WORONORA VALLEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC.
ABN: 14 194 703 212 INC No: 9882362

Marelle Burnum Burnum
2 Tay Place
Woronora 2232
mbb.marelle@hotmail.com
on behalf of the
Woronora Valley Residents Association Inc.

1 September 2025

To Sutherland Shire Council and Arts and Libraries,

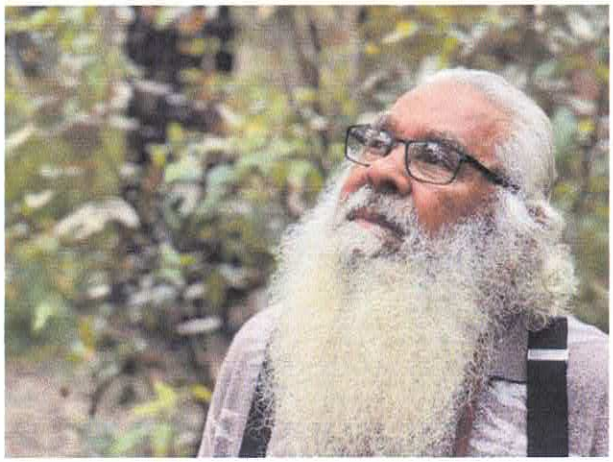
Dear E Ward Councillors, Arts and Libraries, Lachlan Pratt,

Proposal to Name the area of Park and Beach as
UNCLE MAX DULUMUNMUN HARRISON RESERVE

On behalf of the Woronora Valley Residents Association Inc., and myself I am honoured to submit this proposal to formally name what has been casually called Buchanan's Park and Beach area in Woronora as Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison Reserve.

Uncle Max (1936–2021) was a respected Aboriginal Elder, cultural teacher, author and community leader who was deeply connected to this land and its people. His lifelong commitment to Indigenous culture, environmental protection, education, and reconciliation has left a lasting legacy in the Woronora Valley and beyond.

This proposal details Uncle Max's many contributions, including his leadership in establishing the annual Sunset Cultural Ceremony held on Australia Day Eve, his advocacy against damaging developments like the Ridge at Menai, his environmental work with bush care groups that helped return native wildlife and his foundation of World Kangaroo Day which promotes sustainable Indigenous values.



Uncle Max's Community Connection and Contributions:

Cultural Leadership & Education

Uncle Max was a valued member of the Woronora Valley Residents Association Inc., regularly attending meetings and sharing Indigenous perspectives. He visited local schools, including Woronora Primary and lectured at Wollongong University, mentoring Indigenous programs and sharing cultural knowledge. Uncle Max conducted many walks and talks along the Woronora riverbank and adjacent bushland, educating adults, children and students in bush medicines and how to appreciate that nature speaks to us 'without voice'.

Cultural Events

Uncle Max founded the annual Sunset Cultural Ceremony held on the eve of Australia Day, a community event that continues to honour Indigenous heritage. This initiative on the bank of the Woronora River has been a wonderful community celebration that positively brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities together through ceremony and sharing culture. Uncle Max has also led whale watching and singing-up ceremonies in the Shire, as well as performing cultural marriages in Burnum Burnum Sanctuary and along the river.

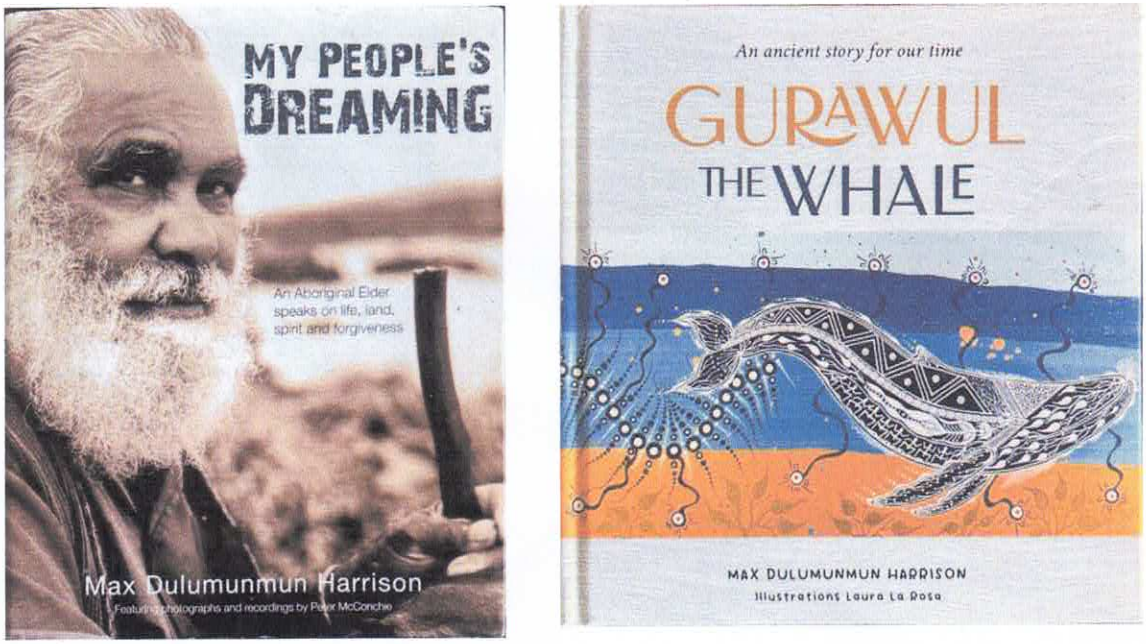
Australia Day Corrobboree on bank of the Woronora River

Author and Cultural Ambassador

Uncle Max's vision for sharing his culture and his deep cultural knowledge is evidenced through his two books: *My People's Dreaming* and *Gurawul the Whale*, which received a 2023 Whitley Award from the Royal Zoological Society of NSW for the best book on Cultural Knowledge and Zoology. These were gifted to Sutherland Library and to the Mayor.

Link to article in The Leader:

https://www.theleader.com.au/story/8320572/all-welcome-to-launch-of-book-which-tells-why-whale-is-so-important-to-first-nations-people/



Uncle Max's books

Environmental Advocacy
Uncle Max was a key figure opposing the Ridge development at Menai, leading community walks and helping protect bushland and endangered species. He worked with bush care groups and university students planting native species behind our local RSL Club, which has attracted bandicoots back to the area.

Kangaroo Declaration
Uncle Max inspired the declaration of World Kangaroo Day on 24 October 2021 to celebrate the harmony with which this iconic and unique creature lives with the land and to raise awareness of the cruelty evident in their slaughter for the meat, leather and the pet food industries. This work was done with the Gurindji, the First Nations men Uncle Max took through lore and ceremony and the charitable organisation he established: Back to Country www.backtocountry.org.au

Kangaroo Declaration Message Stick

Message Stick being presented to Hon. Mark Pearson MLA

Uncle Max holding culture at Australia Day Corrobboree on bank of the Woronora River

Uncle Max Duluminmun Harrison through his life and teachings has been an inspiring Elder and Loreman who has left a legacy of significant cultural sharing across the Woronora and wider communities. All who knew him and experienced his wisdom and deep connection to the land and the waters have shared in real steps together in our nations journey so there is Reconciliation for all with the land. Naming this reserve after Uncle Max would be a meaningful tribute and enduring reminder of his dedication to country, to culture and to the community. We respectfully request the Council's favourable consideration.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Marelle Burnum Burnum
Partner of Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison for 24 years
on behalf of the Woronora Valley Residents Association Inc.