# Chapter 11 Adelaide's Aboriginal Cultural Markers – Significance, Curation, Types and Distribution

## Chapter Outline

This chapter discusses some issues in determining the significance of what is a new genre of public space representation, a collection of Aboriginal Cultural Markers, and presents criteria to assess the significance of Markers. Some form of curation of this collection of Markers, formal or informal, is likely to evolve and this chapter discusses some issues which need to be considered when curating a collection such as this. The chapter also presents categories to further classify the Markers outside the grouping in the phases and examines several data sets; the type of Markers and art utilised, the geographic distribution of the Markers and the types of spaces in which they are located to enable a more considered understanding of what has occurred in the evolution of public space Aboriginal Cultural Markers in Adelaide which would further assist the curation of the collection. The chapter also details those Markers that have been lost and why.

## Adelaide's Aboriginal Cultural Markers – Significance and Curation

In Chapter 3, I presented the criteria and categories in which to group works in the phases and in this chapter add criteria to assess the cultural significance of Aboriginal Cultural Markers. An understanding of both these classifications will assist not only in interpreting what has occurred in Adelaide but also likely assist the planning and implementation of future Markers and the curation of those already in existence. Over time, decisions will be made as to what Markers are retained, removed or in some cases left neglected. This outline aims to aid governance authorities and owners make informed decisions about individual Markers.

### Aboriginal Cultural Markers – Criteria for Significance

There are two main reasons to assess significance, one is to acknowledge intrinsic merit, and the other is to afford some form of recognition that may assist in the protection or enhanced curation and conservation of Markers. Specific criteria to assess and classify the significance of public artworks, in their own right, have not been developed by any central South Australian art or heritage agency. The Public Art and Design Program, Arts SA, has not developed criteria to assess the cultural significance of public art in its own right nor is it aware of other Australian states having done so. There have been evaluations of public art and public art programs based on other criteria, for instance in Queensland the outcomes of Art Built-in, a 'per cent for art' scheme for capital works projects have been reported on (Keniger, 2006) but the report does not engage with the question of the cultural significance of the artworks themselves. Reference is made to broad heritage principles but this is more about the inclusion of the artworks in heritage precincts or buildings. The Adelaide City Council, which has a large collection of public artworks, does not have specific criteria for assessing the cultural significance of public artworks. Gibson (2004:5) noted that:

> *There is no national scheme to document, catalogue or raise awareness of Australian outdoor cultural objects and their possible heritage value in spite of the burgeoning of "public art' and growing number of outdoor cultural objects in our cultural landscape over the past 20 years.*

Whilst criteria have been developed by heritage and other authorities to assess the significance of built structures and places for heritage purposes, for example the *South Australia Heritage Places Act, 1993*, Part 4, Division 1, Criteria for registration, outlined below, this has not been the case specifically for public artworks. In South Australia, heritage places are afforded protection under the provisions of the *Development Act 1993* and *Development Regulations 2008* which may not be entirely appropriate for public artworks. Some civic artworks, as in monuments and memorials, have been given heritage recognition under heritage criteria, mainly for their commemorative intent. Of the colonising statues and memorials outlined in Phase 1, six have been listed as South Australian Heritage Places (Boer War Memorial, Reg. No.1371, Statue of Venus, Reg. No. 1372, National War Memorial, Reg. No. 1523, Statue of Capt. Flinders, Reg. No. 1533, Memorial, Sir Walter Watson Hughes, Reg. No. 1543, Memorial, Sir Thomas Elder, Reg. No. 1544). None of the Aboriginal Cultural Markers identified in this thesis have any such recognition.

This is a significant omission in that an assessment of the cultural significance and potential editing of public artworks in general, will be required in the foreseeable future as works age, social and physical contexts change, and there is sufficient time elapsed to look back at what has occurred. It is now fifty years since the first Aboriginal Cultural Marker emerged. The assessment of the cultural significance of Markers in terms of their aesthetic, artistic, historic or social value has not been undertaken by any cultural or heritage authority; it has not been an issue to date. Nor has there been knowledge of the extent and character of Markers before this thesis to provide some sort of comparison. Unfortunately, all too often works can be lost, through ignorance of potential significance rather than deliberate intention. As an exemplar, in the contemporary redesign of Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga, consideration was given to the removal of the *Three Rivers Fountain*, dating from 1968, which I have established as the first major Aboriginal civic art inclusion in the City of Adelaide and a work of significance. I have been consulted on aspects of the redesign of the Square and was able to argue the significance of the work in terms of Aboriginal inclusion, in addition to the already evident scale, prominence and commemorative function of the work. The fountain is now to be retained, restored and repositioned in the redesigned Square.

To assess significance I have developed the following working criteria, with reference to the *South Australia Heritage Places Act, 1993*, Criteria for Registration, and the Act's definition of place which includes 'any building, structure or other work, whether temporary or permanent or moveable or immovable'.

