Sensing a Remote Coastal Landscape: How an Aboriginal Culture Camp Experience Informed Conceptual Design Thinking of Public Spaces in Australia

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Abstract

This paper presents how a 2015 public space design competition, made available to students of landscape architecture in Australia and New Zealand, provided an opportunity for investigations to be carried out into the experiences, values, and the importance of hangout places in public settings. Following successful and enriching partnerships with Indigenous communities as part of previous design studio teaching and research activities[3] we developed a brief for our current landscape architecture students from the University of Canberra and the University of Melbourne to explore the notion of hangouts, inclusive of Indigenous perspectives. With support from the Local Eden Aboriginal Land Council from the South Coast region of New South Wales (NSW) and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, we formulated a design brief that involved students spending five days camping at an Aboriginal site of significance known as the Haycock Point Culture Camp.

Located at the northern end of the NSW Ben Boyd National Park, the Culture Camp site is a space that has been, for some time, purposefully set aside for the local Aboriginal community to share, celebrate and transmit their knowledge. Consisting of a set of separate family camping sites, each connected to a central meeting place, the campground is located within walking distance of bush foods as well as fishing and diving spots that have been important to the local Aboriginal people for generations. And while the Culture Camp serves as a modern-day hangout, where Aboriginal families typically travel to on weekends and holiday periods, the archaeological record and oral accounts indicated that the site has been occupied for thousands of years. Indeed, the site represents an old hangout location.

Through the act of "hanging out" at the Culture Camp with our students, and by learning about the use and history of the site through the insights of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge holders, we explore in this paper how the knowledge gained through the experience helped to inform and inspire design thinking about hangout places in both regional and urban contexts. This paper features design concepts developed by students, along with critical

reflections on how the fishing, sketching, bushwalking, storytelling, and other camp activities imbued their design approaches with meaning.

Keywords

Landscape Perception, Public Space, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Haycock Point, Landscape Architecture Education, Design Process

Introduction

The Haycock Point Culture Camp was formally set aside in 1999 for the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council to carry out cultural and traditional activities, as part of the *NSW Forestry and National Park Estate Act 1998 No. 163*[4]. The site (approx. 5 hectares; although not officially annexed) serves as the only space for such purpose within the Ben Boyd National Park. The Park is comprised of three sections north and south of the coastal township of Eden, and a much smaller area north of the Pambula River (Figure 1). Another site within the Far South Coast region that serves a similar function to the Haycock Culture Camp is a beachside location within the Nadgee Nature Reserve. These locations are attractive to the local Aboriginal community due to the fishing opportunities they afford. The Aboriginal people have a rich cultural and spiritual connection to the sea and its resources and access to the alongshore environment remains critically important to their maintenance of place, and their cultural identity.

The Haycock Point Culture Camp site is largely inconspicuous; it is not signposted or demarcated with fences. By design and through the wishes of the Aboriginal community, the site maintains a footprint which is seamlessly woven into the Ben Boyd National Park landscape setting. The point at which the Culture Camp site begins and ends is thus blurred and not easily determined, which gives the camp a spatial quality of being holistically connected to the surrounding landscape. Access to the Camp is via a service road managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSWNPWS) and which features a gated entrance in 'national parks green' timbers and galvanised iron. Immediately north of the site and less than a few hundred metres away are basalt cliffs that reach a height of around 35 metres. The clifftops are flat, open, and grassy, with clumps of shrubbery and stunted eucalyptus growth providing refuge for healthy population of kangaroos, wombats, echidnas, and goannas. At the base of the cliffs are wave-cut platforms, sheltered coves, and small beaches – these are accessed from the Culture Camp through small and informal tracks that wind down the cliff faces. A public pedestrian access path along the clifftop that forms part of a longer coastal walk intersects with these semi 'private' Culture Camp tracks with no signposting of any conventional form other than the odd dead branch or vegetative debris partially concealing paths. Forming an arc around the Culture Camp from East to West are dense thickets of tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*). Amongst this vegetation are seven circular clearings, each representing a campsite for particular Aboriginal family units. The protocol for camping at the site is that each family occupies the site designated to them, and that a centrally-located camping shelter and cooking site forms a communal area that can be used by any family and at any time.

