

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Works commence on the revitalisation of Cooktown's Cultural Precinct

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COOKTOWN

Works have commenced on the revitalisation of Cooktown's Cultural Precinct that includes Stage 1 of the construction of the Waymbuurr Milbi (The Waymbuurr Story) Cultural Centre on the site of the old Boathouse, and the creation of a commemorative park and public artworks project that celebrates the significance of Reconciliation Rocks as the site of the first recorded act of reconciliation.

Funded by the Australian Government's Community Development Grants Program, both projects are part of the Council's on-going revitalisation of Cooktown and will be officially opened at next year's Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021: *The Rising Tide*.

"These projects will really showcase the significance of Cooktown as a special place culturally to Indigenous peoples of the Cape, and historically as the site of the first recorded act of reconciliation" said Cook Shire Mayor Cr Peter Scott. "There's been an extensive amount of consultation to make sure we get these projects right. The support and collaboration between all stakeholders – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – will ensure these projects help share the rich local culture and wonderful shared history of Cooktown locally, nationally and internationally."

Once complete, the Waymbuurr Milbi Cultural Centre will house an exhibition and display area, a retail space, a reading and learning hub, flexible meeting spaces – including an outdoor area featuring a ceremonial fire pit (Stage 2) – and a multipurpose media room. The retail space will also feature a striking showcase window on Charlotte Street that will display a replica of the *Endeavour* that's currently on show at the Cooktown PCYC and Events Centre.

Architecturally, the building combines classic heritage features and finishes, such as timber boards and corrugated iron, with modern design and contemporary lines to pay homage to, and complement the historic buildings along Charlotte Street.

Construction also includes the removal of three trees including two problematic Milky Pines that have caused damage to both the existing Boathouse building as well as underground service pipes and drainage. Once complete, landscaping works will be undertaken to replant and revegetate the area with a significant number of native species to support the biodiversity and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area.

The Reconciliation Rocks project sees the creation of a cultural park that respectfully celebrates, preserves and conserves the area surrounding Reconciliation Rocks on Adelaide Street. The Park will feature a series of artworks by renowned sculptor and designer, Braham Stevens, who worked with Traditional Owners to share their 'shore to ship' telling of the events surrounding Cook's visit in 1770 and the wisdom of the Indigenous Elder's offering of the broken spear to Cook and his crew that ultimately cultivated respect and trust between the leaders. Scale models of these art works are currently available on display in the foyer of the main Council Administration Building at 10 Furneaux Street, Cooktown.

Design considerations have included ensuring minimal impact to the natural landscape and environments; improved accessibility and creating a sense of connection to country and place with spaces that allow for quiet contemplation.

Stage 1 of the Waymbuurr Milbi Cultural Centre and the Reconciliation Rocks project are both anticipated to be complete in May 2021.

For more information contact Cook Shire Council via email at mail@cook.qld.gov.au or phone on 4082 0500.

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