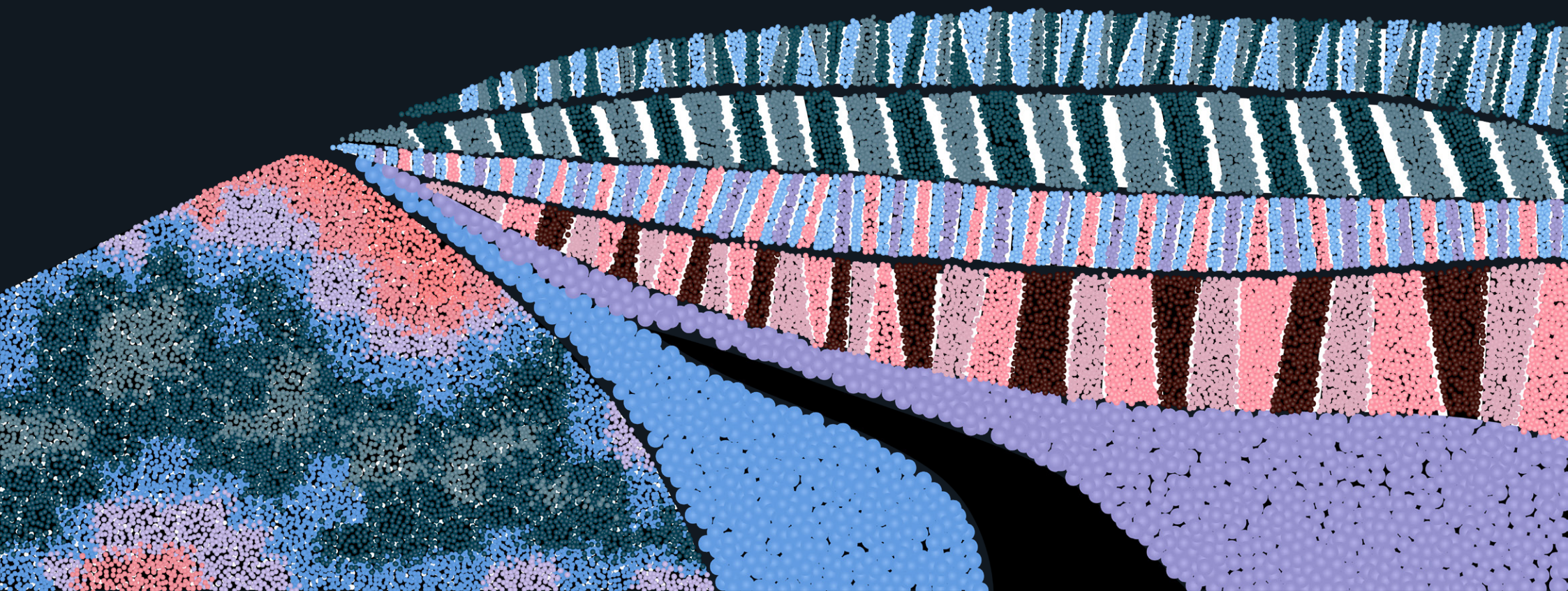


First Nations Strategy

2024-2025

business
events
sydney



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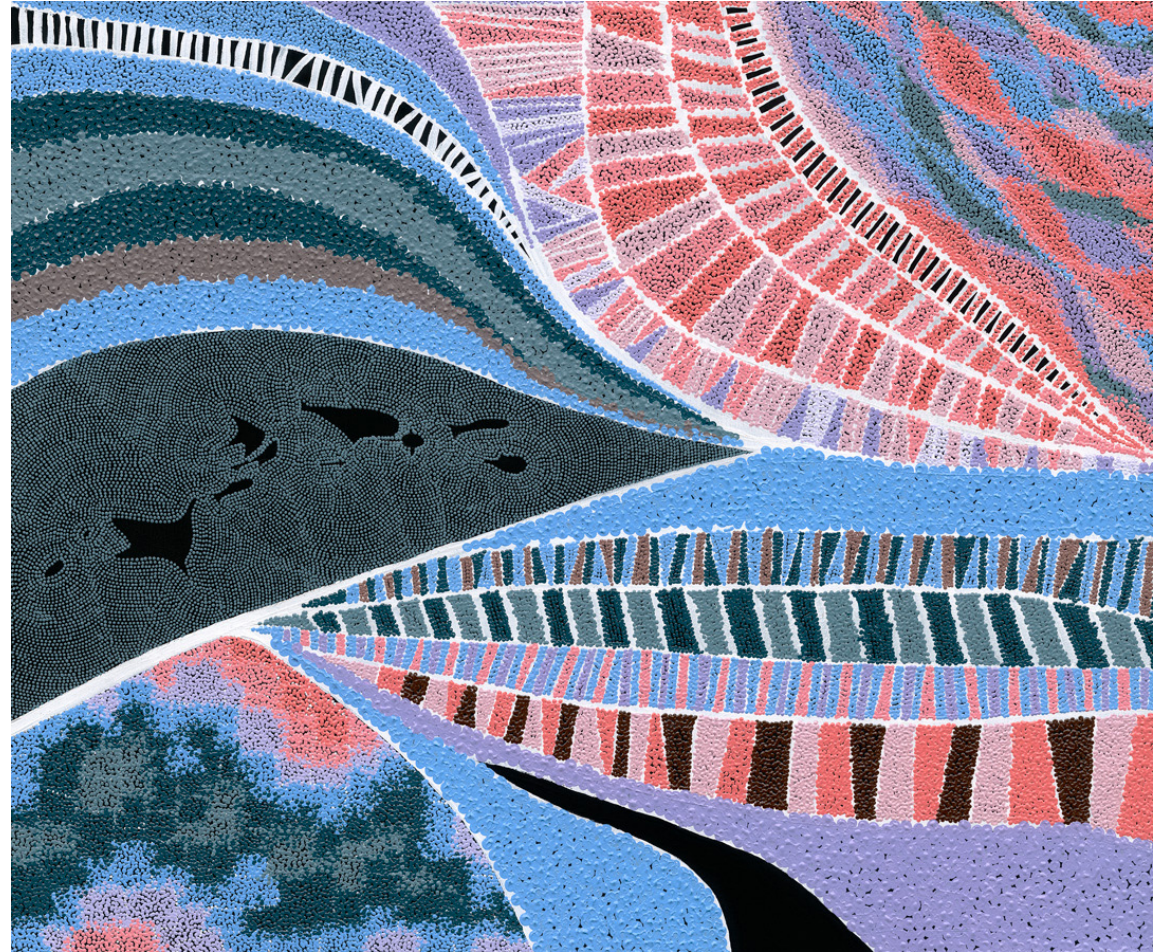
Acknowledgement

Business Events Sydney acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, culture, water, skies and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

About the artwork and meet the artist

Mari Burra
(Big Sky Sydney)

By Konstantina



Mari Burra, which translates to “Big Sky (thinking)” in Sydney, draws inspiration from the hues painted by the sun setting over the harbour – a sight that has captivated the world. This artwork features elements representative of innovation, learning, and the educational practices of Sydney’s First Nations peoples.

The sea creatures and directional arrow are borrowed from Indigenous rock engravings near South Head on Sydney Harbour. These engravings reflect sustainable fishing practices, where Indigenous peoples used the stars to guide them in their fishing endeavors. South Head held sacred significance, providing insights into the life cycles of Indigenous communities.

