

### **BARANGAROO LAUNCHES ABORIGINAL CULTURAL GUIDED TOURS**

Renowned environmental educator Clarence Slockee leads a new Visitor Services team

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Local, interstate and international visitors to Barangaroo Reserve, Sydney's new headland park, will soon be able to connect with the world's oldest living culture through Barangaroo's Aboriginal Cultural Tour Program.

The Barangaroo Delivery Authority, on behalf of the NSW Government, is launching the program to give visitors to Barangaroo Reserve a hands-on education about the site's rich Aboriginal history and cultural significance.

The program, which will also include a specially designed package for schools groups, is being developed by renowned environmental educator Clarence Slockee, who has joined the Authority as Team Leader, Visitor Services.

Slockee is an Aboriginal man from the Mindjimbingal clan of the Bundjalung tribe situated on the far north coast of NSW. He has spent the past decade sharing his passion and knowledge of Aboriginal culture and the environment as an education officer at Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, and is also well known to viewers of ABC TV's *Gardening Australia*.

Slockee said: "The Aboriginal Cultural Tour Program will bring Barangaroo Reserve to life with the stories of its First Peoples, giving visitors an overview of the history of the park and the ways in which it has been referenced throughout the site today – from the naming through to the native plants."

Growing up on the family farm where his parents grew a variety of small crops in their business as farmers, Clarence was able to marry agricultural methods with learned permaculture principals to run his own landscape business before moving to Sydney. As a graduate of the National Aboriginal & Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) Dance College, he has gained experience across a broad range of performance mediums.

Slockee leads a team of five Aboriginal Visitor Services Guides appointed by the Authority and trained in partnership with Eora TAFE NSW: Mary Mumbulla, Jessica Birk, Robert Young, Tim Gray and Harry Matheson. All bring a diverse range of skills and experience to the Aboriginal Cultural Tour Program from their own personal Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and a range of backgrounds including visual art and music.

The guided tours will provide an in-depth explanation of the Indigenous history of Sydney Harbour and surrounds, the cultural significance of the site, and the various species of native plants within the park. People taking the tour will gain a special insight into the plants' traditional uses for Aboriginal Australians as well as the process behind the regeneration of native bushland to create Barangaroo Reserve as it is known today.

The tours will also delve into the stories of the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the land - the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation - and historically significant local Aboriginal people including Barangaroo, the woman

after whom the park is named, as well as Bennelong, after whom the site of the Sydney Opera House is named, Patygaranga and Bungaree.

Craig van der Laan, CEO of the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, said: “Clarence is designing a terrific program that will give visitors to Sydney an opportunity to learn more about Barangaroo the woman, the lives and traditions of her people, and the place which bears her name today. We are delighted he has joined our team, and also to have been able to offer job opportunities to five talented guides through our partnership with Eora TAFE.”

The Aboriginal Cultural Tour Program will commence once the Welcome Celebration concludes at the end of November. Tours for schools groups will be available shortly. For more information, visit [www.barangaroo.sydney](http://www.barangaroo.sydney), where you will also find general information on visiting Barangaroo Reserve, how it was built, how to get there on public transport, and accessibility.

As part of the Barangaroo Welcome Celebration, which concludes at the end of November, the Visitor Services Guides are offering free general tours of Barangaroo Reserve each Saturday and Sunday from 11am – 4pm.

### **Barangaroo the woman**

Barangaroo was a strong Aboriginal woman of the Cammeraygal (the people of Cammeray), who frequently traversed the waters of Birra Birra (Sydney Harbour) in a *nawi* (stringybark canoe.) She would travel between her ancestral homelands of Cammeray on the northern shores of the Harbour to her husband Bennelong’s island of Mel Mel (Goat Island) and many other areas of what came to be known as Sydney.

Life for Sydney Aboriginal clans was in many ways quite idyllic because the sea and surrounding bushland provided ample food and shelter. Ceremonies were held in and around beaches and coves of the Harbour. The sandstone shelters and platforms became galleries of art and sculpture.

Barangaroo Reserve is a re-imagined recreation of the headland and shoreline of Barangaroo’s day, a landscape formed over millennia yet given over to industry for almost 200 years.

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