



**GAMAY**

**SEA COUNTRY**

**PLAN**

MARCH 2025 - 2035



**LA PEROUSE**



LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND-COUNCIL

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council (the **La Perouse LALC**) covers most of the coastal area of Sydney, from Sydney Harbour to Botany Bay in the north, to the Sutherland Shire area and the Royal National Park in the south. As our members' cultural area extends further than our statutory boundary this Sea Country Plan represents our cultural, social, environmental and economic interests.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Gadigal and Bidjigal clans who traditionally occupied the Sydney coast, and the Gweagal clan of the Dharawal (Tharawal, Turuwal or Thirroul) language group who traditionally occupied the southern Sydney area.

The La Perouse LALC also wishes to acknowledge our Elders, both past and present, who have cared for our Sea Country. We also acknowledge all the community members who dedicated their time and effort to share their aspirations for our Sea Country Plan and to help shape its vision.

We acknowledge and thank Country Needs People for investing time, staff and funds into making sure we have the resources and expertise to build this plan properly.

Lastly, we recognise and thank all the stakeholders and partner organisations, who we currently work with, and look forward to working together to implement this plan.



La Perouse LALC (2025) Gamay Sea Country Plan, March 2025-2035.

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Front Cover Image: Gamay *Credit: Jessica Hromas*

Illustrations: Humpback whale, stingray, mullet, flathead and shells *Credit: Shane Youngberry*

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# INTRODUCTION



## As Saltwater Aboriginal People, caring for our Sea Country is a priority for the La Perouse Aboriginal Community.

In this Gamay Sea Country Plan (the Plan), we present a community-led proposal for how to care for our Sea Country. We invite our stakeholders and partners to join us as we work towards creating a resilient Sea Country that is culturally and ecologically healthy.

This document outlines the consultation process we conducted to develop this Sea Country Plan which reflects the La Perouse Aboriginal Community and the Traditional Owners' vision, values, and needs of Sea Country, particularly Gamay (Botany Bay). The plan focuses on defining objectives for the management and protection of our Sea Country while establishing a strong voice for our community. This voice will enable us to build meaningful partnerships, actively participate in decision-making processes, and contribute practically to the ongoing management of Sea Country. In doing so, we ensure that our community's values are heard, respected, and upheld in all aspects of Sea Country stewardship, for now and future generations.

*This Plan is the result of a thorough community-led consultation that we developed to guide us through the planning process and to ensure we met with everyone who wanted to have a say.*

### The Sea Country Plan is divided into four parts:

PART  
1

**Part 1** presents background information about Gamay (Botany Bay) and the surrounding cultural area, including some history of our people and community.

PART  
2

**Part 2** describes the values, uses, and issues/impacts we have identified as the key topics and concerns to address in the Sea Country Plan.

PART  
3

**Part 3** presents the Sea Country Plan in detail. This includes the community's vision, management priorities, objectives and goals within the six management programs identified as the community's highest priority:

- (i) cultural stewardship
- (ii) caring for Sea Country
- (iii) governance, partnerships and enforcement
- (iv) day to day management
- (v) knowledge and communications
- (vi) health, resilience, and safety.

PART  
4

**Part 4** concludes the Sea Country Plan, with recommendations for implementation.

## OUR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This Plan is the result of a thorough community-led consultation that we developed to guide us through the planning process and to ensure we met with everyone who wanted to have a say. We were assisted in the consultation by Kataya Barrett and Joel Turner (from Country Needs People), and Dr Melissa Nursey-Bray (Adelaide University/Country Needs People). This team worked with the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council (La Perouse LALC ) to develop and implement consultations for the plan.

## Consultation and planning took place in 2022–2024, in five phases:

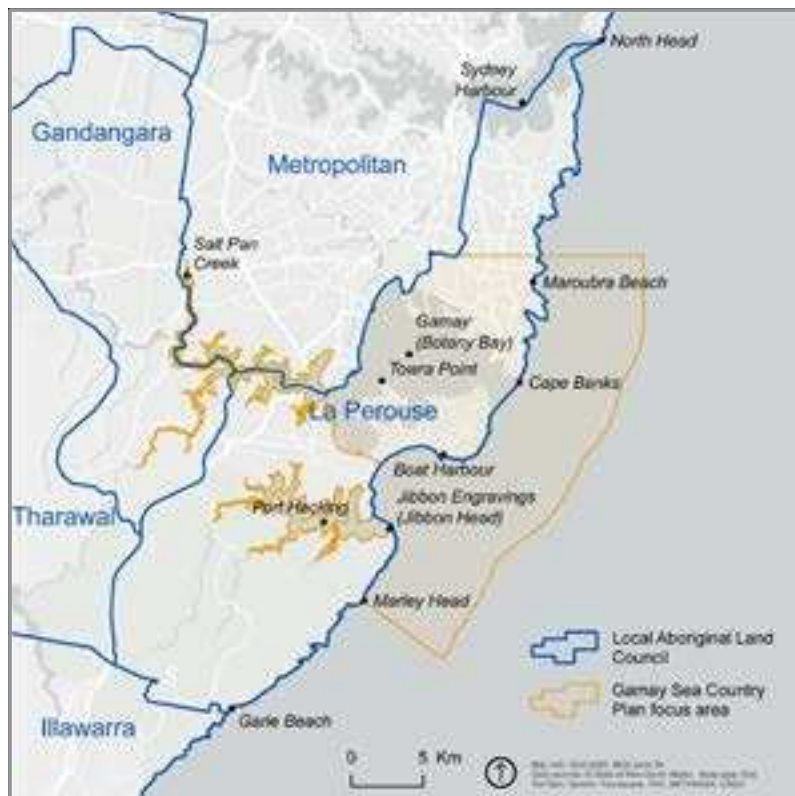
- (i) development of the consultation plan and distribution of communications such as flyers, letter box drops, social media posts, and Plan schedule
- (ii) consultation with the community, including interviews, meetings and workshops
- (iii) development of the draft Plan
- (iv) consultation on the draft Plan
- (v) La Perouse LALC endorsement of the Plan.

During the consultation process, we asked members of the community to share their thoughts on Sea Country—how they have used it in the past and present, their concerns, and what they identified as the main issues. We also invited them to express their hopes for

the future and provide suggestions on how Sea Country should be managed. The community members shared their experiences, raised concerns about special sites and areas, and offered their input on where the boundaries of the Plan should be.

The Gamay Sea Country Plan boundary does not cover all the Dharawal cultural area, but is representative of the area of initial focus for Sea Country work. It covers the waters close to the La Perouse Aboriginal Community.

We also created a communications plan and timeline for the development of the Sea Country Plan, ensuring that our stakeholders and industry could hear our voice in a meaningful way and collaborate with us to achieve our aspirations and strengthen partnerships.



Map 1. Area of focus for this Sea Country Plan overlaid with the NSW Local Area Land Council boundaries

# GAMAY SEA COUNTRY PLAN



## WHAT IS THE GAMAY SEA COUNTRY PLAN?

The Gamay Sea Country Plan aims to give Gamay a voice on how they manage their sea country. The plan will also provide direction for the Gamay Rangers so that we can ensure their work is having the most impact on the things that you care about.

## How CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

Come along to a community meeting to have a yarn about your vision for Gamay Sea Country and the places that you'd like protected. Let us know if there are important animals, plants, cultural activities, seasons, language and anything else important to you. Including this information in the plan is the first step in ensuring that it's better taken care of. If you want to have a yarn about the plan then keep your eye on the La Perouse LALC facebook page for community meeting times or contact Kataya ([kataya@countryneedspeople.org.au](mailto:kataya@countryneedspeople.org.au)).

## WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

This is a La Perouse LALC led initiative, so we need you to tell us what you want us to include. For the plan to be representative of the whole community, everyone needs to be involved.

## MORE INFORMATION

 @LaPaLALC

Kataya Barrett, Country Needs People  
[kataya@countryneedspeople.org.au](mailto:kataya@countryneedspeople.org.au)

2023

STEP 1

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings with the cultural advisory group and smaller community groups. At these meetings the community will be asked what is important to you about culture and country.

STEP 2

### COMBINE COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Information from all the meetings will be combined into a draft plan.

2024

STEP 3

### SHARE SEA COUNTRY PLAN WITH THE COMMUNITY

A community meeting will be held to share the draft plan and show how all aspects of culture and country collected from the meetings has been included.

STEP 4

### FINALISE SEA COUNTRY PLAN

Country Needs People will support La Perouse LALC to finalise the Sea Country Plan.

STEP 5

### SHARE SEA COUNTRY PLAN WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Gamay rangers will meet with partners to share the plan and explain it.

STEP 6

### CELEBRATE AND LAUNCH THE PLAN

This initiative is supported by Country Needs People.



PART  
1

# BACKGROUND

**Our people have occupied coastal Sydney since the beginning of time. Our ancestors moved freely within our cultural area which includes Coastal Sydney, the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. At the time of first contact in 1770 and 1788, it is recorded that around 1500 of our old people were living in coastal Sydney and Botany Bay.**

Gamay (Botany Bay) is well known for the arrival of the Endeavor and Lieutenant James Cook in 1770, when our Country was chosen to be suitable for British colonisation. When they first arrived, the British originally called the region Stingray Bay, due to the numbers of stingrays found here, but soon after changed the name to Botanist Bay, then Botany Bay due to the wide diversity of plant species. It is now known as its traditional name, Gamay. Following the first fleet's

arrival in 1788, the British colony was established in Sydney Harbour. Our people were documented standing against this establishment. This moment is part of our history and marks the starting point of a change for our people in coastal Sydney.

Within in the first century of the colony, our people lived in traditional camps around Sydney Harbour and played an active role in the local economy with enterprise services such as tours, supply of fresh food, and artefact making and demonstrations. In 1883, as the colony grew, the NSW Government established the Aborigines Protection Board, creating laws to force Aboriginal people from traditional camps and relocate them to locations considered 'out of sight, out of mind'.

The location for coastal Sydney Aboriginal people to remain was La Perouse (Guriwal), as it was a traditional fishing camp and would have the potential to sustainably feed the camp. The camp was established as an Aboriginal Reserve in 1884 and become the focus of a Protestant Mission in the years following.

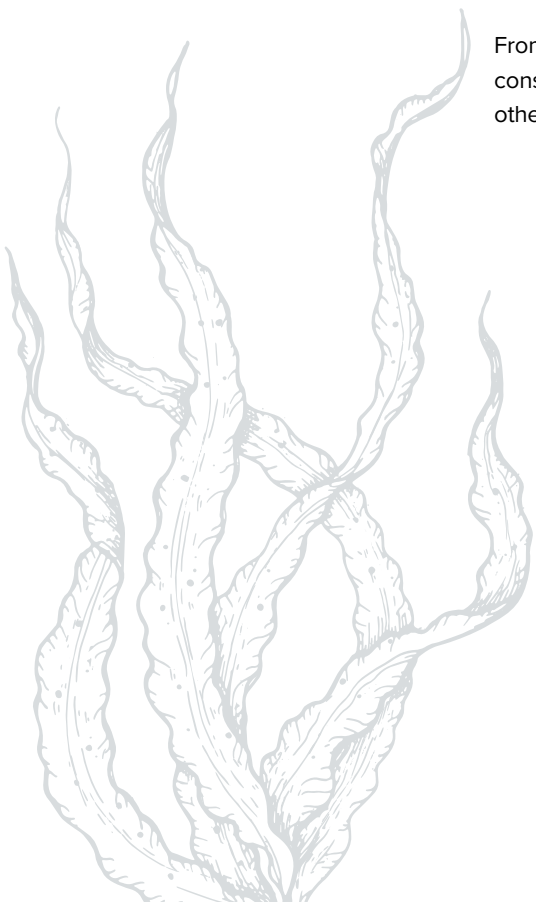
From the 1900s, our people were under constant threat of forced relocation to other places in the growing colony.

Our community refused to move. In the 1960s our community faced more pressures, when the Mayor of Randwick wanted to again relocate the La Perouse Reserve with the assistance of the NSW Government. Our community fought to stay and, with support from local industry, we remained. Following this threat, key people in our community campaigned for better housing conditions. In 1972 and 1973 our Reserve was redeveloped and handed over to the New South Wales Aboriginal Lands Trust. Ownership was later transferred to the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council after its establishment in 1984.

Today, the La Perouse Aboriginal Community maintains our connection to our cultural area of coastal Sydney, extending to the South Coast. Many of our families still reside in Aboriginal communities. The heart of our cultural landscape is Gamay and holds significant cultural importance. Our community is unique in that families living in La Perouse today can trace their ancestors back to pre-colonisation, maintaining an unbroken connection to country. We continue to represent the Traditional Owners of Coastal Sydney and Gamay.

As saltwater people, Sea Country Planning remains a top priority for the La Perouse Aboriginal Community.

*Our people were documented standing against this establishment. This moment is part of our history and marks the starting point of a change for our people in coastal Sydney.*



# SEA COUNTRY GOVERNANCE

Our management of Sea Country is subject to cultural obligations and Traditional Knowledge. Our obligations are comprised of knowledge from our ancestors, which has been handed down through generations and gives us the understanding we use daily to protect and care for our Sea Country. Our identity is based on a holistic perspective, where we know all elements of the land and sea are connected. We use this knowledge to inform all aspects of our management.

Our Traditional Knowledge system is the cultural framework that guides us. We are also subject to multiple Western laws, policies and regulations, and we recognise these laws as part of our plan. As shown on the table, some Western laws are local, while others are enforced by State and Australian governments.

Together the two systems – Traditional Knowledge and Western law - help guide us in our endeavour to improve our Sea Country's condition.