Prior to becoming a Culture Camp, the site functioned as a dairy farm for over a century, although signs of this form of occupation are now unrecognisable. The homestead, outhouses, fences, and other physical forms were removed two decades ago, and the cleared landscape was reforested with vegetation from the area. Other major transformations have taken place nearby in order to reaffirm and recognise the

Aboriginal significance of the region. This includes the construction of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre called *Monaroo Bobberrer Gudu* (literally, keeping place) which is situated on a larger complex known as Jigamy Farm, about 10 km from the Haycock Point Culture Camp. The Keeping Place serves as a hub for teaching and cultural activities among the local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. It is interesting to note that plans are underway for it to become a major arts precinct on the NSW Far South Coast. Artistically and metaphorically, the Keeping Place is earmarked as a site to form the northern gateway to the Bundian Way, an ancient Aboriginal trade route system[5]. Thought to have been lost, the Bundian Way represents one of Indigenous Australia's significant trade routes and spiritual journeys, stretching from Haycock Point to the rugged and mountainous interior of the Snowy Mountains near Mount Kosciusko. The 350 km trail system has been used by Indigenous peoples over generations for ceremonies, and the trade of food, goods, and tools. In writing about an 1847 watercolour within the Bundian Way by the artist Oswald Brierly, the historian Blay placed himself in the same scene as depicted in the image and observed that Brierly's image provided: 'a window into the times and character of the old people who lived here…he is drawing my attention to the imperishables, the things that continue through the ages, what we hold in common with the people who lived here so long ago'.[6] The Bundian Way is the first Aboriginal Pathway to be listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

Figure 1: Location Map of Haycock Point Culture Camp within NSW and the Ben Boyd National Park, which covers an area of 10,485 hectares. The site is accessed through a locked gate off the main northern road within the Park.[7]

The Haycock Point site is one of many hangouts along the ancient Bundian Way trail system. The Bundian Way is embedded in deep-time, and its interconnected sites which in turn are dependent upon different landscape types and locations each with associated meanings and activities provided an opportunity for reflection on how non-Indigenous people hangout – particularly through camping – within this ancient Aboriginal landscape today. The site thus provided a culturally rich and meaningful location of study which was felt appropriate to incorporate into a response to a student design competition set by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architect's (AILA) as part of their annual national conference.

The student design competition, and its focus on hangouts in public settings, asked for innovative conceptual design responses that reinvigorate spaces and encourage people to come together to share experiences and memories. The theme of the AILA's 2015 conference, which was held in Melbourne, was labelled 'This Public Space', and the design competition guidelines stipulated that teams be multidisciplinary and consist of four student team members or less[8]. The site for the competition was not prescribed; entrants were encouraged to identify a site to investigate in accordance with the brief. An important component of formulating a design response for the University of Canberra and the University of Melbourne students was that teams needed to interpret the brief via direct participation in the Culture Camp as both campers and newcomers to the setting. A set of readings included information about the region[9], including anthropological literature on caravan parks as hangouts[10], and writings that featured personal accounts on the significance of cottages and shacks as hangouts. These readings helped students develop a philosophical stance on hangouts and their meanings and encouraged them to consider how important hangout spaces are in forging memories, identities, and intergenerational connection to places[11]. As part of the design process we encouraged our students to develop their own interpretations on the meaning of "hangouts". And while various definitions were provided there was nonetheless consensus among the student cohort that "hangouts" are places where knowledge and stories are exchanged, and which constitute informal and formal meeting and gathering places, in public and private domains. Further, hangout spaces can be ephemeral and ad hoc, but they can also be regulated and even contrived. They are places for reflection to occur, and often provide an outlet for escape from every-day life.

Description of the Design Exercise

In identifying a site that would become the 'default' site for the group the question of appropriateness arose in that each student's interpretation of what constituted a 'good hangout' might demand a different type of site. Regardless, it was thought that in prescribing the Haycock Point site there would be potent issues that would enable thoughtful responses. The choice of site was also partly informed by our own interests in the geographic region of Haycock Point, partly a result of fortuitous connections with members of the local Indigenous community and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife, and partly preference to lead a group of students into a predominantly nature-like setting that typifies Australian national park systems, at least on the East coast.

