



*Aerial view of Rhodes, 1972. City of Canada Bay Local Studies Collection*

## **The City, the River and the Museum: Ways of Knowing the Parramatta/Burramatta River**

**Wednesday 8 November 2023, Western Sydney University,  
Peter Shergold Building, 169 Macquarie Street, Parramatta, Level 9, Conference Room 3**

**8.45am: Morning tea**

**9.15am: Introduction**

**MC, Ien Ang**, *Institute for Culture and Society (ICS), Western Sydney University (WSU)*

**9.30am: Welcome to Country**

**Uncle Chris Tobin**, *Dharug elder*

**9.40am: Opening remarks**

**Lord Mayor Councillor Pierre Esber**, *City of Parramatta*

**10.00–11.30am**

**Session 1: River, city, museum**

**Uncle Chris Tobin**, *Dharug elder*

**Rae Dufty-Jones**, *RPS Group*

**Hiroko Kusunoki & Nicolas Moreau**, *Moreau Kusunoki*, and

**Steven Toia**, *Genton*

**Matthew Connell**, *Powerhouse*

**11.45–1.15pm**

**Session 2: The current state of the Parramatta River**

**Tony Chappel**, *NSW Environmental Protection Agency*

**Ian Wright**, *School of Science, WSU*

**Nigel Helyer**, *Sonic Objects; Sonic Architecture*

**Jasmine Payget**, *Parramatta River Keeper*

**1.15–2.00pm: Lunch**

**2.00–3.30pm**

**Session 3: Human and nonhuman life along the Parramatta River**

**Leanne Niblock**, *Sydney Water*

**Jessica Meade**, *Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment, WSU*

**Swapan Paul**, *Sydney Wetlands Institute*

**Malini Sur, Nimi Tech, Jacob Macri**, *ICS/School of Social Sciences, WSU*

**3.45–5.15pm**

**Session 4: Community, heritage and culture**

**Tammi Gissell**, *Powerhouse*

**Charlene Bordley**, *Addventagious*

**Denis Byrne**, *ICS, WSU*

**Christiane Keys-Statham**, *ICS, WSU*

**5.15–5.30pm**

**Session 5: Wrap up and next steps**

**Nicky Morrison**, *Urban Transformations Research Centre, WSU*

**5.30–6.30pm: Closing reception**

**WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POWERHOUSE**







Aerial view of Parramatta River, Google Earth, 2023

## The City, the River and the Museum: Ways of Knowing the Parramatta/Burramatta River

This symposium brings together researchers, scientists, policy makers, artists, activists, community members and museum workers to focus on different aspects of the Parramatta River as a central feature of Parramatta's growing role as the Central River City in Greater Sydney.

Parramatta is the furthest navigable point inland on the Parramatta River, and also the point at which the river becomes freshwater. Aboriginal people once fished from bark canoes on the river, and the river continues to be a place of Aboriginal cultural significance. The river was also an important transport corridor between Sydney and Parramatta, and most of the Parramatta River was once swimmable. By the 1950s, however, a lack of regulation and rapid industrial development caused substantial pollution and degradation of the water quality. Today, there are growing calls and initiatives to restore Parramatta River's significance as the green heart of the city. The arrival of the Powerhouse Parramatta – scheduled to open in 2025 – is a catalyst for this development.

Leveraging investment in the first NSW State Cultural Institution based in Western Sydney, Powerhouse Parramatta will provide opportunities to extend the Powerhouse's rich cultural and STEM programming to the river. The Powerhouse in partnership with communities will be an active caretaker of the river, building a diverse green ecology that will be accessible and enjoyed by all.

The Parramatta River exemplifies the multiple roles of rivers in the lives of cities and their environs through intersecting physical, social and cultural structures and processes.

The symposium is organised around the following themes:

- *Economy*: what is the role of the river in Parramatta's urban transformation?
- *Environment*: how is the river faring as natural infrastructure under conditions of environmental degradation and climate change?
- *Society*: what role does the river play as a site of conviviality and cultural pluralism, particularly those of local Aboriginal and multicultural communities?
- *Community*: how do community activities support the river?
- *Culture*: How can the Powerhouse Parramatta become as embedded as the river in Parramatta's life and enhance existing relationships between communities and the river?

