Planning with Country: Has the transport profession begun the journey?

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Abstract

Three decades ago, there was a call to action to settler Australians to advance reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Meaningful progress requires, among other things, revised professional practices that respect the cultural diversity of people holding differing worldviews. We frame this discussion of progress within transport planning as a journey of innovation that has scarcely begun.

The paper advances two reasons for taking this journey. The first is a social responsibility both to the nation, and to transport planners' primary client: government. Both have already advanced on this journey. The second is pragmatic: to avoid excessive delays and additional costs to projects on Country, when those projects are challenged by the Indigenous people whose Country is thereby threatened. The paper presents two examples of such cases.

The paper also offers basic tools for understanding this journey as a relationship between different groups—settler and Indigenous, each containing within it a multitude of cultures—which requires reflection, engagement, and dialogue, to move the profession away from its deep colonial roots.

The paper recommends co-design processes as a way for advancing the reconciliation process, improving relationships with Indigenous groups, and increasing the cultural competency of the planning profession.

1. Introduction

This is a call to action for the transport profession, to accelerate its journey along the road of Indigenous-settler reconciliation. Reconciliation with Indigenous Australians is a topic not before discussed in this forum. Yet reconciliation has been part of the national agenda for over three decades, suggesting a gap between national and community expectations on the one hand, and the profession's practice and research on the other.

We develop our argument following the five critical dimensions of reconciliation put forward by Reconciliation Australia (2016). We start with *Historical Acceptance* by offering a brief overview of the evolution of Indigenous-settler relations leading to the current era of reconciliation. We then question the profession's *Institutional Integrity* using keyword counts to illustrate a lack of reflection on reconciliation and its implications for practice and we compare with the progress of our key clients and other professions. This provides context for our review of two current projects that highlight how a lack of *Equality and Equity* in current practice results in overt conflict, leading to delays and escalating costs. We then discuss *Race*

Relations by considering how Indigenous values and knowledge can be included within practice and treated as seriously as other values and forms of knowledge. We then conclude that this journey towards *Unity* requires the ongoing development of practices that value and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as part of a shared national identity.

2. Historical Acceptance: The road to reconciliation

Non-Indigenous scholars describe Australia as a settler-colonial nation, indicating that the colonisers not only took over governance, but also settled the land, displacing the original owners (Johnston and Lawson, 2000). Gardiner-Garden (1999, p.2) has characterized the first 150 years of Indigenous-settler relations "as a period of dispossession, physical ill-treatment, social disruption, population decline, economic exploitation, codified discrimination, and cultural devastation." Distinguished Professor and Quandamooka scholar Moreton-Robinson (2020), characterises the same 150 years as "invading white British immigrants… claimed the land under the legal fiction of *terra nullius* – land belonging to no one - and systematically dispossessed, murdered, raped and incarcerated the original owners on cattle stations, missions and reserves." Overt resistance was met with disproportionate force, resulting in numerous massacres. Together with the introduction of chickenpox the overall result was a rapid decline of the Indigenous population and dislocation from their traditional lands, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Population takeover: Indigenous and settler populations 1780-1850 (Hunter and Carmody, 2015)
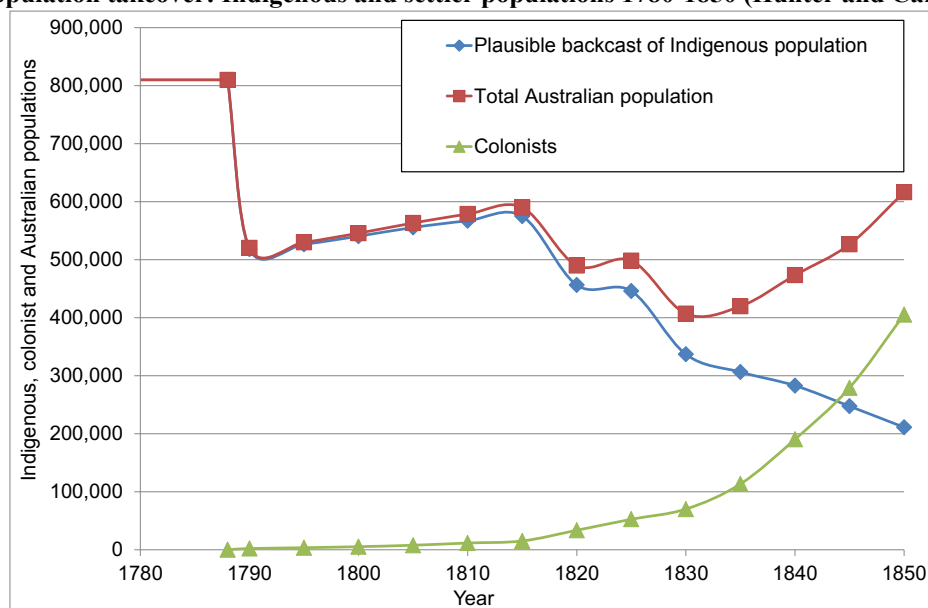
The rate of geographical dispossession slowed by the start of 20th century, with the ownership of the most viable land now claimed by the settler population. State policy switched from one of misconceived "protection" to one of assimilation. State and Commonwealth governments adopted a range of policies treating the remaining Indigenous peoples as second-class citizens incapable of managing their own affairs. Children were systematically removed from their families, with the objective of integrating them into settler society.

