

A PROJECT WITH THE SWAN RIVER TRUST

# Indigenous history of the Swan and Canning rivers

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2010

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## HISTORY BRIEF OF THE SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS

### WANDJU WANDJU NIDJA NYOONGAR BOODJAH

#### Welcome to Nyoongar Country

#### Note on Spelling

Not all **Nyoongar** people speak the same language and dialect.

There may be different spellings for words and place names to those used here.

#### BACKGROUND

Dutch navigator Willem de Vlamingh named the Swan River on 5 January 1697. The Avon River, which has its main source at Wickepin, becomes the Swan when it reaches Wooroloo Brook in Walyunga National Park, 30 kilometres north-east of Perth. It then flows through the Darling Range to the coastal plain and discharges to the Indian Ocean near Fremantle. As the population of the Swan River colony increased, housing and industry were established along the banks and the river was intensively used for waste disposal and for recreation, transport and food. (Encyclopedia of Western Australia)

At Walyunga National Park, 67 kilometres from the river mouth, the Avon River changes its name to the Swan River. Combined, the Swan-Avon River system is 280 kilometres long and runs from near Wickepin to the Indian Ocean down at Fremantle. The Canning River is the Swan River's main tributary and flows from the Darling Ranges before entering the Swan River at Melville Water between the suburbs of Applecross and South Perth. The mouth of the Swan River was enlarged in 1895, subsequently increasing the amount of marine water entering the river system. Therefore the lower stretches of the Swan River and the Canning River up to Kent Street are an estuary (Swan River Trust)

The Swan and Canning Rivers and their immediate surroundings can be considered the most important landscape features of the Perth Metropolitan Region. The river holds 'icon' status and has become a focus for the quality of the perceived environment in the metropolitan region. Retaining the natural and cultural elements makes the Swan and Canning Rivers unique and defines its regional identity. The importance of a site reflects not just a physical link to the land, but also a spiritual or emotional link. Aborigine's place within their country helps in establishing who they are and where they come from (Jackson & Ward, 1999).

The Swan River system landscape has changed since European settlement and is subject to ever increasing pressure for change. The continual influence of people - whose values were formed in different environments - and the inability to recognise the intrinsic value of the unfamiliar landscape, have resulted in the dramatically modified landscape of the present day Swan River System.

*In the Colonial period, much of the natural landscape was regarded as unattractive by Europeans and development took place with little regard to the environment and aesthetics.*

*A typical settler's perspective is reflected by Samuel Taylor, a visitor from Sydney, who in 1829 wrote of the Swan River Colony where 'you have one of the most delightful demi-panoramic views, I suppose, in the world; but this is all that could be said of it. Not a blade of grass to be seen – nothing but sand, scrub, shrubs and stunted trees, from the verge of the river to the tops of the hills' (Stannage, 1979).*

Landscape is more than physical features. It is the interpretation. Interaction, and emotions generated by the experience of the environment's natural and cultural elements. The community appreciation of the landscape resource is a synthesis of individual perceptions, some acute, some subliminal, others based upon historical and childhood appreciations of activities and cultural values. E.g. The limestone cliffs at Blackwall Reach, Bicton, are an important landscape element to most people who use the area: the limestone cliffs provide a range of experiences such as awareness of nature, recreation, spiritual significance and/or a reference point for local identity.

*Significant cultural sites including some sites of historical and Nyoongar significance are mapped. Sites of significance are defined as those areas which demonstrate some or all of the following characteristics: an important emotional link for society, rareness, intactness, excellence of type, cultural or historical importance, association with a particular cultural, historical or social period, association with a significant historical personality, or natural features which are ecologically or intrinsically important.*

## INDIGENOUS HISTORY

*Nyoongars identify many elements of the Swan River system as being of special spiritual significance, giving a sense of ownership and identity with their surroundings.*

Before European settlement the Nyoongars of the South West were connected to the land and had an in depth knowledge of what it contained. This knowledge was supported by the six seasons (see Figure 1) that are recognized as:

**Makkuru** (maggoro), the winter period between June and July – cold and wet with westerly gales

**Djilba** (jilba), the spring period between August and September – becoming warmer

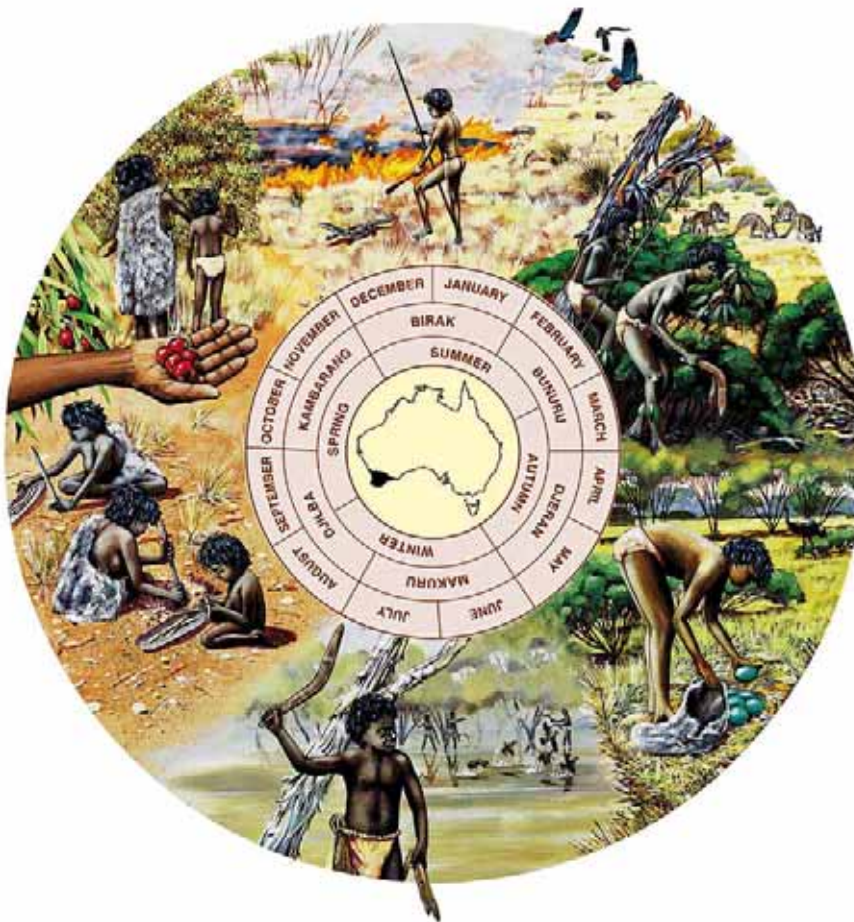
**Kambarang**, October to November – rain decreasing

**Birak** (birok), the summer period between December and January – hot and dry

**Burnuru**, the autumn period between February and March – hot easterly winds

**Djeran** (wanyarang), the period between April and May –becoming cooler

The Nyoongar people knew what grew, where and at what time of the year it was available for harvest. (Berndt, R. M., & Berndt C. H. 1979, Carter, J. 1986; Department of Conservation and Land Management).



*Nyoongar Seasons* (Department of Conservation and Land Management)

The Nyoongar people of the Swan and Canning rivers were divided into a number of different groups. Each group had its own identified territory and held specific cultural and hunting rights over particular stretches of the country. The system of traditional ownership and associated special usage rights was far more complex than the current European system of land ownership as Salvado's observation's state:

*Every individual has his own territory for hunting, gathering, gum and picking up yams, and the rights he has here are respected and sacred .... Consequently, each family regards one particular district as belonging exclusively to itself, though the use of it is freely shared by nearby friendly families (Salvado, 1977).*

These territory rights were inherited through complex kinship systems and although these may have altered due to the impacts of European occupation the spiritual association with land that underpins this system continues to play a major role for the local Nyoongar people today.

The Nyoongar people lived in balance with the natural environment, the main source of food came from the sea, the Swan River and the extensive system of freshwater lakes that once lay between

the coast and the Darling Escarpment. Their social structure was focused on the family with Noongar family groups occupying distinct areas of Nyoongar Country. (South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council)

Despite significant changes to the landscape, many Nyoongars continue to access the river for sustenance, knowledge, and spiritual renewal, and practise distinctly Nyoongar cultural associations with the river environment.

*NB: The following is taken from the thesis by Nicole Macdonald "Images of the Swan and Canning Rivers: Creating 'Barometers' of Change"*

'Country of origin' for Aboriginal people refers to the geographic area in which they were born.

**'Nyoongar'** (also spelled Nungar, Nyungar, Nyungah or Noongar) means 'person' or 'man', and is the commonly used term when referring to Aboriginal people of metropolitan Perth and the southwest region. However, there is a presence of other distinctions within the group, for example the Bardarlong, Bibbulman, Goreng, Minang and Whadjuk groups who originated from different areas within the local region.

It has been acknowledged that traditionally the region of Perth in which the Nyoongar resided was part of the Whadjuk (or Whadjug) territory (see Figure 3). Tindale (1974) explains the Whadjuk's territory as extending: "[From the] Swan River and northern and eastern tributaries inland to beyond Mount Helena; at Kalamunda, Armadale, Victoria Planes, South of Toodyay, and western vicinity of York; at Perth; south along the coast to near Pinjarra".



South-west 'tribal' boundaries after Tindale, 1974



Robert Menli Lyon arrived at the Swan River Colony in 1829 and lived along the Swan River before leaving the colony in 1834. His description of the Swan and Canning River Aboriginal people and their tribal boundaries were published in the Perth Gazette in 1933 and are important for a number of reasons. It is the first recorded account of the names, vocabulary and 'tribal districts' of the tribal groups from 1832-1833, which occupied the area that is now metropolitan Perth (refer to Figure 3). His key informant was Yagan, an 'Aboriginal patriot' who was killed in July 1833.

#### **Yagan of Canning River area** (son of Midgegooroo)

An influential Noongar during the early 1800's was Yagan. He was the son of Midgegooroo whose country was south east of Perth in the Canning River region. Yagan was quoted as saying 'You came to our country; you have driven us from our haunts, and disturbed us in our occupations: as we walk in our country we are fired upon by the white men; why should the white men treat us so?'

A memorial statue was erected on Herrison Island near the Causeway in 1980 after Nyoongar Elders were finally successful in continuous lobbying of the government to commemorate his important role in Nyoongar history. (South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council)

**Mooro**; district of **Yellowgonga**, bounded by the Sea on the West, by Melville water and the Swan to the south; Ellens Brook on the east and by the Gyngoorda to the north. **Beeliar**, the district of **Midgegoorong** bounded by Melville Water and the Canning on the North, and the hills on the east, the sea on the west and by line due east from Mangles Bay on the south.

**Mundy** (or Munday), was the leader of the **Beeloo** people during the time of European settlement and a recognised and important negotiator for Perth's Whadjuk community. The Beeloo had winter camps in the Kalamunda and Mundaring hills and the area where Mundaring weir now stands was an important meeting place for Noongar Families.

**Beeliar** was the territory of the legendary Aborigine **Midgegooroo** (or Midgegoorong), who was the Nyoongar elder for the area at the time of European settlement and better known as father to **Yagan**. His family had customary rights to land usage over an extensive area of what is now southern metropolitan Perth, and were allowed to move freely across even more area, presumably because of kinship ties with neighbours. Midgegooroo played a major role in Aboriginal resistance to white settlement in the Perth region and was subsequently executed in 1933.

The traditional Nyoongar name for the Canning River is '**Djarlgarra**', signifying a 'place of abundance', and area occupied by both tribes. The area in which Perth is currently located, Boorloo, formed part of the Mooro, the tribal lands of Yellangonga, a Noongar leader and elder, whose group was also one of the several collectively known as the Whadjuk. The Whadjuk People were situated around the swan river named '**Derbal Yaragan**' by the Nyoongar people (der-bal= an estuary; yaragan= river).

However this term and its meaning are sometimes contested, for applying to the estuary alone, not the river in its entirety. This may help to be supported and explained by Daisy Bates who outlines how every aspect of the river had a different name. "The estuary was called darbal and those whose camps were on the estuary were called darbalung, estuary people. The Swan River was beela (river) only, but every point, hill, slope, gully or flat had its name". There is strong archeologically evidence supporting the presence of Nyoongar people in the region known as Whadjuk:



Map illustrates the Perth region before settlement (according to Robert Lyons as told to him by Yagan, in Tindale, 1974)

### **Lifestyle along the Rivers**

The estuaries offered easy access to prolific marine life, for the Aboriginal people who were not seafarers and had no form of water transport and the lakes and estuaries provided a habitat for numerous aquatic birds. In traditional times, the Nyoongar fishermen would crush shellfish into a pulp and sprinkle it into the water to attract fish. The men would wait in the water and spear any fish that were drawn in. In the autumn, when smaller fish would approach the shores in prolific proportions, the Nyoongar would surround them keeping them in the shallow until the tide dropped, at which point they were easily speared. If the water was too deep and the fish were not stranded the women and children would make a simple fish pen, by pushing gathered bushes into the sand. The fish could then be contained and easily speared. In autumn and early winter, salmon were in abundance and many would be speared as the dolphins chased them into the shallow waters. The Nyoongar did not use nets, rather they wove bushes and sticks into a wicker fence. Often the Nyoongar would also light fires on the beaches, where the shallow waters and white sand would make it possible to see the fish still in the water, and easier to catch. This is how cobbler was speared in the Swan River.

### **Connection to the Land**

Because of their strong religious and economic connection with place, Aboriginal groups strongly interacted with their close neighbours. Contact between the groups was maintained through the ‘**mandjar**’, or fair, where people came together to barter a variety of goods. The dependence of the Nyoongar on the land and its resources was unquestionable. Although a few resources were acquired through trade with other regions the majority was attained from the land on which they travelled and within which they had established rights of movement and property. Within these parameters their economy was secured.

### **Tracks**

A number of tracks were used when moving from one place to another, especially those connecting permanent water sources. One such track went from Perth and followed the north side of the river to North Fremantle, at which it crossed the river and continued on to Bibra Lake. The river was shallow at this section, requiring only a short swim. These crossings (two also in Perth) were used primarily in summer when the fish were in abundance and could be easily caught. This track and others followed onto Mandurah and Pinjarra and continued on down south to Busselton and Albany. Hammond (1980) also reports that there were a number of tracks used in the winter months, ‘when

the natives had to live on animals and roots because the rivers were flooded and very little fish could be caught'. (Fremantle, 1979, as cited in Gibbs, 1988).

### **Sacred Waugal**

The Swan and Canning Rivers and their tributaries also hold great significance to the Noongar people as being created and sacred to the rainbow serpent 'Waugal', a dreamtime spirit taking the form of a giant snake. Elders taught Nyoongar people that the Waugal created creeks, waterholes, lakes and valleys on its journey to the ocean. It emerged at Mt Eliza and making its way to the sea, created the Swan River. Mt Eliza and the area in which parliament house now stands were named '**Ga-ra-katta**', the site sacred to the Waugal. The strong connection with '**Nidga Boodja**' (this land), is still significant to Aboriginal people who are the traditional caretakers of the land (Department of Education and Training, 2008).

Our spirits are in the trees and the hills and the rocks and the animals. When you're born you come from the land and when you die your spirit goes back to the land. The spirit ancestors from the dreaming gave us this law. This is our heritage. It doesn't change. (Whinmar, 1996, as cited in Department of Education and Training, 2008).

Most religions have places of unique significance that they regard as sacred. Some people consider churches, war memorials, and or cemeteries as sacred places and are disheartened if damage is inflicted on these sites. Other cultures, such as Europeans and Asians brought with them to Australia their religions and made sites sacred, in contrast the Aboriginal religion has existed in Australia for thousands of years and Aboriginal sacred sites are part of the land, rather than built upon it.

Aboriginal sites are significant because they link cultural tradition to place, people and land over time. Aboriginal sites are as significant and important today as they were thousands of years ago, and will continue to play an integral role in the lives of Aboriginal people and Western Australian heritage (Department of Indigenous Affairs, 2008).