The Ben Boyd National Park location formed the site of previous studies by Saniga in which he applied theories in behavioural sciences and environmental psychology to analyse the valued experiences of a small group of campers[12]. The

impetus for this previous research by Saniga was the predicted detrimental impact to the experiences of campers in this particular setting that may have come as result of a series of management proposals being mooted at that time, such as the bitumen surfacing of existing dirt roads, and a number of ill-founded site planning and design decisions that had taken place in relation to a particular camp ground. The purpose of recalling this previous research here is not to expand on the findings of this earlier research, which relates to non-visual sensorial perceptions of 'nature'. Rather, the relevance of this research for the Haycock project was by way of helping to develop an appropriate approach with which to lead this particular group of students in their short five-day experience of Haycock Point. For example, it was decided that activity-based learning would be crucial, and not only of the sort that involved those activities obviously linked to landscape architectural design (like site analysis, surveying, group work on the assignment, etc.) but also fishing, food collecting, and stargazing, which is often associated with camping experiences. A session painting watercolours was undertaken at dawn with the expectation that such an activity might heighten the level of immersion in the sensorial and temporal qualities of the place. It was also deemed relevant to reflect on, and be aware of, the importance of Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage in contributing to the experience of place, in parallel with each students' own experiential and sensorial perception of the actual place as encountered for the "first" time. In identifying such theoretical underpinnings which ranged from environmental psychology through to cultural geography, a number of important methodological dimensions arose.

First, there is considerable research available on the values of wilderness and the experience of natural places[13]. Knopf provided a summary of previous research in this field and generated a useful typology based on four values of natural environments: nature as restorer; nature as competence builder; nature as symbol; and, nature as diversion[14]. Another perspective and categorisation of 'nature' has been advanced by John Dixon Hunt[15], who suggests three categories: 1) nature as wild and undisturbed; 2) nature as agriculture, cities and other built forms; and, 3) nature as gardens. These broad categorisations by Knopf and Hunt are largely symbolic and while we introduced these concepts to our students as a way of thinking about the land and human relations, they did not, however, form an approach or lens to investigate the Haycock Point site and field camp experience. Rather, the way these concepts impacted was retrospective: they became useful in a reflective manner and in contextualising the everyday experiences of urban life with this relatively brief exposure to a seemingly very different kind of place. As will be discussed, these ideas of difference and connectedness, urban and non-urban, became crucial in formulating ideas.

Camping in "nature" certainly added a therapeutic quality to the student experience, but it was the symbolic and cultural values of the Culture Camp and its position within a national park setting that stimulated greater discussions and design responses among the student cohort. Observations and discussions with students suggested that individuals found space for reflection on self, cycles of life, and time, change. Added to this were dimensions of Indigenous cultures as alternate readings that were presented to the group by the ELALC, which, in some instances had the capacity to cause reflection on an individual's place in this particular environment. Students researched and read relevant literature in advance[16], however, a significant number of the student group were international students who were relatively unaware of Australian Indigenous culture and certainly had not had similar contact in terms of upbringing through the Australian system of education at primary and secondary

school levels. In this sense the symbolic value of the experience became significantly charged as students found the need to compare and reach new understandings at a number of different levels in a relatively short period of time and for many this became crucial not only to how they interacted with our Indigenous partners but also in their subsequent design decision-making.

In developing a meaningful response via the competition to design a 'hangout' many students decided to 'steer-clear' of Haycock Point and instead located an alternative site for their design concept. This eventuated because many of the students seemed cautious; they were wary of developing insensitive design proposals in the context of their own limited knowledge and understanding of the local Aboriginal customs and traditions, in the historic and contemporary sense. Likewise, despite the potential for students to develop responses that may have been instrumental, a product of wanting to help the ELALC, none of the student projects ventured into the realms of activism or agitation. Perhaps what eventuated was natural and intuitive in averting an awkward kind of outcome, as some suggest, in 'live projects' there is "…the assumption that working with local communities is inherently worthy, while it may be that such paternalism is, in many ways, counterproductive."[17] In early discussions, held around the campfire, some students' formulations of a design response verged on being condescending and romantic, yet in the final analysis, their actions became wholeheartedly about a commitment to honouring the experience of Haycock Point and respecting the people from whom they had gained new understandings (i.e. a postcolonial design response). There seemed to be a sense of realisation by the students that they should be less concerned with trying to solve problems they did not, perhaps 'could not', fully understand. Indeed, the passage of two months between the field camp experience and the development of their design concepts saw a maturation of ideas and understandings of human relations with the land.

