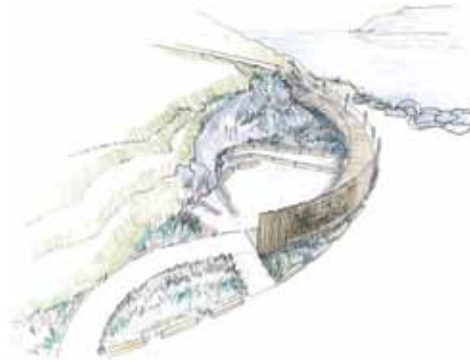


# Güidany Miirlarl Education Space



Güidany Miirlarl is an important place for the Gumbaynggirr Nation at Muttonbird Island on the Coffs Coast, and the site for a new interpretive timber gateway structure and education space.

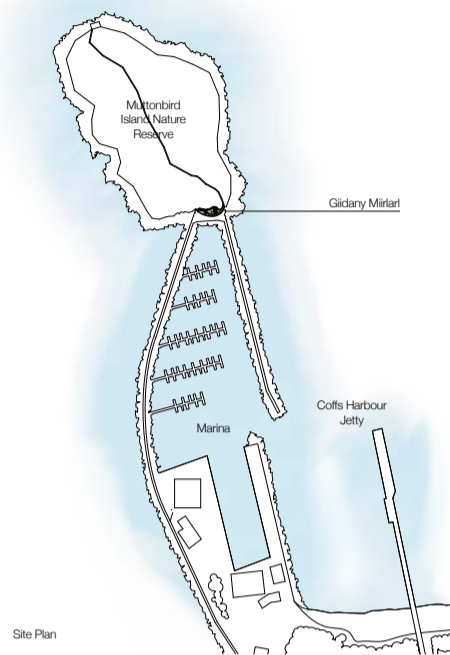
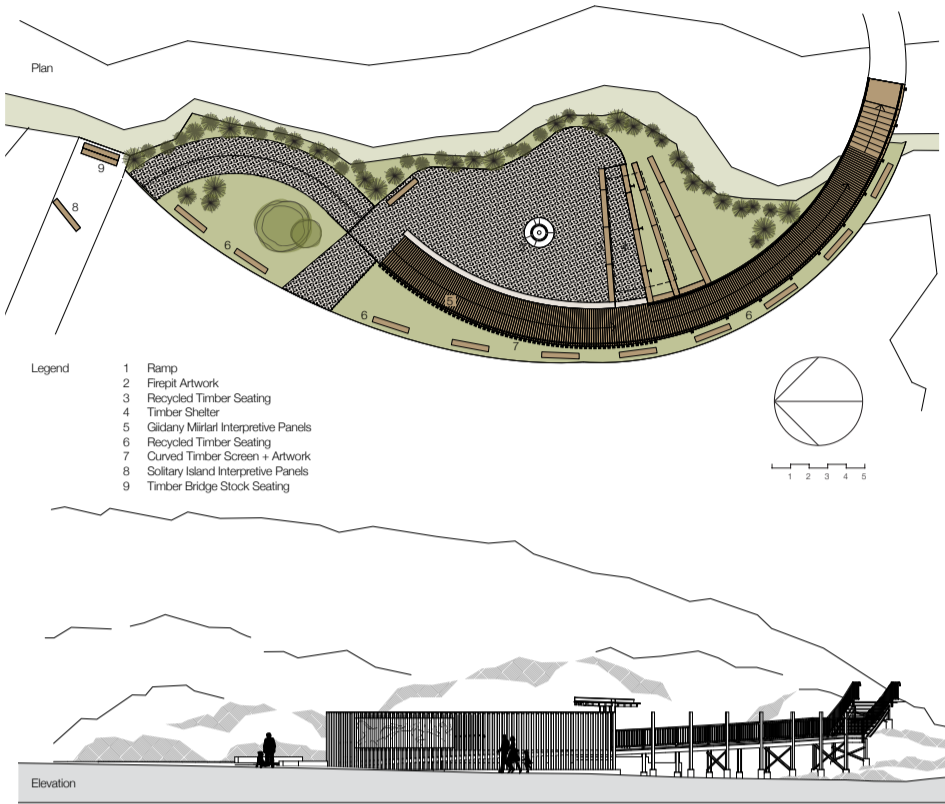
The island was joined to the mainland by the creation of the harbour breakwall in 1924. This historic act endangered the fragile ecology and altered the relationship between the island and the indigenous nation.

Now known by its Gumbaynggirr name, Güidany Miirlarl was officially opened by local Elders on 31 March 2011. Designed by Fisher Design + Architecture & Mackenzie Pronk Architects in association, the structure incorporates an amphitheatre which is enveloped by a curved timber entry ramp giving access up onto the island, and a 3m high timber screen which provides a canvas for a large incised artwork. A second artwork is set into the centre of the amphitheatre welcoming visitors to the Gumbaynggirr Nation.

Timber was chosen as the main building material for its natural textural qualities, the ability to be worked and inscribed with the chosen artwork, and its robust character in this highly exposed marine location. The naturally weathering texture and tone of the timber allows the strong robust structure to sit sympathetically at the base of the island.

A variety of timber types and species were used to suit each element of the design, including locally harvested and naturally seasoned Bloodwood columns - rough sawn and left to intentionally grey off, dressed mixed hardwood ramp planks, large locally sourced recycled bridge timbers, and an old Ironbark timber bridge head stock which was located as an intriguing sculptural seating element at the head of the entry path onto the island.

Güidany Miirlarl is a step towards healing the scars of connection to the mainland, and an example of a collaborative design between artists and architects and an enlightened and willing client. Commissioned by Arts Mid North Coast, National Parks & Wildlife, and Coffs Harbour City Council, the robust and elegant structure provides a dynamic public space that encourages an understanding of the cultural and environmental history of the site, and provides a place for social interaction, story telling, learning and rest.



**Entrant Name**  
Fisher Design + Architecture  
in association with  
Mackenzie Pronk Architects

**Award Category**  
- Non Residential Architecture  
- Timbmesh Timber Award

**Project Title**  
Güidany Miirlarl Education Space

**Client**  
National Parks & Wildlife,  
Coffs Harbour City Council  
& Arts Mid North Coast

**Architect**  
Fisher Design + Architecture  
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