

*Where does the project operate spatially?
Gerard Reinmuth/TERRAIR*

CreaTech EOI

Counter-Mapping Ultimo: Archive and Encounter

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Placemaking projects must start with an investigation of the deep history, existing communities and many truths of that place. This pitch responds to CreaTech's call for interdisciplinary exploration of the future of public space through a place-based storytelling project.

Stage 1 establishes a **Country-centred, research-led foundation for activating the Jones Street Precinct**; engaging with what is already here, before proposing what might come next. Stage 2 translates the stories and knowledges generated in Stage 1 into **public-facing interventions, both on-site across the precinct and a digital storytelling platform** that can be expanded through future research and educational programs, with industry and GLAM sector partners. Led by a constellation of FDS researchers spanning **architecture, landscape architecture, visual communication, design, public history and media studies**, the project will develop an **innovative methodology** that blends counter-mapping, expanded documentary, anarchival practices and community-engaged storytelling to *think-with* each other, and this site.

Through this process, the project **prototypes new forms of place-based storytelling, participatory public engagement and hybrid digital-physical approaches to understanding urban transformation.**

STAGE 1: ASSEMBLING

June – Nov 2026

Mapping is never neutral: it is shaped by our own locations, disciplines and worldviews. Technically mediated knowledges of place have guided research and practice over millennia, while also instrumentalising Australia's colonial project across 250-years of history. This project proposes counter-mapping as a methodology for thinking-with the Jones Street precinct at a moment of accelerated urban and institutional transformation. [Beginning with Country](#) and recognising that Jones Street is a production of layered histories, contested narratives, and uneven distributions of power and resources, the project approaches the precinct as a site of ongoing negotiation, encounter and transformation. **Through archival research, spatial data, institutional records and situated accounts, the project assembles a counter-map that traces how the precinct has been represented, governed and experienced across time.**

Stage 1 asks: What histories are embedded in the naming of place? What forms of authority, ownership, and erasure are carried through this designation? Who has drawn the maps that define the precinct, and to what ends? And how might contemporary framings of the site, through discourses of innovation, creativity, and knowledge economies, resist trajectories of extraction, ordering and control?

Interactive media, workshops and public programs create opportunities for diverse perspectives to contest, expand and rearticulate how the site is understood. In this way, counter-

mapping functions as both a method and medium: refusing the authority of a singular, objective view, instead insisting on situated, partial, and relational knowledges, turning [designated zones](#) into [contact zones](#). With UTS Research Ethics approvals in place, the project establishes conditions for a "right to reply," enabling local communities, researchers and stakeholders to contribute to how the precinct is understood and shaped.

Outputs include: *a prototype digital storytelling platform hosting the counter-map (website, 5-year hosting); a print publication targeting industry partner participation for Stage 2.*

STAGE 2: LAYERING AND TRANSLATING

Nov 2026 – onwards

Stage 2 translates identified sites and stories into **distributed, public-facing interventions across the precinct**, making visible the often-hidden infrastructures, histories and systems that shape everyday access and perception. **Through this process, the project constitutes and reveals a network of third spaces that, in their indeterminacy and complexity, may transform how the Jones Street precinct is understood:** its extent, what can happen there, and how, in turn, it might trigger further transformation across campus.

Through site-responsive installations, interactive media and public programming, the "right to reply" is extended beyond the digital platform and reworked in situ, shifting from assembling stories toward layered forms of engagement responsive to the social, spatial and more-than-human life of the precinct. **The digital storytelling platform moves beyond static representation to incorporate interactive mapping, moving image, audio, and data visualisation, enabling relationships across time and space to be traced, contested and reworked by researchers, students and local communities alike, forming a scalable methodology adaptable to other urban contexts.** For Stage 2 engagement, this group has active industry and external collaborations with: [Committee for Sydney](#), [Transport NSW](#), [Sydney Metro](#), [City of Sydney](#), and [their archives](#), [Ausgrid](#), [Powerhouse](#), [Australian Museum](#), [National Museum of Australia](#), [Museums of History NSW](#), [Chau Chak Wing Museum](#), [AURIN](#), [SJB Architects](#), [Terroir](#), [Bangawarra](#), [Garigarra](#), [ESRI](#), [SLNSW](#), [Blurb Books](#), [Pinch Press](#), [Accessible Arts](#), and [Aspect](#).

We have forged a productive collaborative relationship over four workshops and several sub-group working sessions since March 2026. The following diagram outlines the program of work we have developed for this proposal in detail.

Counter-Mapping Outputs

Layer 01

Country As a Spatial Authority

Establish Country as the primary spatial logic and ethical framework, shaping all subsequent engagement

Indigenous-led knowledge sharing (where appropriate)

Community validation of spatial narratives

Emphasis on obligation, care and ongoing presence rather than extraction

Relational non-linear maps disrupting colonial timelines

Positioned texts embedded within maps for public interpretation

Layer 02

Embodied, Accessible & Multisensory Space

Foreground how different bodies, senses, and species experience the precinct - and how design includes or excludes them

Sensory and experiential maps

Alternative wayfinding prototypes

Community generated annotations and diagrams.

