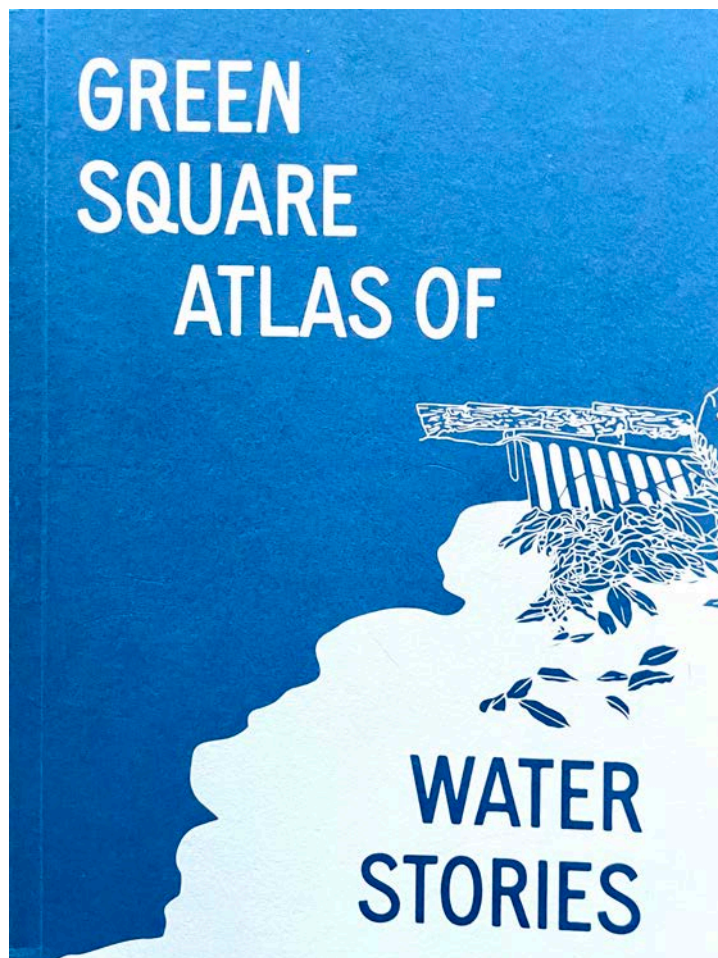


The Green Square Atlas of Water Stories

Project Overview The Green Square Atlas of Water Stories project, funded by the Cultural and Creative Grants and Sponsorship 2022-23 and built upon the 2021 UTS-funded Crossfaculty and UTS 2027 Strategic Funding Project PRO21-12458, aimed to share historical and contemporary water stories to enhance the connection between Green Square residents, workers, and visitors with their local environment. This project fostered a sense of belonging and care for local places through knowledge translation and public engagement initiatives.



The project is a collaboration with values-aligned creatives and organisations engaging in activating local neighbourhoods:

[Bangawarra](#)

[Ella Cutler](#)

[107 Green Square](#)

[PedalSetGo](#)

[Petunia Brown](#)

[Rizzeria](#)

Executive Summary

Objectives

- 1. Increase Awareness of Socioenvironmental Histories of Water:** Through the documentation and sharing of local environmental stories via publications, maps, and guided walks.
- 2. Enhance Recognition of Indigenous Histories and Knowledge:** By incorporating Indigenous perspectives through talks, publications, and collaborative events.
- 3. Strengthen Community Ties and Environmental Stewardship:** By engaging the community in activities that highlight the ecological context of their neighborhood.
- 4. Promote Sustainable Behaviors:** Through educational content that encourages adoption of sustainable water management practices.

