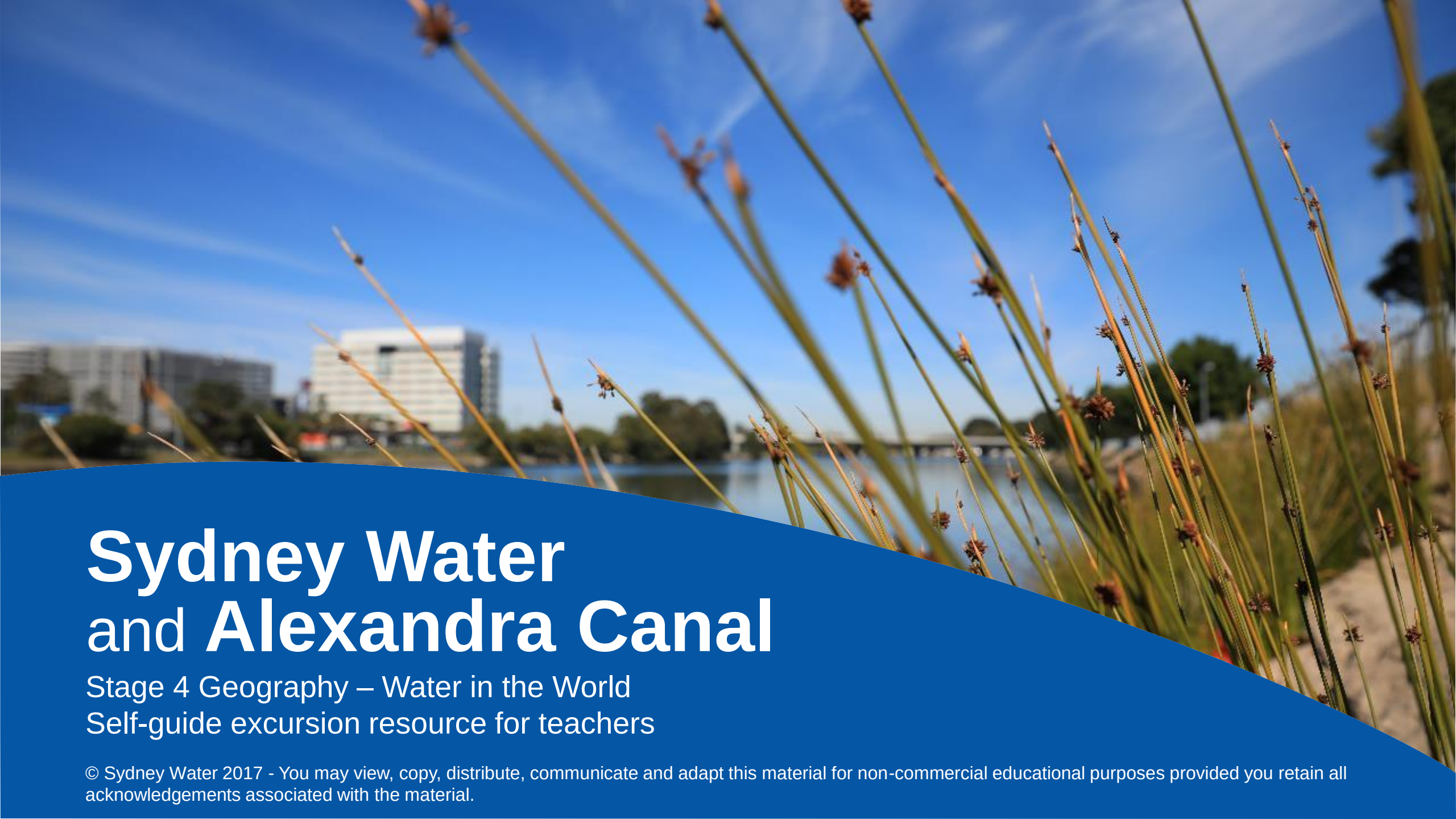




Sydney Water and Alexandra Canal

Stage 4 Geography – Water in the World
Self-guide excursion resource for teachers