An Aboriginal sacred site may be a hill, a rock, a cave, or even a waterhole. Such places are considered sacred or special because something of significance happened there during the dreaming. Some sites are considered secret-sacred, and traditionally can only be visited by those authorised under tribal law. All others, especially children, are forbidden to visit these sites. Throughout the south-west there are numerous sites which are of particular significance for many Nyoongar people, because they are the evidence of their dreamtime ancestry. Particular men had

the job of caring for these sites and the authority to perform the ceremony associated with them.

Nyoongar's close connection with the rivers and surrounding areas forms the basis for much of their culture, spirituality, and identity. For Nyoongar people access to freshwater, and the resources provided by the land and rivers, was central to their survival. It has been suggested that Aboriginal people's connection to such places is so strong, that sustaining the health of their culture, depends on the maintenance of such places.

These places and the grounding beliefs they give expression to, continue to be of great significance in contemporary social and spiritual life. For example, the condition of the rivers is directly related to the well-being of the Waugal, and both are interconnected with the health and well-being of Nyoongar cultural identity. It is thought that if the Waugal leaves or is killed, then the rivers and other water features with which it is connected will dry up, subsequently the processes of rejuvenation, with which it is linked, will cease to occur.

A note about language: there are several communities within the Nyoongar country who speak different dialects and may use different words to those described here or have a different meaning for some of the words.

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	baigup	the rushes
	beere	banksias
	bidi	tracks/path
	boodir	important person
	boodjar	land, earth
	boogur	sulky
	boon	lots or many
	boone	edible root
	boora	bowels
	booryul	magic people
	booyee	stone
	byerbup	ridge
	derbal, derba	estuary
	djangas	spirits of the dead nyungar people
	dooda	tame dog
	dwerda	dog
	dya	lips
	dyeedyall	clay

	dyoondal	white/fair hair
	gabee, gabbi, gaboo	water
	garro	again
	goolam	young man
	goona	excreta, faeces
	gooya	frog
	janga	spirit
	jena	feet
	jooro	jarrah
	kaleep	camping place
	karra	behaviour
	kata	head
	katta	hand
	koort	heart
	koorah	long time ago
	koya/kwiya	bullfrog
	kooyar (cooya, gooya)	frog
	kweeah	big green frog
	kooyah	small green frog
	manang	water with spiritual and healing properties
	marra	hand
	marga	tree
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	meta	leg
	mia	hut
	mool	nose
	ngatta	more
	nyer	pelican
	quaada	beautiful
	quaapa	good
	Waugal (wagyl, wargal)	(rainbow serpent)
	weela	swan
	winna	dead
	yaragan	river
	yoorn	lizard

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

*adapted from Nicole MacDonald's thesis  
'Images of the Swan and Canning Rivers: Creating 'Barometers' of Change*

**Although these stories are unique and personal they combine to represent shared beliefs in a cultural custom (Seaton, 2008).**

People's personal stories, as idiosyncratic as they may be, are woven within a cultural context and act to encapsulate and represent a broader community narrative. This is achieved by reiterating stories handed down to them of places of cultural significance.

Dreamtime stories regarding spiritual beings and creation are community narratives people have given voice to, which in turn sustains their own personal life story in positive ways.

Thus the Swan and Canning rivers and their tributaries hold great significance especially specific sites which represent areas thought to be resting places for the Waugal or home to its eggs.

Although a number of these places have undergone substantial change, the memories and meanings associated remain.

Many of the places revisited have changed as a consequence of either urban development or change to the natural environment, this causes people to reflect on what was, and is no longer.

The personal narratives presented, relate to peoples experience of growing up with the rivers as a playground and backdrop to their lives "as kids we would swim, fish, marron, and jilgy in what was a clean and vibrant river system". Introduced to them by their family, "my connection to the Derbal Yarigan is really through him [his father] ...the river was part of his growing up and it was through his connection to it that I got introduced to it", and of times spent with family and friends, engaging in activities, some of which their ancestors had done generations prior. "You're having this yarn with all your family...about how things are going...you could still be within viewing distance of Perth, and madness, and here you were nestled in this little space, hunting and gathering, catching a feed and growing and sitting on

the foreshore. There was something beautiful, a really nice feeling about that". Many of these activities, they now experience with their own kids.

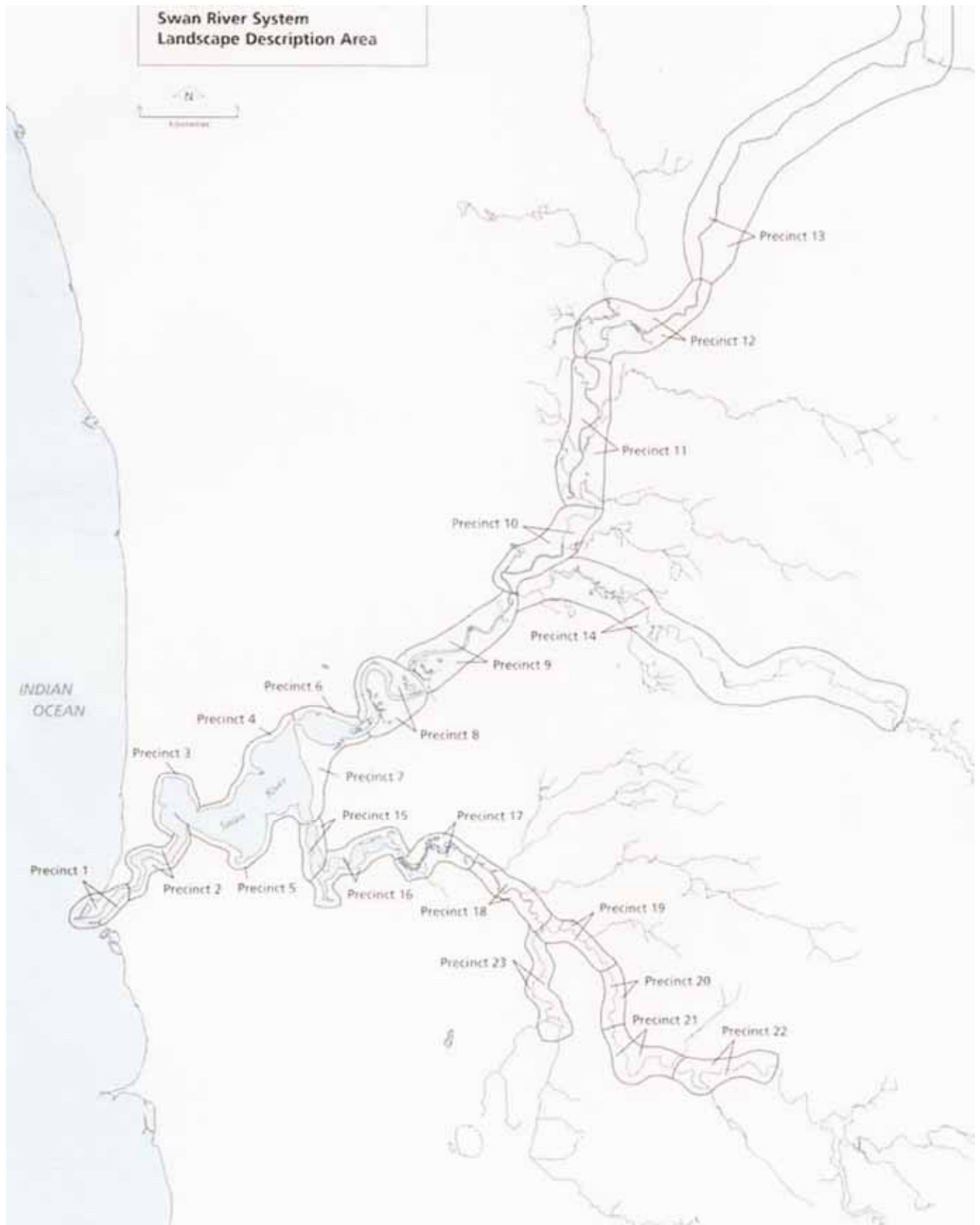
***DJINANGINY KATATJIN DJOORAPINY NIDJA WEERN NYOONGAR BOODJAH  
NGALLA MIA MIA BOORDA***

***So look, listen, understand and embrace all the elements of Nyoongar Boodjah  
that is forever our home.***

(SYRINX, Jill Abery, 2007 – 'Potential Enrich Walk Trail)

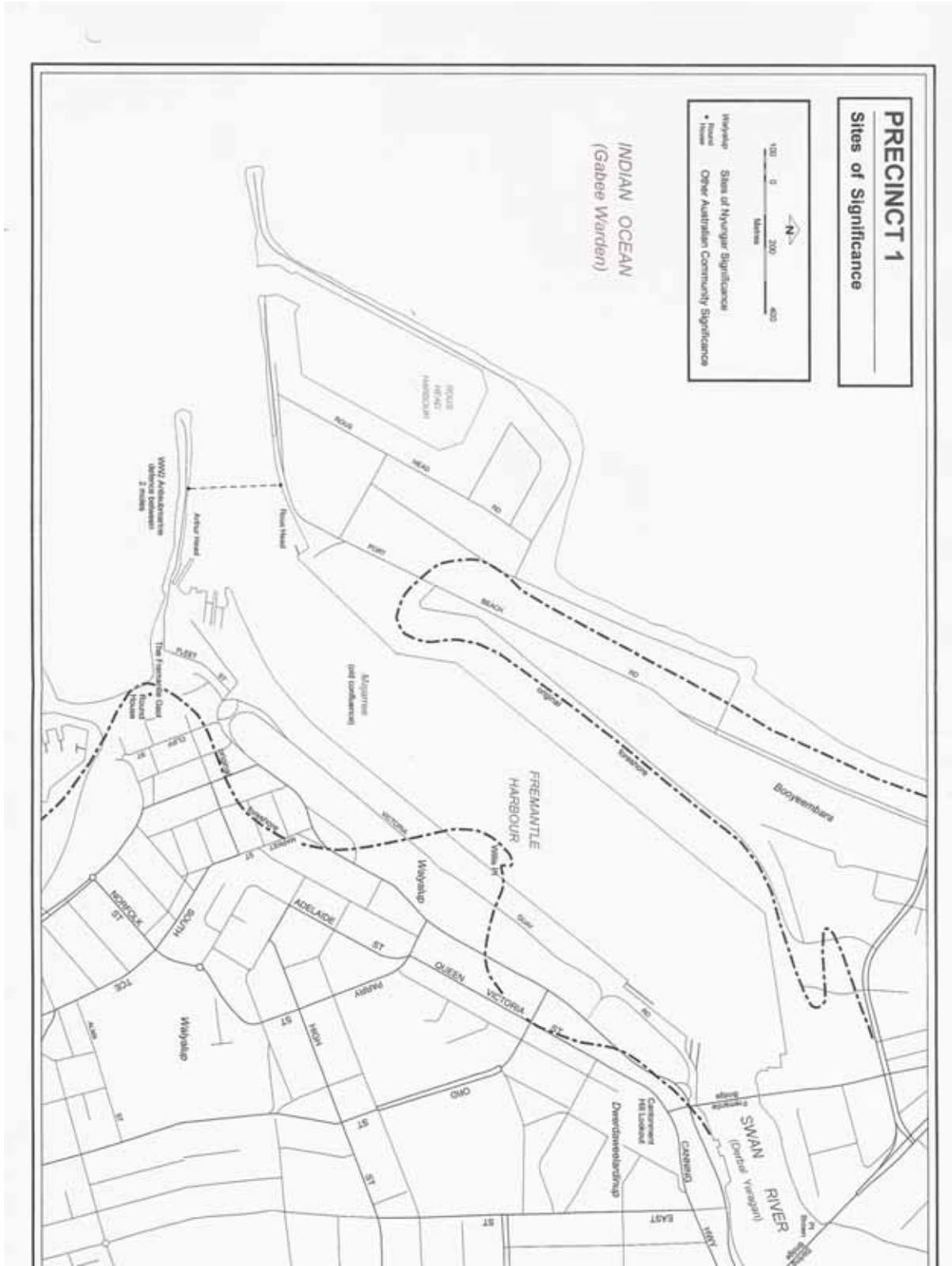


**PRECINCTS INDICATED ALONG THE SWAN AND CANNING RIVER SYSTEM**



PRECINCT 1

FREMANTLE HARBOUR GROYNES TO RAILWAY BRIDGE



<u>Place name</u>	<u>Aboriginal Place Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Indian Ocean	Gabee warden Kuranup	water 'over the sea'
Fremantle coast and Limestone hills	Booyeembara	
River confluence with the ocean Inland Fremantle	Majarree (Manjaree) Wallyalup	place of the eagle (‘up’ means place of) (significant fishing area)
Swan River (from the ocean Confluence to Melville Water)	Derbal Yaragan	
Willis Point	Walyubup	place of the kangaroo rat

<u>Vocabulary</u>	<u>Aboriginal Word</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	Booyee	stone
	Derbal	estuary
	Yaragan	river
	Goono	excreta
	Bidi	tracks
	Djangas	spirits of the dead

Kuranup was ‘over the sea’, where the djangas came from, spirits of the dead Nyoongar people.

Nyoongar refer to the Fremantle coast and limestone hills as **Booyeembara**, this area is frequented regularly in summer for fishing. All those places where the **Waugal** rested were made known by the presence of lime, which was its **goona** or excreta. The **Derbal Yaragan** was created by movements of the Waugal, the powerful, serpent like dreamtime spirit. (City of Fremantle) The river confluence with the ocean is known as **Majarree** and both sides of inland Fremantle area as **Wallyalup** meaning place of the eagle. The Swan River from the ocean confluence to Melville Water is named **Derbal Yaragan** and is significant fishing area for Nyoongars.

Nyoongars frequently traversed a track from Perth Water to North Fremantle. Before the Fremantle Harbour was altered, in summer, it was only a short swim from the northern shore to the southern banks from where the track continued to Bibra Lake. Some women and children might go the long way round (via Herrison Island) and meet up with the others at Bibra Lake (City of Fremantle, Manjaree Heritage Trail). The original Willis Point was known as **Walyubup** ‘place of the kangaroo rat’).

A complete network of tracks known a **bidi**, covered the region and early Colonial roads probably followed these routes. From Ferry Point tracks ran along the river bank, to a crossing at the lower Canning River, to Bibra Lake, and South to Rockingham. Beach Street no doubt follows a track, and the old shoreline round to the headland may have been a track. (City of Fremantle, Manjaree Heritage Trail)

Before colonisation, the area was mainly frequented in summer when the estuary was a plentiful fishing resource and the coastal plain was relatively dry. Green (1986) notes: that a popular fishing

technique was for groups of 20 or more women and children armed with branches to drive schools of mullet into the shallows to be speared by the men.

The dry vegetation was easily burnt, which encouraged the propagation of young vegetation which in turn attracted game for hunting. In winter, local Nyoongars moved inland to avoid the flooding of the coastal plain and river banks. There was a freshwater spring approximately one kilometre from Arthur Head which was an important resource for Nyoongars and this point served as a meeting place.