Fur seal hauled out on pontoon  
Credit: Dr Vanessa Pirotta

## Summary of relevant laws and policies regarding our Sea Country

### Relevant Legislation

Environmental Protections and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)  
Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)  
Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth)  
Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)  
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)  
Marine Estate Management Act 2014 (NSW)  
Crown Land Management Act 2016 (NSW)  
Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)  
Coastal Management Act 2016 (NSW)  
Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (NSW)  
Crown Land Legislation Amendment Act 2017 (NSW)  
National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)

### Strategies, Plans and Policies

Sydney Harbour Catchment Sydney Regional Environmental Plan 2005  
NSW Coastal Management Framework 2018  
NSW Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program (BAP)  
NSW Climate Change Policy Framework 2016  
NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018  
National Ports Strategy  
NSW Freight and Ports Strategy  
State Infrastructure Strategy (NSW), Future Transport 2056 Strategy (NSW)  
NSW Boating Now  
Regional Boating Plans  
The Moorings Review program  
NSW Dual Naming Policy  
Roads to Home Policy  
State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021 (NSW)  
State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021 (NSW)  
State Environmental Planning Policy No 64 – Advertising and Signage (Amendment No 3) (NSW)  
Transport Corridor Outdoor Advertising and Signage Guidelines (NSW)  
National Construction Code  
Development Certification and Fire Safety Regulation (Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021) (NSW)  
NSW Coastal Lands Protection Scheme  
NSW Coastal Design Guidelines  
Resilience and Hazards SEPP (NSW)  
NSW Government's SEPP consolidation program  
Standard Instrument – Principal Local Environmental Plan (LEP) (NSW)  
Sydney Harbour Foreshores and Waterways Area Development Control Plan  
Dark Sky Planning Guideline (NSW)  
State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2009 (NSW)  
State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 (NSW)  
State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (NSW)  
NSW Housing 2041 strategy  
State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021 (NSW)  
State Environmental Planning Policy (Resources and Energy) 2021 (NSW)

## OUR COMMUNITY

As Saltwater People, we have a responsibility to care for our Sea Country, including coastal lands related to our Sea Country. Our Knowledge, referred to by others as “cultural knowledge”, has been passed down through storytelling from generation to generation and has been gathered for thousands of years. It is site-specific and tells us how to care for Country in a traditional sense. We carry out this duty by working on Country in ways described by our old people.

The impacts on Country we are witnessing today are relatively recent. Our Knowledge does not provide all the answers to these modern challenges, which is why it is essential for us to collaborate with partners outside the La Perouse Aboriginal Community to effectively care for Country.

This is a core priority for us, and one that the La Perouse Aboriginal community takes very seriously. We must be included in the environmental protection of Gamay (Botany Bay) and actively involved in the ongoing management and decision-making processes related to it.

We currently work with various stakeholders, organisations, State and Federal Government, and local council agencies all around Gamay. We have partnerships through which we raise issues and concerns, and suggest solutions. Often our community is positioned as part of these solutions. We work with our partners to understand the dynamics behind the problems we are seeing, then work collaboratively to find culturally appropriate solutions. Through the work of the Gamay Rangers, our community is positioned as part of these solutions.



Dolphin with airport in background  
Credit: Dr Vanessa Pirotta

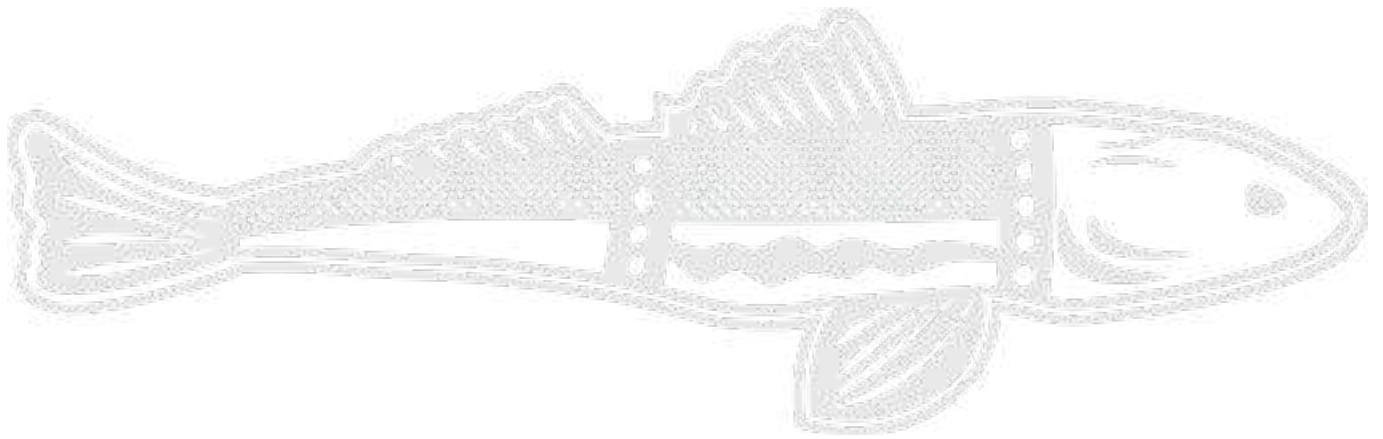
*We work with our partners to understand what the problem is, then work collaboratively to find a solution that is culturally appropriate. We want to build and strengthen these relationships.*

## Working on Country

Our people have always been active in working on Country. We have been involved in many caring for Country projects including the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), the Green Army Program, and the Towra Team Project in partnership with NSW National Parks.

Our other projects include the Guriwal Aboriginal Bush Tucker Project which developed walking paths through a bushtucker track and planted bush tucker plants, helping us revitalise the area and add to visitor experiences. Community members have also established Indigigrow, a native plant nursery that employs our people.

It is based on the principle of sustaining people land and culture through the propagation and growing of native plants.



Gamay Rangers beach clean up. Left to right: Robert Cooley, Bryce Liddell, Robert Russell *Credit: Jessica Hromas*

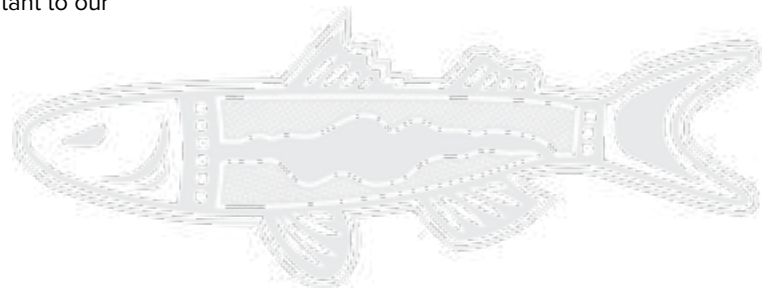
## Gamay Rangers

In 2019, the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council established the Gamay Ranger program, the urban Indigenous Ranger team set up under the Federal Government's Indigenous Ranger Program. The Gamay Rangers undertake natural and cultural resource management activities within our cultural area, righting some of the wrongs that have impacted our bay. Their environmental, cultural and restoration efforts ensure the habitat can sustain diverse vegetation that supports the ecosystem and its complex food web. In August 2022, the Gamay Rangers were officially appointed as Honorary Rangers under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW) and the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW).

The Gamay Rangers also manage conservation land owned by the La Perouse LALC at Kurnell. Management is carried out in line with community needs and our traditional knowledge. We also work with National Parks and Wildlife Service in surrounding reserves to ensure we deliver on our commitments to cultural site protection during planned burns, hazard reduction or land management burns and ensure our sites are protected.

The projects featured on the following pages show how the Gamay Rangers protect what is important to our community.

*Gamay Rangers undertake natural and cultural resource management within our cultural area.*



Gamay Rangers. Left to right: Robert Simms and Bryce Liddell *Credit: Jessica Hromas*

# EXAMPLES OF WORKING TOGETHER TO UNDERSTAND, PROTECT AND REHABILITATE OUR BAYS

## Seagrass Project

Seagrasses are important for estuarine health, are a nursery for many fish species, and support high biodiversity. The Gamay Rangers are working with the University of NSW on Operation Posidonia, to restore seagrass meadows in Gamay. They are also critical habitat for culturally significant species like blue-swimmer crabs, flathead, and mullet. Seagrasses are in decline in NSW, and Gamay is an extreme case of this. Naturally detached fragments which still have part of the woody root system (the rhizome) attached are viable for replanting. Collecting and replanting these fragments into damaged areas of seagrass is helping to slow the decline and improve seagrass meadow health.



Seagrass project photo Credit: Dave Harasti

## Crayweed Project

Crayweed supports high biodiversity and sequesters large amounts of carbon. It is also critical habitat for culturally significant species like abalone and rock lobster. We are seeing declines of crayweed forests, and a phase shift into urchin barrens. The Gamay Rangers are working with the University of NSW on Operation Crayweed, translocating crayweed from healthy forests to restoration sites. We are aiming to restore healthy crayweed forests to bring back the important species that use it as habitat.



Crayweed Credit: John Turnbull, flickr.com

## Seahorse Project

As part of The Sydney Seahorse Project, the Gamay Rangers are working alongside the Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS), the University of Technology Sydney and the NSW Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development, releasing captive-bred juvenile seahorses into natural and artificial habitats to boost local populations. Part of the project uses 'seahorse hotels', which are essentially metal cages that give the seahorses a structure to hold onto as well as protect them from larger predators outside. Once placed on the seafloor, the hotels are quickly covered in natural habitat formers such as algae, sponges, and soft corals. These replace the cage once it biodegrades, leaving the seahorses to live inside the natural habitat.



Seahorse project photo Credit: Gamay Rangers

## Marine Mammal Monitoring Project

The Gamay Rangers are working with Dr Vanessa Pirotta, from Macquarie University on their Marine Mammal Monitoring project. The community is using their Traditional Knowledge alongside Western scientific knowledge to research and learn more about marine mammals such as whales, dolphins and seals. Part of this project uses imagery of dolphin dorsal fins, which are unique to each dolphin, much like human fingerprints. The imagery can be used to identify and track individual dolphins movements, condition, and interactions with humans. This research will provide the first assessment of marine mammals in the area, which will directly inform management and create more targeted protection of marine wildlife in one of Australia's most industrialised sea ports. Ongoing research will also monitor marine mammal occurrence, habitat use and behaviours. Alongside this research is the opportunity for the Gamay Rangers to train and become experienced in scientific methodologies and the communication of science to the local community and wider scientific community internationally.



Marine mammals monitoring photo Credit: Bryce Liddell

PART  
2

# WHY WE NEED THE PLAN

## *Values, Uses And Issues*



## GAMAY SEA COUNTRY

Our Sea Country and community connections are the heart of our people. Our Country is beautiful and is abundant with native flora and fauna; looking after it is a community priority and a cultural obligation. This section describes the habitats and species that are particularly important to us (see map 2).

## HABITATS IN GAMAY

**Gamay's habitats provide different ecological and cultural benefits and reflect our environmental and cultural values. The large number and range of habitats show how diverse and spectacular our Sea Country is.**



### Soft-bottom and beach habitats

Soft-bottom habitats include intertidal beaches, sandflats, and mudflats, as well as extensive subtidal sediment habitats. They support migratory and local bird species, many of which are currently in decline (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023). Species of all types live here, including snapper (*Chrysophrys auratus*), flathead (*Platycephalus fuscus*) and blue swimmer crab (*Portunus pelagicus*). The White-bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) is another important animal which lives in these habitats.

### Seagrasses

Seagrass is very important to us and has served as a vital habitat within our Sea Country for thousands of years. Many seagrass meadows still exist in Gamay, including *Posidonia australis*, one of six populations in New South Wales listed as endangered under the state's Fisheries Management Act 1994. It is also recognised as a threatened ecological community under the Commonwealth's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Protecting these seagrass meadows is essential, as they provide crucial habitat for blue swimmer crabs, flathead, and cockles—all important food sources for the people of Gamay. Seagrasses are an important part of our traditional hunting grounds, and with their decline, they require ongoing protection to preserve them for future generations.

### Mangroves and saltmarsh

Mangrove and saltmarsh areas are important to us. They are important because they provide a nursery habitat for fish (Reid 2021) and saltmarsh plants are important habitats for high densities of molluscs (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023). Towra Point, listed under the international Ramsar Convention on wetlands of importance, is our biggest wetland habitat. The wetland supports high densities of zooplankton, which is a major source of food for estuarine fish.

### Subtidal rocky reef

Most of our subtidal rocky reef is found at the mouth of the Bay. In places like Bare Island, multiple species have been identified, including multiple macroalgal species, species of sponge, and soft coral. Among the deeper reefs east of the island are colonies of cool temperate hard coral (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023). Kurnell Reef, on the southern headland, is even deeper and is especially good spot for weedy sea dragons (Klanten et al. 2020). The subtidal rocky reef is where crayweed acts as a key biogenic habitat former.

The reefs are also habitat for crayweed. We have traditionally harvested snapper, abalone, lobster, and blue groper in these areas; which are all culturally significant species for us.

## Rocky intertidal shore

Our rocky intertidal shores cover about 30% of Gamay's shoreline (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023). These can be found around Cape Banks and Inscription Point, with additional areas around Bare Island and La Perouse. These regions are habitats for many species, including small bivalves, sea squirts, periwinkles, algae and starfish (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023, Martinez et al. 2017).

## Open water and pelagic systems

Our open waters are vital corridors to ensure species like schooling baitfish such as sandy sprat (*Hyperlophus vittatus*), Australian anchovy (*Engraulis australis*) and yellowtail scad (*Trachurus novaezelandiae*), with other significant species such as silver trevally (*Pseudocaranx georgianus*) and yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*) can live and move through the Gamay region. These waters are also a spawning ground for Mullett and provide a critical pathway for our over-arching ancestral species – Burri Burri (Humpback Whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae*), to migrate north and south along the 'Humpback Highway'.

