Parramatta by Foot 2022 at Eric Primrose Reserve, Rydalmere. It combines the use of stencilled and freehand painting to show images of crows in flight, along with text depicting the Dharug word, wagan and its English translation, crow. This painting depicts the creation story for the crow.

Parramatta By Foot 2022 was curated by Parramatta Artists' Studios and supported by the Rosehill Councillors Ward Initiative.

Artists

Shay Tobin is an artist and mathematician from the Boorooberongal clan of the Dharug nation. Having grown up in Western Sydney, in a family of artists, his art practice is influenced in subtle ways by the connection to land, family and what it means to be living in Australia today. Shay has acquired a deep fascination for mathematics and together with a lifelong passion for the natural world, he is motivated to pursue a life as an artist and mathematician.

Jason Wing is a Sydney-based artist who strongly identifies with his Chinese and Aboriginal heritage. Jason began as a street artist and has since expanded his practice to incorporate photomedia, installation and painting. Influenced by his bi-cultural upbringing, Jason explores the ongoing challenges that impact his wider community, calling into question our understanding of history and of our current socio-political reality.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parramatta Artists' Studios' First Nations Engagement Framework (the Framework) outlines our appreciation of and commitment to First Nations people, artists and communities in Parramatta and across Greater Western Sydney.

The Framework is a statement of Parramatta Artists' Studios' (PAS) commitment to support and embed First Nations-led programming.

The Framework is closely aligned to the City of Parramatta's First Nations Strategy currently in development. It was led by conversations and engagement with First Nations artists and communities, as well as consultants and staff from PAS & City of Parramatta (CoP) to ensure the approach to First Nations engagement is current, informed and has impact.

PAS will embed the principles contained within the Framework as business-as-usual practices. PAS is committed to ongoing collaborative planning with First Nations peoples to inform programs and initiatives, ensuring that they are culturally appropriate and continue to meet the needs of First Nations artists and communities.

Achieving the principles and actions contained within the Framework will provide a foundation to collectively build inclusion and positive outcomes for First Nations artists by way of PAS programs and initiatives.

PAS' vision is for First Nations artists to be an integral part of the PAS community. To achieve this PAS will build respectful and responsible long-term relationships with First Nations artists and communities; champion visibility of First Nations artists and culture through programming and infrastructure and support the development of sustainable practice and careers of First Nations artists in the Parramatta region.

INTRODUCTION

Compared with Parramatta as a whole, our First Peoples' residents are a small but fast-growing group:

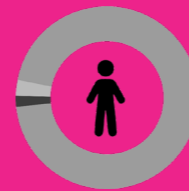


1,695
TOTAL FIRST PEOPLES
2011 - **1,403**

SINCE 2011 THERE HAS BEEN A



12% INCREASE IN FIRST PEOPLES POPULATION
17% INCREASE IN TOTAL POPULATION



95% ABORIGINAL
3% TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
2% BOTH



46%
MALE



54%
FEMALE

MEDIAN
AGE
28

In 2017 Parramatta Artists' Studios together with City of Parramatta embarked upon a journey of building meaningful relationships with First Nations artists and communities across Greater Western Sydney.

As part of this journey, PAS has participated in the following CoP initiatives in partnership with First Nations communities:

- Reconciliation Action Plan - July 2017 to July 2020
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Infrastructure in Parramatta Report: Community Needs and Aspirations - 2019
- Cultural Conversations Workshop & Survey with local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Artists - 2020

In 2020, PAS expressed a further desire to build a First Nations Engagement Framework. The Framework has been developed in partnership with First Nations people with an aim to advance the aspirations of local First Nations communities, build First Nations engagement, support First Nations-led programming and build cultural capacity within the PAS Team.

The Framework is closely aligned to CoP's First Nations Strategy and to the findings of the CoP Cultural Infrastructure report and will seek to activate initiatives and assist artists and communities in preparing for opportunities that arise through future development.

To ensure PAS's approach to First Nations engagement is consistently applied, a Program has been developed to execute the Framework.