This area has an association with the Mooro family.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

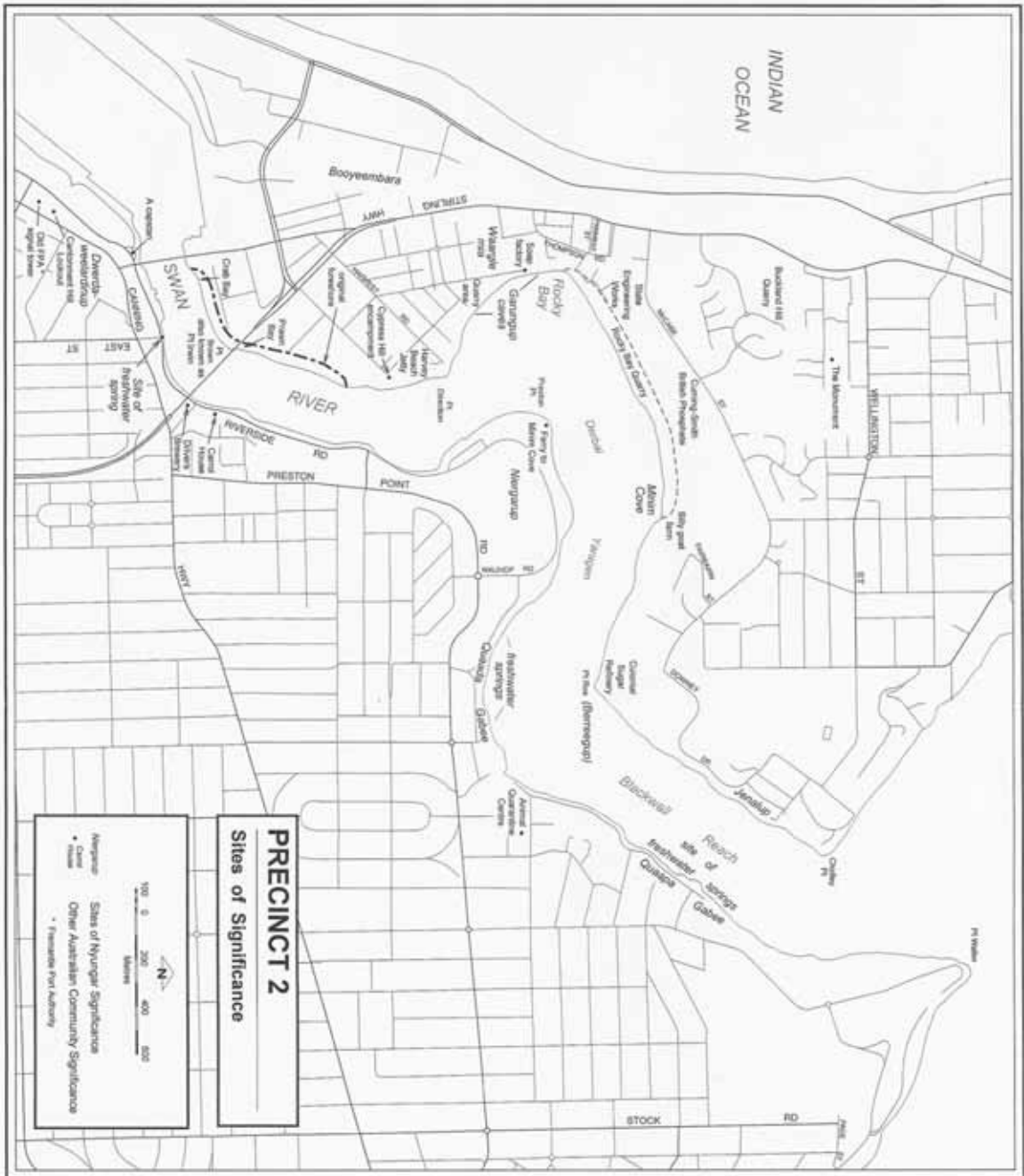
**Fremantle Crossing** (Noel Morrison)



The men would cross the river to go down Mandurah way, the men and children would cross here. You can just imagine how old this bit of rock is.

**PRECINCT 2**

**FREMANTLE RAILWAY BRIDGE TO POINT WALTER RESERVE AND CHIDLEY POINT**



<u>Place name</u>	<u>Aboriginal Place Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Cantonment Hill	Dwerda Weelardinup	'the hill where the spirit dogs guard the river entrance' or place of the dingo spirit doodaroo
Blackwall Reach	Jenalup	the place where the feet make a track
Two caves at Rocky Bay	Garungup	place of anger or place to be avoided believed to be the final resting place of the rainbow-serpent Waugal (Waakle, Warkle)
Point Preston	Waugal mia	resting place of the Waugal
Bicton foreshore	Niergarup	place of the pelicans
	Quaada gabee	freshwater springs

<u>Vocabulary</u>	<u>Aboriginal word</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	Dwerda	dog
	Weela	swan
	Jena	feet
	Boodjar	land
	Quaada	beautiful
	Quaapa	good
	Gabee	water
	Mia	hut
	Dooda	tame dog

This precinct is part of the Mooro district, which at the time of the establishment of the Swan River Colony was the **boodjar** or land of **Yellagonga**. This area was bounded by the sea on the west, by Melville Water and the Swan on the south, by Ellen Brook on the east and by Moore River (Gyngoorda) to the north. Before colonisation, the area was abundant in food, shelter materials and water. There was an important route from the Perth area along the north bank to North Fremantle. It continues to be a location favoured by Nyoongars. At North Fremantle, the water was shallow enough to swim across to the southern bank where the route continued south to Bibra Lake, Rockingham, Mandurah (place of trade and exchange) and the Murray River. Point Preston is known as **Niergarup** to local Nyoongar. This means 'the place where the pelican are located'. Beeliar people used this area as a ceremonial and camping ground. The whole area is known as an 'Important Place'. It was the first sighting area of white people, exploring the river. (City of Melville, Aboriginal History)

At Minim Cove, a smooth granite stone was found some feet below the present land surface in an area covered by undisturbed bush. It appears to have been carried from the Darling Range and used for pounding. This suggests that this area is a Nyoongar site of some age and importance. Tools made from small chips of quartz and chert found at Minim Cove have been dated to 9930 years old.



Minim Cove would also have been a camping ground and a fishing site for Nyoongars who stayed in the area while waiting for low tide to cross the river.

The Cantonment Hill area has been identified by Collard et al (1996) and Gibbs (1988) as **Dwerdaweelardinup**, meaning 'the hill where the spirit dogs guard the river entrance' or the 'place of dingo spirit'. The exact locality of the named area is in need of further research and analysis. The Fremantle City Council (1992, notes that Nyoongars have recently identified the Old Traffic Bridge site as the place where the **Dingo Spirit Doodaroo** lives. Nyoongars have a special known **middar** or **corroboree** for this spirit. Collard et al (1996) note that local elders have recently described the story of the seven dogs who guarded the mouth of the river. In this story a crocodile, travelling from the north attacked the dogs. One of the dogs bit off the tail of the crocodile. The crocodile sank to the mouth of the river forming the rocky bar at the river mouth.

Bicton foreshore is known as Quaada gabee (Quaada means beautiful, Gabee means water), an area of fresh water. It is recorded that a number of fresh water springs in this precinct were used by local Nuyngar. One spring, which no longer exists, has been recorded as once being located at a site adjacent to the present day East Street. Two sites where water sources were used by Nuyngars are recorded to have been in the vicinity of Blackwall Reach. The exact location of these sites is unknown. Water, being essential to life, made sure that settlement was always near water holes and lakes. Water bodies of all kinds hold spiritual qualities. Damaging the water areas is damaging the spirituality of the Waugal (City of Melville, Aboriginal History). All water sites had spiritual and cultural significance. The area is known as **Jenalup** by Nuyngars and refers to 'the place where the feet make a track'. This whole area is very sacred and has very strong ties with the Dreaming Stories (City of Melville, Aboriginal History)

Two caves at Rocky Bay (Garungup) are believed to be the final resting place of the rainbow-serpent **Waugal**, who created the Nuyngar and their world, before it made the tunnel underneath out to the **Gabee – Warden** or the Indian Ocean. The rainbow-serpent slept at **Garungup** after it had created the local hills 'Seven Sisters' said to be the back of the Waugal. Before this time, the Waugal made the Avon River, got sunburnt, constipated and had to shake off its skin. The stones at **Garungup** represent its hard-baked excreta. The name means the 'place of anger' or a place to be avoided.

Mooro family association

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Places can provide information on history and place, which tie into ones individual spirituality, and cultural identity, and thus provide a place of connection. For Aboriginal people aspects of the land and waterways are sacred - they can represent a place to feel at peace and connect with one's spirituality and sense of self: "the site is like a church that's what it was, that's how they symbolise it".

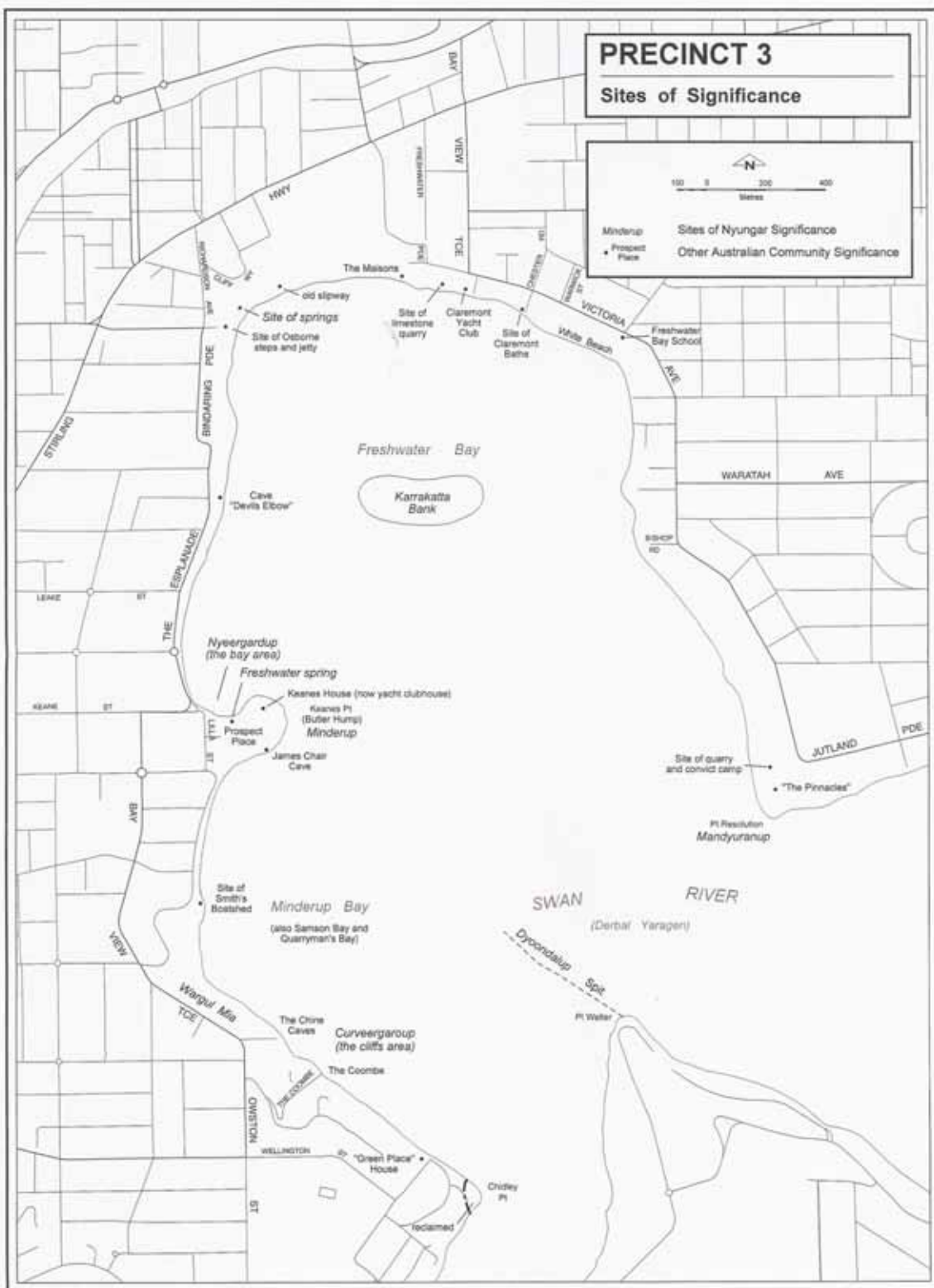
### **The Left Bank, Fremantle (Noel Nannup)**



"We believe they (the seagulls) bring the spirit of those buried on Rottnest Island back to the mainland, and we have 360 of our people buried on Rottnest Island. When they bath themselves there they are actually bathing themselves in water that is sweeter than the ocean and that puts the spirit back into the sweet water. And that connects the spirit back to all the other spirits ..."

**PRECINCT 3**

**POINT ROE TO POINT RESOLUTION (MOSMAN & FRESHWATER BAYS)**



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Cliffed area of Freshwater Bay	Curveergaroup	
Keanes Point, Freshwater Bay	Minderup	place for alleviating sickness
Sand bar in Freshwater Bay	Karrakatta	place of the crabs
Keanes Point	Nyeergardup	place of the pelican
Point Resolution	Mandyuranup	(fishing spot / market place) also place of banksia (??)
Point Roe	Berreegup	place of banksia
Mount Claremont	Karbomunup	(black hill)

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Nyer	Pelican
	Karra	behaviour
	Katta	hand

Willem de Vlamingh explored the beached and cliffs of Mosman Park and Peppermint Grove on 5 January, 1697, and found a freshwater spring near the intersection of today's Lilla and Keane Streets, just within the boundary of Peppermint Grove. This is probably near the spring that later gave its name to Freshwater Bay. There were many springs around this foreshore but not many were flowing strongly in January when Vlamingh located this one.

**Whadjuck Nyoongars** had a campsite in the area as it was a main source of water. The cliffed area is called **Curveergaroup** and the bay itself is termed **Minderup**. **Karrakatta** refers to the sand bar in Freshwater bay and means 'the place of crabs'. The small bay at Keanes Point is called **Nyeergardup** meaning place of the pelican.

Point Resolution (**Mandyuranup**) means place of banksia (Pascoe and Cupton, 1983). This area is very steep and therefore was not an easy or favourite location to gather food. However, on the northern side of the point the beaches were flat and sandy being an ideal fishing and trading area (Claremont Museum, 1995).

Butler Point is referred to as **Minderup**, which is a place for alleviating sickness because of the freshwater springs (which were possibly heated). Point Roe is known as **Berreegup** to Nuyngar which means the place of the banksia. Inland at Mount Claremont is referred to as the 'black hill', or **Karbomunup**.

Whadjuck (Whadjug) family association



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Matilda Bay (different names Probably refer to different Features in the area)	Godroo ) Goodamiorup ) Gurndandulup )	
Pelican Point – southern side	Goordandalup (Koortandalup)	meeting place of the married or betrothed persons
Pelican Point	Boontanup or Boorirarup	place of the Xanthorrhoea Balga or black boy tree'
Pelican Point is also known as	Katamburdup	high rise near where paperbark and zamia palms grow
North of Pelican Point	Nyoongar karra mia	camping place of the Nyoongar
Foreshore in front Gallop House	Gooliliup and Beenyup	Swamp area
Armstrong spit along the southern side of Dalkeith	Nanulgurup	
The track from the old Swan Brewery Stables up the hill face is referred to as: near Kennedy Spring, adjacent to the Old Swan Brewery	Gooniallup	track of the Waugal
South of Point Lewis	Gooniniup Gargatup	place of the faeces of the Waugal place of soul, spirit, breath (waugal's resting place)
Point Lewis – near old Swan	Kooyamulyup	place of the frog camp and place For the initiation of young men (probably did nose pegging here)

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Kata	head
	Goona	faeces
	Karra	behaviour
	Mia	hut
	Koort	heart

**The Waugal (derived from waug which means soul, spirit or breath)**

**The term Waygalan means 'ill, sick or under the influence of Waugal**

This area was used as hunting grounds by **Mooro Nyoongars** who at the time of the Swan River Colony were headed by **Yellagonga** until his death in 1835. Originally, there were several springs including ones which occurred near the area of the present day Archdeacon and Edward Streets.

