



# Support sought for heritage listing of Rushcutters Bay

Indigenous heritage is something we should all protect.

The proposal by the NSW Heritage Council to add Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Parks to the state register is an important recognition of the sites' Indigenous heritage. We ask all *Koori Mail* readers and others to send in letters of support by November 20. Email [emma.dortins@environemnt.nsw.gov.au](mailto:emma.dortins@environemnt.nsw.gov.au)

The proposed heritage listing notes:

"Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park have research potential to inform our knowledge over Aboriginal-settler contact and possible conflict in the early colonial period and 19th century cultural interactions in inner Sydney, shifting camps and settlement, interactions with colonists and increasing suburbanisation. Both have research potential on early and ongoing Aboriginal resistance to colonialisation, lobbying for equal rights and for better living conditions.

"The Eora people was the name given to the coastal Aboriginal people around Sydney. Central Sydney is therefore often referred to as Eora Country. Within the City of



Sydney local government area, the traditional owners are the Cadigal and Wangal bands of the Eora. With European occupation of the Sydney region from 1788, the impacts on Cadigal and Wangal people and their ways of life were enormous, but there are descendants still living in Sydney today. Yarranabbe Park is thought to be named according to the Eora name for Darling Point."

Rushcutters Bay has historic significance as a site of some 6000 years of Cadigal Aboriginal occupation and seasonal use. It has

historic significance as a documented site of early contact and possible conflict between Aboriginal people and settlers. The Cadigal people called it Kogerah and its settler name, Rushcutters Bay, reflects Aboriginal and settler gathering of rushes here, used respectively for light-weight spears for fishing, and thatching for settler huts. Settlers were cutting rushes in this bay within weeks following landing in 1788.

The Indigenous inhabitants of the area comprised at least two clans,

the Cadigal and the Birrabirragal. Yaranabbe is the Aboriginal name for Darling Point, possibly after a Sydney-based tribe of that name (spelt Yeranibe by David Collins) or after an Aboriginal person, Yeranibe, who assimilated into the European settlement during the early days of the colony.

After the devastating 1789 smallpox outbreak, local Aboriginal populations regrouped, continuing to live in camps including in nearby Barcom Glen and downstream on public land at Rushcutters Bay, throughout the 19th century. Residents caught fish, gathered shellfish, sold shell-encrusted ornaments and wooden implements in Sydney to get other things they needed. Ceremonies continued to take place until at least the 1870s. Known local characters included Jack Harris and William Warrell, both of whom died in 1863.

Relations with the harbour people in the first year (of colonisation, 1788) had oscillated between 'sociable' exchanges, such as the shaving sessions, and violence.

**Andrew Woodhouse**  
President, Potts Point Heritage Society