

Meeting Place – Together We Grow

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Artist Statement

This painting tells a story of connection, a meeting place of two worlds that walk together with shared values, purpose, and respect. It is grounded in my culture as a proud trawlwoolway man from North East Tasmania, with deep ancestral ties to the plangermaireener people; they held strong trading links with the leterrermairreener clan, the original custodians of the lower and northeast regions surrounding the River Tamar (kanamaluka). The site of Timberlink's operations at Bell Bay sits on this important waterway, a place where Country continues to support industry, culture, and community. This painting reflects that relationship and honours the ongoing connection to land and water.

At the heart of this work is a contemporary depiction of the River Tamar, an estuary where saltwater and freshwater meet. Estuaries hold deep cultural significance for our people. They are rich, life-giving spaces that provided our ancestors with essential resources such as pigface, shellfish, stone tools, fish, and bird life. These areas were also important meeting places. The multicoloured earthy tones scattered throughout the waterways symbolise our ancestors travelling across Country to gather along the riverbanks of the Tamar. These journeys were made to exchange knowledge, perform ceremony, and strengthen kinship. In many ways, Timberlink continues this practice through its own culture of collaboration, dialogue, and community connection. Just as clans would meet at the river, Timberlink brings together people, ideas, and partnerships to build a stronger future.

Running along the riverbanks are fine green, white, and ochre dots that represent cultural resources and knowledge embedded in the land. These markings also mirror shell middens left by generations of ancestors, signifying long-term connection, use, and care of Country. Their placement along the edges of the river connects them to both the past and the flow of the future.

The vibrant blue tones throughout the painting reflect the dynamic nature of the river, where freshwater from inland meets the saltwater of the Bass Strait. These blue tones also speak to Timberlink as a company, representing diversity, depth, and strength. The merging of waters mirrors the merging of values: Timberlink's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and community sits alongside the cultural principles of care for Country and living in balance with the environment.

At the top of the painting, the river opens out into the Bass Strait, where the water meets the ocean. This marks the mouth of the River Tamar and shows the interconnectedness between inland Country and saltwater Country. The veining of the river that runs through the painting reflects the way these waterways acted as highways for our ancestors. They provided pathways for movement, trade, and cultural exchange. Those same flowing lines now symbolise Timberlink's reach, vision, and continued growth. As their operations expand, they remain deeply rooted in their values and responsibility to land, people, and future generations.

One of the most sacred and powerful elements of this painting is the woven face of an elder, or tribal warrior, that appears subtly along the top right side of the river. This spirit figure represents the ongoing presence of our ancestors. The spirit watches over the land and water, and looks down on Timberlink, guiding them and offering protection. It is a quiet but powerful reminder that Country is alive, and that our stories and spirits remain deeply embedded in the places we walk and work.

The two central circular patterns within the water represent the two main clans who occupied and cared for the River Tamar region. At the same time, these forms speak to Timberlink's own values and how they align with our traditional ways. Though times have changed, the intention remains the same: to take only what is needed, to give back more than you take, and to walk lightly and respectfully on the land. Timberlink's focus on plantation-grown timber, renewable materials, and long-term sustainability shows their commitment to this way of thinking.

On the left side of the piece, the larger ochre-toned circular symbol surrounded by three smaller circles represents a number of things. It speaks to regeneration, growth, and the interconnection between land, family, and future. This motif also represents Timberlink's Home Safe program and their priority to ensure every worker returns home safely to their loved ones. The ochre tones reflect the colours of our ancestors, while the blue and grey tones signify Timberlink's present-day story. This visual blending once again shows the harmony of the two worlds working together with respect and shared purpose.

The circular motif on the right of the painting marks the location of Timberlink in Bell Bay. This is a direct visual reference to place. The winding, rooted lines extending from this point reflect their innovation, reach, and commitment to building a strong, sustainable future. These lines, grounded in Country, show how their story is deeply connected to the land and to community.

This piece is a celebration of shared values, strength, and respect. It reflects Timberlink's commitment to honouring culture, protecting the environment, and creating a future where growth and responsibility go hand in hand. It is a reminder that when we walk together, listen deeply, and respect one another's story, we all grow stronger.