ENGAGEMENT

First Nations Artists Development Strategy Workshop, 2019

This workshop was conducted on 25 June 2019 with Dharug artist Leanne Tobin, First Nations consultant Catherine J Craigie, Community Capacity Building - First Peoples Engagement & Strategy Officer Steven Ross and the PAS team; with input from artist Jason Wing.

Minutes from this meeting indicated that:

- It has been a number of years since a First Nations artist has applied for and participated in PAS' studio tenancy program;
- It is believed a more simplified and streamlined process may increase the number of applications;
- Application criteria may be too restrictive and has acted as a deterrent for First Nations artists i.e. demonstrated connection to Parramatta LGA;
- PAS can benchmark against studios and creative institutions that are leading in this space, for example: Bundanon Trust, Blacktown Native Institution, Underbelly Arts and Banff Centre, Canada.

PAS has worked with First Nations artists since inception, yet this engagement has lacked continuity and strategy, and PAS has been unsuccessful with attracting First Nations artists and communities to participate in particular PAS initiatives, such as the studio tenancy program. Understanding how PAS is currently performing with First Nations participation is key to understanding how to move forward.

To improve PAS processes and increase the engagement of First Nations artists and community in programming, PAS conducted a series of consultations in 2019 and 2020:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Infrastructure in Parramatta - Community Needs and Aspiration, 2019

In July 2019, a report was undertaken by First Nations consultants Catherine J Craigie and Andrew Duke in relation to the needs and aspirations for cultural infrastructure.

Community consultation and engagement was conducted over a six-week period, from May to June 2019, and consisted of a series of activities to provide multiple opportunities and platforms for the community and stakeholders to participate.

Over 270 people participated in and contributed to the consultation through online survey responses, attending a focus group, phone interview or a written email submission.

The findings of this report strongly support the notion that more work is required to facilitate and support the expression and development of First Nations and cultural practices within Parramatta.

Cultural Conversations Workshop, 2020



Cultural Conversations Workshop, 2020

In January 2020, Ngurra Advisory facilitated a two-day Cultural Conversations Workshop with 12 local artists and curators. The Cultural Conversations event and workshop was delivered in collaboration with the CoP's Community Capacity Building team and Riverside Theatres. The objective of the workshop was to provide community input and feedback to inform future programs, processes and initiatives delivered by PAS. The workshop included the following actions:

- Reviewing current initiatives conducted by PAS;
- Identifying the current barriers that exist for First Nations artists in engaging with PAS and its programs;
- Exploring other programs and initiatives that have seen strong engagement and retention of First Nations artists;
- Testing the current studio model to ensure it is fit for purpose (including applications); and
- Exploring ways to increase First Nations engagement and participation in future PAS initiatives (short/medium/long-term).

Cultural Conversations Survey, 2020

In August 2020, PAS engaged Ngurra Advisory to conduct a Cultural Conversations Survey with 30 local First Nations Artists' to better discover their needs and aspirations along with major barriers and challenges.

The survey provided critical feedback to PAS including:

- A lack of awareness of PAS initiatives and programs;
- Limited community engagement and outreach;
- A lack of cultural awareness and adaptation to processes and decision making;
- Limited professional development and fostering of First Nations artists;
- Disconnected fellowship between First Nations Artists and neighbouring galleries.

