

## Chapter 7 Adelaide's Aboriginal Cultural Markers: Phase 4

### Chapter Outline

This chapter documents and contextualises the extent and manner of public space Aboriginal representation in Adelaide in Phase 4, termed *Community, Culture and Collaborations*, in more detail to record the particulars of the Markers and their origins and demonstrate the delineation between and characteristics of the phases. The phase commenced with the International Year of Indigenous Peoples in 1993 and is ongoing. It partially overlaps Australia's Decade of Reconciliation leading up to the centenary of federation in 2001. The impact of these events is discussed as is the greater role of communities in expressing a commitment to reconciliation through Aboriginal public space inclusion. Aboriginal artists also have a greater role in this phase and when known the cultural group of the artist is given to indicate that several cultural groups have been involved. It is the phase in which various government agencies and organisations commissioned works with a specific intent of recognising Aboriginal people and culture. This phase sees a dramatic increase in the number of Markers, seventy have been identified, and because of the large numbers are presented in categories, which I have determined, to better illustrate the development in the styles and range of Markers in this phase. Some significant and representative Markers from these categories are discussed.

### Phase 4. Community, Culture, Collaboration: Early 1990s to the present

*Greater involvement of local communities, community recognition of Aboriginal cultures, cross-cultural collaborations and individual expression by Aboriginal artists.*

This phase of Aboriginal public space inclusion commenced in 1993, the International Year of Indigenous Peoples (IYIP), which provided a political and cultural context for a greater emphasis on and understanding of Australian Aboriginal cultures. The focus on Indigenous people that the Year provided would have no doubt assisted the emergent Reconciliation movement in Australia and the Decade of Reconciliation. In the later stage of the phase, on 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a formal apology on behalf of the Australian parliament and people to Aboriginal people, particularly the Stolen Generations, for the laws and policies which had 'inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians' (Parliament of Australia, 2008). These broader political events contributed to the movement towards reconciliation and are reflected in the works of this phase. Greater involvement of local communities, community recognition of the differing Aboriginal language groups and cultures, cross-cultural collaborations and individual expression by Aboriginal artists typify this phase. In contrast to the previous phases, this phase sees a broad range of government agencies, educational institutions and local governments commissioning public artworks to acknowledge Aboriginal people.

I have located seventy Markers in this phase in which a broad range of art styles, locations and themes have been utilised. Because of the large number of Markers in this phase and the minor nature of many it is not appropriate to discuss each one as in the previous developmental phases.

Using the criteria outlined in Chapter 3, in this phase I have classified eight Markers as major artworks, thirty-six as secondary artworks and eighteen as community artworks. I shall commence the discussion with community artworks as they are a characteristic of this phase and two community murals opened the phase in 1993. As all Markers from this phase are not discussed, a chronological list of all Phase 4 Markers is provided in Appendix B and images of works not discussed here or elsewhere are provided in Appendix C.

#### **Community Artworks in Phase 4**

Community based recognition of Aboriginal cultures is a feature of this phase, part of the broader re-alignment of cross-cultural relationships and the recognition of Aboriginal culture by non-Aboriginals. Community artworks were often used as the means of expression and several are described to demonstrate the breadth of activity, styles of Markers achieved and the communities or institutions involved. Murals, both painted and ceramic, have been the favoured medium for this category of works as they can be readily utilised by artists and communities. Often they do not involve a formal commissioning process unlike sculptural artworks. Two significant community murals open Phase 4 in 1993, the International Year of Indigenous Peoples (IYIP).

##### ***Cawthorne Street Mural, Thebarton, 1993***

The first Marker of this phase is the *Cawthorne Street Mural* (Figure 7-1), Thebarton, setting out the history of the Thebarton area, with a large Aboriginal component designed by South Australian Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal artist Kerry Giles. Giles also utilised the X-ray style of Aboriginal painting which was at that time a generic style of Aboriginal depiction (Figure 7-2).



Figure 7-1 Cawthorne Street Mural, 1993, Thebarton (Kerry Giles and TCAN)



Figure 7-2 Cawthorne Street Mural, 1993, Thebarton (Kerry Giles and TCAN)

The mural, initiated by the Thebarton Community Arts Network (TCAN), is over 100 metres long and several metres high, a grand statement. The dedication plaque acknowledged 1993 as the Year of Indigenous Peoples and stated that ‘The Cawthorne Street Mural is about community spirit and a sense of place’. The mural was undertaken in the early period of recognising that there is an inherent and underlying Aboriginal cultural landscape meaning to urban places, despite the smothering nature of contemporary cities. The inclusion of the Aboriginal presence in this mural, as in the *History of Australia*, is at the forefront of changing the public perception of an Aboriginal Australia, that it is the suburbs as well as the bush. The mural provides the first depiction of a contemporary Aboriginal urban presence by including the institutions and services provided for and by Aboriginal people for an increasingly urban community (Figure 7-3). It also utilises the style and colours of the Aboriginal flag to reinforce an Aboriginal identity. Several Aboriginals, including children, were involved in painting this component of the mural.