*Western Sydney University acknowledges the peoples of the Dharug, Tharawal, Eora and Wiradjuri nations. We also acknowledge that the teaching and learning currently delivered across our campuses is a continuance of the teaching and learning that has occurred on these lands for tens of thousands of years.*

*The Powerhouse acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the ancestral homelands upon which our museums are situated. We respect their Elders, past, present and future and recognise their continuous connection to Country.*



## 10.00–11.30am Session 1: River, City, Museum



*Aerial view of Parramatta River, Google Earth, 2023*

**Moderator: DEBORAH STEVENSON**, *ICS, WSU*

**UNCLE CHRIS TOBIN**, *Dharug elder*

### **Our ways of knowing the Burramatta River**

Uncle Chris Tobin is a Dharug Elder who will talk about the Dharug peoples' long and ongoing relationship with the Burramatta River. He will elaborate on the continuity of traditional and contemporary relationships with this river and connected waterways. This presentation will draw on one he recently delivered to the WSU Indigenous Elders Committee, of which he is a member.

**RAE DUFTY-JONES**, *RPS Group*

### **Understanding rivers as multiscale infrastructures in urban policy**

Rivers have played a crucial role in human society, providing access to water necessary for human survival. However, rivers are also multiscale infrastructures that have been foundational in enabling a range of socio-technological innovations such as agriculture, industrialisation, trade and transport. Cities are another socio-technology that rivers are argued to have been integral in. Today – as we grapple with the various implications of the Anthropocene – rivers and their role as multiscale infrastructures remain pivotal to the future of cities. The multiscale quality of rivers, however, is yet to be fully realised in urban policies and instead more traditional, deficit-framed approaches focused only on a limited range of riverine challenges dominate urban policies. Highlighting the idea of rivers as a multiscale infrastructure enables us to better understand the role of the Parramatta/Burramatta River and inform policy approaches to a range of urban challenges facing Western Sydney.

**HIROKO KUSUNOKI & NICOLAS MOREAU**, *Moreau Kusunoki*, and **STEVEN TOIA**, *Genton*

### **The Powerhouse and the river**

The river is the soul of the precinct, and the Powerhouse its caring guardian. The position of the Powerhouse is derived from the main civic connections, and from the desire to define and shield an active public space, directly interacting with the river. More than a museum, Powerhouse Parramatta reconnects CBD and river with a huge new north-facing public

park. The urban design strategy gives back over two-thirds of the site as new landscaped public open space. The Powerhouse's minimal building footprint touches the ground lightly. The structure supports a series of hyper-platforms, column-free spaces with flexibility and potential. Each platform is a Presentation Space that supports an array of simultaneous curatorial experiences. Visitors move through the Presentation Spaces, connected to nature, appreciating the views over the river and park. This transformational project is set to amplify the cultural heart of Parramatta, while reconnecting the city and river with vibrant and active public spaces, contributing to the rich and diverse culture of Western Sydney.

**MATTHEW CONNELL**, *Powerhouse*

### **Water and power**

The Powerhouse museum holds an extensive collection of artefacts, photographs and other material that speaks to the use (exploitation) of water by British colonists – for drinking, sustaining crops and animals and, in particular, delivering power. Water has been the focus for many of Australia's and NSW's most ambitious and conspicuous engineering projects. Colonisation in NSW was framed by an industrial revolution mindset that persists and is still celebrated despite obvious problems – climate, environmental destruction and associated 'natural disasters'. We are exploring what it means to engineer and design On Country. We hope this First Nation-led investigation may contribute to rehabilitating engineering and other applied science – its application and its value. The starting and finishing point for our exploration is the Parramatta River, including the flood mitigation at Powerhouse Parramatta more modestly echoing the design of the Brewarrina fish traps rather than that of Warragamba dam.

### **Discussion**

## 11.45am–1.15pm Session 2: The Current State of the Parramatta River

**Moderator:** **CECELIA CMIELEWSKI**, ICS, WSU

**TONY CHAPPEL**, NSW Environmental Protection Agency

### **A healthy future for Burramatta River starts with Connection to Country**

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is working with the local community and stakeholders to restore the Burramatta/Parramatta River to a healthy state. In pursuing a stewardship approach to environmental protection, we have adopted a Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal people which outlines 12 principles to guide our work over the coming years. Bringing these principles to life in this context means recognising the need to embrace the knowledge and perspectives of the traditional custodians, the Burramattagal people, and to consider the Burramatta/Parramatta River catchment in a holistic way. While much improvement has been achieved over the last fifty years, there is still more to be done. The EPA is specifically focused on limiting wet weather overflows into the river and reducing sediment through the Get the Site Right campaign.

