

Chapter 6 Adelaide's Aboriginal Cultural Markers: Phase 3

Chapter Outline

This chapter documents and contextualises Aboriginal representation in the public space in Adelaide in Phase 3, termed *Aboriginal Voice Emerges*, in more detail to record the particulars of the Markers and their origins and demonstrate the delineation between and characteristics of the phases. Phase 3, from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, is when Aboriginal people and Aboriginal artists began to have greater participation in expressing Aboriginal culture, often as collaborators with non-Aboriginal artists, in the public space. The phase included two significant commemorative events, South Australia's Jubilee 150 (1986) and Australia's Bicentennial celebrations (1988). The impact of these events on Aboriginal inclusion in the public space is discussed. Eleven Markers have been identified in this decade-long phase.

Phase 3. Aboriginal Voice Emerges: Early 1980s to early 1990s

The inclusion of Aboriginal people as design contributors or collaborators within a period of generic or pan-Aboriginal representation.

Following on from the ground breaking work achieved in Phase 2, this phase is distinguished by the greater involvement of Aboriginal people, with six of the eleven Markers identified including Aboriginal people in their making compared to one only in Phase 2. Phase 3 included two major commemorative events, South Australia's sesquicentenary in 1986 and the bicentenary of European settlement in Australia in 1988. These two events prompted six of the Markers and illustrate how such commemorative events can facilitate a critical reflection on received history. Artists continued to play a lead role in this phase and an arts organisation, the Adelaide Festival of Arts, also significantly contributed by commissioning the first major cross-cultural collaborative artwork in Adelaide (and possibly in Australia).

Mural, Aboriginals Discovered Cook, Adelaide Festival Centre, 1982-92

The first work from this phase and the earliest major work that included a significant Aboriginal input was the mural *Aboriginals Discovered Cook* (Figure 6-1, Figure 6-2). It was commissioned by the Adelaide Festival of Arts for the 1982 Festival (Jim Sharman, Director).



Figure 6-1 Aboriginals Discovered Cook, 1982-92, Amphitheatre, AFC, (detail)



Figure 6-2 Aboriginals Discovered Cook, 1982-92, Amphitheatre, AFC, (C. Ruff and R. Ansell: Photo AFC)

The mural was located adjacent to the amphitheatre of the Adelaide Festival Centre (AFC), a high profile location in a prime cultural precinct, overlooking Elder Park, Adelaide's main riverside park. It was a highly visible, large scale work. The aerial photograph (Figure 6-3) gives the site context of the mural and a postcard of Elder Park (Figure 6-4) shows its prominence in relation to Elder Park and the Torrens Lake, much used and iconic Adelaide localities.