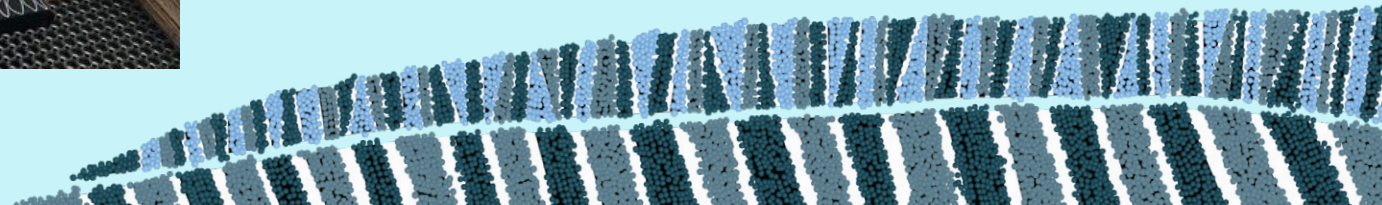
The artwork embodies Indigenous beliefs in the cycles of three: past, present, and future—the omnipresent forces that maintain balance between sea, sky, and land. Indigenous cultures’ understanding of the sky as a navigational tool, seasonal indicator, and animal behavioural map was crucial for survival.



Meet the artist: Kate Constantine

Kate Constantine is a proud Gadigal woman of the Eora nation and a neo-contemporary Indigenous artist. She is re-imagining the traditions of her peoples’ dot painters and providing a modern narrative for all Australians to better understand First Nations People as part of the fabric of Australia. As a descendant of the Gadigal, she is passionate about her language, culture and histories, much of which have been lost, misplaced or manipulated since the dawn of Colonisation. As such, her practice is heavily interconnected with her Mob and their oral histories and married with her esteemed academic research. Kate’s artworks are a physical manifestation of these stories and histories, a document in time to reconnect her people to their Country.

“My arts practice is my act of storytelling and reclamation, it is highly detailed in both style and cultural substance. I like to think my works represent a document in time to help connect both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to our rich Culture; our past, our present and our future.”



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of Business Events Sydney (BESydney), I am delighted to present our First Nations Strategy 2024 - 2025.

Over the next two years, our goal is to enrich our understanding of First Nations cultures and history and identify opportunities to foster a positive impact for First Nations communities from the global events we bring to Sydney.

The strategy will provide a two-year roadmap for building cultural competency and safety across our organisation as well as contributing to the economic prosperity of First Nations peoples and communities.

To ensure the Strategy and Plan are both fit for purpose and meet the needs and aspirations of First Nations people and communities, both documents have been informed by conversations with:

- First Nations people
- First Nations organisations
- First Nations Strategy Working Group
- BESydney staff

Over the next two years, BESydney is committed to working side-by-side with our First Nations partners to deliver outcomes and become a culturally safe, inclusive and responsive organisation for First Nations people and communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the critical role of the staff and key stakeholders, who shared their time and invaluable knowledge in the development of the First Nations Strategy and Implementation Plan 2024 - 2025. Without you, the Strategy and Plan would not exist.

I look forward to profoundly embedding the learnings of the Strategy to create a culturally rich workplace for everyone.



Lyn Lewis-Smith

Chief Executive Officer
Business Events Sydney



A note from the First Nations Working Group

BESydney is located on Gadigal Country, land that has been nurtured by First Nations communities for tens of thousands of years. BESydney attracts business visitors from across the world to Gadigal Country every year. In doing so, it is incumbent on the organisation to ensure that our team have a deep understanding of Aboriginal culture and history. This knowledge can be used to educate visitors and identify opportunities to foster a positive impact for First Nations communities from the global events held here. The development of BESydney's inaugural First Nations Strategy provides a platform to deliver on this responsibility.

Since May 2023, BESydney has been consulting with staff, First Nations people and key stakeholders to develop a series of key focus areas that meet the needs of First Nations people and communities.

The First Nations Working Group has overseen the development of our actions, making sure they are meaningful and purposeful and bring the Strategy to life.