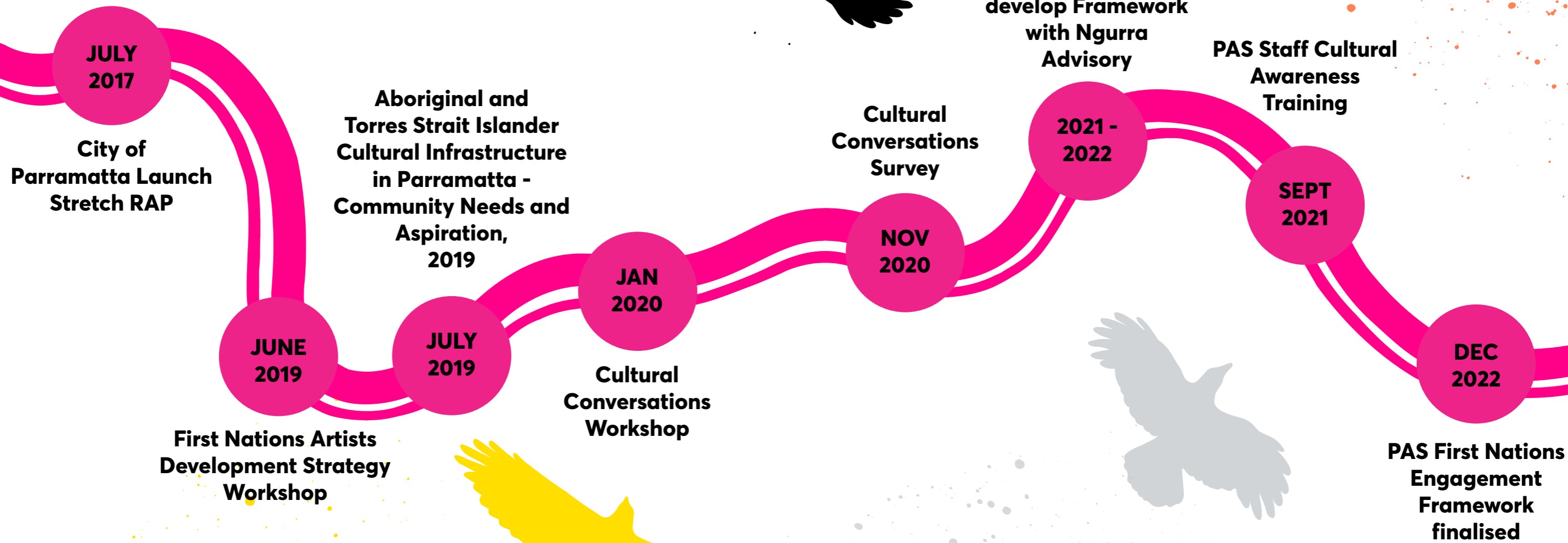
The common response from the survey suggested that further improvements were required in order to activate and boost the participation and engagement of First Nations people.

The survey report found that further improvements and cultural adaptation to processes and programs will allow PAS to:

- Enhance its accountability and responsiveness to First Nations people;
- Build stronger and more meaningful relationships with First Nations artists and communities;
- Foster and nurture local First Nations artists;
- Regularly identify and maximise opportunities for First Nations artists and communities;
- Promote First Nations cultures.

ROADMAP

Our First Nations Engagement Framework reflects on four years (2019 to 2022) of engagement and development by Parramatta Artists' Studios with First Nations Artists in the Greater Sydney area.



PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK



PICTURED:
Studio at Parramatta Artists' Studios
Rydalmere, Artist Chris Dolman 2022,
photo by Jacquie Manning

The First Nations Engagement Framework articulates a model for engagement, partnerships and co-design between First Nations artists, communities and PAS. It provides PAS staff with the guidance and tools for First Nation engagement activities across projects in the areas of culture, community consultation, engagement and sustainability.

The Framework aims to activate initiatives across PAS programs and projects that will ultimately contribute to outcomes identified in the new City of Parramatta First Nations Strategy.

The Framework aims to align with all reports previously mentioned, as well as CoP's Cultural Strategy and First Nations Strategy (currently in development). The CoP Strategy will seek to elevate, recognise and celebrate the voices and aspirations of the local First Nations community, including through the delivery of key cultural infrastructure as well as through programming and events.

Additionally, it aims to align with the following protocols and roadmap.

Aboriginal Arts and Culture Protocols

The Aboriginal Arts and Culture Protocols have been developed by Create NSW to provide support and guidance to Aboriginal artists, Aboriginal arts organisations and Aboriginal arts workers to help equip them with the right tools to ensure their interests and cultural rights are acknowledged and acted upon when developing or contributing to arts and cultural projects and programs.

PAS recognises the importance of First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property and supports First Nations artists and communities to maintain control of their culture.

Reference: <https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Aboriginal-Art-and-Culture-Protocols-interactive-1.pdf>

First Peoples: A Roadmap for enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries & Project Report

The Australian Museums and Galleries Association 10-Year Indigenous Roadmap is committed to improving Indigenous engagement and employment. The Roadmap has been developed for the museums and galleries sector in conjunction with the Project Report, First Peoples and Australian Museums and Galleries.