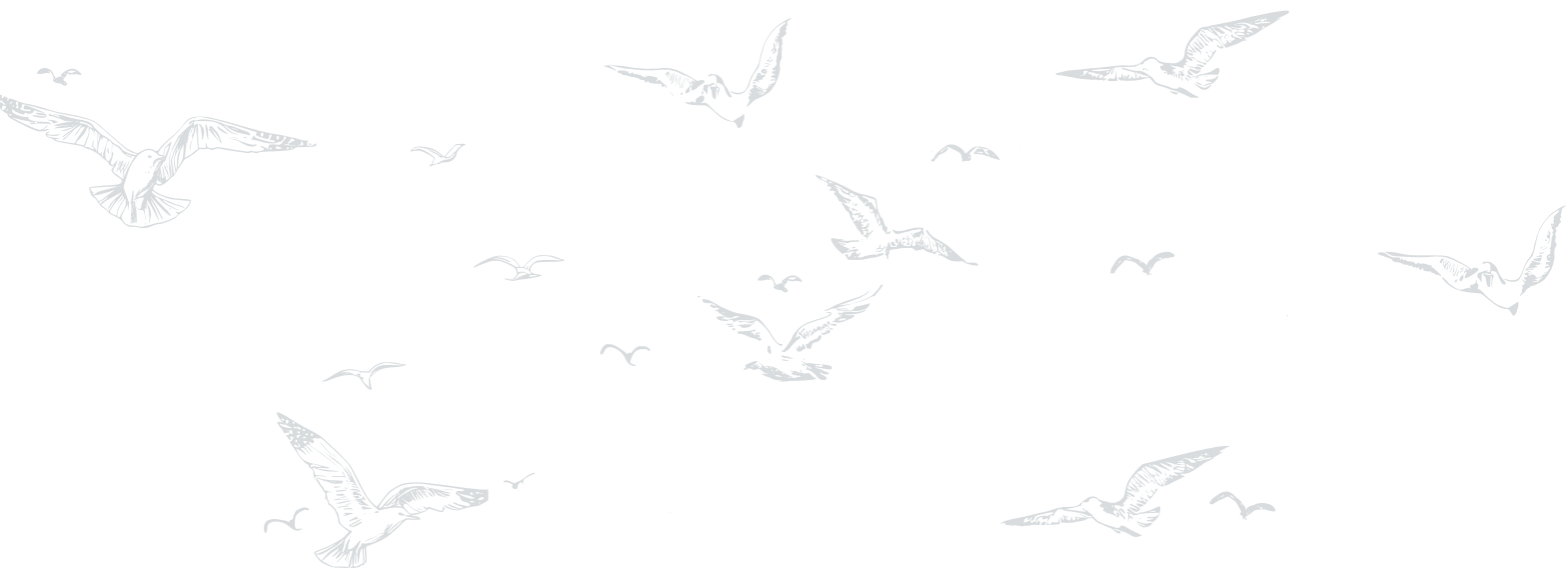
## TOWRA POINT HABITATS

**Towra Point (inclusive of both Towra Point Nature Reserve and Towra Point Aquatic Reserve) is both culturally and ecologically significant.**

The largest wetland of its kind in the greater Sydney area, it holds 60% of the saltmarsh communities and 40% of the mangrove communities remaining in Sydney. It is listed as a wetland of importance under the Ramsar Convention because it is a critical roosting and feeding habitat for large numbers of migratory shorebird species as well as a significant nesting site for the endangered little tern (*Sterna albifrons*). These mangroves are crucial grounds for the protection of wide range of juvenile fish species, because the release of crab larvae, from the saltmarsh areas, feed them.

Alongside Towra Point wetland there is also a significant seagrass area. The reserve is habitat for three nationally threatened species including the grey headed flying fox, the magenta lily pilly and the green and golden bell frog, as well as five endangered ecological communities listed under NSW legislation.

Birds love this area. Towra Point is a roosting and feeding site for migratory shorebird species and is known as a significant nesting location for the endangered little tern (*Sterna albifrons*). Furthermore, the mangroves and seagrass in the area offer shelter and sustenance for key cultural significant species. Towra Point Nature Reserve holds a very important freshwater lagoon; however, it is currently being inundated with salt water due to erosion. This is a good example of the type of ongoing issues we wish to manage.





“

Lapa Beach was our playground as kids. I loved jumping off at the end of the breakwall and swimming into the beach which was like a rite of passage. We'd collect conks, my friend Elly loved them, and she'd light a fire down the beach to cook them.

CARRINE LIDDELL



Would dive around the rocks and catch octopus, gathering - we'd go away to dive and fish, it would bring the community together, and there we'd have end of year cook ups...

PAUL 'STITCH' SAIT

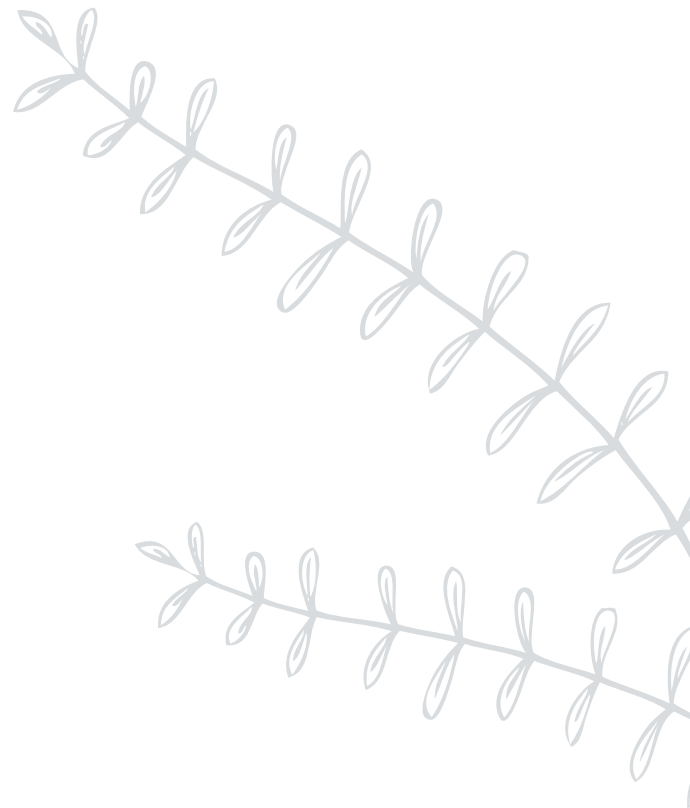


*Blue Swimmer Crab at community Mullet Haul  
Credit: Bryce Liddell*

## SEA GRASS HABITATS

**Seagrasses, particularly *Posidonia australis*, are among our most vital habitats. This species has been officially listed as endangered by both the New South Wales and Australian governments.**

*Posidonia australis* is the world's largest plant, capable of cloning itself repeatedly and spanning areas greater than 180 square kilometres. Although it has existed for over 4,500 years, it regenerates very slowly—taking up to 50 years to restore just 1 square metre. We are concerned that this species could face local extinction in some of our estuaries within the next 15 years unless significant conservation efforts are made to reduce impacts and restore damaged seagrass meadows.



Pussycat (Cruwee Cove) Credit: Jessica Hromas



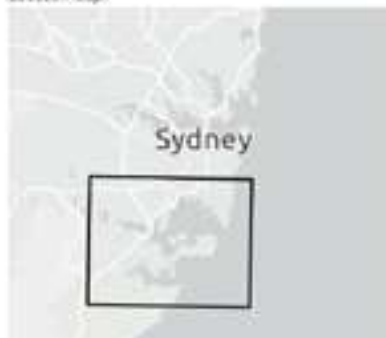
Eastern Rock Lobster (*Sagmariasus verreauxi*) Credit: Bryce Liddell



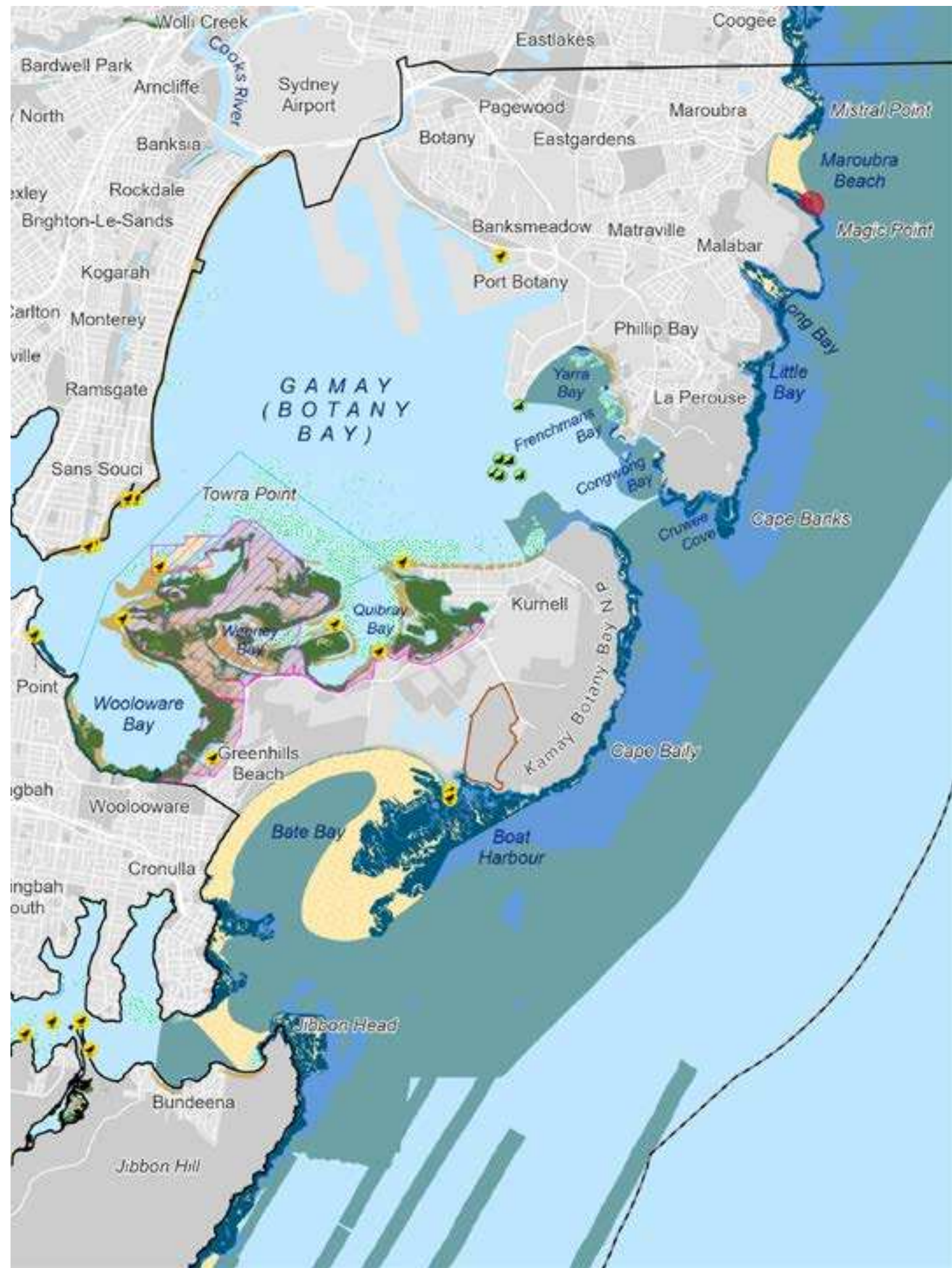
Notes: \* Seafloor habitat not mapped inside estuaries

Map info: GDA 2020, MGA zone 56  
 Data sources: BirdLife Australia, Gamay Rangers, Australian Government (DCCEEW), NSW Government (Department of Primary Industries), State of New South Wales (Spatial Services, a business unit of the Department of Customer Service NSW), Seemap Australia.  
 See report appendix for a full list of data sources

Location Map:



Map 2. Coastal and marine habitats and some key species in the Gamay Sea Country Plan focus area.



## SPECIES IN THE GAMAY REGION

**In addition to our special habitats, our Sea Country also has certain species that have not only been traditionally used and prized by our people but have now become commercially important in the wider community.**

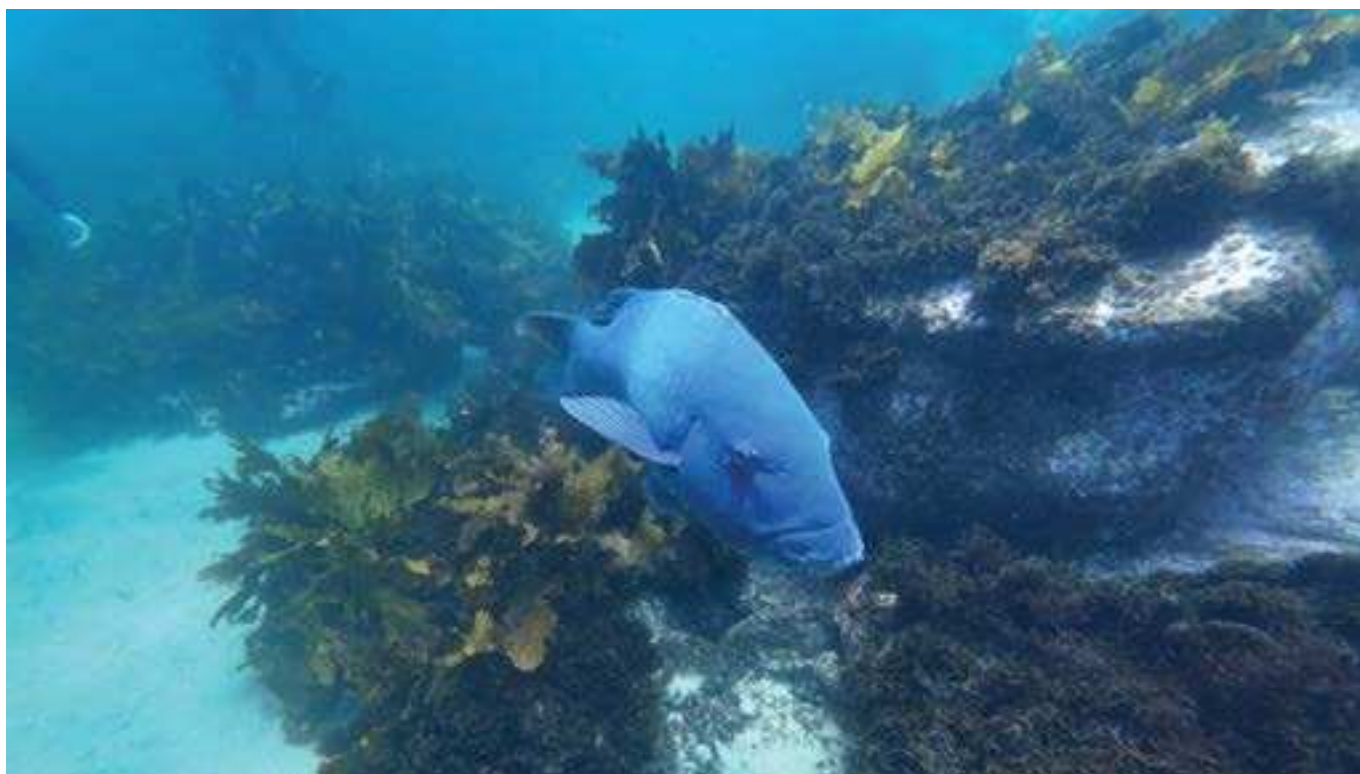
These species are not only ecologically important, but culturally significant, and we need to understand how to look after and build cultural protections around them.

