

Name:

MEMORY RIVER

MEMORY RIVER: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

Memory River is a project which will combine Indigenous history, stories and art with the voices of young people. The project will take place at The Parramatta Female Factory, a location with a long and complex history; at various times it has been an orphanage, prison, asylum and school. Drawing on the area's Indigenous history, and working collaboratively with Indigenous knowledge holders and female contemporary Indigenous artists, students will write stories and poems that explore First Nations history, recent history, their personal memories, and their hopes for the future.

Assisting and sharing knowledge during this project will be Cathy Craigie, Bonney Djuric, Janson Hews and Maddison Gibbs.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION COMPILED BY AUNTY RAY

BURRAMATTAGAL PEOPLE: Ceremony Place

Aboriginal people have had a close connection with the Parramatta River for thousands of years. The river provided a rich source of food and transport and was the location for many significant cultural and social practices.

According to information obtained from council websites listed below, there are approximately 30 clan groups of the Sydney region, referred to collectively as Darug. Several clans lived along the Parramatta River and into Western Sydney. They include, but are not limited to:

- Darug people who lived in the Greater Western Sydney area
- Burramattagal people, a clan of the Darug, who first settled in what is known today as Parramatta
- Cadigal and Wangal people who occupied Sydney's inner west area
- Toongagal who lived in the vicinity of Toongabbie
- Wallumdegal who occupied what is now the Ryde and Hunters Hill areas
- Wategora people who lived near Duck River.

The Parramatta River continues to be a place of cultural significance for Aboriginal people. There are many sites and objects along the river that people have a connection to, both physically and spiritually.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

BURRAMATTAGAL and EELS

"I am a Burramattagal woman from the Darug Nation. We, as Burramattagal people, have a Totem, and we honour our Totem, the Eel. In Dharug language, our name Burramattagal is broken down to mean, Burra = eel, matta = place, gal = the people of. Therefore, "the place where the eel sets down" is the true meaning of the word Burramatta. Some would say, clear as mud! In fact, by nature the eel is not seen as a show-off, rather it is known for hiding in dark waters, making it hard to spot. Some fish like to stay close to the water surface, but the mysterious eel prefers darker, murkier places. The eel is also known for its strange, but intelligent and versatile survival instinct: its genetic memory gives it the ability to swim in freshwater then transition with ease into the saltwater of the ocean. The eel's ability to work its way out of the water onto grassy land areas, climb over and go under concrete barriers, stands in contrast to fish that are either just fresh-water, or salt-water variety, and definitely cannot live without water.

What I find amazing is the eel's ability to survive the long treacherous journey from the Coral Sea when so young, only to complete their end-life cycle and return as an adult to where they first set off. Once they reach their destination on Australia's east coast, they find their way to "set down". Hidden in the fresh waters of Sydney, the female eel decides, when the time is right, for her to begin her journey through to the Coral Sea, back to where she was born, so that she can spawn, and die. One mysterious feature of eels is their endurance to overcome many barriers. They survive swimming from one environmental condition into another, facing varied changes in water currents and temperatures, entering ocean pathways, they travel through their life cycle to return to the Coral Sea."

Jules Christian

<https://garlandmag.com/article/burra/>

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Importance of Water

To Aboriginal peoples, water is life. The water in rivers sustains important plants on riverbanks, and sustains wetlands where fish and turtles breed. Aboriginal peoples in the past used water from rivers for all their water needs - drinking, fishing, and washing. As well as using the water, spending time on rivers and billabongs is central to intergenerational knowledge and cultural transfer, and family time. There are thousands of years of memories in these water places.

