
Key Outcomes Report of a 2nd Willandra Repatriation Forum held in Buronga 9 November 2016



**Office of
Environment
& Heritage**

Collated by Michael Williams - Michael Williams & Associates Pty Ltd



Natural Resource Management Strategists and Facilitators - Sydney

December 2016

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Acknowledgements

This key outcomes report has been collated by Michael Williams, Principal of Michael Williams & Associates Pty Ltd, the independent facilitator of the 2nd Willandra Repatriation Forum. The report has been based on notes of the forum kindly supplied by Jess Ford (ANU, Canberra), Molly Walker (OEH, Buronga) and Dr Olwen Beazley (OEH, Sydney).

Where issues were raised during forum discussions, the report has been written on a no-attribution basis. This was designed to encourage participants to exchange their views in a frank and fearless way as the sometimes sensitive issues of repatriation of ancestral remains and associated cultural material of immense importance to the Traditional Owners and of universal values as part of the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area were explored.

Photos kindly provided by Office of Environment and Heritage.

Acronyms

3TTGs - Three Traditional Tribal Groups, or the Willandra Elders Council

ANU - Australian National University

NMA - National Museum of Australia

NPWS - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

OEH - NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

WRTC - Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians Committee

Second Willandra Repatriation Forum – an introduction

With the success of a first repatriation forum held on 17-18 February 2015 in Mildura, a second Willandra Repatriation Forum was held at the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens, in Buronga on Wednesday 9 November 2016. The forum brought together Willandra Traditional Custodians, Australian National University, scientific luminaries, National Museum of Australia and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) staff to further discuss the return of ancestral remains including those of Mungo Man. Since the first repatriation forum in February 2015, these ancestral remains had been moved from Australian National University (ANU), in Canberra to the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

Thirty-six people attended the second forum. It was kindly hosted by the three Traditional Tribal Groups (3TTG) and Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians – Barkindji/Paakantyi, Mutthi Mutthi and Ngiyampaa. The three Traditional Tribal Groups are providing the leadership and advice on the most appropriate approach for their ancestral remains “to come home”.



A copy of the forum agenda is provided in Appendix 1 and a list of all those who attended the forum is provided in Appendix 2.

Acknowledgement of Country

Michael Young provided an acknowledgement to Elders past and present and wished the forum every success. A minutes silence was observed to acknowledge those who had passed away since the previous forum in February 2015.

The independent facilitator, Michael Williams, thanked Michael Young for his acknowledgement and in turn paid his respects to all Elders past, present and future.

Opening

Pauline McKenzie thanked Michael Young for his welcome address and added her acknowledgment to Elders both past and present. In welcoming everyone to the forum Pauline thanked all attendees for participating in the forum, highlighting that repatriation is for the community to decide.

Purpose of the Forum

Pauline McKenzie outlined that the purpose of the forum was to build on the outcomes of the first repatriation workshop held in February 2015 so that the forum could further develop a shared understanding of initial options for the repatriation of Willandra ancestral remains; and develop a clear pathway for consultation and associated activities so that a final decision can be made at a final repatriation forum scheduled for Wednesday 5th April 2017.

Roles

Given the variety of organisations supporting the community in making its repatriation decisions, organisations represented at the forum were invited to clarify their roles.

OEH advised that it was supporting the community in its decision making, to facilitate the discussions and give effect to the decisions. OEH stressed that it was not the decision maker but had an important role to assist in providing the necessary feasibility detail so that an informed decision could be made. OEH is providing dedicated resources to the project and was in the process of securing financial resources to assist with the repatriation process.

ANU outlined that in recognition of its past role in relation to the ancestral remains, it had provided a formal apology to the community and more recently had provided assistance in the first stages of bringing them home – the transfer in November 2015 of all ancestral remains from ANU to the National Museum of Australia, Canberra. ANU was also bringing colleagues together from the Australian university sector who are currently research active in Willandra so that the sector could provide support to the community's decision. ANU has committed up to \$400,000 of its own funds to invest in a community keeping place/research facility, to assist in enhancing the research relationships between local communities and the universities.

National Museum of Australia outlined that its role was to look after the ancestral remains now being curated at the Museum until the community had decided on their future repatriation. The remains are being well cared for and continue to be under the community's direction. The Museum is looking forward to assisting in getting the ancestral remains back home as soon as possible.

So what has happened since first repatriation forum in February 2015?

Achievements since the community met in February 2015 include:

- the 3TTG undertaking an appropriate cultural ceremony and guiding the ancestral remains collection from ANU to a temporary storage at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra
- the offering of a formal apology to the 3TTG by ANU
- significant advancement in the commitment of funding to the repatriation including:
 - ANU committing around \$400,00 towards a keeping place/research facility, to assist in enhancing the research relationships and to help facilitate future research
 - confidence that other universities will join the ANU to make modest financial contributions once the community preferences are confirmed

- OEH Heritage Division and National Parks and Wildlife Service seeking to each fund around \$400,000 so that a total funding amount in the order of \$1.2 million might be available to deliver repatriation outcomes
- dedicated resources and internal budget by OEH to drive the repatriation process in the form of a senior Project Manager, Harvey Johnston.

The project is now well positioned to meet its November 2017 deadline for repatriation on country, and to support the community's decisions regarding how this should be undertaken.



Presentation 1: Initial Willandra Ancestral Remains Repatriation Options – Harvey Johnston and Robert Quirk, OEH - see Appendix 3)

The purpose of OEH's presentation was to provide a summary of the long history of repatriation discussions and their key messages, and to refresh the community in relation to context of the ancestral remains.