Second, if the values of nature could be transformative as theory suggests then in structuring a five-day camp it was decided to attempt immersion in a variety of ways appropriate to the place. The far south coast of NSW represents some of the most dramatic and rich marine and coastal landscapes in Australia. This region is largely undeveloped and rich in biodiversity due to it being relatively remote and roughly equidistant from the large urban populations of the two major capital cities of Melbourne and Sydney. The dependency of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures on the sea and the land has been crucial and as well as learning about such dependence the student cohort sought to partake in it. Oysters and abalone were collected, students (and lecturers) fished and dived for food alongside Darren Mongta (Figure 2), and others collected shellfish from rock platforms on their own accord. Seamlessly during our meeting with archaeologists Philip Hughes and Marjorie Sullivan (where they led us on a detailed survey of the 1000's year old Severs Beach midden site), the students ambled off and as well as photographing or examining the archaeological site, they started collecting oysters, shucking them using the most makeshift of tools, and in the process making a few midden sites of their own. On the one hand the group had certainly absorbed the depth of archaeological time, but then had proceeded to leave that reading behind and simply 'Get Amongst It'. The 'getting amongst it' seemed a natural progression, as if the landscape was a catalyst for intuitive participation. The experience echoed the sentiments underpinning an account provided by Blay when in conversation with another member of the ELALC, BJ Cruse, who said in relation to a different midden site south of the Severs Beach site visited by the

students: "'It's strange to me,' he says, 'that you whitefellas pay more attention to our old garbage tips than you do to what's behind it.'"[18]

The importance of fire as part of daily ritual was not only recognised for its essential warmth, which was very much needed considering the time of year that the camp occurred[19], but also for the social graces and spatial relationships it generated as well as the activities that pin-wheeled from it; food, conversation, and sharing space and time. In complex ways the fire enabled understanding of site and how it might be occupied at other times of the year. For example, despite the fact that the group were the sole campers at this time, the way they valued functionally and symbolically the fire pit allowed them to appreciate the value of the many other fire-pits in the camp ground and the respective families that would activate and congregate around them at other times of the year. As BJ Cruse noted, without the opportunities that stem from the daily rituals of lighting fires, or keeping them burning, even local children risk losing contact with the array of experiences that natural places provide.[20]

Figure 2: [Left] Darren Mongta, a local Aboriginal educator and sculptor, led a diving expedition to collect abalone and demonstrated preparation and cooking methods; [right] students around central fire pit which proved to have multi-dimensional values.[21]

Third, in addition to the value of the *experience* of landscape, it was decided at the outset of the project that talking to locals should be an important mode of learning and knowing. Students were encouraged not only to talk to people who we had orchestrated to visit the camp – members of the ELALC, the NSW National Park Service, local historians and archaeologists – but also to bring a gift to share with the people they expected to meet. The reciprocal value of the process of gift-giving engendered mutual respect and a sense of commitment and goodwill that at its very core opened the way for the sharing of ideas, knowledge, understanding, and the ability and preparedness to change or be changed. There were weighty themes discussed, such as displacement of Indigenous communities and social inequalities and oppression, through time to the present. But there was also space for many amusing moments and poignant realisations to materialise. For example, our guide Darren Mongta from the ELALC had imparted knowledge of the culinary importance of a broad array of shellfish to the local Indigenous people through time, intimating perhaps that such reliance might have been lost on a newcomer, both then, and now. Little did he realise but by the time we had met him, most of the students had already consumed a decent-sized bucket of oysters

and others would go on to sample quite a selection of local sea snails and herbage, almost without blinking!

