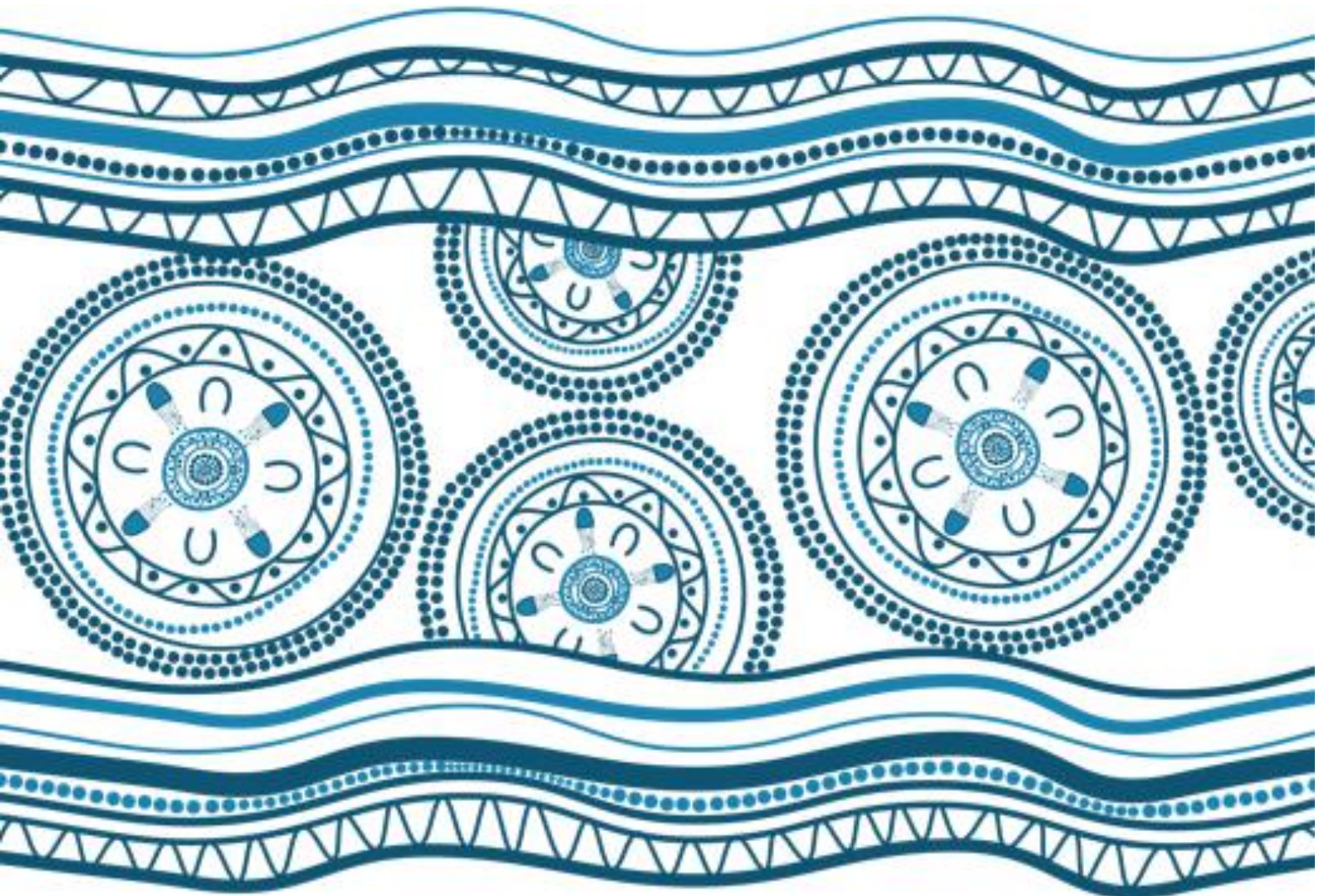


Chapter 3

Strategic justification and project need



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3 Strategic justification and project need

This chapter outlines the relationship of the project to the strategic planning framework. It also identifies the need for the project and the project's objectives. A statement of strategic need concludes the chapter.

3.1 NSW and Australian strategic planning and policy framework

The following section describes the compatibility of the project with key strategic planning and policy documents.