Key messages from the history of community meetings about repatriation

- Community has put in a huge amount of effort and voluntary time - over 150 meetings from 1984 to present have been held with close to 70 having discussed repatriation and across these meetings communities messages have been clear and consistent including:
 - Absolutely vital to consult Aboriginal community
 - Don't put ancestral remains on public display
 - Ancestral remains should be returned to Willandra
 - Either establish a dedicated keeping place or rebury
 - Support for the establishment of a research centre
- A number of committees have been formed to provide advice on repatriation
 - Willandra Elders Council (1995-2013)
 - Community Management Council/Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee Sub-committee on Repatriation (2013)
 - Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians Committee (2014-present)



Key messages regarding reburial options

- OEH has successfully conserved a number of burial sites
- Reburial in sandy location is problematic due to erosion
- Don't rebury in unstable landscapes, need to bury in stable, vegetated landscape to ensure long term security

Key messages regarding keeping place options

- In 2005 the 3TTG agreed to a specific architectural under-ground building design (see Appendix 3) for a Keeping Place and that the keeping place should be constructed at Joulni close to where Mungo Man was removed

Key outcomes from the first repatriation forum in February 2015

- The Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians (WRTC) and 3TTG should make all the decisions on the repatriation process
- The ancestral remains should be brought home as soon as possible and in a culturally appropriate manner
- Learning and education are important opportunities for the future. In partnership with museums and universities, the Traditional Custodians should be able to tell their story and present their culture to visitors
- Traditional Custodians want the Australian Government, NSW Government, Universities and Museums to help bring commitment and resources including financial resources to get the repatriation completed
- Traditional Custodians haven't decided exactly where and how their ancestral remains should be repatriated
- Traditional Custodians are still talking together to work out if a reburial or some kind of modest keeping place is the best option
- Traditional Custodians are still working out if there should be access to the ancestral remains and if Traditional Custodians need a temporary but secure place to store their ancestral remains while Traditional Custodians come to a final decision



Discussion and comments

Following the presentation a number of points of clarification were raised. These included:

Question - What would happen if ancestral remains were to be uncovered into the future?

Response - A modest and simple research facility “on country” should be one of the options for consideration by the community to manage exactly this highly likely possibility. So it’s wise to have a keeping place as part of the conversation so that community can advise and control any research program and research can be conducted “on country”.

Question – As part of the discussion on repatriation what are the long-term employment opportunities?

Response - This is not within the available repatriation budget at the moment as all financial resources are anticipated to be required for the repatriation process including a modest keeping place if this is the community’s preferred option, however long-term employment opportunities have been a consistent request from community and it is recognised that this is an appropriate long-term goal

Comment - Please don’t let the long-term vision for research or education facilities stop or delay the return of our ancestors back to country.

Small Group Workshop session

Prior to the participants breaking into three small groups the key question being considered by the small groups was canvassed and some guiding principles developed.

The Question posed to the small groups

The question was posed as a number of alternatives or possible options which had generally been agreed at the first repatriation forum in February 2015 and were based on the general questions “How do you want to see your ancestors’ returned to country?”

Option 1 – a traditional reburial

- In one location; or
- In multiple locations.

Option 2 - a modest keeping place structure below the ground

- Accessible; or
- Not accessible.

Option 3 - a modest keeping place structure above ground

- In a new purpose built structure; or
- Adapt an existing structure.

Guiding principles

The participants then developed some principles to guide the small group discussions. These included:

- Ancestral remains need to be secure
- Any access to ancestral remains needs to be controlled by Traditional Custodians
- There is an overall desire to rebuild a trusting relationship between researchers and community

Workshop session outcomes

Presentations were then made by spokespersons for each of the small groups on the outcomes of the deliberations focussing on their preferred option

Group 1

Ancestral remains (all those ancestral remains except for Mungo Man and Mungo Lady held at NMA) to be reburied close to where they came from but grouped into three “cemetery-like” locations – Joulni, Gogolo and Garnpang

- Secure location - not accessible to the public
- If there were to be future access, then this would be granted by the Elders

Mungo Man and Mungo Lady should be stored together in an underground modest keeping place structure or in an existing modified building that would keep them secure but not accessible to the public

- Acknowledged that it would be difficult to just rebury Mungo Man and Mungo Lady given the significance of the remains and the desire to ensure maximum security
- Leaghur is the preferred location for a research centre because:
 - Central location
 - Minimal disturbance if you use an established location
 - Need to make the available funds go as far as possible

- Using an existing modified building will be quick to action, which would mean quicker return of ancestral remains
- Prefer to utilize existing structure
- Maybe possible to have replicas made of these two iconic ancestors for display in the research centre for education purposes

Possible research facility could use existing facilities at Leaghur as infrastructure already available



Group 2

Return journey must be culturally appropriate, and the return should be to the Traditional Owners

Reburial of ancestral remains below ground, or possibly in a structure, are the best options – either way this should be in one location. A location near Leaghur is preferred. Could be accessible for future generations but group 2 did not get agreement on accessibility, but nor did it think Aboriginal people would have any reason to have access. Some members of the group said no more research needs to be undertaken on existing remains, and some thought future study for our younger generations could occur.

- Security is critical
- Reburial place needs a culturally appropriate name

Leaghur is the preferred location for reburial in a below-ground Keeping Place because:

- Secure location with existing facilities
- Central location
- Accommodation already available
- Accessible
- Will make the modest budget go further – feasibility issues regarding how far the budget can stretch

Adaptation of existing facilities at Leaghur Homestead or Leaghur Woolshed could provide a secure modest research centre for future recovered remains, near the reburial area

In longer term need for discussion of genealogy and its role in determining who can speak for country. Some thought that genealogy needed to be sorted before remains were brought home.

It was noted that there had been a lot of discussion by the small group members about ensuring there are processes in place to determine who can speak for country and noted that the reburial was mainly men's business. The small group also discussed the importance of considering future remains that may be uncovered and how the community would manage these. While the small group felt that the ancestral remains in Canberra should be returned without further research being carried out, there was some support for future research on newly uncovered remains to be carried out under the control and management of the Traditional Custodians.





