

DEADLY ALL STARS LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Research Report and Implementation Plan



Prepared by
Justin Barrie

On behalf of the Deadly All Stars Design Team

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2016 Best Overall Service Design - Australia



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SECTION 1 ABOUT US



THE PROJECT CONTEXT

In 2016 the Deadly Allstars created and built a series of Story Poles in the front garden of the Barnardos offices in Downer in the ACT. The project was empowering for the group, symbolic of their connection to culture and highly successful in terms of the support for and love of the poles by the community that uses the space (Barnardos staff, visiting families and local residents).

An opportunity arose in 2018 to think about what other features could be added to the space, with the primary driver the creation of a Yarning Circle. To support the boys in the group to experience a formal design process it was decided to commence a service design process, which they would lead, to come up with a design for the space.

THE DESIGN TEAM

The Deadly All Stars is a group that has been established to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care (kinship and other arrangements) to maintain links to their culture and community. In this project the group has become the Design Team.

A series of design activities have been set up for them to move through by Design Mentor Justin Barrie, but the team has delivered the design.

Key elements about the team include:

- The team has been flexible to include anyone who is available at various times - it has been deliberately inclusive - though driven by a core group of around 5 - 7 young men.
- The team has not been helped to generate content or insight - the results in the project are theirs.
- The team is not just the young men - the group conveners Sharon Williams and Katie Martin and carers and family members have been active parts of the process as team members over the research phase.

DESIGN MENTOR CONTEXT

Justin Barrie is the founder and a Principal Designer at Design Managers Australia and long-term volunteer and mentor in the ACT Community Sector.

Justin is a specialist in co-design techniques which seek to deliver projects that are designed along with the users of the service that is being built. His interest in supporting the project stems from a deep personal respect for the group conveners Sharon and Katie and what they are trying to achieve with the Allstars and a desire to support the wonderful young men in the group to work on and deliver a successful project in a context of excellence.

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

This research report contains a large amount of design-specific language. Readers of the report may (mistakenly) think that the Design Team hasn't had this language used with them and that it just appears in this paper as the language of the documenter. This is by no means the case.

Justin has deliberately used this language at all times in the project. The Design Team is made up of capable, intelligent, thoughtful young men and adults.

In fact, a deliberate goal of the project is to equip the team with the language that is used currently by people and organisations that might make decisions FOR THEM, so that in the future they may harness the power of this language and approach to ensure decisions are made BY THEM or at the very least WITH THEM.

This sense of agency through language has been delivered through three key steps:

1. Deliberate use of the design vocabulary - no simplification of language.
2. Translation of the vocabulary - to be activity and age specific to provide context.
3. Debriefing on the design language - when the group hung wall posters to tell the staff of the centre what they had done the previous week.

Not all of these steps, nor all of the language would have been consciously taken on by the whole team each week. Unsurprisingly this is true of adults designers work with as well!

But the project is set up so that they might take away some of this design language and build on the bits that speak to them (and give them tangible results).

SECTION 2

WHAT WE HAVE DONE



FIVE SESSIONS TO CO-DESIGN A SPACE

The team has been moving through a strict service design methodology.



They have taken on a series of tasks over five sessions to move from Intent to Discovery to Design.

The five sessions have been:

SESSION	TITLE	AIM	ACTIVITIES
Session 1	Intent	To ensure we understand, share and articulate what we are trying to achieve as a Design Team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We discussed a range of words that would help us define our intent for the project. We discussed the concept of the 'service system' - the context within which we would deliver. We developed a formal design artefact - the Design Intent
Session 2	Users	Defining the groups and types of people who will use our space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We looked at a physical map of the space to understand our scope. We talked about and defined our 'users'. We developed a series of user-focused survey questions.
Session 3	Data	Creating an evidence-base through quantitative and qualitative data sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We created an online survey for users and loaded it onto SurveyMonkey. We developed a hardcopy survey for users who might not have access to the internet.
Session 4	Analysis	Creating insight and design principles from our evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We analysed our data inputs. We created a series of insights in the form of physical zones to guide our design.
Session 5	Design	Looking at specific design elements that could be incorporated into the space based on a combination of evidence and the team's own intent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We talked about the design elements that we thought should be incorporated. We sketched and discussed elements of our draft design.