The First Peoples and Australian Museums and Galleries Report presents the core issues of past and current Indigenous engagement in the Australian museums and galleries sector.

PAS values the voices of First Nations people heard throughout the Report and Roadmap and recognises the vision for change under the following Five Key Elements that serve as the framework, including:

1. Reimagining representation
2. Embedding Indigenous values into museum and gallery business
3. Increasing Indigenous opportunity
4. Two-way care taking of cultural material
5. Connecting with Indigenous communities

Reference: https://223116f5-186a-4ef8-8beb-326bf73fcd09.filesusr.com/ugd/f76062_c67539d5b2e2433181f66b15ec499d89.pdf

Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts

The Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property is a guide that endorses the rights of Indigenous people to their cultural heritage and supports Indigenous creative practice. This protocol guide encourages self-determination and helps build a strong and diverse Indigenous arts sector.

PAS will utilise the protocols as a guide in developing meaningful collaborations with First Nations artists and creators.

Reference: <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/investment-and-development/protocols-and-resources/protocols-for-using-first-nations-cultural-and-intellectual-property-in-the-arts/>

ENGAGEMENT PILLARS



The Framework is driven by the following four pillars:

- Trust & Accountability
- Community (People/Space)
- Visible Culture (Programming)
- Sustainability

The actions established under each of the pillars have been led by community consultations, engagement of Ngurra Advisory and the experience and knowledge of PAS staff. This has ensured that all subsequent actions under these pillars leverage the core service offerings, capabilities and strengths of PAS.

TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY

PAS has respectful and responsible long-term relationships with First Nations artists and communities.

Actions

- We recognise the importance of our relationships with First Nations artists and communities
- Communication between PAS and First Nations artists and communities is open and transparent
- We improve the representation of First Nations arts workers in our team

COMMUNITY (PEOPLE/SPACE)

First Nations artists are an integral part of our PAS community.

Actions

- We build and support a culturally safe space for artists to gather, learn, create and collaborate
- We invest in and support First Nations artists
- We recognise and celebrates the contributions of First Nations artists and community in our physical space

SUSTAINABILITY

PAS supports sustainable practice and careers of First Nations artists in the Parramatta region.

Actions

- We create opportunities for First Nations artists' professional development
- We foster networks to influence flourishing artist careers
- We increase paid opportunities for First Nations artists and communities

VISIBLE CULTURE (PROGRAMMING)

PAS champions the visibility of First Nations artists and culture through our programming and infrastructure.

Actions

- We apply best practice protocols in engaging with and sharing First Nations artistic practice and culture
- We create opportunities for First Nations artists, arts workers and communities to co-design and co-develop programming
- We actively engage First Nations artists through our programming and opportunities

PROGRAM

To ensure that PAS staff are equipped to achieve the First Nations Engagement Framework, a Program has been developed which outlines the critical items required to execute the Framework.

The Program is a step-by-step guide which outlines a series of priorities, action items, measurables, assigned owners and timelines as well as monitoring and reporting.

Reporting and evaluation are a central component of performance monitoring for the Framework as they provide critical reflections on whether the Framework and Program are delivering outcomes as intended.

Additionally, it will assist PAS with reporting to partners and funding bodies, as well as provide an opportunity to make critical adjustments that will determine the future success of the Framework.

Future evaluation activities must address the following key questions:

- Are we accurately measuring whether the Framework is achieving what it has set out to do?
- Is progress being made against the Program and CoP First Nations Strategy?
- What could PAS be doing better and how?

By addressing these questions, PAS will gain a deeper understanding of successful approaches to programs and projects as well as how to maximise impact of the Framework's outcomes with and for First Nations artists and communities.

In addition to an annual report on the Program, an annual evaluation will be undertaken on the Takso Cultural Outcomes Reporting platform.

*Wagan – Crow,
Shay Tobin and Jason Wing, Parramatta, by
Foot 2022, photo by Shay Tobin*



REPORTING & EVALUATION



Panel discussion featuring Vernon Ah Kee + Megan Cope from proppaNOW, Movers and Makers, Parramatta Artists' Studios 2017, photo by Andrew Vincent Photography

PARRAMATTA ARTISTS' STUDIOS

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