In developing our Strategy, we have committed to the three key focus areas:

- Culture
- Partnerships
- Empowerment

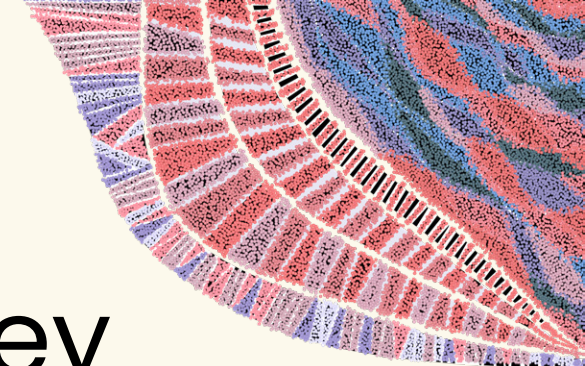
Our journey over the next two years will involve working together with First Nations people who live, work and learn in Sydney to activate these areas.

We look forward to the connections and conversations that will be established through our Strategy activities over the next two years and encourage BESydney staff, key stakeholders and partners to come with us on this important journey.

The First Nations Working Group



About BESydney



We are a trusted, independent, not-for-profit company that targets and bids for hosting rights for global meetings to be held in Sydney, Australia.

For more than 30 years the NSW Government has backed us to bring business visitors to Sydney for conferences, corporate meetings and incentive events that deliver economic and social impact for the state of NSW, Australia and global communities.

We are bidding, communications and engagement specialists. We work with local leaders and partners across government, industry and academia to identify, bid for and promote global meetings in our city. We tell Sydney's stories and profile its strengths as a business destination. We also provide professional services, support and funding to international associations, corporations and event planners who want to bring delegates to Sydney.

About our First Nations Strategy

BESydney is embarking on its inaugural First Nations Strategy.

The Strategy provides a structured approach to creating opportunity and empowering First Nations people and communities.

Over the last 12 months, the team at BESydney have collaborated with First Nations consultancy Ngurra Advisory to identify key focus areas and realistic actions to help drive our contribution to reconciliation within the First Nations communities in which we work.

The Strategy is our commitment to embed cultural values in the workplace and beyond, as we partner and support First Nations people and communities nationwide.

It sets targets and commitments across three key focus areas to ensure the successful delivery of services to First Nations people and to support the wider community's understanding and appreciation of reconciliation. This includes awareness of First Nations history, contributions, and achievements.

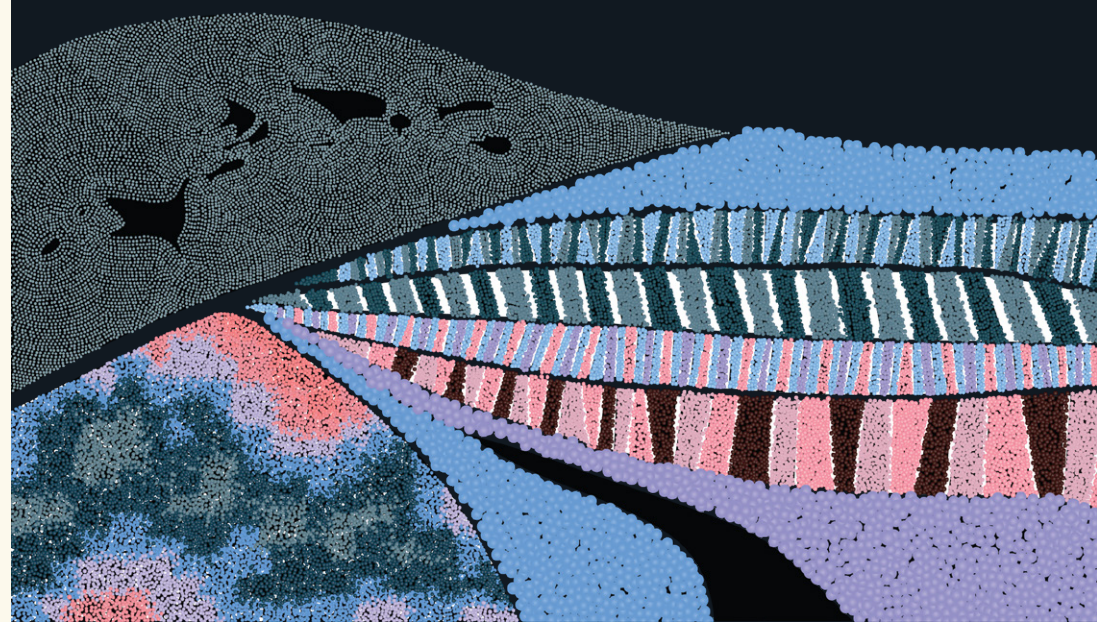
BESydney is committed to working with First Nations people and communities over the next two years to deliver the Strategy successfully.