Abalone (*Haliotis rubra*), also known as mutton fish, is a culturally significant species that we have harvested for both food and trade. It continues to be an important food source for us today. Similarly, oysters hold great cultural value, with significant oyster reefs located in Quibray Bay and Carter's Island in Gamay. Sydney rock oysters (*Saccostrea glomerata*) are present in the middens within the Gamay area, providing evidence that we have been using them for over 6,000 years (Jackson and Forbes 2018).

Oyster reefs are vital habitats, supporting the growth and survival of other species in surrounding areas (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023, Bugnot et al. 2022). However, due to overexploitation, both abalone and oysters have become more difficult to find. It is essential to protect our ability to access and harvest them, ensuring that we can continue to enjoy them as a food source and preserve them for future generations (Reid and Bone 2020).

We also harvest mullet (*Mugil cephalus*). We usually take mullet in between March to June at Frenchman's Beach (La Perouse) and Yarra Bay. Less frequent visitors in the area include the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), bump-head sunfish (*Mola alexandrini*), Macquarie perch, gudgeons, Australian bass and eels (Faulk et al., Hammer et al. 2019), and there is historical evidence that there were once dugongs in the area (Haworth et al. 2004). The endangered Macquarie Perch is also known to occur in the Georges River. Other native freshwater fish reported in the river include several species of gudgeons, galaxids, smelt, Australian bass, as well as long- and short-finned eels (Stelling-Wood, et al. 2022).

The following tables provide a snapshot of some of the species identified during the Sea Country community consultation.



Eastern Blue Groper (*Achoerodus viridis*) swimming Credit: Gamay Rangers

## List of species identified by the community during consultation

### Marine species

Blue swimmer crab  
 Shovel nose ray  
 Flathead  
 Sunfish  
 Octopus  
 Squid  
 Seagrass  
 Bream  
 Conk (snails)  
 Weedy sea dragon  
 White's seahorse  
 Whiting  
 Kingfish  
 Leatherjacket  
 Australian salmon  
 Mussels  
 Oysters (rock and flat)  
 Mutton fish (abalone)  
 Bimblers (cockles)  
 Tailor  
 Kelp  
 Crayweed  
 Eels  
 Periwinkles  
 Shellfish (lots of species)  
 Wobbegong shark  
 Port Jackson shark  
 Mullet  
 Blackfish (luderick)  
 Mud crab  
 Humpback whale  
 Dolphin  
 Long-nosed fur seal  
 Australian fur seal  
 Trevally  
 False Killer Whale  
 Sea Turtle  
 Dugong  
 Blue Groper  
 Red Rock Cod

### Bird species

Little penguin  
 Silver gull  
 Pied cormorant  
 New Holland honeyeater  
 Little tern  
 Pelican  
 Sulphur crested cockatoo  
 Southern emu wren  
 Superb fairy wren  
 White-browed scrubwren  
 White-bellied sea eagle  
 Yellow-tailed black cockatoo  
 Kookaburra  
 Willie wagtail  
 Noisy Miner

### Plants

Ten corner plants  
 Namarraag (Sydney golden wattle)  
 Baan baan (peach blossom tree)  
 Wattangaree (heath-leaved banksia)  
 Lomandra longifolia  
 Dharawal (cabbage tree palm)  
 Redberry Chinese fruit  
 White lilli pilli  
 Guriidja (bracelet honey myrtle)  
 Five corner plants  
 Banksia spp.



### Baan baan

Peach Blossom Tea Tree

*Credit: Australian National Botanic Gardens  
 (APII- Photo No.: a.23961)*



### Namaraag

Sydney Golden Wattle

*Credit: Australian National Botanic Gardens  
 (APII- Photo No.: a.31160)*



### Guriidja

Bracelet Honey Myrtle

*Credit: Australian National Botanic Gardens  
 (APII - Photo No.: dig.7128)*



### Watangaree

Heath-leaved Banksia

*Credit: Australian National Botanic Gardens  
 (APII- Photo No.: a.6831)*



“

If you had enough, you'd give everyone a feed. We used to be able to grab abalone in the shallows (especially at Pussycat and Sucko). We used to trip over the conks and periwinkles, but we also got potfuls of them and boiled them up in seawater. We'd use a nappy pin to pick out the flesh.

UNCLE ASSEN 'CHINA' TIMBERY

## BEING ON COUNTRY

**Many generations of our people have walked and used this area, for fishing, food, having fun, shell work, harvesting, hunting, and just being with family.**

Being on Country allows us to continue cultural practices and connection to land and sea while ensuring our wellbeing both physically and spiritually. Some of our memories presented below give an idea of how we use and know our Country.

“ Would dive around the rocks and catch octopus, gathering - we'd go away to dive and fish, it would bring the community together, and there we'd have end of year cook ups, get a feed. Coming from LaPa [La Perouse] too - towards Kurnell in a boat - there was a lot of Blue Swimmer Crabs I remember, and there'd often be big Jewfish in the bathtub. It would be distributed out to all the families. ”

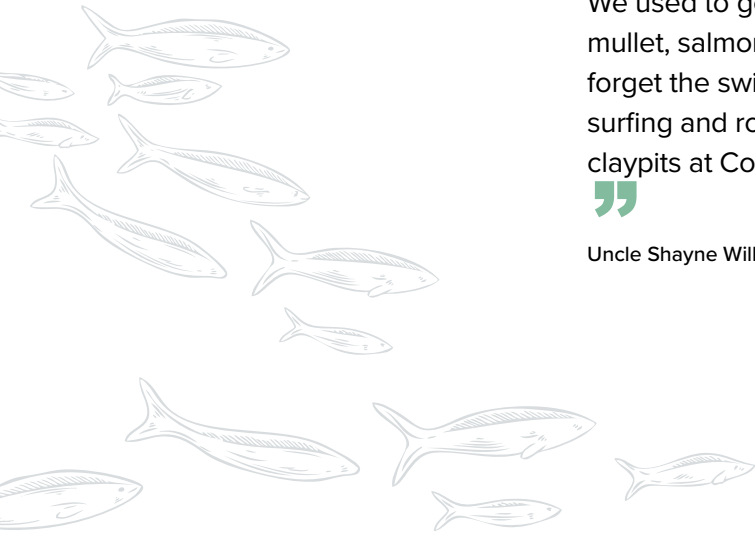
Paul 'Stitch' Sait

“ We used to dive for blue swimmer crabs and fish all along the shoreline. Now that area is closed to the public ...We used to drive down a sandy track, now known as the Foreshore Road and go prawning. As little kids, we would have scoop nets and get prawns and blue swimmer crabs while dad fished by hand. It was the last remaining prawning spot in the Bay. ”

Robert (Bintar) Cooley



Burri Burri sculpture at Kamay National Park - Kurnell *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



“ Fishing goes way back – both commercial and recreational. I remember people netting the fish on La Perouse beach. There was so much seagrass. Well, we use to get flathead and blue swimmers all over at Towra Point, we’re still getting stingrays and flatheads, and well – big schools of fish. We used to get big schools of mullet, salmon, kingfish. I can’t forget the swimming – body surfing and rolling in them claypits at Congwong Beach...”

”  
Uncle Shayne Williams

“ If you had enough, you’d give everyone a feed. We used to be able to grab abalone in the shallows (especially at Pussycat and Sucko). We used to trip over the conks and periwinkles, but we also got potfuls of them and boiled them up in seawater. We’d use a nappy pin to pick out the flesh – old blokes would go around showing you what you could eat. That’s how we learned. Wasn’t taught in the classroom. Learned from my grandfather and father how to fish and read the water. We would sit on the hill, and my Grandfather had an oilskin coat. Five of us would sit under it during rain, hearing stories about fishing. Grandfather could tell you how many boxes of fish were in a school just by looking at it ”

Uncle Assen ‘China’ Timbery



Gamay Rangers cave paintings analysis *Credit: Gamay Rangers*



Bryce Liddell SCUBA *Credit: Jessica Hromas*

“ Us girls would sit on the beach. We’d spend all day there swimming. We would go to the shops then come straight back to swim again. We’d walk over to Congy Beach and check if the waves were good for swimming. The boys would collect golf balls, which they would sell. They’d go to the shop and come back with bread, devon, and banana sandwiches. Mother would sit with Aunty Marge. Would sort the shells. “Can I do one?” I said. I did a horseshoe – mauve corduroy. I wasn’t interested too much. Gotta have patience. I gained more appreciation for the shellworking artform as I got older. Orange, yellow, periwinkles, starries, little fingernails (shell types). We use to use the old ferry to get over to Kurnell to collect specific types of shells. It was a big family day out ”

Aunty Marylin Russell

“ Lapa Beach was our playground as kids. I loved jumping off at the end of the break wall and swimming into the beach which was like a rite of passage. We’d collect conks, my friend Elly loved them, and she’d light a fire down the beach to cook them. I didn’t eat them, but I loved opening them with a pin. I loved going to the Sucko as well – it was very communal. When I was a younger, I wasn’t allowed to go over there, and I would beg my mother to let me go over there. Usually, I’d sneak over there with the bigger kids anyway. My absolute favourite is watching the sunset on Lapa Beach, looking at the water glistening, feeling the water as our connection to saltwater is very powerful. ”

Carrine Liddell



Uncle Assen (China) Timbery *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



Uncle David Ingrey *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



Us girls would sit on the beach. We'd spend all day there swimming. We would go to the shops then come straight back to swim again. We'd walk over to Congy Beach and check if the waves were good for swimming.

AUNTY MARYLIN RUSSELL



Mullet haul. Left to right: Michael Cooley and Rodney Ella Credit: Jessica Hromas

While these accounts of uses and species reflect some of our experience, there are certain species that have deep cultural significance and reflect our cultural values. Our cultural values underpin our identity, how we care for our Country and interconnect our Land and Sea Country together. Our culture connects our people, our community, and our stories.

Within the boundary of the Gamay Sea Country Plan, we are stewards for an area that is of deep and exceptional ecological and cultural significance. It is important to emphasise, however, that the boundary of this plan is not the extent of our cultural area, but the area of our initial focus. This area not only contains multiple cultural and ecologically important sites; we have historically used it for recreation, meetings, medicine, harvesting and ceremony. We continue these activities

in the present day, although with more barriers to overcome.

### **It is our Country and it is our identity, our life source and our family.**

This is the reason why we want to care for it, manage it and protect it, in memory of our Elders, and for the benefit of future generations.

We recognise the major challenge of Gamay's location at the centre of a heavy industrial hub in Sydney that includes a large shipping port, an oil refinery, and the biggest airport in Australia. Pollution from industrialisation and development affect all the habitats described in this proposal. Our entire Sea Country is at risk from pollution in the Bay, with the added pressure of climate change.

*Within the boundary of the Gamay Sea Country Plan, we are stewards for an area that is of deep and exceptional ecological and cultural significance.*



The next section summarises the key issues we have identified that require management, based on the literature and our consultations. These issues, and how to respond to and manage them, form the basis of our Sea Country Plan.

## ISSUES FOR MANAGEMENT

Many issues impact our Sea Country, its habitats and its species. Our key concerns lie in the following six areas: impacts on our Sea Country, pollution, impacts on our cultural sites, access issues, health and wellbeing, and our voice in governance. This section provides more detail on each of these concerns and incorporates views and perspectives from the community, as well as evidence found in literature and studies.

### Impacts on our Sea Country – ecological

A range of ecological impacts on our Country are compromising the habitats, species, and ecosystems that we all use. This includes climate change, infrastructure development (with poor community consultation), dredging, impacts from tourists, and the release of ballast water and oil into the bay.

Concerns about the impacts of dredging on sea grass beds have emerged both in consultations with community and in scientific studies. Community members worry about the impact of the Burri Burri (humpback whale) being taken off the endangered list while issues that affect them post whaling remain unresolved.

The ecological integrity of the Bay is compromised by shipping activity, which has become more intensive over the years. Port construction has also modified and changed many important habitats. With climate change and

release of ballast water, there have been greater impacts from marine invasive species (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023) and exotic algae.

Exotic algae create blooms that negatively affect the Bay and recreational and commercial fish species. There have been several instances of harmful blooms occurring in Gamay. Such events can poison seafood and/or cause fish and invertebrate mortalities (McLennan et al. 2021).

Impacts from the processes of dredging, land reclamation, and shoreline hardening from development mean many significant habitats in Gamay are struggling, with associated effects on species composition, density, and diversity (Porter et al. 2018).

