



VIRTUS HERITAGE

# ANTHOLOGY

*Winter Edition*

*June 2024*



PROJECTS | NEWS | DISCOVERIES





## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY***

Virtus Heritage is committed to the spirit of reconciliation and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of the states and territories of Australia. We recognise the Traditional Owners of the lands we work within. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging in maintaining the culture, country and their spiritual and historical connections to the lands and waters.





# *Directors Message*

Welcome to the new Winter edition of our biannual journal.

We have upgraded our newsletter to a magazine format which we will issue every six months. It has been a very busy period for Virtus navigating the ups and downs of a sometimes volatile economic period with many achievements.

In October 2023, we were proud to be sponsors and South Sea Pearl patrons of the United Nations General Assembly for ICOMOS in Sydney as well as exhibitors at the Heritage Expo and presenters at the Scientific Symposium. For ten days, we listened and learnt from heritage practitioners, government agencies, international heritage patrons and First Nations peoples about their history, projects and experiences.



I presented with Leween Williams, CEO of the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council on our experiences in Northern Rivers, NSW with the 2022 floods and earlier bushfires and our aspirations for cultural heritage reform and conservation of Fingal Cemetery.

As part of our commitment to defence heritage, we were also exhibitors at the Australian Defence Congresses in Darwin and Canberra including sponsoring Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation's Tara Mercy, Business Manager to attend Canberra. We took part in national dialogues on Defence strategic planning and heritage issues, including raising the importance with Bandjalang of their highly sensitive and ancient middens in Evans Head and working with Awabakal women and Heritage NSW on the Butterfly Cave Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

Our team is fast progressing on our sustainability journey achieving Environmental Management ISO 14001 certification in addition to recertification for ISO 45001 OHS Management System and ISO 9001 Quality Management System. We are continuing to have a strong renewables project portfolio including water, solar and wind projects in 2024. We are developing new and innovative techniques with cultural mapping with Shaun Sewell leading our GIS capabilities. Our Indigenous engagement and Connecting with Country design and reporting has also increased in capacity over 2024 with Anya Graubard, Anthropologist based in Wollongong joining our team late 2023. Recognised now by Reconciliation Australia, as leaders championing reconciliation, our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan is with Reconciliation Australia for endorsement and we thank Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation and Tweed Byron Land Council as members of our RAP committee, as well as our Associate Director, Kelly Kent and RAP Champion, Caroline Ephraums for their development of the RAP and Tas Devine for her work on the final design.





## *Directors Message*

We have some exciting news to share on our new Sydney space for our southern team in Weir Phillips Planning and Heritage's office in Woolloomooloo. James Phillips and his team have been partnering and supporting our team since the inception of Virtus and earlier in my career. Together with Weir Phillips Planning and Heritage, we provide heritage architecture, Aboriginal and historical archaeology, cultural heritage and historical services in one package. We are thankful for James Phillips continued generosity and support and we are excited to be continuing to work together on many Sydney projects.

Our feature projects include our partnership with Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation on two important projects including a cultural educational hub and a heritage condition survey for flood impacts from 2022 at St Clair Aboriginal Place, Glennies Creek, NSW. A summer excavation at Ross Lane, Lennox Head demonstrates again that within highly modified contexts, sand dunes continue to exist and contain highly sensitive occupation evidence of Aboriginal history and cultural values still are strong. There is also a story from our recent intern Shantelle Gregoraci, on her experience over the university summer holidays working with our team.

We are thankful for all of the support from our readers, communities and partners, and look forward to new projects and opportunities as 2024 continues.







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# RECENT PROJECTS

**Take a look at what projects the team at Virtus Heritage have been involved with recently.**







# Anzac Memorial Board

New Mapoon, QLD

In partnership with the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, Virtus Heritage undertook research and consultation with the aim of updating the names on the current ANZAC Memorial Board in Bamaga, Far North QLD.

Tara Chilcott (Archaeologist) and Lilit Malcolm (Graduate Archaeologist) conducted comprehensive desktop historical research by delving into various online historical archives. This included extensive exploration of resources such as:

- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies,
- The Australian War Memorial Indigenous Australians service records,
- Queensland State Archives, Census records,
- WWII Nominal Rolls,
- Queensland Museum; and
- The National Archives Australia.