**IAN WRIGHT**, School of Science, WSU

### **Parramatta River: Fighting back from urban development and industrial waste pollution**

To plan a healthier future for the Parramatta River, we need to understand how urban, industrial and commercial development has modified this waterway and its surrounding land and biodiversity. The natural flow patterns of Parramatta/Burramatta River, its tributaries and catchment have been profoundly modified. For decades, the river was used as a dumping ground for domestic and industrial waste. Although untreated industrial waste is no longer disposed into the Parramatta River, the river still contains metals and dioxin contamination that accumulated for decades in river sediment. But the river is fighting back and the community is working to help the river recover. Many aspects of the river's water quality are now improving, and important biodiversity habitats are being protected and improved.

**NIGEL HELYER**, *Sonic Objects; Sonic Architecture*

### **The Parramatta River: Refraction/reflection**

Just as the trajectory and speed of light is altered as refraction or reflection at the interface of air and water, so too our perceptions are deflected and reflected away from the depths of the river. Above the surface, our visual gaze assigns a series of emotions and meanings to water. The shimmer of sunlight on the rippled surface of a River or Lake; calms—the spindrift torn from waves pounding cliffs; excite—in both cases we enter a realm of visual delight or awe. But should our thoughts deflect and penetrate the meniscus, we are lost. Here our reverie ends, our senses become muted, our knowledge evaporates. This is a realm of alien chemistry and biology that shares nothing with the reassuring picturesque sunsets of the surface. The Parramatta River is typically calm—a placid, but turbid flow, curling around the remnant mangrove margins, or lapping the armoured shorelines that protect high density housing developments. Its dark surface reveals little to the casual observer – it guards its history, chemistry and biology. Below the surface, the river is mute, telling nothing about its wellbeing – and we are content to ignore all but the most obvious visual or olfactory signs that not all is well. What hides here?

**JASMINE PAYGET**, *City of Canada Bay*

### **The Parramatta River Catchment Group**

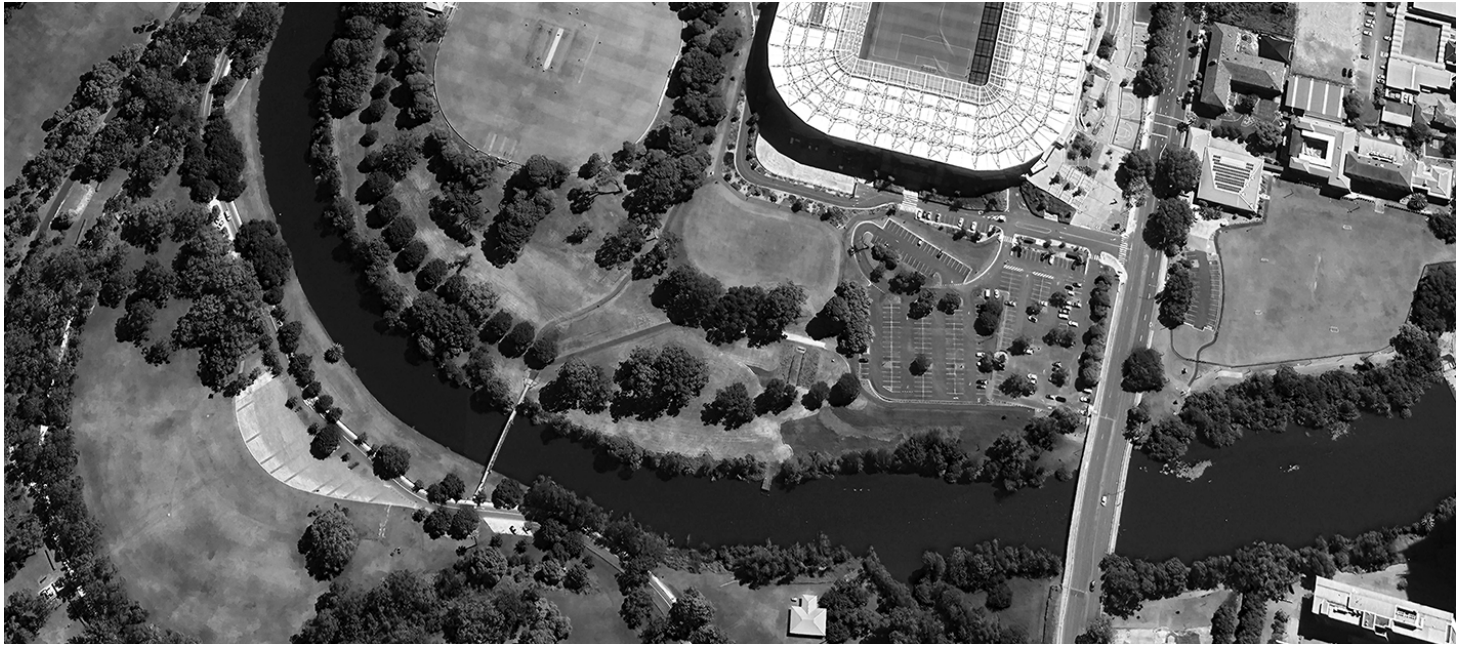
The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) has been established to 'make Parramatta River a living river'. PRCG is a member-based organisation consisting of 10 councils in the catchment, Sydney Water and several NSW State Government Agencies. It works collaboratively across local council boundaries, seeking to have a healthier waterway and to enable humans to enjoy the river through swimming and other water recreation activities. PRCG is strongly supported by communities along the river. The Riverkeeper, the volunteer Riverkeeper Ambassadors and members of clean up and conservation groups run specific projects for the protection of the waterways. Riverfest and the Riverkeeper Network aim to connect people throughout this watery urban space by knowledge, skill and communication. This presentation will illuminate how that occurs and provide an analysis of the current approach.