South Gamay Headland - Kurnell *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



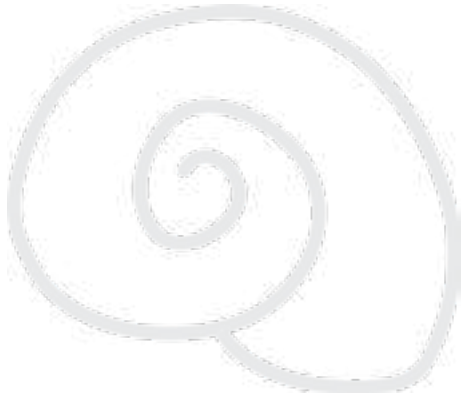
A close-up photograph of a hand holding a bivalve shell (cockle) on a sandy beach. The background is a blurred view of the ocean and sky. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

“

We used to dive for blue swimmer crabs and fish all along the shoreline. Now that area is closed to the public ...We used to drive down a sandy track, now known as the Foreshore Road and go prawning.

ROBERT (BINTAR) COOLEY

A range of ecological impacts on our Country are compromising the habitats, species, and ecosystems that we all use.



Exotic species also have an impact on the oyster reefs, which are of high ecological significance as well as cultural harvesting value in the Bay. Multiple species of potentially harmful phytoplankton taxa have been detected at Woollooware Bay, close to oyster production leases, while blooms of *Alexandrium pacificum* (Catenella) occur regularly, causing the paralytic shellfish toxin (PST) that destroys oysters (Stelling-Wood et al. 2023).

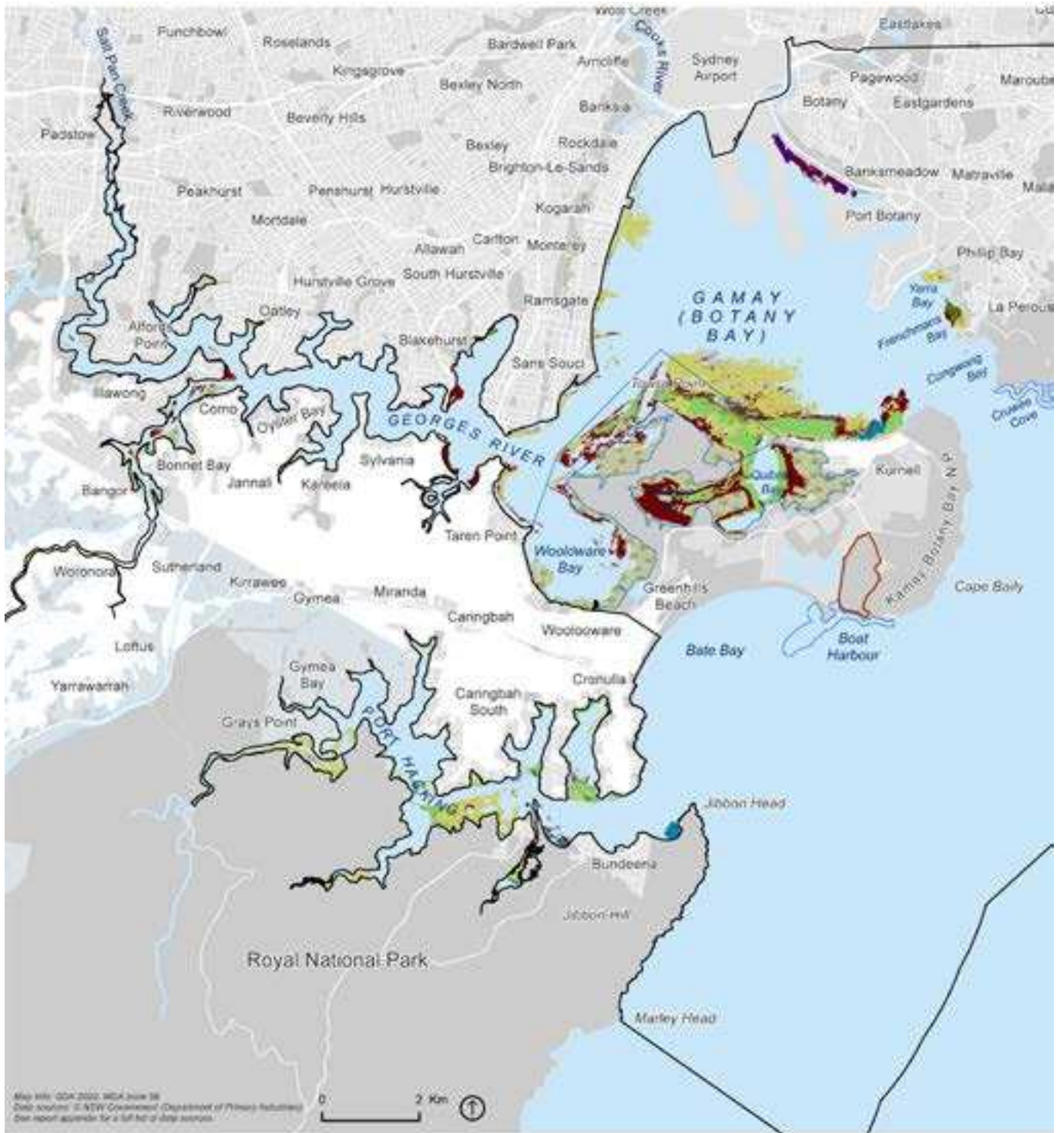
The survival of seagrass is vital. Today, seagrass meadows in our area are a fraction of what they used to be, and we have seen ongoing decline in their spatial reach (see map 3). This change has also been observed by scientists. The decline began with historical contamination in the 1800s and early 1900s and has continued with disruptions caused by port and airport developments (Reeds 2018, McBeth 2019). Traditional block and chain style moorings disrupt anything living on the seafloor within a radius of the mooring. As the wind changes, the buoy and subsequently the chain

which lays along the seafloor scour anything living there. This creates mooring scars of bar sand and disconnects seagrass meadows. We continue to be concerned about the impacts of mooring and anchoring in these meadows.

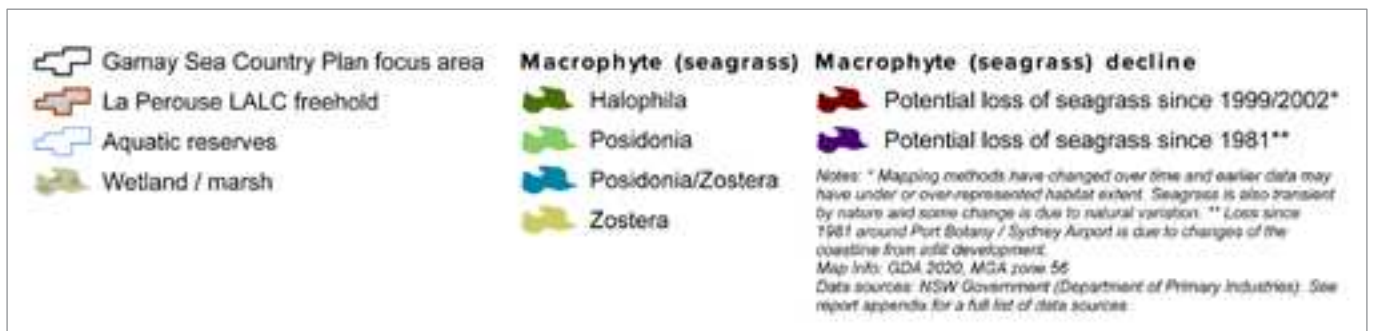
Ecological impacts affect cultural activities. For example, some shells used for shellwork are difficult to find at all now. We expect this to be a result of declined habitat for the mollusc species the shells belong to, along with climate change and pollution. Changes in habitat and the areas mean that to dive for a feed is now much more challenging – in some cases we now need to dive 30ft off the shore, rather than 6ft. Finding abalone and our fish species is much more difficult. Sea urchins are overwhelming other species we used to catch, dominating space and resources, as well as overharvesting kelp and crayweed habitat formers. We are seeing a phase shift from healthy kelp forests to urchin barrens in some areas.

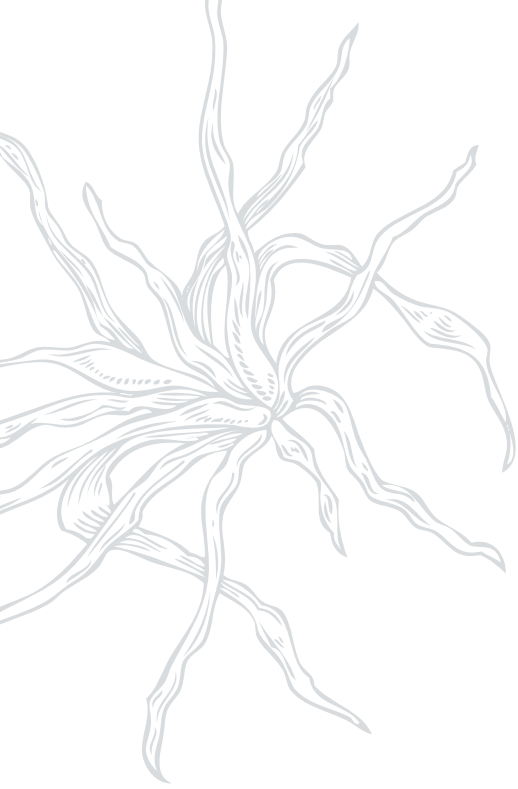
Stingaree (*Trygonoptera testacea*) in Seagrass Credit: Clayton Mead





Map 3. Change in seagrass over time (1981-2002) inside the Gamay Sea Country Plan focus area





## Pollution

Pollution is one of our greatest concerns. It affects every use and value we have for and in our Country. There are many sources of pollution, the legacy of decades-long industrial activity in the bay (Reid 2020) (see map 4). One major source is stormwater runoff, which combines with contamination from industrial discharges to contaminate sediment in the Bay as well as its water (Carney et al. 2019, 2020).

Careless disposal of waste is an ongoing problem. A constant issue raised by the community is the lack

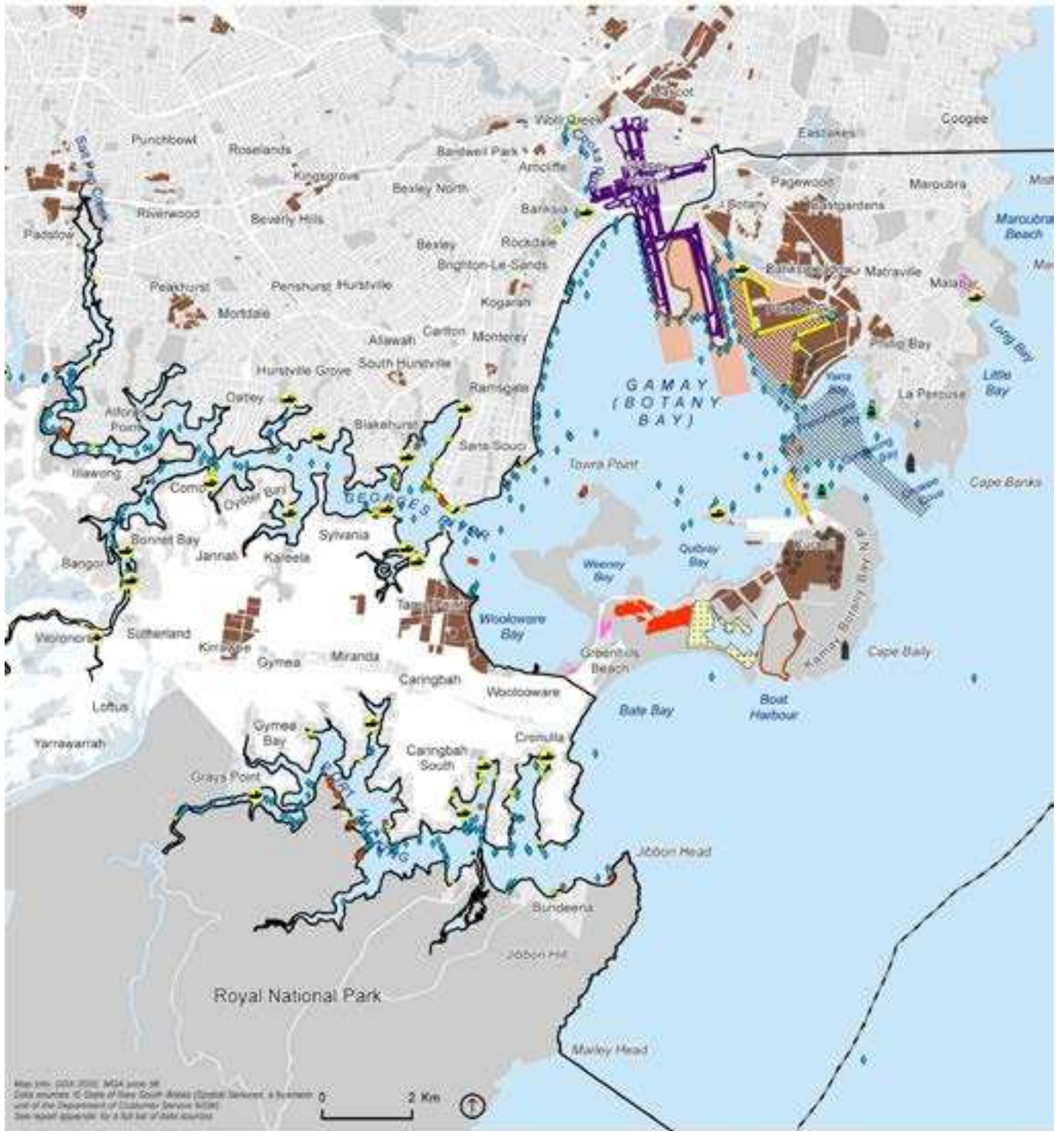
of bins in the region, which causes overflow and distribution of rubbish throughout the area. Hospital waste and detritus from the tip are also concerns.