Additionally, we utilized an existing list compiled by historians in the region provided by Geoff Wharton, the existing Bamaga Anzac Memorial list of names and a newspaper article list of ex-servicemen provided by Auntie Eunice Sagaukaz. Census records from the State Archives Queensland were scrutinised prior to the visit to create a list of additional names for the project of service personnel and also the births, death and marriages books for Cowal Creek and other records from Mapoon and New Mapoon which could assist with the project. This research aimed to create a preliminary updated list of individuals from the NPA communities of Bamaga, New Mapoon, Umagico, Injinoo, and Seisia who have contributed their services in conflicts spanning from World War 1 to the present day.



*This project is proudly supported by  
the Queensland Government*





The preliminary updated list was reviewed, and community meetings were held to finalize the names and details for inclusion on the Memorial. Mary-Jean, alongside Anya Graubard (Anthropologist) and Lilith dedicated the week from October 16th to October 22nd to conducting 2-hour community consultation sessions in the five communities of Bamaga, New Mapoon, Umagico, Injinoo, and Seisia, additional group and one on one meetings and consultation throughout the NPA with follow up in Cairns. Their aim was to engage directly with community members, discussing the list in person and making necessary revisions.



During these sessions, the list was displayed, and Anya and Lilith read aloud each name. This approach provided community members with the opportunity to correct any misspellings or inaccuracies in the information. At the conclusion of each meeting, the community was invited to suggest any additional names that were not on the list but should be considered. Furthermore, some community members provided names or information about individuals in the area who might possess further details regarding specific names on the list. Efforts were made throughout the week to contact these individuals to discuss their knowledge.







At the request of community, Umagico and Bamaga cemeteries were also visited to check the names of service personnel including nurses and signal operators, many of whom were women in the Memorial list. Readdressing the invisibility of women's names in the Memorial was important to pay respect to their service. We had also previously reviewed cemetery registers made for the New Mapoon and Injinoo Cemetery projects for this project to assist with adding names to the draft list for this project, which was also communicated by families consulted as an important source of information to cross check.

We also visited memorial in towns where community members who were ex-servicemen were buried or memorialised at the request of Elders and family members.

This hard work resulted in a draft list of names that NPARC and Virtus circulated to community members. The list has been finalised now and construction of new ANZAC Memorial Board will commence.





# Ross Lane Excavations

Lennox Head, NSW



In November and December 2023, Virtus Heritage embarked on an exciting archaeological excavation at Ross Lane in Ballina, as part of proposed upgrades aimed at enhancing road safety for Ballina Shire Council. Our dedicated team, led by Principal Archaeological, Julian Travaglia, included Graduate Archaeologists Lilith Malcolm and Garth Thompson, and Mid-level Archaeologist Tara Chilcott.

The project area is located within the lands of the Bundjalung language group. Notably, parts of the project area lie within a Pleistocene sand ridge and along the traditional Aboriginal travel route that connects Lismore and Lennox Head to the coast, providing access to food resources, and more.





# Ross Lane Excavations

Lennox Head, NSW



Throughout the excavation, approximately 130 stone artefacts were uncovered, shedding light on the rich cultural heritage of the area. The analysis of these artefacts is ongoing, promising further insight into the historical significance of the region.

Stay tuned for more updates!







# Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation

## Educational Hub

St Clair Mission, Glennies Creek, NSW

Within the boundaries of St Clair lie two Aboriginal Places registered on the State Heritage Register: the Mission and Old School Site and Corroboree Ground (SHR No 79). The gazettal notice for these Aboriginal Places underscores their profound cultural significance and connection to the Wonnarua, Awabakal, Worimi, and Darkinjung peoples, as well as their descendants from across the state.



The Mission Church School site stands as a poignant memorial to the Stolen Generations, having welcomed countless children through its doors. For many, it represents the only childhood home they knew. Within the St Clair Aboriginal Mission Station, residents formed a tight-knit surrogate family, a bond that endures among their children and grandchildren. The houses for Aboriginal families were situated amidst two strands of trees, which, by their size, are estimated to be over a century old, remaining as a poignant reminder of the landscape's unchanged aspect since the Station's closure in 1923. Another significant feature reflecting St Clair's history is the adjacent Travelling Stock Route, known to be used as a camping area by Wonnarua people.