Group 3

Protocols for return journey from National Museum of Australia, Canberra to Willandra

- Mungo Man to be wrapped in traditional skin (i.e. possum, bark) and driven back in a hearse – must not be brought back in boxes
- To reconnect knowledge need to retrace the exact journey when Mungo Man was removed from Willandra and driven to ANU Canberra back in 1974. Jim Bowler kindly agreed to provide OEH with the exact route that was driven from Willandra to Canberra.
- Once the ancestors are back on country:
 - Traditional welcome
 - Smoking ceremony
- Smoking ceremony for each country along the journey home
- Mungo Lady to be reunited with Mungo Man
- Temporary housing in visiting centre if keeping place isn't ready



Reburial and Keeping Place for Mungo Man and Mungo Lady at Joulni (where the remains were found)

- Underground, climate controlled, secure and lockable buried structure
- Restricted access into the keeping place
- Even though there is access doesn't mean that people should be or will be granted access
- Important to have them returned to where they came from and within the Mungo National Park
- Rebury them close to where they were found
- Possible use of grave markers
- Need to respect burial processes

All other remains to be reburied back where they came from or near to their country - not necessary to keep other (partial) remains in storage facility (keeping place) – just rebury with grave markers

Separate research facility – Leaghur or Joulni shearing shed – preferably Joulni as that is close to the reburials

- Research and learning facility is really important



Discussion

- Keeping place - purchasing a pre-fabricated underground structure, which could be installed either above or below ground was a good idea. Depending on the community's preference, one or more of these could be purchased to provide a secure, lockable keeping place facility.
- Could the cultural materials found alongside the ancestors be reburied with them (i.e. ochre, tools) or could cultural materials be displayed as part of the Visitor Centre exhibition?
- There is a need to retain some accommodation at Leaghur, as visiting research staff will need somewhere to stay while they're on country.
- When considering security versus proximity, there was support for focusing resources on security. The high cost and ongoing nature of this was acknowledged as a key item for consideration by OEH for inclusion in its presentation on feasibility of options for the final repatriation forum scheduled for April 2017.
- Securing future access to the keeping place/reburial site(s) by Traditional Owners is considered to be vital. There were concern that with changes in key OEH and NPWS personnel there may arise a situation in which the community is unable to secure access to the keeping place/reburial site(s). There was agreement that protocols around access should be developed to mitigate this risk.
- There was some discussion around whether reburial could take place in one site or be spread across multiple sites, and whether reburial site(s) would be accessible by the public. It was noted that it is important to bury each individual respectfully. There was support for keeping the location of the reburial site(s) private and controlled by the community.



Summary of small group outcomes

Key outcomes of the three small group presentations based on their discussions and butchers paper outputs back to plenary were summarised by the independent facilitator.

Preferred options for Mungo Man and Mungo Lady

Buried in a secure underground keeping place facility at either:

- Leaghur which offers higher security but is further away from where Mungo Man and Mungo Lady were originally found; or
- Joulni, which is closer to where Mungo Man and Mungo Lady were originally found, but may have lower security

Preferred options for the 100 or so partial remains from Willandra lakes, but excluding Mungo Man and Mungo Lady

- In the ground, in proximity to the original find localities, i.e. multiple sites; or
- In three cemeteries situated near to Mungo, Gogolo/Leaghur, and Garnpung lakes

Preferred options for a modest research facility

- Leaghur, seemed to have most support
- Joulni, 2nd option, less support.

Keeping Place locations

With regards to potential keeping place locations, feedback from the workshop focused on either Leaghur or Joulni.

- Leaghur: The Leaghur homestead already has power and water, NPWS has a ranger stationed there so there is someone on site all the time which improves the security aspect. The site is also central to the various locations where remains were uncovered.
- Joulni: There are existing structures here and the location is close to where the remains of Mungo Lady and Mungo Man were originally uncovered. One issue raised was security, as it is more isolated than Leaghur.

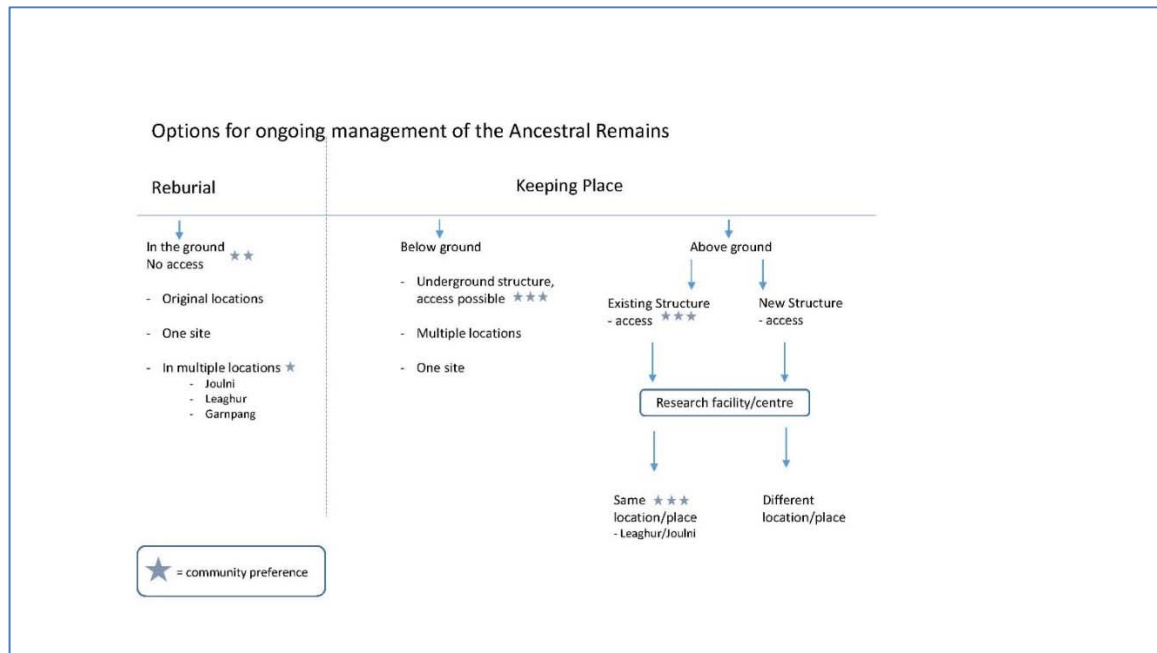
Reburial – landscape stability of utmost concern