**Significant Artworks – Criteria**

1. Date or Period
   . It is an early work
   . It is the first of a kind
   . It demonstrates significant aspects of the evolution of Aboriginal public space representation
2. Exemplar
   . It is an exemplary representative of a style, period or class of Aboriginal representation
3. Cultural Cohesion and Integrity
   . It displays appropriate cultural content and cultural associations
   . It has an association with a significant person or organisation

. It demonstrates cultural integrity
. It demonstrates cohesiveness
. It has a community acceptance and/or utilisation

4. Spiritual Associations
   . It has a strong spiritual association for the community or particular group
5. Creativity
   . It demonstrates a high degree of creative or aesthetic achievement
6. Rarity
   . It has rare or uncommon qualities that are of cultural significance
7. Artist
   . It is by a notable artist, artists or cultural custodian

By comparison a place is of heritage significance under the Act if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history; or

(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance; or

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history; or

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance; or

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics; or

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it; or

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

My criteria (and those of the Act) are intended to be used, beyond this thesis, as a starting point for others and are therefore provisional. Curators of Aboriginal art, cultural custodians, social historians and public space art professionals would need to be included in further developing criteria that can be applied more broadly in public space governance, and in determining the fate of significant Markers. An area that is deserving of particular consideration as part of determining significance of Markers is the social history and social outcomes of Markers from the Kaurna and Aboriginal communities' perspective. There has been little informed critique of the significance of public artworks to Aboriginal people. This would be a valuable contribution at a professional and community level. It is beyond the scope of this project to undertake research into the response of Aboriginal people to particular works but I suggest this would be a most appropriate future research project. Care is required to assess whether the Markers are merely satisfying the dominant culture's needs or are truly resonating with Aboriginal people.

***South Australian Aboriginal Heritage Act, 1988***

The South Australian Aboriginal Heritage Act, 1988, is the Act utilised to protect Aboriginal heritage. The application of the Act to public artworks has not been tested. The Act defines an Aboriginal object as being (a) of significance according to Aboriginal tradition; or (b) of significance to Aboriginal archaeology, anthropology or history. An Aboriginal object can include an object or class of objects declared by regulation to be an Aboriginal object. The Act defines an Aboriginal site as being an area of land that is (a) of significance according to Aboriginal tradition; or (b) of

significance to Aboriginal archaeology, anthropology or history. An Aboriginal site can include an area of land or class of areas declared by regulation to be an Aboriginal object. Whilst this may provide potential to include Aboriginal Cultural Markers by regulation, the Act was not drafted with public art in mind; its emphasis is traditional rather than contemporary culture. The Act, as constituted, does not meet an immediate need to initiate a discussion of the cultural significance of this class of heritage that combines both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in its making. To include Markers is an administrative and political discussion yet to be had.

In summary, individual works within this collection are vulnerable to loss or degradation through ignorance of their cultural significance. During the period of this thesis several Markers have been lost and others vulnerable to loss or degradation (*Three Rivers Fountain*, Adelaide, 1968, *Tjilbruke Marker*, Port Noarlunga, 1986). A considered approach is required in the curation of the collection. This does not mean that all Markers must be retained: the approach I advocate is to prevent loss through ill-informed decision making.

### Artistic Quality of Artworks

As in all art, with public art there are good, bad and ordinary works. An assessment of this is based on a discursive process between various professionals and the audience for these public works, that is, the public itself. The quality of public art under Queensland's public art program, Art Built-in, has received some scrutiny as outlined by Keniger (2006):

> *Numerous submissions from the arts sector questioned the overall quality of the artwork resulting from the policy. The Queensland Art Gallery commented that: the standard of the work varies significantly, from the mediocre to a few quality works of high standard. There are however, few outstanding projects that can be cited. … There has been little research on the public's response to public art except for anecdotal responses and comments recorded in media articles. Despite the occasional controversy concerning individual works, there is generally a lack of focused critical debate concerning public art.*

These comments I suggest are also applicable to public space art in South Australia, a discursive assessment is yet to be made.

In this thesis I have not looked at the artistic integrity or quality of the public artworks located as this is not an art history or art criticism thesis. It is their specific historical geography that is of greater relevance. I have therefore not made comment on the variable artistic quality of works. To do so requires an informed critical analysis, not merely a one or two line statement, coupled with an Aboriginal perspective, which is not available as part of this research project.

In researching and writing this thesis I have developed personal opinions on artistic quality and also noted cultural flaws in several Markers. I have therefore critiqued some Markers in depth but the length of writing precluded this aspect being included in the scope of the thesis. I anticipate that these critiques will surface in future discussions or debates about the management and conservation of the collection of Markers.

## Adelaide's Aboriginal Cultural Markers –Distribution and Types

In this section I summarise the distribution of Adelaide's Aboriginal Cultural Markers to add still more layers of information to assist better understanding and curation of the collection.