Transforming the Camp Experience into Design Concepts: A Sample of Student Design Responses

The design projects for a 'hangout' that this group generated were linked to the Haycock Point fieldtrip. Some of these ways involved designing aspects of the Haycock Culture Camp site, while other designs made tangential contact through responses such as mobile trailers. Other designs chose to look elsewhere for a site within the heart of urban Melbourne for instance, but with a deeper understanding and respect for why and what they were attempting to achieve in terms of Australian Indigenous cultures. Interestingly, the notion of 'inclusivity' featured strongly in many of the students' aims and conceptual bases.

In the student competition entry *Exhuming and Revitalizing: Historical Hangout as Infrastructure* (Figure 3), the group comprised four international students, all from mainland China. Since coming to Australia they had rarely travelled beyond the CBD of Melbourne yet members of this group of students were some of the most active in gathering food, preparing and processing raw foods in highly involved ways, the product of which they actively shared with the group. They enthusiastically engaged in the camp discussions with the ELALC members yet their subsequent competition entry had no direct connection with Haycock Point or the ELALC's aims. In their words:

> Hangouts are bounded within concrete urban jungles in often congested urban environments. Our plan exhumes and revitalizes the notion of a hangout based upon an analysis of important historical periods of Melbourne. Our aim is to develop socially, culturally and historically relevant forms of hangout for people living in cities. Our strategy is based initially on a bid to reintroduce the city to the lost Indigenous landscape-William Creek lying beneath Elizabeth Street in the Melbourne CBD. To explore our vision in greater detail, the important historical period of the Gold Rush in Melbourne is selected because of its significant impact on the city over a relatively short period of time in terms of changes to the city's infrastructure. To test the value of such an historical association, we identify a fragment of contemporary infrastructure – the proposed early phases of the Melbourne Metro – and explore a range of design ideas in response. Ultimately, it is the behavioural and perceptual qualities through time that are our concern, as new infrastructures attempt to become inclusive and conducive venues, producing new kinds of hangout for people to congregate, catch up, play, fill time, or just seek refuge when there is nowhere else to go.

Despite the basic premises of *Exhuming and Revitalising* having no actual connection to Haycock Point, it can be argued that the design intent was inextricably linked: working with concepts such as a sense of loss and changed landscapes via the 'daylighting' of William's Creek; respect for historically significant events and the lessons that may be drawn from the past; and importantly, that design should be for 'all' sectors of community from the daily commuter to the street vendor, to the homeless. There is also a sense of the regional or mega-regional about this work, and the work of other students in the group who generated comparative analyses between the cultural and natural systems that defined Haycock Point and those systems evident in the urban context of Melbourne. Although there can be no pretence that this project (or the studio)

had global environmental action as one of its aims from the outset, it is nonetheless significant that in articulating the gap between Melbourne and Haycock Point (some 600 kilometres by road) barriers to the perception of interconnectedness of global environmental systems was somehow being breached. Weller argues that new and vital directions for landscape architecture under the banners of 'landscape urbanism', and, 'Geodesign', include the premise that the city is 'ecological and that it is not a discrete object but now a global system without edge'[22]. Although Weller's writings were designed to link the McHargian landscape planning tradition with global conservation and the sciences in order to underpin biodiversity[23], it seems that aspects of design education that span diverse systems are, by extension, useful and necessary.