### **Discussion**

**1.15–2.00pm: Lunch**



## 2.00–3.30pm Session 3: Human and Nonhuman Life Along the Parramatta River



*Aerial view of Parramatta River, Google Earth, 2023*

**Moderator: ALISON BARNES**, *ICS/School of Humanities and Communication Arts, WSU*

**LEANNE NIBLOCK**, *Sydney Water*

### **Is swimming the answer to creating a Central River City?**

The Parramatta River Catchment Group's 'Our Living River campaign' has been at the forefront of a growing trend worldwide to reclaim urban waterways for swimming. With a mission of making the river swimmable by 2025, the collective efforts of community groups, local councils, NSW government agencies and Sydney Water has already seen this become a reality, with the City of Canada Bay launching the first new swim site at Bayview Park in November 2022. Despite this success, opening new swim sites remains a challenge. While difficult, it shouldn't be impossible to make a healthy Parramatta/Burramatta River the heart of Sydney's Central River City. Success would see Parramatta placed amongst other leading river cities around the globe.

**JESSICA MEADE**, *Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment, WSU*

### **Flying foxes and the Parramatta/Burramatta River**

Flying foxes are of crucial ecological and economic importance, providing essential ecosystem services via pollination and seed dispersal. In Sydney, the most common species is the grey-headed flying fox, which is sadly threatened with extinction. In addition to ongoing threats such as habitat destruction, the grey-headed flying fox currently faces three emerging threats: urbanisation and associated conflict with humans, mass die-offs from extreme heat events, and range-wide destruction of foraging resources due to fires. Parramatta Park is home to a nationally important flying-fox colony of primarily grey-headed flying foxes. These animals roost in trees along the Parramatta/Burramatta River, and use the river to belly dip, for hydration and thermoregulation. This talk will focus on the importance of monitoring and conserving flying foxes, and their importance for forest ecosystems

**SWAPAN PAUL**, *Sydney Wetlands Institute*

### **Magical mangroves of the mighty Parramatta/Burramatta River**

Mangroves have taken advantage of the rapid urban development in the upper catchments of the Parramatta/Burramatta River, and quickly colonised the shores along the upper and lower energy reaches of the river. Mangroves are intimately linked to human welfare, and despite being hardy, they are also vulnerable to excessive sedimentation, shore slump, impacts of sea level rise, climate change, natural disasters, public interferences and many more. These factors put mangroves under tremendous pressure and at risk of ongoing losses, but mangrove rehabilitation attempts are largely unsuccessful. This presentation argues that for successful and lasting rehabilitation, mindful planning, multilevel approaches and mutual understanding are necessary.

**MALINI SUR, NIMI TECHI, JACOB MACRI**, *ICS/SoSS, WSU*

### **Sounds of the Parramatta/Burramatta River**

This collaboration explores the sonic landscapes of the Parramatta River. We explore the river's life-giving properties and the human and non-human relationships it nurtures. The resulting assemblage of sounds surrounding Parramatta/Burramatta River reveal a vivid auditory scene that encapsulates the essence of Parramatta and its inhabitants and offers a distinct avenue for comprehending our urban milieu, culture and nature. Malini presents on some of the sensibilities that are emerging from a collaborative exploration of the river's soundscapes.