Figure 6-3 Adelaide Festival Centre Precinct. Mural outlined

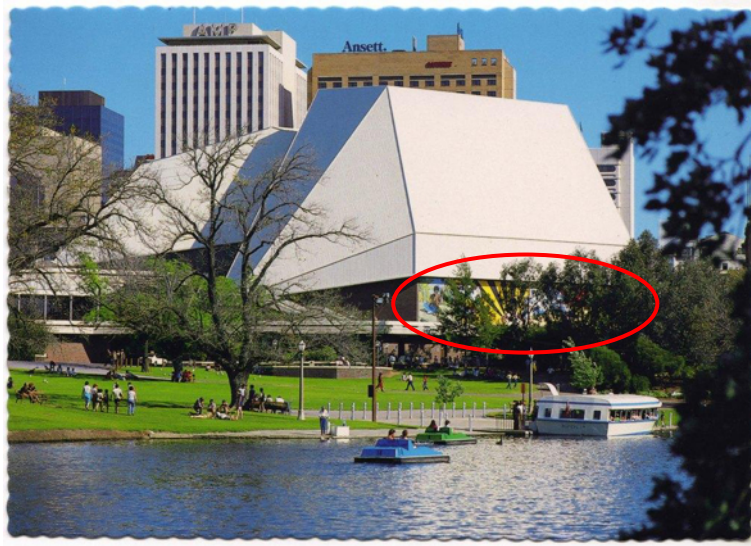


Figure 6-4 Postcard, Torrens Lake & Elder Park. Mural outlined

The mural was collaboratively designed by non-Aboriginal artist Carol Ruff and Arrernte (Central Australia) Aboriginal artist and musician Ronnie Ansell. Noted Kaurna/Ngarrindjeri descendant Veronica Brodie assisted the development of the project concept. The mural was painted with the assistance of several other Aboriginal people from the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) and the Aboriginal College (Figure 6-5). It is the first large scale commissioned public artwork by an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal team in Adelaide, possibly Australia. In a discussion on Aboriginal public artworks in Sydney and Canberra De Lorenzo (2005) pointed out that *Edge of the Trees*, 1994, by Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence is the first commissioned public artwork in Sydney by an Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal team. Adelaide's first was twelve years earlier.



Figure 6-5 Painting of the mural, 1982 (Photos NAA, A6135, 1/1965/6/22)

Ansell, from the Aboriginal rock band Us Mob, had moved from Alice Springs to Adelaide in 1976 to attend CASM, which provided a gathering place for Aboriginal people from diverse regions. Us Mob was formed there in 1977 with other band members Peter Butler from Port Augusta, Wally McArthur from Whyalla and Carroll Karpany from Adelaide. Us Mob are well known for their song *We Have Survived* which has become an anthem for Aboriginal people and reflects the growing Aboriginal urban presence and cultural activity of the period. The song's lyrics are, in part:

*We have survived the white man's world
And the horror and the torment of the old
We have survived the white man's world*

And you know you can't change that

Us Mob played at the mural's launch on 21 March 1982, the final day of the Festival of Arts, and in front of it on several other occasions (Carroll Karpany, 2007, pers. comm.). There was an intermixing of artists, musicians, filmmakers and activists during this period of campaigning for Aboriginal rights, exemplified by the 1981 film *Wrong Side of the Road* directed by Ned Lander. Ruff had been working on the film, which is where she met Ansell.

The rationale for the mural (Adelaide Festival of Arts, n.d.), also reflecting an emergent recognition of the time, was that:

Insofar as celebrations such as the Adelaide Festival reflect community cultural activities and interests, it is suggested that the Aboriginal community and their culture should be an integral part of the Festival. Firstly, there is a significant Aboriginal population in Adelaide, and this community has substantial contacts with urban and traditional communities elsewhere – particularly in northern South Australia and the Northern Territory. Secondly, black culture is important to Australia, a country which, by omission and commission, has played a large part in trying to destroy the lives of its original inhabitants. Finally, and following on from this, it is important that the encouragement of work by blacks should serve the Aboriginal community as a source of pride, and the white community as an example of education and information.

From that point onwards, the Aboriginal community and their culture has become an integral part of the Festival through exhibitions, performances and an Aboriginal opening ceremony. In 2002, twenty years later, Karl Telfer and Waiata Telfer²⁵, Kurna descendants, became the first Aboriginal Associate Directors of the Festival, under Artistic Director Peter Sellars. In 2004, Stephen Page, Artistic Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre, became the Festival's first Aboriginal Artistic Director.

The mural was commissioned with the understanding that it would be there for an initial period of 12 months after which its future would be reviewed subject to weathering or other demands on the space. The position was not reviewed again until November 1990 when deterioration had commenced and the options of restoration, removal or replacement of the work were considered. The Adelaide Festival Centre decided to replace the work, having consulted Carol Ruff and others about its future. Those people depicted in the mural were also advised. In 1992 it was painted over, replaced by the still existing mural designed by Aboriginal artist Trevor Nickolls, discussed below. The original mural was painted on removable hardboard panels which could have been dismantled and preserved and it is unfortunate that this did not occur. Of the mural Rob Brookman, Festival Centre Program Director, said when its future was being considered in 1990 (Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, Memorandum, 02.11.1990):

I believe that it is one of the best examples of mural art that I've come across and that it's worthy of restoration. I also think it would be a good gesture of respect towards Adelaide's Aboriginal community, who I believe hold a not unreasonable sense of 'ownership' of the work.

