

Aboriginal Connections with Eveleigh



Eveleigh Street, 1989 (SLNSW, Tedeschi, Mark A. G. Collection, Mitchell Library, PXD 595)

A Report Prepared for the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority

by

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July 2012

The Eveleigh Area

Aboriginal people have maintained a long and continuous history of connections to Eveleigh, and have been important participants in the history of this, and neighbouring areas, especially Redfern. One key site in Eveleigh that was central to the history of Aboriginal peoples' connections with the precinct was the Eveleigh Railway Workshops. Aboriginal people were among the labour force at these Workshops, and their experiences in that work form a key aspect of their connections to the Eveleigh area.

The precinct known as Eveleigh is approximately '4km south of the Sydney GPO and is bounded by the inner city suburbs of Darlington, Redfern, Alexandria,, Erskineville and Newtown'.¹ This area of about 51 ha 'clearly reflects the legacy of past railway functions and activities including the Eveleigh Railway Workshops, administrative areas, and the former Alexandria goods yards'.² Historian Lucy Taksa states that:

... Eveleigh was not only a geographic location in which specific industrial activities occurred, but also a 'territory' made up of a particular concentration of people and local allegiances. As such it constituted the epicenter of an occupational community because it encouraged residential concentration in the localities that surrounded it and thus produced a high degree of social interaction between fellow workers and their families.³

Early Times

Prior to the establishment of the Railway Workshops, Eveleigh was a rural area. It formed part of the country of the larger group of people of Sydney and environs sometimes referred to as Eora. The term 'Eora' (or more correctly *Iyora* or *yura*), however, may not be a word for a specific Aboriginal group, but was possibly a Sydney term referring to 'person'.⁴ The Sydney clans comprised several language groups 'often with coastal and inland dialects, including Dharug, Dharawal/Tharawal, Gundungurra and Kurringgai'.⁵ The Traditional Owners who today speak for Sydney are from the Gadigal clan (sometimes referred to as Cadigal), or band whose 'area stretches from the south side of Port Jackson from South Head to Petersham'.⁶ This would have included the Eveleigh area. Heiss writes that 'around Sydney, many of the main thoroughfares such as George Street, Oxford Street and King Street Newtown were Aboriginal trading routes and tracks to farmed grasslands or bountiful fishing areas'.⁷

¹ *Eveleigh Precinct Planning Study*, Report prepared for NSW Department of Planning by Lester Firth & Associates, 1992, p.1.

² *Eveleigh Precinct Planning Study*, p. 1.

³ Lucy Taksa, *Social Capital, Community and Citizenship at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in Sydney, 1880-1932*, School of Industrial Relations, UNSW, 1998, p. 2.

⁴ See Jakelin Troy, The Sydney Language, in N. Thieberger and W. McGregor (eds), *Macquarie Aboriginal Words*, pp. 61-78, Macquarie Library Pty Ltd., *The Macquarie Dictionary*, Macquarie University, North Ryde, 1994, p. 61.

⁵ *Life in Gadigal Country*, p. 8

⁶ Anita Heiss, *Life in Gadigal Country*, Gadigal Information Service, Strawberry Hills, Sydney, 2002, p. 8.

⁷ *Life in Gadigal Country*, p. 14.

The region encompassing the Eveleigh precinct was rich in food resources for the Gadigal clans. Rivers, streams, and the surrounding ecosystems provided abundant year-round opportunities and good fishing.⁸ Of Cadical country one source states that ‘almost at its centre, in the area we know as Redfern, was a crossing point where the Gadigal people would meet as they moved through their country.’⁹

The dispossession of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands, together with introduced diseases such as smallpox, and settler violence took its toll on the Gadigal, significantly reducing their population. With their decline in rural NSW, ‘by the 1830s Indigenous people were gathering again in Redfern. From its farms and market gardens they could beg food and sugar bags to compensate for their stolen hunting and fishing grounds’.¹⁰