Key Outcomes

- 1. Enhanced Public Knowledge and Engagement:**
 - Conducted extensive archival research and expert interviews, producing a wealth of primary academic resources.
 - Developed and distributed educational materials, including 1,000 maps and 400 Atlases, highlighted at local events and via an online platform, which has garnered over 4,267 views.
 - Organized public events like exhibitions and workshops, engaging around 400 participants directly, with broader outreach through digital downloads and a dedicated project website.
- 2. Increased Visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures:**
 - Partnered with Aboriginal SME Bangawarra to authentically integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the project.
 - Enhanced public understanding of Indigenous histories and ecological knowledge through events such as smoking ceremonies and culturally significant publications.

3. **Connection to Local Ecological Contexts:**

- Provided interactive experiences such as guided walks and bike tours, which emphasized local ecological priorities and the need for site maintenance.
- Highlighted ecological sites needing attention, such as Woolwash Park pond and Kimberley Grove Frog pond, promoting community involvement in their preservation.

4. **Sustainable Practices and Community Outreach:**

- Documented and shared information on significant water sites and sustainable practices through various media, including a popular article that reached over 5,365 readers.
- Encouraged community-wide adoption of sustainable behaviors through educational initiatives and detailed documentation of local water management strategies.

Methodology

We developed an innovative methodology that brings together Indigenous research methods, place-based and design research. Methods included yarning, walks on Country, observation, and community-engaging activities such as scoping and mapping walks, surveys, interviews, archival research and photo documentation.

Community Feedback and Involvement

Feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly positive, indicating a transformative change in the perception of Green Square. Detailed surveys and interactions during the project events highlighted the educational impact and the enhanced appreciation of the area's socioenvironmental histories and contemporary processes.

Conclusion

The Green Square Atlas of Water Stories project has successfully contributed to strengthening the community's connection to the local socioecological histories and processes, fostering a well-informed engagement with water stories and presence.

Report

Objectives

Increase awareness of socioenvironmental histories of water: Documenting local environments and making them discoverable through a book, map and walks will increase awareness of the local environmental contexts for sustainability.

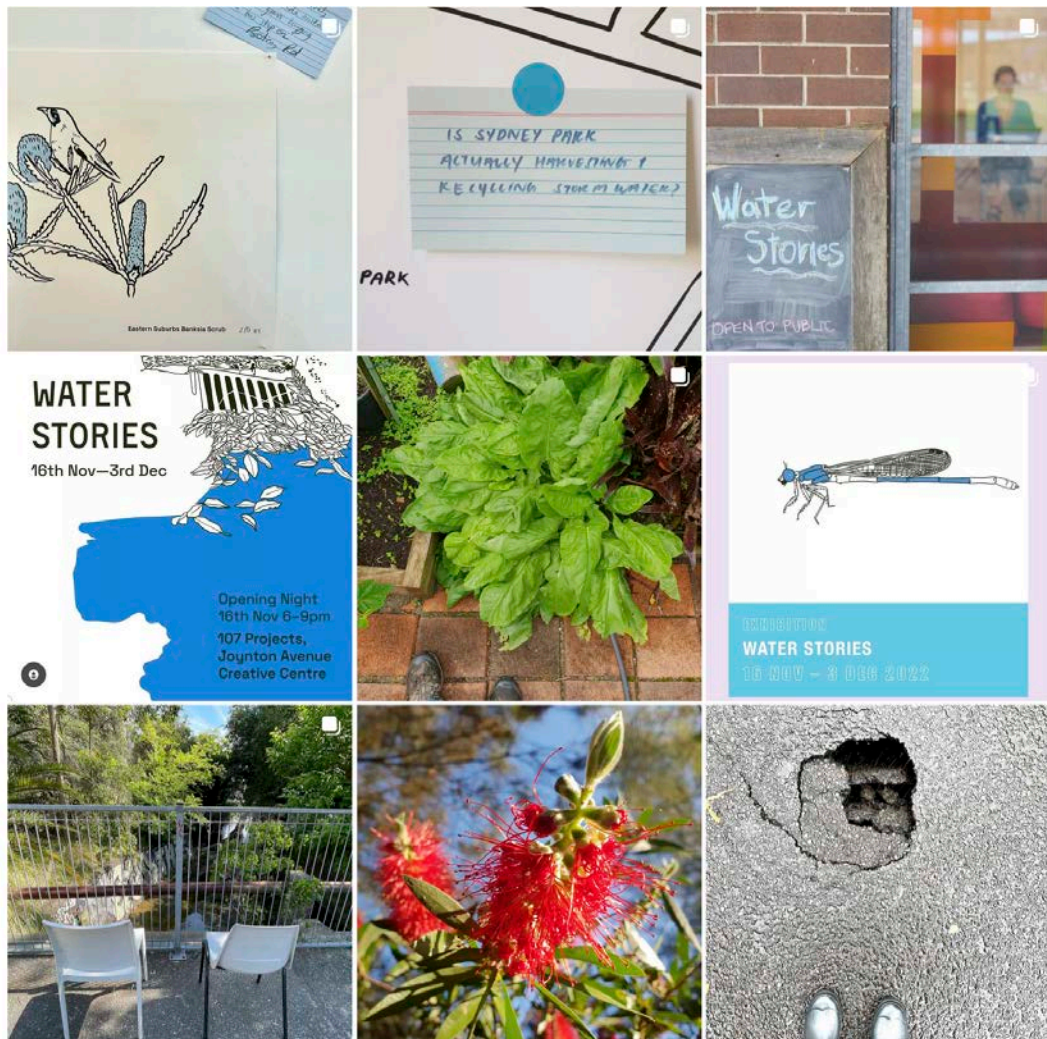
Increase awareness and recognition of the Indigenous histories and knowledges of Green Square through talks, walks and publications.

