

Strengthening the Worimi language and culture

December 2022



Sustainability focus areas



**Respect culture and
heritage**



**Partner with
communities**

Transport for NSW strategies

[Future Transport Strategy](#)

[Transport Sustainability Plan
2021](#)

[Transport Aboriginal Participation
Strategy](#)

[Transport Reconciliation Action
Plan](#)

Highlights

Transport for NSW has an ongoing commitment to implementing best practices across our projects and operations. Through our partnerships, we seek innovative ways to protect and conserve places, objects and cultural values for future generations.

The Nelson Bay Road-Williamstown to Bobs Farm-Section 1 is the first stage of a duplication project located within Worimi Country (Port Stephens area, NSW). The project sits within culturally significant movement corridors between Tilligerry Creek, Tomaree and Fullerton Cove. These areas are associated with resource collection, community gatherings and ceremonial activities for the Worimi people.

- During the assessment, it was identified that the project would impact 18 individual native orchid (*Diuris Arenaria*). These plants hold cultural value for its use as a traditional food source.
- The project team formed an innovative partnership with the local Worimi Aboriginal community to create a traditional dance and song in the Gathang language to showcase the story of the orchid and continue to pass this cultural knowledge down to future generations.

More information

For more information and keep up-to-date with the project's latest developments, visit the [project website](#).

Check out our video showcasing [the Worimi dance and song](#), as well as our sustainability commitments and achievements on the [sustainability website](#).

Overview

Transport is committed to partnering with communities to protect culture and heritage. Consultations with Aboriginal communities form an integral part of the assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage throughout Transport’s extensive network of road and rail infrastructure projects.

Our infrastructure projects have close connections with local Aboriginal communities, as many of the public transport routes we use every day follow the songlines created to guide the journeys of Australia’s first peoples.

The NSW Government is investing \$275 million to improve road safety and reduce congestion in the Nelson Bay Road corridor. The duplication of Nelson Bay Road between Williamtown and Bobs Farm is located in an area rich in cultural value for the Worimi community.

Key sustainability achievements



Respect culture and heritage



Partner with communities

Following best practices

Transport ensures that we are consulting with the local Aboriginal community at the early stages of project development to gain an understanding of how our work might affect Aboriginal cultural heritage and values. During this consultation, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and knowledge holders take part in the assessment of the cultural values of the broader area to help us avoid, minimise and mitigate these impacts. A Cultural Values Assessment helps identify the ways in which a project may impact the Aboriginal heritage of an area and allows us to seek solutions for capturing anything of cultural value and harnessing this knowledge in a long-lasting way.

Discovering the ancient roots of the Sand Doubletail Orchid

During this assessment process for Section 1 of the Nelson Bay Road upgrade project, a small number of Sand Doubletail Orchids were found in the project development area. Knowledge holders engaged in the project advised these orchids are a traditional food source that holds cultural value for the local Aboriginal community.



Figure 1: Sand Doubletail Orchid

Above and beyond best practices

In an innovative approach, the Aboriginal Engagement and Project teams worked with the Worimi Aboriginal Land Council to explore new ways to return knowledge captured in the assessment process in ways that strengthen and support the living language and culture of the local Aboriginal community. This partnership with the Worimi community facilitated the creation of a traditional dance and song in the Gathang language.

Saretta Art and Design, a local Aboriginal-owned business, was engaged to partner with the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council to translate the story of the orchid into a cultural art form. The initiative was enthusiastically supported by the Worimi Community to develop and share language and dance and to connect their culture and Country for future generations.

In an innovative approach to sharing this information with the community, Transport has enabled local cultural knowledge to continue to be shared in a traditional way. Through this collaboration, we were able to support the local Worimi Aboriginal community in creating their own stories and sharing the living components of their culture with future generations.

Revitalisation of ancient roots

Worimi dancers, knowledge holders and language speakers participated in the collaborative journey that created this important cultural resource. Dance and song are ways in which the story of the Sand Doubletail Orchid can be shared among the Worimi community and passed down to generations to come. This collaboration has contributed significantly to reviving the use of the Worimi language and Worimi storytelling traditions.

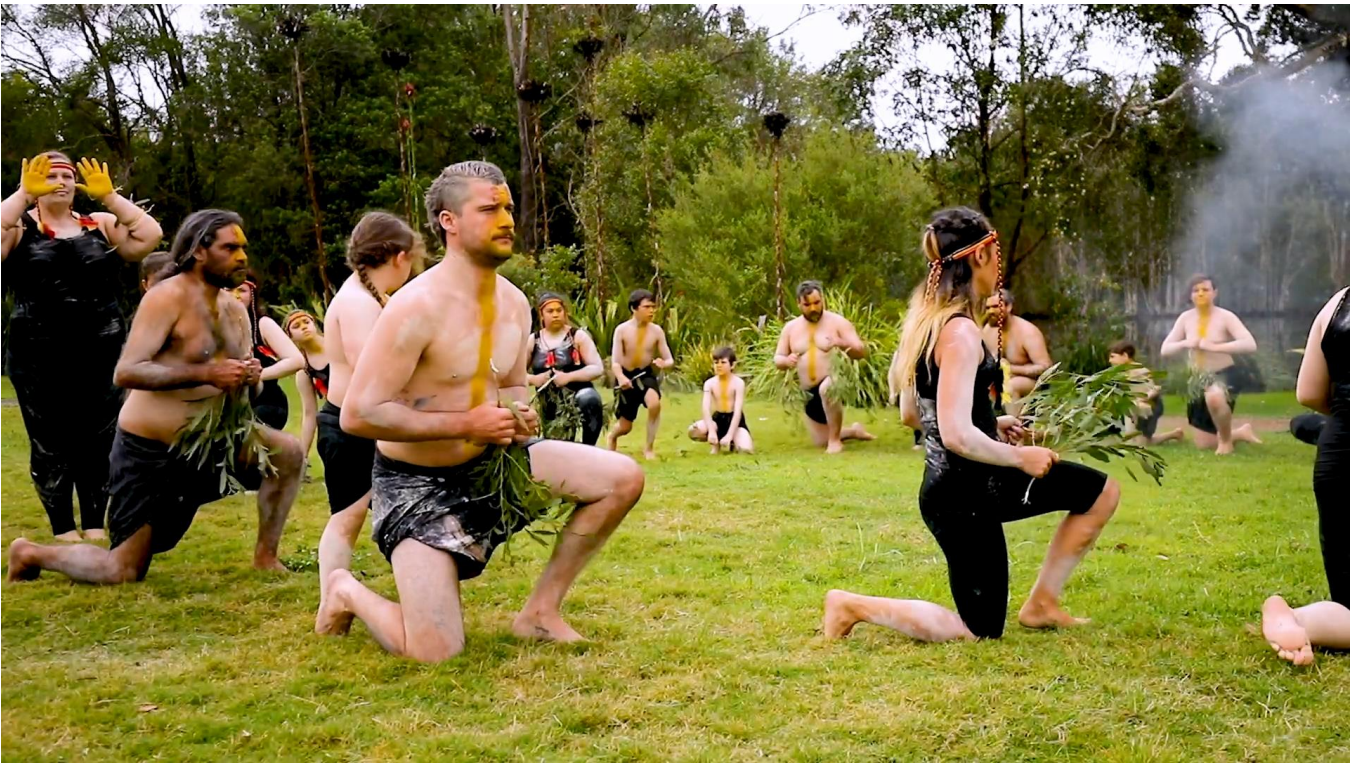


Figure 2: Performance of the Worimi Sand Doubletail Orchid dance