

NGALA BIDI WONGI BOODJAR

Our Paths Talking Country

EXHIBITION LAUNCH

29 October 2022

EXHIBITION RUNS

30 October – 6 November

GALLERY

Goolugatup Heathcote

Truth telling and healing, through deep engagement with Noongar kaartdijin bidi (knowledge trail), to decode, express and celebrate the ancient Noongar place names in Melville with the community.

Shared community vision for Place Names Melville

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CAN acknowledges the Noongar people of the Bibbulmun nation as the traditional custodians of the land and waters on which we live and work. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and honour all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of this nation.

CAN is proud to work with people from all cultures, but we do so on the understanding of First Peoples, first.

**Kalyakoorl Kwadja Be, Kalyakoorl Boorda Be
Always Was, Always Will Be**

WARNING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain images and names of people who are deceased.

SPELLING

We acknowledge that the spelling and interpretation of Indigenous language can vary greatly from community to community.

Ngala Bidi Wongi Boodjar

Our Paths Talking Country

Place Names Melville has been an incredible journey of reconciliation and Noongar language revival produced by Community Arts Network (CAN) in partnership with the City of Melville, the Noongar community and Moodjar Consultancy.

Inspired by Professor Len Collard's seminal research, CAN and Moodjar Consultancy have developed a community-led, creative model for decoding the ancient meanings embedded in place names.

Decoding Noongar place names to reveal these meanings is at the heart of the Place Names project.

In Melville, community participants were immersed in the process, learning the decoding methodology with the collective knowledge and guidance of Professor Len Collard, Geri Hayden and other Noongar Elders.

Facilitated by producer Pip Kelly and the creative team, three areas within the City of Melville - Goolugatup (Heathcote), Willagee and Jenalup (Blackwall Reach) - were explored through a cultural mapping process inspired by walks on Country.

Guided by lead artist Natalie Scholtz and artist Sandy McKendrick, Place Names Melville participants used lead pencil, charcoal, pastel, ink and charcoal

mark making techniques to respond to natural materials collected on Country. They then developed these responses with layers of acrylic paint, pencil, thread, natural materials and additional marks. Creative expressions of Country were further explored through poetry with artist Nandi Chinna. This transpired into a series of abstract artworks and poems capturing the essence of these places - a reflection of the community's strong connection to boodjar.

Participants also recorded natural soundscapes and sensory videos at each site under the guidance of Hugh Sando. When displayed together, the strong connection between video footage and the community collage is evident.

This *Ngala Bidi Wongi Boodjar - Our Paths Talking Country* exhibition is the culmination of the first phase of Place Names Melville and is just the beginning of this journey. Thanks to the ongoing generous support from Lotterywest, CAN, the City of Melville and Moodjar Consultancy will continue Place Names Melville until 2024.

The continuation of Place Names Melville will allow this project to be a powerful catalyst for reconciliation, truth-telling, and healing throughout the Melville area.

Place Names MELVILLE

COMMUNITY ARTS NETWORK

CAN creates positive social change through the arts, building inclusion and understanding between people.

For more than a decade CAN has partnered with Noongar communities to share the histories and experiences that are unwritten or unspoken. This work breaks through the silence arising from systemic disempowerment and exposes the politics of fear by sharing, through art, participants' small, daily acts of resistance and resilience that are essential to maintaining hope.

The creation of powerful artworks and experiences resonate deeply for the community creators and with the audiences they reach, far beyond where the work originated.

can.org.au



MOODJAR CONSULTANCY

Moodjar Consultancy is about sharing Nyungar knowledge and culture to produce an overall positive impact on Australian society.

Moodjar Consultancy is a family owned company established in 2006. Moodjar Consultancy's Directors are Len Collard and Lisa Collard. Len is a Whadjuk Nyungar Traditional Owner of the Perth Metropolitan area and surrounding lands, rivers, swamps, ocean and its culture.

The company's name (Moodjar) refers to the Moodjar Tree – also known as the Australian Christmas Tree or the 'Nuytsia floribunda'. This was chosen as the company name as the Moodjar tree is the totem given to Len by his grandmother as a baby. Len was born during the Nyungar season of Kambarang in December 1959. He would always be known as 'The Christmas Baby, Moodjar.'