At the site of the present day University of Western Australian campus, a hot water spring once ran and the same site was used as a battle ground by the Nyoongar people. The area was plentiful with fish, shell fish, frogs and turtles. Matilda Bay (several references give different names which possibly referred to different features in the area, and **Godroo, Goodamiorup or Gurndandulup**) and Pelican

Point (**Bootanup** or **Booriarup** meaning place of the Xanthorrhoea, balga or blackboy tree leaves), were favoured for crabbing and prawning by the Mooro people. The southern side of Pelican Point is known as **Goordandalup** meaning the meeting place of the married or betrothed persons. Pelican Point is also known as **Katamburdup** meaning 'high rise near where paperbark and zamia palms grow'. It is also recorded that there was a swamp area near Gallop House called **Gooliliup** and **Beenyup** and that Armstrong spit along the southern side of Dalkeith is known as **Nanulgurup**.

Oral history records that Nyoongar wells tapped a freshwater supply in the vicinity of the present Nedlands/Dalkeith foreshore. The exact location of this site is now undetermined. **Gooniniup** camping ground was adjacent to the old Swan Brewery. This means the 'place where he defecated' and is derived from the word kwun or anus. The exact location is difficult to define due to extensive land reclamation and dredging in the vicinity. However, Kennedy Spring is believed to be the eastern point of the camping ground. The Waugal (derived from waug which means soul, spirit or breath) is believed to have surfaced near to the fresh water spring in the area. The Waugal is associated and equivalent to 'living water' or a vital force of water and is represented in the form of a 'water snake'. The abrupt rise of Mount Eliza is said to have been caused by the struggles of the Waugal as it came to the surface and wriggled its way back to the sea.

The area is a place that demands great respect by Nyoongars and there are strict codes of ethics which still exist today. The Waugal would 'suck you in' at the place where it returns back into the ground on its way out to the sea. The term **Waygalan** means 'ill, sick or under the influence of Waugal'. A person would be **Waygalan** if they have disregard for the site.

The Waugal is believed by many Nyoongars to have laid an egg represented by a large round stone near Matilda bay which was removed by white settlers of the Swan River Colony. The track of the Waugal from the old Swan Brewery Stables up the hill face is referred to as **Gooniallup**.

**Goonininup** and an adjacent camp called **Goodinup**, is a recognised meeting place for Nyoongars. It is a place where inland Nyoongar met with the coastal Nyoongar. It was a place associated with male initiation, economic exchange and a recognised trade route for red ochre. It was one of a number of sites of importance to the Nyoongars. Near the camp was an area referred to as **Kooyamulyup**, meaning the place of the frog camp which refers to the many frogs in the area which were part of the diet of the people. It is also believed to have been a place of initiation for young men.

Mooro Family Hunting Ground



## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### Kings Park Cooya (Trevor Walley)



“Well you see King’s Park here is a frog ... Kings park is called Cooya, that’s the frog ... its part of my totem. My totem is the frog, aunties say Cooya, Cooya ... That’s the nose of the frog and towards Subiaco is the back of the frog.”

### Kings Park (Beryl Harp)



Photograph of the view from Kings Park:

“If you could shut your eyes and see no buildings there, but you need your eyes to see the beauty”.

### Mount Eliza (Beryl Harp)



The natural spring at the base of Mount Eliza was an area where Aboriginal people used to camp, as it provided them with fresh water - "along here the fresh water run out".

### **Kennedy's Fountain (Trevor Walley)**

A fountain was constructed there in 1861 and named 'Kennedy's fountain', after the governor of the time. History provided on this area explains how it was an important source of water in the early days of the colony, providing Perth with the first public water supply. However there is scant recognition of its history, prior to colonial times.

### **Swan Brewery Site (Beryl Harp)**

"If it's just one area in Perth they give to the Aboriginal people it could have been here ... they got their way, it's a pity ... there's nothing to look at now just a building."

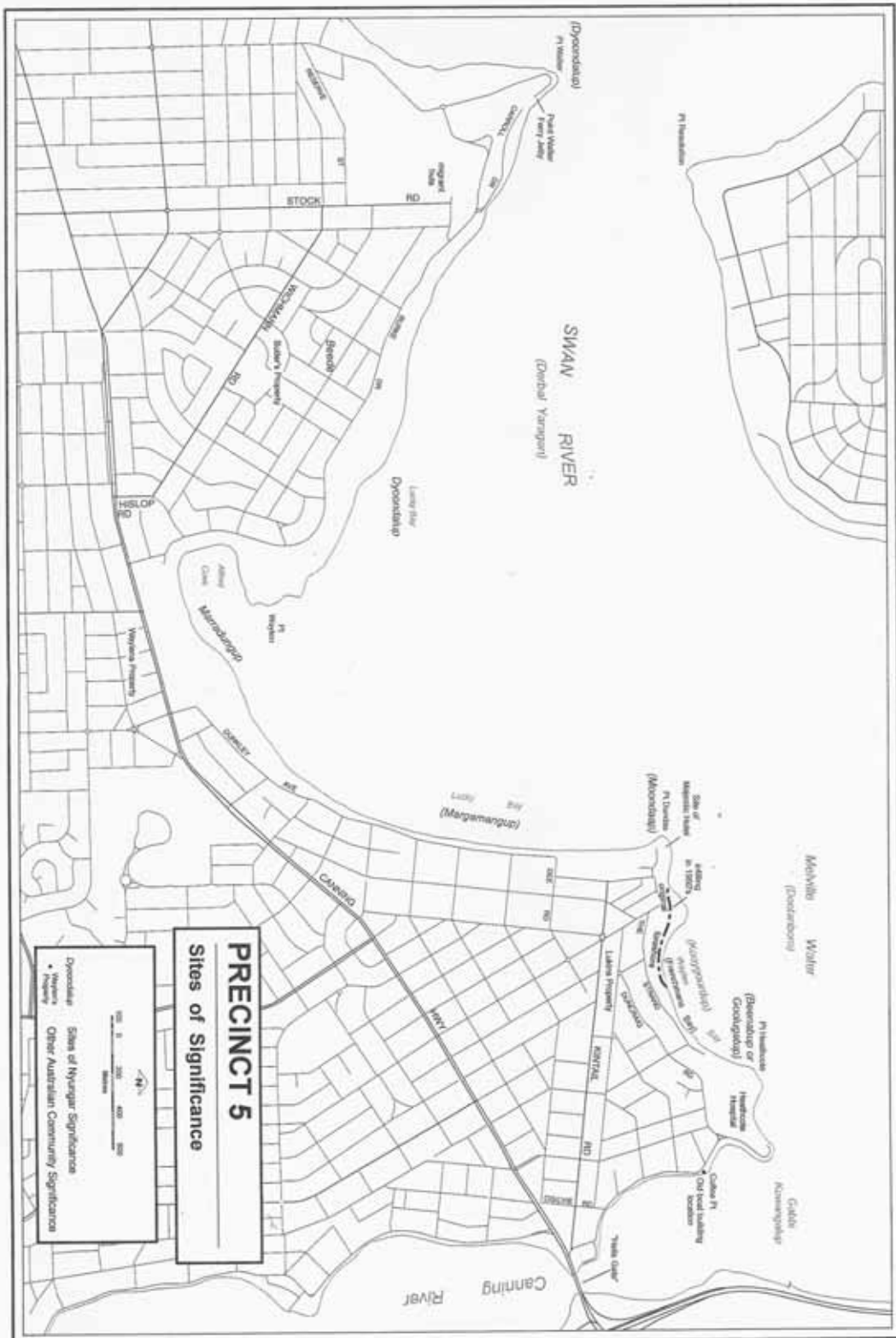


This was a camping ground for Aboriginal people, "because they knew where all the food, all the kangaroos up in the hills..." It also acted as a lookout point, "they could see who was coming...if boats were coming into Perth they had to come down this way...and this was all bush, so they could hide away from the white people".

This site also used to be the location in which a number of stones, thought to be the Waugle eggs were situated, "right at the end there is where the serpent had its eggs". It has been reported that men when passing this site would stop to reset the eggs in a bed of broken blackboy rushes. Unfortunately now both the site and stones have disappeared (N. Green, 1979), along with public acknowledgement that Aboriginal people inhabited this area. "If it's just one area in Perth they give to the Aboriginal people it could have been here... they got their way, it's a pity there's nothing to look at now, just a building".

**PRECINCT 5**

**SOUTH MELVILLE WATER POINT WALTER TO CANNING BRIDGE**



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Alfred Cove	Marrandungup	place of death water
Melville Water	Doontanboro	the big pelican river
Point Walter	Dyoondalup	place of white sand
Lucky Bay	Margamangup	the place of the bird's nest in the tree
Point Dundas	Moondaap	the blackness of the river bank
Waylen Bay	Kooyagoordup	the place of the kooyar species of frog
Point Heathcote	Goollugatup	the place of the children
Canning confluence	Gabbi Kowangalup	the place where the water comes out of the hole

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Dyoondal	white/fair hair
	Marra	hand
	Marga	tree
	Kooyar (Cooya)	frog
	Gabbi	water

In summer, the Beeliar Nyoongars used Alfred Cove (**Marradungup**) as a campsite for this was an area of the Wetlands which was an abundant source of yams, crustaceans, turtles and waterfowl. This name means place of death water. **Beeliar Nyoongars** would regularly burn sections of this area which kept the understorey low and was considered a useful technique for flushing out game.

The Melville area was originally open woodland as the result of centuries of burning by Nyoongars. The area was particularly admired for its open woodland by the early white explorers who found this landscape aesthetically pleasing.

Early colonists could not be persuaded to live in the area particularly at the time of Yagan. **Yagan** was a local Nyoongar who continued to defend his custodial right to this area for some time after the Swan River Colony had been established.

The Nyoongar names for the area are **Doontanboro** (Melville Water) meaning 'the big pelican river', Point Walter or Dyoondalup meaning the 'place of white sand', Lucky Bay, **Margamangup** meaning 'the place of the bird's nest in the tree', **Moondaap** (Point Dundas) meaning 'the blackness of the river bank', **Kooyagoordup** (Waylen Bay) referring to 'the place of the **kooyar** species of frog'. **Goollugatup** (Point Heathcote) means 'the place of the children' and the Canning confluence is known as **Gabbi Kowangalup**, 'the place where the water comes out of the hole'.

Significant to Beeliar Nyoongars as a campsite and hunting ground

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### Point Walter Crossing (Noel Morrison)



“This was the main crossing for the women and children (Point Walter) .... they had to always make sure there was a crossing for the kids.”

### Heathcoat (Glenn Pearson)



“... a really important part of Nyoongar stories [traditionally the site of Heathcoat Mental Health Institution] ... Lots of Nyoongars have been brought to that place when it was an institution ... my grandmother was brought there once.”

A number of photos and stories reflecting the importance of dreamtime beings and stories of creation overlapped. For example the sand spit down at Point Walter, is thought to represent the fallen white hair strand of “the great spirit woman” during the time of creation. This story is a community narrative sustained by the individuals whom give voice to it.

### Point Walter (Noel Nannup)



“Yes, very important in our stories. That’s where, in the story that we call the ‘carer’s of everything’, which was creation time. The great spirit woman walked past and she had long white hair and one of the strands broke and floated down and its now that white sand bar that you see”.

### **Point Walter (Trevor Walley)**



“Joonda the hair of the women, who saved all the little children from being eaten...so she put all the children in her hair and jumped up into the sky, from wave rock, and her hair became the Milky Way. And sometimes her hair would fall down. And one of them fell down there, Joondalup [also spelled Dyoondalup]...That’s a strand of her blonde, white-ish hair”.

*NB: More on ‘the great spirit woman’ can be heard on the CD by Noel Nannup*







<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Near the rise of Kings Park Kings Park	Byerup Yogarin	place of Zambia plants and its nuts place for catching kangaroos
Perth Water	Buneenboro	(between Narrows and Causeway)
Heirisson Island(s) a particular Heirisson Island	Matagarup Kakaroomup	place where the river is only leg deep the island between the bridges where Balbuk's mother was born (?)
Heirisson Island Lake Henderson	Boodjar-Gorden Danjanberu	(commemorative statue of YAGAN) place of shallow lake OR three island lake where the zamias or byers grow
Lake Henderson (also referred to as) Hyde Park area	Goongarnula yarreenup Boodjamooling	place of the stinking spring with moss the earth-ground where it looks like a nose pegging takes place, referring to the initiation of young men
The north bank of Perth Water	Booneenboro	
Some where near the original Pt Fraser	Gabbee darbarl Beeabboolup	very big river place of many fish
Eliza Bay	Goodroo	
Nyoongar meeting place in Kings Park	Wandaraguttagurrup	where there were holes towards the ocean
Kings Park – near the Statue of Queen Victoria	Gabbikalga	once was an old hollow tree which collected rain water
Near the Esplanade	Dyeedyallup	Nyoongar campsite located near Burt Way
Near Pt Fraser	Beeabboolup	place of many fish
Government House (in the grounds of)	Kooraree	Fanny Balbuk's grandmother is buried in the grounds
Foreshore between William and Barrack Sts	Gumap	fishing area – (now reclaimed to create the esplanade)
Perth City – west end	Goodinup	favourite camping place of Yellagonga, leader of the Mooro Nyoongars

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Boodir	important person
	Boodjar	land / earth
	Boone	edible root
	Boon	lots or many
	meta	leg
	mool	nose
	koorah	long time ago
	Wagyl	(Rainbow Serpent)
	dyeedyall	clay
	kaleep	camping place
	byerbup	ridge

manang	Water from the spring - is believed by some Nyoongars to have spiritual and healing properties.
Goon or Goona	excrement - limestone is believed to be Wagyl excrement
Kweeah Dreaming	Big Green Frog - where the Dreaming started the creation of the Kweeah
Kooyah Dreaming	Small Green Frog Dreaming

The Perth city area is a place of great significance for many Nyoongars. It is an important meeting place for many Nyoongars who used this area as a camping site. In addition it was frequently visited by members who lived inland, such as Gingin and Moore River people. Before colonisation the **Byerup** area near the rise of **Yogarin** or Kings Park, meaning 'the place of Zambia plants and its nuts', was seasonally the location of a kangaroo hunt which culminated in the driving the animals to the cliff edge.

Within the area of Kings Park, there is a Nyoongar meeting place called **Wandaragutttagurrup** where 'there were holes towards the ocean'. Near where the statute of Queen Victoria is today at Kings Park, there was once an old hollow tree which collected rain water. This area is known as **Gabbikalga**

Nyoongar, tradition and knowledge, records that a spring and traditional camping place were located in the grounds of Government House near the present day junction between Terrace Road and Governor Avenue. This camping ground would have been on the foreshore of the Swan River. It is recorded that there were Nyoongar camps along the Esplanade between Barrack and William Streets at the time of colonisation. It is believed that the **Dyeedyallup campsite** was located near Burt Way. According to Nyoongar tradition, 'pipe clay' was available here. Similar to white ochre, pipe clay was used by Nyoongars as body paint for ceremony and for artwork. Pipe clays were also smeared over the body to protect from insect bites. A freshwater spring made Dyeedyallup an excellent place for camping. When Nyoongars held corroborees near the Causeway, visiting tribes camped here. The camp was 'free territory' or a sanctuary where nobody was allowed to fight.

The favourite **kaleep** (camping place), **Goodinup**, of Yellagonga, leader of the Mooro Nyoongars. It was located on the **byerbup** (ridge) at the west end of what has become Perth City. Yellagonga and his family were the last of a long line of Nyoongars who camped here before the British arrived in 1829. There were three sources of water available – the spring, the swampy margins of the Swan River and the river itself whose edge is now Mounts Bay Road. The water from the spring is referred to as a **manang** and it is believed by some Nyoongars to have spiritual and healing properties.

Perth Water is known as **Buneenboro** and the flat muds of Heirisson Island('s) as **Matagarup**. This refers to the place where the river is only leg deep. One of the original islands of Heirisson Islands is known as **Kakaroomup** which is the island between the bridges where Balbuk's mother was born. An old camping place near the junction of Governor's Avenue and Terrace Road in the grounds of Government House, **Kooraree**. Koorah means 'a long time ago'. This place has close associations with Fanny Balbuk, a traditional owner of the Swan River area. Balbuk's grandmother, **Moojorngul**, is buried in the grounds of Government House. Balbuk never let the settlers forget whose land they had taken.