Participatory workshops alongside people with other bodied experiences

Multispecies and sensory walk-throughs

Layer 03

Industry, Labour and Media

Reinterpret the Fairfax site as a lived industrial and narrative infrastructure, not a closed heritage object

Story-sharing around labour, migration and exclusion.

Community interpretation of archival material

Co-creation of counter-heritage narratives

Redrawn factory and press maps layered with community stories

Narrative diagrams for voice, labour and silence

Media fragments designed for public engagement

Layer 04

Institution, Architecture & State Power

Reveal how governance, property and institutional power shape everyday access and visibility

Architectural counter-maps

Public-facing governance diagrams

Co-authored spatial critiques

Community discussions about who benefits from institutional space

Public mapping workshops on ownership, zoning and access

Layer 05

Surveillance, Data & Future Tech

Make invisible data systems and surveillance logics legible, contestable and discussable

Participatory speculation: what futures are desired or refused?

Community-informed ethical boundaries for tech

Conversations and workshops on surveillance experience

Surveillance logic maps explained in accessible terms

Paper-based speculative interface prototypes

Community-annotated data imaginaries

Collective critique of "neutral" urban form

Layer 06

Public Translation & Continuing Engagement

Sustain community participation beyond outputs, positioning counter-mapping as an evolving public platform

Counter-mapping atlas (physical + digital)

Exhibition / symposium / immersive wayfinding

A community-accessible storytelling platform for the

Feedback loops shaping future layers

Community-led contributions over time

Public programs: walks, talks, workshops, data picnics

Diagram Key:

Collaborative Map-Making (working alongside community)

Story-sharing/Knowledge- (receiving from community)

Participatory Map-Making (providing space for community)

Didactic Workshops (hosting educational spaces for community)

How does the project operate methodologically?

FDS Constellation: Collective Bios

Guided by relational approaches to working with Country, this project **operates as a constellation** rather than a hierarchy. We value collective authorship, reciprocity, and shared responsibility across disciplines, lived experiences and practices. This project is a **collaboration** between the **UTS School of Architecture (SoA)**, **School of Design (SoD)**, and the **School of Communication (SoC)** with affiliations to the **Visualisation Institute**, the **Australian Centre for Public History**, the **Indigenous Institute of Designing with Country** and **Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research**. The project will support emerging researchers through the employment of UTS HDR candidates as research assistants.

COUNTRY is recognised in this project as an active and enduring co-author. Country must always lead, and through this methodology we begin to listen and understand what she needs.

MATTE AGER-McCONNELL is a Wiradjuri Dabee man belonging to the Cudgegong River holding profound responsibilities to water and Country. He is a lecturer in the SoA, where his teaching, research, and practice is led by ngurambang, Country.

DR ENDRIANA AUDISHO is a Lecturer in the SoA whose work interrogates how space is produced through histories of power, representation, and conflict, with a focus on decolonial practice and spatial justice.

DR SUNEEL JETHANI is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Communication and has published in *Body, Space & Technology*, *Continuum*, *Cultural Studies*, *Griffith Review* and *Conjunctions: Trans-disciplinary Journal of Cultural Participation*.

DR SARAH JANE JONES is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Design. Her practice-based research explores wayfinding design approaches that draw together ecological, historical and cultural narratives.

DR LINDA MATTHEWS is an Associate Professor in the SoA whose research leverages digital visioning systems and virtual urban environments to advance new approaches to urban design, shaping innovative strategies for future urban form.

RACHIDA PEARCE is an experienced business development manager. Nationally, she has worked with the commercial, government and NFP sector. She specialises in projects involving creative practice and research translation.

GERARD REINMUTH is Professor of Practice in the SoA and founder of international practice TERROIR. His research re-examines the agency of architecture in relation to contemporary cultural, environmental and political conditions.

DR JANICE RIEGER is Associate Dean Research and Head, SoA. Rieger's work focuses on the promotion of spatial justice globally, and she has created new inclusive methods including Embodied Mapping/s (EM).

DR JULIA SCOTT-STEVENSON is a Chancellor's Research Fellow in the School of Communication. She uses practice-led research to explore how immersive media can support social and environmental impact.

DR ZOË SADOKIERSKI is an Associate Professor in the School of Design. Her practice-based research explores ways multimedia storytelling can be used to critically engage diverse audiences in complex problems.

DR KIRSTEN THORPE is a Worimi archivist, researcher, and Professor at Jumbunna whose work centres Indigenous data stewardship, sovereignty, and ICIP rights across archives, libraries, and the broader GLAM sector.