We have been assisting the Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation (WNAC) in securing an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) variation by preparing an impact assessment. This support is integral to WNAC's efforts to establish a Wonnarua Education Hub at the St Clair Mission site, featuring amenities like a yarning circle, a playground, and a performance area/stage, utilizing existing flora where feasible, thereby providing the local Aboriginal community with a functional site to gather and promote their culture.



The proposed AHIP variation was developed in consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs). WNAC's commitment to community development drives the significance of the educational hub, serving as vital infrastructure to further the aspirations of Wonnarua families for intergenerational equity, education, and youth training. Additionally, it aims to facilitate the continuous transmission and preservation of cultural knowledge by Elders at St Clair.







# Aboriginal Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment

## Yallaroi, NSW

Virtus Heritage was engaged by SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR) on behalf of Providence to prepare an Aboriginal archaeological due diligence assessment in Yallaroi for the proposed construction of an 11MB Battery Energy Storage System. On 20 June 2023, Virtus conducted a site inspection with representatives of Toomelah Local Aboriginal Land Council (TLALC). The native vegetation within the project area has been extensively cleared and has been disturbed by agricultural use. Although no Aboriginal objects or places were identified within the project area during the site inspection, it was a lovely day in the field.



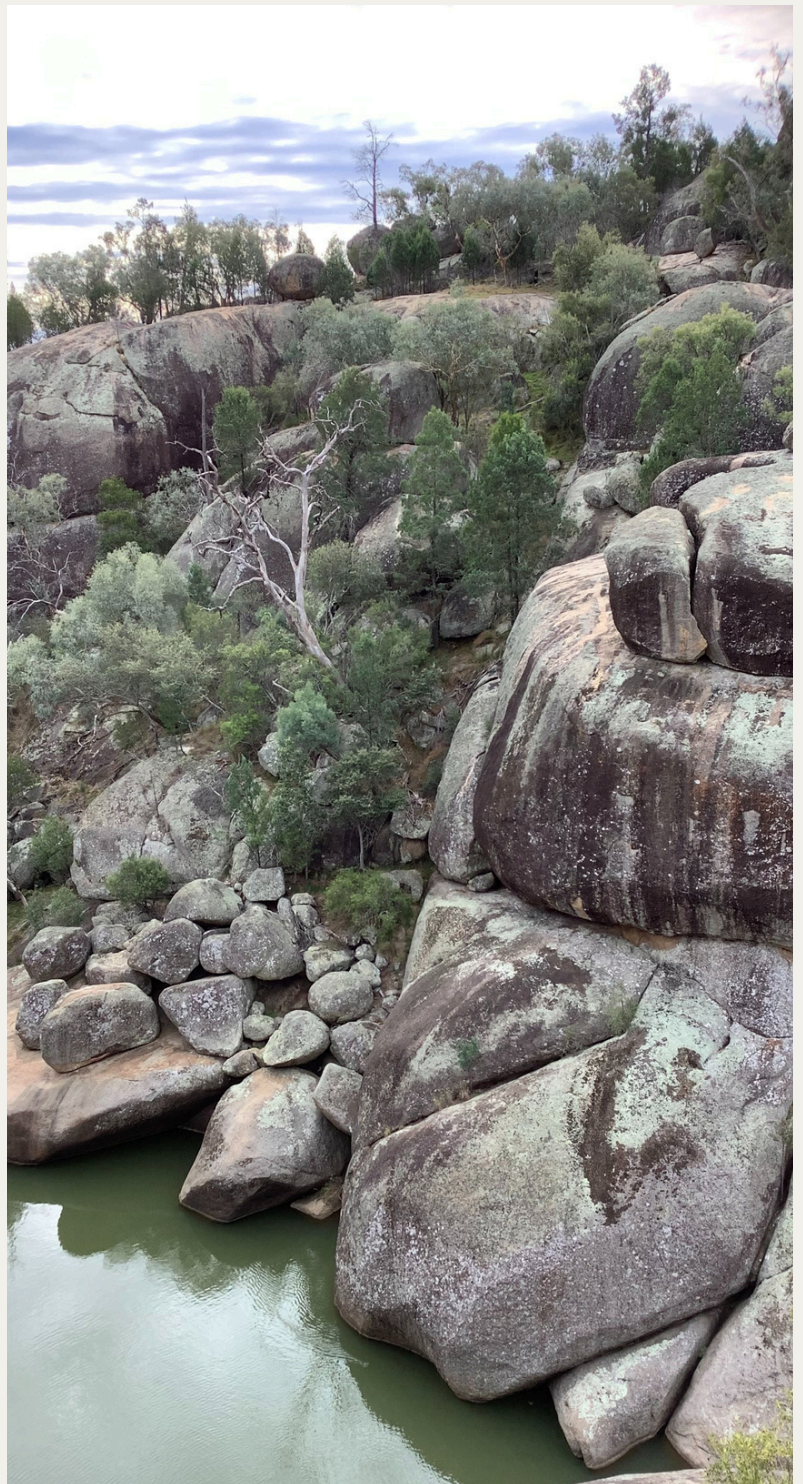




# Cranky Rock

Warialda, NSW

While Virtus Heritage staff were in Warialda for an Aboriginal archaeological due diligence assessment for a proposed Battery Energy Storage System they had the chance to visit Cranky Rock Recreation Reserve. The conglomeration of stacked granite boulders was amazing to see and are said to be 245 million years old! This site is extremely significant to the local Kamilaroi and Gamilaroi people as a meeting place.







# Grant Writing

It has been grants galore here at Virtus for the start of 2024! Anya Graubard, our Anthropologist, has been busy identifying potential grants to match with Aboriginal organisations we work with. We wrapped up 2023 with a survey at the St Clair Mission and Corroboree Ground in Singleton, funded by a 2023–2025 Emergency Works grant from NSW Department of Climate, Change, Energy the Environment and Water.

