

**Thesis Submitted for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**by**

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**Phases of Aboriginal Inclusion in the Public Space in  
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## **Summary**

### **Phases of Aboriginal Inclusion in the Public Space in Adelaide, South Australia, Since Colonisation**

'Post-colonial' Australia is evolving its identity and sense of self but reconciliation with its Aboriginal peoples remains politically and culturally unresolved. This reconciliation has been a national objective since the 1990s. Reconciliation is a multi-faced process to achieve the equitable inclusion of Aboriginal peoples in all aspects of contemporary society and for non-Aboriginal Australians to embrace Aboriginal people and their history as a valid and valuable part of the Australian nation and recognise their claim to sovereignty prior to colonisation.

One way a nation, or people, presents itself and its history is through the cultural artefacts it places in the public space. This contributes to cultural identity at both civic and personal levels. Social inclusion or marginalisation is also reflected in the public space and historically Aboriginal people and culture have been largely excluded from it. Whilst a casual walk around the streets of the main cultural precincts and streets of a city may reveal some recent Aboriginal representations, little is documented on what may actually exist.

In Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia, this also appears to be the case with a limited number of Aboriginal representations apparent in the public space. But there has been no research to fully establish what exists. This research overcomes that lack by investigating and documenting the extent and manner of Aboriginal public space inclusion in greater metropolitan Adelaide. In all, 143 monuments, memorials, public artworks, public space designs, community artworks and commemorative and interpretive markers, collectively called Aboriginal Cultural Markers, have been located and documented through this research.

Having established what exists, interpretation of the data can then take place to better understand the historical exclusion, and gradual inclusion of Aboriginal people in the public space; how and when any change occurred, who was involved and the manner of representation. This research traces the inclusion (or exclusion) of Aboriginal people and culture in the public space from the colonisation of South Australia in 1836 to the present. It identifies six distinct phases, which link to broader historical and social periods or events, in the evolution of representation: *The Silence* (to 1960), *Breaking the Silence* (1960 to early 1980s), *Aboriginal Voice Emerges* (early 1980s to early 1990s); *Community, Culture and Collaborations* (early 1990s to present); *Kaurna Country* (mid 1990s to present); *Kaurna Management and Determination* (yet to occur).

The phases documented reflect: the gradual and ongoing decolonisation process; a nation coming to terms with its treatment of Aboriginal peoples through Reconciliation; an evolving self-determination by Aboriginal people; and movement towards control of cultural production and self-representation by Aboriginal people in the public space and the evolution of a bi-cultural cultural landscape that has a distinctive Aboriginal presence.

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. I therefore make recommendations on themes, locations and processes to help guide future commissioning of Markers. The Markers form an identifiable collection of public artworks, albeit in diverse locations and under diverse ownership. I make recommendations on the curation of this collection.

## **Declaration**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Gavin D. F. Malone

**Disclaimer:** This thesis may contain images of Aboriginal persons who are deceased and readers are warned that the depiction of these people may cause distress to some readers.

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