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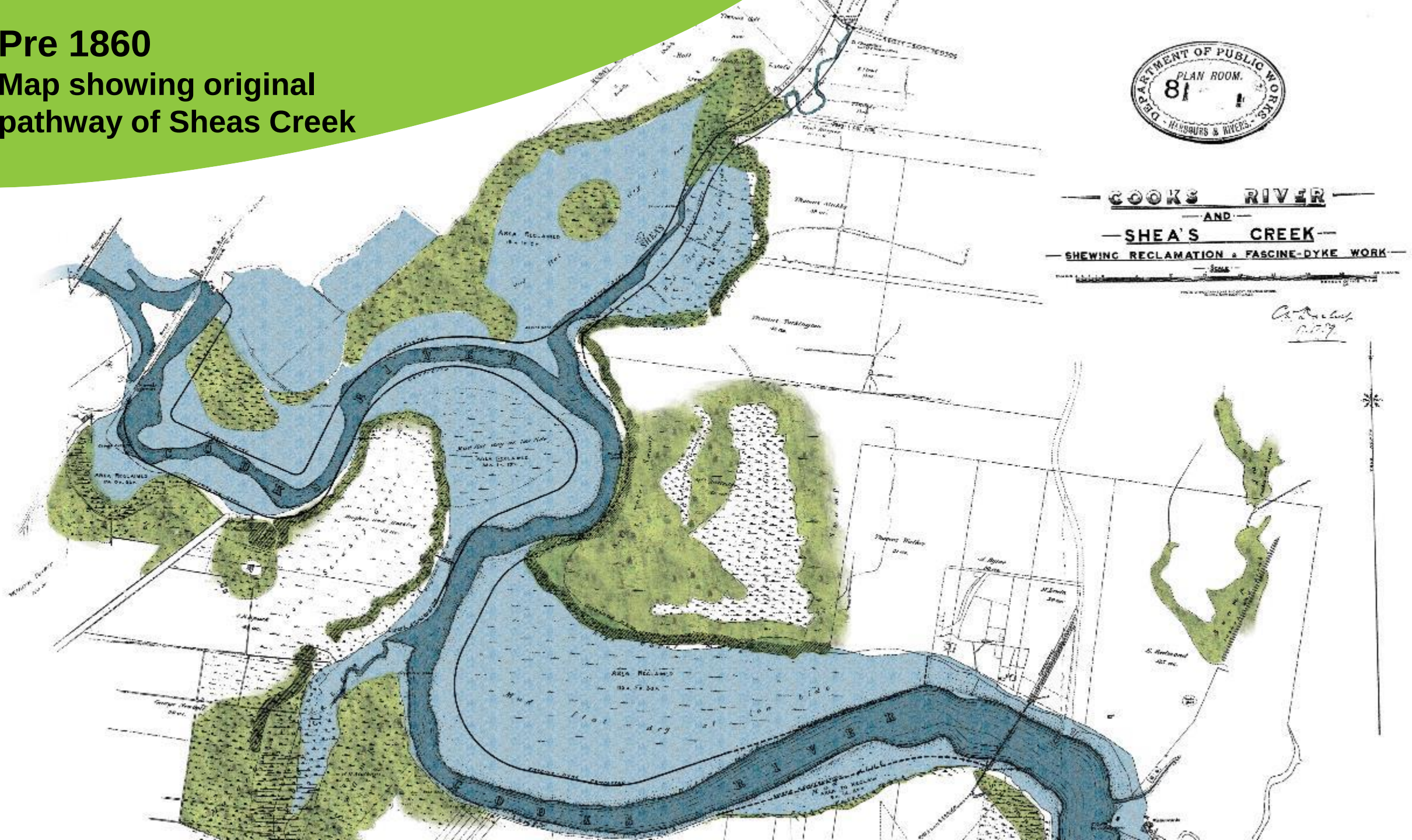
Alexandra Canal is an artificial waterway that follows the course of Sheas Creek. It starts in Surry Hills from underground springs and flows in a southerly direction to Botany Bay via the Cooks River.

The value people have had for Alexandra Canal has changed over time. It has been a ...

- source of food and resources for Aboriginal people
- source of water for colonial food production and manufacturing
- transport route for trade
- dumping place for industrial waste
- a stormwater drain
- heritage listed asset
- recreational space



Map showing original pathway of Sheas Creek



Natural creek

source of food and resources for Aboriginal people

Sydney
WATER



During the canal construction 7,000 year old Dugong bones with cut marks were discovered. This discovery told us a lot about the local climate, the plants and animals in the area and the lifestyle of the original inhabitants.

Before the arrival of Europeans this waterway was a natural tidal creek. It was surrounded by Swamp Mahogany and Casuarinas in the upper creek and Mangroves and Saltmarsh closer to the Cooks River.

