



Clean Air and  
Urban Landscapes  
Hub

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# Deepening the Relationship: Enhancing the capacity for Indigenous engagement in the urban professions

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**Authors:**

Prashanti Mayfield<sup>1</sup>, Libby Porter<sup>1</sup>

1. Centre for Urban Research, RMIT

## About the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub

The Clean Air and Urban Landscapes (CAUL) Hub is funded by the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program. The remit of the CAUL Hub is to undertake "Research to support environmental quality in our urban areas". This includes research on air quality, urban greening, liveability and biodiversity, with a focus on practical implementation of research findings, public engagement and participation by Indigenous Australians. The CAUL Hub is a consortium of four universities: The University of Melbourne, RMIT University, the University of Western Australia and the University of Wollongong.

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## Acknowledgement of Country

All Australian cities are located on Indigenous land where sovereignty was never ceded. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of lands across Australia, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures and heritage. In particular we acknowledge and pay our respects to people of the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin nation where RMIT University is located.

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## 1. Introduction

This gap analysis builds on previous work undertaken by the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub and forms the third milestone of project 6.1, aimed at identifying how Indigenous engagement is practiced in the Urban Planning and Design (UPD) professions. This report has been formed through a series of conversations with UPD professionals, asking them to reflect on their professions and practices in relation to Indigenous engagement. UPD aligned practitioners were asked to identify current gaps in practice and how their professions can be supported to build capacities in relation to Indigenous engagement. In October 2020 seven conversations were conducted with UPD professionals that have experience working on projects where Indigenous engagement was practiced. The range of people spoken to included planners, architects, urban designers, incorporating perspectives from government agencies, private practice and a Traditional Owner's corporation. Four key questions were asked: (i) how would you describe the ways Indigenous engagement is currently practiced in urban design and planning processes?; (ii) what is your personal experience in this space?; (iii) what are the biggest issues and gaps in capacity within Indigenous engagement practices that need to be addressed?; (iv) what resources do you think would best support urban planning and design professionals to build capacity in this space? In the following sections the key findings from conversations with UPD professionals are summarised with key insights from UPD practitioners highlighting where there are current gaps in Indigenous engagement practices.

These results reflect a range of views and perspectives from within the sector and are taken as indicative, not definitive, measures of how the professions view the role of Indigenous engagement and reasons for incorporating it more deeply into their everyday work practices and project design. All the responses are anonymised and are included here to show how different people in the sector consider the relationship they and their work share with Indigenous sovereignties and connections to Country. This report is structured in three sections, firstly the need for the UPD professions to engage with Indigenous communities is discussed, showing how UPD processes and outcomes impact Indigenous peoples and communities. The ways in which engagement is conducted within the professions is then discussed, with an overview on current practices within the sector and identification of where capacity building is needed. The third section analyses current Indigenous engagement practices and identifies possible ways in which these can be addressed and improved.

## 2. Why Indigenous Engagement is Critical to Successful and Inclusive UPD

Planning, architectural and landscape design are professions that shape the nature and functioning of urban places. In the Australian context, all lands on which cities and urban environments are situated are the unceded lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities (Ngurra et al. 2019). While the professions aspire to foster the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in urban development, there is a gap in the materials and practices provided by professional accrediting bodies to support a shift towards engaging in respectful relationships with Indigenous communities, sovereignties and Country in the context of the urban environment (Wensing & Porter 2016; Porter 2017). Ayre and Mackenzie (2013) note that barriers to Indigenous engagement include staffing and travel costs, difficulties in reaching remote communities, under resourced agencies and under skilled staff within settler colonial institutions. These barriers complicate good engagement and often UPD organisations and agencies will often rely on following the practices that are formalised through State-based policy, constraining the possibility of other forms of deeper and more meaningful engagement. Ayre and Mackenzie observe that within planning processes:

it is evident that the role of Indigenous knowledge(s) is contingent on the ability for Indigenous people to participate in processes that enable the possibility of including different knowledges in ways that do not privilege one over the other... we must explore new ways of working together that eschew the representation of Indigenous knowledge as “culture” and allow for new translating concepts to emerge (Ayre and Mackenzie, 2013).

