ARCHAEOLOGY NEAR ME:

Geographically exploring grey-literature report collections

**Nicholas Pitt, PhD candidate, University of New South Wales, Sydney**
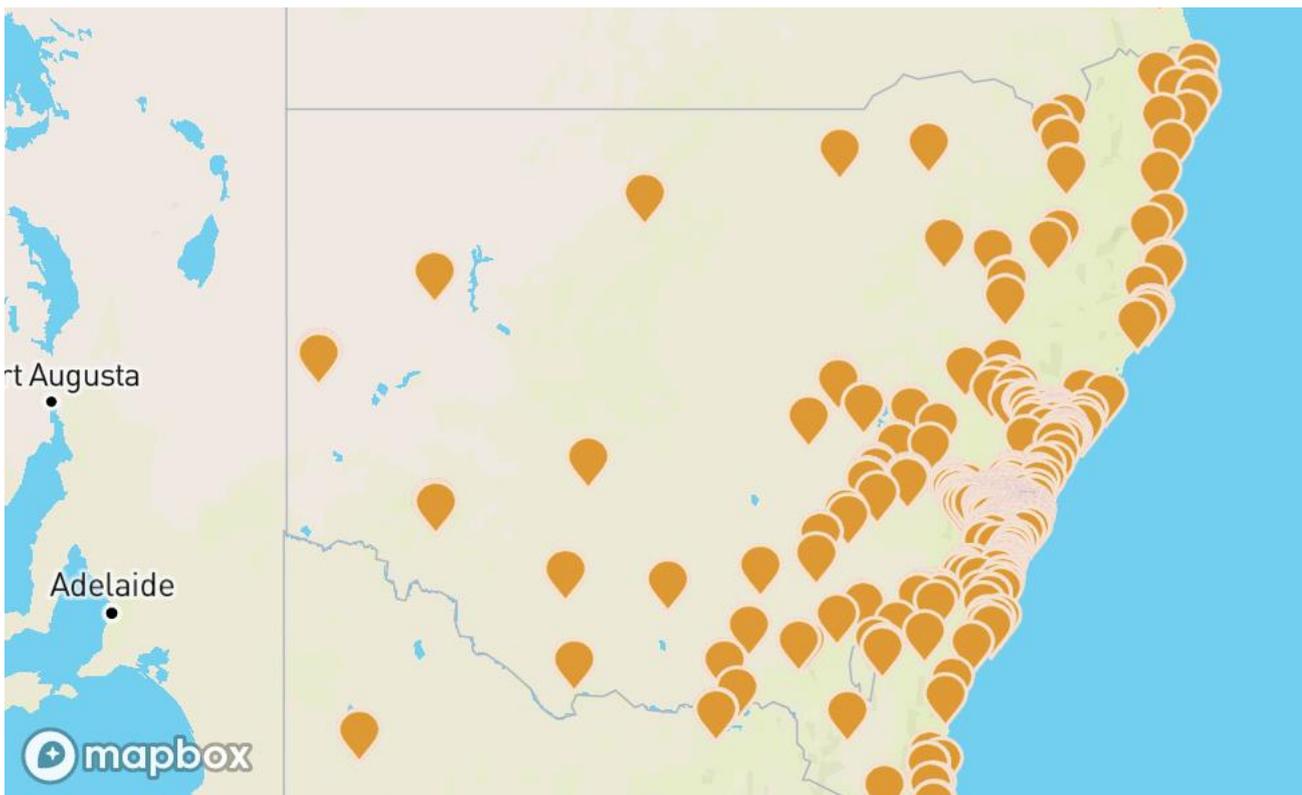
Over the past fifty years, the development of heritage regulations in many jurisdictions has created large quantities of compliance-driven reporting by archaeologists and other heritage professionals. This grey literature typically is hard for even specialists to explore. The geographical location of previous studies can remain unknown, particularly in areas without publicly accessible site registers.