3.1.1 Kamay Botany Bay National Park Kurnell Master Plan

The Kamay Botany Bay National Park Kurnell Master Plan (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), 2019) focuses on the 'Meeting Place' concept within the Kurnell Precinct of the Kamay Botany Bay National Park (the National Park) (defined as "a place where cultures met and continue to meet and where conflict and reconciliation, celebration and sorry business can be acknowledged in the one landscape" NSW, DPIE, 2019, page 2). The vision of the 2019 Master Plan is to make the National Park "a place of significance to all Australians that contributes to their sense of identity as Australians" (page 3).

This is to be carried out by improving visitor access and facilities as well as improving the visitor experience. There are three stages identified in this master plan. These include:

- Stage 1 – Foreshore loop and ferry
- Stage 2 – Arrival at Kurnell and new beach park
- Stage 3 – Broader park upgrade.

The reinstatement of the previous wharves and ferry service is identified as part of Stage 1 of this Master Plan. The ferry service would improve connection between La Perouse and Kurnell and provide a new type of visitor experience for those entering/travelling around the National Park.

3.1.2 Kamay Botany Bay National Park Plan of Management

The Kamay Botany Bay National Park Plan of Management (NSW DPIE, 2020a) covers an area of about 456 hectares, extending across the northern and southern headlands of the entrance to Botany Bay as shown in Figure 3-1. The core values of Kamay Botany Bay National Park as outlined in the Plan of Management are:

- The long and continuing connection between Aboriginal people and the landscape.
- The association with British and French expeditions of exploration and settlement and the history of contact between Aboriginal Australians and explorers and settlers.
- The diverse and evolving symbolism that comes from these initial contacts and later meetings between cultures — the 'meeting place' theme allows for continuing recognition of this cultural impact and the opportunity to explore social issues such as reconciliation.
- The enduring scenic landscapes that define the entrance to Botany Bay and are a continuing connection between the place that existed prior to 1770 and today — they provide the setting and backdrop for park visitors to enjoy and learn about the national park's natural and cultural values.
- The largest remnants of the original vegetation communities of the Kurnell Peninsula and La Perouse area, representing an important sample of the landscapes, ecosystems and habitats of the Sydney coastline.



Figure 3-1: Kamay Botany Bay National Park overview (NSW DPIE, 2020a)

One of the plan's objectives is to provide for visitor use, including to provide visitor facilities that support cultural and nature-based recreation and provide opportunities for the enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of the National Park's value. There is a specific action to provide support and cooperation to relevant agencies in the planning and establishment of water-based links, such as a ferry, and associated infrastructure between the La Perouse and Kurnell sections of the National Park within three years. The project aligns with this Plan as the re-establishment of the wharves and ferry service allows transport links to connect people with the National Park.

3.1.3 Meeting Place Precinct Botany Bay National Park, Kurnell: Conservation Management Plan 2008

The Meeting Place Precinct Conservation Management Plan (NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2008) is a policy framework which was developed to conserve the significance of the Meeting Place Precinct. This Conservation Management Plan has been largely implemented. The principles of the Conservation Management Plan have been adopted in the Master Plan and Plan of Management.

3.1.4 Kamay 2020 Project

The Kamay 2020 Project (NSW DPIE, 2020e) (a joint Australian and NSW Government project) has been informed by both the Kamay Botany Bay National Park Kurnell Master Plan (NSW DPIE, 2019) and Plan of Management (NSW DPIE, 2020a). It commemorates 250 years since the encounter between Aboriginal Australians and the crew of the Endeavour and aims to deliver improved visitor amenity and access, provide new experiences and acknowledge the diversity of stories associated with the National Park. The ferry wharves project is being delivered as part of Stage 1 of the Kamay 2020 Project. Other parts of the Kamay 2020 Project include the installation of commemorative sculptures and other enhancements to the visitor experience at the National Park.

3.1.5 Government agreements

In April 2018, the Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer announced funding towards the ferry wharves project with contributions coming from both the Commonwealth and NSW Governments. This is referred to as the Project Agreement for the Kamay 250th Anniversary Project (Commonwealth of Australia and NSW Government, 2018). This agreement also included other elements not part of the ferry wharf project including commemorative artwork, visitor building, foreshore loop, update to Alpha House, installation of a collection/specimen garden and upgrade to the Commemoration Flat picnic area. In December 2018, National Parks and Wildlife Services and the then Roads and Maritime Services (now Transport for NSW) signed an Interagency Project Agreement to define the roles and responsibilities of each party in relation to delivery of the elements of the Kamay 250th Anniversary Project, namely that Transport for NSW would lead the delivery of the ferry wharves project and NPWS would provide all funding to pay for the delivery of the ferry wharves project.