Figure 7-3 Cawthorne Street Mural (details), 1993

Despite the mural's impressive scale it is not well known, being located in a back street in the inner suburb of Thebarton. It is painted onto the back (western) wall of the Coca Cola factory, which has a prominent frontage onto a major roadway, Port Road, Thebarton. The mural is however valued and as of 2011 the City of West Torrens, in whose area the mural is located, has commissioned its repainting. This is not being done as a community artwork but is being undertaken by a professional sign writer.

***International Year of Indigenous Peoples Mural, Parks Community Centre, 1993***

The second work from 1993 is the *International Year of Indigenous Peoples Mural* (Figure 7-4) at the Parks Community Centre, Angle Vale. The mural features sections containing contemporary interpretations of Australian Aboriginal motifs and others of various Indigenous peoples from elsewhere in the world. The Parks is located in what has been a socially disadvantaged region and provides numerous social and other services to the region's community.



Figure 7-4 IYIP Mural, 1993, Parks C.C (S. McLean DeSilva, et al.)

These two 1993 Markers were followed by many more and a growing momentum.

***Mural, Serpent, Kangaroo and Goanna, Gepps Cross Primary School, 1995***

Little is known of the genesis of this mural (Figure 7-5) other than it was undertaken by Aboriginal parents and other members of the Gepps Cross Primary School community. Staff involved at the time have moved on. It utilises familiar motifs, the rainbow serpent as a central motif, and the x-ray style.



Figure 7-5 Mural, 1995, Gepps Cross PS (School community)

### **Visions, Signal Box Park, Rosewater, 1997**

The 1997 Visions mural at Rosewater, a socially disadvantaged suburb, was a community arts project where the building of social inclusion and cohesion was of importance and is a good exemplar of a project where there is significant Aboriginal participation. The project was part of the Rosewater Railway Yards Community Arts Project, part of the redevelopment of degraded former rail yards site (Figure 7-6).



Figure 7-6 Signal Box Park prior to redevelopment (Photo City of PAE)

The painting of the mural involved the Port Community Arts Centre, Tauondi College, Junction Community Centre and other local community members, including Aboriginal youth (Figure 7-7, Figure 7-8). Lead artist Trevor Wren (1997:3) commented:

*I enjoyed working with the kids, especially with the workshops on site, there was no stopping them, particularly the Aboriginal kids from Auntie Shirley's who amazed a lot of the white kids with their ability to draw, splashing paint around or just scribbling images onto the bitumen paths using different coloured chalks.*

This comment reflects the community building capacity of community based arts, the bringing together of people to better know each other cross-culturally in an informal

situation. In particular it is giving Aboriginal youth the opportunity to express themselves in the public space, and for their contribution and cultural heritage to be valued. It is my experience that only a small percentage of non-Aboriginal communities have the opportunity to interact with Aboriginal people at a personal level, something I suggest is a key contributor to reconciliation. This project is an exemplar of such an opportunity.



Figure 7-7 Visions, sponsors and participants, Signal Box Park, 1997



Figure 7-8 Visions, participants, Signal Box Park, 1997 (photos City of PAE)

Unfortunately, this mural was subject to graffiti tagging (Figure 7-9) and rather than the affected areas being renewed the mural was painted over after several years. The building was owned by a government authority remote from the community and the maintenance of the work was not seen as a primary responsibility. Whilst it has been lost it also provides an exemplar of the nature of change that can occur at both a physical and community level and how community artworks are part of that process.



Figure 7-9 Visions, Signal Box Park, 1997 & repainted signal box, 2007

***Mural, Christie Downs Railway Station, 1997***

This mural (Figure 7-10) was painted in 1997 at an outer southern suburban railway station, by aerosol artist Jimmy C (James Cochrane) with local youth from nearby schools. It was, however, also subject to several graffiti attacks and Cochrane touched up the mural on a few occasions at his own initiative but as there was no support from the transport authority to maintain it, it was eventually painted over in 2002.



Figure 7-10 Mural, Christie Downs R.S, 1997 (Jimmy C et al)

***Port River Healing Mural, Port Adelaide Visitor Centre 1998***

The *Port River Healing Mural* (Figure 7-11) involved over thirty local volunteers and artists in its making under the direction of Queensland Aboriginal artist Thancoupie Fletcher and is displayed in the courtyard of the Visitor Centre.