Moodjar.com.au

CITY OF MELVILLE

Place Names Melville is a long-term project that recognises traditional Noongar place names in the City of Melville and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to reconciliation and truth-telling.

Since 1997, the City of Melville has been working with local Elders to research significant Noongar sites and understand their history. Following some further exploration in 2015, this led to the production of the Whadjuk Boodja sites of cultural significance brochure.

This early work identified the potential for further research and engagement and a longer-term project, hence the establishment of Place Names Melville. As part of this project the shared meanings and Aboriginal location names for relevant sites, parks and roads in the City of Melville will be acknowledged.

melvillecity.com.au

Decoding and the place names process

Cracking the Ancient Codes

PHASE ONE

Community engagement and initial decoding

In 2022, Noongar Elders and community members came together to explore the meanings and stories behind several Noongar place names in the City of Melville.

Guided by Professor Len Collard's extensive research, which shows that most Noongar place names are actually sentences, participants used a decoding process with specially developed word cards to break down the names and try to unlock their ancient meanings.

Noongar place names were originally written down by non-Aboriginal people, so over time many of the words have been misinterpreted and their meanings misunderstood.

CAN's Place Names decoding process places Noongar knowledge and language firmly at the forefront of this exploration.

"What we are doing is recolonialising, because it places Noongar kaartadjin (knowledge, language and culture) as the authority and puts the historical documents written by wadjellas as secondary." Professor Len Collard

Through language decoding workshops and creative activities, Elders and community members shared their stories, histories, culture and kaartdijin as a powerful act of reclamation. The ancient meanings of these place names are starting to reveal themselves, but further research and uncovering of Noongar kaartadjin will continue before a final consensus is reached.

JENALUP

JEN-AL-UP

The place where the feet make a track.

JEN	foot, feet
AL	that over there
UP	place of

JENA-L-UP

Place where the feet makes tracks.

JENA	feet
L	joining word
UP	place of

WILLAGEE

WIL-LA-GEE

Wow, that's ochre.
Wow, ochre is there.

WIL	ochre (particularly red)
LA	that/there
GEE	wow

GOOLUGATUP

KULUNGAR-KAART-UP

Place of children.
Children's place of knowledge.

KULUNGAR	children
KAART	head or hill/top of
UP	place

KULUNGAR KUDITJ

Children's learning place.

KULUNGAR	children
KUDITJ	knowledge

WIL-GI

Place of the ochre (red).

WILGI	ochre
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Video

In a mentorship between photographer and videographer Hugh Sando, producer Pip Kelly and participants Christine Reich, Chelsey Thomson and Dr Gerrard Shaw, natural soundscapes and sensory videos were recorded. When displayed together the strong connection between video footage and the community collage work is evident.

Words accompany the abstract artworks drawn from the lush Melville landscape creating a contemporary representation of Country.

"Recording audio on Country opened it up more for me, I could really hear and feel the country. I also love sitting with other Elders I've only just met and meeting new people who bring a whole new life to what you know about language and places." Christine Reich

Poetry

Place Names Melville is a multi-media project exploring a decoding process of Noongar language and meaning connected with place.

Alongside a series of abstract artworks is a collection of poems capturing the essence of these places - a reflection of the community's strong connection to boodjar.

Facilitator Nandi Chinna guided deep listening and word expressions about place names and in turn Noongar participants produced these word scapes.

Use the QR code to hear poems spoken by:

Geraldine Metcalf
Dot Henry
Chelsey Thomson
Dulcie Donaldson
Dr Gerrard Shaw
Vickie Zani
Narelle Ogilvie
Christine Reich



can.org.au/place-names-melville

Digital collage

The Digital Collage is an amalgamation of abstract artworks created by participants of Place Names Melville.

Inspired by three locations - Goolugatup, Willagee and Jenalup, our emerging artists responded to patterns, textures and personal experiences on Country with ink and charcoal mark making techniques.

Their individual pieces were then combined to form the first layer of many, as participants used lead pencil, acrylic paint, pastel, charcoal, ink and photocopied elements to respond to each other's lines and marks.