3.1.6 NSW Future Transport Strategy 2056

The NSW Future Transport Strategy 2056 (Transport for NSW, 2018a) is an update to the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. The transport strategy sets out a 40-year vision for transport in NSW, which is supported by the Greater Sydney Services and Infrastructure Plan and other subplans.

The transport strategy focuses on the role of transport in delivering movement to support the desired character of places and communities, while contributing to a productive economy and a sustainable and liveable society. Consistency with the movement and place framework is a key objective of the project. It also provides an economic opportunity and improved liveability through better accessibility within the National Park encouraging future investment.

The South East Sydney Transport Strategy articulates Future Transport 2056 at a regional level. Section 1.3 of this Strategy lists a ferry service between La Perouse and Kurnell as a major initiative.

3.1.7 Tourism and Transport Plan: Supporting the Visitor Economy

This Plan (Transport for NSW, 2018b) is a supporting plan to the NSW Future Transport Strategy 2056. It includes objectives for developing the visitor economy through enhancing the experience and ease of access to more of NSW. It also aims to make transport an attraction/visitor experience. The project aligns with these aims by providing improved access between the two sites and a better travel experience. The project also aligns with the aim to improve links to national parks and nature-based tourism (identified under Customer Outcome 2 of the plan) by improving linkages and connection to the National Park. As the National Park is split across La Perouse and Kurnell, the project would help improve connections within the National Park itself.

3.1.8 Sydney's Ferry Future: Modernising Sydney's Ferries

Sydney's Ferry Future: Modernising Sydney's Ferries (Transport for NSW, 2013b) aims to improve the ferry transport experience for customers and modernise and grow the ferry system in Sydney.

While this plan is more focused on upgrading existing services and infrastructure, it also states that the State Government will investigate building wharves at new locations where there is a growing demand. Demand for the project is expected to come from tourists wanting access to the National Park and commuters travelling north from Kurnell. Of relevance to the project, the Sydney's Ferry Future document notes that about one-third of ferry trips on a weekday are for leisure, increasing to nearly three-quarters on weekends. This is much higher than other transport modes and creates high use outside of traditional commuter peak times; especially on sunny days and weekends. This is consistent with the observed visitor numbers at La Perouse and Kurnell, which both experience high visitor numbers on weekends. This would be considered when finalising the operating model for the ferry service.

3.1.9 Transport for NSW's Reconciliation Action Plan 2019 - 2021

Transport for NSW's Reconciliation Action Plan 2019 – 2021 (Transport for NSW, 2019e) outlines the commitments that all NSW transport projects are to work towards for reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The project has been identified by the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council as helping to restore and strengthen connection to culturally significant sites and continue practicing culture and provide economic opportunities. La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council has also been engaged throughout the design development and EIS process (refer to Chapter 6 (Consultation)).

3.1.10 Regional Boating Plan: Botany Bay, Georges River and Port Hacking Region

This Regional Boating Plan: Botany Bay, Georges River and Port Hacking Region (Transport for NSW, 2015b) was produced to boost the experience of recreational boating across the State. It identifies actions to address safety, access and infrastructure. Key findings of the plan identified relatively few existing formal waterway access points in Botany Bay to service the population. The project provides additional access points and would allow for recreational use at the wharves.

3.1.11 Sydney's Cycling Future

Sydney's Cycling Future (Transport for NSW, 2013a) presents the direction for cycling in Sydney while supporting its changing culture.

One of the objectives of this strategy is to invest in connected bike routes that are within five kilometres of major centres and public transport interchanges. Botany Bay is within a five kilometre catchment area of an activity centre. The project would promote cycling as a mode of transport between La Perouse and Kurnell by improving the connectivity of cycle routes on either side of Botany Bay.

The current bicycle connectivity to Sydney light rail links and the Sydney CBD would also be improved with the proposed ferry service as La Perouse is about eight kilometres from Kingsford and 10 kilometres from Randwick light rail stop. Sydney's Cycling Future also mentions improving the traffic performance for cyclists who ride their bike to public transport services. The project would support La Perouse becoming a public transport interchange and would include provision for bike racks near the entrances to the wharf in line with this strategy.