Sheas Creek

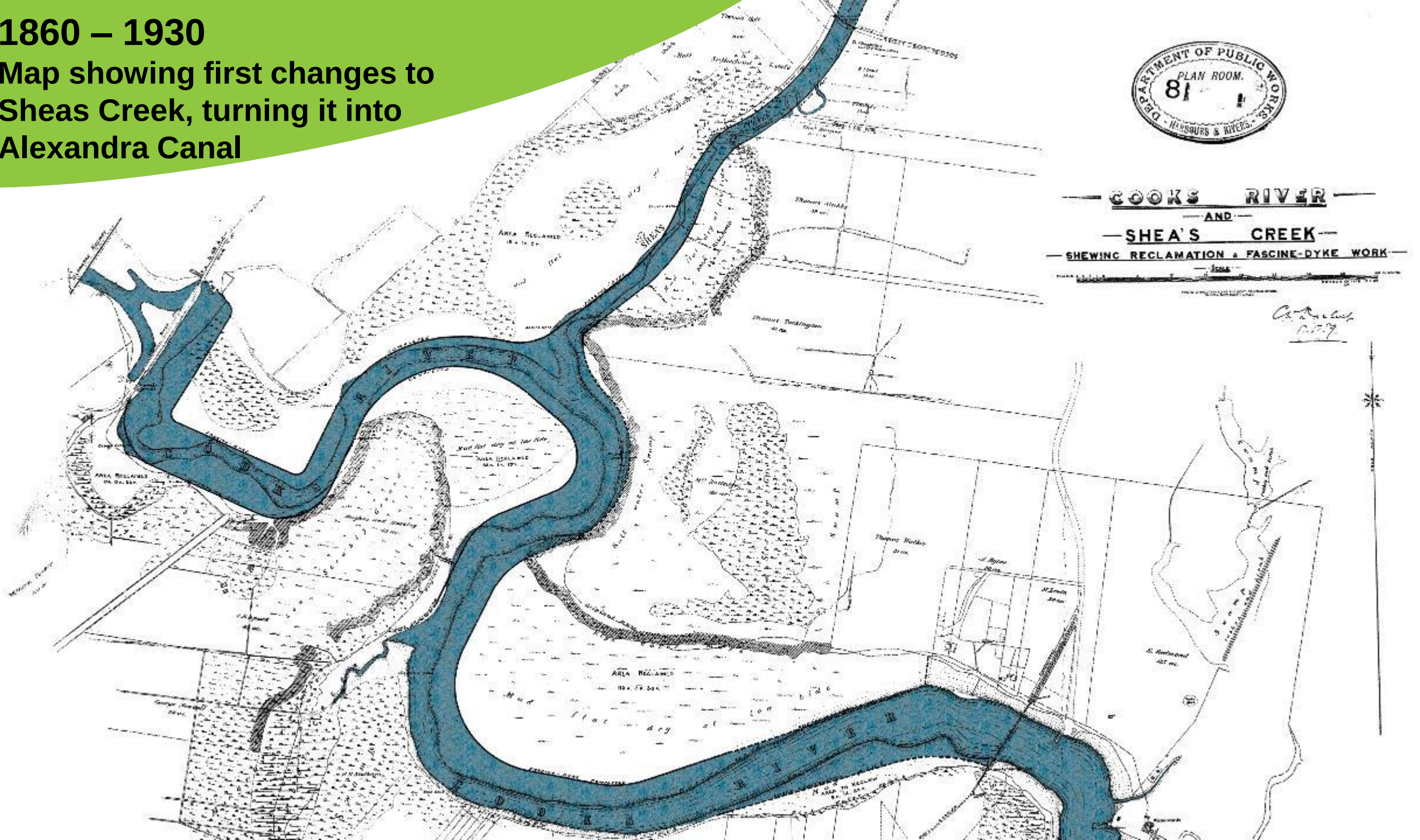
source of water for colonial food production
and manufacturing

Sydney
WATER



- Sheas Creek was named after Captain John Shea. He arrived with the First Fleet as captain of the ship Scarborough.
- The first use of the creek was as a water supply for Chinese market gardens.
- In 1848 the Slaughterhouse Act forced all polluting industry to move out of the city.

Map showing first changes to Sheas Creek, turning it into Alexandra Canal



Alexandra Canal

transport route for trade and dumping place
for industrial waste

Sydney
WATER



Industrial activities included brickworks, tanneries, abattoirs, lime kilns, chemical manufacturing and wool stores