These interpretations of place are carefully curated into eight combined digital artworks reflecting the community's strong connection to Country - and the heart of Melville.



JENALUP

Ashley Donaldson Jnr

Freda Ogilvie

Narelle Ogilvie

Dulcie Donaldson



JENALUP

Sheridan Jones
Christine Reich



JENALUP

Tamara Ugle
Christine Reich
Chelsey Thomson



KULUNGARKAARTUP
KULUNGAR KUDITJ

Vickie Zani
Narelle Ogilvie
Sharon Calgaret



KULUNGARKAARTUP
KULUNGAR KUDITJ

Dr Gerrard Shaw
Narelle Ogilvie



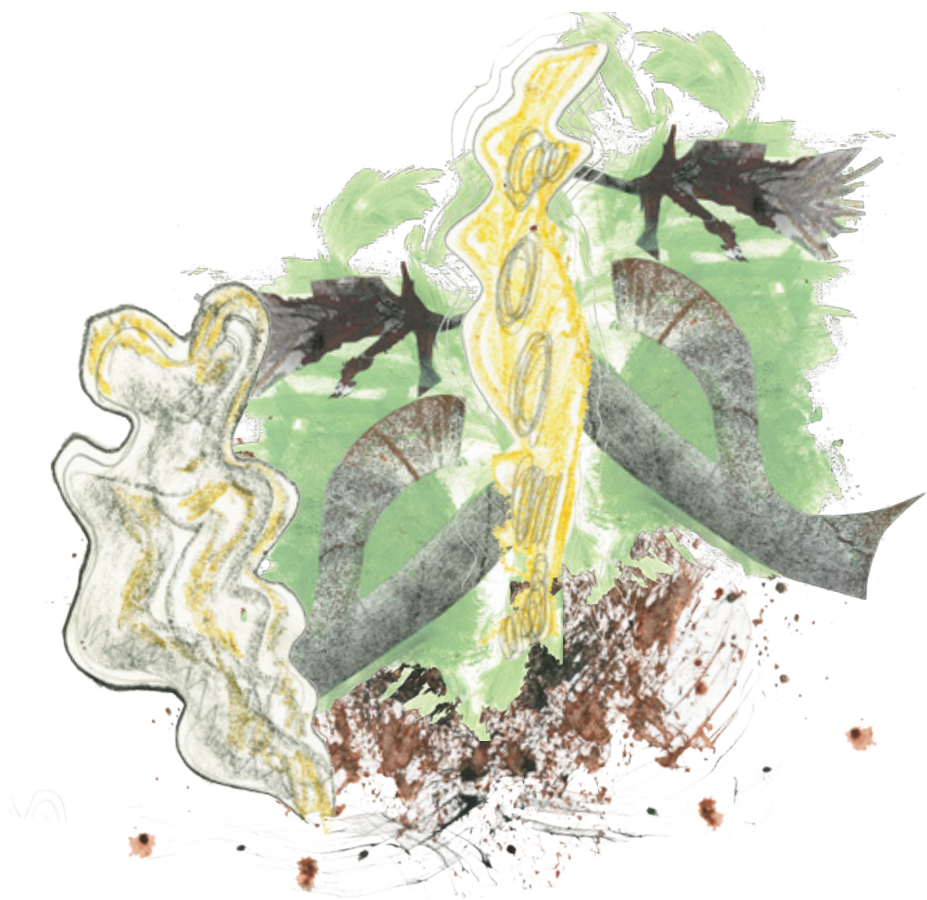
**WILLAGEE
WILGI**

Sacha Ogilvie
Freda Ogilvie
Christine Reich



**WILLAGEE
WILGI**

Sacha Ogilvie
Freda Ogilvie



**WILLAGEE
WILGI**

Tova Calgaret

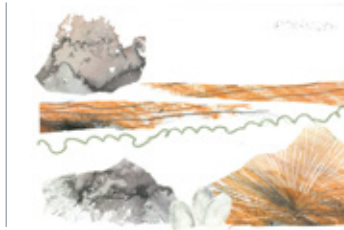
Sacha Ogilvie

Dulcie Donaldson



Chelsey Thomson

"It's a spiritual healing journey and I spose I am a creative person and it embraced my creative side"



Treelines to story lines

Soft sounds of tiny waves
Swept away in the calm
The waves move me
Dancing leaves whispering
Smell of the salty breeze
Diamonds on the surface
From sun to the water
Distance of the hilltop
Water caressing the rocks
Rocks comforting the sand
Tree- lines to story-lines
Healing in my heart



Geraldine Metcalf

"I'm so proud of it and it was alot of fun. The artwork is amazing, the mapping, the story behind the mapping. It's really learning alot of my culture."