The survey aimed to assist the Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation by identifying potential risks to elements of the Aboriginal Places, documenting the current site conditions and identifying changes to the St Clair property including the identification of additional stone artefacts on the property and providing recommendations, flood management strategies and remediation efforts. Building off the success of the State Heritage Emergency Grant, we assisted the Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation, Numbahging People, Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council, Wonnarua Nation AC, and the Ghurrumbil Dreaming Indigenous Corporation in preparing applications for the Cultural Grants 2023/2024 via Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

Proposed projects funded by this grant included a photo exhibition, ceremonial celebrations at a recently excavated midden (excavations were undertaken by Virtus Heritage Principal Archaeologist Julian Travaglia and Senior Archaeologist Martin Wright), and training for Youth Rangers.

We are always on the lookout for ways to uplift organisations we collaborate with through grant funding. Through our partnerships, we work to bring about positive change and innovation in heritage preservation. We aim to find sustainable solutions to address modern challenges, ensuring our cultural heritage remains relevant and protected for generations to come.





# NEWS

**Our team have been busy when not in the field, from Defence conventions to international heritage expositions. Take a look at all the recent behind the scenes happenings at Virtus Heritage.**







# Defence Summits

With a strong focus and commitment to marketing our services in 2023, numerous marketing events were attended by the Virtus team. The Australian Defence Magazine held the Northern Defence Summit in Darwin where we held a stall to showcase capabilities as a pre-qualified provider. Later in the year Mary-Jean, Clare, Tas and Tara Mercy from Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation attended the ADM Congress Summit in Canberra it was a great experience attending the summit and charity dinner.



**Pictured above: Tas, Tara and Mary-Jean at the ADM Charity dinner.**

**Mary-Jean and Tas at the Virtus Heritage stall in Canberra.**

**Below: Welcome reception in Darwin held at Parliament House, Virtus Heritage stall in Darwin.**



**Virtus Heritage is a pre-qualified provider of Indigenous Heritage services to the Australian Department of Defence as part of the Defence Infrastructure Panel – Environment, Heritage and Estate Engineering Services 2020–2025 (DIP.EHE).**





# Visual Identity Refresh

Refreshing our brand identity and website was a goal for 2023 while reflecting our team, showcasing projects, partnerships, and company capabilities. The team at CAKE went above and beyond to bring our ideas to life, we will be rolling out our updated collateral in the coming months with our refreshed logo, colour palette and brand style.

When deciding on colour and design we wanted to pay homage to where the company originated from. The key colours chosen all have a significant meaning.