### **Discussion**

## 3.45–5.15pm Session 4: Community, Heritage, Culture

**Moderator:** **DEBORAH LAWLER-DORMER**, *Powerhouse*

**TAMMI GISSELL**, *Powerhouse*

### **Dancing up Country: (Re)creating relevant ceremony for Burramatta River communities**

Rivers hold enormous significance to Aboriginal Australians due to resounding spiritual, cultural and practical connections with Country. Many clan groups of the Dharug nation and their welcomed guests have been existing alongside the Burramatta River since time began. Many more people have come since the settlers came. This symposium recognises that the Burramatta River is the heart, brain, veins and sinews of the Country where the Powerhouse Parramatta will reside. Without the river's blessing, without Country's consent, the Powerhouse won't power on too long on its foreshore. This presentation will address the need for Aboriginal-led caring, critical, creative visitation with the Burramatta and highlight how activation of space towards placemaking is possible and necessary. Discussing the need to create (or recreate) relevant rituals and ceremonies (for all community) is vital to an ongoing reciprocal relationship borne from responsibility to Burramatta and, ultimately, will provide the real foundation for the success of the Powerhouse's vision.

**CHARLENE BORDLEY**, *Addventageous*

### **Addventageous: Building resilience, stories and legacy**

Independent mobility, health, and well-being are seen as crucial to self-efficacy, independence, active citizenship, and self-esteem among participants in community cycling programs to make a lasting impact in the Parramatta community and beyond. Recognising the significance of storytelling and cultural connection, this talk outlines potential collaborations with the Murama Healing Space Aboriginal Cultural Circle, the aim of which is to share the stories of the living river with youth, training ride leaders who will educate visitors to Parramatta about the river's rich heritage. Community engagement and advocacy roles such as the Ambassador River Keeper for Our Living River will demonstrate how awareness has been raised about the importance of fish passage and making the Parramatta/Burramatta River swimmable again. The focus on community initiatives will also address the roles of the Parramatta Cycling Advisory Committee, Parramatta Chapter of Cycling Without Age and the Bicycle User Group Camwest.

**DENIS BYRNE**, *ICS, WSU*

### **The place of the river in the lives of first-generation migrants in Parramatta**

As they go about their everyday lives in Parramatta, walking the suburban streets or the paths along the Parramatta River, first generation Chinese and Indian migrants are resignifying the white settler heritage of colonial and more recent times. In this presentation, I review the findings of current research on migrant heritage-making in Parramatta, paying particular attention to what recent migrants have to say about the ways in which the river and its margins have become woven into the fabric of everyday life. The river is of key significance to them as a category of open space that is more 'open' to newcomers than is the more culturally structured space of Parramatta's built environment. For many, the river triggers memories of rivers in their hometowns offshore while at the same time serving as an entry point to their nascent understanding of what country means to Aboriginal people.

**CHRISTIANE KEYS-STATHAM**, *ICS, WSU*

### **Public art, the river and the museum: Connecting the Powerhouse to Parramatta**

As Parramatta is progressively reshaped, layers of permanent and temporary public art shift and transform the city. The Powerhouse Parramatta will be a host site and vessel for the display of public art, a public artwork in its own right and potentially also a commissioning body. The museum can also become a microcosm of the city: a curated reflection and extension of public debates being held in the streets, media and throughout our contemporary cultural life. What conversations and debates will be explored through the Powerhouse Parramatta's public programs and infrastructure? This paper examines the complex connections between the Powerhouse Parramatta, the Parramatta/Burramatta River and the collection of artworks along the river and in the surrounding streets. The presence of environmental networks and non-human communities, and their interplay with cultural life along the river, will be analysed as part of a broad consideration of the living landscape into which the Powerhouse Parramatta will integrate.

### **Discussion**

### **5.15–5.30pm Session 5: Wrap up and next steps**

**NICKY MORRISON**, *Urban Transformations Research Centre, WSU*

### **5.30–6.30pm: Closing reception**

## BIOGRAPHIES



**Ilen Ang** is Distinguished Professor of Cultural Studies and was the founding Director of the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. Her most recent books include *Chinatown Unbound: Trans-Asian Urbanism in the Age of China* (2019) and *Cultural*

*Diplomacy: Beyond the National Interest* (2016). She is the recipient of numerous Australian Research Council grants, including two current ARC Linkage projects: 'The Collaborative Museum: Embedding Cultural Infrastructure in the City' and 'Diversifying the Regional Art Museum'. She is a champion of collaborative cultural research and has worked extensively with partner organisations including The Art Gallery of New South Wales, The Special Broadcasting Service, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the City of Sydney and the Powerhouse. Ilen is a co-convenor and moderator for this symposium.