Most of the original lakes and wetlands of the Perth city area have been filled in. To Nyoongars living in the region prior to colonisation, these wetlands were important for food collection and also

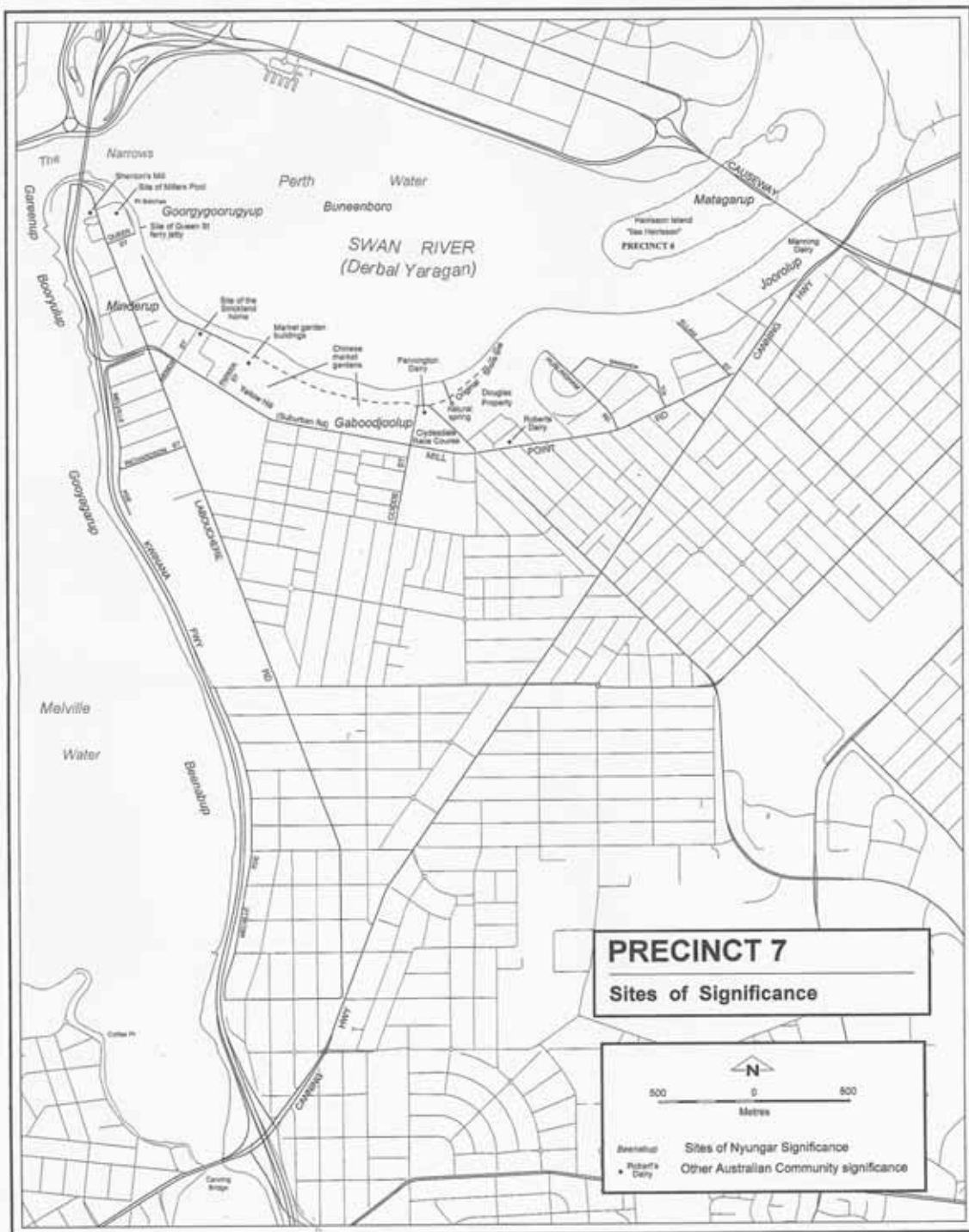
spiritually significant. Lake Henderson is referred to as **Dunjanberu**. This means the 'place of the shallow lake' or three island lake where the zamias or byers grow. Lake Henderson is referred to as **Goongarnula yarreenup** meaning 'the place of the stinking spring with moss'. Hyde Park area is referred to as **Boodjamooling**, meaning the 'earth-ground where it looks like a nose pegging takes place' referring to the initiation of young men. The north bank of Perth Water is known as **Booneenboro** meaning 'very big river'. **Beeabboollup** which is somewhere near the original Pt Fraser, means 'the place of many fish'.

Today at **Boodjar-Gorden** or Heirisson Island there is a commemorative statue of Yagan, who at the time of colonisation was a **Nyoongar boodir** or important person. Strictly speaking the statue might not seem to be within Beclair Nyoongar **boodjar** or land, rather it is in the territory of the **Beeloo Nyoongar**. However Yagan's family affiliation would have given access to this area.

Yagan is now recognised for his resistance to the colonists who divided Nyoongar hunting grounds into fenced farms and allotments, therefore reducing Nyoongar means of existence and access to country. He led a number of raids on properties which resulted in four colonists being fatally speared. As a result of these incidents and the political conflicts between the colonisers and Nyoongars, Yagan was wanted by the Swan River authorities for murder.

**PRECINCT 7**

**SOUTH PERTH – CANNING BRIDGE TO THE CAUSEWAY**



Place name	Aboriginal Place Name	Meaning
situated between the present day Richardson	Booryulup	place of the Booryul or magic people

Park and Mill Point South Perth foreshore reserve	(Gareenup) Milyu	(an Aboriginal but not Nyoongar word for samphire) (?)
South Perth foreshore (further south)	Gooyagarup	place of the frog holes
Como foreshore	Beenabup	place for digging holes
Area of rushes near Millars Pool	Goorgygoogup	
The South Perth foreshore	Gaboodjoolup	place of the shore - where the water And the land meets
Side of Perth Waters .. further east	Joorolup	place of the jarrahs
Nyoongar people of this area	Gareenup	place of Gareen

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Booryul	magic people
	beere	banksias
	Gooya	frog
	Boodja	land
	Gaboo	water
	Jooro	jarrah

It is believed by Lyon (in Collard et al, 1996) that the South Perth area was the country of **Beeloo Nyoongars** or river people. The Key Nyoongar figure at the time of colonisation was described by Lyon as **Munday**. Nyoongars who used this area were known as Gareen and their place was **Gareenup**.

An important camping and fishing area was situated between the present day Richardson Park and Mill Point (Gareenup) and this area was referred to as **Booryulup** or the place of the **Booryul** or magic people. This area has since been covered by the Kwinana Freeway. The area stretched for approximately one and a half kilometres of foreshore and 150 metres into the bushland to the east of Melville Water. Today the foreshore reserve is called Milyu which is an Aboriginal but not Nyoongar word for samphire.

The Como foreshore was a place for digging holes or **Beenabup**. Nyoongars referred to the area of rushes near Millars Pool as **Goorgygoogup**. The South Perth foreshore side of Perth Waters is known by Nyoongars as **Gaboodjoolup** or 'the place of the shore'. Further east is **Joorolup** or 'place of the jarrahs'.

It is recorded (Bates, 1992) that Nyoongars would camp in the South Perth area when the **beere** or banksias were flowering and extract honey from the blossom. A spring which was on the Melville Water side of South Perth was widened by the Nyoongar at this time of year and blossoms were left to ferment in the water. The fermented drink was then consumed as part of this special occasion.

After colonisation, one of the earliest recordings of Nyoongar presence in the area occurred when a party of thirty men from the **Bidjareb** (Pinjarra) Nyoongar attacked Shenton's Mill. The leader of the party, **Gcalyut**, was later jailed.

After about 1850, a camp near the present day Causeway was established and occasionally Nyoongars would use the South Perth area (Florey, 1995). During the 1930's and 40's the Parfitt and Pickett families, among others, lived here. At this time other families visited the area to catch prawns, bees, fish and crabs.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### The Old Mill, South Perth (Beryl Harp)

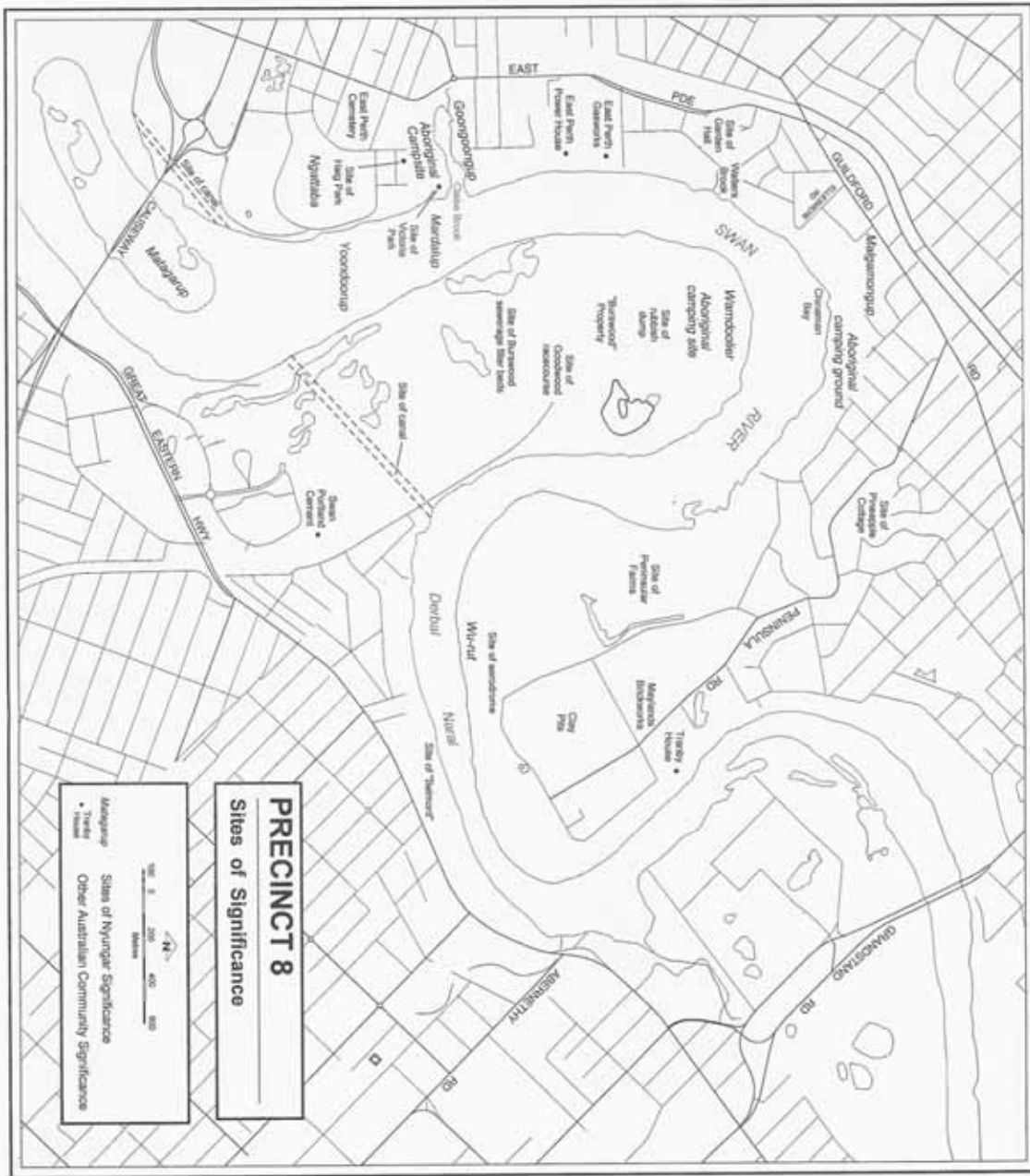


The old mill site was a significant birthing place for Aboriginal women, “very important area this was to Aboriginal people...it was a significant site for them because that was the hospital for them, for the women to go over there and have their babies”.



**PRECINCT 8**

**BURSWOOD ISLAND TO MAYLANDS PENINSULA (CAUSEWAY TO BATH STREET RESERVE)**



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Claise Brook	Mandalup	place of the small marsupial
Gloucester Park Brook adjacent to Gloucester Park	Yoondoorup	place of a black stumpy tail lizard
Swan River around Burswood Island area	Goongoongup	
Maylands Peninsula Bardon Park at Maylands ... also known as ...	Warndoolier	
	Wu-rut	(known as to Munday's people)
	Malgamongup	on the shoulder, the place of the spearwood camp on the hill
Swan River around Burswood Island	Warndoolier	(known as to Nyoongars)

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Yoorn	lizard
	Ngatta	more
	Derba	estuary

Claise Brook campsite was tucked into the recess of the Swan River and has been used by many Nyoongar families since colonisation as a camping ground. The area is known as **Mandalup** or the 'place of the small marsupial'. It is near the present day Gloucester Park which is also known as **Yoondoorup** or 'place of a black stumpy tail lizard'. The brook adjacent Yoondoorup is known as **Goongoongup**. The Swan River around Burswood Island area is known to Nyoongars as **Warndoolier**.

Burswood Island was used by Nyoongars up to the 1920's and possibly later. Apparently many shacks were built all over the island, housing both local Nyoongars and others from as far north as Moora who would spend some time at this site.

According to Lyon (in O'Conner et al, 1986) Maylands Peninsula was known to Munday's people as **Wu-rut**. Two Nyoongar archaeological sites have been recorded and these consist of stone artefacts on Maylands Peninsula. Bardon Park at Maylands is known to have been a Nyoongar camping ground last century due to its sheltered position. Nyoongars call this place **Malgamongup** which means 'on the shoulder, the place of the spearwood camp on the hill'. O'Connor et al (1989) record that between 1930's and 1960's up to 30 Nyoongar camped here at a time.

Mundays people association - camping site

**PRECINCT 9**

**ASCOT TO THE HELENA RIVER CONFLUENCE**



<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Baigup	the rushes

Nyoongars believe that the Waugal shed its sunburnt skin near Ascot which formed the beds of scale like shells which were abundant along the river channel.

Captain Stirling on his 1827 exploratory voyage recorded that in the area now known as Redcliffe where a 'whole Tribe of about thirty natives' of whom 'the Warriors followed us along the bank'. The Nyoongars, who made signs of friendship, did not follow Stirling's Party above the 'creek' possibly Helena River (Hallam, 1981). This was one of the first encounters that Stirling had with the Nyoongar people.

It is likely that the wetlands adjacent to the Garratt Road Bridge, Bayswater, were used by Nyoongar as a family camping ground. Recently, the reserve was named **Baigup** which is Nyoongar for 'the rushes'.

Archaeological evidence has shown that Aborigines inhabited the Bassendean area for over 30,000 years before James Stirling and his exploratory expedition arrived in Western Australia in 1827. The Town has numerous sites of cultural significance to the Nyoongar people, and the importance of Bassendean for Nyoongar hunting and gathering activities, and as a meeting place for the various tribes, is affirmed in many documents and personal narratives from the 1830's to the present-day. (Bassendean library website)

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

**Bassendean** ( Robert Inditch)



"That's the foreshore of the point of the Swan River, in Bassendean ... my family grew up in Perth but then we moved to Kalgoorlie. Every time we came back during the summer time, we always go down to the Swan River, it was our main swimming point when we were down here ... I learnt to swim there."

### Bassendean (Robert Inditch)



An area in Bassendean was photographed which used to have a large mud bath “we used to jump in and out of it, running into the water”. When he returned he was surprised to find it was no longer there “Yeah it’s been filled in, yeah it’s not there anymore, which is surprising... it was just natural in the ground, nothing man made about it”.