The Eveleigh and Redfern areas were beginning to experience great transformations. By the 1790s and early 1800s, areas in the vicinity of Eveleigh included activity relating to brick making.¹¹ In the early years of the 19th century ‘land grants were made to Hutchinson, Chisholm, King, Chippendale and Shepard’. However, there was little development on the western side of Redfern until the late 1870s.¹² King’s original grant of land was 30 acres in 1794, Hutchinson’s was 52 acres in 1819, and Chisholm’s was 62 acres in 1835.¹³ There was a process of subdivision, and resulting smaller lots around the 1880s, according to one planning study, were ‘intended to attract the “working man”’.¹⁴ Notable properties in Eveleigh included Calder House, built by James Chisholm, ‘probably in the 1820s’.¹⁵ The present Aboriginal Housing Company in Lawson Street, Redfern is in the locality of the former Eveleigh House, built by John Rose Holden around 1840.¹⁶ The Eveleigh precinct experienced further significant changes with the coming of the railway in 1855. The smaller subdivisions and housing provided greater access to working class families, and for Aboriginal people seeking opportunities, which included employment with the railways.

The Eveleigh Railway Workshops

The Eveleigh Railway Workshops had a significant role in the history of this small area of inner Sydney. Although details of Aboriginal workers at the Workshops have yet to be established, it is known that the site was an important focus for employment for Aboriginal people. For example, accompanying a photograph that depicts the Workshops in ‘about 1912’ from the Australian Railway Historical Society Archives, the City of Sydney ‘Barani’ website has a caption that reads as follows:

⁸ *Life in Gadigal Country*, p. 14.

⁹ Terry Irving and Rowan Cahill, *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes*, UNSW Press, 2010, p. 328.

¹⁰ Terry Irving and Rowan Cahill, *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes*, UNSW Press, 2010, p. 328.

¹¹ Godden Mackay, Final Report, Vol 1, 1990, p. 33. This report states that ‘Lesueur’s plan of Sydney in 1802 marks the area generally as “Brickfield Village” where there are manufactures of tiles, pottery, crockery etc’, Godden Mackay Final Report Vol 1, p. 33. See <http://mapco.net/sydney1802/sydneyb.htm>.

¹² *Eveleigh Railway Locomotive Workshops Conservation Management Plan*, Heritage Projects NSW Public Works, 1995, p. 19. See also *South Sydney Heritage Study*, Rosemary Annable and Ken Cable, prepared for Tropman & Tropman Architects, 1995.

¹³ Thanks to Dr Lisa Murray, City of Sydney Historian, for providing these additional details.

¹⁴ *Eveleigh Railway Locomotive Workshops Conservation Management Plan*, p. 19.

¹⁵ *Eveleigh Railway Locomotive Workshops Conservation Management Plan*, p. 19.

¹⁶ *Eveleigh Railway Locomotive Workshops Conservation Management Plan*, p. 19.

Many local Aborigines from Redfern were employed in the dirty work in the foundry, boiler room and workshops. In later years, others arrived from the country seeking work but had to sleep in disused air-raid shelters because the local hotels refused them accommodation.¹⁷

Eveleigh Locomotive Workshops
about 1912 (Australian Railway
Historical Society Archives)



One such Aboriginal worker was Phillip James Campbell, who was among the former Eveleigh Railway workshop employees mentioned in an Eveleigh Workshops Register established in 1999.¹⁸ The site for the Workshops was selected in 1875. This site had been ‘previously used as a dairy and [was] known as “Slade’s Paddock”’. Construction for the Railway Workshops commenced from 1882, on the site of Chisholm’s original land grant. Apart from Chisholm’s Calder House, there had been little development on this site until the Workshops construction began.¹⁹ However, a property known as ‘Grange Villa’ had existed ‘at the western end of the North Eveleigh site’.²⁰ The Grange was constructed sometime prior to 1840. It was the home of a number of prominent local and colonial figures, including William a’Beckett, Sir Saul Samuel and possibly Felix Wilson. The Grange continued to be occupied, including as a private school from 1900 to 1902. It was purchased by the Department of Public Works in 1908 to expand the Eveleigh Railway Yards, and was probably demolished shortly thereafter.²¹ That property may have been the same one (known as ‘The Grange’) that had been occupied in 1871-72 by Thomas McCulloch, a solicitor who had divided the Hutchinson Estate into blocks for subdivision and sale. Before moving to The Grange, McCulloch had lived at Eveleigh House 1865-69.²²

¹⁷ City of Sydney ‘Barani’ website www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/themes/theme11.htm, accessed 4/11/2011. For the photograph see Australian Railway Historical Society Archives.