### Aboriginal Cultural Markers - By Category of Marker

As outlined in Chapter 3, because of their numbers the Markers have been categorised and presented by categories in Phase 4 (Chapter 7) and Phase 5 (Chapter 8). Table 9 therefore contains a summary of Markers by category across all phases. I shall briefly discuss the major and secondary categories as they comprise seventy-nine, or 55%, of all Markers. The other categories have been discussed in the relevant phases.

| **Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area By Category of Markers to December 2009** | |
|---|---|
| Major Civic/Public Artwork | 22 |
| Secondary Artwork | 57 |
| Community Artwork | 23 |
| Commemorative Marker | 14 |
| Interpretive Marker | 13 |
| Inclusion of Kaurna Language | 6 |
| Public Space Design | 8 |
| **Total** | **143** |

Table 9 ACMs by Category

### Major Artworks

Twenty-two, or 15 %, of the Markers have been classified as major artworks. A Marker has been classified by me as major with reference to the criteria in Chapter 3. This does not infer that they are culturally significant Markers when assessed against those criteria. In the context of their scale and visibility twenty-two markers spread over the geographic and social spaces of Adelaide is a small number. There is a clear capacity for many more major artworks which include Aboriginal representation to be commissioned to increase the visibility of Aboriginality in the public space. Of the works I have classified as major, fifteen (68%) are pan-Aboriginal acknowledgements and seven (33%) specifically acknowledge Kaurna. Of the fifteen major pan-Aboriginal Markers, seven are earlier Markers dating from prior to 1993 (Phases 2 and 3) with eight in Phase 4. Of the seven major Kaurna Markers, six date from 1995 reflecting the increased public understanding of Kaurna Country, as outlined in Phase 5. A trend is emerging for major works to acknowledge Kaurna rather than to be pan-Aboriginal. I am also aware of two councils and a government department which plan to commission major artworks to acknowledge Kaurna in the near future.

### Secondary Artworks

Fifty-seven Markers, or 40%, of the Markers have been classified as secondary artworks and comprise the largest category of Marker. The vast majority of these, forty-nine (or 86%), occur from 1993 onwards, in Phases 4 and 5, reflecting the increased community engagement with Reconciliation and the acknowledgement of Kaurna Country. There is often a localised intent with many of these Markers adding

an Aboriginal component to the sense of place of their locations for the people who interact with and within these places in their daily lives. It is likely that many, if not the majority, of these Markers will disappear over time as places change or redevelop or as the physical life expectancy of the Marker is reached. Not all will be retained or renewed. And, as indicated, new forms of Aboriginal public space cultural presentation will likely emerge to take their place.

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - By Type of Art**

The Markers have been classified by the type of art form (Table 10) to indicate the patterns of activity and to understand the forms of art most often or readily utilised. Interpretive/Commemorative Markers, Public Space Design and the Inclusion of Kaurna Language are not discussed in this section as they are not stand alone recognised art media, for instance a sculpture or a mural. They utilise a variety of art and design forms and materials in their making, for instance a commemorative marker may be a bronze plaque, public space design incorporates landscape design, plantings, functional objects as well as potentially, sculpture, installations and interpretive material. They have been discussed elsewhere.

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area**
**By Type of Art to December 2009**

| | |
|---|---|
| Sculpture | 25 |
| Mural | 67 |
| . Painted (57) | |
| . Mosaic (10) | |
| Photograph | 2 |
| Ground Pattern | 7 |
| Interpretive/Commemorative Marker | 27 |
| Public Space Design | 8 |
| Inclusion of Kaurna Language in Public Artworks | 6 |
| Not Yet Determined (in progress) | 1 |
| **Total** | **143** |

Table 10 ACMs by Type of Art

**Sculpture**

Of the Markers located, twenty-five (17%) are sculptures. Sculpture is traditionally the most permanent and better-recognised form of public or civic artwork. Twenty-five sculptural works is not a large number when spread over the geographic and social spaces of greater metropolitan Adelaide. Of the twenty-two major civic/public artworks, seventeen are sculptures, reinforcing the utility and perception of the longevity and importance of public sculpture.

The commissioning of public space sculpture is usually the most expensive form of public art and commissioning requires a highly structured process. Development and other council approvals are often required to place sculptures in public places and there is a myriad of issues to contend with such as occupational health and safety, engineering, longevity of materials and relationship to place. Professional and/or highly skilled artists are usually commissioned to undertake such projects. It is not surprising then that there are far fewer sculptures than murals.

**Murals**

The mural, both painted and mosaic, has been the predominant form of public art to include Aboriginal people and culture, comprising 47% (67) of all Markers. Fifty-seven painted and ten mosaic (or ceramic) murals have been located and because of their predominance I shall discuss several aspects of their utilisation.

Murals are perhaps not seen to be of the same level of importance as bronze and stone, and are in some ways considered to be short lived (although there are murals included in this thesis which are up to thirty years old). They are not necessarily subject to the same degree of scrutiny as the commissioning process of major civic or public artworks and can be more readily implemented, particularly at a local level. Often a decision can be made to paint a mural on a school wall or the like without any reference to external authorities and at minimal cost, particularly when local community based (school or otherwise) art skills are utilised in its making. They may or may not include a professional artist in the making.

