

# The land, water & its people



## Wangal and Gadigal land

Glebe is believed to be located on Wangal and possibly Gadigal land.<sup>1</sup> This painting by James Taylor shows Cockle Bay (now Darling Harbour) in 1819-20.<sup>2</sup> Beyond Cockle Bay, slightly to the left of centre, can be seen the entrance to the waterway that becomes Blackwattle Bay and Rozelle Bay.

At an earlier time, Cockle Bay was known as 'Long Cove'. A number of writers during the first years of the colony said that Cadigal land extended west to Long Cove and Wangal land extended west from Long Cove along the southern shore of the Parramatta River.



The above portrait of Bennelong is by William Waterhouse. It was painted around 1793 when Bennelong and Yemmerawanne visited Waterhouse while on a trip to England.<sup>3</sup> Bennelong, believed to have been a Wangal man, is cited by Arthur Phillip when describing his understanding of the boundaries between the clans living in the Port Jackson area:

*From the entrance of the Harbour, along the south shore, to the cove adjoining this settlement, the District is called Cadi, & the Tribe Cadigal — the Women, Cadigalleon. ... The South Side of the Harbour from the above-mentioned Cove to Rose Hill, which the Natives call Parramatta, the District is called Wann, and the Tribe, Wanngal.<sup>4</sup>*

*Similarly, in a journal entry in 1790, Philip Gidley King wrote: The tribe of Cadi are on the South side, extending from the South head to Long-Cove; at which place the district of Wanne and the tribe of Wangal commences, extending as far as Par-ra-mata, or Rose-Hill"<sup>5</sup>*

'Long Cove' was a name for what is now Darling Harbour. In the Sydney language, Darling Harbour was called 'Tumbalong', meaning a place where seafood is found.<sup>6</sup> Generally, territories were bounded by ridge lines that demarcated watersheds to major streams and rivers.<sup>7</sup>

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## A sense of how people lived

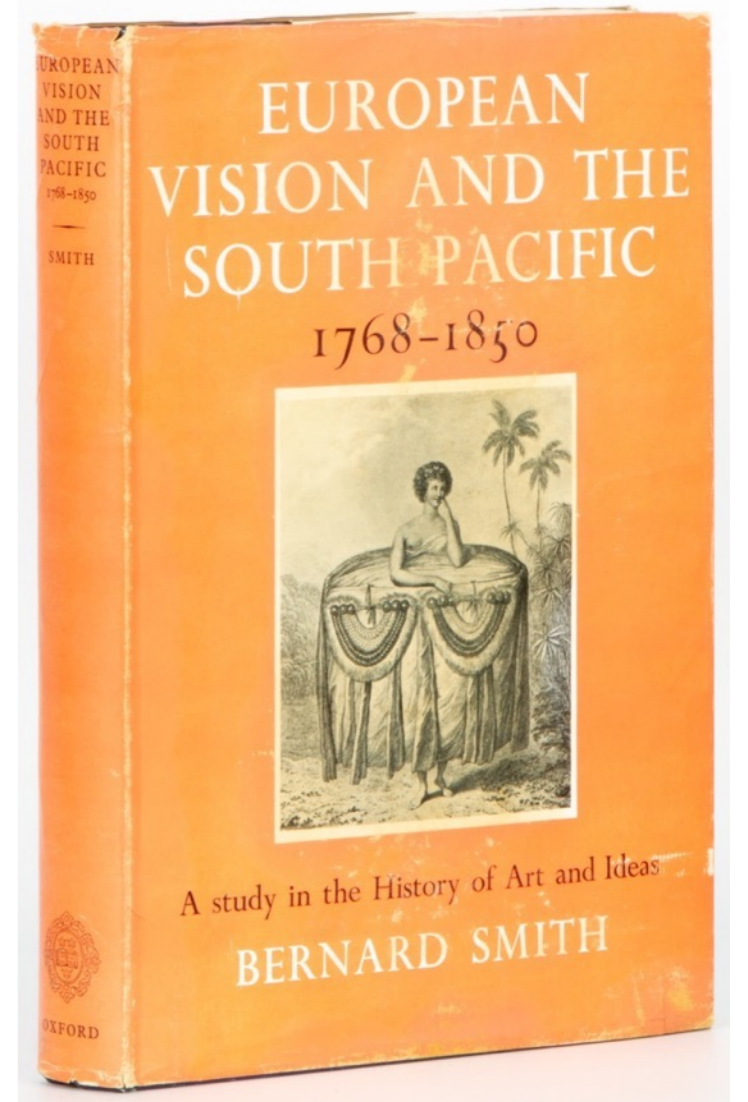
Aboriginal people living around the estuaries of Sydney spent much of their time fishing. This painting by the 'Port Jackson Painter' is titled: *A N. South wales Native strick. [sic] fish by moon light while his wife paddles him along with a fire in the Canoe reading to broil the fish as caught.*<sup>8</sup> Aboriginal people fished in the harbour from canoes made of bark.<sup>9</sup>

## The Glebe Society connection

The Port Jackson Painter was named by Bernard Smith in his 1960 book called *European Vision and the South Pacific*. The book was based on extensive research in the Natural History Museum in London and led to many early colonial artworks seeing the light of day for the first time.<sup>10</sup>

Bernard Smith was the founding President of the Glebe Society.

The Port Jackson Painter was the most prolific of the First Fleet artists, and worked in Sydney from 1788 to the mid-1790s.<sup>11</sup>



## Devastation of the people by British colonisation

The catastrophic effect of colonisation on the Aboriginal people of this area cannot be over-stated. When an epidemic of gal-galla (probably smallpox) broke out in the Sydney region in April 1789, well over half of local Aboriginal people died, perhaps up to 70%.<sup>12</sup>

One of many who died was Arabanoo, who succumbed after caring for others with the disease.<sup>13</sup> This watercolour by John Eyre shows the gardens of First Government House, in which Arabanoo was buried in 1789.<sup>14</sup> Arabanoo had reported that many people fled Sydney in an attempt to escape the epidemic.<sup>15</sup>

Aboriginal peoples who inhabited the land now known as Sydney were increasingly alienated from their land and food sources, and conflict ensued:

*Within two and a half years of the arrival of the First Fleet, patterns of life which had been followed for thousands of years were no longer possible. Within forty years, the pre-colonial way of life had all but disappeared from the Sydney region.<sup>16</sup>*

Although there is little written about the Aboriginal people living in the Glebe area in the very early colonial period, they were disposed of their land within a few years of colonisation, as land was set aside for the church and for the crown.<sup>17</sup>