¹⁸ G. O’Brien, G., *From Sweatshop to Hard Labour*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30.8.99. The register was a project initiated by historian Lucy Taksa, who has carried out extensive research on the labour history of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops.

¹⁹ Information provided by Dr Lisa Murray, Sydney City Historian.

²⁰ After his ownership and occupation of the Grange, William a’Beckett became the Chief Justice of Victoria and was the magistrate presiding over the Eureka Stockade trials. see Adam Paterson, Archaeologist, Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd, Annandale, in a letter ‘Response to Submission North Eveleigh Concept Plan’, June 2008, to Joanne McGuinness, Redfern-Waterloo Authority, 25 August 2008.

²¹ Historical Archeological Assessment – The Grange Aecom July 2012

²² See Peter Lonergan, *Conservation Management Plan, The Settlement Neighbourhood Centre, 17-19 Edward Street, Darlington, Lot 1 DP 179089* June 2006, Revised June 2007, Lonergan & Cracknell Architects & Heritage Consultants, p. 13.

By 1884 the Running Shed was completed, the Carriage and Wagon Shops in 1886 and Bays 1- 4 of the Locomotive Workshops and the Chief Mechanical Engineer's Residence in 1887.²³ At the time of its opening the Eveleigh site provided jobs for some 1548 "artisans and skilled workers".²⁴ Construction continued through the following decades, and, following a decision to manufacture locomotives at Eveleigh, the "New Loco Shop" was built in 1908.²⁵

The development of the Eveleigh Railway workshops in the 1880s had a significant impact on both the Eveleigh and the Redfern areas. Redfern and neighbouring precincts such as Darlington were the locations for much of the workers' housing that was stimulated by the development of the Eveleigh Railway workshops.²⁶ These houses 'mainly consisted of brick rendered walls, iron roofs and timber verandas with iron balcony railings'.²⁷ The proximity of the Eveleigh railway workshops to the adjacent precinct of Redfern provided a focus for Aboriginal people seeking employment. Many were drawn by the availability of affordable rental housing in Redfern, its growing Aboriginal community, and its proximity to Central Station, where Aboriginal people had arrived from rural regions in search of work.²⁸

Eveleigh Railway Workshops as a Site for Aboriginal Activism

Aboriginal people have maintained a continuous presence in the Eveleigh area. However, from the 1920s, prompted by worsening economic conditions, and the possibility of work on the railways and at the railway workshops, more people began moving into the area. It is likely that Aboriginal people were at least employees, if not participants in the political and union activities centred on the Eveleigh Workshops from the early years of the century.

The general strike of 1917, in which the Eveleigh Railway Workshop employees were involved, was one of the factors that influenced Aboriginal peoples' growing participation in political movements and their calls for recognition. That strike occurred at a time when there was a growing awareness of, and concern by unions and Aboriginal peoples' organisations about the poor wages and conditions experienced by Aboriginal workers. The Eveleigh Railway workshops were one of the focal points for meetings and rallies in support of workers' rights, supported by the railway union shop committees. By the 1940s nearby Redfern was becoming a focal point for Aboriginal activism more widely.²⁹

²³ History of Eveleigh Workshops (Eveleigh Locomotive Workshops) by Eveleigh Works Manager, 14 April 1955, in Eveleigh Carriage Workshop Committee, Correspondence and History of Eveleigh Workshops 1954-1957, ML MSS 2674, Item 4, Mitchell Library.

²⁴ *Eveleigh Precinct Planning Study*, Report prepared for NSW Department of Planning by Lester Firth & Associates, 1992, p. 3.

