

Gleaning the Soils of Silver City —Cultural Revival and Colonial Resistance in a Community Garden

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Gleaning the Soils of Silver City is a book project that seeks to document the experimental anti-colonial, multispecies, and material reclamation of land and history that has been taking place at the Armidale Aboriginal Community Garden since 2015.

The Armidale Aboriginal Community Garden opened in March 2015 as a collaborative initiative between Anaiwan Elder Uncle Steve Widders, Kate Wright, and a committee of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members and organisational representatives. Since this time, the garden has been running as an activist platform for anticolonial activism and cultural revival, as well as an experimental pedagogical and public environmental humanities research site that promotes alternatives to neoliberal, colonial, and anthropocentric ways of thinking and living.

The Armidale Aboriginal Community Garden is sited within the boundary of land that was once known as ‘Silver City,’ an Aboriginal Reserve located on the town rubbish dump that was home to over one hundred dispossessed people in the mid-twentieth century (from approximately 1954 – 1970).

The significance of this book lies in the way it approaches research as an act of invention, as well as one of discovery, by using the generative soils of a growing community garden to make way for an emerging archive of previously suppressed elements of the past. Curating material that has been creatively and collaboratively produced by Aboriginal peoples and their human and nonhuman allies over a four-year period, *Gleaning the Soils of Silver City* aims to:

- 1) Counter hegemonic histories of nationhood and place making that silence the experience of First Nations people across the Australian continent through a deeply collaborative research and writing process that Indigenises and decolonises methodologies, and foregrounds the voices of Anaiwan, Dunghutti, Gumbaynggirr, and Gamilaroi people.
- 2) Produce an innovative, creative and lively monograph that translates the multispecies hybrid research methods employed in the community garden, and the entwining of more-than-human meaning, affect, and voice, into a scholarly text.
- 3) Provide a prototype for anti-colonial public environmental humanities research that demonstrates the ways alliances with non-academic publics and the more-than-human world can form counter-colonial networks of resistance, with the goal of cultivating activist research methods that can influence political, social, and cultural agendas.