**PRECINCT 10**

**HISTORIC GUILDFORD – NORTH HELENA RIVER CONFLUENCE TO MIDDLE SWAN ROAD**





At the time of colonisation, **Mooro Nyoongars** considered the western section of the precinct part of their **boodjar** or country. **Beeloo Nyoongar** considered the eastern banks of the Swan River and the Helena River as part of their boodjar or country. It is believed that at the time of colonisation, the land from Mount Eliza to just past Broun's farm was the land of Munday's family. From Bassendean to the head of the Swan was considered to be the province of **Wiap**.

Nyoongars believe the **Waugal** is present at the section where Bennett Brook enters the Swan River below Success Hill. This area was known locally as devil's Elbow by the early colonists (Bourke, 1987). Many local Nyoongars are particularly wary of the location and practice certain rituals before entering the site. It is believed that Success Hill or a location nearby was a meeting ground for Nyoongars. An important meeting place, ancient camping ground and home of their ancestors' spirits (Town of Bassendean, Swan River Heritage Trail)

Nyoongar believe that Blackadder Creek was formed through the creative activity of the Waugal who still lives there. A corroboree ground was located on the eastern bank of the Swan River near its junction with Blackadder Creek. The exact location of the site is not known and the area has been dramatically altered and the creek diverted several times.

The relationship of Aborigines to the land and their notions of land ownership are such that Aborigines consider themselves guardians of the land, and custodians of its stories, songs, rituals and ceremonies, sacred objects and religious associations. Calling a place home means that they belong to the land and their commitment to it; was developed and passed down over thousands of years (Town of Bassendean, Swan River Heritage Trail).

In 1981, near Midland Brick, stone artefacts were found which are believed to be around 40 000 years old. The site held over one hundred stone artefacts of different materials including chert and dolerite. The artefacts are believed to have been hand held implements including scrapers and other tools.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### Guildford – near Lilac Hill (Jean Boladeras)



“That’s a view of the river [taken in Guildford, near Lilac Hill] when it’s very quiet and cool and calm. Showing the trees in there. That part of it is to show the complete wholeness of the river. Without water we can’t live and how important that water was and the river was to Noongar people because it supplied fish and jilgies and crabs and all sorts of things for people, and water, and it made an abundance of life there, the birds and so forth it was a part of that complete circle of life, without it Noongar people could never have existed. And a very special place to , always special, because Noongar people believe that the Waggle made all these places and still believe and will always believe, and that’s the law, and what we follow...”

### Guildford (Jean Boladeras)

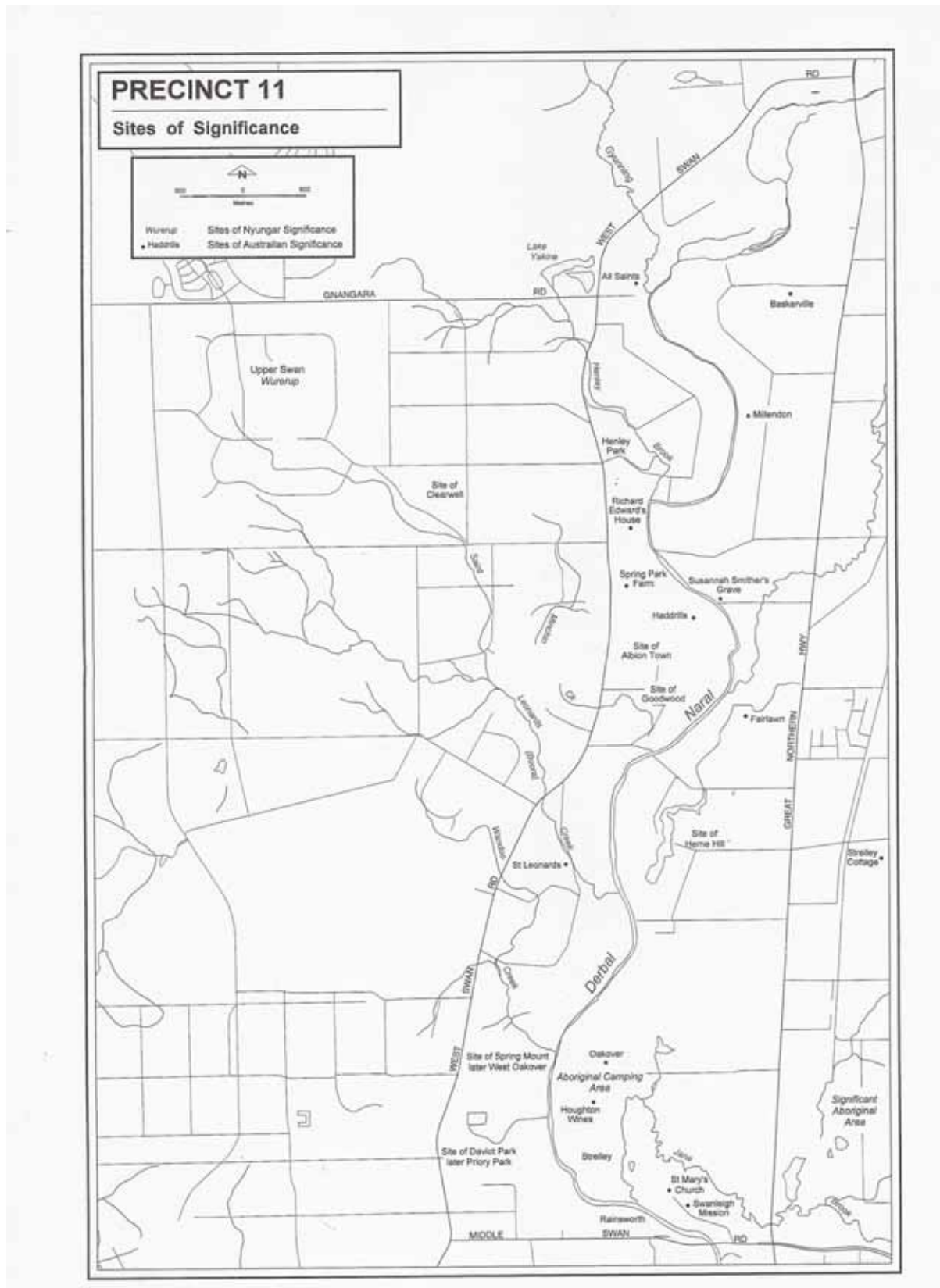


“This part of the river [place at Guildford] is called the **Nanook** or the neck of the river and it’s where the end of the salt water comes up to the river and it’s a place for the Waggle, a sleeping spot. That’s his nest for him there, where he stays, it’s one of his resting places, so it’s pretty important that place, to us, and always will be”.

“If he [referring to the person who shared this story with her] was to run past this spot here, the Waggle would be in there, so he had to throw sand on the surface of the river, to make the water all choppy, so the Waggle couldn’t see him run past. And he wasn’t allowed to go for a swim until his grandmother had talked to the waggle and it was ok for him to go for a swim and so he was a little boy, right from early days he knew that”.

PRECINCT 11

MIDDLE SWAN – MIDDLE SWAN ROAD TO ELLEN BROOK



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Leonards Creek	Boora	
Upper Swan	Wurerup	
Ellen Brook	Gyunning	
South of Oakover and North of Houghton Wines		(site of significance, camping area)
Jane Brook – tributaries to that flow from Red Hill		Nyoongars avoid these places due to the evil influence of wurdaatjis
	Wurdaatjis	‘Bad spirits’ who live in the forests and assume a small human like form and are considered dangerous to humans if aroused

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Boora	bowels
	Winna	dead

The abundance of water in the area would have meant that before colonisation, the precinct would have been an important location for food resources. It was noted by Captain Stirling on his 1829 exploratory voyage that at Ellen Brook where the river ceased to be navigable, the river bank was pitted with diggings for yam.

Jane Brook is recorded as a mythological site and also is the location of three scattered camping areas. One recent camping area was a seasonal grape pickers’ camp located south of Dale Road near the confluence with the Swan River. A second camp was placed west of the present Searle Street (previous precinct) and a third was located outside of the precinct adjacent to the crossing of Toodyay Road and Jane Brook. The third camp was used by families who earned money cutting timber for contractors supplying the Midland and Caversham brickworks early this century.

Nyoongars speak about the existence of a creative Waugal in Jane Brook. The upper reaches of the tributaries that flow from Red Hill are **Winnaitch** areas. This means that Nyoongars avoid these places due to the evil influence of wurdaatjis. **Wurdaatjiss** are spirits who live in the forests and assume a small human like form and are considered dangerous to humans if aroused.

**PRECINCT 12**

**MIDDLE SWAN – ELLEN BROOK TO BELLS RAPIDS**

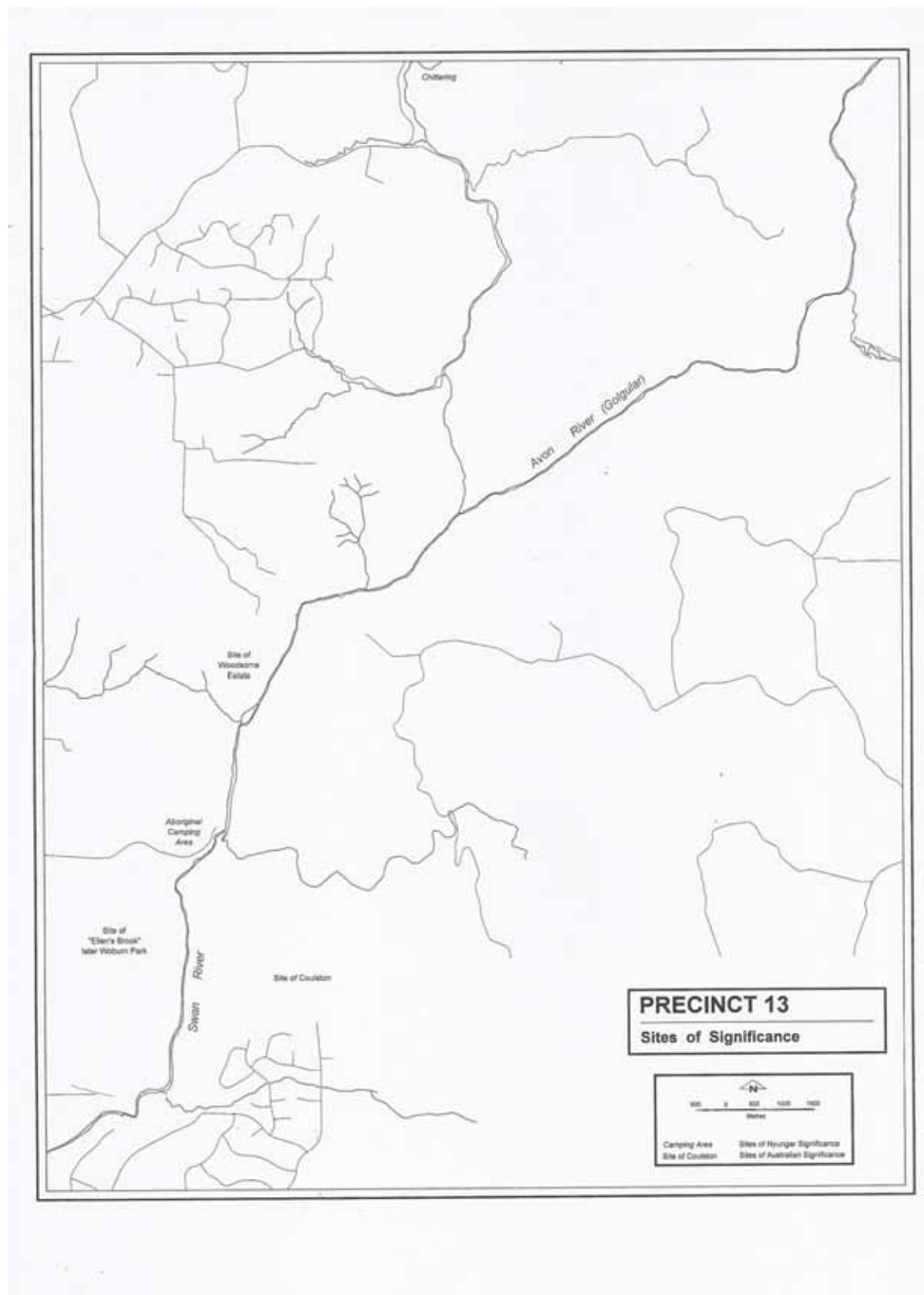






PRECINCT 13

BELLS RAPIDS TO MOONDYNE BROOK



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
	Waylunga	(spiritual site of significance)
	Chittering	place of the willy wag tail

This general area was used extensively by the **Whadjuk (Whudjag)** tribe for campsites. Archaeological evidence suggests that the area has been used by regional tribal groups for over 6000 years. Quartz and dolerite form rocks strewn in river beds and hills were used by Nyoongars for a variety of tools. The abundance of food and the high quality mylonite and quartz made the site an ideal camping area.

The well drained sandy area west of **Walyunga** Pool is believed to be an old Nyoongar camping site. Nyoongars say that the Waugal took a wrong turn at this part of the river. The Waugal squeezed through a crack in the range, stopped and vomited, leaving the stone for tools. It then came out onto flat land below the range. Here the river bed was formed (CALM, walk trail information).

Nyoongars believe that **Wurdaatjis** still live in the **Walyunga** area. According to tradition, these little hairy creatures caused mischief especially towards misbehaving children (CALM, walk trail information).

The area north of the study area is known as **Chittering**, meaning the place of the willy wag tail.



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Mundaring	Mundjallina	(swamp pools)
The Guildford section of the Helena Valley	Mandoon	place of many trees
Helena Valley Hill	Jagoolyoo	(sacred place)
Soldier Swamp - South Guildford	Beeragunning	site of tortoise hunting, and camping ground (location of sacred stone)

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	<b>janga</b>	<b>spirit</b>
	<b>boogur</b>	<b>sulky</b>

According to Nyoongars, the Helena River is fed by numerous springs of 'living water'. There is one Nyoongar account which relates the significance of Helena River linking Mundaring, **Mundjallina**, with the Swan River. Another account speaks of the significance of the Helena River between Mundaring and York. These are described below.

According to the Nyoongars, the swamp pools known as Mundjallina are located in the deep valley that has since been inundated as a result of the construction of the Mundaring Weir. A powerful Waugal associated with rain making lives here. Nyoongars believe that disturbance of the swamp reeds at Mundjallina results in cyclonic winds and rain. So feared was this potency that children are not allowed in the vicinity of the swamp.

According to one Nyoongar a corroboree ground was located nearby. It is believed that Mount Hall and a series of rocky outcrops on the northern side of the reservoir are significant for their association with a **Waugal**. One story recounts the journey of this Waugal up the course of the Helena River to its source. From here it travelled 18 kilometres overland to York forming the region's rocky hills as it went. A second version recounts how the Waugal formed the course of the lower Helena River from Mundjallina to Guildford. The Helena River was an important travelling route for local Nyoongar. It is believed that a corroboree ground exists near the confluence of the Swan and Helena Rivers. The exact location can no longer be identified. The Guildford section of the Helena Valley was referred to by Nyoongars as **Mandoon** meaning 'the place of many trees'.

North of the Helena River there is a **winnaitch** or sacred stone at **Beeragunning** which is split down the middle. The stone was wide enough for a person to pass through. At the foot of the stone rushes were strewn and Nyoongar passing the stone had to pass between it. If they touched either side they would die. Sometimes the stone was 'sulky' or **boogur** and would close in. If this happened Nyoongars knew that it was time for them to die.

There is a hill on the Helena River a hill is called **Jagoolyoo** with a **winnaitch** or sacred place here with a stone in the middle of it. Nyoongars would sweep this spot and keep it clean. Should they visit this place soon after and find a piece of meat on it they knew their death was imminent as the **janga** or 'spirit' in this stone was eating their flesh.