SECTION 3

WHAT WE FOUND



SESSION 1 - INTENT

We are making sure any work we do has a strong intent. We spoke about words that described what we wanted to achieve, and we voted on our favourites. We learnt that designers call this 'articulating the design principles for our work'.

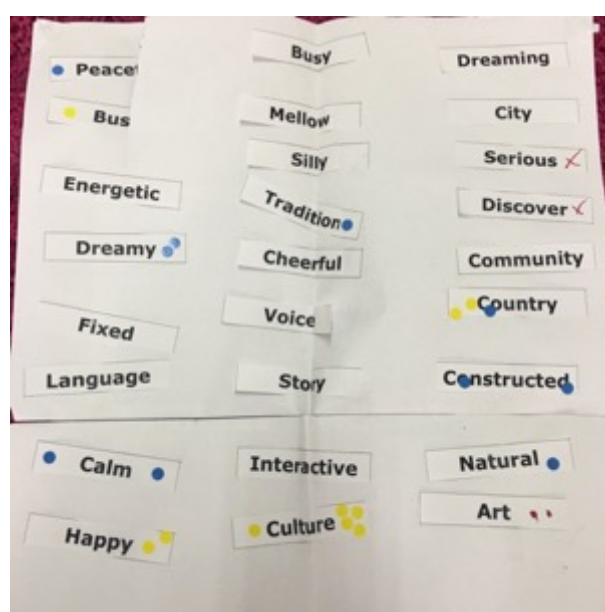
There were two levels of words we discussed:

Words that described our Intent:

POWER	LANGUAGE	FUN
ACTION	SELF-DETERMINATION	LEADING
LEGACY	FOCUS	FOUNDATIONS

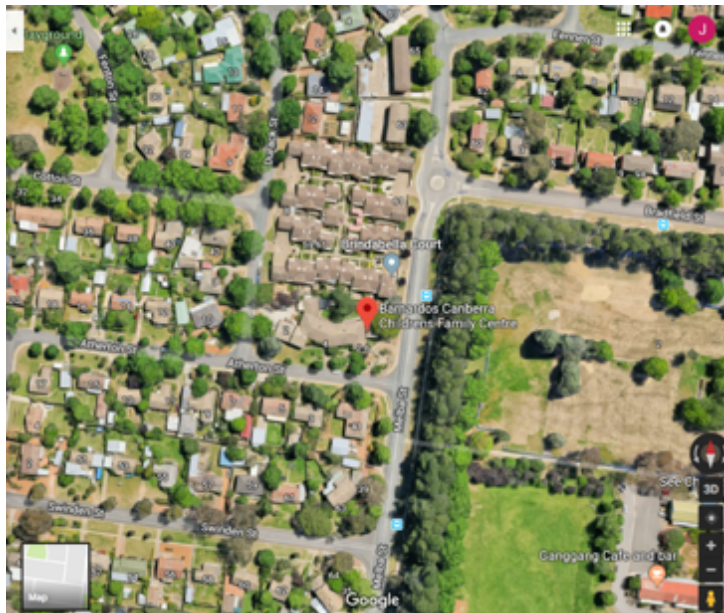
We then voted using a card sorting and sticker technique on the types of words that described what we might like to see achieved in the space:

Art	Discover	Fixed
Culture	Community	Busy
Language	Voice	Mellow
Story	Tradition	Silly
Bush	City	Serious
Country	Dreaming	Cheerful
Natural	Constructed	Happy
Interactive	Calm	Peaceful
Energetic	Dreamy	



We also need to think of others, so we talked about where our project will be delivered and who we might need to engage. We learnt that designers call this 'drawing the service system and thinking about the users.'

We used an overhead photo to think about this and to understand that this isn't just about our space but the surrounding space:



The result was the formal Design Intent:

DESIGNING THE YARNING CIRCLE GARDEN PROJECT INTENT

SPONSOR Sharon Williams and Katie Martin - Coordinators, Deadly Allstars

DESIGN TEAM The Allstars and others who use the space during the sessions

This intent document developed following the discussion at Session 1.