3.1.12 NSW Premier's Priorities

The current priorities outlined by the NSW Premier aim to deliver a strong economy, high quality education, well connected communities with quality local environments, break the cycle of disadvantage, and put customers first (NSW Government, 2020a).

The project could help to achieve the 'greener public spaces' priority which is to increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023. The priority recognises that "walkable, connected and accessible public spaces promote healthier lifestyles and bring people together". The project would help to improve the connection that surrounding regions have with the existing greenspace of the National Park. It would also help to improve access within the National Park itself which spans across the two sites by providing visitors the opportunity to experience more of the National Park in an easier manner rather than needing to travel by road.

3.1.13 NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW number one

While NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW number one (NSW Government, 2011) has been superseded by the NSW Premier's Priorities, it was key in identifying the need to "enhance cultural, creative, sporting and recreation opportunities by improving access to the significant cultural and recreational sites in the Kamay Botany Bay National Park". The project would achieve this objective by improving access to and enhancing recreational opportunities within the National Park.

3.1.14 Building Momentum: State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2028

The Building Momentum: State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2028 is a 20-year infrastructure investment plan (Infrastructure NSW, 2018) that assesses infrastructure problems and provides solutions to grow the State's economy. The strategic objective is to "ensure the transport system creates opportunities for people and businesses to access the services and support they need".

One of the recommendations of this strategy is to complete missing links in the regional network that create travel time savings, which this project addresses by providing a direct route between La Perouse and Kurnell. The alternative is by road; which currently has poor public transport connectivity resulting in travel times of up to two hours.

3.1.15 NSW Maritime Infrastructure Plan

The NSW Maritime Infrastructure Plan 2019-2024 (NSW Government, 2018b) sets out a strategic and coordinated approach to prioritising and delivering maritime infrastructure in NSW. The plan aims to deliver the following outcomes:

- Enable safe and environmentally sustainable access, use and navigation of NSW waterways
- Enable great recreational and tourism experiences on our waterways
- Support a strong and diverse NSW economy, growing tourism and commercial fishing and aquaculture
- Facilitate increased investment in maritime infrastructure and facilities by others (including the private sector)
- Facilitate the improvement and activation of our harbours and foreshore precincts and improve public amenity for the community.

The project supports this plan by creating a new waterway link for Botany Bay that improves access for the public to move between locations and allows for recreational vessels to use the facility and enjoy the waterways.

3.1.16 Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan 2030

The visitor economy in NSW is aiming to generate \$55 billion by 2030. Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan 2030 (NSW Department of Industry, 2018) sets out the objectives for the planned growth of the NSW tourism market to support this.

The six key focus areas of this plan include:

- Listen, understand, act
- Support regional decisions: Back regional NSW
- Put the visitor first
- Support, bolster and encourage the visitor economy
- Invest in infrastructure
- Make opportunities to support growth.

Indigenous-based tourism is identified as an opportunity for visitors to learn about Aboriginal culture and history in this plan. The project supports this by improving access to significant Aboriginal cultural sites. It also aligns with the 'support, bolster and encourage the visitor economy' focus area by enabling increased visitor numbers to travel to these areas and engage with Aboriginal culture.

3.1.17 Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Employment: NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal Affairs, Education, Employment and Accountability

The Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Employment plan was created in 2013 by NSW Aboriginal communities and the State Government (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2013). It focuses on revitalising cultures, creating opportunities and empowering Aboriginal Australians. Initiatives identified in this plan include:

- Create improved learning pathways for Aboriginal Australians in education
- Better link education with employment opportunities
- Empower Aboriginal communities to take responsibility for their own futures.

The project supports this document by improving access to important Aboriginal cultural sites and providing opportunities for greater economic participation for Aboriginal communities.

3.1.18 Draft Connecting with Country

The Government Architect NSW released a draft Connecting with Country policy document in 2020 (NSW Government Architect, 2020) which is a framework for understanding the value of Aboriginal knowledge in the design and planning of places. The project has been carried out in line with this policy by integrating Aboriginal knowledge in the design process. Examples of this are outlined in Chapter 5 (Project description), and include Aboriginal consultation to inform design principles, receiving feedback on design outcomes and engaging Aboriginal designers for the detailed design of wharf elements.