**Alison Barnes** is a senior lecturer in Visual Communication and a school member of the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. Her research interests centre on the differing roles graphic design plays in the mediation, construction,

and communication of everyday life, belonging and identity. Alison's most recent work explores how 'graphic heritage' and the seemingly mundane design choices made around the use of colour, typography and symbols in urban retail environments, contribute to processes of gentrification and experiences of inclusion and exclusion.



**Charlene Bordley** is the founder of Addventagous: Your Cycling Connections and Parra Bike Tours: Cycling by the River, two enterprises that aim to empower individuals through cycling. Through these ventures, Charlene reinvests revenue into community cycling programs,

equipping participants with the necessary skills, confidence, and safety knowledge for bike riding as a means of transportation. Having volunteered for a sizeable youth-based organization for 15 years, where she focused on environmental care, Charlene laid the foundation for her journey as a social entrepreneur. With a deep commitment to normalising bike riding and connecting people, places, and Country, she has dedicated her efforts to positively impacting her community.



**Denis Byrne** is a Professor of archaeology and heritage studies at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. With a focus on Asia and Australia, he works across the fields of the archaeology of the contemporary past, critical heritage studies, and the

environmental humanities. His research on the transnationally distributed heritage of Chinese migration to Australia is published in *The Heritage Corridor: A Transnational Approach to the Heritage of Chinese Migration* (2022). His books *Surface Collection* (2007) and *Counterheritage: Critical Approaches on Heritage Conservation in Asia* (2014) explore new approaches to the writing of archaeology and heritage.



**Tony Chappel** joined the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in August 2022 with strong experience in highly regulated industries and a commitment to the environment. Prior to joining the EPA, Tony was Executive General Manager, Corporate Affairs, Legal Risk and

Governance at the Australian Energy Market Operator. His role included responsibility for stakeholder engagement, regulatory strategy and policy, working with all Australian governments to ensure the delivery of safe, reliable and affordable energy, and to enable the energy transition in the interests of consumers. Tony holds a Master's degree in Environmental Change and Management from the University of Oxford and a Master's degree in Environmental Technology from Imperial College, London.



**Cecelia Cmielewski** is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University with over thirty years' experience in the cultural sector. She is the author of *Creative Frictions: Arts Leadership, Policy and Practice in Multicultural*

*Australia* (2021). Cecelia's research interests address inclusion in the creative sectors with a focus on the relationship between creative production and multicultural policies. Cecelia held Senior Policy and Project Management roles at the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts agency between 1998 and 2011. Her current research role is on the ARC-funded 'The Collaborative Museum: Embedding Cultural Infrastructure in the City' (2021–2025). Cecelia is a co-convenor and moderator for this symposium.





**Matthew Connell** is Director Curatorial, Collections and Programs at the Powerhouse Museum. He graduated with a degree in physics before working in seismology, microelectronics research and computing. In 1991, he joined the Powerhouse Museum as the Curator of Computing

and Mathematics. Matthew went on to lead the IT Curatorial Team curating exhibitions relating to computing history, AI, Logic, Robotics, Interface Design, Digital Manufacturing Technologies, and others. He is a member of the Faculty Advisory Council for the UNSW Faculty of Science and an Adjunct Professor with the iCinema Research Centre at UNSW.



**Rae Dufty-Jones** is Director of Social Advisory and Research at consulting firm RPS. Rae is a PhD qualified social and economic geographer and an award-winning communicator and educator. She has over 15-years of experience in designing innovative research solutions for and with

community, government, and industry partners in a range of infrastructure areas including transport, energy and housing. Prior to working at RPS she was an Associate Professor of human geography in the School of Social Sciences at Western Sydney University.



**Lord Mayor Cr Pierre Esber** was elected to the City of Parramatta Council in September 2017, and elected Lord Mayor in September 2023. Lord Mayor Esber, who represents the Dundas Ward, has been helping shape Parramatta in various roles for more than 20 years. Councillor

Esber is focused on leading the City as it embarks on the next chapter of its transformation. Having lived in Parramatta all his life, Cr Esber is committed to continuing to make it the best place to live and raise a family, to work and build a business and a magnet for our smartest minds, most brilliant creatives and promising talent. With a background in small business, Cr Esber wants to ensure the benefits of Parramatta's economic transformation are shared by all, so local communities get the highest quality services and community infrastructure in their suburbs and neighbourhoods.



