

# Edith Cowan University City Campus Artworks

Reko Rennie, *Journey*



Apparatus

## Reko Rennie, *Journey*, 2026

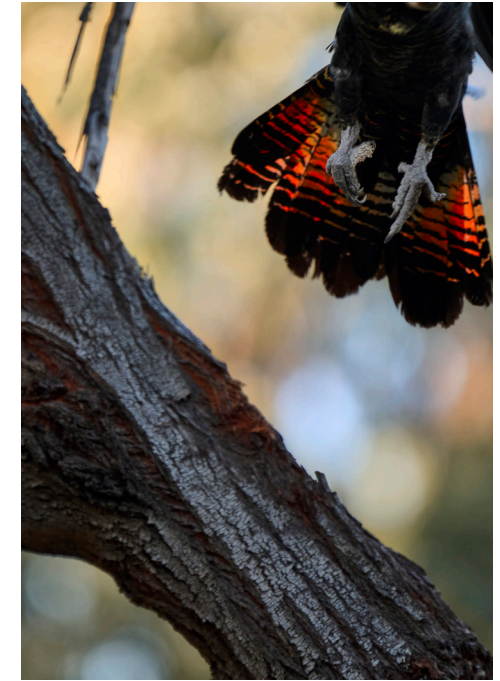


Reko Rennie is an interdisciplinary artist who explores his Aboriginal identity through contemporary painting, installation, sculpture and video. Reko's work provokes discussion surrounding Indigenous culture and identity in contemporary urban environments.

Rennie's artworks combine the iconography of his Kamilaroi heritage with bold contemporary visual language.

For *Journey*, Rennie brings his practice to Boorloo (Perth), creating a work that speaks to connection, place, and cultural continuity.

***"I am very proud of my identity. I am proud because, for so long our people were dispossessed and dislocated for declaring their identity, so it's very important to me to acknowledge who I am. And through my work, I have a voice. Art can be a very powerful tool to raise awareness or make a statement or present an idea."***



Developed for Edith Cowan University's City Campus, this major public artwork reflects the way in which the natural elements of the site are deeply intertwined with the Noongar narratives integral to belonging to this location.

*Journey* takes the form of two monumental feathers. Rising 5 and 4 metres high, the twin sculptures take the form of falling feathers - drawn from the Karak (Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo) and Ngoolark (Carnaby's Cockatoo). Their shafts pierce the surface of the ever-present wetland, Gooloogoolup.

The Karak (Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, *Calyptorhynchus banksii naso*) and Ngoolark (Carnaby's White-tailed Black Cockatoo, *Zanda latirostris*), are iconic endangered species endemic to Western Australia's South West and hold profound cultural, spiritual, and ecological importance for Noongar people.

They are essential to the local environment, helping maintain the health of ecosystems by dispersing seeds from native trees.

For some Noongar groups, these birds serve as a totem, representing family, identity, and a connection to country, and are integral to culture, signifying responsibilities to care for the land and its creatures.

Both the Karak and Ngoolark are listed as vulnerable due to habitat loss and climate change. Their decline reflects broader ecological issues impacting Noongar country, galvanising efforts to protect native landscapes.

Rennie's concept is the culmination of meeting points, the feathers of the Karak and Ngoolark coming together, and the significance of the site with contemporary society, embodying a powerful connection between nature and culture.

It acts as both a celebration of cultural pride and resilience for Noongar people and all First Nations people across this country, and as a plea for the protection of native land through ecological and cultural sustainability for our future generations.

## Background

*Journey* by Reko Rennie, is a landmark sculptural commission at Edith Cowan University's City Campus, developed as part of the broader public art program, a major initiative embedded within the design of the new city campus.

Featured alongside Rennie's work as part of the public art program, is *Kep Koornly Djenna Bidi (Water Moving Walking Trail)*, an integrated groundplane artwork by Bibbulmun artist Lea Taylor that traces the movement of water and story across Country.