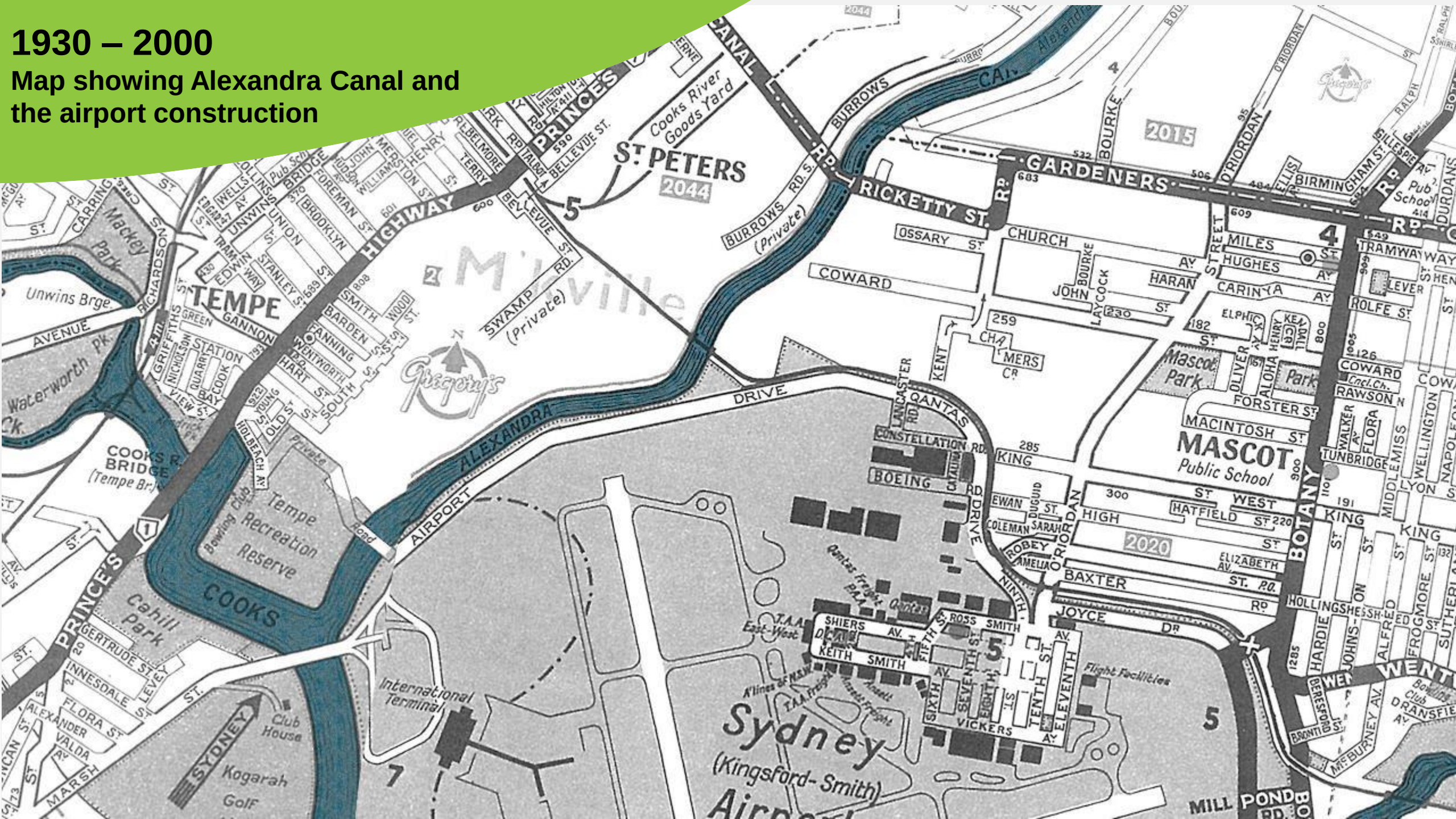


The development of Alexandra Canal was inspired by the industrial canals of Birmingham UK. The TV show Peaky Blinders has recreated the industrial canal use in Birmingham