1. WHERE WE ARE NOW

We have an opportunity to input to the re-design of the outdoor space at the Atherton St Office.

We started by thinking about adding a Yarning Circle to our existing Story Pole space, but now have scope to undertake a design that might encompass the front and backyard, so:

- We are taking a service design approach so that we come up with something that people (including us) will use.
- We are being led through this in terms of process by an experienced designer so that we can all build our capability, but
- **We are the design leads and the results will be ours.**

We have commenced our design sessions and will be also receiving help from a range of experts and volunteers like the Dell Computer group who will help us clear the space in June.

We want to be as open about the process as possible so that everyone at Atherton St is aware of and able to input into what is going on. For that reason you'll see our work on the walls!

2. WHERE WE WANT TO BE - DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The descriptors that we think the design must have that we discussed and voted on as a group were:

- Peaceful
- Dreamy
- Country
- Constructed
- Culture
- Happy
- Calm
- Natural
- Tradition

This doesn't mean the words that we didn't vote on aren't important - the ones above just jumped out at us and were considered important.

3. WHERE WE WANT TO BE - SERVICE SYSTEM

The second main outcome from Session 1 that will drive our intent was a discussion about where the garden sits in the broader environment. We call this the Garden Service System and it helped us:

1. Think about the different types of users of the garden - so that we know who to research with.
2. Think about the constraints and opportunities - so we manage expectations.
3. Think about how our space connects to the suburb - so that we think about the context we are designing in.

The outcome of this thinking was that we identified a number of groups we might research with to build a body of evidence about what would work in the space - so that we:

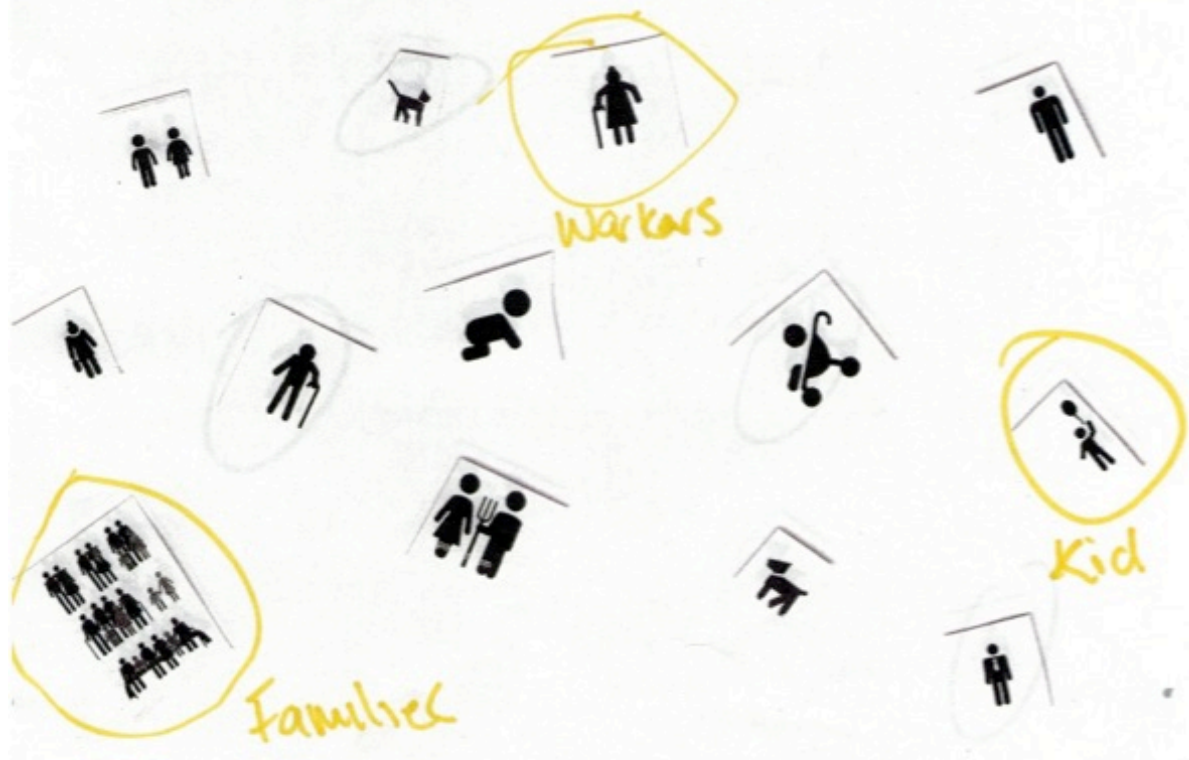
- **Design based on what we need, not just what we want.**