Discussion regarding reburial straight into the ground again highlighted the issue with the deflating (eroding) landscape, which means it is virtually impossible to rebury in the ground in such a way as to avoid the remains being uncovered sometime in the future.

Mungo Man and Lady Mungo should be reunited

There was support from the forum to have Mungo Man and Lady Mungo reunited and stored in a separate, secure keeping place preferably below ground. Guaranteeing the security of these two ancestral remains of world significance was identified as a top priority.

Figure 1 – diagrammatic summary of key outcomes



Presentation 2: Next steps - Harvey Johnston, OEH - see Attachment 4

Further consultation by OEH

OEH will reach out to Traditional Custodians who were unable to attend the forum and share the outcomes, as well as seeking additional input and feedback. This further consultation will focus initially on those people who have been part of previous repatriation discussions. The importance of ensuring that everyone who has an interest in repatriation of Willandra ancestral remains is appropriately consulted throughout the process was highlighted as key to achieving community consensus.

This additional feedback will then be provided by OEH as part of the final repatriation forum in April 2017.

A follow-up and final repatriation forum is scheduled for 5 April 2017, at which time OEH will bring back a more detailed set of project plans and costings of the preferred options for consideration and endorsement by Traditional Custodians. This report/presentation will include costings, plans, maps and approval pathways, all focussed on meeting the November 2017 deadline for bringing the ancestral remains back home. It will focus on key issues raised throughout the repatriation forums' discussions.

Additional issues raised by participants for OEH to consider when considering the options include:

- Occupational Health and Safety concerns
- Impact on the park, ensuring minimal disruption
- Reducing carbon footprint of any development
- Adhering to World Heritage and National Heritage values

Further investigations into the research facility by ANU and university colleagues

The ANU representatives will undertake further investigation into the requirements of a research facility, with a focus on:

- Space, equipment, functionality
- Governance arrangements for the facility
- Draft research protocols for consultation with Traditional Custodians

A more detailed report from the Universities will be made available at the April 2017 forum.

National Museum of Australia to continue to care for the ancestral remains

The National Museum of Australia will continue to care for the ancestors until the community instructs them to bring them home. National Museum of Australia will be available to facilitate the repatriation from the secure facility in Canberra to start the ancestors on their journey back to country.

Closing remarks

There was agreement that the forum had been a really productive day, with significant progress made since the February 2015 repatriation forum and the pathway forward now has clarity. The funding announcement from ANU, OEH Heritage Division and NPWS were critical to the sense that the repatriation will now be able to be achieved at last after 40 years.

The attendees were thanked for contributing their time and thoughts, both of which are highly valued and a critical part of the repatriation process.

The strong sense of goodwill to bring the ancestors home, and the respectful way in which people have listened to the diverse range of opinions have been key to the success of the forum. There are significant areas of agreement, clear options to further develop and cost. OEH will work in the coming months to develop a plan for consideration and approval at the final April 2017 forum.

Thanks were expressed to the facilitator, to OEH for organising the forum, to the presenters, and to ANU for note taking.

Appendix 1: Agenda - Willandra Repatriation Forum

Willandra Ancestral Remains Repatriation Forum Agenda

Forum venue: Australian Inland Botanic Gardens – 1183, River Road Buronga NSW

Date and time: Wednesday 19th October 2016 - 9:30am registration and cup of tea prior to opening at 10:00am. Workshop scheduled to finish at 4:15pm

Purpose of Forum: Develop a shared understanding of initial options for the repatriation of Willandra ancestral remains; and develop a clear pathway for consultation and associated activities so that a final decision can be made at a final repatriation forum scheduled for Wednesday 5th April 2017

Independent Facilitator: Michael Williams - Michael Williams & Associates Pty Ltd – Sydney

Dinner invitation evening prior workshop – 6.:30pm Tuesday 18th Oct 2016: An invitation for all forum participants - please join us for dinner at Pizza Café 18 Langtree Ave Mildura.

Time	Agenda
9:30am	Registration, tea and coffee on arrival
10:00am	Welcome to Country
10:10am	Opening, acknowledgement, purpose and context of workshop – Pauline McKenzie - Executive Director Heritage Division OEH Introductions, workshop agenda, roles and suggested protocols – Michael Williams, Independent Facilitator
10:30am	Presentation - Rob Quirk - Director Park Conservation & Heritage Branch NPWS OEH and Harvey Johnston - Project Manager Willandra Repatriation Heritage Division OEH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key achievements and outcomes of the repatriation journey so far • Key outcomes from the first Repatriation Forum held in Feb 2015 • A suggested way forward - initial Willandra ancestral remains repatriation options Clarification of the initial options
11:15am	Morning tea
11:30am	Small group workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the range of options presented, prioritise your options and outline what were your most important criteria in arriving at your preferred option; and • What does your preferred option look like - provide a detailed explanation of your preferred option?
12:30pm	Lunch