In general murals as an art form have included a broad range of social expression and the counter-culture or sub-cultures not included in more formal commemorations or public artworks. They can be seen as a more democratic form of public art or public expression; they are more readily achieved than sculptural works, they can facilitate a broad community involvement, and include a broad social or political commentary. The murals identified, by and large, are not overtly political in their content, for instance demanding Aboriginal land rights or social justice. They are more an expression and celebration of Aboriginal cultures and a method to publicly express and make visible both a personal and group sense of Aboriginality. Contemporary Aboriginal painting, in particular dot painting, based on the Aboriginal tradition of sand, rock and body painting has a ready capacity to represent traditional Aboriginal motifs and can readily be used in murals to give them a distinctly Aboriginal appearance, as in the mural at Golden Grove High School by Mara Dreaming Indigenous Arts (Figure 11-1). Mara Dreaming, a private Aboriginal artists group, have undertaken seven murals included in this thesis in the northern suburbs where they are based, providing a distinctive contribution. The foyer of the Northern Women's Community Health Centre, Elizabeth (Figure 11-2), contains another example of their work.

Figure 11-1 Mural, 2009, Golden Grove HS (Mara Dreaming)

Figure 11-2 Mural, 2004, Northern Women's CHC, Elizabeth (Mara Dreaming)

Some murals do not have that 'Aboriginal' appearance as they are a contemporary youth orientated urban expression. Exemplars are: *On the Wall*, 2003 (Figure 11-3), at Angle Park, undertaken by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth involved in programs at the adjacent Parks Community Centre; and *Centre of Life*, 2007 (Figure 11-4), at the Centro Shopping Centre, Arndale, by Adelaide aerosol artist Jimmy C, also with Aboriginal youth from the Parks Community Centre. These are two of several murals initiated as projects for Aboriginal youth to direct their expressive energies and provide mentoring and skills development opportunities. Jimmy C (James Cochran) has undertaken five murals in this way.


Figure 11-3 Mural, On the Wall, 2003, Angle Park (Youth project)


Figure 11-4 Centre of Life, 2007, Arndale (Jimmy C with Aboriginal youth)

The Art Department of Tauondi College has been particularly active in mural painting, with eleven sites included in this thesis (at two sites there are multiple murals but they have been counted as one Marker only). The works have mainly been undertaken by the staff and students of Tauondi rather than as collaborations or mentoring with the students of the particular schools concerned. The first recorded off-campus mural by Tauondi dates from 1997, at the former Port Adelaide Primary School (now demolished), which was nearby to the Tauondi campus. The most recent dates from late 2008[39] and is at the Marden Senior College (Figure 11-5). Several other murals have been undertaken by the College but have not been included in this thesis as they are not located in the public space as defined and used for the purposes of this research. The College has also undertaken temporary works for specific events, such as festivals and the 1993 Adelaide Formula One Grand Prix with a multi panel work along the racing straight. The televising of the event gave the mural and its contents international exposure. It was Tauondi's foundational organisation, the Aboriginal Community College at North Adelaide, that provided the first Aboriginal public artwork, the mural in the Suzanne Ward at the Women's and Children's Hospital in 1978. This thirty year spread demonstrates a period of on-going activity by the College and its contribution to Aboriginal public space expression through mural painting.

Figure 11-5 Mural, 2008, Marden Senior College (Tauondi College)

[39] My field research was to December 2009. Other murals may have been undertaken since then.

In summary, schools, community groups and individual artists have utilised the mural extensively. It has proved ideal as a means for including community members and non-artists in the process, and for providing an outcome of community and personal pride. Murals have thus made a significant contribution to Aboriginal public space inclusion.

**Ground Patterns**

Seven Markers have been located that I have classified as ground patterns. These Markers can be understood as a multi-medium ground based mural or perhaps as a derivative, or contemporary form, of ground or sand drawing utilised in Aboriginal cultures. They utilise a variety of materials such as ceramics, tiles and stones. Two exemplars in this genre are:

. *Paving and Emu Crossing*, 1995 (Figure 11-6), Swallowcliffe School, Davoren Park

Figure 11-6 Paving & Crossing, 1995, Swallowcliffe, (F. Poole, J. Kivubiro)

. *Coloured Stones*, 2005 (Figure 11-7), Cowandilla Primary School

Figure 11-7 Coloured Stones, 2005, Cowandilla PS (School staff and students)

**Photography**

Photography has only been used for two Markers, both of which are located in the foyers of government public buildings and are by the Aboriginal photographic artist

Nici Cumpston. *Katarapko*, 2008 (Figure 11-8), is located in the foyer of the Department of Health Building, Adelaide. The other is in the Commonwealth Law Courts Building and has already been referred to (Phase 4).

Figure 11-8 Katarapko, 2008 (Nici Cumpston)

In summary, when commencing this research most of the works I was aware of were sculptures and this had been the preliminary indicator to me of the extent of Aboriginal public space representation. The identification of the broader range of types of representation has provided for a more comprehensive overview and a richer narrative. Murals have been the most utilised and pragmatic type of art utilised. Local community murals (school or otherwise) can be commissioned for a relatively small amount of money whereas the commissioning of public sculpture is a more involved and costly process. I am aware of two further school based murals that have been commissioned since the completion of field research in December, 2009 and it is likely there will be others.