²⁵Karl and Waiata are children of Georgina Williams, Nganke burka, Kurna.

Mural, Kangaroo, Adelaide Zoo, 1985

The mural *Kangaroo* (Figure 6-6) by Ngarrindjeri/Kokatha Aboriginal artist Bluey Roberts is located in the Children's Section of the Adelaide Zoo. Painted in 1985, the mural is the first individual commission by an Aboriginal artist and the oldest known still existing Aboriginal Cultural Marker in the Adelaide area by an Aboriginal artist.



Figure 6-6 Kangaroo, 1985, Children's Section, Adelaide Zoo (Bluey Roberts)

The painting style of the mural, known as the 'x-ray' style, emanates from Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Its use by Roberts also reflects the early attempts by southern urban Aboriginal artists to portray Aboriginality when their own specific cultural motifs and styles may have been lost through colonisation and/or lack of use. The contemporary use of this style in public artworks has all but disappeared as alternative or new motifs have emerged.

The mural was commissioned by the Aboriginal Development Commission as an Aboriginal community contribution to the Zoo as part of a public response to the killing of a number of animals in the Children's Zoo by two intruders. There was broad community outrage at the malicious slaughter of the animals and a public campaign to improve the Children's Zoo facilities and replace lost animals was instigated. In dedicating the mural (Figure 6-7) in May 1985 Greg Crafter, then Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, stated:

The Aboriginal community wanted to make a contribution, and Bluey Roberts was commissioned by the Aboriginal Development Commission to paint the mural. It is a further reflection of the fact that Aboriginal people see themselves as very much part of the South Australian community and that animals play a special part in the legends of Aboriginal people (Unidentified newspaper clipping 29.05.1985).



[Photo courtesy "The Advertiser"]
 The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. G. Crafter (left) officially unveiled a traditional aboriginal mural in the children's zoo. He is shown with the artist, Mr Bluey Roberts (centre) and the Director, Dr R. M. Baker.

Figure 6-7 Dedication of Mural, 1985 (image courtesy Royal Zoological Society of SA)

Mural, Multi-Cultural, Ascot Park Primary School, 1985

Situated at the Ascot Park Primary School and completed in December 1985, the mural was painted by community artist Zig Moskwa with the school community. Whilst the theme is multi-cultural there is a strong Aboriginal motif providing the central structure of the work (Figure 6-8) and an Aboriginal boy in traditional body paint is depicted as part of the multi-cultural theme (Figure 6-9). Non-Aboriginal artist Moskwa has also utilised the 'x-ray' style as it was then a generic visual signifier of Aboriginality. This mural is the earliest school based mural with an Aboriginal inclusion I have located and marks the beginning of Aboriginal recognition in school communities²⁶. Schools have made a significant contribution to Aboriginal public space inclusion as has been elaborated (Chapter 4).



Figure 6-8 Mural, Ascot Park P.S., 1985, detail (Z. Moskwa and school community)

²⁶ It is possible that other murals from this period may exist. A formal survey of all schools has not been a component of this research and would be required to verify this. This mural is indicative of an emergent trend of Aboriginal recognition in schools through artworks.



Figure 6-9 Mural, Ascot Park Primary School, 1985, detail

The mural was dedicated in March 1986 by the Minister of Ethnic Affairs. It reflects the government advocacy, at that time, of a multi-cultural Australia. Whilst the Aboriginal recognition is commendable for its time, Aboriginal people are not now considered to be part of the multi-cultural make up of Australia. The term now usually refers to the incoming cultures that have settled in Australia since colonisation, in particular post the Second World War. ‘Multiculturalism was a concept and policy devised to respond to the increasing ethno-cultural diversity of Australian society resulting from mass immigration in the decades following World War II’ (Parliament of Australia, 2010) and contemporary discussion on multiculturalism in Australia at the federal government level sits within the portfolios of immigration and citizenship (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010). Aboriginal people have not wanted to be included in this definition; they see themselves as the original peoples (Dunn, et al, 2010). The mural was repainted in 2007 by Moskwa, 22 years after it was first painted, indicating a school pride in its early achievement.