Noise pollution also has impacts. The large number of jet skis or powered boat activities increase potential harm risks to community members who are trying to use the beaches for recreational fishing or diving.

Because of the proximity to Sydney Airport, there are also ongoing incidences of oil pollution, water pollution and airstream pollution.

Burri burri in Gamay. La Perouse Mission in background *Credit: Bryce Liddell*

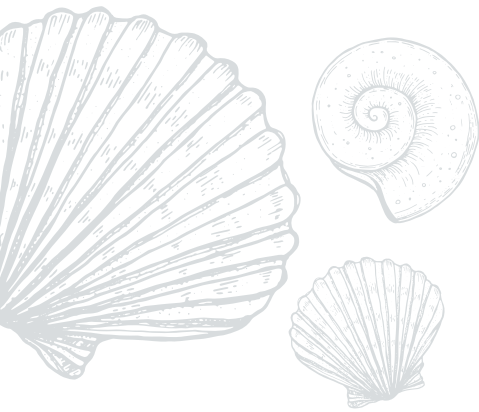




Map 4. Industrial sites and infrastructure locations in and around the Gamay Sea Country Plan focus area



*We have several important cultural sites and areas in our Sea Country, places we have used for thousands of years.*



## **Impacts on our cultural sites**

We have several important cultural sites and areas in our Sea Country, places we have used for thousands of years (See map 5). These include middens, fish traps, birthing trees, and various engravings. They include our hunting grounds, sites of ceremony, engravings, and places for family to get together.

As the map shows, we have identified a wide range of sites that are important to us. However, our sites are not always respected, and we do not always have the rights to access and care for those sites. Some are being eroded away, and others are being submerged. Some sites are becoming inundated by invasive plant species.

We are also finding it harder to access sites, which means active knowledge about them becomes used less often and is not maintained. This includes knowledge about shell work, the tides, fish movement patterns, and connections with traditionally important species. The lack of resources restricts our capacity to manage important sites, such as caves, burial grounds, and engravings. Additionally, development and increasing numbers of visitors have pushed us out of the places we once frequented and cherished.

The ongoing degradation of habitats and negative effects on species from infrastructure development mean that several of our important cultural practices, such as harvesting mullet or taking abalone and oysters, are now more difficult as numbers have declined, making it harder to find them. Rules and regulations have hindered our legal access to these species in a culturally appropriate manner.



Boat Harbour Midden *Credit: Jessica Hromas*





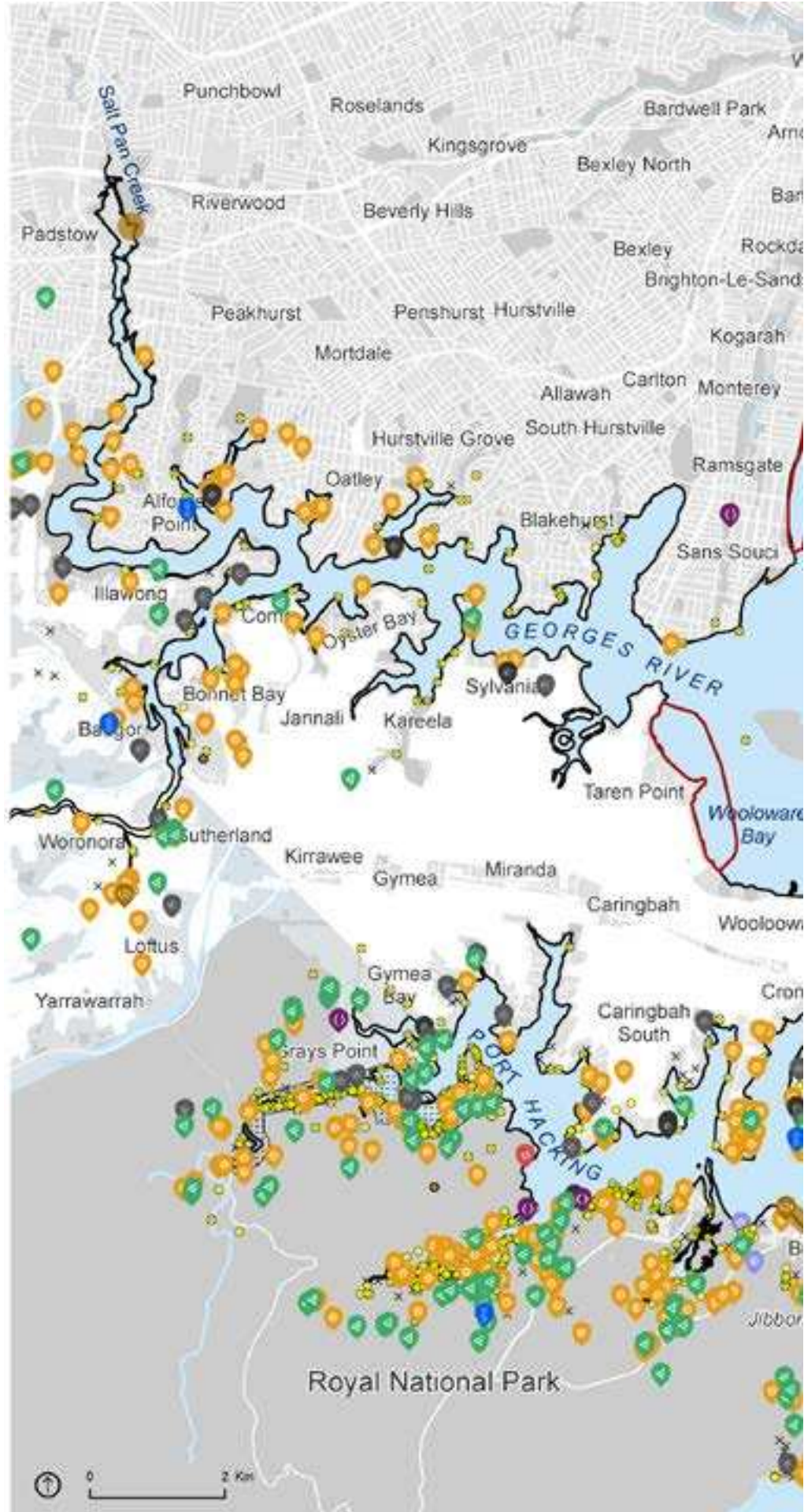
*Notes:* \* Only coastal sites are shown on this map, other important cultural areas inland are not mapped. Some site locations have been generalised for privacy reasons.

Map info: GDA 2020, MGA zone 56  
 Date sources: Consultations with La Perouse community 2023, 2024; Heritage NSW (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System). See report appendix for a full list of data sources.

Location Map



Date sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS



Map 5. Cultural sites recorded in the Gamay Sea Country Plan focus area (includes sites from the AHIMS database and those recorded during consultations)





Fishing goes way back  
– both commercial and  
recreational. I remember  
people netting the fish on  
La Perouse beach. There  
was so much seagrass!

UNCLE SHAYNE WILLIAMS

## Access issues

Overall, we find that we do not have the access to our Country that is required for us to maintain cultural connection and care for sites.

Several laws prohibit us from using our own Country in the ways we have in the past. Access to beaches is sometimes difficult. We cannot use or access the national parks as we would traditionally, because of gates and other restrictions. While we can apply for permits and special considerations, there are still many barriers to access Country that we have a cultural obligation to care for.

We currently do not have access to the governance or decision-making structures that exist about our Sea Country. This means we do not have the mechanisms to promote our voice or be heard.

*Without proper access to our Country, we start to lose connection to our knowledge, and this has a roll-on effect on our spiritual wellbeing and identity.*



Seahorse release. Sydney Insitute of Marine Science Divers, Gamay Divers and public *Credit: Jessica Hromas*





*We believe that healthy water leads to healthy people.*

## Health and wellbeing

The impacts on cultural sites and access issues outlined earlier significantly affect our health, resilience, and overall wellbeing. We believe that healthy water leads to healthy people.

We worry about the safety of our families when on the beach and the boats and jet skis are so close – and often travelling at dangerous speeds. We worry about the impacts of oil and fuel contamination on our fish or the negative health risks of algal blooms. Poor or declining water quality could affect the health of our people as many of us still eat a lot of food from the Bay.

We have ongoing concerns about the effects on our people of hospital waste and potential leaching from the hill above Little Lapa Beach. The lack of access for fresh fish and other species and plants we use for our diet, means it is increasingly harder for us to have healthy diets.

Without proper access to our Country, we start to lose connection to our knowledge, and this has a roll-on effect on our spiritual wellbeing and identity. We need to maintain connection to Country and associated cultural practices for our future generations.



Mangroves in Gamay *Credit: Gamay Rangers*

## Our voice in governance

A major issue for us is the fact that while we have built a range of partnerships, we still do not always have a voice or place in the governance structures of major stakeholders such as Port Botany, Sydney Airport or local, state and Australian government departments. This lack of voice puts us in a position where we react to rather than co-lead initiatives for the Bay that will benefit all.

We need a voice to be able to articulate how the activities in the Bay affect us as a people, how it affects our Country, and to become partners in decision-making processes. Our people require pathways into wider governance structures and to be employed in these institutions so that we become visible and active in the various businesses and management of the Bay.

*We need a voice to be able to articulate how the activities in the Bay affect us as a people, how it affects our Country, and to become partners in decision-making processes.*



Uncle Rodney Ella Credit: Jessica Hromas

PART  
3

# SEA COUNTRY PLANNING



**We, the (Gamay) Traditional Owners of coastal Sydney, present our Sea Country Plan. It tells of our story, and shares some of the values and issues that are important to us. It outlines our vision for managing Country now and for our future generations.**

To implement our vision, we have identified the management priorities which provide the basis for a series of management objectives and goals. They will be used as a guide for the community and La Perouse LALC to build new and existing programs to implement the community's goals over time.

We recognise that this is a long-term strategy, and therefore, we are not presenting these programs as fixed plans, but rather as a flexible framework to guide how we allocate our time and resources within the constraints we face.

The next section describes each one of these priorities, and then suggests a series of objectives and goals for each one.



## OUR VISION

*To ensure our Sea Country is healthy, protected, enjoyed and sustainably used by both current and future generations.*



# MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

We present the following management priorities which embed our core values for looking after Country: responsibility, reciprocity, recovery and resilience.

## RESPONSIBILITY

As the Traditional Owners of this Country/Gamay, it is our responsibility to manage and protect it. This is essential not only for the health of the land but also for the continued health and wellbeing of our people.

## RECIPROCITY

We commit to building reciprocal relationships with our partners to jointly care for our Country, fostering collaboration that integrates our knowledge for the effective management of our country.

## RECOVERY

We embed recovery as an operating principle that underpins our work in acknowledgement of the impacts on Country that have already occurred, and which we seek to rectify.

## RESILIENCE

We want to build on our existing resilience and celebrate the fact we have continually adapted to how we've been impacted - and we are still here.

The following programs provide a framework under which we can progress our core objectives and goals. The programs will provide new directions as well as strengthen and work in collaboration with other core documents such as our Community Land and Business Plan, and ensure that we avoid any overlap. In this way we aim to build capacity across all our community programs.



Gamay Rangers SCUBA images Credit: Gamay Rangers

# OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

## CULTURAL STEWARDSHIP

1. To manage and care for culturally significant sites
2. To negotiate and ensure ongoing community access to all traditional and cultural sites and (re) establish cultural connections
3. To maintain our cultural knowledge

## CARING FOR COUNTRY PROGRAM

1. To strengthen the Ranger Program for Caring for Country
2. To establish species and habitat protection and management
3. To establish a voice and say in the management of fish stocks and marine species
4. To secure ongoing access rights for our people to Country

## GOVERNANCE, PARTNERSHIPS & ENFORCEMENT

1. To have a voice in and be part of decision making and governance arrangements
2. To have formally qualified Rangers, with equal powers to manage, enforce, and fine
3. Build new and strengthen existing partnerships.

## KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION

1. To establish ongoing two-way communications and knowledge transmission
2. To establish a research program that is community driven that will fill gaps in our knowledge and inform management
3. To build skills, knowledge, motivation and resilience to keep culture strong

## DAY TO DAY MANAGEMENT

1. To be involved and have input into management of different uses of the Bay
2. To establish necessary infrastructure for Gamay Rangers and Sea Country management

## HEALTH AND RESILIENCE

1. To build climate adaptive capacity for Country (including flora and fauna) and community
2. To ensure clean and safe environments

Figure 8. Overview of management priorities and objectives

# 1

## CULTURAL STEWARDSHIP PRIORITY

**Our Country is an integrated cultural and environmental landscape. We are the holders of the cultural knowledge and law about our Country, and also hold the responsibility of preserving, handing down ensuring knowledge is preserved and maintaining cultural sites.**

Many of these sites are damaged or we have minimal access to them. For others, climate change, pollution and other impacts are changing the nature and dissemination of our knowledge. In this plan, we set out the ways in which we seek to ensure our cultural knowledge, rights and sites are recognised and protected.

Mullet Haul. Uncle Michael Cooley *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



### OBJECTIVE 1.1

**Manage and care for culturally significant sites including meeting, burial, medicine and art sites.**

#### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Set up a Cultural Centre on Country.
- Care for our Country.
- Establish cultural zones to guarantee ongoing access to, use of, and safety in, areas by community.
- Maintain and exercise fishing and hunting practices.
- Prepare cultural site management plans.
- Undertake regular site maintenance with NSW NPWS and relevant authorities.
- Fence off significant sites with access only to our community members.
- Manage culturally significant sites including meeting, burial, medicine and art sites.
- Establish protocols around tourist visitation to Country and culturally significant sites.
- To be included in Sea Country planning of government departments to ensure cultural business is respected and incorporated.
- Establish recognition of, and ways to maintain, cultural ways of managing hunting and fishing.
- Establish ongoing and effective maintenance procedures for cultural sites.