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Geographic Distribution and Type of Space**

All Markers have been GPS located and the geographic distribution of the Markers in greater metropolitan Adelaide is provided below (Figure 11-9). More detailed location of Markers by council areas is given in Appendixes G (Northern Area, Greater Adelaide), H (Central Area, Greater Adelaide) and I (Southern Area, Greater Adelaide). The latitude and longitude coordinates of each Marker are given in Appendix J.

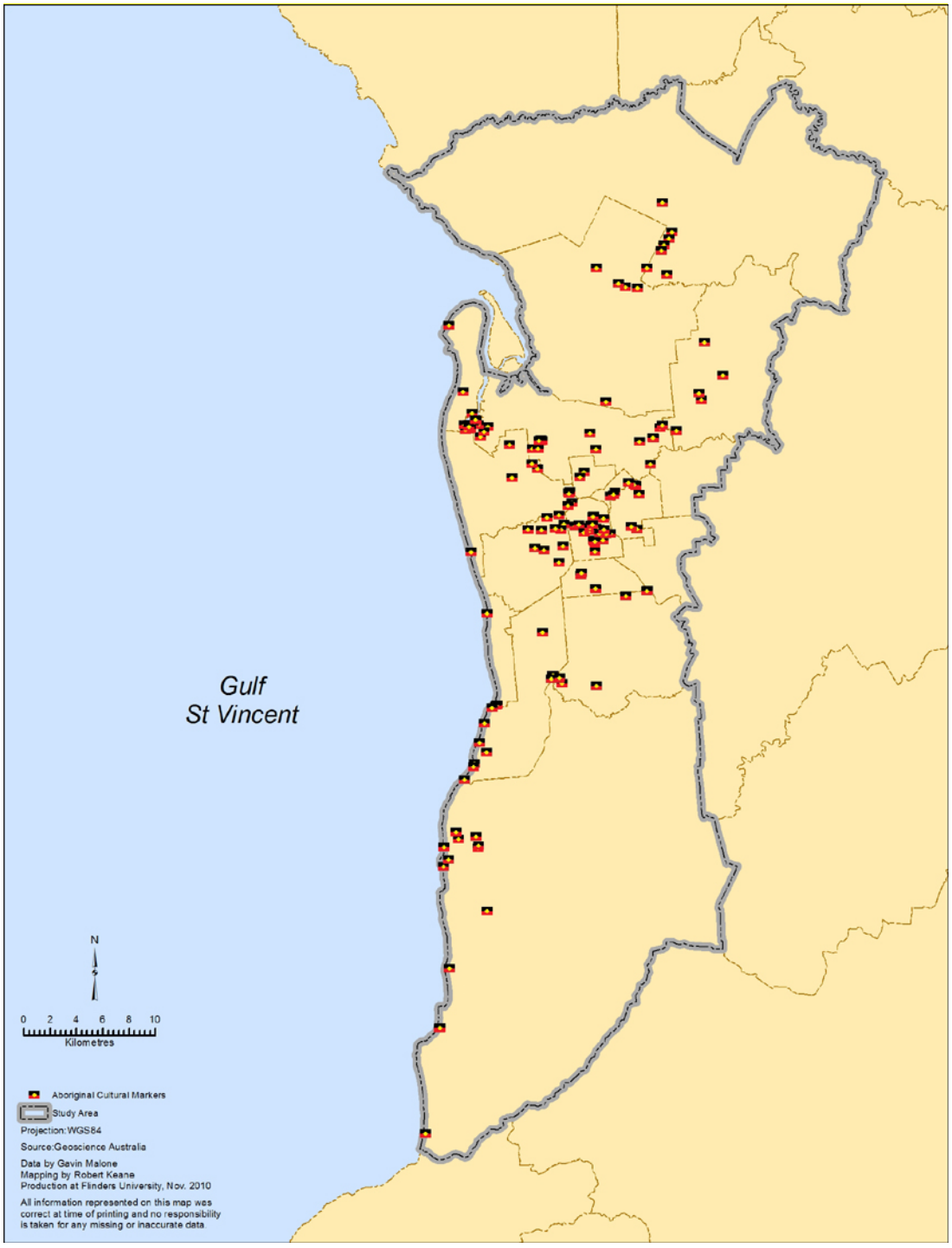


Figure 11-9 Aboriginal Cultural Markers, Geographic Location, Greater Adelaide

There is no intentional placement of Markers in relation to the pre-European Aboriginal landscape other than for some coastal and river sites, in particular the Tjilbruke Dreaming sites. The coastal region was the prime summer habitation area

for Kaurna and the Mount Lofty Ranges foothills (now the eastern boundary of metropolitan Adelaide and the survey area) the winter camps. The rivers were used as travelling corridors. There are five Markers, of diverse origin and intent, along the River Torrens/Karrawirraparri and one on the Sturt River/Warriparri, *Tjirbruki narna' arra The Tjirbruki Gateway*, 1997 at Warriparinga.