Within UPD Indigenous engagement is primarily guided by State based legislative frameworks that outline the levels of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities required for developments, projects and sites. The application of these policies in practice can have varying outcomes in terms of benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities determining who is included – and who is excluded – in consultation and engagement processes. Often, standard processes work to silence groups and communities that are not recognised by settler institutions for example as a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), Land Council (LC) or Traditional Owner (TO) group. Further, formally recognised groups may not fully represent the voices or perspectives of all communities. Being auspiced through state and federal legislation provides legitimacy as legal entities under settler-colonial systems of governance, but this does not necessarily mean they have legitimacy within sovereign domains of Indigenous law.

Recent examples of engagement and partnerships with RAPs, LCs and TOs over the past few years show the mixed results that engagement with UPD processes and projects can have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Conflicts in legislation occur across policy scales and legislative jurisdictions that impact how engagement is conducted and the degree to which Indigenous views and voices are included in UPD. One participant interviewed observed that:

There is a real rub point between Indigenous views on land planning, zoning and management, there are all these white constructs versus not only historic cultural beliefs and values, but also contemporary beliefs and values, it’s a real rub point.

It was further observed by another that there is a lag in the ways that policy is developed to how practices occur on the ground, and noted that even the terminology of *engagement* can be problematic:

The word engagement is a tricky one...three or four years ago when we talked about engagement it meant that you would go and talk to the traditional owners and that would be the end of the process. Whereas now I don’t think we should be using the word engagement, I think it is a distraction or a misrepresentation of what needs to happen.

Policy governing UPD requires professions to engage with all rights holders and groups affected by a proposal or development. Regulatory frameworks often specify the ways in which engagement must be conducted. However one issue identified through the interviews is that policy assumes there is time and willingness to participate in engagement processes on the part of the RAP, TO or LC:

When engagement is trying to be done in a meaningful and heartfelt manner, the assumption is that the local Aboriginal people have the capacity, time and understanding to be engaged. I think one of the

constraints is that there is a lack of capacity in the groups to actually engage.

This statement reflects that there is a broad level of willingness within the UPD professions to engage with Indigenous communities, but the questioning of their capacity to do so meaningfully reveals an implicit bias in the assumptions that underpin how UPD is practiced in Australia. There is a consistent messiness and entanglement that occurs between settler-colonial systems of planning and the *rights* of traditional owners to be included and represented at all stages of a development, and the expectations that are explicit in legislation. The two central policy domains governing how UPD Indigenous engagement occurs are federal and State policies responding to Native Title and State policies governing cultural heritage management.

### 2.1 Land Rights, Native Title and UPD

Recognition of Indigenous land rights in Australia is governed through a patchwork of legislative responses across State and Territory jurisdictions. In addition, there is the native title regime instituted at the Federal level following the High Court's decision in *Mabo (No.2)* through the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth.). The court overturned the doctrine of *terra nullius* – land belonging to no-one – finding it to be a legal falsehood legal (Watson 2014) and recognised that the property rights of First Peoples, now known as 'native title', may have survived colonisation. However, the Federal Government extinguished native title on freehold land, leaving only Crown land available to claim. That extinguishment is of course "most spatially intense" (Porter and Barry 2016, p.53) in urban areas, which are also the places where Indigenous communities bore a particular brunt of colonisation, often resulting in the displacement of entire populations (see the analysis of Australian cities planning and development provided in Jackson, Porter and Johnson 2018). Claiming native title requires communities to provide proof of both ancestral and unbroken connection with their Country, with enormous ramifications for Indigenous peoples whose Country is now taken up by Australian cities and towns. This is the reason why there are so few successful native title claims in Australian urban areas (Wensing and Porter 2016).

This highlights the systemic assumptions in place within standard UPD engagement processes which automatically position Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities as *other than white* or *external* to the land and places where they have lived for thousands of generations and continue to practice their law (see also Foley 2007; Behrendt 2006). The explicit form of erasure enacted through the processes of colonisation as well as processes such as native title are extended through other more subtle forms of erasure. One participant interviewed stated that:

I would like there to be an acceptance of Aboriginal knowledge of a place considered with the same weight non-Indigenous knowledge is. Just because you haven't heard a story about a place before doesn't mean it isn't true, you can't just assume its fake or its made up because you didn't know it. We are acting in a culture where you don't have the right to know everything, and with a dislocated culture where no one will know everything, because their families have been dislocated and disconnected from their Country over generations (Participant 7).