3.1.19 NSW Government Aboriginal Procurement Policy

The Aboriginal Procurement Policy (NSW Government, 2021) objectives are to support employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and support sustainable growth of Aboriginal businesses by driving demand via Government procurement of goods, services and construction. The Policy has three targets to be achieved by December 2021:

- One per cent of the NSW Government addressable spend to Aboriginal businesses
- Three per cent of total goods and services contracts to Aboriginal businesses
- 3,000 full time equivalent employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through NSW Government procurement activities.

The project provides an opportunity to achieve real and tangible outcomes in the areas of Aboriginal employment both in terms of constructing the project and supporting further growth during operation by improving access for the local Aboriginal community.

3.1.20 Randwick City Plan

Randwick City Plan (Randwick City Council, 2017) covers the area where the proposed La Perouse wharf would be located. The plan outlines a framework for land use planning and decision making over the next 20 years. The key themes of this plan relevant to the project include:

- A sense of community, which outlines the aim of creating a sense of inclusiveness, wellbeing and involvement
- Places for people, which describes how the natural and built environment can enhance the way people experience Randwick City
- A prospering City, which is an overview of how local and regional economic development will be encouraged
- Moving around, which is how movement from place to place is supported
- Looking after the environment, which responds to pressures facing the natural and built environments now and into the future.

The plan also notes that “there has been a continuous and profound connection to the land among members of the Aboriginal community of La Perouse with evidence of their long occupation apparent in the living sites, middens and artwork located in Randwick City”. This project helps to improve connectivity to La Perouse by providing a new waterway transport link.

3.1.21 Sutherland Shire Council Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement

The Sutherland Shire Council Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement (Sutherland Shire Council, 2019) covers the area where the proposed Kurnell wharf would be located. This sets out the vision and planning principles for land use decisions in Sutherland Shire for the next 20 years. It identifies priorities for infrastructure, housing, town centres, employment, transport, recreation and environment land use outcomes.

The project aligns with a number of the planning priorities such as:

- Liveability: Open space and sporting needs – by providing better access to existing areas of open space (Kamay Botany Bay National Park) and improving visitation.
- Liveability: Community connections – by providing a piece of public transport infrastructure to support the community and provides improved access to areas of historical and cultural significance.
- Productivity: Connected transport networks – by providing an alternative transport option that would improve travel time and access for people moving between Kurnell and La Perouse
- Productivity: Grow tourism – by improving visitor access to the Kamay Botany Bay National Park and improve the entry experience.
- Sustainability: Improve efficiency – by providing a public transport option that helps to reduce travel time and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

3.2 Project need

The above policies, plans and strategies indicate a need to improve the access and connection between La Perouse and Kurnell. This will help support actions raised in the Kamay Botany Bay National Park Kurnell Master Plan (NSW DPIE, 2019).

The below sections further summarise the need for the project.

3.2.1 Existing access

There is currently no ferry service between La Perouse and Kurnell, limiting visitors to use the road network which takes about 40 to 90 minutes to travel between the two sites. Existing public bus services take between one to two hours to travel between La Perouse and Kurnell. The previous ferry service that operated reduced this travel time to 20 minutes. Other issues affecting travel and access between La Perouse and Kurnell include:

- Poor travel reliability due to variable road traffic conditions

- Poor accessibility for members of the public that do not own a car, including disabled and elderly people
- Poor public transport connectivity, which can result in a travel time of up to two hours between the two sites and between three to five mode changes.

This lack of an accessible connection between the two sites of the National Park inhibits the visitation and use.

There are no formal existing berths or access points between land and sea for vessels within Kamay Botany Bay National Park at La Perouse or Kurnell. The Regional Boating Plan (Transport for NSW, 2015b) identifies relatively few existing formal waterway access points in Botany Bay to service the population. The Plan identifies the need for improved wharf infrastructure in the region to provide access points for passengers on larger vessels as well as an additional emergency access point in Botany Bay.

3.2.2 Poor sense of arrival at Kurnell

Community consultation carried out as part of the Kamay Botany Bay National Park Kurnell Master Plan highlighted that Kurnell, in its current state, is underwhelming and does not fairly represent the importance of the site to Aboriginal people and the community. The poor arrival experience at Kurnell via car was considered to not reflect the site as a nationally significant area (as the arrival via car includes views of an oil refinery and the industrial areas of Port Botany).

