Aboriginal Child & Elder

The Aboriginal people of the area are the Wardandi and Bibbulmun/Piblemen language or dialectical groups. Both had a well-established annual nomadic cycle which brought them to the fertile flood plains at Wonnerup, to the beach at Busselton and along the shores of Geographe Bay to the west coast beyond Cape Naturaliste. Following the seasons, hunting and collecting food to supply their needs, the Aboriginal people remained in tune with the natural environment and its rhythms until the settlement of Busselton. Prior to that, the visits of seafarers, whalers and surveyors had been observed but not disrupted to an ancient way of life.

The young Aboriginal child in the sculpture is depicted as looking at a stack of sawn timber, a symbol of change as the forests were cut to supply a global demand for hard wood. An Elder stands nearby, perhaps caught between the traditional world and the world of work and settlement that the pioneers brought with them.

Relationships between the white settlers and the Noongar people varied, with the botanist Georgiana Molloy recording the help of Aboriginal people, particularly with her interest in native flora. A local species, Boronia molloyiae is named for her.

Other stories tell of spearings and arguments, often starting with a cultural divide over the concept of property rights, the ownership of food, and boundaries.

Consultation with the local Elders by the artist Greg James with guidance from artist Sandra Hill will be initiated with local Aboriginal people once the sculpture is commissioned.

Tax deductible donations can be deposited at the City of Busselton front counter for the “Busselton Settlement Appeal”