## OBJECTIVE 1.2

Negotiate and ensure ongoing community access to all traditional and cultural sites and (re)establish cultural connections.

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### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Work with our partners to formalise access to our sites.
- Develop a visitor access protocol so we can control who comes in and out of Sea Country sites.

## OBJECTIVE 1.3

Maintain our cultural knowledge over time.

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### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Establish a Cultural Knowledge Elders Group to advise on cultural knowledge matters.
- Hold On-Country Cultural knowledge workshops, with youth and Elders.

Gamay Rangers. Left to right: Robert Russell, April Allende, Robert Cooley and Bryce Liddell *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



## 2 CARING FOR SEA COUNTRY PRIORITY

**Our Sea Country is an interconnected socio-cultural eco-environmental system that is used by multiple sectors and is the heart of our connection to our Land and Sea. Caring for it is our first priority.**

In this management program, we set out the key mechanisms that will enable us to work in partnership with others to rectify the impacts that have already occurred, while building management for the future. This includes thinking about how to manage the impacts of current and future issues like climate change, pollution and ongoing development in the area.

Aunty Marion Russell *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



### OBJECTIVE 2.1

#### Strengthen the Ranger Program for Caring for Country.

##### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Build the Gamay Ranger Program to implement areas of our Sea Country Plan.
- Continue to increase the knowledge base of, and capabilities of, the Gamay Rangers.

### OBJECTIVE 2.2

#### Establish species and habitat protection and management programs.

##### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Identify and highlight key priority species for cultural protection and environmental management.
- Work with scientists and researchers to establish what the gaps in knowledge are.
- Create a language data base of key species.
- Enhance existing management systems such as aquatic reserves and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- Document cultural management protocols for species management.
- Establish a regular beach clean-up program or undertake regular beach clean-up events.
- Establish volunteer programs.
- Establish coast and marine revegetation and regeneration programs.
- Establish habitat restoration and remediation programs.

## OBJECTIVE 2.3

Establish a voice and say in the management of fish stocks and marine species, including in existing management and marine protected areas (MPAs).

### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Establish clauses in government management plans for cultural fishing of culturally significant species.
- Continue to work with fisheries and marine parks agencies to determine key stocks and issues with management.
- Identify a list of areas in which we want a specific voice in management.
- Work with government to develop a list of opportunities in the way we help co-manage stocks, including in MPAs.
- Develop and establish Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) in our cultural area.
- Establish a place for us in management committees and other management and government forums relating to management of fish stocks.
- Influence legislation for marine species quotas and size/bag restrictions
- Establish living seawall installations in Gamay



## OBJECTIVE 2.4

Secure freedom of access rights for our people to Country, including NSW National Parks and Wildlife estate.

### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Develop an agreement that confirms our access rights to Country.
- Negotiate freedom to access all our Country within National Parks and other areas within our cultural area.
- Partner with industry and government to create representation on governance forums.
- Create a special community space/zone for us to access and use/enjoy the beaches and Sea Country safely.
- Create policy that ensures management of jet ski and boat activities, including exclusion zones.
- Negotiate the relocation of moorings away from La Perouse.
- Negotiate the replacement of block and chain style moorings with environmentally friendly mooring designs.



Yellowfin Bream (*Acanthopagrus australis*). Woolloomooloo Bay  
Credit: Bryce Liddell

# 3

## GOVERNANCE, PARTNERSHIPS AND ENFORCEMENT PRIORITY

**To ensure that we can meet and deliver on our aspiration, we need to have a voice in decision making and work in ongoing partnership with all sectors and stakeholders in the area.**

We will strengthen our existing positive relationships to advocate for a greater role and influence in decision-making. We are open and committed to being active participants in ensuring the effective implementation of Western governance, while also contributing our own cultural governance in managing Country. Some suggested pathways to achieving these goals are set out in the following objectives.

Uncle Assen (China) Timbery *Credit: Jessica Hromas*



### OBJECTIVE 3.1

**Have a voice in and be part of decision making and governance arrangements relevant to Sea Country**

#### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Work with stakeholders, government and industry to create places for our community on key decision-making groups.
- To be included and have decision-making power in or over any key decisions or governance arrangements relating to our Sea Country.
- Explore potential for Gamay Rangers to be part of enforcement processes.
- Development of community-led Indigenous Coastal Advisory or Sea Country Committee.
- Build stakeholder and sector data base.

### OBJECTIVE 3.2

**Have formally qualified Rangers, with equal powers to manage, enforce, and fine with relation to laws and acts in the area.**

#### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Build opportunities for the Gamay Rangers to support compliance/enforcement activities.
- Build education/programs to promote awareness of compliance and enforcement rules.
- Train our Gamay Rangers and others to undertake oil pollution management and fire management.

### OBJECTIVE 3.3

## Build new and strengthen existing stakeholder relationships.

### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Establish collaborative marine protected area program.
- Establish a cultural renaming program.

In this Sea Country Plan we have outlined why the area is so important, why it matters to us, and what our issues are.

We recognise that we are located in one of the most urbanised areas of Australia's largest city, and we understand that we cannot implement this program alone. Collaboration with local stakeholders and organisations is essential for success.

The table below sums up some of our key partners and stakeholders, all of whom play a crucial role in the day-to-day business and management in Gamay. We acknowledge it is not a complete document, but it illustrates some of our core existing stakeholder engagements.



List of Stakeholders in the Sea Country Plan boundary.

Stakeholder
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
University of New South Wales (UNSW)
University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS)
Port Authority
Sydney Airport
Local Councils – Randwick, Bayside, Southerland Shire etc
AMPOL
DPI Fisheries
NSW Ports
Local schools: eg. La Perouse Public School, Matraville Sports High School
Marine Rescue
Water Police
Maritime Police
Sydney Water
Fishing Clubs (Botany Bay Sport Fishing Club, Bayside Community Recreation Club, Botany Bay Game Fishing Club etc)
Industrial groups (e.g. Botany Bay Industrial Estate, Botany Group, Solid Property Group)
Property holders
Port Botany Transfer Station and other waste facilities in area
Australian Government Department of Energy, Environment, Climate Change and Water
Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans in Australia (ORRCA)
Taronga Zoo
University of Sydney

Mullet haul. Left to right: Robert Cooley, Michael Cooley and Rodney Ella  
Credit: Jessica Hromas

# 4

## DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT PRIORITY

**To fulfil our obligations to Care for Country, we propose a day-to-day management program.**

This program will facilitate establishment of management initiatives, the building of partnerships, and provide opportunities for employment in the area.



Sand Whiting (*Sillago ciliata*). Towra Point Aquatic Reserve  
Credit: Bryce Liddell

### OBJECTIVE 4.1

To be involved in, and have input into, the management of different uses of Gamay, including maintenance and management of rubbish, oil spills, tourism, pollution, flooding, sewage, tidal change, fuel releases, waste water, tip waste and marine traffic.

#### MANAGEMENT GOALS

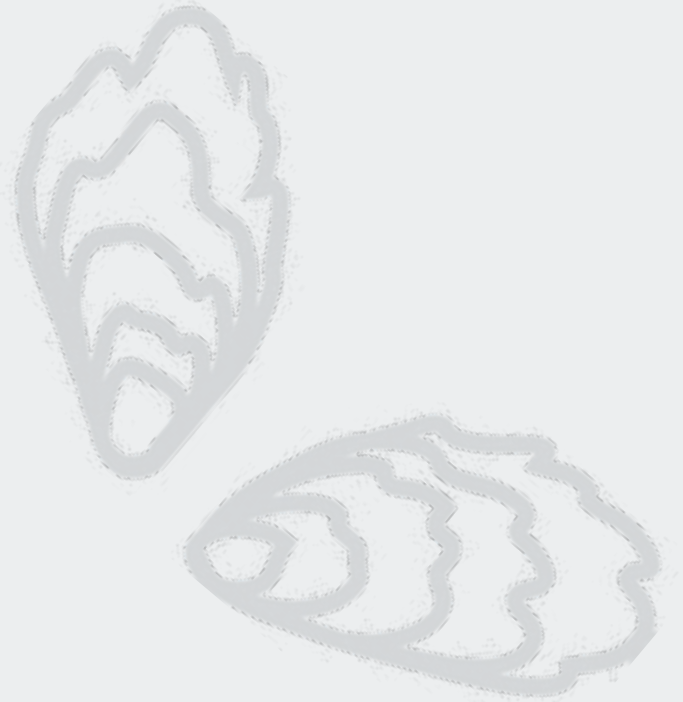
- Develop training for and then implementation of oil spill and management response teams.
- Work with community to implement clean up rubbish program and placement of a bin network.
- Partner with researchers to establish research programs about the impact of waste and sewage, and their management
- Work to build community-led tourism ventures in the area.
- Formally deliver training in emergency services (flood and fire) delivery for the Gamay Rangers.
- Develop co-management arrangements with different groups to assist in ongoing day-to-day management.
- Undertake collaborative boat patrols of the Bay.
- Gamay Rangers trained to undertake annual biosecurity and surveillance checks/audits.
- Undertake species and habitat monitoring.
- Build and maintain restoration projects.
- Build resource bases and assets needed to undertake day-to-day management.
- Create situation reports to monitor barriers to and progress in management of issues.
- Work with local government to implement a vape (e-cigarette) disposal system

## OBJECTIVE 4.2

### Establish necessary infrastructure for Gamay Rangers and Sea Country management

#### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Seek funding for purchase of patrol boats.
- Seek funding for shed/Ranger base.
- Build boardwalks on key sites.
- Build vehicle fleet including a fire response vehicle.
- Set up a laboratory for water quality testing.
- Establish meetings room/Ranger/operations base.
- Ensure Rangers/community are added and/or included as a stakeholder on other sector action and management plans.
- Seek funding for provision of ongoing employment opportunities.



Gamay Rangers. Left to right: Robert Russell, Robert Simms, Bryce Liddell and Robert Cooley  
*Credit: Jessica Hromas*



# 5

## KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITY

**Knowledge is central to the implementation of our plan – its dissemination, maintenance, revival, and application. We also want to ensure that our own cultural knowledge is respected and recognised as an equal source of information that can be used to build and support caring for our Sea Country.**

We also need to work in partnership with others to learn from and be trained in other knowledge systems so we can work to manage the impacts on our country that have occurred since colonisation. Together, we can then communicate that knowledge, both within the community but also to our youth.

### OBJECTIVE 5.1

**Establish ongoing two-way communications and knowledge transmission about caring for our Sea Country**

#### MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- Develop a Caring for Country communications plan, based on community values and needs.
- Establish a cultural knowledge, education and transmission program.
- Hold on-country camps and community days for young people to learn from Elders and Rangers.

Gamay Ranger Robert Russell with Archaeologist Paul Irish. Sydney Harbour  
*Credit: Gamay Rangers*



## OBJECTIVE 5.2

Establish a research program that is community driven that will fill gaps in our knowledge and inform management of our research priorities.

### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- To build on existing and create new research partnerships to address gaps in knowledge including the hydrology (water movement) of the Bay, seascape connectivity, mitigation and management of negative effects to ecosystems.
- Promote long-term datasets.
- Establish support programs for young people and Rangers to gain research skills and qualifications.
- Establish new and support ongoing co-led research programs on issues of priority to Gamay.
- Establish habitat restoration and research projects.
- Establish data base of key research questions and priorities.
- Commission a report that reviews current knowledge to establish what we know and don't know.
- Build community capacity to become researchers and undertake community led/driven research.



## OBJECTIVE 5.3

Build skills, knowledge, motivation and resilience to keep culture strong.

### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Build a seasonal calendar.
- Build and maintain a repatriation program.
- Create a community-managed data base of Traditional Knowledge about species, sites, use and maintenance, for community use only.

Mullet Haul. Koda Haze Liddell  
Credit: Bryce Liddell



# 6

## HEALTH, RESILIENCE AND SAFETY PRIORITY

**Being healthy and resilient is an essential driver of ecosystem health and supports the capacity to manage Sea Country. We also need to ensure that the ways in which other people use and access our Country is respectful and safe.**

We propose a series of actions that ensure both people and the environment are considered. This includes being culturally and physically safe while interacting with Sea Country.

### OBJECTIVE 6.1

**Build climate adaptive capacity for Sea Country and community.**

#### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Undertake an assessment of community and environment resources that build resilience to identify future priorities.
- Build community safe shelters for climate and emergency events.

Yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*). Towra Point Aquatic Reserve Credit: Bryce Liddell



## OBJECTIVE 6.2

### Ensure clean and safe environments.

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#### MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Establish a waste and safety management and operational program.
- Undertake beach cleanups.
- Undertake habitat remediation programs.