3.2.3 Limitation of visitors and investment in the area

The lack of connectivity between these sites acts as a deterrent against potential investment from the private sector in exploring new tourist and visitor experience market opportunities. The National Park currently receives about 800,000 visitors annually, which is markedly lower than other NSW National Parks. The lack of wharves prevents investment to initiate a regular ferry service in Botany Bay, with potential operators unlikely to enter this market without appropriate infrastructure or subsidy support at La Perouse and Kurnell. While this prevents direct investment for ferries and related ferry services, it also limits further investments around La Perouse and Kurnell. This includes waterborne visitor economy services such as boat tours, cruises and charters, as well as retail and food / beverage offerings near the wharves.

3.2.4 Aboriginal loss of connection to Country

The local La Perouse Aboriginal community has accessed Kurnell for generations. Prior to British settlement in 1788, the Aboriginal groups in the Dharawal (around Kurnell) and Eora nations (around Metropolitan Sydney) used watercrafts for fishing and travelling over the water. This allowed people to move between La Perouse and Kurnell, which made connection with Country accessible to the Aboriginal groups and for Kurnell to exist as a place of importance for meetings and cultural activities.

The original ferry service was the primary means of transport for the Aboriginal community at La Perouse to travel to Kurnell and vice versa. Since the loss of this service, connection to Country has decreased due to the limited accessible public transport options. This lack of a waterborne connection prevented people from readily accessing both sides of the National Park.

3.2.5 Kurnell as a site of national importance

The Meeting Place Precinct in Kurnell is recognised by many Australians as a site of national significance. The culture and history that is linked to the National Park such as the ongoing Aboriginal connection to the land and the history of both French and British arrival to Australia, makes this a site of national importance for all Australians. However, there are accessibility limitations of the National Park arising from long travel times for private vehicle and lack of public transport, particularly for the Meeting Place Precinct at the Kurnell site. As a result, the true visitation potential is currently unable to be realised, preventing this site and the historical significance of the Aboriginal, British and French ties to the National Park being fully appreciated.

This limits the National Park's potential to contribute to a society that is more inclusive of Aboriginal people, and their diverse cultures.

Both the La Perouse and Kurnell areas of the National Park are places of national significance and as such they require equitable access to be provided by accessible public transport links, such as a ferry service, for all Australians and other visitors.

3.3 Project objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

- Create waterborne access to the National Park for passenger ferries, tourism-related commercial vessels and recreational vessels
- Ensure safety is paramount during all project lifecycle phases
- Adopt a place-led approach to the services in accordance with the Movement and Place Framework
- Achieve value for money and efficiency in the development, delivery and operation of the project
- Ensure the project is completed within the project budget
- Complete the project as early as possible
- Ensure full compliance with all planning approvals
- Make the best use of available resources from private and public sectors
- Ensure robust, accountable and transparent governance systems and structures are implemented
- Ensure meaningful engagement with the Aboriginal community and that culturally sensitive outcomes are implemented
- Meet the needs and expectation of end users, community and key stakeholders
- Ensure the project promotes ecologically sustainable development principles.

3.4 Project benefits

A range of benefits are expected to be realised through the reinstatement of the wharves at La Perouse and Kurnell. The key benefits can be summarised by the following categories and are described in detail below:

- Increasing visitation to the area
- Recognition and engagement with culture
- Economic participation and opportunities.

3.4.1 Increasing visitation to the area

A waterborne transport connection between La Perouse and Kurnell would create new commercial and recreational opportunities, improve accessibility and enhance the arrival experience for more visitors accessing the National Park.

The reinstatement of the La Perouse and Kurnell wharves would provide the necessary infrastructure for a waterborne ferry service to be reinstated and create a new and direct transport link between the two sites. A waterborne ferry service would allow higher visitation to both sites due to:

- Reduced travel time when travelling to and from the strategic centres including Sydney CBD and other suburbs
- Improved travel reliability with a ferry service that has regular scheduled crossings
- Provision of a low-cost and disability compliant public transport option
- Berths for tourism-related commercial and recreational vessels
- Improved access to the National Park for recreational cyclists using the ferry to complete the Botany Bay loop.

New visitor experiences

The wharves would create an opportunity for new visitor experiences to occur within the National Park and its surroundings through commercial and recreational vessels utilising the wharves. New services could be offered from the wharves such as waterborne tours, cruises and charters for activities such as whale watching, fishing and cultural tourism.

The reinstatement of the wharves would also allow for private vessels to casually berth, allowing individuals on the vessels to easily access the National Park. This could include 'kiss and ride' for collecting or dropping off passengers, stopping off to enjoy the sights at La Perouse or Kurnell for short or longer periods of time, and enjoyment of food and beverage options nearby. Other visitors would have greater access to recreational activities from the wharves such as cultural tourism, as well as fishing, which could benefit from fishing platforms at the wharves.