Following WW2, this treatment of Indigenous Australians became increasingly perceived as at odds with the ideals promoted by Australia on the global stage. The continuous resistance by Aboriginal peoples against colonialism and the growing power of the international community of Indigenous peoples lead to global and domestic change against the systematic discrimination against Indigenous peoples. In Australia, the reassessment of the settler-Indigenous relationship culminated in the 1967 Referendum, "the result, a 90.77% 'yes' vote, opened the way for much greater Commonwealth Government involvement in the area of Aboriginal affairs" (Gardiner-

Garden, 2007, p.1). The 1967 referendum itself is an early example of co-design process promoted many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders, yet it was only one step on the journey towards healing a fractured relationship.

The Indigenous people of Australia have never ceded sovereignty over Country to which they belong. The 1960s and 70s saw Indigenous peoples gain ground on land rights through public appeals and Australian courts. Events such as the *Yirrkala* Bark Petition and the Wave Hill strike paved the way for the establishment of the Woodward Commission, which sought mechanisms to recognize Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory (Maddison, 2009).

In 1992, the High Court of Australia, through the Mabo decision, ruled that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples possessed common law interests in the land prior to colonial settlement, and that the doctrine of terra nullius, which underlay colonial settlement, had been misapplied (Hobbs and Williams, 2018). Paul Keating (1992) in his Redfern speech said that "Mabo establishes a fundamental truth, and lays the basis for justice".

The Mabo decision recognized prior ownership of land by the Indigenous peoples, but also recognized its extinguishment through settlement. That land was appropriated in this way remains a key issue of contention between the dispossessed Aboriginal peoples, who have never ceded sovereignty, and the settler state. This contention, together with the history of injustice, frames the current reconciliation policy which aims to repair Indigenous-settler relations.

The process of reconciliation was a key recommendation of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Today, three decades later, organisations continue to be encouraged to develop practical plans to build improved relationships between Indigenous and settler Australians (Short, 2003). Examples of plans established by State and Federal transport agencies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Examples of Reconciliation Action Plans and Economic Participation Plans

Govt	Agency	Policy [Status]
C'wealth	Dept of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communication	'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan [Under development]
WA	Public Transport Authority	Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan [July 2018–June 2020]
NSW	Transport for NSW	Reconciliation Action Plan [July 2019–July 2021]
VIC	Transport Portfolio	Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan [2020-2023]
	Department of Transport	Bullarto-Buluk: Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plan [2018-2020]
QLD	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	Stretch: Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan [2018-2021]
	Department of Transport and Main Roads	Moving Ahead: A strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy [2016-2022]
SA	Department of Transport	Reconciliation Statement of Commitment [2013]

These plans however do not address all structural issues that continue to impact the inequity of the relationship, such as sovereignty and land rights (Short, 2003). The 2017 *Uluru Statement from the Heart* calls for a formal mechanism to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples a voice in decision making processes (Referendum Council, 2017). While the current Federal Government has rejected constitutional recognition, it supports the establishment of a Voice to Parliament as well as regional Voices for matters of local concern, and the design of these Voices is under way.

Some States are also taking steps to structurally redefine Indigenous-settler relations. Victoria and Queensland have commenced a treaty design process. West Australia has recently agreed a Native Title settlement with the Noongar people covering an area of 200,000 square kilometres—an agreement that has been described by legal scholars Hobbs and Williams (2018) as Australia's first treaty. However, to date, Australia remains the only settler-colonial nation not to have a treaty with the original Indigenous inhabitants.