Our Vision

Collaborate respectfully to create opportunities and empower First Nations people and communities through the work we do.

We aim to achieve this by building strong partnerships that create meaningful and sustainable opportunities and positive impact.

BESydney recognises First Nations people as an integral part of the community and highly values the social and cultural contributions of the community.



Our journey so far

BESydney is committed to walking alongside First Nations people to learn, connect and create sustainable and meaningful opportunities in the communities in which we operate.

These milestones summarise our work undertaken to date:

We are proud of these achievements and recognise that there is much work to do. BESydney will use the First Nations Strategy as a foundation to continue supporting First Nations people and communities as well as building our cultural capability as an organisation.





Inclusion and cultural programming

The BESydney Strategy will help drive partnerships and how we work with and empower First Nations communities and stakeholders.

We will make concerted efforts to continue and increase our collaborations and partnerships as we expand our networks and implement our Strategy.

Over the years, BESydney is proud to have promoted First Nations businesses and experiences through our work in securing global meetings for Sydney. This has included offering clients and staff opportunities to engage with First Nations businesses and experiences including:

- Bangarra Dance Theatre
- BridgeClimb Sydney - Burrawa Aboriginal Climb
- Botanic Gardens of Sydney - Aboriginal Harbour Heritage Tour
- Barangaroo Aboriginal Cultural Tours
- Dreamtime Southern X
- Giralang Guwal
- Tribal Warrior
- Chef Mark Olive

The implementation of this Strategy will also seek to amplify the work of our industry community of Major Partners, Strategic Partners and Members; collaborating to foster positive outcomes for First Nations people and communities.



The Framework

Purpose

The First Nations Strategy articulates a model for engagement, partnerships and empowerment between First Nations people, communities and BESydney.

Alignment

Through consultations with Ngurra Advisory, businesses and key stakeholders, BESydney gathered important information outlining the key steps that can be taken to respectfully and meaningfully contribute to First Nations people and the broader community. The findings closely aligned with the outcomes from the BESydney Staff Engagement Yarns.

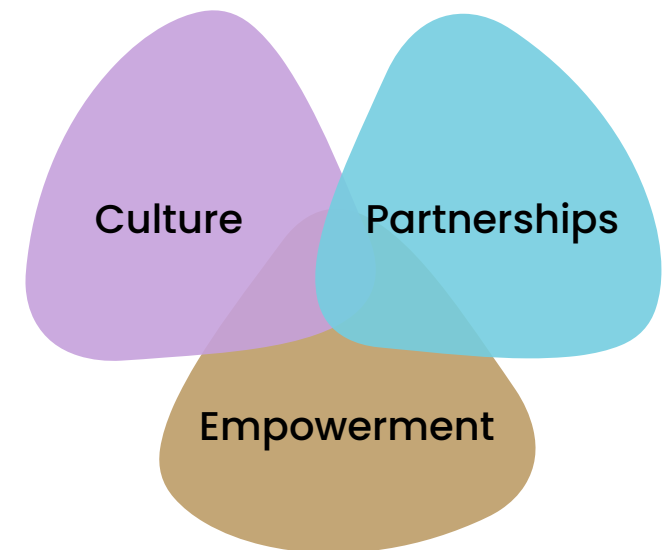
We have used this feedback to inform the development of the Strategy's vision and focus areas, noting that the Strategy also has close alignment with the following strategies, plans and policies:

- BESydney Values
- BESydney Business Plan 2024-2027
- BESydney Social Impact Strategic Project Plan 2023-2025
- BESydney Social Impact Framework
- BESydney Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework

BESydney has also engaged with its major partners - the NSW Government, the City of Sydney and ICC Sydney - to develop this Strategy and recognises the significant focus each of these entities has on creating opportunity and empowerment for First Nations people and communities.