The Markers along the southern coastal region are mainly from two projects, the *Tjilbruke Dreaming Track*, 1986, which marked six sites from the Dreaming and *Marni Naa Budni Kaurna Wauwa-anna–Welcome to the Kaurna Coast*, 2006, which provided interpretive information on coastal/sea flora and fauna at six sites as part of the Marion Coast Park. The park is part of the establishment of a coastal park stretching along the metropolitan coastline and includes a wide variety of environmental interpretive information. Additional Markers will be included along the coast in the near future with the *Kaurna Cultural Markers* project (City of Charles Sturt) likely to mark two or three sites. The Port River estuary, a prime habitation site, has six sites marked for the *Kaurna Cultural Heritage Trail*, 2003[40].

Apart from the Tjilbruke sites, the coastal and river sites have provided opportunities and open spaces which have been able to accommodate Markers rather than being part of a systematic attempt to portray pre-colonial Kaurna culture in metropolitan Adelaide. The future determination of sites for Markers which are primarily based on criteria developed by Kaurna people, based on their cultural perspectives or needs, is yet to be a primary consideration of commissioning bodies. This is changing with at least two councils I am aware of in discussions with Kaurna representatives as to the location of future Markers.

The type of space in which the Markers are located has also been recorded (Table 11). The Markers have largely been positioned by the dictates of the contemporary urban plan and existing physical infrastructure; the roads, parks, schools and so forth. This is not unexpected in that the Markers have predominantly been commissioned as additions to, or to fit into, the existing dominant culture's structure of place, its institutions, civic and public spaces.

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area**
**By Type of Space to December 2009**

| | |
|---|---|
| Main Road* | 16 |
| Minor Road or Street | 10 |
| Cultural Precinct/Square | 9 |
| Public Park/Reserve | 40 |
| Major Public Building Foyer/Facade/Courtyard* | 18 |
| Secondary Public Building Foyer/Facade/Courtyard* | 10 |
| Educational Institution/School | 37 |
| Other | 3 |
| **Total** | **143** |

*The designation Main Road is based on the road being a main arterial road, major/secondary buildings have been defined by the prominence of their location, size and function.

Table 11 ACMs by Type of Space

[40] When a project has multiple sites and is contained in a Council area it is counted as one Marker only. The Tjilbruke Dreaming Track is located in two council areas in the metropolitan area and has been counted as two Markers.

Public parks and reserves (40) are the main spaces utilised for Markers. This reflects both Council activity in utilising their reserves for the placement of Markers and the availability of public spaces. This is followed closely by educational institutions, primary, secondary and tertiary (37) with several visible to the passer-by but most within the grounds of the institutions. Whilst sixteen Markers are located on main roads, nearly all of them are not readily noticed from passing vehicle traffic because of the scale or form of the works. Six of those Markers are inlaid into the footpath itself. The Markers just happen to be on main roads rather than being positioned to provide high visibility. Only four main road Markers are reasonably visible from passing motor vehicles, three sculptures, *Spirit of Family*, 1995, located near to the Adelaide airport, *Yangadiltya*, 2001, in Payneham and *Reciprocity*, 2008, in Birkenhead, and the mural *History of Australia*, 1982, in Prospect. Thus a casual drive around Adelaide reveals little Aboriginal representation.

In summary, the majority of the Markers are not located in prominent public or civic spaces with only nine located in Adelaide's recognised cultural precincts and city squares. Most Markers are tucked away in schools, local parks, back streets and sidewalks. On a positive note this can be seen as reflecting local and community based activity, as well as the activities of institutions that have on-going contact with Aboriginal people. It can also been understood as a lack of political, or community, commitment to include Aboriginal people prominently in the civic fabric of place.

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Numbers by Council Areas**

Analysis of the number of Markers by Council Area (Table 12) also brings to light several points.

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area**
**By Council Areas to December 2009**

| **Council Area** | **Number of Markers** |
|---|---|
| City of Adelaide | 34 |
| City of Burnside | 1 |
| City of Campbelltown | 3 |
| City of Charles Sturt | 11 |
| City of Holdfast Bay | 3 |
| City of Marion | 6 |
| City of Mitcham | 7 |
| City of Norwood, Payneham & St Peters | 3 |
| City of Onkaparinga | 10 |
| City of Playford | 7 |
| City of Port Adelaide Enfield | 26 |
| City of Prospect | 2 |
| City of Salisbury | 5 |
| City of Tea Tree Gully | 5 |
| City of Unley | 5 |
| Corporation of Walkerville | 4 |
| City of West Torrens | 11 |
| **Total** | **143** |

A list of Markers by council area is provided in Appendix F.

Table 12 ACMs by Council Areas

The Markers are predominantly clustered in the City of Adelaide itself, the prime cultural arena, with thirty-four Markers. This reflects the location of cultural

institutions, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, service organisations and the focus of cultural activity that the city provides. The Council has also commissioned eight Markers.