3. Institutional Integrity: Progress towards reconciliation

Reconciliation Australia (2016, p.22) promotes Institutional Integrity, meaning that "reconciliation is actively supported by the nation's political, business and community structures". Professions play a key role within the structures of modern society by upholding standards of practice, conducting research and training its members. A key question is therefore the degree to which the transport planning profession has supported this societal shift towards reconciliation.

To explore this question, we searched the ATRF paper archive together with websites of other professional organisations (listed in Table 2) representing the transport profession, to map the frequency of the topic in the learned discourse.

Table 2: Websites surveyed

Australasian Transport Research Forum (paper archive)	www.australasiantransportresearchforum.org.au/papers
Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management	www.aitpm.com.au
Institute of Transport Engineers	www.ite.org.au
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Australia	www.cilta.com.au
Transport Australia Society	www.engineersaustralia.org.au/Communities-And-Groups/Technical-Societies/Transport-Australia-Society

Table 3 shows the number of mentions returned when we searched for particular key words. We used the internal "find" function on the ATRF site, and the google "site:" function to scan the others. We have excluded the results for the TAS as benchmark count was low (10). Notably the occurrence of "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal" were nil for ATRF, and comparatively low for the others. The hits for the more common technical terms provide context for the low results we found.

Table 3: Keyword search results

Keyword	ATRF	AITPM	ITE	CILTA
Benchmark word "a"	2458	766	507	583
Planning	115	569	213	82
Safety	72	236	255	413
Infrastructure	54	161	171	88
Economic	46	161	72	70
Environment	26	126	81	87
Community	26	425	344	58
Social	23	137	72	46
Climate	11	14	26	13
Consultation	2	27	28	15
Native Title	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6**
Reconciliation	**0**	**3**	**3**	**0**
Indigenous	**0**	**6**	**2**	**2**
Aboriginal	**0**	**3**	**5***	**1**
* This figure excludes 95 counts of pro forma acknowledgements of country ** During revision, we spot-checked the table data, and discovered variances between our original table and the spot checks. This variability has been detected also				

by Bramer (2016), and factors affecting variability are discussed by McEvoy (2020.)
In the range of variations we saw nothing that challenged the dramatic contrast
between hits on standard terms, and hits on terms associated with reconciliation, and
thereby stand by our conclusions.

We then considered how Indigenous-settler relations were addressed in other professions. We were already aware of the debate in the so called "history wars" that led to reforms in the writing and teaching of Australian history (Clark, 2018). Similarly, the legal profession has long been involved with Indigenous land rights and sovereignty (Hobbs and Williams, 2018). The medical profession has also recognized the importance of understanding the cultural differences between settler and Indigenous Australians. A search of the AMA website for "Aboriginal" returns 1,450 (cf "economic" 1,980) hits. In 2002 the AMA started producing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Report card pre-empting the Commonwealth Government's own Closing the Gap framework established in 2008.

In planning, the Planning Institute of Australia adopted their Welcome to Country Protocol in 2009 and a search for "Aboriginal" and "Indigenous" in the Australian Planner identified 234 and 226 articles respectively (as 15th June 2021 cf "economic" 2,428 results). Substantive articles first appeared in 1984 (*NSW procedures for Aboriginal Site*s, S Sullivan and a review of *Aborigines, Land and Land Rights* by N. Peterson and M. Langton eds). These trends in professional circles mirror wider community trends illustrated though the Google's Ngram shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Google Ngram results for "Indigenous Australian" and "Aboriginal Australian"
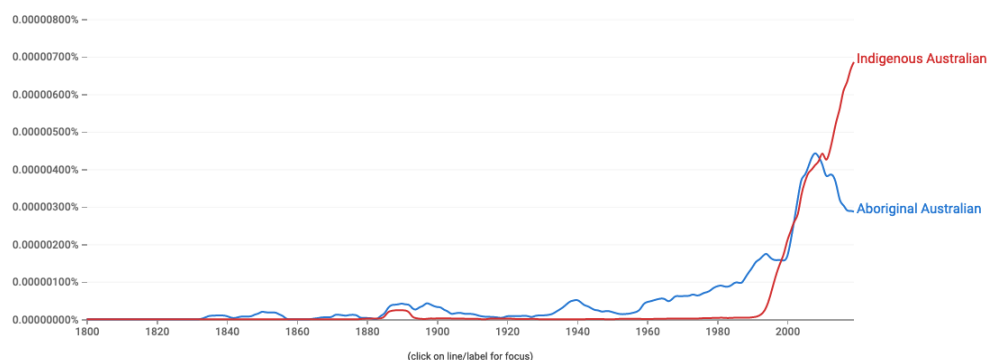
ATRF claims to be Australia's pre-eminent forum for "transport researchers, policy makers' advisors and practitioners from a range of disciplines" established to disseminate knowledge "relating to *all* aspects of transport" (Australasian Transport Research Forum, 2021, authors' italics). The forum plays an important role in "fostering research programs and the identification of emerging transport challenges". The absence of any reported research concerning the relationship between transport planning and Indigenous concerns is what WEH Stanner referred to as the "great Australian silence" (Clark, 2018).