1:30pm	Presentations from small group workshops Views and discussion
2:15pm	Synthesis of key outcomes of small group workshops
2:45pm	Afternoon tea
3:15pm	What do we need to do between now and final repatriation forum scheduled for 5 April 2017 so we all are in a position to make a determination on the most feasible and preferred repatriation option? Presentation led by Harvey Johnston
3:35pm	Plenary discussion to develop an action plan including consultation in order to be in a position to make a determination on the most feasible preferred repatriation option at the final April 2017 repatriation forum.
4:00pm	Distillation of key messages from workshop, where to from here and next steps - OEH
4:15pm	Thanks and close of workshop - OEH

Appendix 2: Workshop participants & apologies

<i>First name</i>	<i>Last name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Albury	Smith	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Dan	Rosendahl	Team Leader, Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area, NPWS, OEH
Daryl	Pappin	Community Programs, Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area, OEH
Dawn	Smith	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Graham	Clarke	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Harvey	Johnston	Project Manager, Willandra Repatriation, Heritage Division, OEH
Ivan	Johnson	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Jaymie	Norris	Strategic Programs Officer NPWS, OEH
Jessica	Ford	Executive Officer, Australian National University
Jim	Bowler	University of Melbourne
Jo	Gorman	Area Manager NPWS, OEH
Joan	Bowler	Attendee
Kerry	Bates	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Lenore	Fraser	Senior Manager, Park Conservation & Heritage Branch NPWS, OEH
Lottie	Williams	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Mary	Pappin	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Maureen	Reyland	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Michael	Williams	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Michael	Young	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Michelle	Johnson	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Molly	Walker	Administration, Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area, NPWS, OEH
Olwen	Beazley	Team Leader, Conservation & Heritage Branch NPWS, OEH
Pamela	Dunrobin	Contract Administration, Willandra Repatriation, Heritage Division, OEH
Patricia	Johnson	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Patricia	Winch	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Pauline	McKenzie	Executive Director, Heritage Division, OEH
Peter	Thorley	Acting Head, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program, National Museum of Australia
Phillip	Whitton	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Priscilla	Briggs	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Robert	Quirk	Director, Park Conservation & Heritage Branch NPWS, OEH
Sophia	Pearce	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Steve	Meredith	Regional Manager, Heritage Division, OEH
Tanya	Charles	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Theoni	Whyman	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's
Veronica	Taylor	Director ANU
Warren	Clark	Traditional Custodian from 3TTG's

WRTC – Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians

Apologies

<i>First name</i>	<i>Last name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Arthur	Kirby	Paakantji/Barkindji
Barry	Pearce	Mutthi Mutthi
Beryl	Kennedy	Ngiyampaa
Betty	Pearce	Paakantji/Barkindji
Carla	Rogers	OEH
Coral	Ellis	Ngiyampaa
Jean	Charles	Mutthi Mutthi
Joan	Slade	Ngiyampaa
Marie	Mitchell	Paakantji/Barkindji
Patrick	Lawson	Paakantji/Barkindji
Roy	Kennedy	Ngiyampaa
Steve	Webb	Bond University
Tim	Denham	ANU
Warlpa	Thompson	Paakantji/Barkindji

Appendix 3: Presentation 1: Initial Willandra Ancestral Remains Repatriation Options –
Harvey Johnston and Robert Quirk, OEH