Born 'out the back of Bourke', North-West NSW, **Tammi Gissell** is a Muruwarri-Wiradjuri woman and Collections Coordinator, First Nations at the Powerhouse. Since 1996, she has toured as a performer while working across cultural and educational institutions as

lecturer, program coordinator, producer, assessor, compliance officer, registrar and team leader. From 2020-2022, she led the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander assessment team for the Powerhouse Collection, Relocation and Digitisation Project. Tammi holds a Bachelor of Performance: Theory and Practice (Honours) from Western Sydney University. Tammi has presented research to the World Dance Alliance (NYU), Brisbane Festival, and has been commissioned to write for the Precarious Movements: Dance and the Museum anthology, the Australian New Zealand Journal of Art and The Venice Journal of Environmental Humanities.



**Nigel Helyer** is an internationally prominent sculptor and sound artist. He brings these concerns together in creative projects that prompt the community to engage with their cultural histories, identity and sense of place, inviting us to examine the abstract conditions of

our world and our complex relationships to it. Nigel is a strong advocate for experimental art and is a specialist in art and science collaborations. He is a board member of the Paris-based Association Internationale de Critiques d'Art and has authored several books, including Crayvox, The Deluge Ark(ive), Culturescape: An Ecology of Bundanon and When Science Meets Art. He is an Honorary Professor at Macquarie University.



**Deborah Lawler-Dormer** is Research Manager at the Powerhouse. Her work is transdisciplinary and often engages art, science and technology in collaboration with industry, tertiary and community partners. She is the lead curator for the exhibition Invisible Revealed

(2022) developed in partnership with the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation. Recent publications include 'Critical post-humanist practices from within the Museum' in The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Posthumanism (2022). Deborah is the Siggraph Asia Art Gallery Chair for Sydney in 2023. She is a co-convenor and moderator for this symposium.





**Jacob Macri** has been working in production for the last four years. He is an experienced editor, cinematographer and director. Jacob has worked in multiple roles across the creative industries, such as digital content producer for Investorment and head of production at The Casual

Athlete. He has also directed two musical theatre pieces: Singin' In The Rain and Jersey Boys. Jacob has written and directed three short films and is currently freelancing on multiple projects with organisations such as Western Sydney University and the National Rugby League.



**Jessica Meade** earned her Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Biological Sciences at the University of Bristol (UK) before going on to do a PhD in Animal Behaviour at the University of Oxford (UK). Jessica was appointed as a Postdoctoral Research Associate (PDRA) at the

University of Sheffield (UK) before moving to Sydney in 2011. In Australia, Jessica worked as a PDRA at UNSW and at Taronga Zoo before joining the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment at Western Sydney University in 2017. Jessica specialises in animal behaviour, movement ecology and animal remote sensing.



**Nicky Morrison** is Professor of Planning at Western Sydney University and the University's Director of the Urban Transformations Research Centre. Nicky is a leading academic authority on delivering resilient, healthy and sustainable communities and securing

affordable housing through the planning system. She has over 27 years of experience leading interdisciplinary teams on high impact international planning and housing research projects, attracting funding from the European Commission; Norwegian, UK, NSW state and local governments; Shelter Homeless Charity; and Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Nicky has been invited to act as advisor to senior government officials and NGOs across the world.

**Leanne Niblock** has been with Sydney Water since 2019 and is principally overseeing the program of activities with councils and catchment groups aimed at improving waterway health, including delivering new swimming sites with partners through the organisation's Urban Plunge program. This role with Sydney Water combines all the things she is passionate about - building partnerships, developing strategy and delivering great outcomes for the community



and the environment. Prior to this, Leanne spent much of her career working in local government, delivering sustainability and land use planning projects before moving to roles with the NSW Government.



**Swapan Paul** is Senior Wetlands Ecologist at the Sydney Olympic Park Authority and lead for the Sydney Wetland Institute. He is responsible for planning and managing projects and programs targeting superior management of wetlands in the Park, particularly

estuarine wetlands including mangroves. He completed his PhD in 1990 in wetland ecology and management, and has over 35 years of working in international, Australian state and local government positions. He is the architect of the Wetland Education and Training (WET) Program at Sydney Olympic Park Authority which he manages, including the hands-on training in wetlands. Swapan was awarded the 2023 Outstanding Wetland Educator by the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS).