Strengthen senses of belonging and social relations: Walking purposefully-discover and contribute to water stories – strengthens participants' attachment to the ecological contexts of their neighbourhood.

Document initiatives that encourage the adoption of sustainable behaviours and sustainable lifestyles: connecting socioenvironmental histories and examples of CoS water management strategy can inspire more people to adopt 'water actions for residents', such as saving water, using recycled water and harvesting rain.

Methodology

We developed an experimental methodology bringing together Indigenous methodologies, place-based methodologies and design research. We start acknowledging that in Australia, wherever we are, we are always on Country: this was and always will be Aboriginal land. Our collaborators Bangawarra, explain: 'The word 'bangawarra' is a Dharawal word, as well as a shared word from the local Sydney languages and means to make, to design and to bring about through sustained effort. At Bangawarra, our shared praxes revolve around the central belief that only when we acknowledge overlooked spatial histories of place and Country can we speculate on more inclusive, culturally rich and sustainable future spaces and places, challenging the erasure of Country and culture from our built environment.'



Methods

Yarning

Walks on Country

Observation

Deep hanging-out

Scoping and mapping walks

Archival research

Surveys

Interviews

Photo documentation

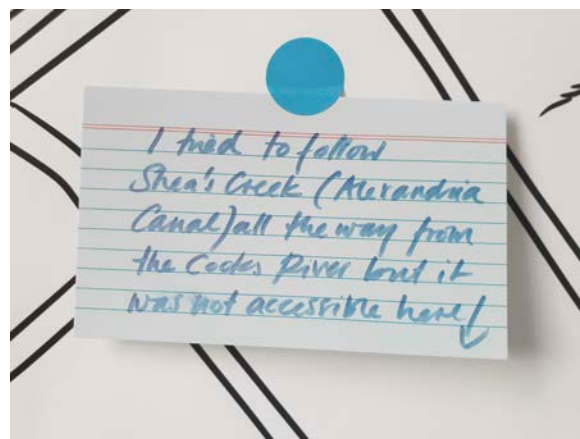
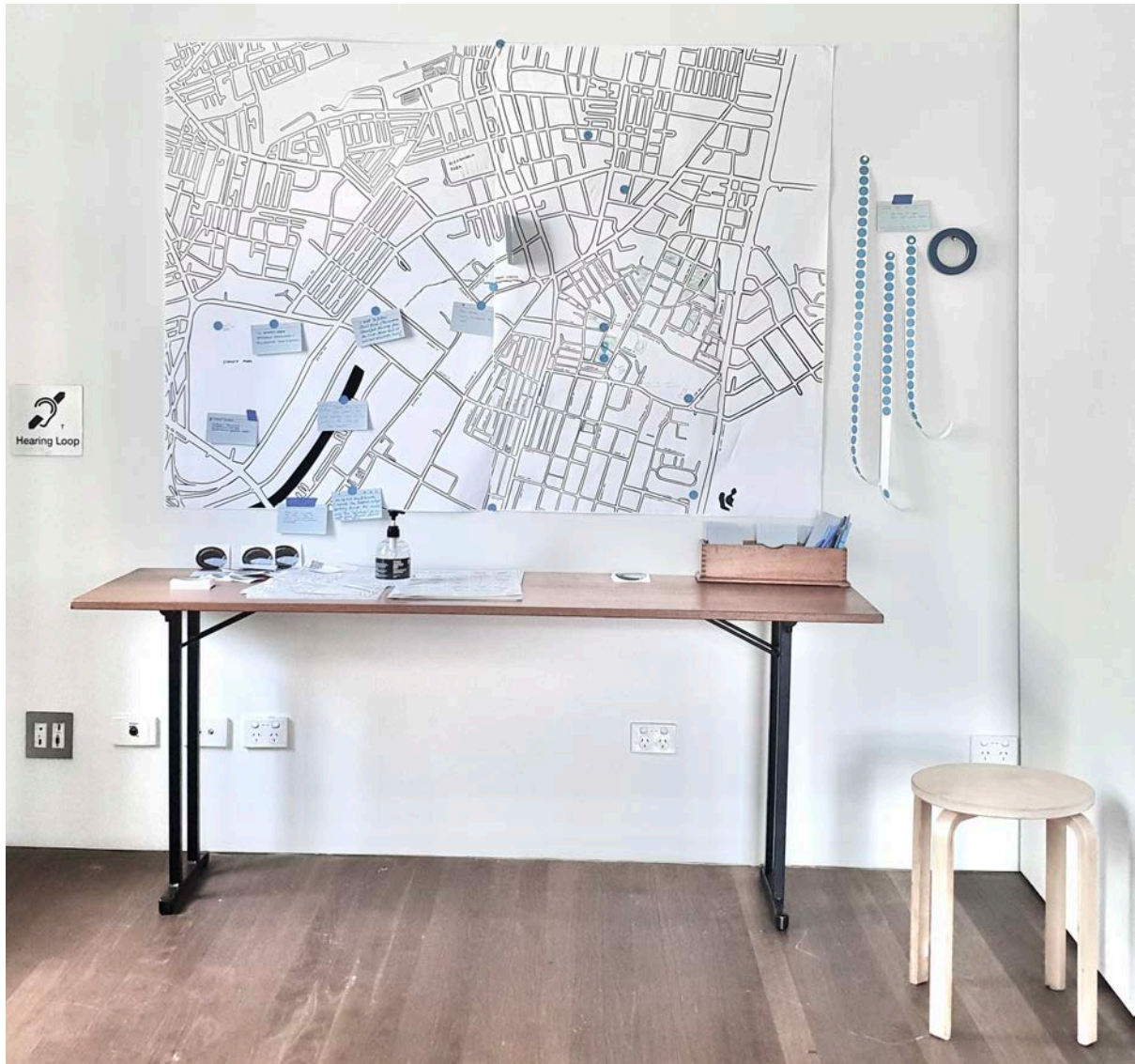
Drawing