This silence is carried over into the Australian Transport Assessment and Planning (ATAP) Guidelines created for the Council of Australian Governments to "provide a comprehensive framework for planning, assessing and developing transport systems and related initiatives" (Department of Infrastructure Transport Regional Development and Communications, 2021). A review of the ATAP guidelines found no specific mention of how Indigenous concerns are addressed within the planning process.

This preliminary evidence demonstrates the profession in the very early stages of reconciliation. This lack of progress on reconciliation has substantial negative impacts for both governments and Indigenous peoples.

4. Equity and Equality: Current practice: two cases

In the two cases that follow, we use the available documentary evidence to highlight how existing practice fails to engage with Aboriginal peoples on an equal and equitable basis that recognises and respects their culture including their connection with Country. Our purpose in reviewing these cases is not to challenge or endorse any of these claims or counter claims but rather illustrate the shortcomings in current practice and to illustrate the consequences of this planning failure.

4.1.   The projects

The first project is the duplication of the Western Highway between Beaufort and Ararat in Victoria through Djab Wurrung Country. This project is part of the Western Highway Corridor Strategy adopted by VicRoads in 1999 (McCullough et al., 2013). The strategy proposes an upgrade to freeway standard between Melbourne and Ballarat, divided carriageways between Ballarat and Stawell and improvements to the existing single carriage between Stawell and the South Australian border. The second project, the proposed Gympie Bypass between Cooray and Curra in Queensland lies in Kabi Kabi (sometimes recorded as Gubbi Gubbi) Country. This project is part of the strategy to upgrade the Bruce Highway to a divided carriageway between Brisbane and Cairns (Arup, 2008). Both projects are part of a national program to upgrade Australia's highway network.

In both cases the justification for the upgrade is the need to accommodate growing traffic volumes. The benefits of these upgrades are variously described in the economic, social, safety and environmental terms that are traditionally important for western, settler culture. Since both highways are part of the national highway network these projects are undertaken jointly by the Commonwealth government together with the Victorian and Queensland state governments respectively.

4.2. Controversies

Both projects have attracted media attention due to the protests and legal actions of the Djab Wurrung and Kabi Kabi peoples. These groups claim their concerns were considered in the original planning, and that the projects will destroy items and landscapes of cultural significance (Hall, 2021, Jacks, 2020).

The Western Highway project was due to start in 2016 but is currently on hold as the State again reviews their plans for the new route. Delays to date have been estimated to inflate original $85m contact value by $50–60m and the resulting controversy has caused the Victorian Ombudsman to undertake an "own motion" investigation into the issues (Glass, 2020).

Works on the Gympie bypass were due to commence in September 2020 but have similarly been delayed due to protests. The concerns raised by some members of the Kabi Kabi are now being debated in the Queensland state parliament (Hall, 2021).

In both cases the concerns at issue only came to light once construction was due to start raising questions about the appropriateness and completeness of the prior planning. The original routes assessments for both projects asserted that few or no items of Aboriginal significance would be impacted.

The 2013 Panel for the Western Highway concluded that the "Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment found both Options 1 and 2, with the same eight Aboriginal cultural heritage places of minor significance and two Aboriginal cultural heritage places of moderate significance, had the same impacts. The Assessment found, overall, there is a low impact to

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage resulting from both options." (McCullough et al., 2013, p.47) It is now accepted, after five years of protest, three Federal court challenges and an Ombudsman investigation, that the landscape impacted by the Western Highway upgrade contains a number of culturally significant mortuary and birthing trees (Glass, 2020). In accepting this the State has recently agreed to again review the proposed alignment in consultation with the Djab Wurrung and construction is not expected to restart until 2022 (Jacks, 2021).