These groups include:

- Kids who use the space.
 - Our neighbours.
 - The residents at the retirement village.
 - The staff at Atherton St.
 - Other groups who use the space
 - And we need to think about people and pets moving through the space.
-

SESSION 2 - USERS

We are making sure we think about EVERYONE who might use the space. We identified a range of groups such as staff, families, kids and neighbours.



Then we thought about questions we might ask them, and we turned this into a survey. We learnt that designers call this 'user research as a basis an evidence-based design'.

We also had our first go at sketching some things we might like to see in the space. We will balance what we think works with what the survey results say. Designers call this 'designing for what we NEED, not what we WANT'.



SESSION 3 - DATA

Based on our previous conversation about users, we developed a series of survey questions. The questions were published and presented on Survey Monkey with an email going to all interested users for input:

Welcome!

Q1 My connection to the Atherton St Office is...
Q2 I would say my understanding of the Deadly All o Stars design project is...
Q3 My favourite thing about the front yard at Atherton St is...
Q4 The thing(s) I don't like about the front yard are...
Q5 My favourite thing about the back yard at Atherton St is...
Q6 The thing(s) I don't like about the back yard are...
Q7 If you are changing the space in the yard you need to think about the following types of users...
Q8 The kind of things I would like to see added to the yard spaces are...
Front Yard ...
Back Yard ...
Q9 If I was to describe what I would like the outdoor spaces to "feel like" when you are finished I would say...
Front Yard ...
Back Yard ...
Q10 I have some more to say about designing a new Respondent skipped this question outdoor space at Atherton St...

SESSION 4 - ANALYSIS

We heard the voice of users! We had over 27 replies to our survey. That meant there were over 478 individual data points we collected.

During the session we printed out detailed and summary data. BIG DATA has lots of small messages, so we read every single reply in detail and highlighted the new things we learnt from it. We learnt that, as designers, we were using data to create an evidence-based series of insights.



Once we analysed the data we translated your feedback into meaning. We created words that described what we heard from the users.

These words included:

- **welcoming**
- **safety**
- **fun**
- **play**
- **private**
- **secure**

And they have become our guiding principles for the design elements.

Then we took those words and tried to pick 'zones' of the garden that they could apply to. We were ensuring the words of the users translated to the physical space.

Designers call what we did 'balancing the voice of design with the voice of experience'.



SESSION 5 - DESIGN

Having outlined the zones and key features in the previous session, in this session we concentrated on a couple of specific elements of the garden that users asked us to include - culture and art.

Our story poles have had a huge impact on people - the survey showed this. We decided that a way to make a public space meet our design principles of

- **welcoming**
- **safety**
- **fun**
- **play**
- **private**
- **secure**

Is to use art. For example, we discussed using natural garden borders in artistic and cultural shapes instead of fences to meet a design principle like 'safety', because we also need to meet the principle of 'welcoming'.

So first of all, we listed our favourite types of art in order. The types of art we discussed included:

Architecture	Sculpture	Painting
Performing	Music	Poetry
Ceramics	Pottery	Mosaic
Carving	Graffiti	Weaving
Drawing	Engraving	Stone Arranging

We found that as a group, performance space was as important as art space.



Then we talked about imagery.

We looked at examples that included:

- astronomy
- sports
- flora
- fauna
- landscape

The group liked a range of these and wanted to see them represented in the space.