Our Pillars

The Strategy aims to strengthen all engagement activities across BESydney. Three focus areas drive the Strategy:



The focus areas are closely aligned to the BESydney service offering. They are grounded by the experience and knowledge of our staff and, most importantly, the findings of community consultations with First Nations people.

Each focus area is deliberate and designed to serve and empower First Nations people and communities.



Pillar 1: Culture

Cultural capability, immersion, safety and visibility

Understanding, valuing and visibly displaying First Nations cultures to spread awareness and create a welcoming, respectful and culturally safe environment.

What we aim to achieve: Improving and enhancing the cultural capability within the organisation will ensure staff feel equipped to engage and implement practical strategies and tools to spread reconciliation awareness. This will assist when positioning Sydney as a destination for global communities to meet.

Creating the opportunity for culture to be more visible in the workplace and at events will allow staff, clients and delegates to build a deeper understanding of First Nations cultures and contribute to reconciliation in Australia.

BESydney will do this by:

- building internal and external awareness of our First Nations Strategy
- increasing understanding and knowledge of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning
- developing and implementing a Cultural Learning Strategy
- having staff undertake regular cultural learning and immersion activities

- including cultural programming in all BESydney bids and company events
- increasing the internal understanding and importance of First Nations cultural protocols
- supporting a culturally safe workplace to learn and support career aspirations
- raising awareness and celebrating dates of significance
- providing opportunities for staff to engage with and participate in external cultural activities with First Nations communities.

BESydney will measure this area/goal through:

- annual staff surveys to gauge the level of awareness of the Strategy and identify challenges and barriers for future improvement
- successful launch and delivery of the BESydney Cultural Learning Strategy
- the number of BESydney staff who have participated in cultural learning and immersion activities
- monitoring and tracking cultural programming in bid documentation and company events
- developing and implementing a Cultural Protocols Guide
- increasing cultural visibility and safety in the workplace
- increasing staff awareness and participation in external cultural activities.



Pillar 2: Partnerships

Partnerships and social impact

Creating meaningful partnerships with First Nations people, organisations and like-minded organisations to create positive impact and outcomes for First Nations people.

What we aim to achieve: BESydney will build mutually beneficial partnerships with First Nations people and organisations supporting economic and social outcomes for First Nations people and communities.

BESydney will do this by:

- identifying and establishing partnerships with First Nations organisations and like-minded organisations
- creating informative content for clients that articulates the positive impact and outcomes for First Nations people when hosting events in Sydney
- identifying and including First Nations organisations/charities in our workplace giving and volunteering campaigns
- increasing the number of First Nations members.

BESydney will measure this area/goal through:

- number of partnerships established with First Nations organisations and like-minded organisations
- content development for clients hosting events in Sydney
- number of organisations and charities supported in workplace giving and volunteering campaigns
- staff participation in volunteering campaigns
- number of First Nations businesses represented as members.



Pillar 3: Empowerment

Employment and procurement

Creating opportunities to enhance and support economic prosperity and self-determination of First Nations people, businesses and communities.

What we aim to achieve: Create more opportunities for First Nations people and businesses.

BESydney will do this by:

- ensuring all internal HR policies are inclusive and supportive of First Nations people
- investigating education and employment pathways for First Nations people
- exploring employment opportunities for First Nations people at BESydney
- investigating mentorship opportunities for First Nations people
- investigating memberships with organisations that support First Nations supplier diversity
- engaging more First Nations-owned businesses in BESydney's supply chain
- promoting First Nations businesses to BESydney's strategic partners and members.