Figure 7-11 Port River Healing Mural, 1998 (T. Fletcher et al)

***Fauna Path & Seat, Adelaide Zoo, 1998***

The *Fauna Path and Seat* (Figure 7-12, Figure 7-13) is the second work in the Children's Section of the Adelaide Zoo (*Kangaroo*, 1985, being the first) and was undertaken through a cross-cultural collaboration between non-Aboriginal artist Jeanette Salazar, and Kaurna artist Eileen Karpany. Children from several primary schools participated in the development of the stories and content of the fauna path, which has a conservation ethos.



Figure 7-12 Fauna Seat, 1998, Adelaide Zoo (J. Salazar, E. Karpany)



Figure 7-13 Fauna Path, 1998, Adelaide Zoo (J. Salazar, E. Karpany)

***Celebrating Diversity Stobie Poles, Woodville Gardens, 1998 and Mural, Aboriginal Flag, Brompton, 1990s***

As part of their reconciliation initiatives community groups also utilised the mural in less formal ways using unusual support bases such as Stobie (electricity) poles as in

the *Celebrating Diversity Stobie Poles* (Figure 7-14) and a rubbish bin in a local park to illustrate the Aboriginal flag (Figure 7-15).



Figure 7-14 Murals, Celebrating Diversity, 1998, Woodville Gardens (Artist unknown)



Figure 7-15 Mural-Mosaic, Aboriginal Flag 1990s, West St, Brompton (Artist unknown)

### ***You Can Walk in My Shoes, Port Adelaide, 1999***

*You Can Walk in My Shoes* (Figure 7-16) is a reconciliation public artwork undertaken by non-Aboriginal artists Nicholas Watson and Bridgette Minuzzo in collaboration with Aboriginal artist Tamara Watson and the Port Adelaide community. Structured as insertions in the footpath of one of the main streets, the work is described by Council as follows (City of PAE, n.d.):

*These cultural markers are the culmination of research from a community consultative process and data collection. The artworks, in the form of concrete inclusions carrying text impressions, words and short phrases, telling of the community's thoughts, feelings and aspirations for the reconciliation movement of the greater Australian community. The works remain as part of the community voice in a subtle and valuable way – reminding, inspiring, thoughtful and noting an identifying phase in the history of the Port community.*



Figure 7-16 You Can Walk in My Shoes, 1999, (Watson, Minuzzo, Watson)

**Reconciliation Mural, Port Adelaide, 2000**

The *Reconciliation Mural* at the Port Adelaide Community Health Service (Figure 7-17) is comprised of two parts, a mosaic column mural and a painted mural. It was undertaken by non-Aboriginal artist Mike Tye with Tauondi art students Danny Cox, Krissy Houston and Annette Boreham and members of the Port Adelaide community utilising the Health Service.



Figure 7-17 Reconciliation Mural, 2000, Port Adelaide CHS (M. Tye et al)

**Mural, Tuggerway Bridge, Elizabeth South, 2002**

This large scale mural (Figure 7-18) on the rampart walls of a bridge was sponsored by the SA Department of Industry and Trade to provide ‘a canvas to exhibit the talents of local and guest artists’. It was supported by the two local councils, the Cities of Playford and Salisbury. It was undertaken by a cross-cultural collaboration comprising Jimmy C and Kevin Baxter with students from the nearby Kaurna Plains School, which is an Aboriginal Reception to Year 12 school, at Elizabeth.



Figure 7-18 Mural, 2002, Tuggerway Bridge, (Jimmy C. et.al)

***Norwood Narrangga Reconciliation Artwork, Norwood, 2008***

The *Norwood Narrangga Reconciliation Artwork* (Figure 7-19) results from a relationship which has developed between the Norwood Primary School and the Narrangga Point Pearce community on Yorke Peninsula. Point Pearce is a former mission station where many Kaurna lived. This Marker is one of a few in Adelaide that specifically refers to other Aboriginal cultural groups.



Figure 7-19 Norwood Narangga Reconciliation Artwork, 2008, Norwood P.S.

In summary, the twenty-three Markers (16.5% of total works) that have been classified as community artworks have made an important contribution in local community development and representing Aboriginal culture in the public space. The Markers have made visible the sentiments within communities to come together with Aboriginal people and work across the racial divide. As Sharp et al. (2005:1004) outlined ‘For many authorities, inclusive, community-based projects appeal because they are generally low-cost and yet are perceived to be able to yield benefits beyond the aesthetic that correlate with social policy objectives’.

**Major Artworks in Phase 4**

I shall now discuss the eight Markers I have identified as being major artworks in this phase.