The program was shaped through collaboration between ECU, Apparatus, Whadjuk Noongar Elders, and the artists ensuring that the artworks responded meaningfully to Country, culture, and the site's history through shared knowledge and cultural guidance.



## Materiality

The *Journey* artwork is integrated within the landscape of Karak Walk, emerging from the ground plane as a series of vertical sculptural forms set within planted zones. The material expression is bold yet highly resolved, using scale, colour, and reflectivity to create contrast while maintaining a cohesive relationship to the surrounding public realm.

The design is realised through the fabrication of large-scale feather forms, constructed from laser-cut aluminium with an internal steel structure. Painted in vivid gradients and detailed with recessed patterning and integrated lighting, the surfaces reference the distinctive markings of the Karak and Ngoolark.

At their base, mirror-polished cast aluminium ripple elements are embedded within the landscape, evoking water and reflecting light, movement, and the surrounding environment.

## Boola Waanginy

Boola Waanginy (Many Talking) was a collaborative, Elder-led engagement and design process that underpinned the development of the ECU City public artworks. It brought together Whadjuk Elders, First Nations artists Lea Taylor (Bibbulmun), Reko Rennie (Kamilaroi), ECU, Apparatus, and the broader design team within a cultural framework built on respect, reciprocity, and shared knowledge.

Central to this process was the role of Elders Dr Roma Winmar, Farley Garlett, and Dr Barb Bynder as cultural advisors, sharing knowledge to guide the development of concepts and ensure cultural integrity. This ongoing dialogue enabled artists to translate stories and connections to Country into contemporary forms in a way that was authentic, respectful, and meaningful.

The process unfolded through a series of structured touchpoints—from early engagement and yarning sessions, through concept development and review, to completion and cultural endorsement. Ensuring cultural material was managed in accordance with Noongar protocols supported both the protection of knowledge and the creation of enduring public artworks.

Boola Waanginy was a methodology and an investment in self-determination, cultural continuity, and the capacity of First Nations artists. The resulting artworks created opportunities for people to engage with Noongar culture as part of everyday life within the city.



## Cultural Responsibility

The Whadjuk Noongar Elders and cultural advisors were engaged to maintain cultural integrity and support the sharing of knowledge in the development of cultural interpretation, translation, and representation of Whadjuk Noongar culture and heritage across the ECU City Public Art Program.

Whadjuk Noongar cultural philosophies are embedded throughout the campus and within the public art program, contributing to place-making and strengthening a meaningful sense of place within ECU City. Throughout the delivery of the project, engagement with Elders and cultural advisors has included contributions to project development, the sharing of cultural katidjin (knowledge), and the review of artwork concepts and outcomes.