SECTION 4

WHAT IT MEANS



EIGHT ELEMENTS IN THE PHYSICAL SPACE

The design that the team has arrived at, based on evidence and inspiration, is made up eight key elements:

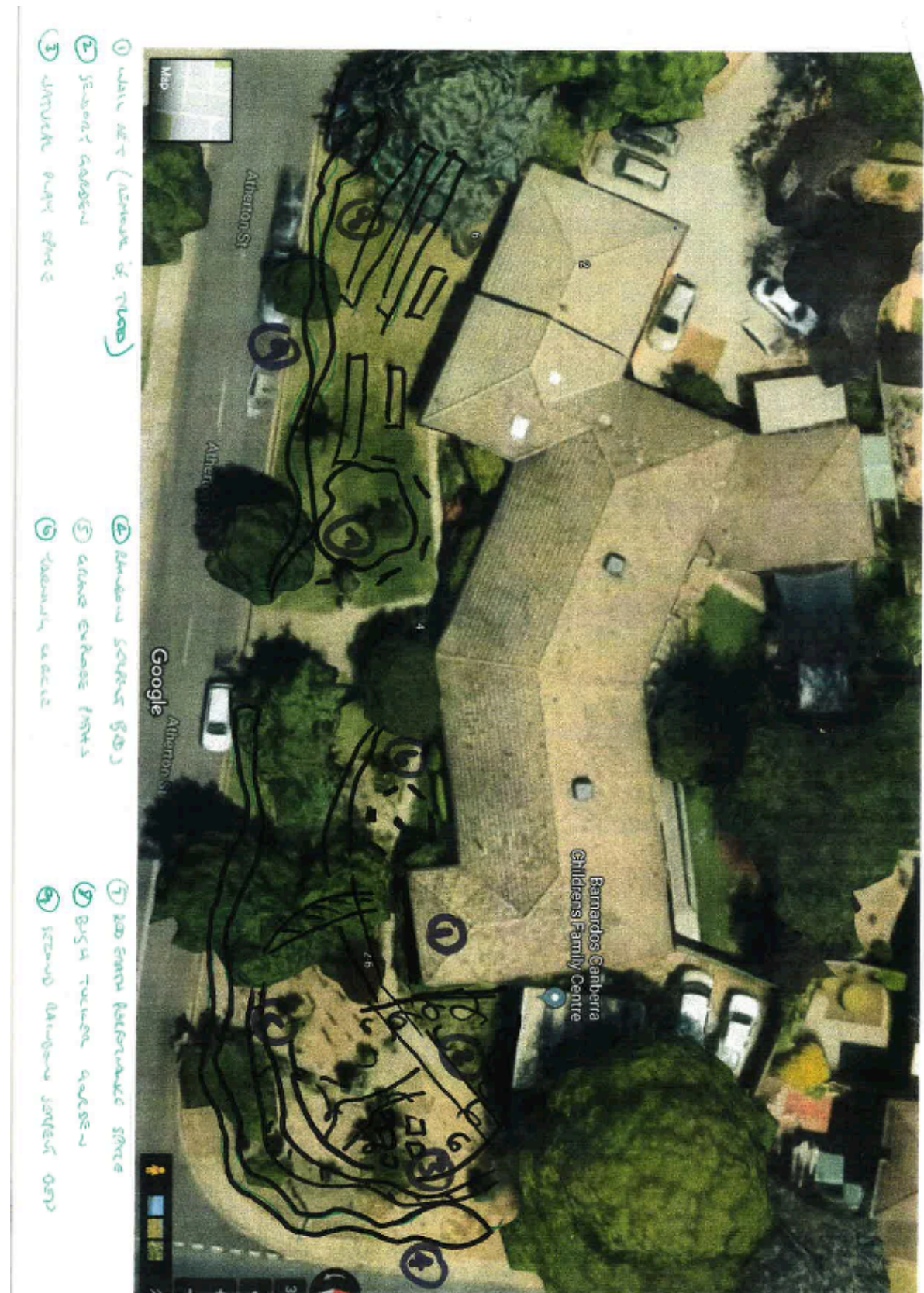
Element Number	Element Name	How it would work
1	Wall Art	Art became very prominent in the final sessions and particularly street or wall art. It is envisaged that a mix of media and styles would be painted on the street facing walls of the office
2	Sensory Garden	A renovation of the current sensory garden to use natives and to remove the dangerous rocks for use by young people.
3	Natural Play Space	The incorporation of an area where young people can be engaged in games they create using natural objects and currency.
4	Strong natural borders	Rainbow Serpent shaped garden beds ring the property, they will have low natural plantings that create a barrier to the road but support the view in to the story poles and other features. The garden beds will lead up to the front steps and the serpents' tails will be painted in non-slip paint to improve the safety of the entrance.
5	Gravel Explore Paths	Paths will weave between features throughout the garden, creating an exploration space but also being built in gravel colours that remind the Allstars of their trips to various places like Uluru, Brungle and Mt Majura.
6	Yarning Circle	The centrepiece of the new work will sit with the story poles to create a community place to yarn and connect - made from natural wood furniture and the existing rocks reclaimed from the front yard.
7	Red Earth Performance Space	A groomed gravel space to encourage performance and art workshops, in the colour of the red centre for dramatic effect and as a memory of the trip to Uluru.
8	Bush Tucker Garden	A working garden for ongoing collaboration between the Allstars and horticultural specialists - the beds to be shaped in the iconic shapes of boomerang and clap sticks as a cultural marker.

