



The rich Country west of the mountains was sought after by British colonists.

View in Bathurst Plains near Queen Charlotte's Valley. 1824. Joseph Lycett. Courtesy State Library of Victoria.



The start of colonising Ngurra west of the divide.

Campbells River John Lewin. 1825. Courtesy State Library of NSW.

Strangers in Ngurra seeking new estates.

Squatter with Aboriginal stockman. Tommy McRae. 1881. Courtesy National Library of Australia.



Ngurra Maru-yarr

Pathways in Country

By the early 1800s the small British colony at Sydney, in the rich Ngurra of the Dharug people, was rapidly expanding and more land was needed.

The colonisers were tantalised by stories of the rich lands west of what came to be known as the Great Divide and the rumoured existence of ancient pathways through the mountains. The search was on for places with deep, rich soil, good timber, reliable rainfall and standing water, an abundance of game and a temperate climate.

These physical qualities of Ngurra were those also valued by the Dharug, Gundungurra and Wiradjuri.

Competition for good land between the original owners and the colonists, was inevitable.

Gundungurra and Dharug peoples had forever easily traversed what the colonists thought of as 'the Divide', using their ancient pathways, seasonally and ceremonially connecting them to important parts of Ngurra, to each other and to their neighbours the Wiradjuri.

It was through these pathways that the party of colonists fatefully found their way in 1813, heralding the European occupation of Central West NSW. It also marked the beginning of the violent dispossession of the original owners of the land, an impact still felt by Aboriginal people to this day.

The party of explorers are said to have carved a tree to mark their crossing and you have probably stopped here today to see that tree. Remember this part of the story when you ponder the tree. It does mark the beginning of the colonists' expansion beyond the range, assuring the survival and success of the British colony, but it also marks a starkly different beginning for the Dharug, the Gundungurra, and the Wiradjuri.

By the way, the tree is not quite what it seems, but that's a different story...

Use the QR code link below to both explore these signs and discover more about the heritage of the Pulpit Hill precinct.



A NSW 'Heritage Near Me' project 2019