Nyoongars probably had several names for the Helena River including Mandoon. They also had a very detailed list of resting places and localities along the river banks. It is believed that around the 1880's many Nyoongars travelled down the Helena River from York working for farmers.

It is recorded that on a hill in the Helena Valley, Nyoongars built a stone wall about one metre high and 20 metres long. It was built in the form of a snake and orientated north-south directly up the face of the hill. Another similar east-west wall was built at the base of the hill. Both ends of the walls joined up with granite boulders. It is believed that this site was important for initiation ceremonies.

Soldier Swamp at Kidman Avenue, South Guildford was used to train young Nyoongars in the art of tortoise hunting. In the dry season the ground surface dries out. The tortoise dig to the damp mud below and skilled people can identify the disturbance in the mud to locate the tortoise. A ritual procedure would take place before the tortoise was eaten.

There are several records of Nyoongar artefacts being found in the area known as 'Wild Horse Hill' and at **Beeloo**. It is also believed that the area near Army Transport depot was an initiation site and Strathams Quarry and Hazelmere Lakes are mythological sites.

The Jacobs family was one of the original Nyoongar families which used the area of the Helena River to just below Gingin. At the turn of this century, the family was lead by Senior Elder's, Ted and Les Jacobs, and the family still has close connections with the area.

**PRECINCT 15  
CANNING BRIDGE TO FREEWAY AT MT HENRY**



<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Mouth of the Canning River	Wagoorjup	place of the Waugal
The river itself	Dyarlgarro	
Eastern shore of the Canning	Beenabup	
Flats south of the Canning River	Wadjup	
Confluence of the Canning and Swan River	Gabbi Kowangulup	
Narrow section at Canning Bridge	Wagoorjup	
Bull Creek	Gabbiljee	watery place at the end of the river
Open waters of the area	Booragoon	

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Kaleep	camping ground
	Dya	lips
	Garro	again

The Canning River, Dyarlgaard, is Nyoongar country with the Beeliar people being one of the traditional owners. The river provided a plentiful and varied source of food for the families – fish, eggs, snakes, lizards, freshwater mussels, turtles, marron, and birds were all favourite targets and selected wetland plants were roasted or eaten raw. (City of Canning, ‘Canning River Canoe Trail’)

The wetlands of the Swan Coastal Plain provided an abundance of food and other resources. The density of the Nyoongar population living in what is now the metropolitan area is considered to be one of the highest in Australia. A Nyoongar family group could consist of several family units. Each Nyoongar group had a favoured camping ground or **kaleep** which held special significance. Beyond this a wider hunting and gathering area could be used.

Nyoongar leaders, **Munday**, **Midgegooroo** and **Yagan** are especially remembered for their confrontations with white settlers. Yagan is recorded as being an impressive man who had a distinctive tribal tattoo on his right shoulder indicating his high stature in the Nyoongar community.

The mouth of the Canning River was termed **Wagoorjup** (place of the Waugal) and the river itself is known as **Dyarlgarro**. The eastern shore of the Canning is named **Beenabup** and the flats south of the Canning River are called **Wadjup**. The confluence of the Canning and Swan Rivers is known as **Gabbi Kowangulup**. The narrow section at Canning Bridge is known as **Wagoorjup** to Nyoongars. Bull Creek is known as **Gabbiljee** (the watery place at the end of the river) and the open waters of the area referred to as Booragoon.

At least six family groups are thought to have claimed territorial rights to the present metropolitan area. Two of the family groups which are believed to have been associated with the Canning River are the family of Munday in the Beeloo District and family of Midgegooroo in the Beeliar District.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### Taken from Alfred Cove (Noel Nannup)



“It’s from Alfred Cove, just a bit around from the Atwell gallery. The reason I’ve taken that is because of the pelicans, they’re really significant to me. They are my mother’s totem.”

### Ardross (Glenn Pearson)



“So this little inlet here is right next to the Ardross tennis club...this is where I used to take my kids prawning.”

### Applecross (Glenn Pearson)



“This is the Raffles tower, Dad used to bring it [the boat] in here, literally...this water here used to be as blue as the water between here and Rottnest Island...over the years, the water has just gone like this”.



PRECINCT 16

CANNING RIVER – FREEWAY AT MT HENRY TO RIVERTON BRIDGE



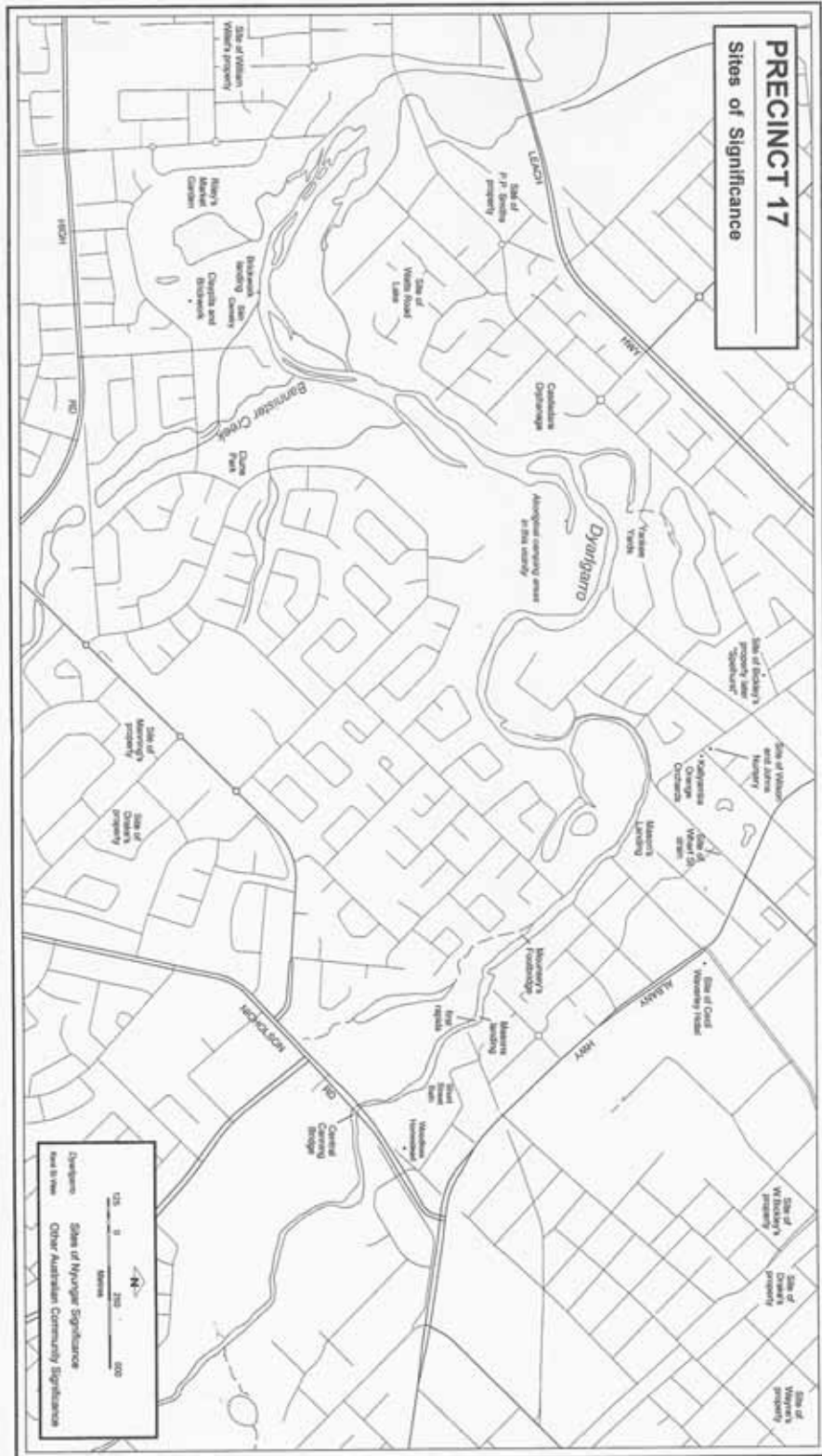
There are records of Nyoongar occupation in the Bull Creek area and South Perth area. Many Beeliar Nyoongar families considered the Canning River foreshores as part of their 'run' which was the part of the route once travelled. At the time of colonisation the Bull Creek area, **Gabbiljee**, was of considerable importance as the wetlands were present in summer and provided many foods compared to other surrounding drier areas.

There are three recorded archaeological sites of Nyoongar significance in the Bull Creek area. These are important due to the scattering of quartz artefacts. Henry Bull who was granted a property at Bull Creek in the early 1830's appears to have had an understanding of Nyoongars in the area and developed a trusting friendship with **Yagan**.

Many Nyoongars who were associated with the land have retained the knowledge and beliefs associated with the area. The Mount Henry area was a Nyoongar hunting and fishing ground (City of South Perth, 1996).

**PRECINCT 17**

**CANNING RIVER – RIVERTON BRIDGE TO NICHOLSON ROAD BRIDGE**



Beeliar and Beeloo Nyoongars are believed to have considered this section of the Canning River as part of their run. The **Beeloo** considered north of the Canning River, **Dyarlgarro**, to the hills as part of their ground while the Beeliar mainly traversed the southern section of the river to the sea. At the time of European settlement, **Midgegooroo** and **Munday** were leaders of these people. The Cannington-Wilson area was called Beeloo for Many years by the local residents.

Before colonisation, *Canning wetlands were important to Nyoongars for food and shelter. As a result, there are artefacts of Nyoongar economic practices from the area.* There is one reported archaeological site along this section of the river. There is a sparse scatter of quartz artefact material which indicated a possible camping ground. There was also a camping ground at Ferndale which has since been built over. It contained several stone chips and was at least 5000-6000 years old.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### Riverton (Noel Nannup)



“What I like about that photo is that you can see a landscape that almost doesn’t have any buildings...its right near Riverton bridge, looking to the hills...it’s all natural bush and that makes me feel good.”

**PRECINT 18**

**CANNING RIVER – NICHOLSON ROAD BRIDGE TO SOUTHERN RIVER CONFLUENCE**



At the time of colonial settlement, the Canning River was the run of two Nyoongar groups. The Beeloo, lead by Munday, mainly lived between the river and the Darling Ranges. The Beeliar, lead by Midgegooroo, used the land between the Canning River and the Ocean. It is possible that the area of the 'Maddington Park' property was a meeting ground for both groups.

The Canning River was one area where conflict between the Nyoongar and colonists was particularly heated. Nyoongar relied on the wild food resources in the various environments. Their disciplined and ordered nomadic lifestyle required no domestic animals or crops. This lifestyle was not understood by the new colonists, who demarcated their properties with fences and were not willing to share the land.



**PRECINCT 19**

**CANNING RIVER – CANNING-SOUTHERN RIVER CONFLUENCE TO TONKIN HIGHWAY**



The entire Canning River has been recorded as a useful track to the Darling Range for the local Nyoongars. There have not been any specific sites identified as having significance to Nyoongar within this precinct. However there is a Nyoongar legend that the local people lived on flat land adjacent to the river. The account tells how the tribe that lived in the area had a snake that they would look after and feed. The snake would play with the children. The group would go into the desert on their search for food. One time the tribe went for such a long time that when they returned they found the snake ill. The old people tried to look after him, but were tired and soon had to sleep. In the morning they work to find that the snake had died and turned into a long row of hills. The people were no longer sad at his death but knew that the snake was still with them.

As with the entire Canning area, once the colonists began settling along the river there was antagonism between the two communities. One hostile incident occurred when John Randel Phillips was clearing his land on the south-eastern section at Stoke Farm. He was approached by a party of eight Nyoongars and was speared because he was destroying the Nyoongar livelihood. Unwarranted attacks were made by the settlers. For example, one of William Nairne's labourers shot at a group of Aborigines to show his companion how 'natives were treated in other colonies'. Later in 1839, the retaliations continued when 12 year old John Burtonshaw-Cox was killed by **Men-dick** while minding Phillip's sheep and goats. Men-dick eluded the settlers for some time before being captured. He was hung and his body left as a warning to other Nyoongars.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### Mason's Landing (Glen Stasiuk)



"From a cultural point of view this area [Mason's Landing] was significant to me due to its abundance of jilgies ... as children we would fish this area for jilgies and more often than not return home with an ice-cream container or if luckier, a bucket full of these sweet tasting delicacies."

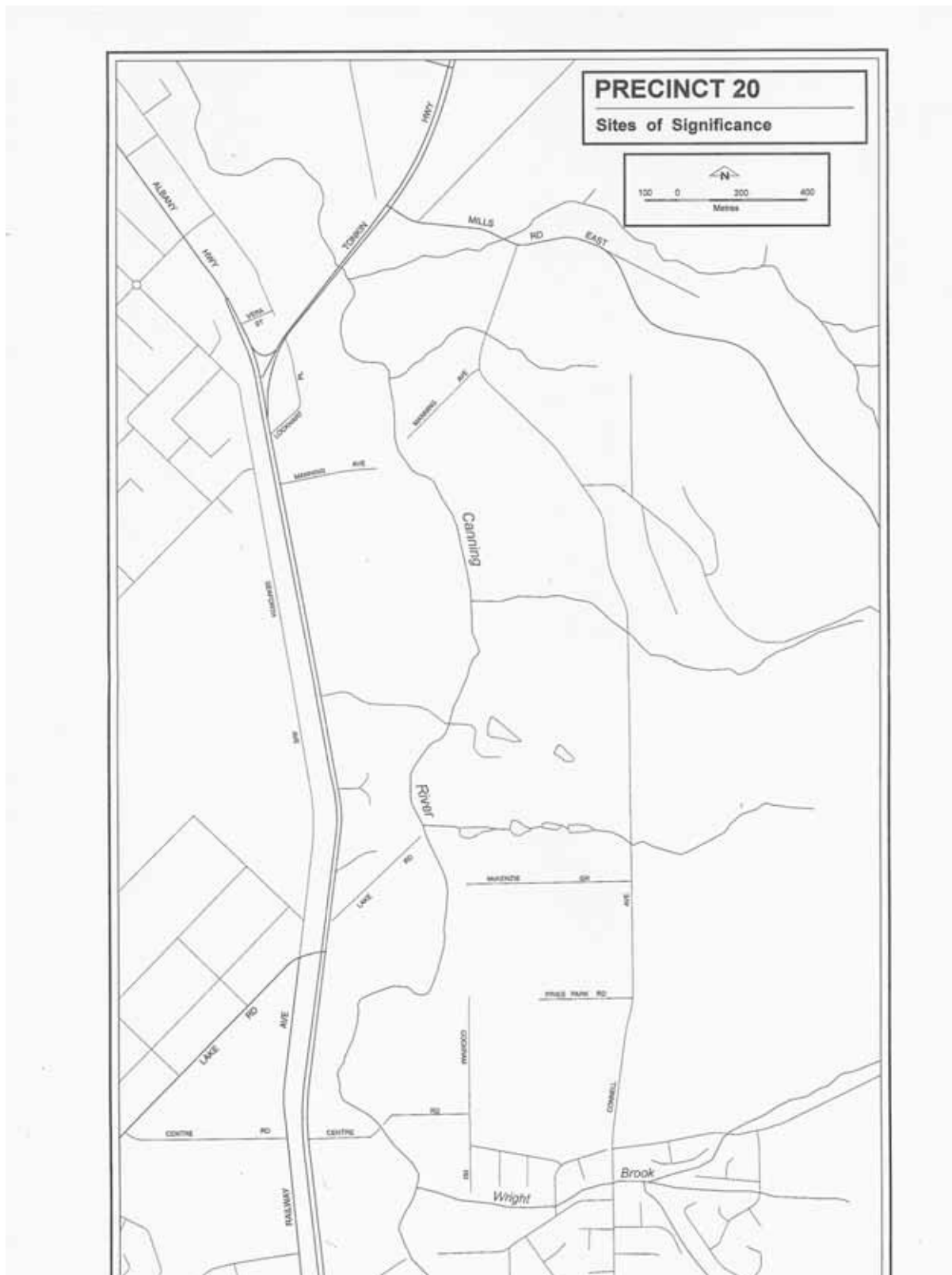
Many of the places which were significant historic sites for Aboriginal people are now a reflection of colonization and settlement, "this area [Mason's Landing] and the cottage behind it are colonial markers related to the Swan River settlement..." it would be hard to find a scene without the presence of buildings or development "the surrounding area of Mason's Landing does not resemble the area that we rode our push-bikes to. It is now suburban in nature with many modern houses lining the once open bush/river frontage".