The Willandra repatriation journey so far

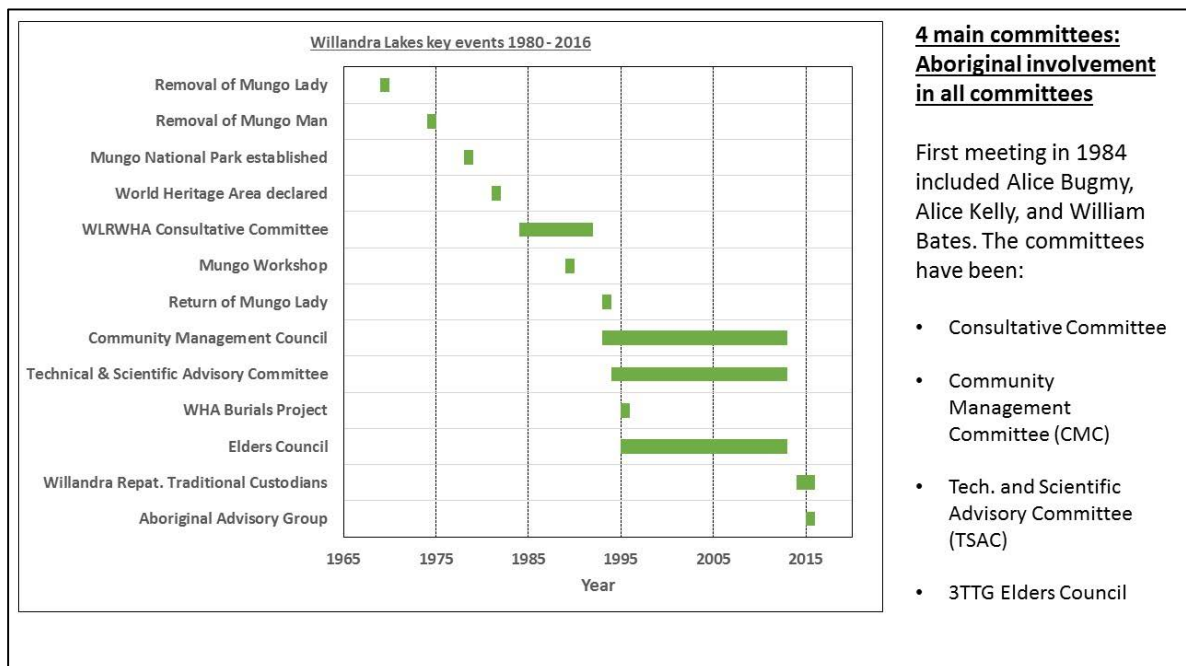
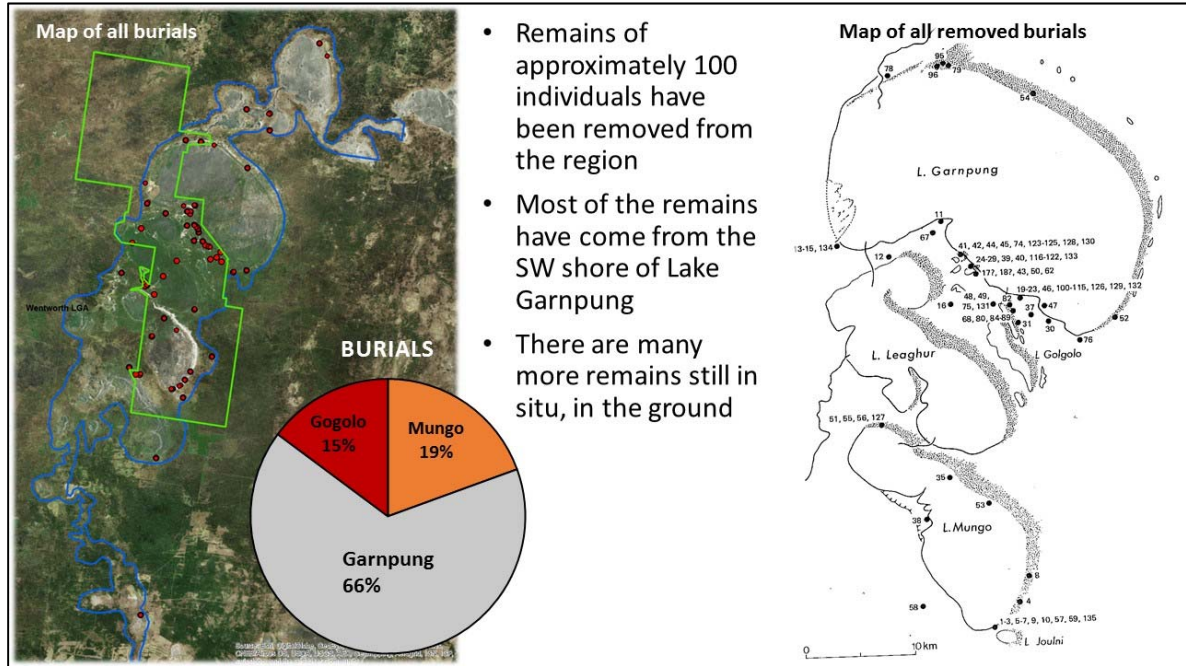
Forum, Inland Botanic Gardens

Buronga, 9th November 2016

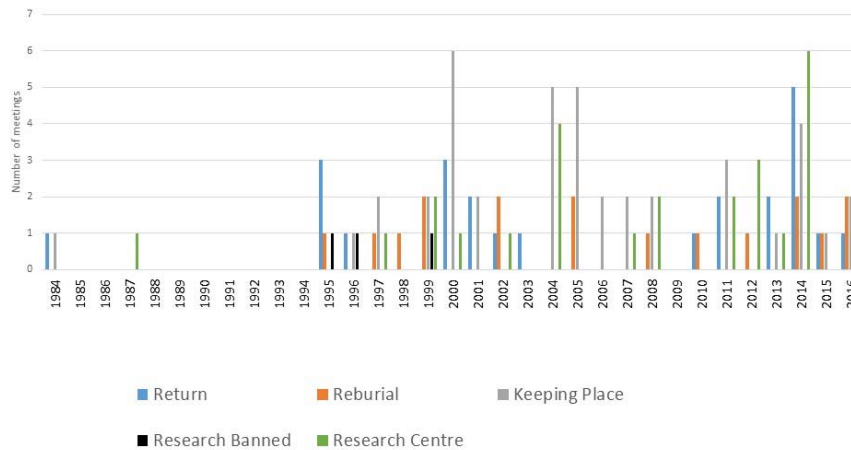


Please note. There are some slides that follow that contain pictures of Elders and others who have passed away.

There is also an image of ancestral remains



Repatriation Options discussed in governance meetings 1984 - 2016



- 152 meetings
- 370 attendees
- 69 meetings with discussions on repatriation

Consistent Key Messages presented

- Consult the Aboriginal community
- We don't want human remains on public display
- Return ancestral remains to the Willandra
- Either establish a Keeping Place **or** Rebury ancestral remains if possible, securely and safely
- Establish a Research Centre if possible

1. What's happened - Return of Remains

The Mungo Statement: Towards a Reconciliation

A record of discussion at the Willandra Research Publication Workshop
Thursday 22nd June '89

During the final session of the Willandra Publication Workshop held on the 22nd June, 1989, those researchers and Aborigines present discussed the future of archaeological research in the Willandra Lakes Region. Two suggestions, crucial to the future of research and Aboriginal Heritage were made.

Firstly, it was decided to embark on a course of reconciliation between archaeologists and Aborigines. It was recognised that Aboriginal people must have the final say whether research was done and what it might be.

One way to do this would be to establish an Aboriginal Research Committee. This committee might oversee and ratify research programmes dealing with the way people lived in the past and the kind of land they lived in. The committee could initiate its own research programmes and seek funding for them.

Secondly, Alan Thorne agreed that the Mungo skeletal remains should be returned to the Willandra, and suggested that the first step could be the addition of a second lock on the safe which presently contains the Mungo skeletal remains. The key to the second lock would be in the hands of the Aboriginal Research Committee.

Also discussed was the possibility of establishing at Mungo National Park a Keeping Place for the care and protection of Aboriginal skeletal remains. This Keeping Place could also have two locks. As a symbolic act of collaboration one key could be held by the Aboriginal Research Committee and one by a representative of the scientific community.