The effect of this silencing and white-washing of Indigenous Country results in further marginalisation and removal of Indigenous input in UPD decision-making practices and outcomes.

The result of this is the further dispossession and deterritorialisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their connection to Country in urban environments (Porter 2018; Barry & Thompson-Fawcett 2020)

## 2.2 Cultural Heritage and UPD

Cultural heritage within Australia is managed at a State level and this legislation is often the primary impetus and mechanism for UPD professions to engage with Indigenous communities (Porter and Barry 2018). This variegated policy landscape between jurisdictions results in further mixed outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the continent. The design of the legislation is often outdated (see Jackson, Porter and Johnson 2018), or rely on definitions of cultural heritage and significance formulated by non-Indigenous peoples. As one participant noted:

The community is being encouraged to destroy culture because there is an income stream attached to it. Its deeply problematic...Getting away from worship of the artefact, the current basis of cultural heritage and what is considered to be cultural heritage was decided in the 1960s and 70s, mainly by archaeologists, and collectors and academics. This is not a list of cultural values and heritage that has been determined by Indigenous people.

The impacts of this exclusion on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is seen across the spectrum of planning and place-based design, including - but not limited to – decisions regarding housing and urban renewal, mining and mineral resource licensing, water governance, transport infrastructure and the management of natural resources. The power of both the federal and state legislatures to explicitly shape the ways in which Indigenous people and groups connect with their Country and who is deemed to have a *legitimate* claim to land show how it is Indigenous people and communities who are expected to follow settler-colonial governance norms. Yet there is little to no willingness from these structures to consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander systems of law and governance norms, or cases where Country has been returned to its and people with a complete removal of any claim to oversight or governance by the Crown.

## 3. Perspectives from the UPD Professions on Indigenous Engagement Practices

UPD professionals and firms are diverse and operate at all scales, from individual freelance practitioners to government employees to large scale private firms that operate at the precinct/suburb/regional/state and national scale. The approach to Indigenous engagement that these organisations take is typically driven by three factors (i) legislation within their operating jurisdiction; (ii) policies at a company level and requirements for professional registration; and (iii) at the individual level, driven by personal values and commitment to changes in professional practice. When asked to describe how the UPD professions practice Indigenous engagement participant responses included:

Patchy, superficial in the main, and not in the majority...meaningful and passionate engagement is really driven by committed individuals not private firms, the government or even legislation (Participant 1).

It's an evolving space, getting better in some areas while stalling in others... People are scared of saying or doing the wrong thing with Traditional Owners (Participant 3).

Some planners see Indigenous engagement as just another regulatory box to be ticked off, and the lessons that we have learned from that approach is that it simply doesn't work (Participant 7).

As noted by multiple participants, Indigenous communities are not 'stakeholders' they are *rights* holders. This is strongly supported in the research evidence, which indicates the importance of a shift from project specific engagements or 'stakeholder consultation' to a more holistic and relational understandings of engagement that extend through time (see Porter 2006 and 2010). This is where both the importance and the limitations of the ways in which legislation is constructed and implemented can shape planning and urban design outcomes (see Porter and Barry 2016). In particular there are instances where legislation can work as a disincentive as cultural heritage evaluations become a monetised space from which TOs and RAPs derive significant streams of income that they depend on for other work. This has the effect of capturing and constraining Indigenous values within financial and commodified logics (see Zorzin 2014). It was noted that often engagement is driven by the requirements set out by government frameworks and:

It's very removed and its very prescribed. The only point of required engagement, that I'm aware of is through the cultural heritage act and that is a very heavily prescribed and set out process that required proscribed fees, reporting, ways of meeting and is only triggered in certain circumstances based on modelling that is not very well updated and needs to be redone. That is the only point where the planning and design professions need to engage under the law (Participant 7).

It probably gets triggered by state legislation addressing cultural heritage and the tangible protection of cultural heritage. That's the base level trigger. We do a lot of big developments in my company, so when land is transition is required, that is one of the triggers. I think that there is probably limited opportunities or action taken beyond that when the onus is on a private developer (Participant 4).

