

“We’re building what we think is beautiful, putting it into exhibitions, not selling it and then complaining about it.”

I said, “I think I would like to begin on a major piece, an enormous piece of major Australian furniture that will make my name but also bloody sell.

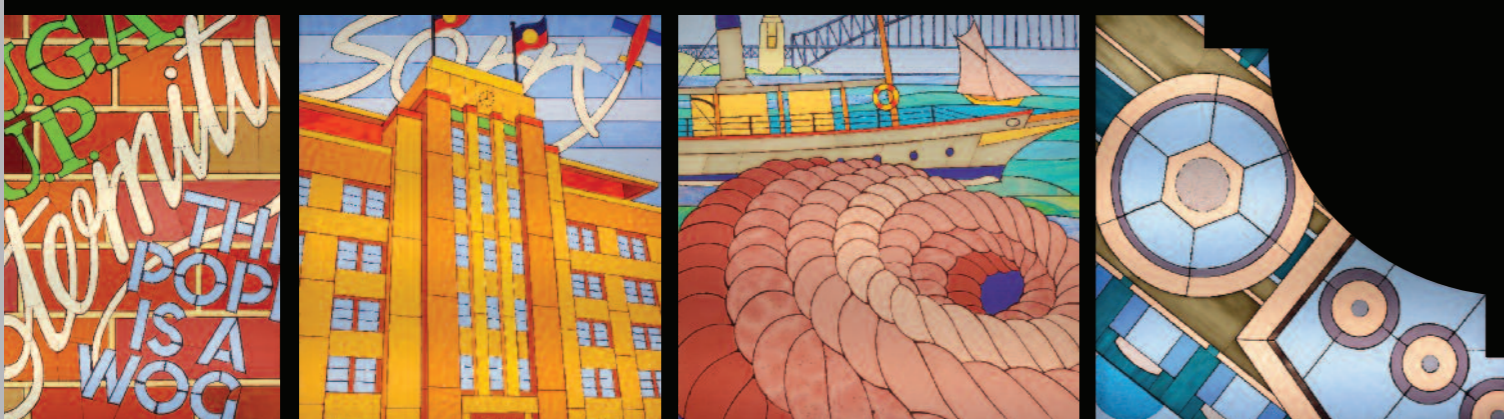
“Who’s got the money? Let’s approach it from the money side. Who has the money in society and spends it freely?” It was the casino operators; the Crown Casino and the casino at Darling Harbour were in the news. We thought they’re are the ones that have money and they spend millions every year rejuvenating and renovating their casinos and huge hotels that are associated. Let’s make something that a casino or a major international hotel would want. What would the region want? We de-

cidied probably where they make most of their money is in the hotel, in the restaurant and in the bar. “Well, let’s make a cocktail bar.

“An enormous thing that will draw people in. A cocktail bar that’s like nobody else’s cocktail bar.”

I thought, “What are the things that I love the most in this world?” One of them was the harbour bridge. I was being nuts about the damn thing. I said, “all right, let’s just steal the design and build a cocktail cabinet in that iconic shape.”

That’s why she was born — that’s why she’s here. But it took 32 years. We are pensioners now and really we have nothing in this world except this. It’ll be our superannuation, really. It’ll mean we can survive and travel again after all these years.



UNDERSTANDING THE LAND



JULIA GREEN WITH THE TIMELINE ...



... AND UNCLE MAX DULUMUNMUN.

In the Braidwood Museum:
The Newest Exhibition of the Oldest History

“From the moment of first contact, settler history became part of Indigenous history and Indigenous history became part of settler history”

Mark McKenna, historian *From The Edge, Australia’s Lost Histories* Miegunya Press 2016, xvii

“All the riches of the oldest human culture on earth is available to Australians; very little of it is prohibited to the uninitiated or those of a different race”

Bruce Pascoe, Indigenous writer and historian 2016 Lin Onus Oration

“You aren’t going to lose 250 years of history, you will gain 65,000 years of history”

Recent Indigenous quote, unknown source

In April 2016 a small sub-committee of Braidwood and District Historical Society members, Richard Green, Janene Collins and Julia Green formed to discuss ways of respectfully highlighting the long and rich Aboriginal history of the Braidwood area. We developed an initial plan for an exhibition with three elements: a timeline from 60,000 years ago to the present, displays of artefacts already held in the Museum, and screens with relevant images and audiovisuals.

We researched, and consulted widely during the following months and years. We (as non-Indigenous people) were particularly keen to engage with Aboriginal people with family links to this region, many of whom have reconnected with Braidwood through the biennial Two Fires Festivals. Budawang Elder Noel Butler advised us on identification and likely provenance of the artefacts that had been donated by

the Ellis Family many years ago. Netta and Nevin Ellis travelled extensively in Australia and the precise origins of their collection are largely unknown. Walbunga Elder Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison was consulted early in the planning, and many others provided us with the quotes that form part of the exhibition.

Bruce Pascoe, Indigenous writer with Yuin connections, challenges us all to be proud that bread was first made in our country some 15,000 years before anywhere else on earth. The Museum Timeline includes this and other amazing dates and events.

The Exhibition slide show takes us evocatively from the earliest photos of local Aborigines, to their present presence, depicting the enormous changes they experienced since early white settlement.

In April 2019 when the exhibition was ready, its earliest visitors were Indigenous people and others attending the 2019 Two Fires Festival. Their feedback was good, they were engaged and impressed. Uncle Max spent a lot of time showing younger Aboriginal men the stone axes and teaching them how they were made and used.

What we have created is regarded as the beginning stage of an evolving exhibition. Certainly it is important to include more Aboriginal voices, and we are in touch with families who have expressed interest in researching and sharing stories about their ancestral links with Country here. Also, contributions from local Braidwoodians with stories they are willing to share about early contact with the First People in the Braidwood area would add significantly to our understanding of place and to our historical records.

Visit the Museum to have a look, and be in touch if you would like to discuss or help develop this project in any way.

Julia Green
September 2019