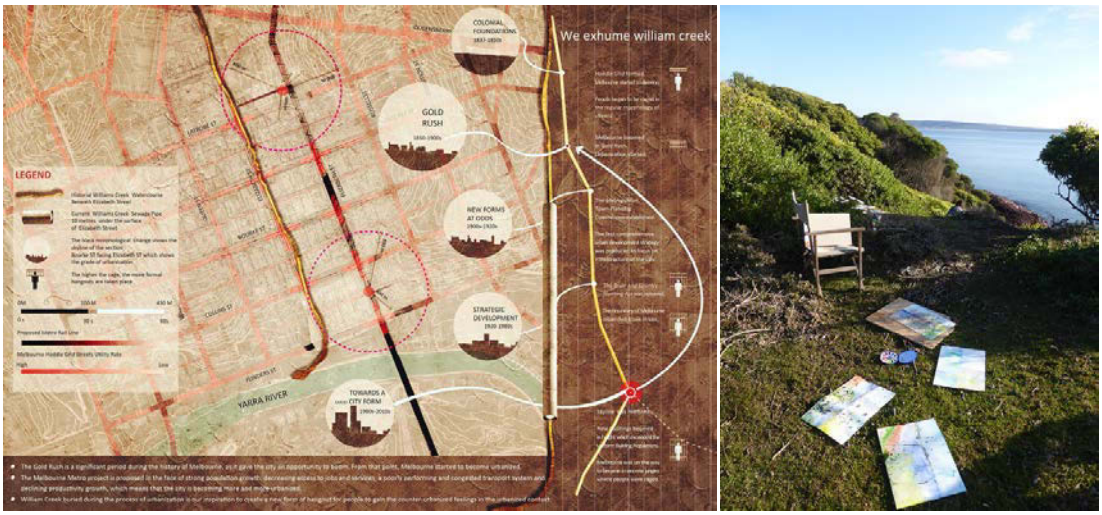

Figure 3: [left] An extract from the entry *Exhuming and Revitalizing* by Jingyi Hu, Yunzhi Tang, Jing Wen (Serena) and Chenyi Zhao, Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne, 2015; [right] Dawn watercolour session, Haycock Point, 2015.[24]

Mobility, ephemerality and the potential for events to snowball into rituals formed a part of the inspiration for the competition entry *Experiments In Hanging Out* (Figure 4). That this group could produce a scheme that combined industrial design with landscape places, people, and the universe or, perhaps, the universality of ideas in the context of the very nature of life itself, demonstrated the free-wheeling explorative mood that became engendered as a result of the Haycock Point fieldtrip. The students described their project:

> Our process began with an attempt to embody the notion of *hangout*. During a journey to Ben-Boyd National Park, on the South-Coast of NSW, we visited the ancient hangout of the Haycock-Point Culture Camp. The Camp is for Aboriginal use; to hangout, share ideas and strengthen traditions. Our visit signified a sharing of some traditional hangout rituals. During the course of our trip we came across a diversity of people using various sites to hangout, and we co-opted some sites into our own hangout ritual.
>
> The custodians at the Culture Camp had no desire to see the fundamentals of their site altered. In response we conceived a design based on flexibility, ephemerality and ritual. We designed and tested a mobile trailer, constructed a prototype, and took it to a range of sites: a trip through the urban, suburban and rural space, keeping a journal of experimentation.

Modular, un-packable and stackable; the trailer can be used to activate disused urban spaces, to reinvigorate or reimagine the suburbs or to take camping. From fire-pit to planter-box, the three primary components of the trailer can slot together to create a myriad of uses. The final ambition of the trailer is to be a gift to the Culture Camp, in what historian John Blay calls "a long and vital tradition of gift giving".

Figure 4: An extract from the competition entry *Experiments in Hanging Out* by B Brennan, K Chen, D Ding and J Doak, Melbourne School of Design, the University of Melbourne, 2015.

In another competition entry, the night time scene and fireside experience at Haycock Point provided inspiration for the project titled: *BYOT* or *Bring your Own Torch* (Figure 5). In this project, the team reflected on the use of various torches used by everyone on the camp to move about the camp: from LED headlamps, to torches on mobile phones, and gas-lamps. The students saw an opportunity to playfully construct a night time space that could become activated through the use of torch light as sensors. As such, they decided to develop an interpretation of the Haycock Point night time experience at the National Gallery of Australia's Sculpture Garden in Canberra, akin to light installations that feature in major cities throughout the world as part of the *Nuit Blanche* series of festivals. Here, the students explain their rationale for selecting the Sculpture Garden site as a night time hangout space:

> People increasingly moving from rural to urban areas has meant 'hangout' spaces in cities are now in greater demand than ever. These spaces are important in promoting social interaction, non-judgemental environments where users can intermingle, informal educational spaces and places to simply escape. As such it is vital that public spaces are designed to be utilised in a variety of different ways for a multitude of different users. Our hangout draws on experiences of spending time in natural, non-urban environments where light and fire drew people together at night. In recognition of this we have created a hangout space that is an escape from the city within the city itself. The Sculpture Garden is an iconic site that receives a large number of visitors during

the day. At night, however, it is under-utilised. The lighting within the garden is a barrier that excludes many potential visitors from using it as they feel that it is simply not a safe place at night. The lack of light on the sculptures also misses an opportunity to highlight the sculptures in a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing way. In order to both experience and engage with the sculpture garden at night our hangout requires people to 'bring (their) own torch'.