Boat Harbour *Credit: Jessica Hromas*





PART  
4

# IMPLEMENTATION

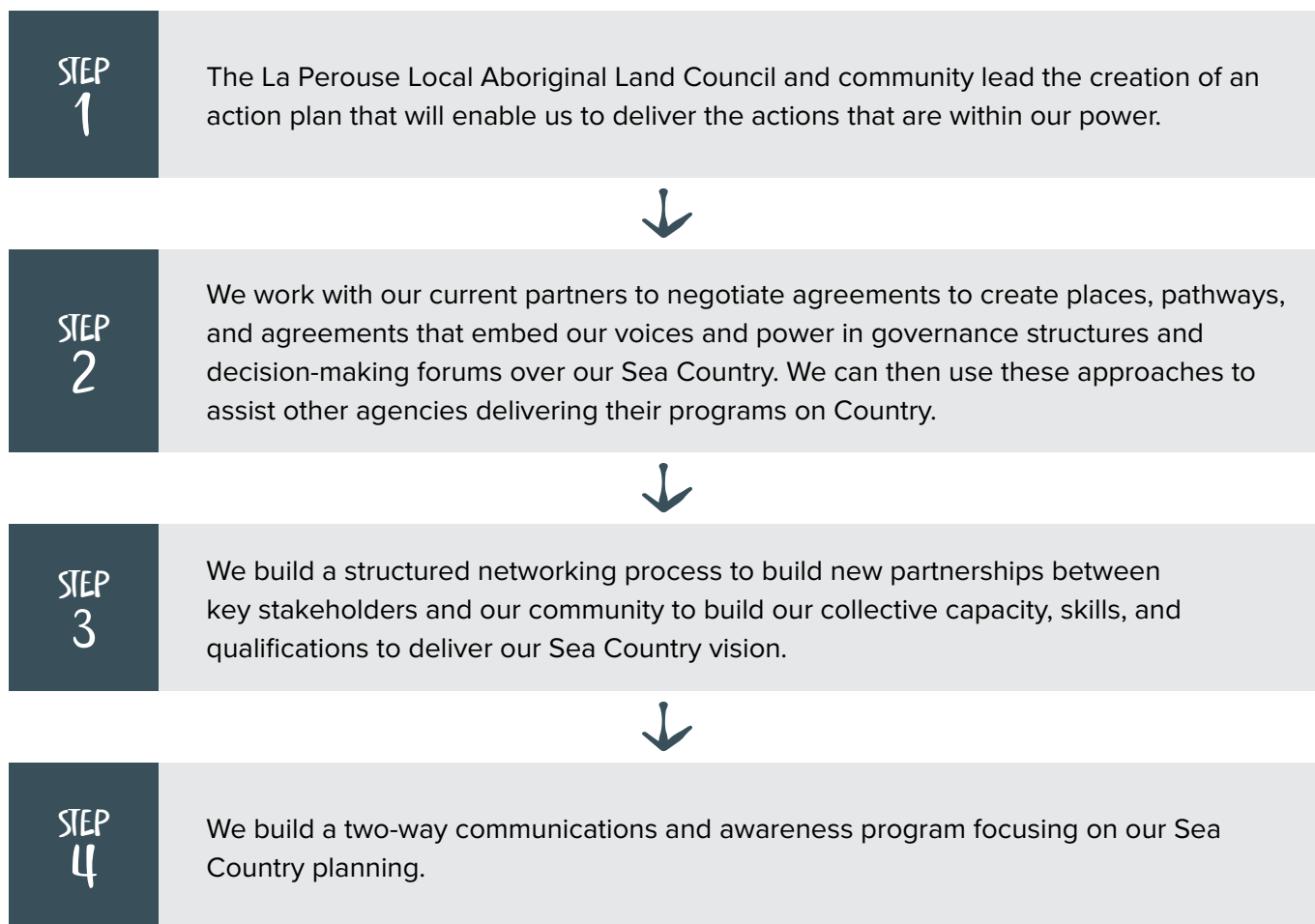
**This strategy establishes why Sea Country is so important and why we want to protect it. It also explains the key issues we face in the ongoing management and protection of our place.**

Our vision for our Sea Country, and our proposed management programs and actions, all reflect core priorities. As a community, we will work together to implement the Sea Country Plan, to protect and restore Gamay so we can all enjoy it now and into the future.

We recognise we cannot achieve this alone, nor are we suggesting that all proposed management programs can be implemented immediately. Our goals are presented as a guide to direct ongoing and future efforts in managing our Sea Country. Realising our vision will require additional resources, partnerships, and sustained, meaningful collaborations.

*Our vision for our Sea Country, and our proposed management programs and actions, all reflect core priorities.*

**We suggest that the implementation of the Plan follows these four steps:**





We invite all our partners and organisations in the area to join us in realising our vision and achieving the objectives outlined in this plan.

We are all connected, and it is through shared effort that we can ensure Gamay is used sustainably while safeguarding its unique ecological and cultural values. Our responsibility is to leave it in the best possible condition so that future generations can live, work, and enjoy it.





Swim nets with seagulls at Brighton Le Sands Beach  
Credit: Jessica Hromas

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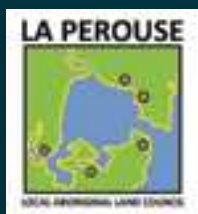
## PHOTO CREDITS

Pg	Description	Credit
Cover	Gamay	Jessica Hromas
4	Swim nets at Brighton Le Sands Beach	Jessica Hromas
7	Small photo Bare Island	Jessica Hromas
8	Group photo left to right: Robert Russell, Baylee Liddell, Aunty Marilyn Russell, Carrine Liddell	Jessica Hromas
10	Fur seal hauled out on pontoon	Dr Vanessa Pirotta
11	Dolphin with airport in background	Dr. Vanessa Pirotta
12	Gamay Rangers beach clean up. Left to right: Robert Cooley, Bryce Liddell, Robert Russell	Jessica Hromas
13	Gamay Rangers. Left to right: Robert Simms and Bryce Liddell	Jessica Hromas
14	Seagrass project photo	Dave Harasti
14	Crayweed project photo	John Turnbull, flickr.com
15	Seahorse project photo	Gamay Rangers
15	Marine mammals monitoring photo	Bryce Liddell
16	Coastal vegetation, cliff and ocean photo	Jessica Hromas
19	La Perouse Beach	Jessica Hromas
20	Kurnell headlands from Henry's Head	Jessica Hromas
21	Pussycat (Cruwee Cove)	Jessica Hromas
21	Eastern Rock Lobster ( <i>Sagmariasus verreauxi</i> )	Bryce Liddell
24	Eastern Blue Gropser ( <i>Achoerodus viridis</i> ) swimming	Gamay Rangers
25	Peach Blossom Tea Tree, Sydney Golden Wattle, Braclet Honey Myrtle, Heath-leaved Banksia	Australian National Botanic Gardens
26	Pussycat (Cruwee Cove)	Jessica Hromas
27	Burri Burri sculpture at Kamay National Park - Kurnell	Jessica Hromas
28	Gamay Rangers cave paintings analysis	Gamay Rangers
28	Bryce Liddell SCUBA	Jessica Hromas
29	Uncle Assen (China) Timbery	Jessica Hromas
29	Uncle David Ingrey	Jessica Hromas
30	Blue Swimmer Crab at community Mullet Haul	Bryce Liddell
31	Mullet haul. Left to right: Michael Cooley and Rodney Ella	Jessica Hromas
32	South Gamay Headland - Kurnell	Jessica Hromas
33	Hand holding bimbler (cockle)	Jessica Hromas
34	Stingaree ( <i>Trygonoptera testacea</i> ) in Seagrass	Clayton Mead
36	Burri burri in Gamay. La Perouse Mission in background	Bryce Liddell
38	Boat Harbour Midden	Jessica Hromas
39	La Perouse Beach	Jessica Hromas
42	Whiting fish being held	Jessica Hromas
43	Seahorse release. Sydney Insitute of Marine Science Divers, Gamay Divers and public	Jessica Hromas
44	Mangroves in Gamay	Gamay Rangers
45	Uncle Rodney Ella	Jessica Hromas
46	Yarra bay. Ferry wharf with shipping port in background	Jessica Hromas
48	Gamay Rangers SCUBA images	Gamay Rangers
50	Mullet Haul. Uncle Michael Cooley	Jessica Hromas
51	Gamay Rangers. Left to right: Robert Russell, April Allende, Robert Cooley and Bryce Liddell	Jessica Hromas
52	Aunty Marion Russell	Jessica Hromas
53	Yellowfin Bream ( <i>Acanthopagrus australis</i> ). Woollooware Bay	Bryce Liddell
54	Uncle Assen (China) Timbery	Jessica Hromas
55	Mullet haul. Left to right: Robert Cooley, Michael Cooley and Jessica Hromas Rodney Ella	Jessica Hromas
56	Sand Whiting ( <i>Sillago ciliata</i> ). Towra Point Aquatic Reserve	Bryce Liddell
57	Gamay Rangers. Left to right: Robert Russell, Robert Simms, Bryce Liddell and Robert Cooley	Jessica Hromas
58	Gamay Ranger Robert Russell with Archaeologist Paul Irish. Sydney Harbour	Gamay Rangers
59	Mullet Haul. Koda Haze Liddell	Bryce Liddell
60	Yellowtail kingfish ( <i>Seriola lalandi</i> ). Towra Point Aquatic Reserve	Bryce Liddell
61	Boat Harbour	Jessica Hromas
62	Bryce Liddell SCUBA	Jessica Hromas
65	Swim nets with seagulls at Brighton Le Sands Beach	Jessica Hromas

illustrations: Humpback whale, stingray, mullet, flathead and shells Shane Youngberry

# MAP DATA SOURCES

Map	Legend	Dataset Name / Credit
1	Local Aboriginal Land Councils	NSW Administrative Boundaries Theme - Local Aboriginal Land Council / State of New South Wales (Spatial Services, a business unit of the Department of Customer Service NSW). For current information go to <a href="https://spatial.nsw.gov.au">spatial.nsw.gov.au</a> .
1	Baselayer	Light Gray Baselayer / Esri, Tom Tom, Garmin, Foursquare, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS
2	Aquatic reserves	Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database. CAPAD2022 (marine) / Australian Government (DCCEEW). The data is supplied to the Commonwealth for compilation by States and Territories of Australia and custodianship rests with the source agencies.
2	RAMSAR	Ramsar Wetlands of Australia / Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water) 2023
2	Important shorebirds sites	National Shorebird Monitoring Database / Birdlife Australia, supplied March 2024
2	Long-nosed fur-seal haul out site	Long-nosed fur-seal haul out site field data / Gamay Rangers, La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council
2	Great Nurse Shark	Greynurse Shark Critical Habitat and Aggregation Sites NSW / State of New South Wales (Department of Primary Industries)
2	Seagrass	NSW Estuarine Macrophytes 2023 / State of New South Wales (Department of Primary Industries), 2023
2	Estuarine habitats	NSW Estuarine Macrophytes 2023 / State of New South Wales (Department of Primary Industries), 2023
2	Seafloor habitats	Seamap National Benthic Habitat (2023) / Lucieer V, Walsh P, Flukes E, Butler C, Proctor R, Johnson C (2017). Seamap Australia - a national seafloor habitat classification scheme. Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), University of Tasmania (UTAS).
2	Boundary - terrestrial reserves	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) All Managed Land / State of New South Wales. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) All Managed Land. Updated 2022. State Government of NSW and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (State of New South Wales) 2021
3	Aquatic reserves	Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database. CAPAD2022 (marine) / Australian Government (DCCEEW). The data is supplied to the Commonwealth for compilation by States and Territories of Australia and custodianship rests with the source agencies.
3	Wetland / marsh	NSW Landuse 2017 / State Government of NSW (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water), 2019
3	Potential loss of seagrass since 1999/2002	Botany Bay 1999, Port Hacking 2002, Georges River 2002 / State of New South Wales (Department of Primary Industries)
3	Potential loss of seagrass since 1981	Botany Bay 1981 / State of New South Wales (Department of Primary Industries)
4	Whaff/jetty/boat ramp	NSW Transport Theme / State of New South Wales Spatial Services, a business unit of the Department of Customer Service NSW (State of New South Wales), 2020. Updated 2023
4	Rockwalls	GEODATA TOPO 250K Series 3 / Commonwealth of Australia, Geoscience Australia (Commonwealth of Australia), 2006. Updated 2022.
4	Airport runway/taxi	NSW Transport Theme / State of New South Wales Spatial Services, a business unit of the Department of Customer Service NSW (State of New South Wales), 2020. Updated 2023
4	Kamay ferry wharfs	digitised approximate location / digitised approximate locations from <a href="https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/kfw-cemp-2023-06.pdf">https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/kfw-cemp-2023-06.pdf</a>
4	Large storage tanks	GEODATA TOPO 250K Series 3 / Commonwealth of Australia, Geoscience Australia (Commonwealth of Australia), 2006. Updated 2022.
4	Lighthouse	GEODATA TOPO 250K Series 3 / Commonwealth of Australia, Geoscience Australia (Commonwealth of Australia), 2006. Updated 2022.
4	Marine navigation bouys/ poles	NSW Transport Theme / State of New South Wales Spatial Services, a business unit of the Department of Customer Service NSW (State of New South Wales), 2020. Updated 2023
4	Public moorings	NSW Transport Theme / State of New South Wales Spatial Services, a business unit of the Department of Customer Service NSW (State of New South Wales), 2020. Updated 2023
4	Public boat ramp	NSW Boating Ramps / Infrastructure and Geospatial Services NSW. Updated 2023. Transport for New South Wales Infrastructure and Geospatial Services, Maritime, Roads and Maritime Services NSW (Infrastructure and Geospatial Services NSW), 2017
4	Land use (sand mining, sewage treatment, land fill and waste facilities, manufacturing and industrial)	NSW Landuse 2017 / State Government of NSW and NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 2019
4	Shipping channel- restricted area	digitised approximate location / digitized approximate location from <a href="https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/9f-botany-bay-lower-georges-cooks.pdf">https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/9f-botany-bay-lower-georges-cooks.pdf</a>
4	Port/airport security zone	NSW Transport Theme / State of New South Wales Spatial Services, a business unit of the Department of Customer Service NSW (State of New South Wales), 2020. Updated 2023
5	Important community and cultural sites	Gamay sea country consultation data 2023-2024 / La Perouse Local Area Land Council. Sea country planning data was recorded during consultations with the La Perouse Aboriginal Community.
5	Important community and cultural sites	Gamay AHIMS export / Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System New South Wales Environment and Heritage (AHIMS), accessed 2024 (note: Non-Human Bone and Organic Material and Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) not shown)
All maps	LGAs	nsw_localities / Geoscape. NSW Suburb-Locality Boundaries - Geoscape Administrative Boundaries (Geoscape), 2021 Australia licensed by the Commonwealth of Australia. 2021
All maps	Boundary - sea country planning boundary	Sea Country planning boundary / La Perouse Local Area Land Council. Sea country planning data was developed during consultations with the La Perouse Aboriginal Community.
All maps	Land parcels	NSW Landuse 2017 / State Government of NSW and NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 2019



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This plan was supported by Country Needs People

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