Geographic and jurisdictional differences within Australia were noted and that it is the underpinning legislation that drives if and how Indigenous engagement practices are undertaken. Practice changes lead through policy shifts in Queensland were highlighted as exemplars of how Indigenous engagement is practiced, comparative to the other states. The conversations undertaken with UPD professionals all reflected this stratification and the relationship that is present between what is a regulatory obligation, and what more broadly could be considered as 'doing the right thing'. Overall it observed that there is a shift occurring in the ways that UPD is practiced that goes deeper than simply following legislative requirements. The change in thinking about how Indigenous engagement is occurring in the professions was linked to an individual's personal engagement with Indigenous people and communities outside of professional spaces and training that had shifted some of their ways of working and perspectives on engagement. As one participant explained:

The base level of knowledge across the [urban professional] community in general is almost ground-zero, sometimes I find myself falling into a space where I'm like: people are waking up and there is hope – and that certainly is happening. But then sometimes every now and again I get exposed to a

slither of the world that's outside of my context and then I'm like: 'oh shit'  
(Participant 4).

The question of how differing ways of seeing and understanding place come together through the process of engagement and how they work together was reflected upon in each of the interviews and showed a range of perspectives. A recurrent theme was that the gap present in how Indigenous engagement is practiced by UPD professionals was due to how planning education and professional development curriculum is designed and delivered. It was noted that for a majority of people interviewed that Indigenous perspectives were not integrated in relevant UPD course materials:

There are so many barriers, one is the capacity within the professions, there is a cultural awareness and understanding barrier, it's a 'walking on eggshells' concern from the profession, even though they come with good intent and good heart, they just lack the capacity to do it [practice]. There is a constraint in our academic planners who don't have capacity, even in universities, the requirements that we have imposed [for professional registration] are salt and peppered with Indigenous planning throughout. But the reality is that the universities don't have the capacity in their academics to begin to teach undergrads and postgrads how to do meaningful engagements. There are a couple of notable examples, but these are driven by passionate and committed individuals, not the academic discipline of planning as a whole (Participant 7).

This statement highlights the need for further and tailored training for the professions. In a majority of conversations a desire was stated for ongoing training and development in how to practice and Indigenous engagement meaningfully and respectfully. Some practitioners discussed how they are considering their own positionality and relationship to Indigenous people and sovereignties in both their professional and personal lives. Stating that the impact of reflecting on this relationship and their capacities within their professions to either choose to recognise or ignore its presence. All participants agreed that more needs to be done, but the pathways and methods to achieving this are complex and often people choose not to act for fear of making a mistake or 'doing it wrong'. Developing capacity in the professions means recognising this fear and leaning into the discomfort of it. The maintenance of a status quo where engagement practices could be done better but are not out of a sense of paralysis halts potential progress and ignores the potential learning opportunities that can come from 'getting things wrong' and 'not knowing how to do it'. All participants stated that the responsibility for shifting perspective and growing capacity was incumbent on the professions and that practitioners had a responsibility to develop their own knowledge and understanding of how to practice Indigenous engagement, a view that is highly supported in the research evidence (Howitt et al 2013; Porter and Barry 2016). One participant commented that:

We can't have an Elder on tap, just sapping them for their knowledge, that is not appropriate and its predatory. They may be Cultural Ambassadors, but they are people too who get exhausted, and it's not their role to empower us. That is work we need to be doing, we have a lot of responsibilities to do this for ourselves...we have a responsibility to come up and develop the base level of knowledge ourselves and not expect TOs and Elders to be doing it for us, in terms of engagement and knowledge.

In practicing engagement, something that the professions need to navigate are the expectations, assumptions and agendas that are brought into an engagement process and how these have the capacity to limit or restrict a willingness to engage from the perspective of Indigenous people. In particular, it was emphasised in the interviews that coming into a consultation meeting with an expectation of a particular outcome can impede the process or create a barrier to the engagement. Instead it was highlighted that by sitting back and listening and waiting to have information shared, rather than a sense of entitlement towards that knowledge resulted in deeper relationships overtime and a more balanced sharing of decision making in UPD processes.

This emphasises how the expectation inbuilt to UPD legislation, norms and processes leans towards transactional interactions between parties rather than deeper relationships developed overtime. A consistent statement across respondents is that there is not a 'cookie cutter' or 'one-size fits all' approach that can be applied to practicing successful Indigenous engagement, instead the importance of context and recognition that each project carries with it unique experiences, requirements and expectations that reflect the nature of the individual, groups and Country involved in a project site.