All features supporting the evidence we were presented with to create:

"A friendly, cultural, secure space."

THE VISUAL DESIGN

The following visual design was sketched to highlight the design elements. It is currently being professionally drafted and costed.



SECTION 5

WHAT WE WILL DO



IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the garden design will continue to be led and undertaken with the group, along with subject matter experts where required.

There are three main phases of implementation:

1. Costing and Prioritisation

Landscaper Jason O'Connell is currently engaged to take the draft visual design and draw it up as a technical design with full costing options for the eight design elements. This has been completed and can be found in the next section.

Following the costing and after defining the budget (a combination of in-kind contribution, existing donations and funding through available grants) decisions will be made on what order the eight elements are implemented.

A number of the elements, such as the Wall Art, are projects in their own right that collaborators could be brought in to work with and support the Allstars to deliver.

2. Cultural Support

The second phase is about ensuring that the goals of the Deadly Allstars - cultural and personal connection - remain a key part of the project. Links have been made with Adam Shipp from Yurbay.to support the group as an advisor and educator.

Yurbay offer a range of services to connect you, your family, friends and work colleagues to local food and medicine plants from the region. Adam personally can also provide links to existing agricultural programs that might support planting and work in the garden.

Adam will advise on key cultural aspects of the planting and use of landscaping in the garden. He has already led the team on a bush tucker walk to Mt Majura as a transition between the design phase and the implementation phase.

3. Delivering the Garden

With prioritisation having taken place and funding secured for various elements, the design team will become implementation team and directly lead the delivery of the garden. This will take place over a number of sessions during regular Deadly Allstars time.



COSTINGS AND PRIORITISATION

After a meeting between landscape advisor and the design team in early September, the following design elements were identified in priority order.

The concept behind the prioritisation is to implement elements that are infrastructure heavy first, so that ongoing Allstars workshop activity can deliver the content within them. This will mean the space is ready to use immediately and not waiting for planning (such as a wall art design which is a project in its own right).

Element Number	Element Name	How it would be implemented
6	Yarning Circle	Constructed from 5 naturally faced sandstone blocks 1m long .5 high .5 wide \$2,500.00
4	Strong natural borders	Rainbow Serpent shaped beds constructed with a reinforced concrete edge and a solid head and tail for painting. Planting bed will be filled with quality compost soil. \$1,100.00 x 2
7	Red Earth Performance Space	Red earth performance stage with informal log and boulders for seating (naturally placed) \$750.00
8	Bush Tucker Garden	Constructed using natural coloured concrete pavers in the shape of a kangaroo paw print. Garden bed will be filled with quality compost soil \$800.00
General Clearing		Jason will prune and remove any trees and limbs as necessary at no additional cost however if a stump grinder is needed it will cost \$400 for hire and labour.
Total		\$6,650.00
Then as specific ongoing projects		
5	Gravel Explore Paths	Paths will weave between features throughout the garden, creating an exploration space but also being built in gravel colours that remind the Allstars of their trips to various places like Uluru, Brungle and Mt Majura.
1	Wall Art	Art became very prominent in the final sessions and particularly street or wall art. It is envisaged that a mix of media and styles would be painted on the street facing walls of the office
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VISUAL ELEMENTS

Images supplied by Jason to confirm approach:

