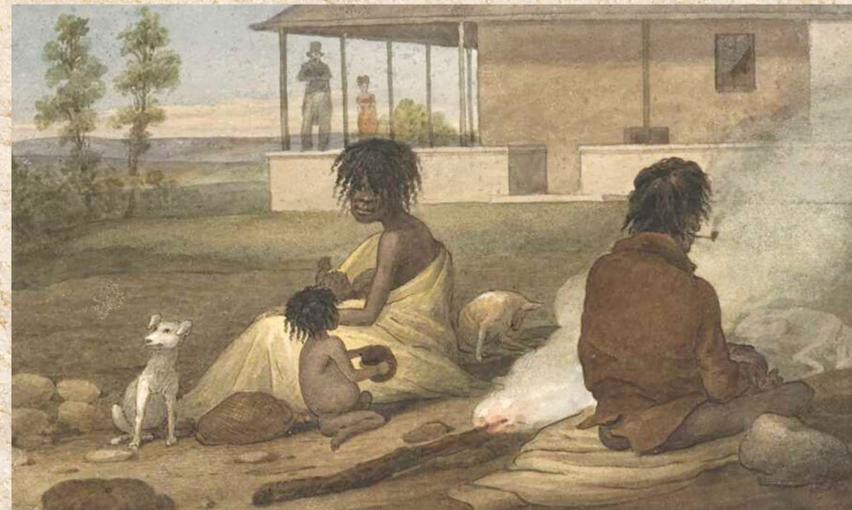


A confronting and enduring legacy



The process of British colonisation was a brutal one, and the dispossession of their Ngurra resulted in immeasurable loss for the Traditional Owners.

Port Jackson Painter. c1790. Courtesy of the British Natural History Museum.



The impacts of colonisation on Traditional Owners was devastating and continues to cause significant disadvantage to Aboriginal people to this day.

A native family of New South Wales sitting down on an English settler's farm. c1826. Augustus Earle. Courtesy National Library of Australia.



Surviving Gundungurra and Dharug people gather in 1916 with missionaries at the West Katoomba Mission Church in The Gully, not far from here.

Courtesy Blue Mountains City Council Library.

In the 1970s and 1980s, debate over the future of the remnant of the tree came into focus, particularly due to the upgrade of the increasingly busy Great Western Highway.

There was also increasing scrutiny about the authenticity of the tree. In turn, this raised questions about the need to protect and conserve the tree, which by then had largely rotted.

However, regardless of the condition and authenticity of the tree, it is a highly significant artefact and cultural symbol, which tells a powerful story.

It is a story of how the British colony at Sydney survived and thrived, and of the need for a fledging colonial nation to celebrate the beginning of its story.

For the original owners of the land, the Dharug, the Gundungurra, the Wiradjuri and the innumerable other Aboriginal peoples whose Ngurra was taken after the crossing, this tree symbolises something very different.

Though painful for Gundungurra people, the myth of this tree is now part of their story, bonding them to the stories of their Dharug and Wiradjuri neighbours and others beyond them.

It is a story of heroic resistance, loss beyond measure, survival, reawakening and reclaiming, and of unbroken and timeless connection to Ngurra, which has never been ceded nor surrendered.

Today, Australia has grown into a strong, prosperous and mature nation with a growing appetite to embrace its past and to move into the future with honesty and respect.

The story and symbolism of the tree can help us do that, to understand the price paid for the prosperity enjoyed today and the real and lasting impacts experienced by Aboriginal peoples, as a result of colonisation.

In recognition of this, in 2014 Blue Mountains City Council entered into an agreement with the Gundungurra people, the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement. This recognises the Gundungurra's deep, abiding and unbroken connection to Ngurra and establishes a consultative partnership approach with the Gundungurra to the management of land in the Blue Mountains.

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