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Archaeology Near Me (ANM) represents a novel way to directly map previous heritage and archaeological reports from New South Wales, Australia. Python scripts are used to extract address and site information from report metadata. Various public sources are then used to geolocate these addresses. The located sites are then presented on a web-based map interface (http://archaeology-near-me.com/). On 3 September 2020, it included 5212 heritage reports from the main government regulator, and 3865 'archaeology reports' (broadly defined) from a variety of sources.
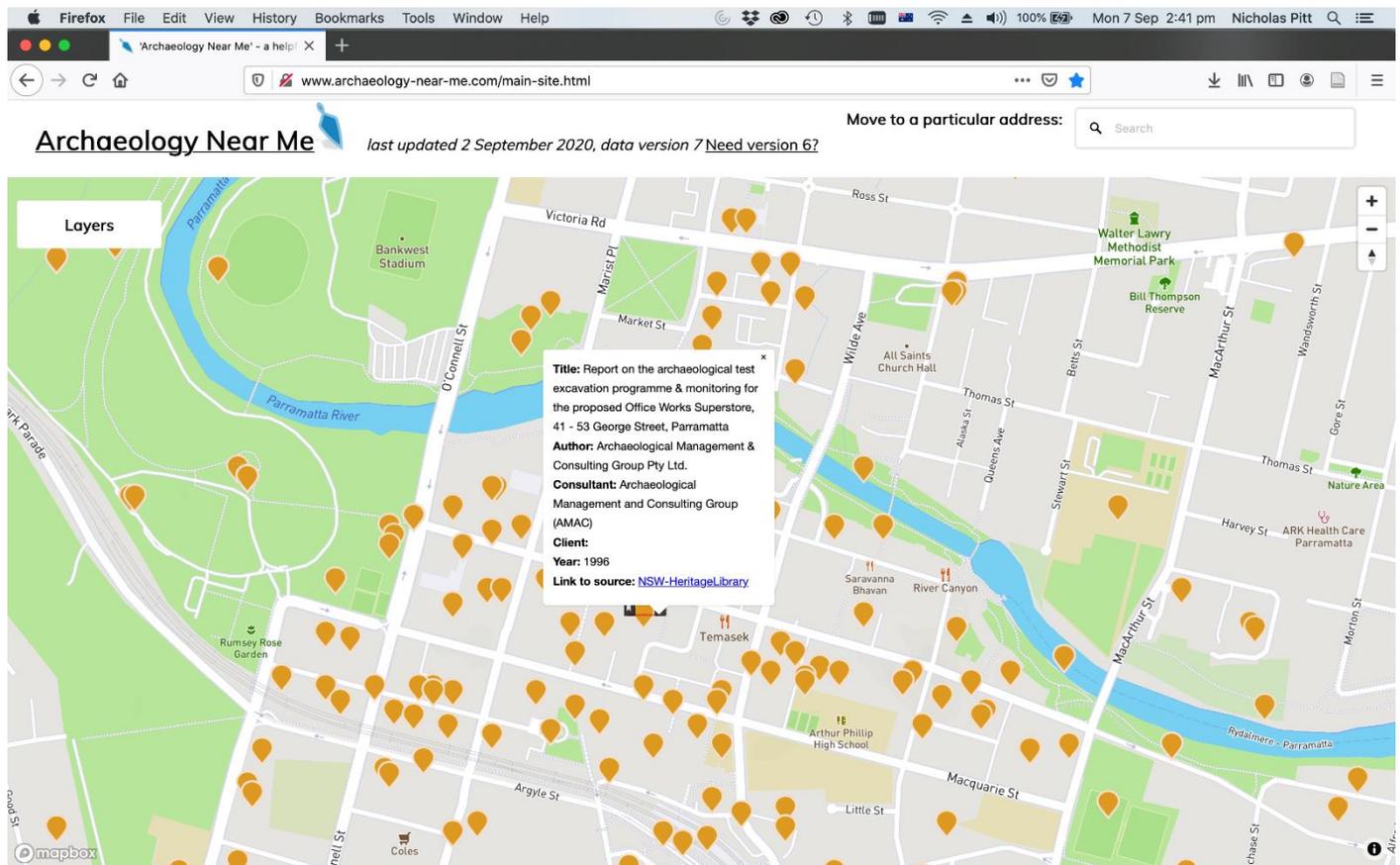

Although I created Archaeology Near Me out of my frustration as a heritage professional, I have increasingly appreciated how it opens up the material for wider use in public history and education. Preliminary conversations with high school teachers point to its value in reaching students of varying ages and abilities.