These new activities to engage in while visiting the National Park (enabled by the proposed wharves) would bring a range of new visitors to the National Park and increase the visitor spend per person.

Cycling and walking connections

In addition to greater visitation to the National Park itself, a ferry service between these sites would fill the missing connection for walking and cycling routes along the coastline of Botany Bay and further south, increasing the opportunity for recreational walkers and cyclists to travel onto both sides of the Botany Bay headlands. This would connect the Sutherland Shire to the Principle Bicycle Network under the NSW Future Transport Strategy 2056 (Transport for NSW, 2018a) which extends to La Perouse. By encouraging the use of active transport modes (cycling and walking), this would have flow on health benefits.

Travels costs and reliability

The proposed new transport link would help to improve travel time reliability for visitors and commuters who previously faced a long and unreliable road transport journey. It is also anticipated that a portion of visitors who previously travelled to the National Park by private vehicle may be inclined to switch modes to active modes and public transport due to the proposed ferry service.

Benefits to Kamay Botany Bay National Park

Larger numbers of visitors to both La Perouse and Kurnell would result in greater usage and exploration of the National Park. The link between La Perouse and Kurnell would allow more visitors, who may have previously been deterred by the distance between the two areas via the road network, to visit the entirety of the national park.

The increased visitor numbers that wharves and a waterborne service would produce, would help support the other upgrades to the National Park that the Masterplan proposes. This includes upgrades to the Visitor Centre which will include an art gallery, shop and café. Additional visitation as a result of the wharves and ferry service would support these businesses, services and increase visitor spend throughout the National Park.

3.4.2 Recognition and engagement of culture

Recognition of culture

The reinstatement of the wharves and associated ferry service would improve opportunities for visitors and the local Aboriginal community to access both sites of the National Park.

There is a well-represented Aboriginal community within La Perouse and surrounding Randwick areas. The La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council owns the site of the former mission, and La Perouse remains a place where Aboriginal people have retained connection to their traditional land from European settlement to date. Having a direct connection from La Perouse to Kurnell would allow for improved community engagement and recognition of Aboriginal culture at both sites of the National Park.

Aboriginal cultural heritage can encompass physical evidence of Aboriginal use of an area as well as culturally or spiritually significant places. The reconnection between La Perouse and Kurnell would allow greater access to Country and assist those participating in cultural activities at Kurnell. This includes the Meeting of the Cultures ceremony and repatriation burials, which have great importance for the local Aboriginal community where Elders have received the remains of their ancestors from public institutions (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 2020).

Through providing better access for the residents of La Perouse to the culturally significant precinct of Kurnell, and vice versa, the project is expected to contribute to improvements in health, where health is defined as 'not just the physical wellbeing of an individual, but the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community' (NSW Ministry of Health, 2012).

Engagement with culture

Engagement with Aboriginal culture as well as the history of French and British arrival, would also be improved by increased educational trips to the area. Part of the Master Plan upgrades which are separate to this project include improvements to the Educational Centre. This is expected to allow for enhanced educational programs and increased number of students visiting La Perouse and Kurnell. The project would allow an improved means of travel between La Perouse and Kurnell for school groups seeking to learn about Aboriginal, French and Australian history.

In the past, major community gatherings occurred at Kurnell and this allowed for connection between Aboriginal communities and this culturally significant area. Through the reinstatement of the La Perouse and Kurnell wharves, major community gatherings could be more easily accessed and contribute to greater attendance. The wharves and resulting ferry service are critical to enabling key cultural objectives of the Master Plan.

The wharves would serve as a physical reminder of the connection between the two sites and help commemorate that connection for the local Aboriginal community. The Kurnell wharf is proposed to be located close to Cook's Obelisk, the monument dedicated to the arrival of the Endeavour in Botany Bay. This allows visitors arriving at Kurnell via the ferry to immediately engage with the shared history of the National Park represented by this feature.

Aboriginal construction and operational involvement

The project has a target of two per cent for Aboriginal participation in construction roles. There are several strategies being considered to support contractors to meet this target including using the experience of Industry Capability Network in support of interested contractors and Aboriginal majority-owned businesses. The possible involvement of the Gamay Rangers (who have contributed to the planning phase already) during construction would also be considered. There is also the potential for Aboriginal participation in the operations of a ferry service between the wharves. Participation of local Aboriginal community members creates the opportunity for further cultural engagement with the area to be incorporated into the project.