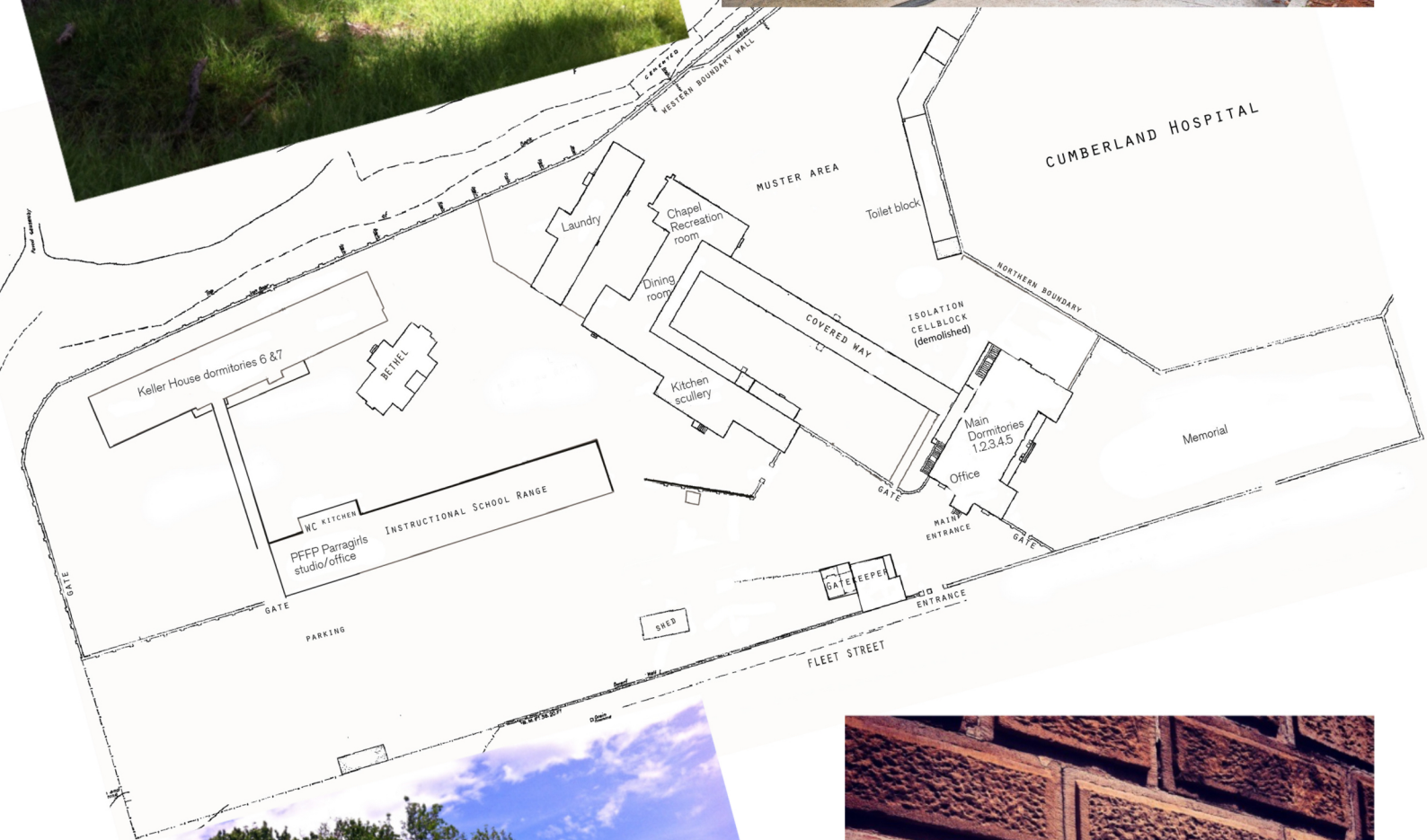
Sustainable Water Use

The traditional way of life was centred around ensuring use of all resources was sustainable, and water is a significant part of that balance. In traditional ways of managing the health of country, there is no strict separation of water, land, air, plants and animals, as all are perceived as interconnected. They are managed as a whole to keep country healthy. In recent decades, water has been managed by the government separately from the way the land is managed, and as a resource or commodity that can be bought and sold, no longer belonging to the river itself. What this means is water is sold to those who have the most money to pay for it and often stored out of the river, rather than seeing it distributed to where it is needed in rivers and wetlands to sustain plants and animals. Aboriginal people today are very concerned that the rivers are sick.

<https://indigenousknowledge.unimelb.edu.au/curriculum/resources/indigenous-voices-in-water>

PARRAMATTA GIRLS HOME

WHAT COULD THIS
PLACE BECOME?



HAIBUN - How To...

Haibun is a poetry form that combines a haiku with a prose poem. Haibun prose is usually descriptive. It uses sparse, poetic imagery to evoke a sensory impression in the reader. The section of prose is followed by a haiku that serves to deepen the meaning of the prose, either by intensifying its themes or serving as a juxtaposition to the prose's content.

The opening of your Haibun will consist of Prose

See - Two/Three sentences

Think - Two/Three sentences

Wonder - Two/Three sentences

SEE

Footsteps, trees moving, branches scratching the sky, leaves blowing across the ground. People smile and share thoughts, tell us about their hopes. The sun glows in the background, falling on leaves and flowers, creating shadows.

THINK

I think about how the land has changed, the buildings, the trees, the experiences of people who live here. But the river still flows, there are some parts that remain, the earth, water and dreams continue. Buildings seem to breathe under the trees, I can imagine the river and earth speaking to us. The memories of people remain all around us, like they're ghosts telling us to remember what has happened in the past.

WONDER

I wonder about the people who have been here, all the futures that could be. I wonder about my own future, where I would like to go, who I would like to be. Each day here would be like a capsule of yesterdays remembered, futures suggested. The names that might have been between these walls, next to this river, they're all silhouettes and shadows. Now their language is weather, they talk in sunshine, rain, lightning. I listen to all the things they promised to say.

Haiku Conclusion

The haiku element at the conclusion of the haibun serves as a thematic accompaniment that deepens the meaning of the piece as a whole. What does that mean?? It means you'll try to capture the essence of the prose section of your work.

5 syllables

7 syllables

5 syllables

*Footsteps across grass
the bats spread wings and fly
the river flows past*

SEE, THINK, WONDER

THINKING
ROUTINE

WATCH THE VIDEO... WHAT DO YOU NOTICE...

WHAT DO YOU THINK... WHAT DO YOU WONDER??

SEE

THINK

WONDER

HAIBUN

PARRAMATTA GIRLS HOME

PROSE POEM

6-9 SENTENCES

[illegible]

Найки

5/7/5 SYLLABLES

ME

PARTNER