Bush River | Kulungar kaart up

The sound of the wind
The Water, the Birds, the Peace around
Them, the sound of my people Long ago.
Talking in their language, doing their work.
Each day, dressed in their warm Kangaroo skins.
The women carrying their babies with them.
Some of the old women doing their painting.
The children playing not far from their family.
My people had so much freedom in their land and country.
Our fathers, grandfathers went out to hunt for food each day.
Some times at night as well.
This is how I see my people long ago.



Dulcie Donaldson

"I love going out on country and feeling the country with my five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting."



Kulungar kaart up

As I stood there on the edge of the water, I felt the cool breeze blow upon my face, it was cold, cold as ice. I rubbed my hands together and the heat of my hands I placed upon my face. It was so good to feel the warmth of my hands upon my face.

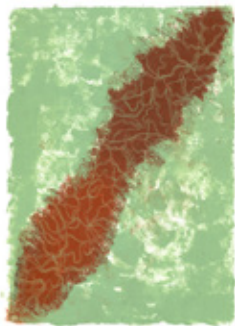
I heard the sound of the water lapping upon the edge of the river. I stooped down to touch the water and scooped it up to my lips, oh so salty I could not drink.

I imagined the seafood that was swimming in that water, fish, prawns, crabs, octopus and eels, wouldn't they be nice cooked up on a BBQ with a squeeze of lemon juice to add to the flavor and oh don't forget the salt and pepper.



Sacha Ogilvie

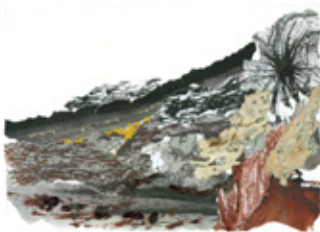
"Walking the paths those walked before me."





Christine Reich

"Recording audio on country opened it up more for me, I could really hear and feel the country. I also love sitting with other elders I've only just met and meeting new people who bring a whole new life to what you know about language and places."



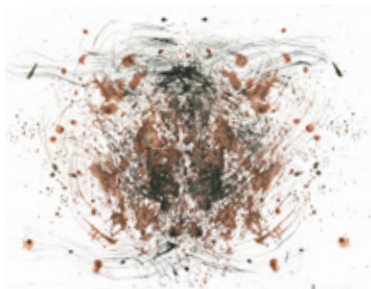
(Untitled)

What is it I feel? Is it longing from
past or the uncertainty of what's to come?
As the feeling passes through, inhaling, feeling
my way,
I embrace the thought of my mother,
caring and always with me.
Surrounding me with beauty and warmth
to guide my journey choosing a
path that holds me dear.
My home is the way.
In country which nurtures and fills my soul.
This place Willagee.



Sharon Calgaret

"I enjoy going there - 'cos I can talk freely, I can express myself, we can laugh and yarn and I have friends there. It's just enjoyable and I look forward to it."





Narrelle Ogilvie

"Today is tomorrow's
history"



(Untitled)

Walking thru the breeze the wind chilling
my bones

Crashing waves and the smell of the river
enters my nose.

The sunshine glistening reflecting the waters
like golden stripes

A place of healing in a spiritual place.

My soul is cleansing at a peaceful pace like
the soft winds rustling the leaves and crashing
of waves.

Connection to country, connected for life.



Kelvin Garlett



Dr Gerrard Shaw

"I go there for the wonderful healing that is going on. I find it hard to find words for it. I feel that my identity is reaffirmed. I feel that I am owned by someone. The pain is there from the stories from the past, but we mustn't stay there, we must move forward together."