Figure 5: An extract from the *BYOT* or *Bring Your Own Torch* competition entry. In this series of installations at the National Gallery of Australia Sculpture Garden, users bring their own torch and shine the light across certain sensors to activate night time scenes reminiscent of Haycock Point. This graphic shows how the National Carillon, which is directly opposite the Sculpture Garden, transforms into the lighthouse that is located within Ben Boyd National Park. Developed by University of Canberra Landscape Architecture students, S. Fehlberg, N. Thi Phuc Dang, S. Bellani, and L. Tran, 2015.

In another entry called *Haycock's Hidden Hangout*, which was developed by University of Canberra students originally from China, we see an underwater hangout design response that draws on the alongshore experiences held by the entire class. Here, the students fished, swam, sun-baked, illustrated, and collected shellfish from rocks. Inspired by watching the abalone diving activity occurring near the wave-cut platforms, one element of the design (Figure 6) seeks to make a diving pontoon that will facilitate easier access to the sea in rough conditions. The students designed the pontoon to be a watery and mobile hangout which can be conveyed to the next preferred diving location.

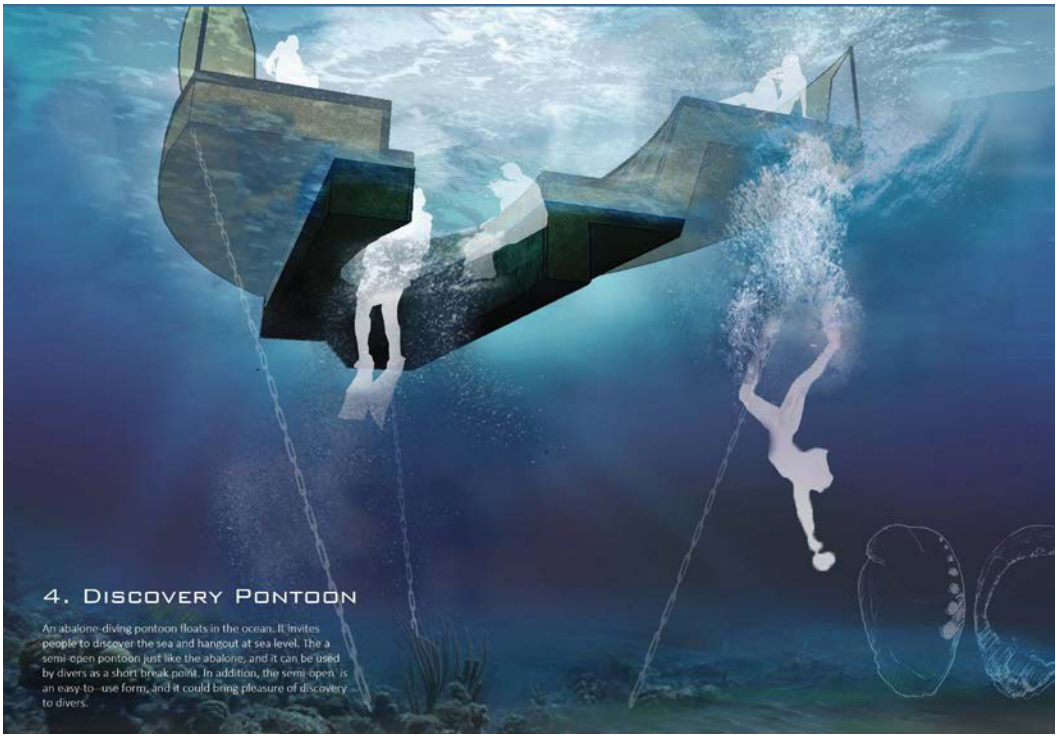

Figure 6: An extract from the competition entry: Haycock's Hidden Hangout. This proposal recognises the cultural importance of abalone diving at Haycock Point to the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community, and includes purpose-build platforms to facilitate diving activities. The featured pontoon serves as a water-based hangout, and the design is inspired by the shape and characteristics of abalone themselves. University of Canberra landscape architecture project team: L. Liu, W. Wu, L. Zhou, and R. Sun, 2015.