Alan Thorne *Maryjane* *Phil Jones* *Richard Hobbs*
Mary Poppin *Ron Hyde* *Davidson*
Louise Williams *Alan Thorne* *Phil Jones* *Richard Hobbs*
John Minge *Maryjane* *Wilfred Shawson*
Alice Kelly *Reggie Nyole*
Isabel McBratley *Richard Williams*
Jeannette Hope *Conrad Wójcicki*

The Mungo Statement 22nd June 1989

- Reconciliation
- Mungo skeletal remains should be returned to Willandra
- Establish a Keeping Place
- Locks to the collection were held by Alan Thorne and Aboriginal community

Mungo woman returns to her people



11th Jan. January 1992

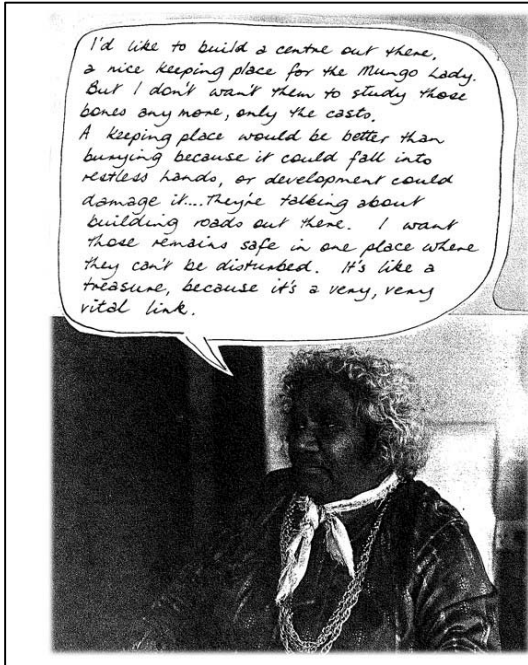
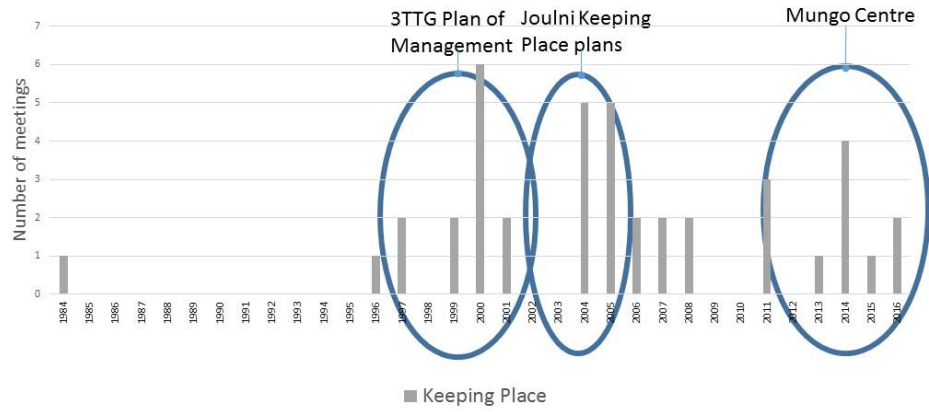
June 1996 Visit to Melbourne and Canberra

- Jason Kelly, Daryl Reyland, Mary Pappin,
- Lottie Williams, Irene Mitchell, Christine Kelly,
- Roy Kennedy, Beryl Kennedy, Lawrence Jones
- Michael McIntyre, VAS, Jim Bowler, Melb Uni
- Steve Webb, Alan Thorne, Isabel McBryde, Wilfred Shawcross ANU
- Jeremy Pierce, DAA, George Townsend,
Harvey Johnston, Badger Bates, NPWS



2. What's happened - Keeping Place Option

Keeping Place discussions 1984 - 2016



Talk of a Keeping Place started in 1984

Alice Kelly ca. 1986, part of the 'Mungo Report'



OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE,
THE WILLANDRA

WILLANDRA LAKES REGION WORLD HERITAGE AREA
THREE TRADITIONAL TRIBAL GROUPS

Muthi Muthi
Nyirraapa
Paarkinj



PLAN OF MANAGEMENT
EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY
KEEPING PLACE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE FEASIBILITY
STUDY
2004

Prepared by Australian Archaeological Survey Consultants Pty Ltd
GPO BOX 943 Canberra ACT 2601 Ph 0412 211137

3TTG Plan of Management 2004

This Plan called for:

- Keeping Place for Human Remains (short or long term)
- Meeting place for Aboriginal people
- Located at Joulni, Garnpang, Zanci, Pan Ban, or somewhere between Mungo Lodge and Mungo camping ground

Gregory Burgess design was favoured by the Elders Council

5 Keeping Place proposals were prepared in 2004 - 2005

None of these proposals were costed or funded



MUNGO CENTRE

MUNGO NATIONAL PARK, NSW
WILLANDRA LAKES REGION WORLD HERITAGE AREA (WLRWHA)

Design Brief

Part A Design Requirements

Issue: 5 June 2011
To: Reference Committee
By: Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife

In 2010 – 2012 Mungo Keeping Place, Education and Research Centre was planned

- **No drawn plans have ever been prepared**
- **Cost estimated at \$8 million**
- **Funds not available for this project**

3. Reburial Option

1995 Burials Project.

- Visited all the WHA burial sites
- Works included relocation, reburial, monitoring and conservation work