Serenity

Chaos (worries and unresolved issues)

I turned to the Warm Sun for healing

And to the peace that comes from the rippling waters

The idea of putting my body into

the waters and letting the waters

wash away all my worries

and unresolved issues

Contact with ancestors who walked on this very land

A long time ago

Powerful healing

The bushes by the water together bring peace

All blessed by the sun

Freda Ogilvie



"It was time to sit down and yarn and catchup with everybody. I didn't think I could paint, I didn't think I could do craft, but I can! The crew got us thinking a bit deeper about the signs out there - it was about connecting with the land, with the spirit and connecting with our mob. When we went on the bus together, we got thinking a bit deeper and it's all about the wellbeing of everyone - so we can laugh and tell jokes, which is important to us so we can have that happy feeling, so we can be more in the happy feeling."



Tova Calgarett

"For me, it was mainly learning. I like seeing how the words and the feeling comes together. Feeling connections both to the places, people and ancestors."



Reflection of Nature

In the lands of ancestors before me,
With the ebb and flow of time and seas.
The lands blanketed in clouds,
The seasons forever go around.

Earth is forever, but we are not,
Life goes on, no matter what.
Life is worth living, and having fun,
Feel it, experience it, loss and love.

Experience all of the possibilities,
Live to the best of your abilities.
Death is life's only certainty,
So live life, and feel free.

Ashley Donaldson JNR





Vickie Zani

"It was a feeling of family coming together. A combination of everything, being together and the laughter and the feeling of achieving something and actually starting from nothing and seeing how it all comes together and the good feeling of wow, of achievement! Thank you to CAN for making this journey possible"



Reflections

The wind whistling and whispering through the trees makes me think of ancestors telling their stories and lores.

Smelling the loamy earthiness of the vegetation the rot and decay and sweetness

Hearing the waves hitting the beach sounds like the ancestors clapping, feet stamping and singing

The birds trilling and frogs croaking, bees buzzing accompanying nature in her fabulous song

The briny, salty, fishy smell I can almost taste.

The feeling of peace and serenity and the chill breeze cutting to the bone.

Knowing that I experience all of this means I am alive and I am free!!

Sheridan Jones



Ashley Donaldson Snr





Dot Henry



My experiences walking down by the river-

Walking out along the river with the wind blowing through my hair and onto my face

Leaves blowing from trees big and small

Listening to the birds chirping and chatting, also in the trees

Markings of the sand and the stillness of the surroundings

Experience a taste of salty water which was scooped up in my hand

Looking out at the water, hearing the rippling effect of the water crashing into the rocks

Looking at the form of an old mia mia wondering if my ancestors were still there.

The still life of logs and branches that were set in place

Feeling cold and stepping back into the sun to get warm and relive my experiences

