

Artefacts living on in water

By **MATT CARR**

HUNDREDS of indigenous artefacts were returned to Tomago soil at the heart of a \$140 million development yesterday.

Worimi elders attended a smoking ceremony at WesTrac's Tomago Road development, which is due for completion mid-year.

A number of artefacts discovered in a high sand dune at the edge of the wetlands were reburied at the centre of the new building.

Worimi elder John Ridgeway said returning the tools to the land was an important gesture for the land's traditional owners.

"A lot of these artefacts were used for [our ancestors'] meals, to cut meat, and they used these stones for axeheads," Mr Ridgeway said.

"This ceremony meant a lot to us."

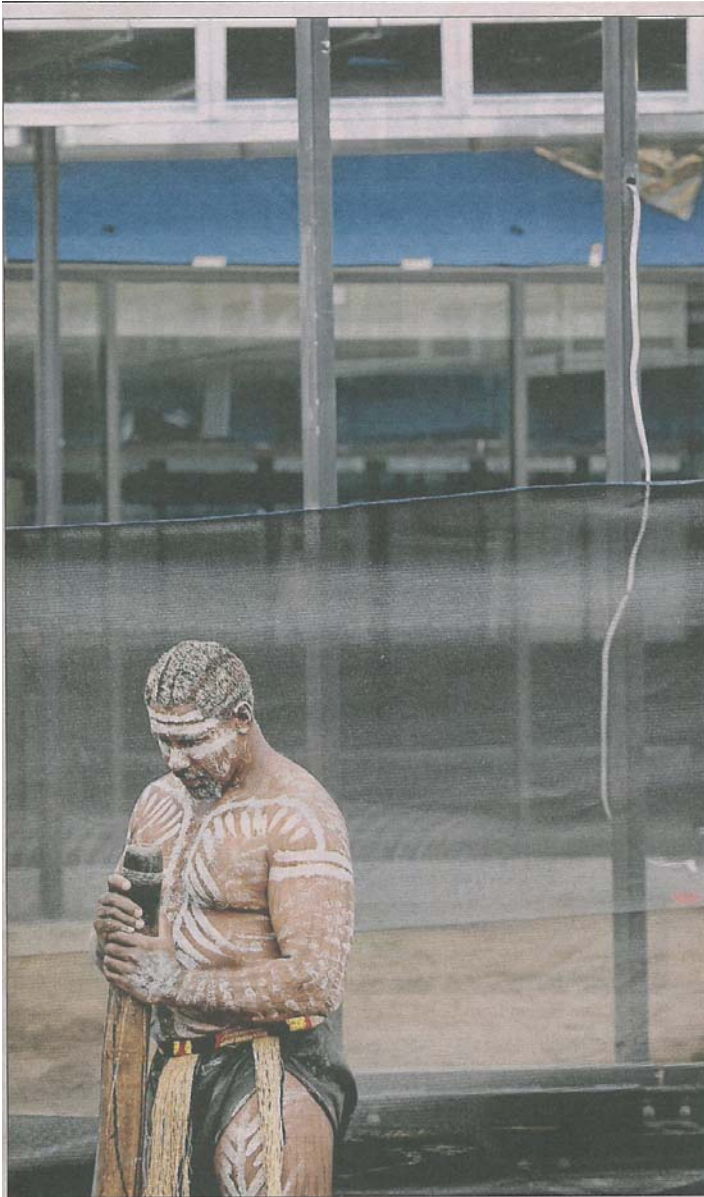
The completed development will include an atrium garden above the relics in honour of the traditional landholders.

That area was christened Gurrang-Bathu or "living water" during the ceremony yesterday.

Several pieces will also remain on display in the area to acknowledge the Worimi's history in the area.

WesTrac's Darren Tasker said the smoking ceremony was a sign of respect.

"We're planning to be here for a long time and you don't do that without working in with the community," Mr Tasker said.



CEREMONY: Aaron Taylor of Karuah, above, an artefact, left, and Leigh Ridgeway, right.
— Pictures by Dean Osland

