

ngurrak barring / RidgeWalk is a cultural walking experience examining the human connection to Country and the expression and exploration of that relationship in the Dandenong Ranges over time. It is considered a major Victorian cultural tourism project, attracting funding from all levels of government.

Some of Australia's most significant artists and creatives, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have drawn inspiration from the Dandenongs, including William Barak, Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts, Edna Walling, Lin Onus and Fred Williams. Today, the area continues to thrive as a creative hub.

Following extensive consultation and creative and cultural guidance* five themes were established for the project. They are; Ways of Seeing, Community, Resilience, Activism and Country. All creative and cultural content and design, expressed via the architectural nodes, the artwork, the interpretive signage and programming of the trail is curated according to these themes.

Jon Tarry and James Morton (TARRMACstudio), Marti Fooks, (FOOKS Studio), Kirsten Bauer (ASPECT Studio), *Regeneration*, 2024. Stainless steel, brass, bronze, timber, plants.

Regeneration will be a large-scale, site-specific, integrated land artwork. It will create a unique and iconic destination for local residents and visitors and is considered a key public art project for *ngurrak barring*. *Regeneration* will be positioned along an extensive system of walking trails. Here Artscape and landscape will purposefully combine to create a place where culture, nature, and our senses meet.

Regeneration will complement the form and character of the site and its surrounds and convey a concept that is deeply considered and reflective of the environment and cultural and historical context of the immediate area and/or the wider Dandenong Ranges.

As a land artwork *Regeneration* will be integrated with the landscape and made using mostly natural materials. It will reflect the *ngurrak barring Vision*, particularly by being environmentally responsive.

Regeneration is inspired by William Barak's paintings and drawings of the area, and on Edna Walling's celebrated environmental design. William Barak's depictions of life in the region provide moving insights. His drawings of the Lyrebird render the intricacy of the feathers and the creature's unique ability to mimic sounds of other wildlife that echo through the valleys. Edna Walling's celebrated influential environmental design steered changes to gardening practices that now emphasise the importance of sustainability.

The artwork's form and function is responsive to the sounds of the site and features an interactive element for people to explore and to make connections between past and present moments. This is introduced through the resonant sound elements of the sculptural works.

In harmony with nature's geometry, the sculptured forms will utilise some of the fallen timbers from the area. Subtle sculpting of the land with paths and plantings will combine, creating a place to expand the senses.

Regeneration will be experienced from the Kalorama Park lookout as well as a dedicated path running through the site. The path is designed to echo the shape of the Lyrebird feather. The lower section of the path will frame a perfect alternate view into the distance and links to the May Moon path. Along the way planting beds will radiate from the central space in a repeated pattern to the central sculptural space, creating a 'convergence', of growth and 'Regeneration'.

Artwork selection process

Following an open expression of interest process earlier this year, forty-two submissions were received of which six parties were shortlisted by the Public Art Working Group, consisting of local arts practitioners, business owners and public art professionals', to progress to the second stage. These six parties were invited to tender and create a concept proposal.

The Regeneration concept proposal by Jon Tarry (TARRMACstudio), Marti Fooks (FOOKS Studio), James Morton and Kirsten Bauer (ASPECT Studio) was recommended by the Public Art Working Group and approved by the Director, Communities, Yarra Ranges Council.

***Community Research and Consultation**

RidgeWalk was first conceived in 2017 by the Yarra Ranges Council Creative Communities team. Yarra Ranges Council led the project in partnership with State and Federal Government, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria, residents, artists, businesses, schools, cultural and community organisations. Indigenous culture, the environment, heritage and creativity were the key local values identified during this early conceptual phase, and they continue to underpin all subsequent project activities.

Two cultural studies, commissioned by Yarra Ranges Council, provide the thematic foundation for the project. The reports were produced in collaboration with Traditional Owners and local history groups. Studies examining opportunities around transportation and economic impact were produced, along with a Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Curatorial Framework.

Between 2017-2019, more than 1200 community members participated in drop-in sessions, online forums, workshops, and guided walks. Additionally, project staff worked with Yarra Ranges Council's Disability Advisory Committee, Indigenous Advisory Committee and attended local environmental, business and heritage network meetings. As ngurrak barring progresses, community groups, residents and the public will be invited to give feedback in a variety of ways on many projects. Council, including the ngurrak barring team regularly hold in person pop-ups in towns across the Dandenong Ranges and have stalls at community events. Regularly updates, opportunities to be involved, to have your say or to join our mailing list can be found online here. A quarterly digital report is distributed to the ngurrak barring mailing list. An annual paper update report is also distributed to all the residents who live in the Dandenong Ranges. ngurrak barring social media posts also feature regularly on Council's social media channels.

Parks Victoria (PV) and Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV) are key stakeholders and partners. Council consults with PV and FFMV ongoingly to ensure all fire safety standards are met and asset maintenance is planned and implemented appropriately.

Creative Guidance

The RidgeWalk Creative Advisory Panel (RWCAP) was formed to work alongside industry leaders in providing creative oversight for the development and delivery of the ngurrak barring | RidgeWalk's creative program. Consisting of local arts practitioners and public art professionals' advice was given by the group guided by the RidgeWalk Curatorial Framework and RidgeWalk Masterplan 2020.

In March 2023, as the ngurrak barring | RidgeWalk project progressed the RWCAP transitioned from a strategic focus to a delivery focus and so a Public Art Working Group was formed. Members of the RWCAP became members of the Public Art Working Group

and were joined by expert Council staff from the Design and Place and Creative Communities' teams. Now the Public Art Working Group provides high quality creative advice for the development of art and creative projects for ngurrak barring | RidgeWalk. The group draws on experts from relevant Council departments and from external organisations, groups and individuals.

Cultural Guidance

ngurrak barring | RidgeWalk is guided by and regularly consults with the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, a subgroup, the Wurundjeri Indigenous Project Advisory Network, and an Indigenous Project Advisory Network made up of Indigenous people living locally.

ngurrak barring draws upon principles and best practice approaches outlined in the Australian Indigenous Design Charter: Communication Design (AIDC:CD). The AIDC:CD aims to help facilitate accurate and respectful representation of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in design and associated media.

All content referencing Indigenous people or culture included as part of ngurrak barring | RidgeWalk is guided by these groups and by the Australian Indigenous Design Charter.