However, this accessibility also means that the project also faces ethical challenges. In particular significant parts of Australian heritage discourse has long been criticised for how it has reinforced myths associated with Australia's settler-colonial history. Making heritage and archaeology reports more accessible could replicate this discourse further, unless

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deliberate decisions are made in how the information is presented. Strategies such as an Acknowledgement of Country screen and inclusion of non-sensitive, publicly available Aboriginal cultural heritage data are two simple ways that I have attempted to reduce the settler-colonial legacies inherent in the report collections with which I work.
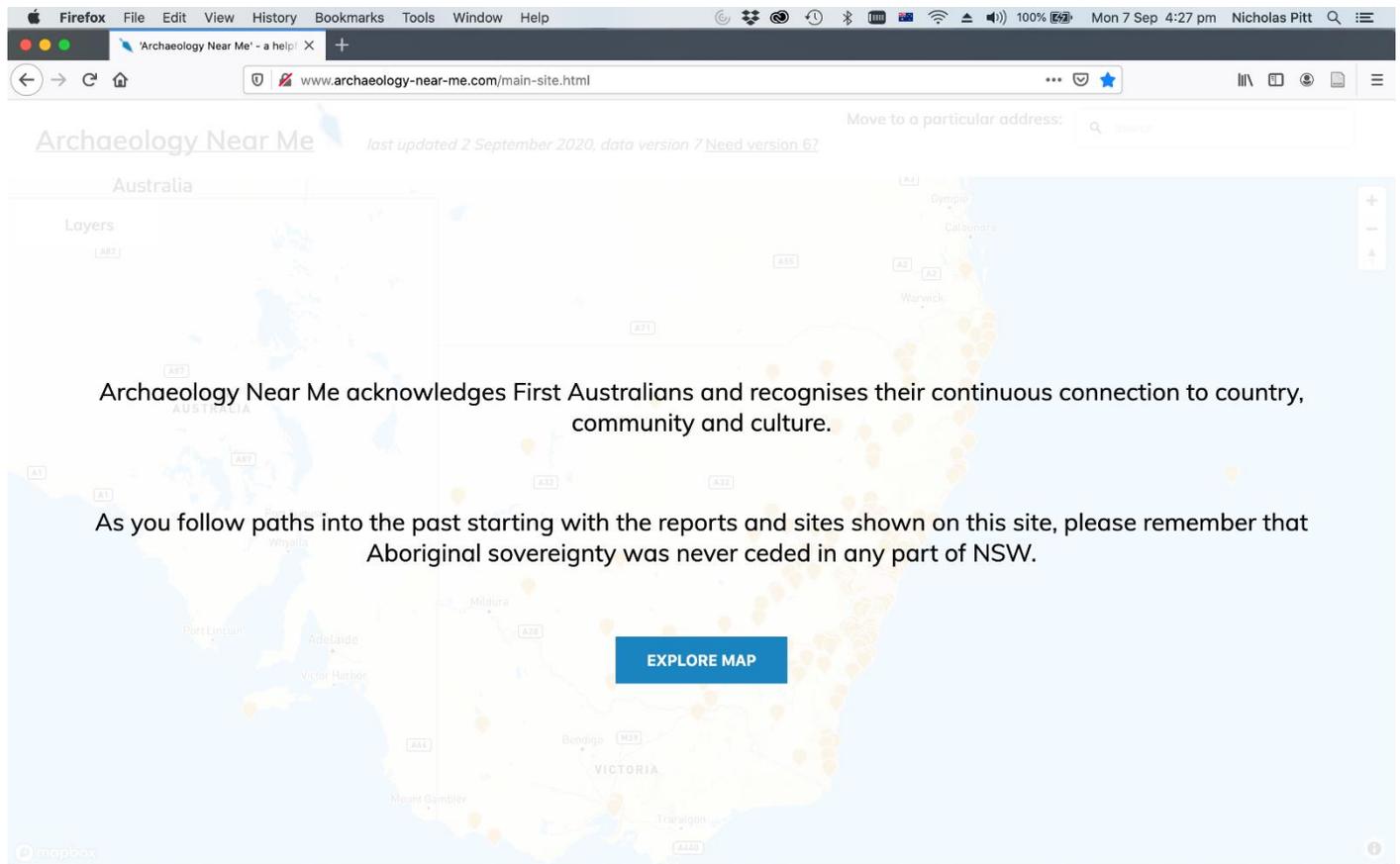
Biography

Nicholas Pitt is an archaeologist and historian with professional experience in non-Indigenous archaeological heritage management in Sydney, Australia. He is currently a PhD candidate in history at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, considering the colonial entanglements of urban settlers in Sydney between the 1820s and 1850s, combining both historical and archaeological sources. He also maintains an interest in GIS and the digital humanities, which he integrates into his wider research practice.

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