You should have seen the zantias

Linley Williams

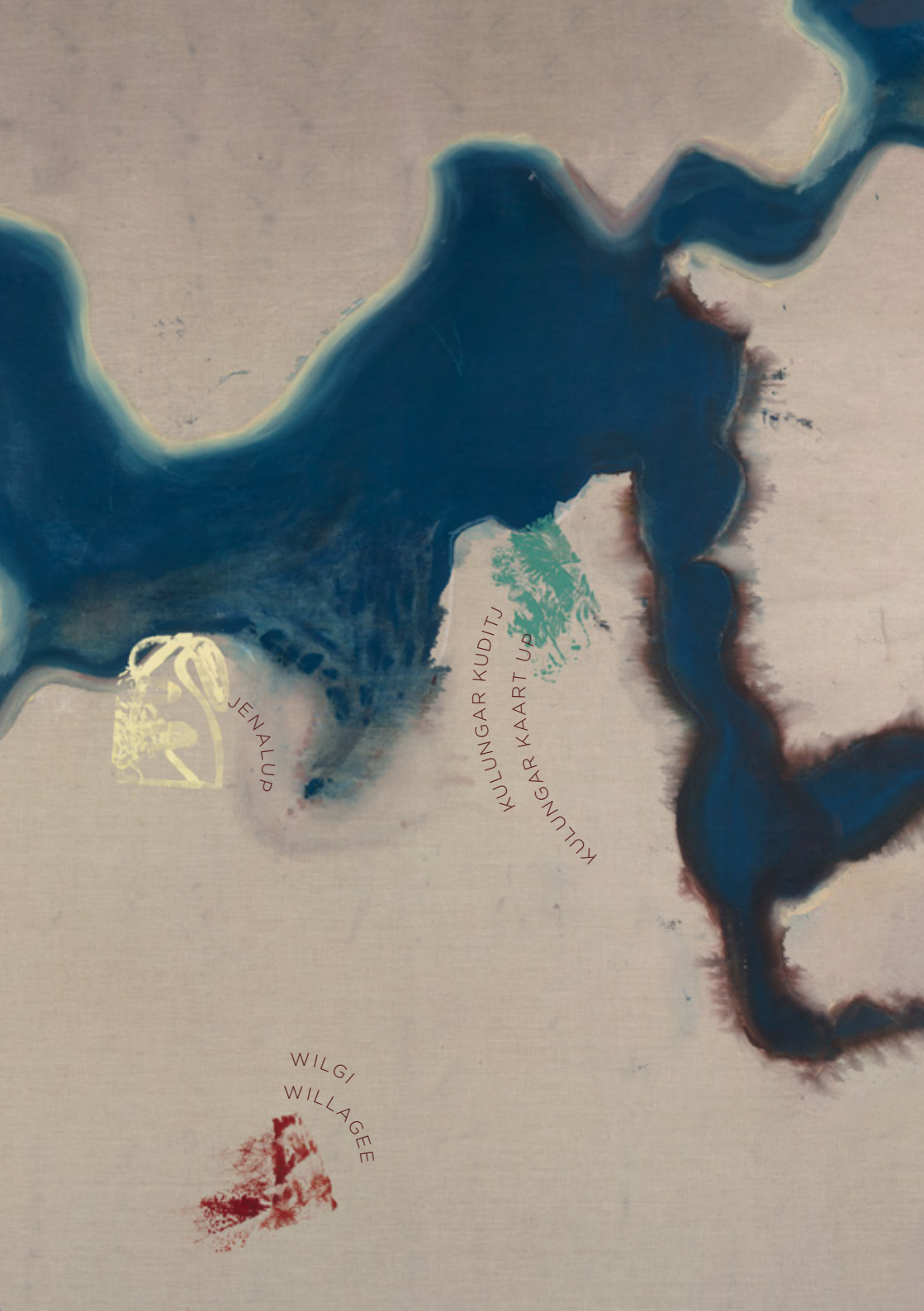


Tamara Ugle



Place Names
MELVILLE





JENALUP

KULNGAR KUDITJ
KULNGAR KAART UP

WILGI
WILLAGEE

ELDERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Adam Williams	Freda Ogilvie	Liz Hayden
Ashley Donaldson Jnr	Garry Garlett	Mick McCarthy
Ashley Donaldson Snr	Geraldine Metcalf	Narelle Ogilvie
Betty Garlett	Dr Gerrard Shaw	Sacha Ogilvie
Billy Jack Spicer	Jim Hayden	Sharon Calgaret
Chelsey Thomson	Karen Jacobs	Sheridan Jones
Christine Reich	Kelvin Garlett	Tamara Ugle
Deena Lazzan	Kerry-Ann Winmar	Tova Calgaret
Dot Henry	Liam Nelson	Trevor Walley
Dulcie Donaldson	Linley Williams	Vickie Zani

PROJECT TEAM

Len Collard

Cultural Facilitator - Moodjar Consultancy

Geri Hayden

Cultural Facilitator - Community Arts Network

Pip Kelly

Producer - Community Arts Network

Natalie Scholtz

Creative Producer/Lead Artist - Community Arts Network

Sandy McKendrick

Creative Producer/Artist - Community Arts Network

Noelene Mantellato

City of Melville Place Names Project Coordinator

Leanne Woods

City of Melville First Nations Engagement Coordinator

Hugh Sando

Photographer and video mentor

Nandi Chinna

Spoken word facilitator

Rebecca Lyon Augustus

Digital and graphic design - Community Arts Network