Outcomes

1. Increased Awareness of Socioenvironmental Histories of Water

- **Research and Resource Sharing:** Conducted extensive archival research and interviews with seven experts in diverse fields, including landscape architecture, biology, and water engineering, which enriched our understanding of Green Square's water-related histories. Shared a variety of resources to publicise our findings, including 42 archival images, 14 published historical texts, and 7 original interviews, contributing significantly to public knowledge and primary academic resources.
- **Design and Dissemination of Educational Materials:** Created and distributed innovative materials, such as a series of original limited edition prints illustrating Green Square water stories, which were exhibited at Joynton Avenue Creative Centre, a participatory map created in collaboration with exhibition visitors, maps marking the sites of water stories, and an Atlas drawing from both archival sources and our own photo documentation. Published and disseminated 1,000 printed maps and 400 Atlases, which were donated to residents, researchers, local organisations, collecting, local and academic libraries. Provided a valuable educational tool through the updated project website (waterstories.info).
- **Public Engagement and Educational Outreach:** Hosted various public events, including an exhibition in collaboration with 107 Projects Green Square, a workshop with the local printing coop The Rizzerria, and a community yarning session with Aboriginal SME Bangawarra. Engaged approximately 400 participants directly through these events, with many more reached via the distribution of the printed Atlas and a downloadable PDF, accessible online on our website www.mappingedges.org. The project's digital storymap, available at waterstories.info has garnered significant attention with 4,267 views (as of April 2024), demonstrating its impact and reach.

Mapping Edges Research Studio



2. Increased Visibility and Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures

- **Cultural Partnership and Co-design:** Partnered with Aboriginal SME Bangawarra, a spatial design practice that integrates Aboriginal perspectives by honouring and incorporating Ancestral knowledge and culture into spatial planning and design. This partnership ensures the respectful foregrounding of Aboriginal perspectives through research, writing, yarning sessions and walks on Country.
- **Cultural Education and Events:** Increased awareness of Indigenous histories, sovereignty and knowledge through a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country by Dr Shannon Foster, D'arhawal eora Knowledge Keeper and Registered Traditional Custodian, and walks on Country. These events were instrumental in providing participants with a deep, contextual understanding of the area's Indigenous sovereignty and knowledge. Published culturally significant materials, including D'harawal water words and the local story of Parra'dowee, The Eel Spirit.
- **Recognition of Indigenous Ecologies:** Enhanced the visibility of Indigenous ecologies by highlighting significant plants and animals in the local wetland ecosystem through the Atlas and visual 'portals' illustrating flora and fauna key to the local water ecologies, further educating the public.



3. Enhanced Connection to Local Ecological Contexts

- **Interactive Experiences:** Organized three guided walks and five guided bike tours in collaboration with cycling education experts Pedal Set Go focusing on the local water stories. We ensured quality engagement by capping event attendees to 10. Highlighted ecological priorities during collaborative sessions, which identified necessary maintenance for ecological sites like Woolwash Park pond and the Kimberley Grove Frog pond.



4. Promotion of Sustainable Behaviors

- **Documentation and Awareness:** Documented initiatives that advocate for sustainable living and encouraged the adoption of environmentally friendly practices through educational content and community outreach. These resources include documentation on the design and impact of four significant water sites in Green Square, including Woolwash Park and The Water Reuse Centre. Conducted interviews with an archaeologist, a geographer and a water management engineer to provide comprehensive overviews that enrich the public's understanding of the area's water history. This documentation aims to inspire more meaningful understandings and connections to the wetlands in the area.
- **Outreach and Engagement:** Generated extensive outreach through 10 blog posts, social media content (27 Instagram and Facebook posts, over 60 Instagram and Facebook stories), and a widely read article in The Conversation, titled "Bell frogs, dugong bones and giant cauliflowers: water stories come to life at Green Square", 14 Nov. 2022, which was read 5,365 times and shared in 7 online publications.



Campaigning artefacts

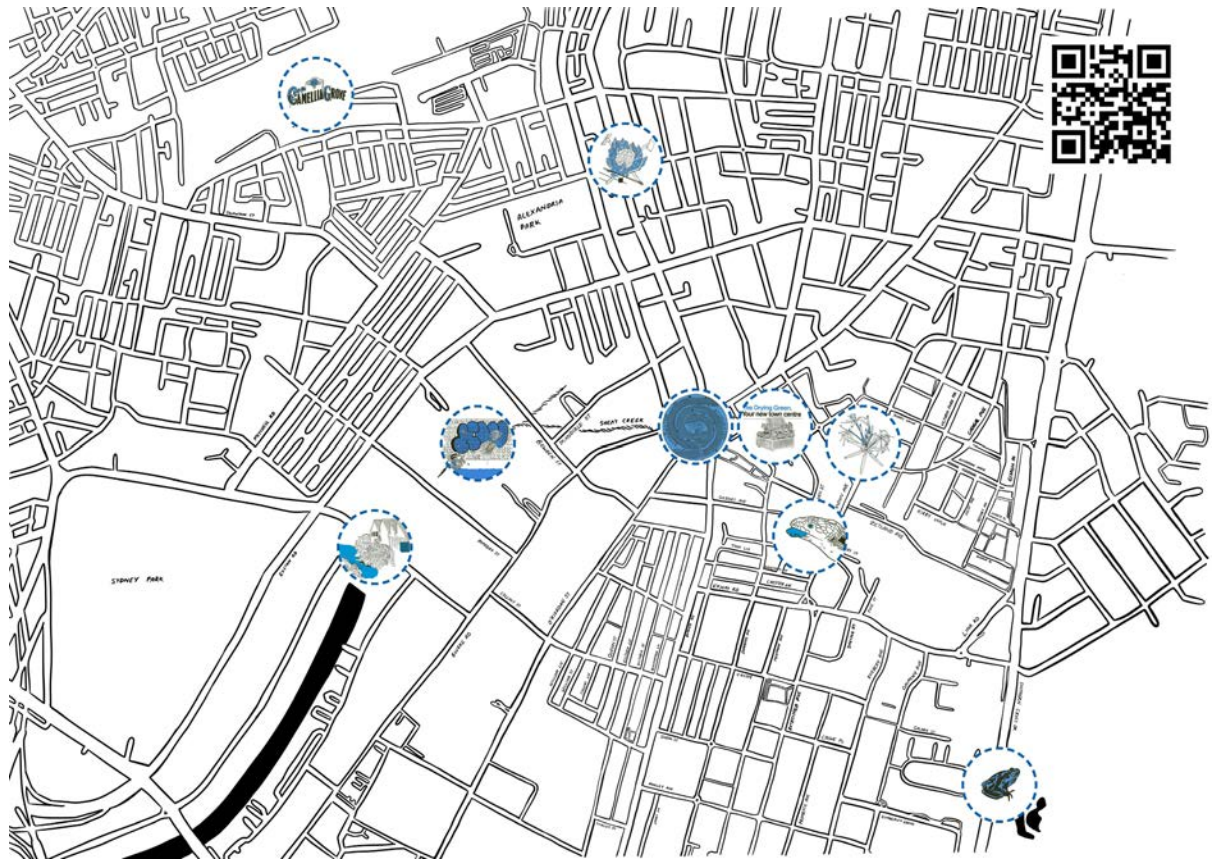
These are community resources for residents, workers, community groups, organisations, developers, and schools in Sydney's Green Square area. They encourage locals to understand their neighbourhood's socioecological histories.

These printed artefacts are designed to be carried on walks, and to inspire discovery of new water stories.

The storymap is designed as immersive multimodal and geolocated storytelling. It is accessible on any digital device.



Water Stories of Green Square Map



Water Stories of Green Square



The Country that is now known as Green Square is *nadungu gurad*, sand dunes Country, known for millennia for its natural *bamamarray*, freshwater wetlands and ephemeral ponds.

We acknowledge the generous contribution of Shannon Foster, Dharawal *sora* Knowledge Keeper & registered Sydney Traditional Owner in guiding us as we work on Country. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these places.

Mapping Edges Research Studio:
Alexandra Crosby, Iarla Vanni and
Ella Oulter, University of Technology
Sydney

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Green Square Atlas of Water Stories

Did you know there is habitat for endangered frogs in Rosebery? Did you know there were extensive market gardens in Waterloo? Did you know dugong bones and a submerged forest were found during excavation for the Alexandra Canal? The area we know as Green Square was part of a network of wetlands.

The *Green Square Atlas of Water Stories* surfaces some of the wetlands histories, through the narratives of storytellers who have worked with water in this area, and invites residents and visitors to discover objects in the landscape that unfold more water stories.

The Atlas is brought to you by Mapping Edges Research Studio: Alexandra Crosby, Ella Cutler and Ilaria Vanni, University of Technology Sydney and by Shannon Foster at Bangawarra.

GREEN SQUARE ATLAS OF WATER STORIES

GREEN SQUARE ATLAS OF

WATER STORIES



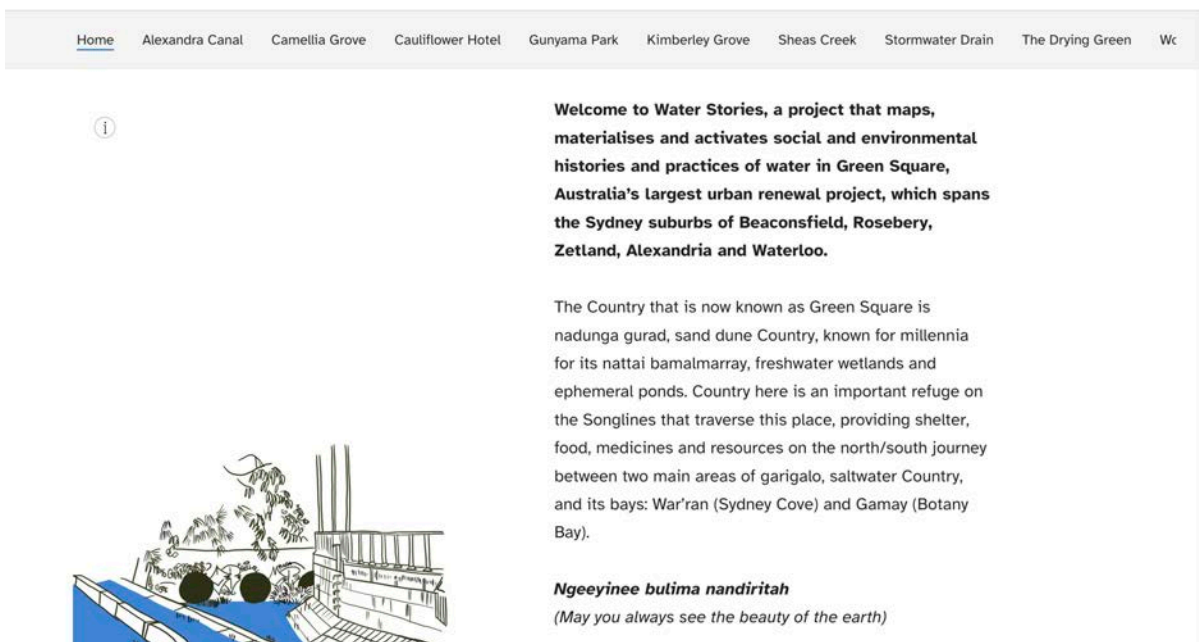
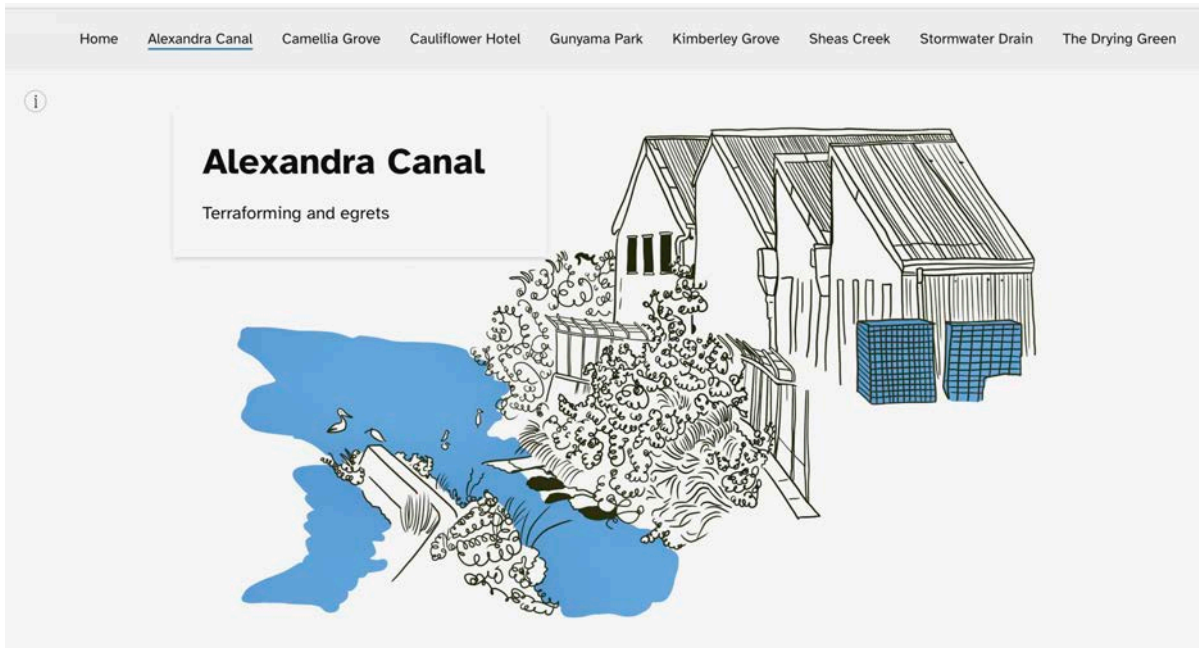
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WATER STORIES

Storymap

waterstories.info



Feedback and Community Involvement

Each of the project's outcomes has enhanced a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the socioenvironmental narratives of Green Square, contributing to fostering a community that is informed, engaged, and respectful of its ecological and cultural heritage.

We collected impactful feedback through surveys and interactive sessions, revealing a transformative change in participants' perceptions of Green Square. We highlighted local ecological priorities during guided walks, which identified necessary maintenance for ecological sites like Woolwash Park Pond and the Kimberley Grove Frog Pond.

In detail, we captured data through observation and conversational interviews during walks and ran a survey after Pedal Set Go guided bike tours. Because of the nature of these events and safety reasons, the number of participants is necessarily capped at 10 people per event. We collected 9 qualitative responses in the post-guided bike ride survey, in which 100% of respondents reported their perception and experience of Green Square changed after the Water Stories ride.

Some qualitative responses include: "A great initiative that has given me lots to think about." "The talk & ride were so informative and fun - I really loved it, such a wonderful morning- thank you!" and "I will never look at Green Square in the same way again".

Qualitative feedback also included high praise for the initiative's informative and enjoyable nature, indicating a stronger appreciation and altered perspective of the local area. Participants outlined their learning on - "Some of the industrial history, including the importance of water. About dugongs, frogs, market gardens, pollution, the shared paths along the Alexandria Canal. The deeper meanings of a lot of the art works around Green Square." - "The glass factory and how it mined sand nearby." - "The marshland, dates, connection to rivers, wool drying area, Loved the portal idea." - "Excavation finding Dugong bones in Sheas Creek/ Alexandria Canal and the understanding that Sydney/ Warrane had been lived in for far longer than originally thought." - "Native fauna & flora surviving in the hostile urban environment."

The project was celebrated in the Parliament of NSW in a Community Recognition Statement on 21 September 2022 as an example of 'ongoing work on addressing pressing social and environmental issues and for cultivating positive change' (Parliament of NSW, Mr Hoenig's speeches in Hansard, 21 September 2022).