BESydney will measure this area/goal through:

- reviews and audits of BESydney's HR policies
- increasing representation of First Nations people working within BESydney
- memberships established with First Nations supplier diversity organisations
- increase in the number of businesses engaged in BESydney's supply chain
- increase in the amount spent with First Nations businesses.

We are a certified member of the Climate Active Network. To help us achieve this certification, we have purchased 100% of our carbon offsets through the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation Company for The Karlantijpa North Savanna Burning Project, which benefits the environment and brings benefits to traditional owners.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan (the Plan) is a step-by-step guide supporting BESydney staff to implement the Strategy.

The Plan outlines a series of focus areas, action items, assigned owners, stakeholders and due dates to assist the BESydney team to succeed.

These practical actions share the common goal of creating meaningful, impactful and sustainable relationships with First Nations people and communities.

Monitoring and Performance

Monitoring and performance reporting will be crucial features of the Strategy to ensure outcomes can be tracked and measured.

BESydney staff will undertake quarterly reporting to track and monitor progress.

Quarterly reports will be provided to the following teams who are responsible for overseeing and supporting the implementation and progress of the Strategy outcomes:

- Executive Leadership Team
- First Nations Strategy Working Group

In addition to the quarterly reports, BESydney staff will be required to complete an annual survey to track and monitor individual progress toward cultural learning goals.

Reviewing and evaluating the Strategy

Reviews and evaluations will be a critical component of performance monitoring for the Strategy. They will provide critical reflections on whether the Strategy approach delivers intended outcomes.

Evaluation activities must address the following key questions:

- Is BESydney accurately measuring whether the Strategy is achieving what it has set out to do?
- Are we culturally strengthening the work we do?
- Is progress being made against the Strategy and BESydney's Business Plan more broadly?
- What could we be doing better and how?

By addressing these questions, BESydney will gain a deeper understanding of what has been working well and how we can apply our learnings to support and improve the Strategy. This will ensure it is having maximum impact on the lives of the First Nations people and communities we work in.

Our commitment to First Nations people and communities is much bigger than the Strategy. BESydney will listen and respond to First Nations people to identify the best ways to review and evaluate our progress.

Evaluations will be undertaken annually, with the first review commencing at the start of the 2025 calendar year. Each year, we will produce a progress report which will be published on the BESydney website.

Glossary

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way to show awareness of and respect for the Traditional Custodians of the land where a meeting or event is to take place. Its purpose is to recognise the ongoing connection of First Nations people to the land and is commonly delivered by both First Nations and non-First Nations people.

Cultural Capability

Cultural capability is a broad concept covering cultural awareness, safety, and competence. It encompasses the skills, knowledge, behaviours, and systems necessary to deliver services in a culturally respectful and appropriate manner.

Cultural Learning Strategy

A framework that outlines a clear learning path for staff to enhance and continuously develop their cultural competencies to effectively support and work alongside First Nations peoples and communities.

Cultural Protocols Guide

A cultural protocol guide is a framework that acknowledges respectful engagement with Indigenous people. It encompasses specific protocols, customs, and traditions that hold significance for First Nations peoples.

Culturally Safe

Cultural safety is achieved through actions taken by the majority position to recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of First Nations peoples. It involves creating a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Dates of Significance

Dates that recognise significant milestones, events, commemorations, and/or celebrations that hold importance for First Nations.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation involves acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this land and recognising that these peoples were dispossessed, persecuted, and oppressed as a result of colonisation in Australia.

Reconciliation is about building relationships, respect, and trust between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to create meaningful and positive change.



Thank you

BESydney would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to:

- local Aboriginal Elders
- First Nations community members
- First Nations organisations
- First Nations Working Group
- BESydney Staff

The First Nations Strategy would not have been possible without your support and contributions.

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