#### 4. Analysis of Gaps in Practice and Steps Towards Capacity Building

There is a groundswell of people wanting to learn ways of doing Indigenous engagement better. Interviewees observed that the personal experience of learning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities has resulted in greater ways of thinking through engagement in the professional space. Ayre and Mackenzie (2013) observe that government departments and planning professionals have expressed frustration in working to formalise how Indigenous engagement is conducted so that it is consistent with how it is practiced across communities. Structural change within UPD practices is driven at a grass roots level and changes in staff, an organisational structure or management practice can result in years of work building trustful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities being rapidly compromised. Often there are multiple engagement processes occurring simultaneously, and in cases where a site has multiple Traditional Owners, engagement can be occurring in parallel between groups. This can create miscommunication, duplications in process and misunderstandings, resulting in dissatisfaction with both the process and the outcome, a lack of trust in UPD engagement practices and lack of integrity in outcomes.

Participants interviewed emphasised that successful engagement practices with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is contingent on building and developing relationships that extend beyond the transactional bounds of an engagement process. However, this way of working is often in tension with the expectations and norms from the UPD sector as to how 'business as usual' is conducted. In several of the conversations with UPD practitioners it was noted that the expectations of settler-colonial planning systems operate to different timelines, expectations and obligations between parties in that relationship. In particular, the limitations of client's budgets, expectation and willingness to engage with Traditional Owners of a project site was highlighted as an impediment to the development of deeper relationships. In the following sections the themes that emerged from the interviews are discussed to identify present capacity and gaps in the ways Indigenous engagement is practiced by the urban aligned professions.

#### 4.1 Individual/Personal Capacities: Considering Where the Self is Positioned in the Relationship

Indigenous engagement in the UPD aligned professions is not just about the end aims of a project or development, and an outcome is not the end destination of the interaction, but part of its process and connected in many ways, not just through one point or conduit of conduct. Tebrakunna Country and Lee (2019) argue that for true exchange in perspectives and decision making in governance to occur a 'resetting of the relationship' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is required. Changing ways of thinking, doing and being is incremental and takes time, however, the trigger point to action and reflection on issues of this scope is a moment of internal reflecting and questioning of how a status quo came to be and if it is still serving its purpose (Ranci re 2011). Shifting how the urban aligned professions practice requires changes to occur at all scales, however, most significantly it requires a willingness to change perceptions and preconceptions on the part of the practitioner. Bouvier (2019) emphasises that engagement work can be understood as 'practice reflected in relationships' – or that the way we relate to the others that we find ourselves *in relationship with* is directly interrelated with our work practices and outcomes. Further to this, she is clear in stating that a relationship is an ongoing dynamic that morphs over time, meaning that working with others is not static or a 'tick-box exercise' but something that requires an ongoing commitment between parties. Change at an industry or sectoral level cannot occur until the individuals and the organisations of which they are part are willing to commit to and see through the practice change process.

The willingness to engage in a shift of thinking and being about how relationships with Indigenous groups is formed was clear in the interviews undertaken. However the risk of apathy or a procedural approach to engagement at both the individual and organisational level throughout the UPD sector was noted. It was observed that driving change often sits on the shoulders of an individual or a group of people within an organisation committed to improving how engagement practices are conducted. This approach runs a high risk of staff burning out and/or feeling unsupported in the work that they are doing, which can result in apathy towards future engagement and impact mental health and wellbeing of the individual. Further to this, changes in staffing, management or organisational structure can also impact changes in practice or undo work already undertaken in this space through a lack of proper resourcing. In the context of scaffolded professional development to support meaningful and inclusive engagement at all stages of a project, developing competency in this space needs to be driven at all levels of an organisation, and more broadly each of the UPD professions. Specifically integrating Indigenous voices and perspectives in UPD outcomes requires integration across all aspect of UPD processes. Professional organisations and UPD firms can support staff to understand/explore/reflect upon their positionality in relationship to Indigenous sovereignties and Country through in-house programs or allowing staff time to undertake skills building in this area outside of the workplace.