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwXfVGjSz-4>

1930 – 2000

Map showing Alexandra Canal and
the airport construction



Alexandra Canal

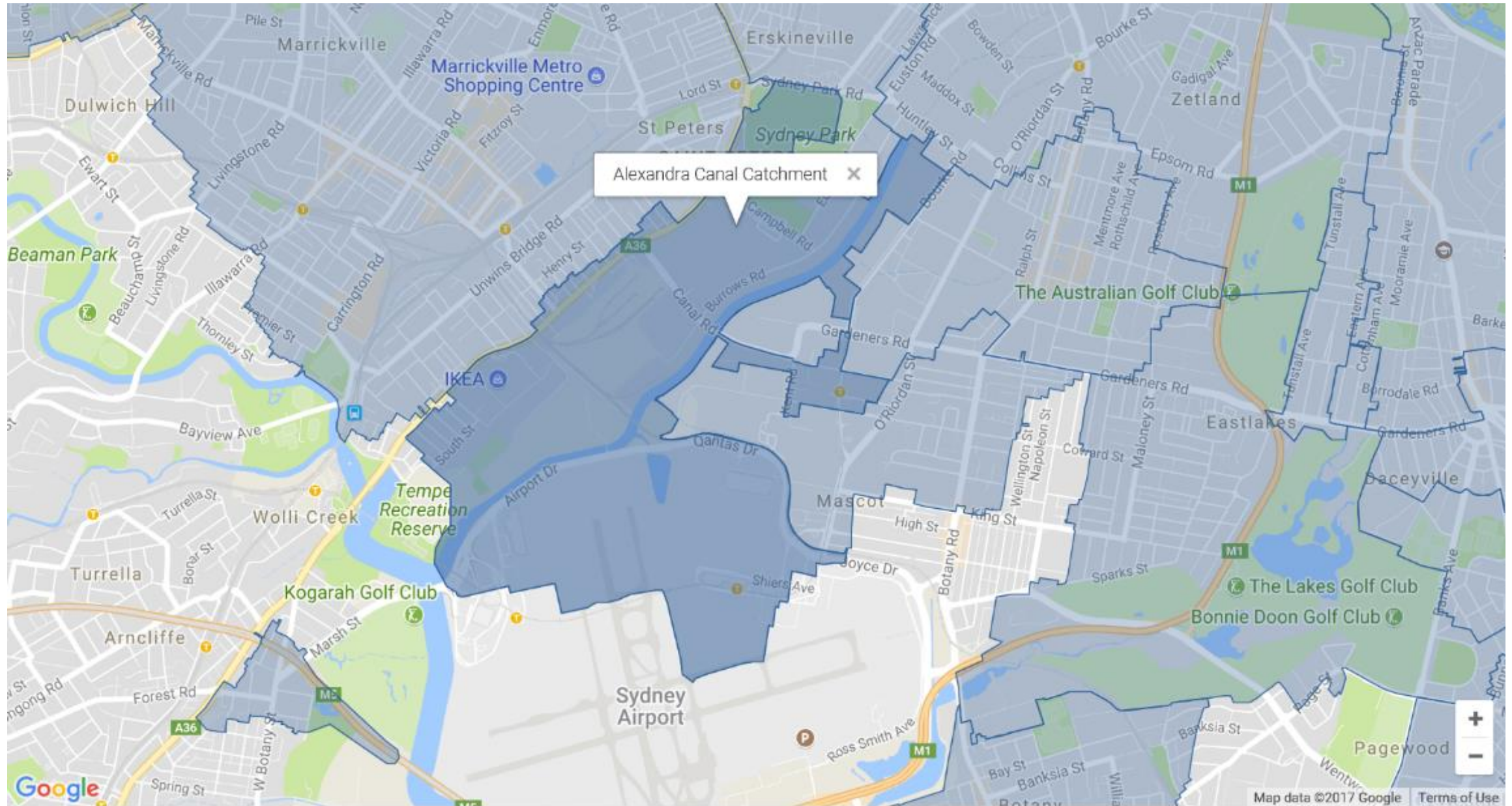
A stormwater drain and urban decay

Sydney
WATER



This is still an industrial area but the canal is no longer in use for transport, so it has begun to decay. Today, it is an outlet for the stormwater from the surrounding area.

Stormwater catchment area



Investigating the site

Heritage

A Conservation Management Plan was created to report on the value of this place as evidence of our industrial past



Environment

Major erosion along the side of the canal had reduced public enjoyment of the site



We have used 3D modelling to inspect areas we cannot reach in person. The orange section in the aerial image below can be seen in 3D. Click on image.



2000 – today
Satellite image showing
Alexandra Canal today



Naturalisation



To fix the canal we have build a new wall. It is made of sandstone with gaps in it. These gaps are spaces for plant and animal habitat. We also worked with local council and community groups to create a space for recreation. We also tried to keep some of the previous features of the landscape such as the old Moreton Bay fig.



To see the finished project and hear what our community thought about it, watch this video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvsuQLdtu5Y>

Your safety is important

All waterways in Sydney are stormwater drains. Moving run off from high points to low points in the catchment.

Stormwater drains can be open channels or underground tunnels.

Some naturalised stormwater drains are designed to look like a natural creek.

It's important that you don't go into drains - even during fine weather.

Stormwater drains can be very dangerous places.

- stormwater can contain pollution like broken glass, chemicals, disease causing bacteria and litter
- water in drains can rise quickly and unexpectedly, even when it's not raining in the local area
- You can be swept away by water in a stormwater drain. Even shallow water can be very powerful and could knock you over



Sydney **WATER**