The 2008 consultant report recommending the preferred option for Bruce Highway upgrade found nothing of Aboriginal significance noting that a "cultural heritage survey in accordance with the requirements of the Queensland Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act will also be required at the appropriate stage" (Arup, 2008, p.iii). The items at issue in the Bruce Highway are currently subject to a dispute between the state, its agencies and some members of the Kabi Kabi over the significance of the items impacted with no resolution at the time of writing.

In both cases the affected Aboriginal groups are maintaining protest camps to prevent construction activity impacting these items of concern. That the original assessments overlooked these potential significant sites must flag questions about the adequacy of current practice. It is not simply a case of the local Aboriginal people dissenting a particular decision but that those making the decision were not provided with information about the Aboriginal interests and concerns relevant to these decisions.

4.3. Failure to effectively engage

The planning of both projects included a stakeholder engagement program designed to elicit a wide range of views about the impact on the surrounding area and the people living there. The planning teams used a variety of techniques to raise community awareness about the project and provided various opportunities for people to comment on the proposed designs and options. In the case of the Western Highway this process culminated in a Independent Ministerial Advisory Committee review of the proponent's environmental impact assessment and public submissions (McCullough et al., 2013). Planning for the Bruce Highway followed a process that included a series of focus groups to allow people with an interest in the project to participate in route selection and project design (GHD, 2017).

Our review of the documents found an absence of any Aboriginal voice in the initial planning work. In the case of the Western Highway the Committee received no submissions from the Aboriginal people nor were Aboriginal people included in the focus groups established for the Bruce Highway project. Implicitly, this silence was seen by those responsible for planning these projects as confirmation of the various expert assessments that there was nothing of significance to be considered. However, as the subsequent events have shown, silence is not the same as consent.

Nor is it a case that Aboriginal concerns were simply overlooked. The assessments for both projects make clear that the proponents were aware of their legal obligations to manage Aboriginal heritage. To this end contact was made with the relevant Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) who were made of aware the project and offered no objection to the proposed schemes.

However, these RAPs were not established as representative bodies for all Aboriginal people with an interest within a particular area. Rather, they are established by Aboriginal people in order to pursue native title claims and may therefore only represent the interests of a particular clan. Further complicating engagement is that Aboriginal people with an interest in the impacted Country may live elsewhere due to historical dislocation and relocation. Perusal of the land claims registers show that far more claims commence than proceed to resolution. The

native title system is not an adequate proxy for respecting Aboriginal connection to Country, nor does it avoid the consequences of ignoring that connection.

In the case of the Western Highway, initial contact was made with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation and Martang Pty Ltd for the purpose of seeking assistance to prepare a cultural heritage management plan. Under this plan it was proposed to undertake the "complex assessment" of Aboriginal heritage as required by law after the preferred route had been determined. It was only after the EES was completed that contact was made with the Djab Wurrung people who subsequently made VicRoads aware of the cultural significance of the impacted trees. By this stage the route had been determined and VicRoads was only prepared to offer a limited realignment.

Similar confusion is also found in the planning of the Bruce Highway. Initial consultation occurred with the Kabi Kabi people to inform the 2008 planning study but again it was decided that a detailed assessment of cultural heritage would occur after the preferred route was determined. Since the initial planning, the claimant group involved have not pursued their claim, and another group has initiated a new claim[1]. This confusion over who speaks for the local Aboriginal people has led the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to assert "no tangible evidence of Aboriginal cultural heritage has been found at the site" (Bailey, 2021) despite the claims of the protesters and his department's 2017 EPBC referral that reported the existence of two bora circles (GHD, 2017).

Placing an emphasis on the views expressed by RAPs offers obvious administrative advantages over an alternative approach designed to elicit the diversity of views within the local Aboriginal society. However, the risk of the narrow approach, as illustrated in these cases, is that important views are not expressed early in the planning process.

The single point of engagement offered to the Aboriginal community is in contrast with the approach used to engage with the settler community. For the latter, a variety of media and avenues of engagement have been used. Better practice would ensure early consultation that canvases the full range of stakeholder views prior to any decisions.

In these examples, it is clear that the engagement models being used are failing to gather the full spectrum of concerns.