#### 4.2 Professional and Sectoral Capacities

Two key issues in relation to Indigenous sovereignty and connections to Country underpin UPD in Australia and the way in which it impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people emerged from the interviews (i) the site specific outcomes that current practices have in Australia and the impacts this has on Indigenous people and groups directly related to a site; and (ii) the impacts planning and development processes can have in either building or eroding trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As one participant observed, building trust is critical to successful engagement but it cannot be assumed as a given:

There is strong guarding of certain stories and information within communities because they don't trust other people...from a planning perspective there are serious ways of thinking that are at odds with how the communities interact and what values are, the need for hard lines or soft lines, the recording of cultural information or the sharing of history (Participant 7).

While individuals and groups in the UPD professions are able to drive incremental changes to how they practice, the overarching issue that emerges is that change needs to occur across the sector so that grass-roots efforts are met with top-down support and resourcing to enable change beyond tokenism. Time and money were repeatedly highlighted as restrictions to deeper Indigenous engagement within the professions, resulting in an attitude of:

Well, what is it we are *required* to do, not what *should* we be doing and what the Traditional Owners want for their Country (Participant 2).

It was also observed that Indigenous communities, organisations and Elders are increasingly being asked to provide cultural heritage assessments as part of state legislative requirements and the that this stretches resources available. A significant source of funding for Traditional Owner organisations are cultural heritage assessments for development applications, resulting in a financial pressure on the assessment process and how it is conducted. The compounding factors of money and time result in compromises being made on both ends: on one hand government and private sector developers approach engagement as an obligation, not an opportunity to develop and deepen ongoing relationships with Traditional Owners, and secondly, it places pressures on Traditional Owners to facilitate assessments that might compromise the heritage of a site to ensure financial viability of their organisation.

Project design and engagement timelines for projects need to be reframed and reconsidered as a fundamental part of driving practice change within the professions: if space and resourcing is not given for change to be able to occur, it cannot be expected that it will happen purely through intention alone. Two examples of where capacity building towards more positive forms of engaging is occurring are the Three-Category Approach developed by CAUL (CAUL 2019) that is currently being delivered in the form of workshops and the establishment of an ongoing community of practice and support for UPD professions. The CSIRO (2020) publication *Our Knowledge Our Way* is also making significant contributions in this space, articulating ways of working with Traditional Owners predicated on respect, relationship building and mutual trust. Both of these training and development programs focus on building capacities in non-Indigenous people and organisations to recognise the relationship they and their work share with Indigenous sovereignty and connections to Country. They provide tangible, scaffolded steps for deepening the ways UPD is practiced. Further integration of Indigenous engagement capabilities as part of professional development programs run through the professional accreditation bodies for the UPD professions would help to deepen confidence in engagement practices.

#### 4.3 Educational Capacities

Many participants emphasised the importance of developing university- level planning and design education that helps develop knowledge and competence in graduates going into the professions in the conduct of Indigenous engagement and inclusion in planning and development processes. An

underlying theme revealed through some of the conversations was a 'capacity gap' was assumed by the professions on the part of the Indigenous people being engaged or consulted on a project. The gap highlighted was that groups being engaged did not have the 'capacity' to be engaged. This reveals a lack of understanding of differing ways of seeing and knowing places and sites and presupposes that Indigenous knowledges should meet the expectations of a settler-colonial urban planning and development system without providing flexibility for a reversal of this expectation. It also emphasises the importance of planning and design education that articulates and centres Indigenous ways of seeing, knowing and being in place as much as it prioritises settler-colonial perspectives.

There is a well-established gap in planning and design curriculum in relation to Indigenous peoples, sovereignties and knowledges (see Jones et al 2016; Porter 2017). As noted in the interviews, Indigenous perspectives and ways of planning are often 'tacked on' or offered as a single elective across the course of a four-year program. This cannot and does not prepare people to go out into industry with skills, competencies and ethical positions that enable them to engage and include Indigenous perspectives. New standards for accredited planning degrees are now in place and will begin to address this capacity deficit. The other side of this is the importance of universities committing to creating stronger and more supported pathways for Indigenous students to be able to access planning and design courses with the aim of increasing representation and access to the professions for Indigenous people and their communities:

Its not an add on, or a theme or a curiosity, it is something that is fundamental to the professions and it needs to be taught this way so that it is part of everything" (Participant 4).