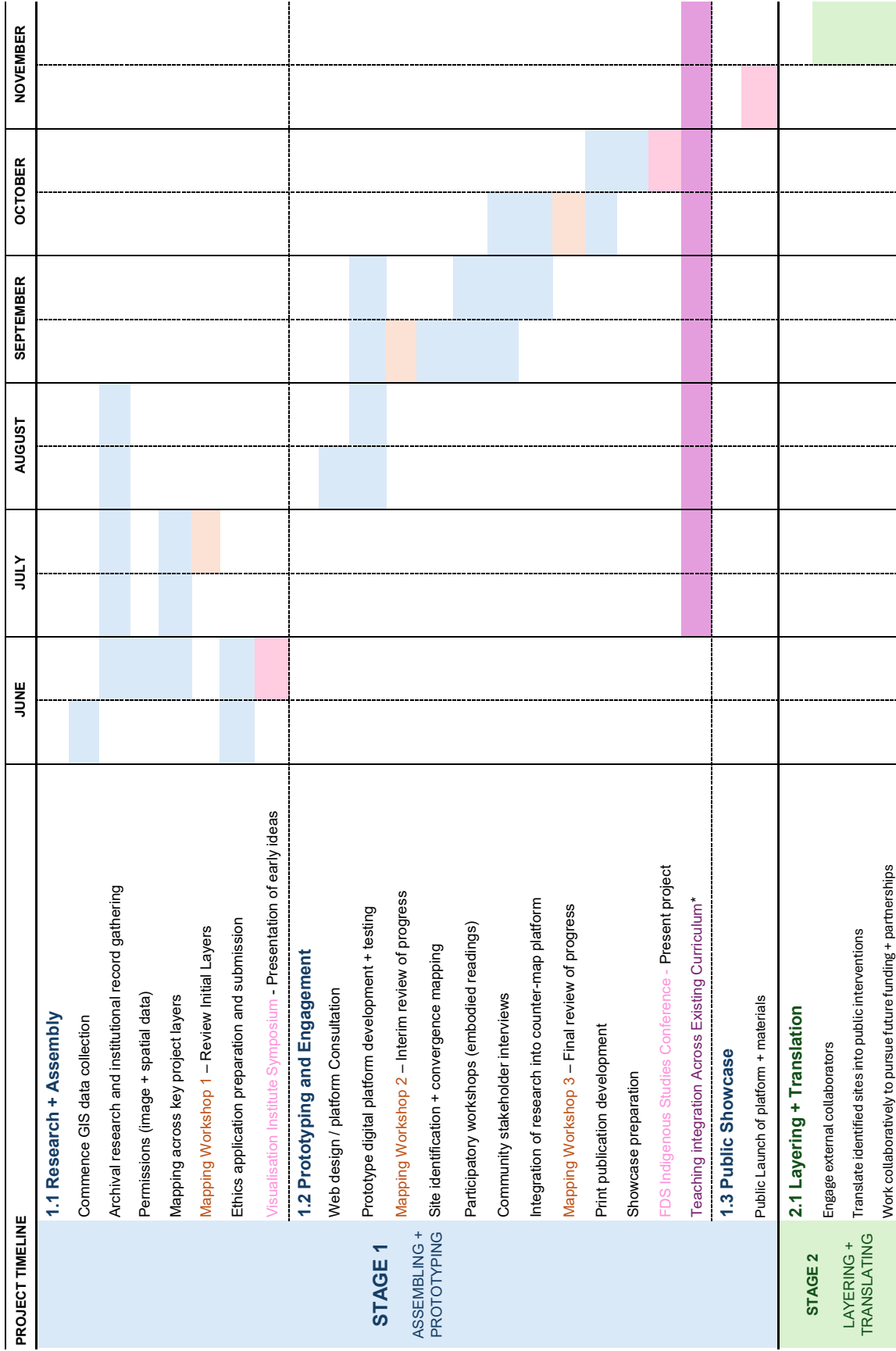
THOMAS WOODHEAD is a Landscape Architect and Lecturer in the SoA. His work and teaching practice focus on the intersection between ecological and human communities, and visualising these narratives through a cartographic lens.

DR CONSTANCE WYNDHAM is Centre Manager and Research and Engagement Fellow at the Australian Centre for Public History at UTS. She is a heritage and museums practitioner, curator and researcher with 15+ years experience.

STAGE 02 EXTERNAL ADVISORY NETWORK:

Stage 2 will expand through collaboration with external advisors as the counter-mapping develops into public-facing and site-responsive forms: [Kholisile Dhliwayo](#) is an African-Australian architect and curator whose work engages BIPOC knowledge systems, diaspora, documentary filmmaking, and community-driven spatial practices; [Taylor Coyne](#) is an urban geographer and design researcher whose work explores infrastructure, water-scapes and spatial justice in settler-colonial cities; [Victor Murari](#) is an art historian, researcher and curator whose practice examines digital colonialism, AI and subaltern artistic resistance.

Project Timeline



*Interactive Documentary 52712 (SoC); Ethics of Data and AI 573014 (SoC and FEIT); Data Ethics and Regulation 570100; Practices: Advocacy 11501 (SoA); and Starting with Country 11345 (SoA)