South Australian Jubilee 150 Commemorations, 1986

In 1986 South Australia celebrated the sesquicentenary of its colonisation, the Jubilee 150. Whilst overwhelmingly a celebration of the settler culture’s achievements, there was some Aboriginal recognition and inclusion.

The Jubilee 150 provided for a concentrated re-examination and re-writing of aspects of South Australian social and political history. One significant contribution was a new *Atlas of South Australia* (Griffin & McCaskill, eds. 1986), the first atlas on South Australia published for a century, which included a section on Kaurna history. In the Foreword the then Premier John Bannon stated:

After four years’ intense work, an expert team has produced a handsome book that is unrivalled in presenting an immense amount of information about South Australia in a readily accessible form.

Especially noteworthy is the substantial historical section, an innovation for an Australian atlas, which graphically illustrates the course of settlement over the past century and a half.

The maps and texts in this section illustrate and interpret the movements and settlements of both Europeans and Aborigines – I found them particularly fascinating and quite unexpected.

The *Atlas* reflected upon the then prevailing understanding of Kurna people and what might constitute a surviving or dormant culture:

The Kurna people were the first group to suffer the full and immediate impact of the European settlement of South Australia. Consequently, our knowledge of their culture is incomplete, although archaeological and linguistic research is active. Their culture was destroyed within thirty years, but today a number of people can still trace their descent to the Kurna (Groome, 1986:36).

It is now understood that the culture had not been completely destroyed. The 1980s was a period of nascent cultural renewal for Kurna descendants and there was an emergent recognition of them by broader society. Concurrent research, publications, and Aboriginal activism were further elaborating Kurna and other Aboriginal history providing a basis for specific Aboriginal cultural identification and other social and political activities. An example is another Jubilee 150 project, the book *Survival in Our Own Land: 'Aboriginal' experiences in 'South Australia' since 1836 told by Nungas and others* (Mattingley and Hampton, 1988). Nunga is the term used to collectively describe Aboriginal people in this part of Australia and, as the title indicates, this substantial (340-page) book provides a predominantly Aboriginal perspective. In addition to the sanctioned publications there were other outcomes. For example the *White Invasion Booklet* (1986) was published by the White Invasion Diary Collective, a group of (mainly) Aboriginal women who brought together some overlooked aspects of South Australian history. The use of the word 'invasion' rather than 'settlement' was just beginning to enter the lexicon at that time.

The Jubilee 150 coincided with an awakening of Aboriginal pride and political activity. The migration of Aboriginal people to the city from mission living, from the 1960s onwards, provided an urban population to both participate and agitate. There was some dissent within the Aboriginal community about whether to be involved in the Jubilee 150 celebrations and Vi Deuschle, Chairperson, J150 'Aboriginal' Executive Committee, outlined the situation this way (Mattingley & Hampton, 1988:ix):

The all 'Aboriginal' committee has been criticized for its involvement in the sesquicentenary celebrations. Although the dissenters had valid reasons for their concern the Executive committee felt there should be some provision made for 'Aborigines' to express their views in their own way, and to relate the impact of the past 150 years upon their lives.

Deuschle (Mattingley and Hampton, 1998) further outlined that:

Many 'Aboriginal' people perceive the SA sesquicentenary as a celebration of a violent hiccup in the long history of 'Aboriginal' occupation of this country. Aboriginal people see it as a time of mourning. The Executive Committee supports this view as a valid one for the following reasons:

- 1 Dispossession of Aboriginal land without compensation*
- 2. Denial of basic human rights.*
- 3. Failure to recognise Aboriginal culture as a valid way of life.*
- 4. Destruction of Aboriginal culture and heritage*

She concluded in stating: ‘In 1986 we, the ‘Aboriginal’ people of ‘South Australia’ celebrate our survival’.

Three Markers from the Jubilee 150 have been located, the most significant Aboriginal project being the *Tjilbruke Track Markers*. There was also the commemoration of three Aboriginal people in the *Jubilee 150 Commemorative Walk* on North Terrace and Aboriginal representation in the *Jubilee 150 Mural* at Goodwood Primary School.

Jubilee 150 Tjilbruke Track Markers, Various Locations, 1986

The most significant Aboriginal Jubilee 150 public space project celebrated the survival of Kurna through the marking of the Tjilbruke Dreaming Track. The Tjilbruke Track Committee, comprising predominantly Aboriginal people including Kurna descendants, implemented the erection of stone cairns and marker plaques (Figure 6-10) at ten significant sites along the coastal section of the Dreaming.



Figure 6-10 Tjilbruke Track Marker, 1986, Pt. Noarlunga

The intention was to provide not only recognition of Kurna ancestors and culture, revealing another spirit of place, but also to provide a contemporary Kurna presence both within the public space of their own lands and, importantly, to provide a Kurna presence in the public imagination. This marks a turning point in the political and cultural understanding of Kurna by establishing it as a still extant and living culture. Because of its significance in initiating a Kurna public identity and political activity this project is discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

As of late 2010/early 2011 the Marker at Port Noarlunga illustrated above disappeared from the public space as part of a redevelopment of its coastal site. The redevelopment did not accommodate its returning to its site and I suggest that the authority concerned, the City of Onkaparinga, did not fully appreciate the significance of the Marker. I was informally consulted by a staff member and arranged an informal consultation with an appropriate Kurna cultural custodian. It is proposed the Marker be placed in another nearby public space which will be landscaped to accommodate the Marker. This incident further demonstrates the lack of knowledge and appreciation of the history of Aboriginal Cultural Markers which this thesis aims to correct.

Jubilee 150 Commemorative Walk, North Terrace, Adelaide, 1986

A concurrent project was the *Jubilee 150 Commemorative Walk* (Figure 6-11) along North Terrace, Adelaide's premier cultural boulevard. The Walk, initiated by the Jubilee 150 Board, comprises 150 bronze pavement plaques commemorating nearly 200 outstanding South Australians. The people commemorated were selected by a small panel of eminent South Australians. Three of those commemorated are Aboriginal people: Gladys Elphick, Aboriginal welfare worker; Jimmy James, Tracker; and David Unaipon, Inventor (Figure 6-12). This is a significant inclusion for its time as it presents Aboriginal people as being part of the social history of the State, is a formal civic commemoration rather than a public art project and is located in a prime cultural precinct.

Four other people who had been advocates for Aboriginal welfare or worked closely with Aboriginal peoples were also recognised: Charles Duguid, medical practitioner and worker for Aboriginal advancement; Alfred Gerard, electrical merchant and worker for Aboriginal welfare; Charles Mountford, anthropologist; and Norman Tindale, anthropologist. Charles Witto-Witto Cawthorne, music seller and concert manager, is also recognised. His father William Cawthorne, a colonial settler, had a close friendship with Kurna man Kadlitpinna and gave his son the unusual middle name Witto-Witto, which refers to the Kurna men's ceremonial headdress made of cockatoo feathers.



Figure 6-11 Jubilee 150 Commemorative Walk, 1986, North Terrace, Adelaide



Figure 6-12 Jubilee 150 Commemorative Walk, Individual Plaques

Jubilee 150 Mural, Goodwood Primary School, 1986

There was some acknowledgment of Aboriginal culture during the Jubilee by the general community. An example of this is the *Jubilee 150 Mural* (Figure 6-13) at the

Goodwood Primary School²⁷. It was painted by community artist Zig Moskwa with the school's students as part of an Artist in Schools project to celebrate the Jubilee (Goodwood Primary School, 1986). The mural includes the Aboriginal serpent as the central motif and an Aboriginal child as part of the multi-cultural composition of the school's community and is similar in style to that at Ascot Park Primary School, also painted by Moskwa. The children featured in the conga line attended the school at the time. Moskwa, who then lived in Goodwood, had worked with Aboriginal communities on various mural painting projects in regional areas and interstate. It appears likely that it was his initiative to include Aboriginal culture in the mural.



Figure 6-13 Jubilee 150 Mural, 1986, Goodwood P.S. (Z. Moskwa et al)

Australian Bicentennial Commemorations, 1988

In 1988, Australia celebrated the bicentennial year of British settlement, or invasion, of New South Wales. There was some criticism of the Australia-wide Bicentennial celebrations and the role of the Australian Bicentennial Authority (ABA) in relation to Aboriginal history and issues, as discussed by Frances and Scates (1989:72):

In Australia, 1988 saw the political reconstruction of the past on an unprecedented scale. From the spectacle of the Tall Ships arrival in Sydney to the feigned camaraderie of 'bicentennial barbies', Australians were enticed to celebrate their nationhood as a common destiny in which we all have an equal share. Seen through the rhetoric and re-enactment of the Bicentennial Authority, Australia's past is pluralist and unproblematic.

They further stated that (1989: 72-73):

The failings of Australia's bicentennial have been well noted by the Left. We have censured the ABA for its fabrication of consensus; in the past as today, Australia was marred by the inequalities of race, gender and class ... All have been appalled by the alarming insensitivity of the occasion, the 'celebration of a nation' commemorating the bloody dispossession of Aboriginal people from their lands.

²⁷ Whilst this is the only community based Jubilee 150 marker located with an Aboriginal inclusion, it is possible there may be more.

In Adelaide, however, there was some acknowledgement of Aboriginal people and a significant outcome through the establishment of Tandanya; The National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, a major South Australian Bicentennial project and Australia's first Aboriginal cultural institute (Hannaford, 1992:106). Tandanya is run by an Aboriginal board specifically for Aboriginal people. Its establishment involved the conversion of a heritage-listed former power station into a multi-functional space incorporating a large exhibition hall, the smaller Kaurna Gallery, a performance and theatre space, retail outlet, café and administrative offices. Tandanya recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, providing a long lasting legacy. The ground mural *River Spirit Dreaming* was commissioned as part of the establishment of Tandanya.

Two other Markers from the Bicentennial have been located. The *Trees of Peace Bicentennial Marker*, Welland, and the *Museum Views* murals, South Australian Museum. Along with the establishment of Tandanya, these Markers contribute to redressing the incomplete construction of history and celebrations at the time.

River Spirit Dreaming, Tandanya, 1989

River Spirit Dreaming (Figure 6-14) is by Ngarrindjeri/Kokatha Aboriginal artist Bluey Roberts, who also painted the 1985 *Kangaroo Mural* at the Zoo. This artwork is a 28 metre long multi-coloured ground mural incorporated into the concrete pavement blocks at the entrance to Tandanya. Each pavement block was poured and set around a wooden template cut by a computer driven router, using a computer programme created from Robert's original drawing. Roberts and his assistants then filled in the design on each block with a coloured grout before the blocks were laid as the pavement (Hannaford, 1992:106). This was a technically challenging and sophisticated public artwork for its time and Tandanya still holds a number of the wooden templates. Again the mural utilises Aboriginal motifs from elsewhere, a combination of x-ray and cross hatching from Arnhem Land.



Figure 6-14 *River Spirit Dreaming*, 1989, (B. Roberts) (Photo Arts SA)

Trees of Peace Bicentennial Marker, Welland, 1988

The *Trees of Peace Bicentennial Marker* (Figure 6-15) was implemented by the former Hindmarsh Council, now part of the City of Charles Sturt. The Marker is located adjacent to the River Torrens Linear Park, in suburban Welland. The Marker

includes an Aboriginal acknowledgement and as such is an important initiative of local government during the Bicentennial and an early formal acknowledgement of Aboriginal people in the public space. This appears to be the first Aboriginal acknowledgement initiated by a Council in Adelaide²⁸.



Figure 6-15 Trees of Peace, 1988

The idea for the *Trees of Peace* was proposed by Mr Richard Bowey, a resident of Hindmarsh Council district, as a way to extend the Bicentennial celebrations to include Aboriginal people. He said (16 February 1987) in a letter to Council:

The Bicentennial celebration is a paradox for myself and, I believe many others. While it represents the two hundred years of settlement in a country of great beauty and wealth, it also represents two hundred years since the land was forcibly seized from its former owners, the Aboriginal people who were its custodians for over forty thousand years. Any project set down to celebrate the Bicentennial which does not include the later fact, is, I feel, deficient.

With this in mind, I propose that a simple but significant Bicentennial Project would be the planting of three trees ... The trees should be carefully chosen as to be native to Australia, long lived and spectacular. They should be identified by simple brass plaques with subscriptions as follows:

Atonement

In recognition and memory of the original inhabitants of Australia – the Aboriginal people who tended this land for 40000 years

Gratitude

In recognition of the peace, beauty and wealth that this great land offers all who dwell within her boundaries

Peace

In recognition of that elusive ideal humanity has sought since its beginnings upon which the future of humanity now depends

²⁸ The City of Adelaide contributed to the planning and implementation of the 1986 Jubilee 150 Commemorative Walk but it was initiated by the Jubilee 150 Board.

These trees were planted on (date) 1988 by the people of Hindmarsh to celebrate the Bicentennial year of Australian settlement. May these trees stand through the years and remind all who see them of these three ideals.

By 2009, of the three River Redgums which were planted, the one for *Atonement*, the Aboriginal acknowledgement, had gone completely, the one for *Peace* never grew beyond a sapling and the semi mature tree for *Gratitude* had died. The Marker had become a bit ‘lost’ over time and somewhat neglected. In his letter Bowey (1987) also stated ‘... in the years ahead, into the next century and perhaps in a hundred years time, people can gather under the trees and appreciate the vision of the people of Hindmarsh in 1988.’ In 2009 the City of Charles Sturt restated this vision and initiated an upgrade of the Marker and replanting of trees. I undertook the upgrade in collaboration with Karl Telfer. It was dedicated in 2010 (Figure 6-16).



Figure 6-16 Trees of Peace Upgrade, 2010 (Karl Telfer, Gavin Malone)

As with several other Markers mentioned, this 1988 Marker did not specifically acknowledge the Kaurna people by name, which is not unusual for that time. The 2010 upgrade included a specific Kaurna acknowledgement which stated:

Kaurna

*In recognition of the Adelaide Plains people on whose Country this city now sits and whose continuous living culture we respect
City of Charles Sturt for Reconciliation, 2010*

There was, however, a Kaurna presence at the 1988 dedication ceremony in the person of Leila Rankine, a well-known Aboriginal campaigner of Ngarrindjeri/Kaurna descent, reciting a self-composed poem ‘Trees’ and planting the Redgum for *Atonement*. The planting ceremony included recollections of residents, poems from local children and didgeridoo music by students from the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) (Figure 6-17).



Figure 6-17 Trees of Peace Dedication, 1988, Leila Rankine (Photo CSS)

Murals - Museum Views, South Australian Museum, 1988

The *Museum Views* project, part funded by the Australian Bicentennial Authority, comprised the painting of eleven 'window' murals on the rear wall of the Museum building (Figure 6-18). Ten were painted by South Australian artists and one panel painted by Warlpiri Aboriginal artists from the small Central Desert settlement of Yuendumu, north west of Alice Springs. The artists were Bessie Nakamarra Sims, Dora Nakamarra, Pansy Nakamarra, Lorna Napurrurla, Morna Napurrurla, Jorna Napurrurla and their panel is *Wapirti Jukurrpa Bush Carrot Dreaming*. There are two other works referencing Aboriginal culture by non-Aboriginal artists Ann Newmarch and Zig Moskwa (Figure 6-19).



Figure 6-18 Museum Views, South Australian Museum, 1988



Figure 6-19 Museum Views, South Australian Museum, 1988 (Left: Yuendumu Artists, Centre: Ann Newmarch, Right: Zig Moskwa)

Museum Views was instigated and managed by artist David Kerr who was working at the Museum as an artist/exhibition officer. The Project Brief themed *Museums: Past, Present and Future* did not call for the specific recognition of Aboriginal culture. Two artists, Ann Newmarch and Zig Moskwa, however chose to do so. Kerr also specifically included a group of Yuendumu artists who were then working on the exhibition *Yuendumu: Paintings out of the Desert* to be held in the Museum for the 1988 Adelaide Festival of Arts.