The distribution of Markers by council areas also reflects demographic and socio-economic patterns. The second largest number of Markers (26) is in the City of Port Adelaide Enfield. It is one of the largest councils in South Australia with a total population of almost 103,000. The council has the highest representation of Indigenous[41] people within the metropolitan Adelaide area. In the 2006 Australian Census 2,261 residents of the council area identified themselves as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which is 2.2% of the Council's total population, a representation almost twice that of the Adelaide metropolitan area as a whole (City of Port Adelaide Enfield, 2010:1). The Adelaide statistical division (Australian Bureau of Statistics, n.d.) with a population of 1,145,800 (2006) had an Indigenous population of 1.1% compared with 2.3% Indigenous population in Australia. Port Adelaide is the location of Tauondi College, which has contributed to several Markers in the area. The Council itself has also been proactive and has commissioned or been a partner in several Markers.

The City of Playford, an outer northern suburbs council, has an even higher proportion of Indigenous people which at the time of the 2006 Census was 1,829 persons, representing 2.6% of the city wide population of 70,011. Seven Markers were located in the council area. The City of Onkaparinga, an outer southern suburbs council, also has a significant Aboriginal population. At the time of the 2006 Census it had an Indigenous population of 1,622 persons, representing 1.1% of the city wide population of 149,735. Ten Markers were located in the council area. The City of Charles Sturt, a western suburbs council, at the time of the 2006 Census had an Indigenous population of 1,216 persons, representing 1.2% of the city wide population of 100,529. Eleven Markers were located in the council area.

The eastern suburbs, comprising Burnside (Indigenous population ninety-seven people or 0.2%; total population 41,953), Norwood Payneham & Saint Peters (Indigenous population 142 people or 0.4%; total population 33,730), and Walkerville (fifteen people or 0.2% Indigenous population; total population 6,964) councils, are some of the wealthier areas of Adelaide, have low Aboriginal populations, and have far fewer large scale Markers. This is perhaps because these communities are more remote from day to day contact with Aboriginal peoples or government services which support Aboriginal people. Of particular note is the City of Burnside with just one Marker. This Marker is located two metres inside the Council boundary and its existence is a co-incidence rather than the result of a considered decision. The artwork, *The Fossil Forest*, 2000, designed and coordinated by Tony Bishop, includes a contribution from Aboriginal artist Daryl Pfitzner Milika, entitled *Beguiled (Pastoral Letters)* (Figure 11-10). The work was commissioned by the State Government as part of the Gateway to Adelaide project, an entrance to Adelaide from a new freeway. Bishop had several artists contribute components of the artwork but the inclusion of an Aboriginal artist in the project would not be noticed by most people. In essence, Burnside is the only council area without any noticeable Marker.

[41] An Indigenous population includes both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the statistic.

Figure 11-10 Fossil Forest, 2000, Beguiled (Pastoral Letters), Glen Osmond (T. Bishop et al)

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Lost Markers**

The total of 143 Markers identified includes those that have been lost (destroyed). To December 2010, eleven have been lost and one other removed from public display. Four are known to have been lost during the period of this research and writing. The loss of these Markers and the way they were lost provides valuable information about the vulnerabilities of, pressures on and likely valid replacement or removal of Aboriginal Cultural Markers. Information on what (is known) to have been lost will be of value when undertaking the task of curating Adelaide's collection of Aboriginal Cultural Markers, hence its collation and presentation here.

The lost Markers comprise two interpretive trails which have been vandalised, the *Warriparinga Interpretive Trail*, 1999, Warriparinga, Bedford Park and the *Tappa Wodliparri Trail*, 2002, at the Kaurna Park Wetlands, Burton. *True North*, 2005, an entrance statement to an urban development containing a Kaurna language component, was destroyed in a vehicle accident and *To Lose, Leave and Find*, 2002, at Glenelg had been damaged and subsequently removed. Seven murals have been painted over or the buildings hosting them demolished. Murals are by their nature more subject to change or loss than three-dimensional public artworks. As David Hansen (1991:10) stated 'Decay and disappearance are also inherent in the nature of the medium'. The seven lost murals are:

. *Untitled Mural* Suzanne Ward, Royal Adelaide Children's Hospital (1978-?) (Phase2)
. *Aboriginals Discovered Cook* Amphitheatre, Adelaide Festival Centre (1982-1992) (Phase 3)
. *Aboriginal Theme* Christie Downs Railway Station (1997-2002) (Phase 4)
. *Visions* Signal Box Park, Rosewater (1997-?) (Phase 4)
. *Untitled Mural* Former Port Adelaide Primary School, Port Adelaide (1997-2009) (Phase 4)
. *Untitled Mural* The Pool, Parks Community Centre, Angle Park (2000-2008) (Phase 4)
. *Untitled Mural* Foyer, Tea Tree Gully Community Health Centre, Modbury (2005-2009) (Phase 4)

The Shedley Theatre Mural, 1965 (Phase 2), which is demountable, has been removed from public display but is held in safe keeping by the City of Playford.