²⁵ *Eveleigh Precinct Planning Study*, Report prepared for NSW Department of Planning by Lester Firth & Associates, 1992, p. 3.

²⁶ Information from the website for the Aboriginal Housing Company, www.ahc.org.au.

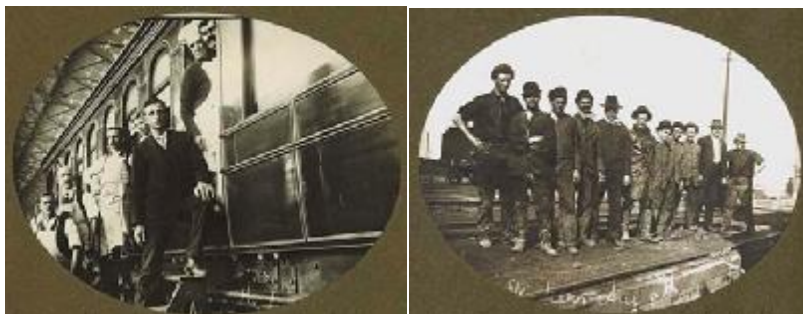
²⁷ Aboriginal Housing Company website, www.ahc.org.au.

²⁸ Terry Irving and Rowen Cahill, *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes*, UNSW Press, 2010, p. 328.

²⁹ See for example G. O'Brien, G., *From Sweatshop to Hard Labour*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30.8.99, and references to the role of the Eveleigh workshops in growing Aboriginal activism.

Aboriginal activism and the general strike of 1917

The 1917 general strike, from 2 August to 8 September began in the Eveleigh workshops and in the Randwick Tram Workshops. The strike was over a planned introduction of a new system to record workers' productivity.



The above images are from NSW State Archives, see <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/resources-for/historians/railway-employee-records>

A photograph in the *Sydney Mail* of 15 August 1917 (p. 10) depicts strikers making a deputation to the NSW Premier. That photograph is reproduced in the book *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes* with the following caption:

A deputation of strikers' wives (some of whom appear to be Aborigines) to the Premier in 1917. Determination and anger are etched on their faces. Many had husbands working at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops; some Aborigines were employed there.³⁰

The Eveleigh Railway workshops maintained an important role as a focal point for industrial activism over several decades.³¹ In 1934 NSW Premier Jack Lang spoke to supporters outside the workshops, and in 1937 Eveleigh workers held mass meetings to voice their protest at a visit by German emissary Count von Luckner.³² This continued activity by Eveleigh Railway Workshop employees provided a stimulus for Aboriginal peoples' political activism and struggles for recognition of their rights. Aboriginal workers were particularly disadvantaged, and their struggle for equality of pay and conditions found support at the Eveleigh Workshops. According to one source, Aboriginal employees at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops were listed in the employment register, without names under the category of 'Boy'.³³ The Railway Workshops union committees also showed support for Aboriginal peoples' justice and rights issues more widely, including land rights, rural conditions for Aboriginal people, and the impact on Aboriginal lands of nuclear weapons testing.

³⁰ Image reproduced in Terry Irving and Rowen Cahill, *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes*, UNSW Press, 2010, p. 190.

³¹ See for example, Peter O'Connor, *On Wooden Rails: Celebrating 150 Years of Work on the NSW Railways*, The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (NSW Branch), 321 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

³² For the 1934 meeting by Jack Lang see *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes*, p. 190 and photo in the Dixon Galleries, NSW State Library, DG ON4/351; for reference to the 1937 Eveleigh workers' meeting see Peter Mac, 'Trainworks: History on the Rails', *The Guardian: The Workers' Weekly*, CPA, Issue No. 1493, 16 March 2011.