### ***Pool of Tears & Grieving Mother, Colebrook Park, 1998-99***

This phase saw representations which were not of a mythological or traditional Aboriginal past, nor did they use traditional Aboriginal imagery: they referred instead to a post-colonial or contemporary Aboriginal presence. There is a deep Aboriginal history which speaks of the colonisation process and of survival, and the intertwined Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history post colonisation. This provides post-colonisation sites which are of significance to Aboriginal people, part of a shift in understanding and appreciation that there are urban sites of significance to Aboriginal people and that their history is not fixed in a distant past. One such place is Colebrook Home, located in Eden Hills, in the southern foothills of Adelaide which was a home for many Stolen Generation Aboriginal children from 1943 to 1972. The home itself has been demolished, contrary to the wishes of many Aboriginal people, but the site, now known as Colebrook Reconciliation Park, contains several commemorations outlining the history of the site and has been described as ‘One of the most powerful of Stolen Generation memorials’ (Read, 2008:39). The commemorations include *Pool of Tears*, 1998, and *Grieving Mother*, 1999 (Figure 7-20), by Silvio Apponyi with Kurna artist Sherry Rankine and Aboriginal artists Tjula Jane Pole and Kunyi June-Anne McInerney. These two Markers were commissioned by Colebrook Tjitji Tjuta, the Blackwood Reconciliation Group, a significant achievement for a community group.



Figure 7-20 *Pool of Tears*, 1998 and *Grieving Mother*, 1999, Colebrook Reconciliation Park, (S. Apponyi, S. Rankine, T. J. Pole, K. J. McInerney)

Whilst there are some negative associations with the place, in terms of the policy of child removal, the Park also celebrates or affirms the lives of the Aboriginal children who grew up there. As Taylor (2000:33) outlined ‘... the remembering process itself is a form of cultural affirmation.’ As with many commemorative or remembrance sites, Colebrook and the artworks are used by many people as part of the ritual of remembering. On several occasions when I have visited flowers have been placed in the lap of the *Grieving Mother* as illustrated above. They are not a design element of the artwork. Read (2006:42) outlined that ‘The lives of the Colebrook inmates were transformed here. In turn, by the collective act of memorialisation, they have transformed the site once secular and painful, into one Aboriginal and inspired’. The site is also used for formal and informal commemorative gatherings and

ceremonies, at times drawing attendances in the hundreds. Of the gatherings the local council has said:

*Nowadays, the former residents hold 'campfire' gatherings for adult groups and for school and university students. They share their stories and achieve reconciliation through creation of compassion and empathy. It is hoped these are the steps towards true Aboriginal acceptance into mainstream society and its opportunities for fulfillment of self (City of Mitcham, n.d.).*

### ***Passage of Time, Port Adelaide, 2000***

*Passage of Time* (Figure 7-21) located at Black Diamond Corner, Port Adelaide, a well known local landmark area, was commissioned by the City of Port Adelaide Enfield. The mainly pavement based artwork reflects the phases of history of the area, from prehistoric to contemporary. Undertaken as a collaboration between non-Aboriginal artist Trevor Wren and staff and students of Tauondi College it incorporates both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories, including the history of the working port, unionism and maritime related enterprises of the port. This is unusual in that a predominantly Aboriginal design team is commenting on non-Aboriginal post-colonisation history.



Figure 7-21 *Passage of Time*, 2001, Port Adelaide (T. Wren & Tauondi College)

### ***Yangadiltya For the Future, Payneham, 2001***

*Yangadiltya For the Future* (Figure 7-22), in suburban Payneham, was a Centenary of Federation project by an artist who is Aboriginal, Daryl Pfitzner Milika, a Kokatha descendant. Commissioned by the City of Norwood, Payneham & Saint Peters, the project brief did not seek to specifically acknowledge Aboriginality; Pfitzner Milika was awarded the commission on the basis of his design proposal. As part of this phase individual Aboriginal artists are undertaking works based more on their individual arts practices, rather than broadly representing Aboriginal cultures or using typical Aboriginal motifs. Pfitzner Milika trained as a jeweller and that approach is seen in the fine detailing of the work, which can be understood as a contemporary jewellery object on a large scale. It is not uncommon for jewellers to participate in public space practice.



Figure 7-22 Yangadiltya For the Future, 2001, Payneham (D. Pfitzner Milika)

### ***Reconciliation Touchstone, Adelaide, 2007***

*Reconciliation Touchstone* (Figure 7-23), located off North Terrace in the grounds of the University of Adelaide, was commissioned by the University as a contribution to the reconciliation process. The work incorporates casts of handshakes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people embedded, fossil-like, in the reconstituted stone. Tasmanian born Aboriginal artist Karen Casey in collaboration with non-Aboriginal artist Darryl Cowie designed the work.



Figure 7-23 Reconciliation Touchstone, 2007, Uni. of Ad. (K. Casey, D. Cowie)

### ***Reciprocity, Birkenhead, 2008***

*Reciprocity* (Figure 7-24) was commissioned as part of a transport infrastructure upgrade, the construction of a new bridge over the Port River and an upgrade of the road system. The artwork is to provide a marker about Port Adelaide and the brief did not call for an Aboriginal acknowledgement but the artist, Marijana Tadic, chose to use a form associated with Aboriginal culture with Aboriginal motifs included on the internal faces of the two vertical segments. Queensland born Aboriginal artist Mark Blackman contributed to the project.