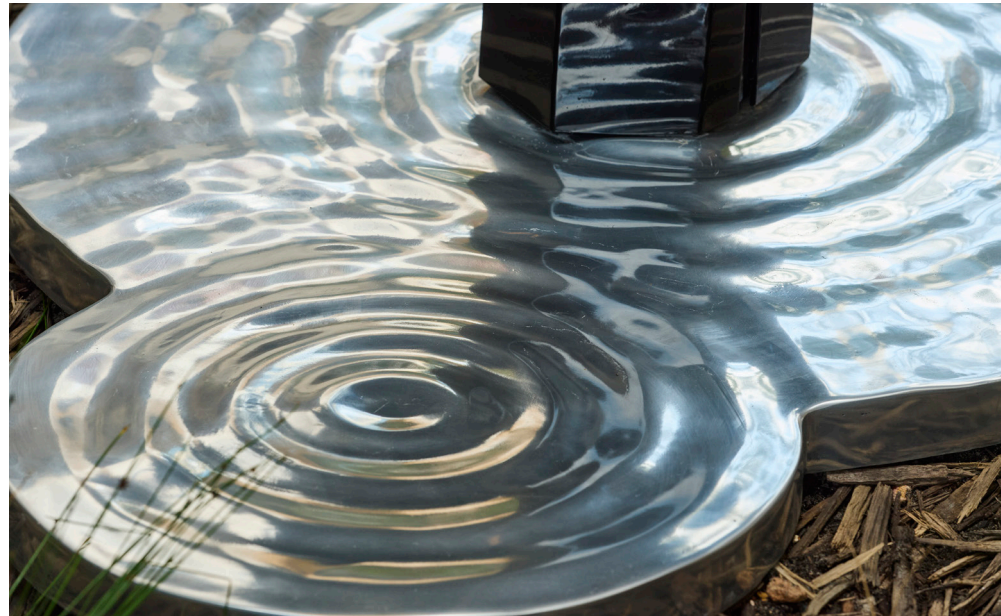
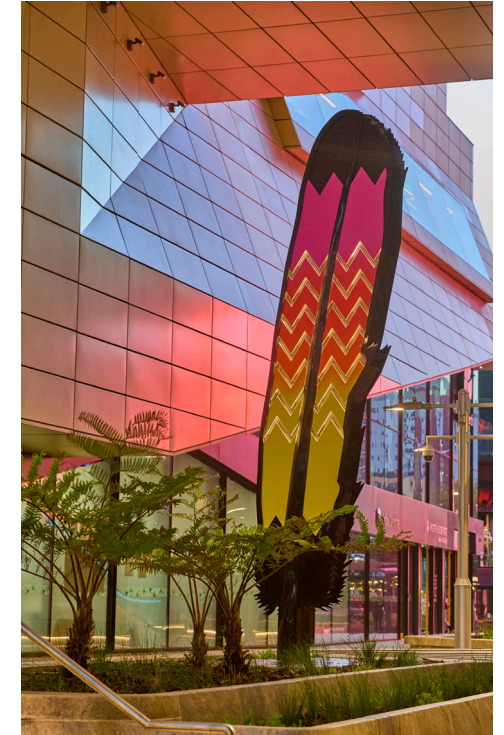
## Site Integration

Reko Rennie's *Journey* is embedded within the landscape of Karak Walk.

Positioned within key zones along the walkway, the artwork establishes a visual dialogue with the surrounding architecture and public realm.

Across the site, the sculptural elements reinforce key moments of pause and transition rather than being confined to a single focal point. This placement creates a rhythm along the pedestrian route, establishing a cohesive visual language with the new campus buildings.

As visitors move through the space, the artwork is experienced in motion, light, reflection, and shifting perspectives animate the surfaces, transforming the walkway into an evolving spatial and cultural journey.



## Outcomes

Proudly situated at ECU City Campus, *Journey* stands as a powerful marker of place and identity - a bold signal of Edith Cowan University's values.

*Journey* brings these threads together - past and present, culture and landscape - forming a meeting point between First Nations knowledge and contemporary life. It is both a tribute to cultural pride and resilience, and a call to reflect on our shared responsibility to care for land and future generations.

As Rennie reflects, the work stands "**as a marker of place and time - a celebration of First Nations art and more importantly education**" inviting all who encounter it to pause, reflect, and act.

**Project**

Edith Cowan University  
City Campus

**Artwork**

Journey

**Client**

Edith Cowan University

**Artist**

Reko Rennie

**Artist Management**

David Hagger

**Collaborators**

- Dr Roma Winmar AM
- Farley Garlett
- Dr Barbara Bynder
- Aboriginal Productions Promotion
- Scape-ism
- UAP
- Multiplex
- Lyons Architecture
- Aspect Studios

**Stakeholders**

- Development WA

**Timeframe**

2023-2026

**Services**

- Public Art Strategy
- Public Art Plan
- Cultural Context
- Boola Waanginy (Many Talking) Program
- Public Art Coordination
- Photographic + Video Documentation

**Photography**

- Frances Andrijich
- Rachel See, UAP
- Rift Photography



**Apparatus**

**ECU**  
EDITH COWAN  
UNIVERSITY



 **DevelopmentWA**

**UAP**

ASPECT Studios  
**MULTIPLEX**  
**LYONS**