³³ Lucy Taksa, 'From Steam Trains to Information Superhighways', *Workers Online*, Issue 12, 7 May 1999, cited in Lonergan, *op cit.*, p. 16

During the 1940s and 1950s there were shifts in government policy for Aboriginal people, towards an emphasis on assimilation. Aboriginal people themselves were also becoming more organised, and developing forums to articulate their views. The Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship was established in 1956 by Pearl Gibbs and Faith Bandler.³⁴ It was in this context that the Eveleigh Workshops played an active role. The Eveleigh Workshops supported the Fellowship and its activities for Aboriginal justice and rights, and the latter also obtained support by a number of trade unions. Unions involved included the Australian Workers' Union, Builders' Workers' Industrial Union, and the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemens' Association.³⁵

The Eveleigh Loco Workshops Central Shop Committee was also active in voicing its opposition to nuclear weapons testing, then taking place as a joint exercise carried out by Australia and Great Britain at Maralinga in South Australia.³⁶ The weapons testing has had significant and long lasting impacts on the Aboriginal peoples in the area. One *Matutjara* woman, Jesse Lennon, who was 'caught by the bomb', has written her account in *I'm the One That Know This Country*.³⁷ The committee's newsletter *Eveleigh News* for 17 April 1957 carried a short piece stating its protest against weapons testing.³⁸ This had the headline 'The people must act against atomic arms and experimental explosions'. The *Eveleigh News* voiced its protest at the weapons testing in further editions during 1957. In its 12 June edition it referred to a public meeting held at Oatley School of Arts, to address subjects such as atomic weapons testing. That meeting was held under the auspices of the Australian Peace Assembly and the Aboriginal Australian Fellowship.. Further references to the Maralinga weapons testing were in the 24 July and 18 September editions of the *Eveleigh News* for 1957.

The *Eveleigh News* took up the issues of Aboriginal rights directly in its pages over the following years. In its edition of 29 May 1957³⁹ it ran a full page with the heading 'New Deal for Aborigines'. It began with the following statement:

No "dinkum" Aussie will deny that one of the most shameful features of our Australian history has been the tragic treatment of our Aborigines. Although we all have a very bad conscience about our inhuman behaviour to-wards the original Australians, our authorities continue to deny them economic, social & political equality, & enforce their existence as an underprivileged minority in their own Country.⁴⁰

³⁴ [Add references]

³⁵ See Sandra Bloodworth 'A tradition of union support for Aboriginal rights', *Socialist Alternative*, 8 March 2010, on-line at http://www.sa.org.au/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4404:a-tradition-of-union-support-for-aboriginal-rights&Itemid=454&tmpl=component&print=1.

³⁶ See for example Alan Parkinson, *Maralinga: Australia's Nuclear Waste Cover-up*, Sydney, ABC Books, 2007; Judy Wilks, *Field of Thunder: The Maralinga Story*, Melbourne, Friends of the Earth, 1981.

³⁷ Canberra, Aboriginal Studies Press, 2011.

³⁸ *Eveleigh News*, 17 April 1957, 'The People Must Act against Arms & Experimental Explosions'. Further articles against weapons testing were printed in the editions of 24 July 1957, and 18 September 1957. The latter made specific reference to testing at Maralinga.

³⁹ The date of this edition has been changed to 5 June in a handwritten revision, in the copy held by the Mitchell Library.

⁴⁰ *Eveleigh News*, 29 May 1957.

The *Eveleigh News* article also asserted its support for the newly formed Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship and other organisations, such as the Australian Assembly for Peace. Critical issues taken up by the Eveleigh Loco Central Shop Committee, and its main publication the *Eveleigh News*, included protesting at the atomic weapons testing, which was to have very significant impact on Aboriginal people at Maralinga in South Australia, and the campaign for Aboriginal citizenship and a referendum for constitutional change. The Eveleigh Shop Committee liaised closely with the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship in organising meetings and speakers, including Aboriginal people to address the workers. Among the Aboriginal people who spoke at meetings at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops was Herbert ('Bert') Groves, a prominent activist, president of the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship, and one time Aboriginal member of the Welfare Board. Groves spoke at 'lunch hour meetings at Eveleigh Workshops and Sydney University'.⁴¹ On 21 March 1957, the Honorary Secretary of the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship wrote to the Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) thanking the latter for agreeing to speak at a public meeting at Sydney Town Hall on 29 April 1957. That meeting was to discuss 'ways and means of raising the living standards of the Australian Aborigines and their integration into the Australian community'. Bert Groves was also among the speakers at that meeting.⁴²