The visual representation of proposed hangout spaces was a critical aspect of meeting the design competition brief, and to convincing the jury of the merits and innovativeness of the proposals. Interestingly, though, some students turned to creative writing as an outlet for expressing their feelings of the hangout qualities of the space, as demonstrated in the following poem.

Acoustic Promise

Catherine Grace

Darkness all around,
Our eyes to open, to gaze.
Silence all around,
Our attention to no noise.
Perched atop, sheer cliffs underneath,
Warm rays of light, to heat.
Awake we are.
Drawing the soft yet grand space,
colour surrounds, the day breaks.
Acoustics of the landscape,
begin to be heard.
No more darkness or silence.
To listen in the moment,
that acoustic promise.

The auditory qualities of the Culture Camp site – the pounding of the waves, the sounds of the animals, and the stillness of the night air, for instance – were a feature of daily discussions at the camp, and yet these qualities became difficult for students to capture in their design responses. These findings relate back to Saniga's research in Experiencing the Nonvisual Landscape[25]. The visual sense's dominance coupled with peoples' relatively limited vocabulary for expressing the nonvisual senses they experience, seems to ultimately shape the way the professionals in architecture and landscape architecture value the world around. The Haycock Point research confirms that there is a need for more conscious attempts to address this issue. For example, design competitions need to have defined briefs, and perhaps future AILA student design competitions could place more emphasis on the nonvisual features of a particular landscape setting in order to explore what differences in design response might be realised.

Conclusion

From our perspective, whether students win a design competition as part of a design studio exercise is not necessarily important to the overall learning experience, acknowledging of course the important way in which such competitions can catapult student work into a much wider field of vision and across disciplines. Indeed, for the Haycock Point project the AILA's 'This Public Space' conference and competition became a fulcrum for discussing how people interact with each other, and how designed landscapes can play a central role in celebrating and accentuating the Indigenous and non-Indigenous qualities of the Australia landscape.

This project is ultimately a starting point for a proposed ritual of taking students out of university environments and exploring rural, remote and indigenous landscapes and communities. In the context of mounting rules and regulations surrounding occupational health and safety and a push by institutions to conduct more teaching online, it has been observed that such endeavours seem to be increasingly rare. And yet fieldwork and direct experience remains one of the most essential and critical aspects of teaching and learning and ultimately has great influence on the 'doing' of research. Bridging the gap between urban and remote sites also makes tangible the potential causal effects of global actions even if in the final analysis these relationships also require completely different mechanisms for enactment such as digital mapping, remote sensing, etc. If the word 'design' is to be employed in the broadest possible sense, then landscape architecture along with other professions should give time and thought to the essential qualities and the 'design of experiencing' landscapes and peoples. In many senses this is not a new or profound notion upon which to conclude, but it is one which is often forgotten, and perhaps more to the point, it is something difficult to define and to value.

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Notes

Notes

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[3] See: S.A. Heyes, D. New & S. Tuiteci (2015), "Mapping the 'Unseen' Landscape: Using Participatory Mapping to Raise Awareness of Aboriginal Landscapes in the South East of South Australia," Projet de Paysage: A Landscape International Review 12, www.projetsdepaysage.fr/mapping_the_unseen_landscape; S.A. Heyes & S. Tuiteci (eds.) (2013), *Transects: Windows into Boandik Country*, Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra; S. Burroughs & S.A. Heyes (2014), "The Studio as Advocacy Entrepreneurship and the Development of a Social Consciousness: A Design Project on Aboriginal Lands," Fusion Journal 3, www.fusion-journal.com/issue/003-fusion-the-studio/the-studio-as-advocacy-entrepreneurship-and-the-development-of-a-social-consciousness-a-design-project-on-aboriginal-lands/

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