**Mason's Landing – fenced** (Glen Stasiuk)

“A view of our precious ‘Jilgie Brook’ [Mason’s Landing – Fence], which once supplied us with joy and delicious feasts. The fence attempts to keep us out – but the memory still remains”. Such memories are kept alive through the connection people hold for the rivers and surrounding areas, a connection which sustains community narratives.

PRECINCT 20

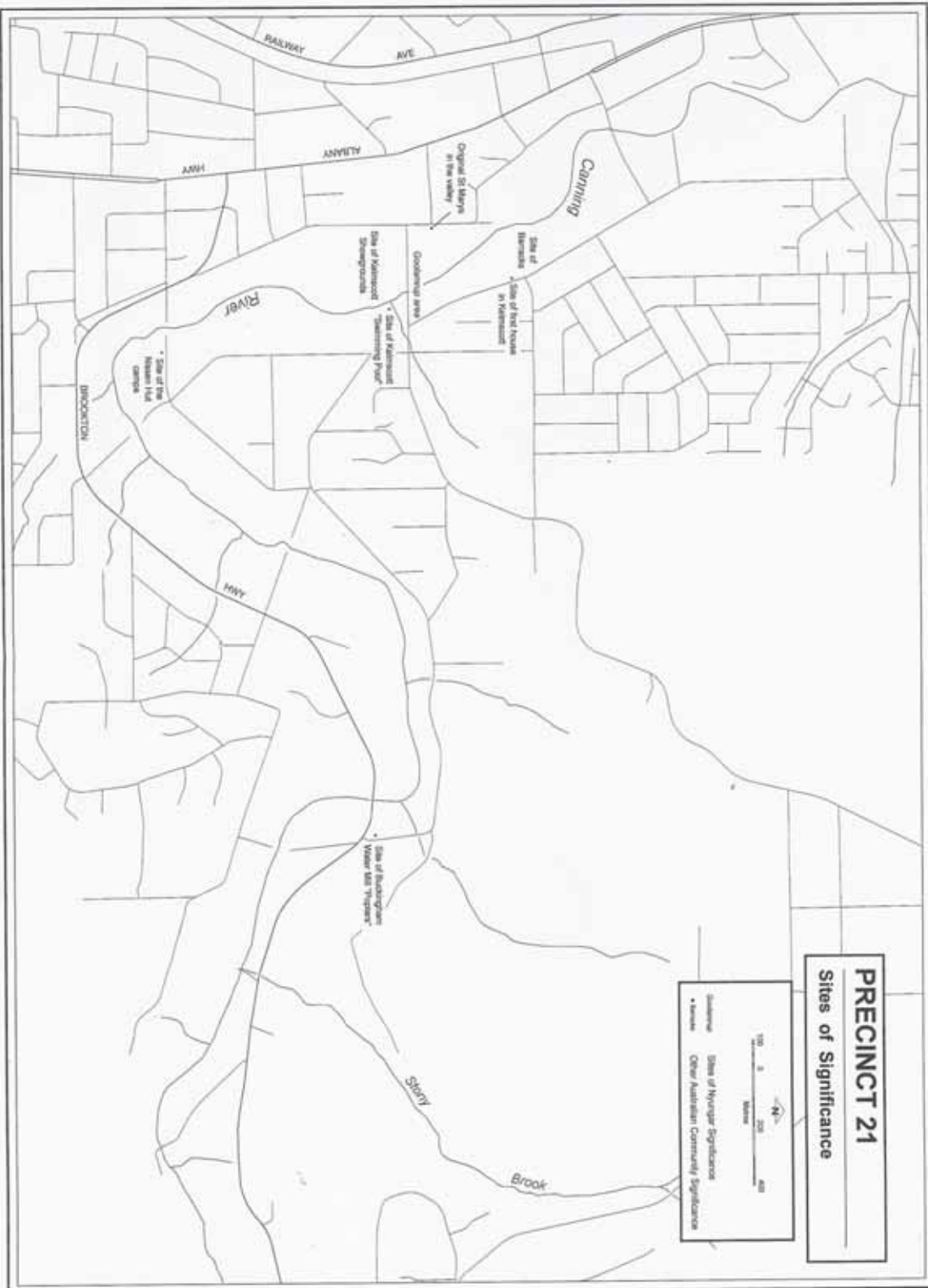
CANNING RIVER – TONKIN HIGHWAY TO TURNER/BROOKSIDE FOOTBRIDGE



The Beeliar and Beeloo or river people are believed to have considered this section of the Canning River as part of their run. The Beeloo considered north of the Canning River, **Dyarlgarro**, to the hills as part of their ground while the Beeliar mainly traversed the southern section of the river to the sea.

**PRECINCT 21**

**CANNING RIVER – TURNER/BROOKSIDE FOOTBRIDGE TO STONY BROOK CONFLUENCE**





<b>Place name</b>	<b>Aboriginal Place Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Kelmscott area	Goolamrup	some significance

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Aboriginal Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Goolam	young man

The area of Kelmscott was known to Nyoongars as **Goolamrup**. The Canning River is a significant element in the landscape for Nyoongar, although there are no specific sites of significance identified within this area.

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

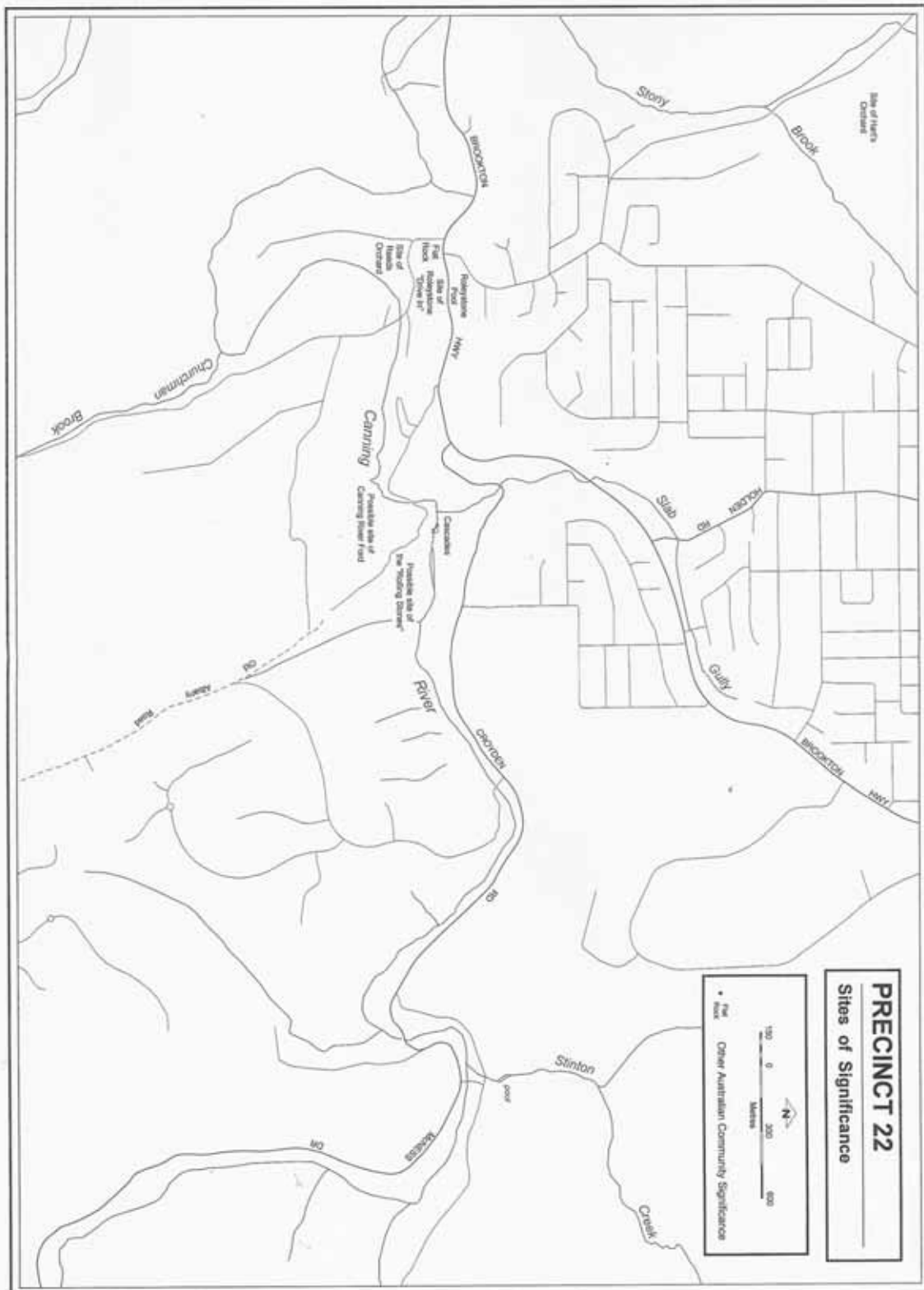
#### Stoneybrook (Glen Stasiuk)



“I now live here [Stoneybrook-Roleystone] with my family and I am proud and pleased to have Stoneybrook pass through our property. It is now a happy place that I can share with my wife and children. We named our place ‘**Ngullak Mia**’ (our home)”.

**PRECINCT 22**

**CANNING RIVER – STONY BROOK CONFLUENCE TO STINTON CREEK CONFLUENCE**

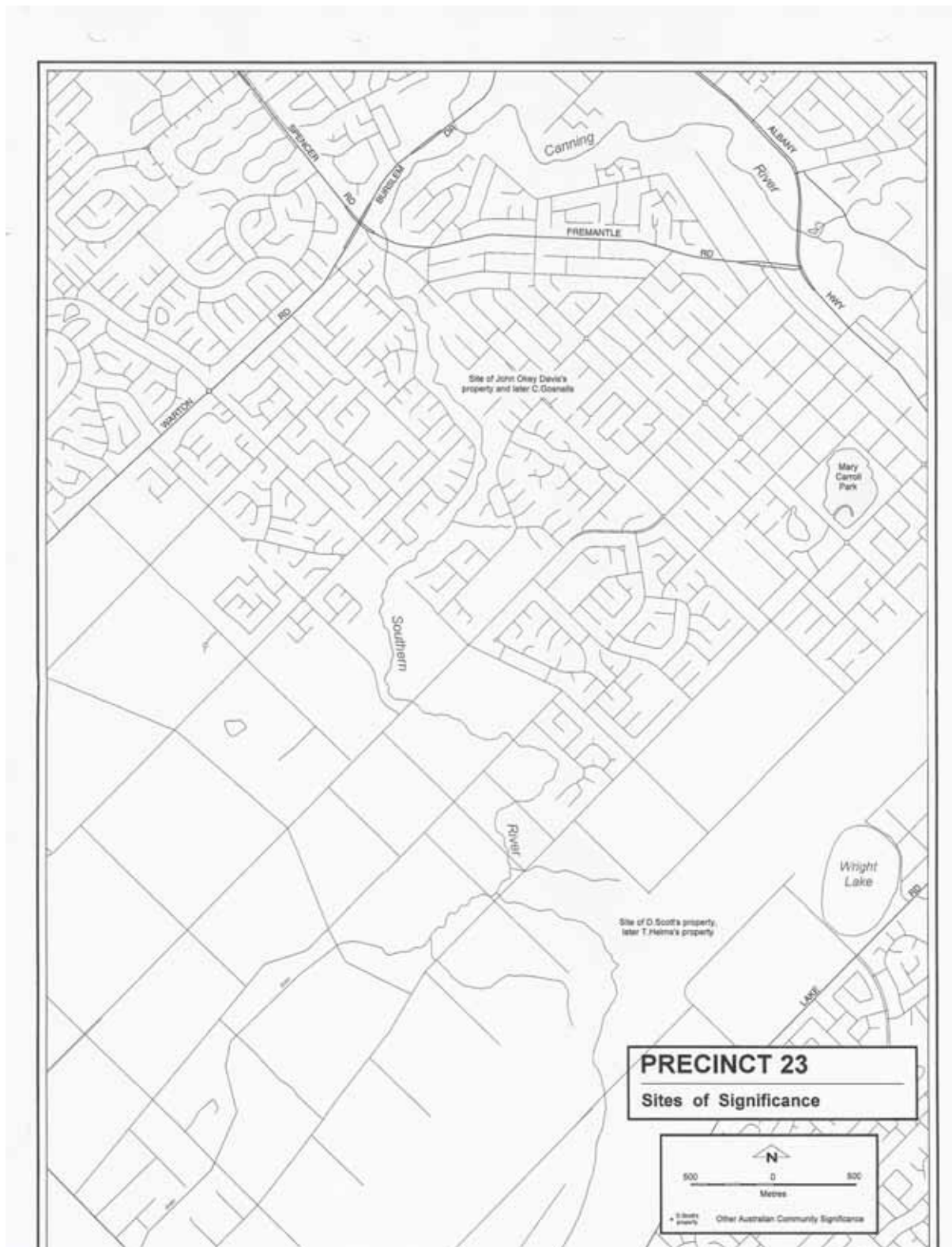


The Canning River is recognised as being of significance to Nyoongars. There are no specific sites of significance identified in the area. However south of the Canning Dam there are several significant sites. Turtle Pool is associated with the Waugal. In addition, there are two pools fed by springs adjacent to Canning Dam which are also associated with the Waugal.



PRECINCT 23

SOUTHERN RIVER – CANNING-SOUTHERN RIVER CONFLUENCE TO ALLEN ROAD CROSSING



There are no recorded sites of significance along the Southern River; however to the west of the river, outside this study area, there are several sites of significance including a swamp at Gosnells Golf Club Site, Lake Forrestdale, Bartram Swamp and Mather Reserve. These sites have strong associations with the Waugal which is believed to inhabit the swamps and water bodies.

It is believed that at Lake Forrestdale, disturbance of the reeds could unleash the powerful Waugal associated with rain and destruction. The swamps were an important food source and camping grounds to the local Nyoongar.

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CALM, walk trail information

NB: Idjhil by Helen Bell

'Images of the Swan and Canning Rivers: *Creating 'Barometers' of Change*', Nicole MacDonald, 2010

Rottneest Island and the Swan River:

A Map Celebrating the Tri Centennial of the Landing of Willem de Vlamingh in Western Australia December 1696 and January 1697.

*This map has been a joint project of the Western Australian Local Government Authorities of Claremont, Cottesloe, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Melville, Mosman Park, Nedlands, Peppermint Grove, Perth, South Perth, Subiaco and Victoria Park, Project Co-ordination, City of Fremantle*

City of Fremantle

Fremantle Trails / Manjaree Heritage Trail

Potential Enrich Walk Trail – Perth Waters (SYRINX, Jill Abery, 2007)

Town of Bassendean City of Bayswater and Shire of Swan, Swan River Heritage Trail – WA Heritage Trails Network

Bassendean Library website: <http://www.bassendean.wa.gov.au/library>

For further information contact Local Studies Librarian, Janet Megarrity on (08)9279 2966 or email on [baslib@bassendean.wa.gov.au](mailto:baslib@bassendean.wa.gov.au)

City of Canning, 'Canning River Canoe Trail': Stage 2 – Riverton Bridge to Hester Park