



Picture: Ben Searcy

Flinders creates a space for culture and Country

More than 20 years after the idea of a special place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students was first raised, Flinders University has unveiled its first dedicated cultural meeting place.

Based at the University's Bedford Park campus in southern Adelaide, Yungkurrintheni Inparrila is a place of well-being and healing, a place to grieve, and a space that brings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the wider community together to honour and acknowledge Country, cultural knowledge, and learning.

Yungkurrintheni means to 'impart knowledge communicate and inform' and Inparrila means 'meeting place' in Kurna.

Yungkurrintheni Inparrila holds a deep and heartfelt significance to the Flinders community, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff, as it provides a unique place that, unlike a building or

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an office, is directly connected to Country.

With a footprint of locations spanning Countries through South Australia and the Northern Territory – including Arrente, Larrakia, and Yolgnu in central Australia and the Top End – having a dedicated cultural place at the main campus is a sign of respect and provides connection for visiting staff and students from across Flinders' network of campuses.

Building on the principles of minimal disturbance and enhancing landscape, the

design of Yungkurrintheni Inparrila incorporates a shelter and a ceremonial firepit, encircled by a series of mesh decks placed across the site that draw inspiration from fallen gum leaves to form a central amphitheatre.

The decks provide access across the steep site for people of all abilities at the same time and allow sunlight, rain, and other elements to reach the earth below, enabling the uninterrupted re-vegetation of the site.

The Wardli – or shelter –

designed by Kurna artist James Tylor and Wiradjuri architectural designer Samantha Rich, is the centre piece, highlighted by the special inclusion of traditional possum skins, provided by Kurna Elder Uncle Lewis Yarlupurka O'Brien and Senior Kurna man Uncle Mickey Kumatpi Marrutya O'Brien from their personal collections.

Associate Professor Simone Tur, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) says it's impossible to overstate the importance of this new space for everyone in the Flinders community.

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The space is popular amongst the community, with many staff and students utilising the area for teaching purposes, meetings, and informal lunches. Lunchtime is busy, with many staff and students frequenting the area to take in the surroundings and enjoy the fresh air overlooking the coast.

Since its opening in May, Yungkurrintheni Inparrila has played host to a variety of University events, including a cultural campus tour held during Orientation Week, and celebrations held to honour and celebrate Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.