Figure 7-24 Reciprocity, 2008, Birkenhead (Marijana Tadic)

***Blessed Mary MacKillop, Adelaide, 2009***

The statue *Blessed Mary MacKillop*<sup>29</sup> (Figure 7-25), was commissioned by the Catholic Church and is located adjacent to St Francis Xavier Catholic Cathedral, Adelaide. It depicts Sister Mary with two children, a non-Aboriginal girl (on her right hand side) and an Aboriginal boy (on her left hand side). It is to represent her work with the disadvantaged and the poor. Whilst Aboriginal people were by no means the focus of her work, this contemporary representation reflects the increasing tendency for Aboriginal people to be included in the historical narrative, they are being written back into history. The statue is the latest completed major Marker of Phase 4.



Figure 7-25 Blessed Mary MacKillop, 2009, Catholic Cathedral. (Judith Rolevink)

***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial, Adelaide, (in progress)***

The Government of South Australia, on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial Committee which comprises several interest groups, is facilitating the commissioning of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War

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<sup>29</sup> Following her beatification the statue has been re-titled *Saint Mary of the Cross*.

Memorial in Adelaide. The Memorial is to commemorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service personnel who have served and continue to serve in the Australian armed services. The Memorial is not to address issues of the Australian colonisation frontier wars, the conflict between Aboriginal peoples and the colonisers. The design has been completed (Figure 7-26) and its construction now awaits funding. To be located in the Torrens Parade Ground, a significant site of military remembrance in Adelaide, the Memorial has been designed by a cross-cultural collaboration comprising non-Aboriginal artists Tony Rosella and Michelle Nikou and Narungga, Wirangu, Wotjobaluk Aboriginal artist Lee-Ann Tjunypa Buckskin. Of the Memorial, the Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial Committee, Ms Marj Tripp (Reconciliation SA, n.d.) stated:

*The unique memorial will be the first significant acknowledgement of the enormous sacrifice made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the defence of Australia, and on peacekeeping missions, from the Boer War to the present day.*

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial will stand proudly within the military heartland of our state, adjacent to the Torrens Parade Ground, and alongside the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial.*



Figure 7-26 Proposed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial, (T. Rosella, L. Tjunypa Buckskin and M. Nikou) (Photo Reconciliation SA)

In summary, these eight Markers, which I have classified as major, provide a more visible representation of Aboriginal culture in the public space. As a group they reflect the pan-Aboriginal post-colonisation and urban history rather than pre-colonisation or traditional Aboriginal culture. As will be noted from the Markers in Phase 5, Kurna Country, they differ from that phase in not having a particular connection to Country or traditional culture.

Four Markers commemorate a pan-Aboriginal experience. *Pool of Tears*, 1988, and *Grieving Mother*, 1999, address a difficult aspect of the treatment of Aboriginal people and contribute to a process of healing and commemoration. A decade later the proposed *ATSI War Memorial* commemorates a previously under-recognised contribution of Aboriginal people to the Australian nation. *Reconciliation*

*Touchstone*, 2007, adds a somewhat nondescript sculptural expression of reconciliation.

Two Markers reflect an emerging Aboriginal public space practice; *Passage of Time*, 2000, covers the history of Port Adelaide from pre-history to the present and is not specifically Aboriginal in intent. *Yangadilya For the Future*, 2001, is an example of a public artwork by an Aboriginal artist. The remaining two Markers, *Reciprocity*, 2008, and *Blessed Mary MacKillop*, 2009, have an incidental inclusion of Aboriginality; they were not commissioned to specifically represent Aboriginal culture, and are in my opinion tokenistic. Thus only four of the major works were commissioned specifically to engage Aboriginal themes. The Markers are essentially about commemorating a past and not, as in Phase 5, re-enlivening a future.

#### **Secondary Artworks in Phase 4**

Secondary artworks comprise the majority of Markers in this phase. Several representative secondary Markers are presented here.

##### ***Spirit of Family*, Brooklyn Park, 1995**

*Spirit of Family* (Figure 7-27), Mulga Reserve, Brooklyn Park, was undertaken as part of the 'Adelaide Arrive' project along Sir Donald Bradman Drive, the main road from Adelaide airport to the city centre. It is an often seen work, particularly for interstate and overseas visitors, as it is located not far from Adelaide Airport. It is also the first public work by a Kurna artist, Sherry Rankine, in collaboration with Ngarrindjeri artist Jacob Stengel.



Figure 7-27 *Spirit of Family*, 1995, Brooklyn Park (S. Rankine & J. Stengel)

##### ***Meeting Places*, Salisbury, 2001**

*Meeting Places* (Figure 7-28), located in a park adjacent to the Bagster Road Community Centre, Salisbury, was commissioned by the City of Salisbury and the South Australian Housing Trust. The work, by Bridgette Minuzzo & Adrian Potter, provides a seat with a spiral ground pattern of mainly Aboriginal imagery.



Figure 7-28 Meeting Places, 2001, Bagster Road CC, (B. Minuzzo & A. Potter)

***To Leave, Lose and Find, Glenelg, 2002***

*To Leave, Lose and Find* (Figure 7-29), by Aboriginal artist Mark Blackman, was commissioned as part of a series of public artworks for the Holdfast Shores urban redevelopment, Glenelg. This Marker is another example of an Aboriginal artist's personal practice. When documented, the work was damaged and when again visited several years later, was in the same condition. As of late 2011 this Marker had been removed.



Figure 7-29 To Leave, Lose and Find, 2002-11, Holdfast Shores, (M. Blackman)

***The Bend and Flooded Gums, Adelaide, 2005***

*The Bend and Flooded Gums*, 2005, (Figure 7-30) by Barkindji Aboriginal photographer Nici Cumpston, is located in the foyer of the Commonwealth Law Courts Building, Adelaide. It depicts scenes from the River Murray and is another example of an Aboriginal artist's personal practice.



Figure 7-30 The Bend & Flooded Gums, 2005, Law Courts (N. Cumpston)

A particular characteristic of this phase is that state and local government institutions that provide services to Aboriginal people, particularly in health, education and community services, became active in commissioning artworks for their buildings to recognise Aboriginal culture. This not only provided cultural recognition and inclusion for Aboriginal people but places with a more welcoming and familiar ‘feel’ for Aboriginal people and the knowing that their culture was recognised and valued by the institution itself. Four exemplars are seen in the following images:



Figure 7-31 Murals, 2002, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, (Tauondi College)



Figure 7-32 Mural, 2006, Foyer, Holden Hill Community Centre (Mara Dreaming)



Figure 7-33 River of Dreams, 2006, Women's and Children's Hospital (M. Blackman et al.)

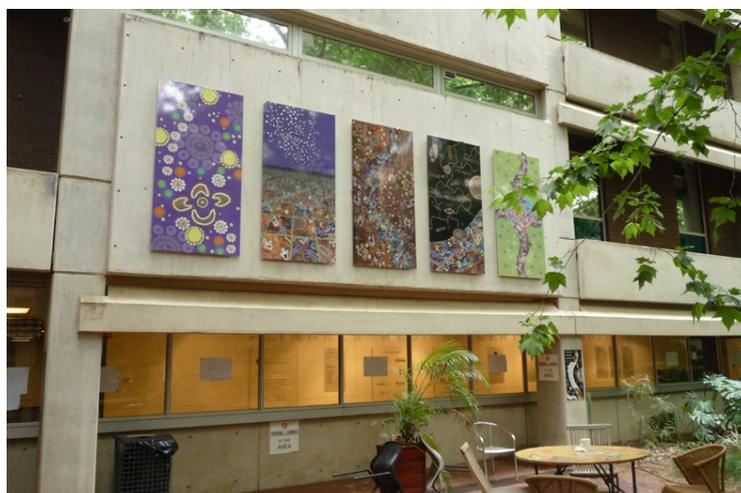


Figure 7-34 One Place, One Future, 2007, (A) Courtyard, Flinders Medical Centre (N. Cox, M. Mansell, G. Ash, Y. Sabuncu, S. Loffler)



Figure 7-35, One Place, One Future, 2007, (B) Entrance, FMC

One imaginative form of 'mural' from this grouping is the *Foyer Floor Pattern*, 1997, (Figure 7-36) at the Muna Paiendi Community Health Centre, Elizabeth Vale.

Designed by Centre staff of which several are Aboriginal, it is based on the Aboriginal flag.



Figure 7-36 Floor Pattern, 1997, Muna Paiendi CHS, Elizabeth Vale

Educational institutions are well represented in this phase with twenty-four Markers mirroring the greater inclusion of Aboriginal studies in curricula of the time. The mural has been the preferred medium with two exemplars from this phase being at the Pooraka Primary School (Figure 7-37) and Warriappendi School, Marleston (Figure 7-38). Warriappendi is a small secondary school which has an Aboriginal cultural focus. It supports mainly Aboriginal students who have previously had significant difficulties in traditional secondary schools to re-engage in formal education processes and provides an environment with which students feel a strong sense of identity, belonging and achievement (Warriappendi School, n.d.).



Figure 7-37 Mural, 1994, Pooraka Primary School (Debra Szekely)



Figure 7-38 Mural, 2003, Warriappendi School, Marleston (School community)

In summary, in this grouping of secondary Markers government agencies have contributed significantly to the commissioning, formally and informally, with the education and health sectors providing the majority of Markers. The readily executed painted mural has been the favoured medium.

#### **Commemorative Markers in Phase 4**

Two pan-Aboriginal commemorative Markers have been located in this phase. The majority of commemorative (and interpretive) Markers located refer to Kaurna and are discussed in Phase 5.

#### ***Reconciliation Statement, University of South Australia, 2000***

The University of South Australia has its reconciliation statement on plaques mounted on quarried stones at each of its four metropolitan campuses. The exemplar below (Figure 7-39) is at the City West Campus. Image detail given in Figure 8-23.



Figure 7-39 Reconciliation Statement, 2000, City West Campus, Uni. of SA

#### ***S. A. Aboriginal Cultural Groups Acknowledgement, Walkerville, 2008***

The Department of Transport Infrastructure and Energy (DTEI) acknowledged all South Australian Aboriginal language groups on the façade window of its Transport building at Walkerville (Figure 7-40), reflecting its state-wide responsibilities. The Department has included Aboriginal acknowledgements in a number of transport

infrastructure projects such as rest stops, sound barriers and bridges which are outside metropolitan Adelaide and thus not included in this research.

The Department has since vacated the building which has been sold for redevelopment as residential apartments. Promotional material for the development stated that there is to be an Aboriginal art theme as part of the developers 'Art Series' of hotels and apartments but it is not known if this particular Marker will be retained.



Figure 7-40 SA Aboriginal Cultural Groups, 2008, DTEI, Walkerville

#### **Interpretive Markers in Phase 4**

Only one pan-Aboriginal interpretive Marker has been located in this phase.

#### ***Aboriginal Flag History, Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga, 2007***

Located at the base of the flagpole flying the Aboriginal flag (Figure 7-41) the audio marker tells the history of the Aboriginal flag which has a particular association with this location. The first time the Aboriginal flag was ever flown was in Victoria Square at an Aboriginal land rights rally in July 1971. The flag was designed by Luritji man, Harold Thomas, from Alice Springs, who came to Adelaide to study at the South Australian School of Art. He was the first Aboriginal person to graduate from an Australian art school (Adelaide City Council, n.d. b).



Figure 7-41 Aboriginal Flag, 2002 and Audio Marker, 2007

The Aboriginal flag, along with the Torres Strait Islander flag, was recognised as an official flag of Australia under the Flags Act of 1995. Since July 2002 the Adelaide City Council flies the flag in Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga permanently (Adelaide City Council, n.d.b) and since May 2003 the federal government flies the flag permanently in Reconciliation Place in the parliamentary triangle of Canberra (Tuckey, 2003). Aboriginal flags themselves are not included in this thesis (they do not fall into the definition used for Markers) but the flying of the Aboriginal flag is a significant public space inclusion and form of Aboriginal recognition. Many Adelaide councils and institutions now fly the flag.

#### **Public Space Design in Phase 4**

One public space design Marker has been located in this phase. All other Markers of this type are specific to Kaurna and are discussed in Phase 5.

#### ***Reconciliation Feature Garden, Modbury, 2009***

The City of Tea Tree Gully initiated a pan-Aboriginal acknowledgement, *Reconciliation Feature Garden*, 2009 (Figure 7-42), located in the Civic Park adjacent to the Council Offices at Modbury. The garden was designed by council staff in conjunction with members of the council's Aboriginal community. The garden incorporates landscape design, sculptural forms and several mosaic interpretive ground panels.



Figure 7-42 Reconciliation Garden, 2009, Tea Tree Gully

#### **The Reconciliation Movement, NAIDOC Week and Sorry Day**

The level of activity in this phase, and the next phase, Phase 5, has been assisted by a national movement for reconciliation between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians. The national Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established under the Commonwealth *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991*, the object of the Council being 'to promote a process of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider community ...' (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991, Section 5). From its first meeting in Canberra, the national capital, in February 1992, the Council had a broad role in promoting discussion and events to facilitate a better cross-cultural understanding and the reconciliation process. Specific events to acknowledge Aboriginal peoples were established or enhanced. Reconciliation Week, held in May to commemorate the 1967 referendum, and NAIDOC Week (and its predecessor events), held circa August, became prominent community and political events during the period of Phase 4.

The Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families was tabled in Federal Parliament on 26 May, 1997. Known as the Bringing Them Home Report, it revealed the extent of forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families by the state and the devastating impact on them and their families. The release had a profound effect on the Australian community and led to the formation of the National Sorry Day Committee (NSDC) and the first Sorry Day was held in Sydney in 1998 for the community to say sorry. It became a national event, held in conjunction with Reconciliation Week, and the opportunity for thousands to participate in memorial services, commemorative meetings, survival celebrations and community gatherings to honour the Stolen Generations and to sign Sorry Books (NCDC, n.d.).

On May 28, 2000 more than 300,000 people walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of Indigenous Australians and reconciliation. The walk attracted Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other Australians of all ages and from many different backgrounds including politicians, public figures, families and members of the Stolen Generation. It took five hours for everyone to cross the Harbour Bridge. The 'mass mobilisation' in Sydney was quickly followed by walks in other capital cities, and towns, involving almost a million people in total around the country. In Brisbane more than 60,000 people crossed William Jolly Bridge, in Adelaide 55,000 walked over the Adelaide Bridge and in Canberra participants braved snow and sleet to cross Commonwealth Bridge. Walks were held in December through the streets of Melbourne and Perth with another 300,000 people taking part to support the reconciliation movement (Reconciliation Australia, n.d.).

Local government has been active in this endeavour and this is typified in the booklet *Examples of Working Together in South Australia* (LGO & LGA, 2000:7) which outlined that by the year 2000:

*Almost half of the Local Government Councils in South Australia have taken up reconciliation initiatives, both in a **symbolic way** [my emphasis] and through partnerships and agreements. Involvement in Reconciliation Week, and cultural celebrations such as National Aboriginal Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) events, are also tangible ways of making connections and demonstrating links with Aboriginal people.*

The number of councils participating has almost certainly increased since then.

In summary, these reconciliation events have provided an impetus or platform for Aboriginal inclusion, served to encourage the commissioning of Markers or served as appropriate times to dedicate Markers. Of the Markers identified from Phase 4 and Phase 5, ten Markers have been dedicated during Reconciliation activities, five during NAIDOC activities and two on Sorry Day<sup>30</sup>. As early as 1972, National Aborigines Day, 15 July (predecessor to NAIDOC Week), was the target date for the dedication of the *Tjilbruke Monument* (dedication actually took place in September) and in 1987 a proposed sculpture commemorating Tjilbruke, at the Bluff, Victor Harbor, was to be commissioned for National Aborigines Week (7–13 September). Lack of funding prevented its commissioning. The public space outcomes achieved reinforce the merit of the reconciliation events in structuring or re-structuring the

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<sup>30</sup> This statistic is indicative only as it has not been possible to determine the exact completion or dedication dates for the majority of the Markers located.

social understanding and lores of a community. As Lewis O'Brien outlined (2006:30):

*Australians must be educated to see reconciliation as a way of 'being' Australian. A culture of sharing the space must be nurtured in this country, while I acknowledge that sharing the space with other Australians will not occur overnight. Time is a necessary ingredient.*

## **Summary**

The seventy Markers identified in Phase 4 reflect the dramatic social change, in Adelaide (and Australia) over a period of nearly two decades, regarding the inclusion of Aboriginal people and their culture in broader Australian society and the public space. The Aboriginal-related political and legal events of the period informed community attitudes and prompted activity by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to better include and express the process of reconciliation in the public space, and for Aboriginal people to express themselves in their own right.

The International Year of Indigenous Peoples in 1993 provided a turning point and, coupled with the Decade of Reconciliation leading up to the Centenary of Federation in 2001, reflected a community's changing understanding of itself, with its inclusion of Aboriginal people in the public space. The phase saw a dramatic increase in the number, locations and styles of Markers as well as broader community and institutional involvement. It is characterised by the emergence of government agencies, particularly schools, in the commissioning of works with a specific intent of recognising Aboriginal people and culture. The recognition is in the form of pan-Aboriginal inclusion rather than being specific to an Aboriginal cultural group.

The Decade of Reconciliation facilitated the emergence of this broad scale engagement. The encouragement, inclusion or commissioning of Markers through reconciliation or commemorative events has been perhaps an under-recognised outcome of those events. The Markers reinforce the community value and effectiveness of these events as social processes with tangible outcomes. Whilst there are several major public artworks in this phase, the majority of the Markers are of a minor nature and reflect a community sentiment of reconciliation at a local level. Reconciliation is an ongoing process and Markers continued to be commissioned in the 2000s to support and reflect the process of the 1990s.

As the majority of the Markers were commissioned by government agencies, and reconciliation became a community process, no longer did artists have to provide the lead in acknowledging Aboriginal people in public artworks and commemorative markers. Building on the few works of earlier phases, a new form of art practice, cross-cultural collaboration, further emerged bringing with it new synergies and forms of expression. In addition, Aboriginal artists also incorporated public space artworks into their practice in their own right, as well as in collaborations, part of an evolving urban based cultural expression by Aboriginal people and ways of expressing contemporary Aboriginality itself.

The Markers presented in this phase demonstrate a broad engagement with Aboriginal people and culture by the non-Aboriginal community and its institutions since the early 1990s; the Markers articulating a sense of collective 'ownership' of the reconciliation narrative, of a community able to focus on those aspects of culture and social history that may have been overlooked or forgotten in the past. The

Markers contribute to the normalisation of Aboriginal people and culture being part of the social fabric of place, part of a reimagining of identity for all Australians, and social equity for Aboriginal people, through the public space.