**Jasmine Payget** became the Riverkeeper with the Parramatta River Catchment Group in August 2020. Jasmine has a wealth of experience in catchment education and community engagement, having worked previously for the Blue Mountains Council,

former Leichhardt Council and Cooks River Alliance. A key part of Jasmine's role is to develop programs that improve biodiversity in the Parramatta River catchment and increase community engagement through the expansion of the Riverkeeper Network and other initiatives.



**Christiane Keys-Statham** is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Culture and Society, a public art curator, writer and project manager. Christiane's work has a particular focus on the intersections of public art practice, cultural infrastructure and environmental processes, and she is dedicated to

expanding the potential of public art through collaborative projects with artists, communities, scientists, activists, academics, architects and design professionals.



**Deborah Stevenson** is an Elected Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and a Professor in the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. Her research interests are in arts and cultural policy, cities and urban life, and the

ways in which gender shapes creative practice and cultural consumption. She has published extensively on these topics, including the recent books *Cultural Policy Beyond the Economy: Work, Value, and the Social* (2023) and *Cities of Culture: A Global Perspective* (2017). Her latest co-edited books are *The Australian Art Field: Practices, Policies, Institutions* (2020) and the *Urban Media and Communication Companion* (2020).



**Malini Sur** is an Associate Professor in Anthropology at Western Sydney University. She is internationally recognised for her contributions to the study of borders, mobility, and environment. Her book *Jungle Passports: Fences, Mobility, and Citizenship at*

the Northeast India-Bangladesh Border (2021) was awarded the President's Book Prize from the South Asian Studies Association of Australia, Bernard S. Cohen Prize (honourable mention) and Choice Outstanding Academic Title (2022). Her documentary film *Life Cycle* has been screened nationally and internationally. Funded by the ARC Linkage project 'The Collaborative Museum', Malini is currently directing a documentary on the Parramatta River with Nimi Tech, Jacob Macri and Shivani Yaddanapudi (camera, sound, and production). Malini is a co-convenor for this symposium.



**Steven Toia** founded Genton in 2010, establishing studios in both Sydney and Melbourne, with a focus on delivering exceptional architecture and urban design. It is a professional pursuit that has been recognised with award-winning results across commercial, residential,

infrastructure and technical projects including the design and rebuild of iconic rail stations and public buildings, as well as transformative refurbishment projects. Steven celebrates a collaborative team culture and a balanced approach to entrepreneurial innovation, with a commitment to combining creativity with business management acumen, skills that have positioned Genton as an industry leader. Genton is part of the design team of the Powerhouse Parramatta in collaboration with the Paris-based firm Moreau Kusunoki.



**Nimi Tech** is a student of anthropology at the School of Social Sciences, WSU. Her research focus lies on migration, kinship, and Indigenous aspirations. She serves as the Executive Officer for the South Asian Studies Association of Australia and as a Social Media Editor for South

Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies. She currently holds the position of Research Assistant at the Institute of Culture and Society, Western Sydney University, actively contributing to diverse ongoing projects, including assisting in a documentary film production on the Parramatta River.



As a Dharug man, **Uncle Chris Tobin** is a traditional custodian in the Blue Mountains region and shares some of the local stories via his artworks. He has published a small booklet 'The Dharug Story', an Aboriginal History of Western Sydney. Chris coordinates Aboriginal presentations for small groups,

large school groups, private tours and for hotel guests. Chris also works on commissions for government bodies, small business and community organisations. While working with National Parks, he also co-ordinates other Aboriginal rangers to deliver cultural presentations as well as teaching large groups of children about ochres, weapons, Dharug language, painting, dancing and Aboriginal games.



**Ian Wright** is a water scientist and an Associate Professor in Western Sydney University's School of Science. Prior to WSU, he worked as a scientist in the urban water industry, mainly at Sydney Water. His water science interests include freshwater ecology, water chemistry and water pollution

(science and management). Ian's research interests include urban water issues, contamination from concrete materials and impacts of mining on streams and rivers. He has provided independent expert testimonies for environmental science matters for the NSW Land & Environment Court and for mining development proposals being considered through the planning system.

*The Symposium working group are from the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University: Ien Ang, Malini Sur, Cecelia Cmielewski, and from the Powerhouse: Deborah Lawler-Dormer.*

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