Other Aboriginal rights issues taken up by the Eveleigh Loco Workshops Shop Committee included a petition calling for the commuting of a death sentence imposed on Aboriginal man (Rupert Max Stuart) convicted of murder (*Eveleigh News* 5 August 1959). In the November 1962 edition of *Eveleigh News* carried an article headed 'Aboriginal Rights'. This piece stated 'Workers in these shops are to be congratulated on the manner in which they signed recent petitions for the removal of discriminatory clauses, oppressive to our Aboriginal Australians, from the Australian Constitution'. In the *Eveleigh News* of 29 July 1964, a headline ran 'Aboriginal Speaker told of Racial discrimination at Walgett'. This article highlighted the close cooperation between the Eveleigh workers committees and trade unions in bringing attention to the plight of rural Aboriginal people in NSW and other parts of Australia.

Support for Aboriginal people by Eveleigh Workshops employees found expression in other ways too. An Australian Railways Union Delegate in the Boiler Shop at Eveleigh, F Wingrave, wrote in the *Eveleigh News* (20 April 1966) seeking support from colleagues for Aboriginal people in need at the Wreck Bay Aboriginal community. Wingrave wrote:

During my recent holiday I made friends with some families at Wreck Bay Aborigines' Settlement, and became acutely aware of some of their needs and problems. When I spoke about this to friends and neighbours they gave me unwanted toys and clothing, including boots and shoes, which I am taking to the Settlement on Anzac Day week-end. I will be pleased to accept similar gifts from workmates, feeling sure they will be appreciated, especially clothing for the coming winter...

The involvement of workers, worker organisations and trade unions in Aboriginal rights campaigns and issues at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops is relatively well documented. What is lacking in the historical record, however, is documentation showing the participation of Aboriginal people themselves as employees and organisers at the Eveleigh

⁴¹ Mrs I McIlraith, Hon Sec Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship to T Dougherty, Secretary AWU, 21 March 1957, Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship Papers, Mitchell Library, MLM MSS 4057/5.

⁴² Mrs I McIlraith, Hon Sec, Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship to Mr T Dougherty, Secretary AWU, 21 March 1957, Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship papers, Mitchell Library, SLNSW, MLMSS 4057, box 5.

Workshops and other railway sectors. As the NSW archives website has noted ‘Aboriginal people’s work at Eveleigh Railways, close to Newtown, will need to be explored further through oral history. However, their work does not appear to be obviously or well recorded in written records, according to other researchers completing archival searches’.⁴³

Eveleigh Neighbour: Redfern

The proximity of Eveleigh to Redfern is important for telling the story of Aboriginal peoples’ connections to Eveleigh. For Aboriginal people, the municipal boundaries between these precincts are sometimes less important than they may be for others. Redfern was, and continues to be, a locality that is important for Aboriginal people. It is historically a site of Aboriginal social and political activism, and closely intertwined with that activism, the establishment of organisations such as the Aboriginal Housing Company.

In Redfern today there are several Aboriginal organisations that play a key role in providing services for the community, and also as important centres for people. Not only are they organisations that service particular needs or interests for Aboriginal people. They have also been central to the political activism and struggle for recognition that is the heart of Redfern. The establishment, growth and survival of organisations such as the Aboriginal Housing Company, Aboriginal Medical Service, Aboriginal Legal Service, Black Theatre and Murawina, to name just a few, mark Redfern as a very significant place for Aboriginal people throughout Australia. Although the organisations that play such a crucial role in Redfern’s history are separate, discrete organisations, they are also very much part of the community. In documenting and illustrating their history, it becomes very apparent that these organisations are all interlinked: they are as much about *activities* as about formal organisations. For example, when looking at the development and growth of Murawina, the child care centre, it is important to view this as not only about an organisation, but about the activity of caring for children and families within and by the Redfern community. In this light, care for children was critical during the time when Aboriginal people – the parents and wider adult community – were very involved in the struggle for rights, justice and recognition. Similarly, the Aboriginal theatre company was not only an organisation: theatre and drama were essential vehicles for mobilising community support, for promoting and engaging the wider community in the ongoing work of political activism, and for developing and maintaining a consciousness about Aboriginal self esteem.