Explicit pathways and programs supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to be created by the higher education sector to facilitate greater diversity within the planning professions and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives as something that is *integral* to how UPD is conducted. Moving *beyond* the standard ways planning and urban design has traditionally been taught is challenging and requires flexibility on the part of the educator to be able to resource themselves and their students adequately with the tools to scaffold and foster new ways in which the professions could be practiced. Pedagogy and curriculum models that support this approach to education and practice-based models are emerging that work to facilitate students' capacities to consider where they are situated in relationship to Indigenous sovereignties and Country. Often these approaches break with conventional settler-colonial methods of teaching and learning and draw on practice-based approaches to course content including:

- recognition of the limitations of settler-colonial systems of knowledge and its codification (Wright et al. 2012);
- reversing the lens through which students see themselves and their future professions (O'Sullivan 2013);
- exposure to activism and narratives of Indigenous protestors protecting their Country and their rights (Lowan-Trudeau 2017);
- embedding the concept of reciprocity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people throughout the curriculum (O'Sullivan 2016; McGregor & Marker 2018);

- a centring of Indigenous voices and perspectives in all aspects of UPD education (Watson 2014; Porter & Arabena 2018).

## Conclusion

The capacities of Indigenous groups to engage with settler-colonial planning practices is abundantly evident: from navigating the overlapping requirement of federal and state legislation in relation to land claims, rights and political decisions that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to the creation of formal and informal organising structures to gain a voice and representation in planning processes, to grass roots organising and protest to gain attention to an issue and the socio-political will for change. What is evidenced by these actions is not a *lack of capacity* on the part of Indigenous people, but a *lack of willingness to listen* on the part of government, UPD professions and planning educators. While this silencing blankets the ways in which Indigenous engagement is practiced it is also evident that there is a strong desire for change among individuals, institutions and organisations in the UPD professions and affiliated areas. This drive for change is being demonstrated through new ways of working together that are being developed and implemented.

The urban aligned professions focus on the use of land and the ways in which it is developed, how and for who. These are central questions that underpin all urban planning and design professions during the development and implementation phases of a project or site. Within the Australian context this work takes place on traditional lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, however historically planning and design practices have excluded or included only to a limited capacity the voices and choices of Indigenous people as to what happens on their Country and how. In the past two decades there has been a notable shift across the professions to recognise the importance of real consultation and inclusion of Indigenous people and communities in urban planning and design processes. Differing ways of seeing, knowing, understanding and being in a place are often where conflicts between Indigenous and settler-colonial systems of knowledge and cause tension in the engagement experience. An emphasis on relational practices and development is critical for a shift in the ways the UPD professions are practices and the processes that follow, as Bouvier (2019) states:

Practice is bound to a belief and values system that guides and informs continuous actions and behaviours, of the mind and the heart, in everyday interactions and experiences to maintain balance and harmony. Practice needs us to remember where we have come from, what we carry within us, while simultaneously living our own experiences. Assessing our stories so that we can know how to act to form connections and relationships today is crucial. Our own stories reflect back to us who we are in relationships and provide a map for us to continue practising relationships and ultimately suturing our wounds so that we can live a good life (2019, p.42).

Settler-colonial systems of knowledge can be codified into linear patterns of operation and doing that create neat systems of categorisation and understanding of what a place is and how it functions. By contrast Indigenous knowledges in Australia are formalised and recognised in other ways, knowledge is shared according to different rules about who, when and where it is appropriate. Codification of Indigenous knowledge within settler colonial systems of knowledge risks removing and abstracting who has a right to knowledge and how, in ways that may conflict with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law and practice. Maintaining sovereignty over knowledge, data collection and retention, and the sharing of cultural practices is central to Indigenous rights to self-determination,

and within the UPD professions successful Indigenous engagement needs to centre this perspective. Information shared through engagement practices by Traditional Custodians with UPD professionals does not become proprietary knowledge of the organisations and Individuals involved, its ownership sits with the person or community sharing their knowledge.

Within the UPD professions it is evident that more and more people are choosing to move *beyond* 'just engagement' as outlined by state and federal policies. However, there are still powerful assumptions being made in regard to the *capabilities* of Indigenous people to *understand* the process of planning and development in a particular location and site.

This assumption can lead to silencing of Indigenous perspectives in settler-colonial planning and development processes. Inclusion and uplifting of Indigenous perspectives in UPD practices holds capacities for the professions to create new ways of working and being in relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Addressing this fundamental problem requires a radical reorienting of the ways in which the urban professions see themselves, their relationship with Indigenous sovereignties, and their responsibility in that relationship.

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