5. Race Relations: Discussion

These case studies highlight the challenge of planning within a societal context that respects the legitimate concerns of many different cultures. Improving race relations requires the building of relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism (Reconciliation Australian 2018). Current practices reflect the norms of settler society and provide a collection of communicative techniques designed to engage settlers including landowners and other stakeholders within the decision-making process. Newsletters, websites, public meetings and focus groups are technologies of engagement that go beyond minimum legal requirements to meet societal norms that legitimizes any ultimate decision.

The case studies highlight the engagement developed for the Aboriginal community was the minimum required by law. The engagement focus on RAPs leaves many Aboriginal people outside the process. Mechanisms that ensure the involvement of a wider Indigenous community are yet to be developed and incorporated in practice. This gap between current

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[1] Details of the various claims over the area of concern can be found in the register of claims held by the National Native Title Tribunal: <http://www.nntt.gov.au/Pages/Home-Page.aspx>.

practice and the community's expectations for reconciliation represents an opportunity for innovation in the profession.

What can be done to move the profession along the path of reconciliation? In this section we propose two theoretical frameworks to understand the challenge now confronting the profession.

5.1 Reconciliation as innovation

We posit that the process of reconciliation is an opportunity to drive innovation within the profession. We would liken it with two previous waves of innovation:

- The consultation wave, in which community and stakeholder consultation became central to transport planning, in considering the impact of plans on communities.
- The environmental wave, in which environmental impact analysis became a norm within communities.

Both have opened new horizons for research into transport planning and in the way the profession goes about its practice. The advantage of framing reconciliation as innovation, rather than compliance, is to harness the professions best minds and energies in inventing new forms of practice, rather than as a burdensome legalistic exercise.

We use the term of the "wave" as innovation does not happen all at once, but rather "diffuses" through populations such as professional groups in a wave-like statistical model first postulated by Everett Rogers. Conceived in 1962, it is now one of the most widely use social science models (Rogers et al., 2014).

Rogers divides the successive adopters of innovation in five categories of "adopter", illustrated in Figure 3. These adopters can be individuals, organisations, or entire social groups.

Figure 3: Rogers' diffusion of innovations curve (Wikimedia Commons, n.d.)
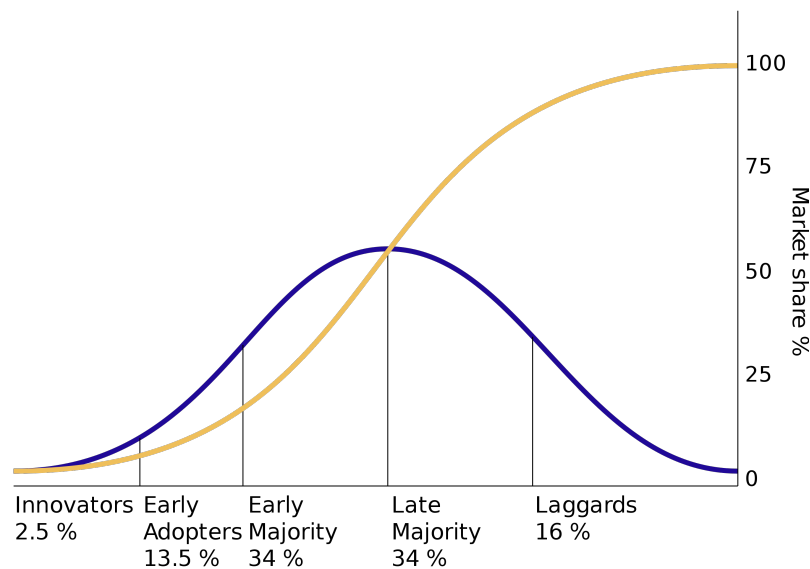
In our analysis, we have positioned the transport planning profession—as a social group in broader society—at the far left side of the diagram. There may be reconciliation innovation going on within the profession, but it has not yet reached the point where the innovations are visible in the profession's broader discourse, as represented by the investigations we undertook.

To move forward, we see the identification and mobilisation of innovators and early adopters as critical to leading innovations. Innovators are risk takers who can afford to invest time in developing new ways of practice. Early adopters are leaders who can adopt these working innovations and disseminate these new practices to the rest of the membership.