**Crimson red** – reflect the crimson red frangipani of Aunty Harriet Flinders' garden in Mapoon where Mary-Jean started thinking about the beginning of the company and recorded oral histories in Mapoon with Granny Susie, Aunty Alma Day and Aunt Zoe and other Elders. It also represents the blood red bauxite soils of Mapoon (which Elders refer to as the blood of their spirits tied to country).

**Dark eggplant** – The dark eggplant colour is also tied to Mapoon and Aunty Harriet and was her chosen Tjugundji colour which was worn to her funeral.

**Greens & blues** – Represent the rainforests and sea.

**Chalk white** – The sand representing the countries and sites we work in.

**Dusty pink** – Connected to Granny Susie Madua's house in Mapoon which was painted pink inside with flowers and landscapes and to Aunty Alma Day, and is tied to the colours of Dirawong (also featured on the website in drone imagery with BAC's permission) – the meeting place and spiritual home ground of the Bundjalung nations we all work within and our head office is based.



Artwork by Aunty Harriet, the crimson red frangipani inspired the chosen colours.

Check out our website to see our new refreshed look!

[www.virtusheritage.com.au](http://www.virtusheritage.com.au)

Website design by: [www.thecake.com.au/](http://www.thecake.com.au/)





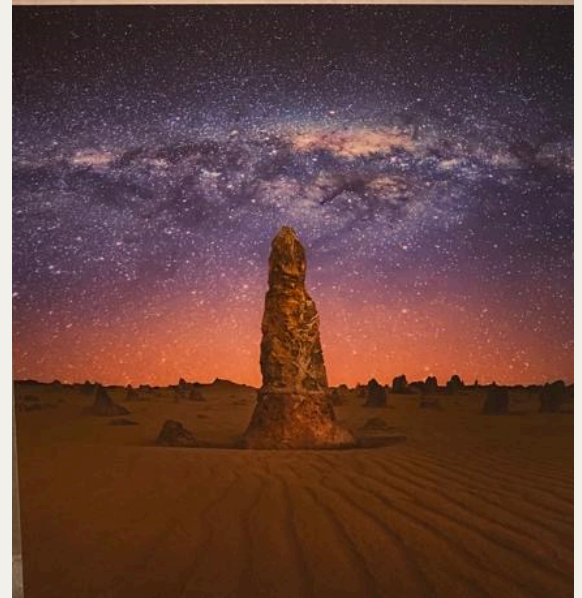


# Virtus Heritage takes ICOMOS GA2023

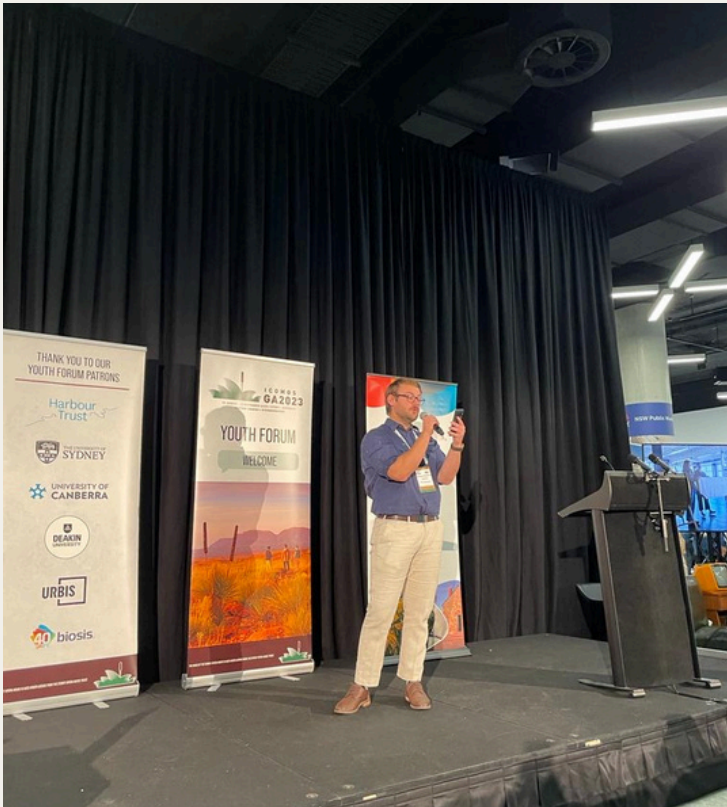
31st August - 9th September 2023

Sydney

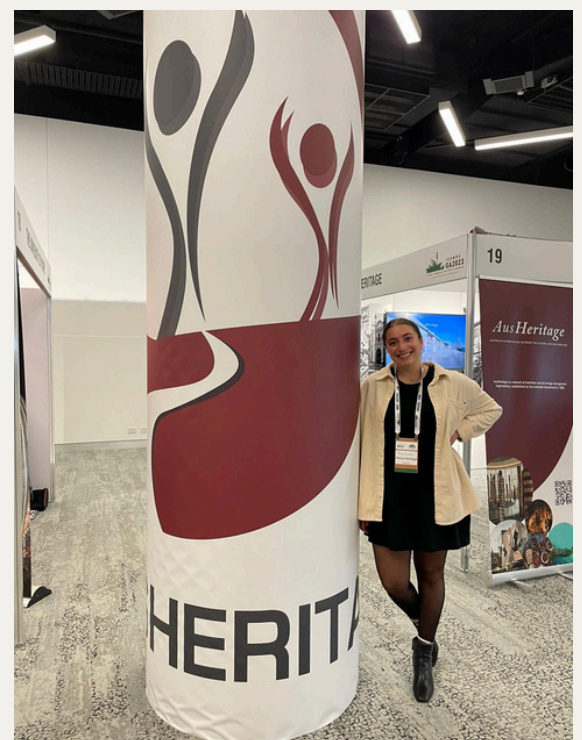
In September 2023, the Virtus Heritage team alongside Tweed Byron LALC attended the United Nations ICOMOS General Assembly in Sydney. A huge accomplishment for Virtus as a South Sea Pearl Patron, holding a stall showcasing past projects and capabilities, and supporting this important international gathering of expertise to discuss, promote and celebrate world heritage held by ICOMOS. Our wonderful Marketing Co-ordinator, Tas Devine led the organisation of our patronage and the stall supported during the event by many members of our team including Clare Anderson, Anya Graubard, Garth Thompson as well as Clare Lena, of Tweed Byron LALC. Our Director, Mary-Jean with Leweena Williams, CEO Tweed Byron LALC presented a paper on the challenges of flooding on cultural heritage in Northern Rivers, NSW after the 2022 floods and previous episodes of bushfires and also on some of the positive collaborations of cultural heritage projects together at Fingal and Norries Headlands and Hastings Point.







ICOMOS held numerous events all centred around leading cultural heritage conservation in Australia by raising standards, encouraging debate and generating innovative ideas including a Youth Forum which Virtus team members Garth and Lilith attended at Cockatoo Island. Garth also won the Harbour Trust's ICOMOS Youth Forum Group Presentation Competition. We made new friends from around the world, shared many learnings and listened and participated in many discussion groups and sessions that will now shape and inform future heritage practice and policy in world heritage. We congratulate ICOMOS President, Tracey Ireland and the team led by A/Prof Richard Mackay who organised an amazing event that will be remembered by years to come.







# Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

Virtus Heritage is committed reconciliation and is currently in the process of creating our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan with our RAP committee.

For Virtus Heritage in particular for this Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan period, we will continue to advocate for constitutional recognition and we embrace the Uluru Statement of the Heart by embedding reconciliation and fostering a culturally safe work environment of empathy, diversity, equality and cooperation, where reconciliation is not just a concept, but a living reality.

We believe that cultural heritage and archaeological practice is an opportunity to learn from each other, for capacity building and sharing knowledge and through listening and respect in cross cultural exchanges and dialogues, we can create a stronger and more inclusive Australia.



**Pictured: Part of our RAP committee. Kelly Kent, Virtus Heritage Associate Director and RAP Coordinator, Caroline Ephraums RAP Champion with Leweena Williams and Clare Lena from Tweed Byron LALC.**



# Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan



Virtus Heritage is honoured to exhibit two incredible First Nations artists for our upcoming Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, Chris Gray and Campbell Edward James.

## Chris Gray

### The Artwork Story

Chris Gray, is a proud Goori man from Bundjalung country. This art piece has been designed to represent my home, the Tweed region. The story of this exhibits three connection symbols joined together in the middle with people sitting and yarning on country. The connection with this shows unity, equality, cooperation, and respect that we have for one another. This also shows cultural safety and that we feel safe when working together on country. The round circled dot art represents the Tweed river systems and how it twists and turns through the region. The blue wave dots represent the ocean, the swell, and tides along the coastline.

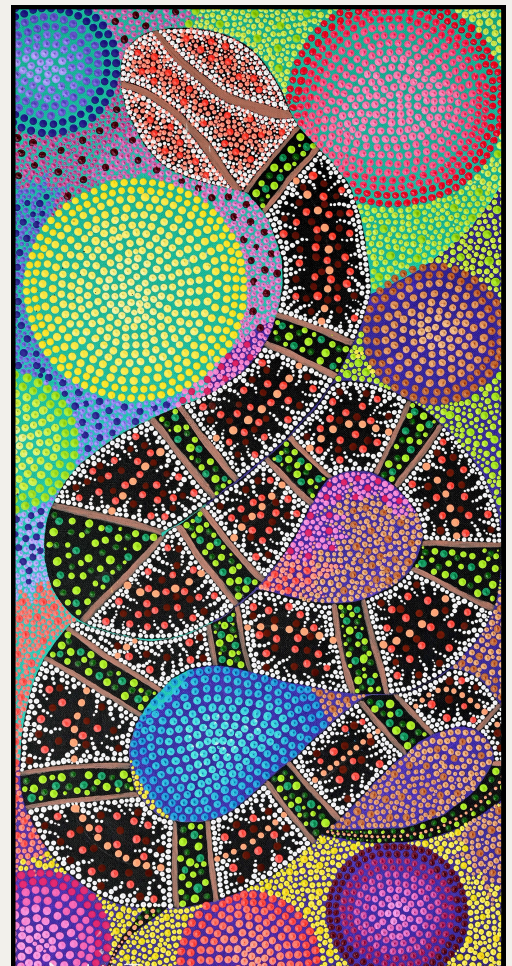


Home 2023 - Acrylic on canvas

## Campbell Edward James

### The Artwork Story

Campbell is a Bundjalung Man from the Bundjalung Nation. He has been developing and evolving his artwork and painting style for over 20 years. His paintings feature many animals that are revered in his community. Strengthening community relationships and individual identities through deep cultural connection to land as one travels through country. His passion and use of colour within his painting gives him strength in grounding himself and quietening his mind during unsettling times. Bringing him back to present moments in his contemplation of the natural environment and life. The Rainbow serpent travels through country shedding its scales through the landscape creating the mountains, rivers, lakes and waterholes represented in the blue, purple and pink circles in his painting. The green, yellow and scarlet colours are the flowers and bushland through the different seasons. The browns represent the lichen and rocky outcrops scattered through the environment and country that the serpent and people journey through.



Rainbow Serpent 2022 - Acrylic on canvas





# Rising from the Embers Festival 2024

Wollotuka Institute, Newcastle University

Virtus Heritage was thrilled to participate in the Rising from the Embers Festival hosted by the Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle in May. Team members Archaeologist Garth Thompson and Anthropologist Anya Graubard had an incredible time engaging with the community and celebrating the rich Aboriginal culture and heritage.

At the festival, we proudly introduced our new archaeological educational Educate and Excavate dig kits designed for primary schools. These kits aim to provide young students with hands-on learning experiences, fostering an early appreciation for archaeology and cultural heritage.







In collaboration with Cessnock City Council, we also had the opportunity to discuss the upcoming Cessnock City Council Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan. This plan is a significant initiative dedicated to preserving and promoting Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region. We were eager to speak with community members in-person about this important project and gather their insights and feedback.

The festival was a day filled with vibrant cultural celebrations, including traditional music, dance, and storytelling. It was an honour for us to support the Aboriginal community in Newcastle and to showcase some of the critical work being done in the field of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the Newcastle area.

We are committed to continuing our efforts to preserve and promote Aboriginal heritage and culture, and we look forward to more opportunities to engage with and support the community. Thank you to the Wollotuka Institute and the University of Newcastle for hosting such a remarkable event.







# Excavate + Educate Toolkits

Unveil the innovation of our Educate + Excavate toolkits, crafted in-house to elevate education in classrooms across New South Wales and Queensland!

Step into the shoes of budding archaeologists with our meticulously curated kits, each packed with essentials such as kid-friendly excavating tools and replica "artefacts" for learners to unearth – mirroring the adventures of real archaeologists. Dive deeper with our themed boxes, ranging from maritime explorations featuring shipwrecks and sunken treasures to journeys through historical archaeology. Have a specific theme in mind? Let us know, and we'll be delighted to assist in crafting your very own ideas.

Filled with diverse multimedia resources like interactive timelines, engaging videos, and authentic primary sources, along with exciting lesson plans, these kits invigorate historical learning. Carefully aligned with curriculum standards, our materials seamlessly integrate into existing history curricula, supported by comprehensive teacher resources. Students delve into enriched learning with supplementary materials that expand beyond the classroom, fostering a love for history and encouraging independent research. Educators can easily assess student progress with our flexible assessment tools, tailored to different grade levels and needs. Plus, our toolkits promote cultural heritage awareness, spotlighting Aboriginal history and heritage, fostering deep understanding and respect. At Virtus Heritage, we believe in the power of history to inspire across subjects like Science, Maths, English, Arts, and Technology. With Educate + Excavate, we empower teachers to nurture curiosity and inquiry in their students. Join us in transforming education!



Excavate + Educate toolkits have been developed by Virtus Heritage to cover NSW learning outcomes with activity learning packs and hands on dig kits.

#### Excavate + Educate Activity Learning Pack

Exercises for students developed by Virtus Heritage Archaeologists to correspond with VH Excavate + Educate Lesson Plan.

Activities include maze, word search and colouring pages for after-lesson fun.

#### Dig kits include:

- 30 L Storage container
- Kid-friendly tools (spade, magnifying glass, plastic scrapers, brushes, trench pegs and cord for grinding)
- Replica artefacts to bury including buttons, coins, dolls, and various trinkets

#### Teachers Guide + Lesson Plan

- HTe-1: communicates stories of their own family heritage and the heritage of others
- HTe-2: demonstrates developing skills of historical inquiry and communication
- HTI-1: communicates an understanding of change and continuity in family life using appropriate historical terms
- HTI-3: describes the effects of changing technology on people's lives over time
- HTI-4: demonstrates skills of historical inquiry and communication

To learn more about this initiative, please reach out to [info@virtusheritage.com.au](mailto:info@virtusheritage.com.au)







# Our new space in Sydney

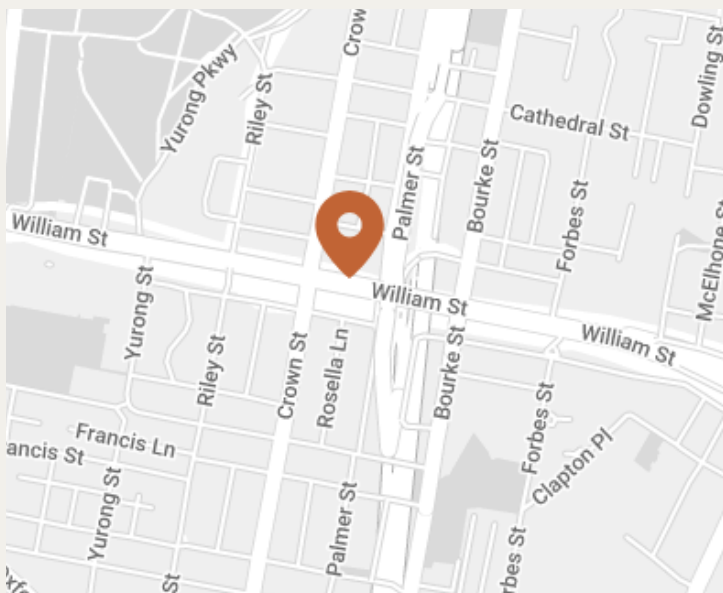
Virtus Heritage has partnered with Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning in their Sydney office, we now have a permanent space which our Sydney based staff will be working from at 100 William Street.

Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning was founded over twenty-five years ago by James Phillips in response to the need to provide informed, practical, and targeted heritage advice. Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning provides a comprehensive consultancy service for heritage and planning projects.

**Pictured: James Phillips**



**Weir Phillips**  
Heritage and Planning



**Pictured: Clare Anderson our Principal Archaeologist based in Sydney**







## *Contact us*

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