The area known as ‘The Block’ in Redfern is registered with the Australian National Estate in recognition of its status in the history and significance of this part of inner Sydney. Part of the Block was purchased on behalf of Aboriginal people by the Commonwealth Government in 1973, thus becoming one of the first pieces of land in urban Australia owned by Indigenous people.

The significance of Aboriginal peoples’ roles in the intertwined histories of Eveleigh and Redfern cannot be underestimated. From Gadigal walking tracks, trading routes, and hunting and fishing areas, to locations for Aboriginal activism and support for these peoples’

⁴³ See www.sydneymarchives.info/Gadigal-newtown?start=9; the web reference refers to the work of Lucy Taksa: 2003 ‘Machines and Ghosts: Politics, industrial heritage and the history of working life at the New South Wales Eveleigh Railway Workshops’, *Labour History*, No. 85, November, pp 65-88; Lucy Taksa 1999, Technology, Work, Gender and Citizenship at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops Precinct: An Historical Interpretation of Landscape, Identity and Mobilisation, *Labour History*, No. 76, May, , pp. 153-

justice and rights, Aboriginal peoples' connections to these areas form a major part in the story of Aboriginal Sydney. Aboriginal peoples' long associations with Eveleigh are retained in their memories and stories. People such as members of the Madden family, for example, recall their connections with the railways.⁴⁴

Aboriginal organisations remain active at Eveleigh. For example, North Eveleigh is the operational location of the successful socially inclusive urban renewal initiative – the Koori Job Ready Program. Since 2006, the Program has delivered more than 891 employment opportunities for local Indigenous persons in the construction industry and 106 graduates entering the hospitality industry. The long story of Indigenous connections to Eveleigh will be woven into future interpretation across the site, and Eveleigh remains a place of strong Indigenous presence.



Workers at the unveiling of an honour board at the Eveleigh Railway Yards in Redfern (photograph courtesy Noel Butlin Collection, Australian National University – hdl:1885/203)

⁴⁴ See Letter, 28 March 2008, from Allen Madden (then Cultural and Education Officer with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council), to Paul Irish, Consultant Archaeologist, regarding 'Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Assessment of a Portion of the North Eveleigh site, Redfern'. Madden stated 'The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council would like to see the Aboriginal history of the North Eveleigh site, which included a number of Aboriginal workers in the railyards complex, documented so that it can be used to interpret the site during any future redevelopment. This should include oral histories as well as historical research', attachment to Paul Irish, *Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Assessment – Two Portions of the North Eveleigh site (Part Lot 4 in DP862514) Redfern, NSW*, Report to the Redfern-Waterloo Authority, March 2008.



**METROPOLITAN LOCAL
ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL**

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28 March 2008

Paul Irish
Consultant Archaeologist
7 Mitchell St
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Dear Paul,

Re: Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Assessment of a portion of the North Eveleigh site, Redfern (Part of Lot 4 in DP862514)

I refer to our recent telephone conversations about the above site and your letter of 26th March discussing your preliminary assessment and proposed recommendations for the site. I have now briefly inspected the site myself and can make the following statements on behalf of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council supports your assessment that these two small parts of the North Eveleigh site do not have the potential to contain Aboriginal archaeological remains and do not require any further archaeological investigation.

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council would like to see the Aboriginal history of the North Eveleigh site, which included a number of Aboriginal workers in the railyards complex, documented so that it can be used to interpret the site during any future redevelopment. This should include oral histories as well as historical research. The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council would like to be involved in this research and would be an appropriate place for the research to commence as a number of members have family members who have associations with the railyards. The railyards played an important role in the development of the Redfern Aboriginal community and should be appropriately commemorated.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Allen Madden
Cultural & Education Officer