**Aboriginal Cultural Markers - Curation of the Public Collection**

The growth of public art of all genres that has occurred over the last thirty years now provides an extensive public collection, with diverse ownership and levels of maintenance and curation. Like all art collections the collection of Aboriginal Cultural Markers identified in this thesis requires consideration as to the contemporary relevance, significance and condition of the works. Whilst museum collections have curators who maintain, edit, add to and display the works there is not a comparable structure for the public art collection, there is no strategic curatorial oversight to assist with issues of significance, maintenance, or removal. Ownership is diverse through various public and private institutions and there is not a singular entity that has knowledge of all works or curatorial responsibility. The Markers identified in this research combined form an identifiable public collection, but with diverse ownership and location. Several councils have a catalogue or walking guide of the public artwork collection in their areas (for instance City of Adelaide, City of Port Adelaide Enfield, City of West Torrens) and ArtsSA publishes the *Public Art Walking Guide* covering the city and some suburban localities. In these exemplars not all of the Markers identified in this research are included as either the council/Arts SA are unaware of them or they are not seen as public art, i.e. a commemorative or interpretive marker. At the completion of this thesis a complete listing of all Aboriginal Cultural Markers located through this research will be lodged with ArtsSA and the Division of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation so that they are aware of this distinct public collection.

Some Markers, particularly murals, will be subject to development pressures and others may be poor examples, no longer appropriate, or in poor condition. Like all public space infrastructure, maintenance of Markers is required but not always provided. The phases and types of works identified will be useful as a means of selecting art works for conservation and retention. Representative Markers from each phase and of each type should be retained in the 'collection' to show the evolution of the works, materials utilisation and the sophistication of the Markers.

The past thirty years has also been a period of rapid change in the social and legal frameworks for Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations and it may be that after appropriate consideration some works ought to be removed or altered to better reflect who we are now, make space for other voices, or update something that is no longer appropriate. The built environment is continuously being altered or renewed. Some buildings or places are protected but many are replaced or upgraded. I do not see the public art collection being excluded from this evolutionary process. The removal of any particular work is not being advocated but I am proposing that some oversight may be required of the evolutionary process through an advisory body to assist decision making about significant, and other, works. This is no different to the broader built environment of which public art is part.

ArtsSA has an advisory role in the commissioning of public artworks, assisting diverse organisations in the commissioning of artworks. To date there has been little call for the decommissioning of artworks but I believe there is a foreseeable need to edit existing public works after three decades of greater activity. There is a saturation point in some places and many works can also be considered to be of poor standard. I suggest that Arts SA would be the appropriate organisation to provide an advisory role in the maintenance and decommissioning of Aboriginal Cultural Markers. There are some practical problems in terms of the diverse ownership, and the minor nature of many works would not warrant intrusive bureaucracy. I envisage Arts SA role

would be to establish a template to guard against the unthinking loss of some works and to promote the significance and maintenance of others. Recognition of an urban Aboriginal heritage is an emerging issue, inclusion of public artworks as part of that is another consideration again. Deliberations in this area must include effective consultation with any party with a vested interest in the artwork. This would include cultural custodians as well as artists, who have intellectual and moral copyright. The Division of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, which manages the Aboriginal Heritage Act, would be one such vested interest. More detailed consideration of this proposal from curatorial and administrative perspectives is still required.

Local government will have an important role to play in terms of managing Markers both those under its ownership and those which make up its local heritage. Local government has an existing role in managing local heritage items and some Markers may be deemed to be of significance within that framework. The City of Adelaide has an active program of curation of its public artworks and monuments, but does not have a direct role with artworks not under its care and control. Of the thirty four Markers located in the City of Adelaide only three are under Council's care.

To assist councils' awareness of this issue, a list of Markers in individual council areas will be supplied to councils by me, along with an outline of the history and value of Aboriginal public space inclusion. Councils having knowledge of the Markers located in their areas is not only for their information but may provide a prompt, or incentive, for further commemorative activities.

## Summary

There are many important questions to answer about the significance of and how or why to curate this collection of Markers but in order to answer those questions, one must first know the extent and manner of Aboriginal representation in the public space. The distribution and types of Markers have now been established in this thesis.

Eleven Markers have been lost, mainly murals, and this is to be expected given the nature of the medium and the on-going change that occurs not only in the urban infrastructure but also in social structures. Whilst several murals have been lost, three are known to have been or are being renewed. This draws attention to the need to establish the significance of Markers to assist their curation, maintenance and any decisions about removal or renewal. Working criteria have therefore been developed to assist this assessment. The contribution of Aboriginal people to the assessment of cultural significance is vital to understand the value of the Markers to them. This may be at a local community level or with major works, a discussion which includes Aboriginal cultural custodians and political representatives.

A wide range of localities and art forms have been utilised for the 143 Markers, from local parks to civic precincts, from small-scale community based works to large-scale commissioned sculpture and public space design. Despite what has been achieved there are still considerable gaps in the geographic and cultural spread of Markers and there is much more to be achieved to provide a visually and culturally strong Aboriginal symbolic presence in the city centre and urban areas. Many Markers are of small scale or located in less visible public places with a small or specific audience.

The documented Markers form an identifiable collection of public works, albeit in diverse locations and under diverse ownership. The Markers comprise the history of Aboriginal public space inclusion in Adelaide and reflect broader social inclusion and the process of reconciliation in Adelaide. Just as other cultural artefacts are useful to understand a culture and its history, so too are these Markers. At this point there is no art or cultural authority with an overview of, or active in, curating this collection. This is an absence that requires attention.