5.2   Intercultural negotiation

Overall, we propose seeing settler (Western, European) culture and Indigenous cultures as very different, and equally valid (and valuable) culture systems. No culture is monolithic—both are internally diverse and complex, and contain views, ideologies, politics, and practices. Nor does this mean that that either is hermetically sealed from the other, each is changing over time, and each is changing in response to the other. Indigenous people have throughout their centuries of negotiation with the settlers, steadfastly maintained their distinct culture and special relationships to Country.

This reconciliation wave will be fundamentally different from the consultation and environmental waves. The consultation wave involved new interactions with a large group of people who were mostly assimilated into Australian culture and worked within settler governance structures. The environmental wave dealt largely with non-human nature and involved working within the familiar language of science. Indigenous Australians work to maintain their own distinctive cultures, including their own forms of governance. As such, reconciliation must take the form of mutual learning, dialogue and respect for differing views.

A negotiation between people of different cultures is very different from negotiations within cultures. The anthropologist Edward T Hall developed the "iceberg model" of culture (Hall, 1989) illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The Iceberg model of culture
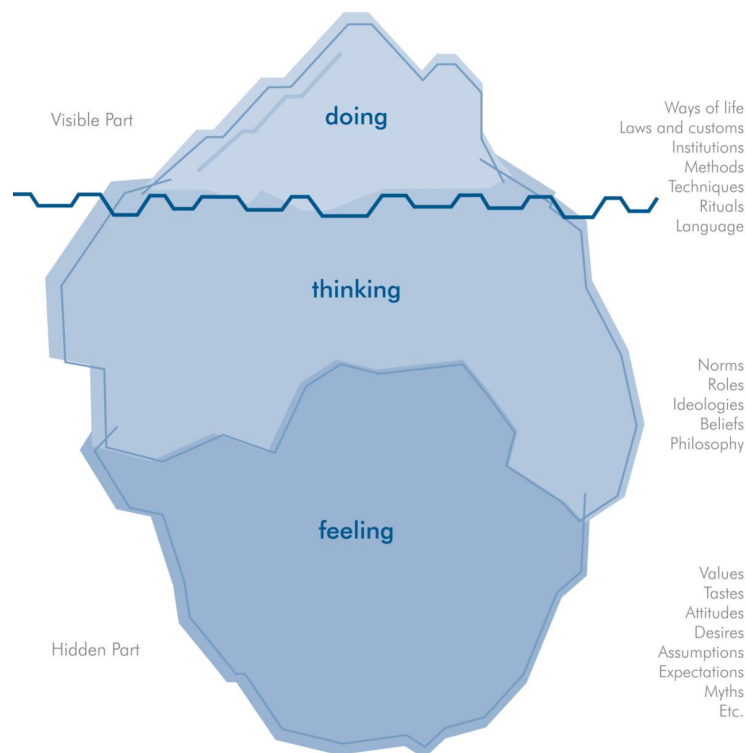
The observable behaviours of the culture sit above the water line while the underlying factors that shape and influence these behaviours sit below the surface. Knowledge theorists use the term 'explicit' for the visible aspects of culture because people consciously know about them.

For instance, we know that extended families play a special role for most Indigenous people—that knowledge is visible, above the line. What we don't know is how those families and roles work: that would require the acquisition through long experience. Knowledge of below-the-waterline culture is known as 'tacit', 'background' or 'embodied'. Even someone who is a part of the culture may find it difficult to articulate this knowledge fully, or correctly. The same applies to settler culture. For instance, we all know that time, money and technical quality are all very important to settler professionals. Knowing the tacit details of that knowledge, so one can act competently around issues of time, money and quality take decades of training and experience.

A misstep, in an intracultural negotiation, is to assume that most of what's under the waterline is common to both sides. Furthermore, this portion does not manifest itself through explicit negotiation positions. Rather, per the behavioural psychologist Daniel Kahneman (2011), it comes through as discomfort, intuitions or feelings brought forth by specific proposals or situations. Therefore, professional innovations in negotiation with peoples of a different culture require a high degree of "co-design": joint work on the details, which allows tacit knowledge to be evoked and play its part for the solutions to be cultural acceptable to both parties.

For example, consider the differences between the cultures towards land. For settler culture, derived primarily from Europe, and shaped over the last thousand years by first a feudal and then capitalist economy, tend to see land as something that is owned by individual humans, and which can be harnessed for human purposes. Land management can be sufficiently defined through technical and scientific means. Land is defined by its economic utility (Rubin and Klumpp, 2012).