3.4.3 Economic participation and opportunities

New economic opportunities would be created for La Perouse and Kurnell through the reinstatement of the wharves. This includes potential commercial ferry operators and the subsequent associated jobs created by the project that allows people to engage and participate in the workforce. The surrounding areas of La Perouse and Kurnell would indirectly benefit from job opportunities and economic growth as a result of the increased number of people in the area due to the ferry service.

The ferry service would create greater economic participation through the added employment such as crew, ticketing, and potentially onboard food / beverage services and onboard cultural and educational experiences. Opportunities for Aboriginal employment would be enabled due to the proximity of the wharves to the Aboriginal community at La Perouse. The predicted increased visitor numbers associated with the ferry service also creates opportunities for further job creation of local Indigenous Discovery Guides.

A new transport connection via the wharves would allow people to better access employment opportunities within the National Park at Kurnell, particularly at the existing Visitor Centre. The Kamay Botany Bay National Park Masterplan and proposed investments are also likely to increase employment within the National Park, which would benefit from having this new transport connection.

Further opportunities for investment to the area could be explored through revenue collection from other recreational vessels, commercial tourism and fishing vessels berthing at either wharf. This would support use of Botany Bay and assist in enabling a market for tour operators to provide services within and around Botany Bay, such as whale watching.

3.4.4 Other benefits

Safety

The project is expected to improve safety in a number of areas such as cycling and maritime travel. Cyclists would not need to ride on major roads to connect La Perouse and Kurnell. The project would enable cyclists to ride one way to either La Perouse or Kurnell and then catch the ferry on the return journey (or vice versa).

There are also a limited number of public wharves and jetties in Botany Bay which limits the options for vessels to load/unload people and equipment in times of distress and for medical evacuations. The project could also be used as an evacuation route if road access was cut off due to fire or flood. The project would provide additional wharves for use in these emergency situations.

The wharves will be able to be used for fishing and therefore may see a reduction in rock fishing incidents.

Placemaking

Placemaking contributes to the character of a place and the experience of the people using it. For the National Park, this includes the expansive view of Botany Bay, flora and the heritage features of both La Perouse and Kurnell sites. Additional placemaking benefits are expected to be created through the wharves, the design approach for the wharves is to create a high-quality architectural response that is simple, efficient and provides a sense of place while enhancing the existing identity of the unique maritime settings. The wharves will not just be transport infrastructure. Rather they will be places and destinations themselves, which people can enjoy for gathering, walking along and fishing.

Amenity benefits

The associated amenities such as seating, waiting areas and way finding would enhance the comfort and use of these areas for ferry passengers and park users. The wharves would provide amenities for recreational fishers to fish from the wharves.

Air pollution reduction

The project is expected to reduce the distance travelled on the road and public transport network for park users who would have taken land transport for access between the two sites. As a result of the reduction in distances travelled, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions may decrease.

3.5 Statement of strategic need

There is currently no existing waterborne service between La Perouse and Kurnell. This limits the ability of people on either side of Botany Bay to easily access the historical and culturally significant areas and restricts the use of the National Park. This was identified as an issue in the Kamay Botany Bay National Park Kurnell Master Plan (refer to section 3.1.1).

The lack of a ferry service between La Perouse and Kurnell creates a barrier for the local Aboriginal community to access important cultural sites on either side of Botany Bay and limits the ability of these communities to connect to Country.

A ferry connection would provide public transport access for visitors. It would provide an alternative option for those travelling north towards the Sydney CBD, the eastern suburbs, and south to Cronulla and Sutherland Shire. It would also support economic development and tourism at La Perouse, Kurnell and the National Park.

The project's design meets the project objectives by creating a waterborne service that considers safety and urban design principles to reflect the character/context of the area. The design also considers the Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal and underwater heritage, as well numerous environmental constraints such as key biodiversity areas.

Findings from consultation as part of a Feasibility Study carried out in 2015 for the project (Transport for NSW, 2016), demonstrated community support for a reinstated ferry service to improve links to the wider Sydney area for economic and tourism purposes. It also supports a number of policy documents; in particular the Kamay Botany Bay National Park Kurnell Master Plan for which this project is a key component.