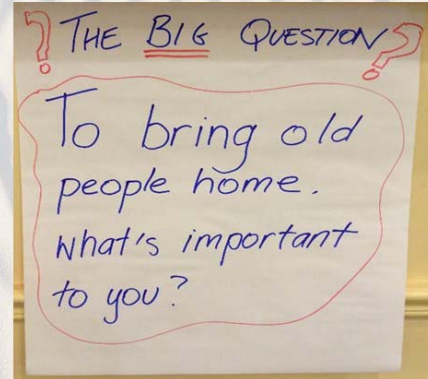


- Concerns expressed in 1984 about erosion and finding a safe way to return remains are confirmed
- Results of monitoring show remains that are buried in sandy areas can be re-exposed after 20+ years of erosion

Appendix 4: Presentation 2: Next steps – Harvey Johnston, OEH

Key Outcomes of the first Repatriation Forum Grand Hotel, Mildura, Feb 2015

- The Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians and 3TTG should make all the decisions on the repatriation process



Key Outcomes of the first Repatriation Forum Feb 2015

- We want the ancestral remains bought home as soon as possible and in a culturally appropriate manner



Key Outcomes of the first Repatriation Forum Feb 2015

- We recognise that learning and education are important opportunities for the future. In partnership with museums and universities, we should be able to tell our story and present our culture to visitors



Key Outcomes of the first Repatriation Forum Feb 2015

- We want the Australian Government, NSW Government, Universities and Museums to help us and to bring commitment and resources including financial resources to get the repatriation completed



Key Outcomes of the first Repatriation Forum Feb 2015

- We haven't decided exactly where and how our ancestral remains should be repatriated.
- We are still talking together to work out if a reburial or some kind of modest keeping place is the best option.
- We are still working out if there should be access to the ancestral remains and if we need a temporary but secure place to store our ancestral remains while we come to a final decision.



What has happened since Feb 2015 ?

- Willandra repatriation traditional custodians (WRTC) have continued to meet
- Resources have been allocated to this project
- A formal apology has been submitted from the Australian National University to the Aboriginal Community
- Target of a repatriation by November 2017 has been set
- Universities have agreed to work together
- And...

November 2015 Willandra ancestral remains

- Ancestral remains at the ANU returned to the Aboriginal community
- Moved to a temporary storage at the Museum of Australia Repatriation Centre



The way forward

Some things we can do, if required

- Locate, approximately, the places on the ground where the burials came from
- Identify suitable locations for reburial
- Build a modest keeping place at one or more locations
- Modify an existing building so that it can become a keeping place
- Modify an existing building so it can become a research centre

Some things we cant do

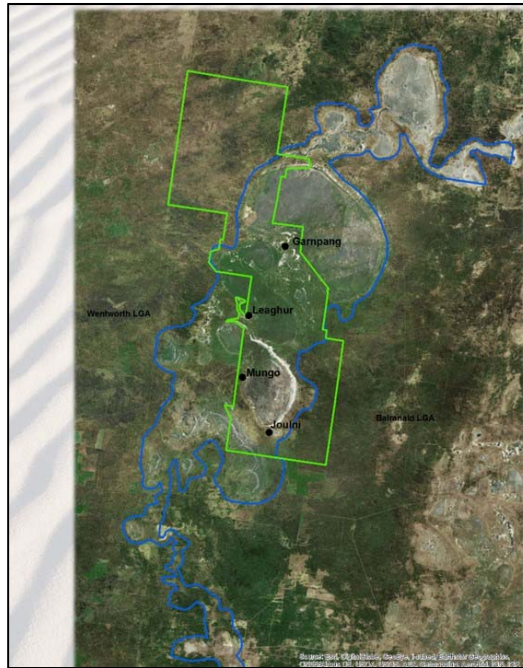
- Large expensive build is not possible, there is a modest budget available
- Cant build on private land, OEH cannot offer to build off Mungo National Park
- NPWS is no longer planning a new Visitors Centre at this time
- Employment of extra people can only occur with funding. We don't have funding for long term employment at present

How do you want to see the ancestors remains returned to country?

- Traditional reburial
 - One location or a number
- Below the ground in a structure
- Accessible or not accessible
- Above ground
 - A new structure
 - Adapt an existing restructure

If a Research facility/Centre is needed what is required?

- Simple structure -- weatherproof and dust-proof
- Secure, accessible storage for existing cultural items and future discoveries of cultural items and/or ancestral remains
- Basic facilities for examining -- work benches and stools
- Power and plumbing, kitchen and bathrooms, so that researchers could work for extended periods
- Space for educational meetings, displays
- Universities will contribute up to \$400,000



If a Keeping Place or research facility is required existing buildings on Mungo National Park could be used at:

- Leaghur
- Garnpang
- Joulni



Leaghur Homestead



- Currently used for staff accommodation
- High adaptive reuse potential
- Remote from public visitor area
- 3+ months planning approval period

Leaghur Homestead



- Currently used for staff accommodation
- High adaptive reuse potential
- Remote from public visitor area
- 3+ months planning approval period

Leaghur Shearer's Quarters



- Currently used for accommodation including researchers
- Remote from public visitor area
- Can be expanded to a small extent
- 2+ months planning approval period



Leaghur Woolshed



- High adaptive reuse potential, large space, can accommodate a range of functions
- Remote from public visitor area
- 3+ months planning approval period

Garnpang Homestead



- Currently used for staff accommodation
- High adaptive reuse potential
- Remote from public visitor area
- 3+ months planning approval period

Garnpang Shearer's Quarters and Woolshed



- High adaptive reuse potential
- Remote from public visitor area
- Quarters are in poor condition, would require extensive renovation/rebuild
- 3+ months planning approval period

Joulni Woolshed



- High adaptive reuse potential, large space, can accommodate a range of functions
- Remote from public visitor area
- Close to public access road
- 3+ months planning approval period

Small group Workshops

- Focus on return of ancestral remains
- Keeping Place and/or Reburial ? Prioritise your options
- What does your preferred option look like
- Provide a detailed explanation of your preferred option
 - Is it likely to be within budget ?
 - Where ?
 - Is any structure/reuse required?