In contrast, from an Indigenous perspective, "The land is the mother and we are of the land; *we do not own the land rather the land owns us*. The land is our food, our culture, our spirit and our identity."—Dennis Foley, a Gai-mariagal and Wiradjuri man, and Fulbright scholar [our emphasis] (Common Ground, n.d.]. Indigenous feelings are entwined with Country, "a term used by Aboriginal people to describe those geographic areas and the landscapes within them with which they have inherited rights and responsibilities"(Kohen, 2003, p.229). Studies of Indigenous health have linked well-being to connection to Country (Dew et al., 2020). Indigenous land management is not defined as the use of land for human purposes, even if defined sustainably.

Nor is it limited to scientific understanding. Rather: "Indigenous land and sea management, also referred to as 'caring for country', includes a wide range of environmental, natural resource and cultural heritage management activities undertaken by Indigenous individuals, families, groups and organisations across Australia. These activities have their origins in the holistic relationships between traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and their customary land and sea estates—or 'country'—that have evolved over at least 50,000 years." (Hill et al., 2013, p.1)

COAG (the Council of Australian Governments) has worked to attempt to "close the gap" between Indigenous and settler wellbeing. In doing so it used its own best technical and scientific advice on how to do so. In 2018, year 10 of the program, the Human Rights Commission concluded that "the nation is now in a situation where the closing the gap targets will measure nothing but the collective failure of Australian governments to work together and to stay the course," and "the overall situation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health can be characterised as 'systemic' or 'market failure' "(Holland, 2018, p.5). Later that year, the COAG *Statement on The Closing the Gap Refresh* declared co-design as the new

policy going forward, with a "strength-based approach" which builds on Indigenous capacities (COAG, 2018, p.3).

It's important that the transport planning profession not make the same mistake as COAG, but rather adopt the principle of co-design from the outset.

6.   Unity: Conclusion

> "Reconciliation Australia's theme for 2021—*More than a word: Reconciliation takes action.*" (Reconciliation Australia, n.d.)

The reconciliation of Indigenous-settler relations is seen as a journey rather than a destination. It is a continuous process of reflection on our behaviour and practices to innovate new ways that foster a practice that "values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Inlander cultures and heritage as part of a shared national identity" (Reconciliation Australian, 2018. p.30. This process is conducted in dialogue, because only in dialogue can solutions be found that meet the needs of all parties.

The journey involves various aspects, including:

- acknowledging and respecting each other,
- undoing past harms, wherever possible, and
- making arrangements to prevent future harms.

In considering the journey, it would be useful to make use of the extensive work already done by both Indigenous and settler workers in the area of Indigenous Cultural Competence (ICC). Developing ICC is a continuum, developed over time. We suggest the following breakdown is useful to professionals (Charles Sturt University, u.d.):

Table 3: Stages of Cultural Competence

1. Knowledge	2. Skill	3. Practice
Understand specific cultural and historical patterns that have structured Indigenous lives in the past and the way in which these patterns continue to be expressed in contemporary Australia	Critically examine personal power, privilege, and profession within the broader context of the history, assumptions and characteristics that structure Australian Society, and the way those factors shape historical and contemporary engagement with Indigenous communities and Indigenous people	Practice in ways that show a commitment to social justice and the process of reconciliation through inclusive practices and citizenship

There are at least two reasons for now engaging expeditiously along this path. The first is ethical: for the profession to do its part towards a broader, national goal. The second is practical: to avoid the kinds of missteps apparent in the case studies. Doing so will involve not just working with the explicit aspects of our profession, but with the more profound, and harder to get at tacit aspects of our professional and settler culture. The first can be done by conscious attention and deliberation; the latter requires coming together with members of the cultures involved both broadly, and within particular projects, to "co-create" steps forward. It's through co-creation and dialogue that potential conflicts between the settler culture and the Indigenous ways are surfaced and then explicitly addressed.

We return to the Rogers innovation curve, this time at the meaning of it within the transport planning profession. We have offered evidence that this journey has barely begun, if at all. To progress, the first step is to identify and bring together the innovators, those who want to bring about change through a process of co-design. In the first instance, this may only be settlers, but it must move quickly to include Indigenous peoples to share their tacit

knowledge. If our profession is open to change, and is willing to learn new ways, progress will then become evident in interactions over concrete questions.

We propose the ATRF's role is to invite those practitioners and researchers willing to invest time and resources on this journey to share their innovations with the rest of the profession.

Acknowledgement

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