Kerr was a member of the Prospect Mural Group and one of the key designers of the 1982 *History of Australia Mural*, as was Ann Newmarch. Kerr has continued to work at the Museum where he has had an ongoing involvement with the presentation of Aboriginal cultures through Museum displays, in particular the acclaimed Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery. Newmarch was a lecturer at the South Australian School of Art until her retirement. Her teaching and personal practice continued to respect Aboriginal culture. Moskwa was the artist for the 1980s murals at Ascot Park and Goodwood Primary Schools. He left Adelaide to live in Sydney some time ago.

The art critic from local newspaper *The Advertiser*, Robert Smith, wrote of the murals (1988):

A new standard of enlightened public patronage has been established by Museum Views, ... With this project, museum and artists are helping put art back into its social context and make it more widely accessible, after the long night of 'art for art's sake.'

Mural, Amphitheatre, Adelaide Festival Centre, 1992

This untitled mural (Figure 6-20) designed by Aboriginal artist Trevor Nickolls, is the last work from Phase 3. It replaced the first work of this phase *Aboriginals Discovered Cook* from a decade earlier.



Figure 6-20 Mural, Adelaide Festival Centre, 1992 (Trevor Nickolls)

In 1990 Nickolls and Rover Thomas (Kimberley region, Western Australia) were the first Aboriginal artists to represent Australia at the prestigious Venice Biennale. From the late 1970s Nickolls was at the vanguard of the movement of contemporary urban Aboriginal artists who had adapted elements of traditional Aboriginal art and used these alongside Western art techniques to make personal artistic statements. He exhibited widely in Australia and Europe (Adelaide Festival Centre, n.d. b). After a call for design proposals from three artists, the one by Nickolls was commissioned for implementation by the Festival's Visual Arts Program. As Nickolls was unable to participate in the painting of the mural, the painting was undertaken by a group of predominantly non-Aboriginal artists, including Carol Ruff, co-designer of the 1982 mural it replaced.

The mural is described by Margot Osborne (Adelaide Festival Centre, n.d. b), the 1992 Visual Arts Program Manager:

Trevor Nickolls' mural painting uses Aboriginal techniques of cross hatching and dot painting, blended with contemporary western representation, to deal with notions of harmony and reconciliation between mind and body, and between man and nature. The central Mimi figure, adapted from Aboriginal mythology, floats in a stream between the land and heaven. It is a meditative image of peace and tranquility which creates a calming antidote to the concrete austerity of the Festival Centre architecture.

This mural remains as a large scale and prominent Marker in the city of Adelaide in a principal cultural precinct.

Summary

Phase 3 can be understood as a 'breakpoint ... a fracturing of the dominant unifying and totalising narrative' (Taylor, 2003:30). The seven Markers undertaken as part of the Jubilee 150 and the Bicentennial contributed an alternative, Aboriginal, narrative in the public space in what were primarily celebrations of European colonisation, or invasion. It is the emergence of other narratives which challenges the dominant narrative:

Contesting narratives force us to remember the differences and variations that have been forgotten, to confront those parts of the story that have been left out, to realise that that which was rendered invisible in order to be forgotten, was actually there all the time (Taylor, 2000:30).

The phase provided the first commissioned cross-cultural collaborative artwork and saw the greater involvement of Aboriginal people, including Kaurna descendants, in the Jubilee 150, representing their culture. It was an emergent Aboriginal public space expression. The Tjilbruke Track Markers drew on the Western convention of stone cairns and plaques to provide a public space presence. The Aboriginal artistic expression drew on motifs from elsewhere as artists, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, sought meaningful ways to express Aboriginality in an urban context.

Artists again had a significant role, and in this phase they were joined by an arts event, The Adelaide Festival of Arts, which commissioned two large scale murals. These murals, on the same Festival Centre site, provided the start and end point for this phase. Without these two murals and the seven Markers undertaken as part of the commemorative events there would have been little activity in this decade long phase which provided eleven Markers. As with Phase 2, there was no commissioning of Markers by government to address Aboriginal public space exclusion and provide for their inclusion in the public space narrative.