



Local Land
Services
Hunter

10th Aboriginal Community Advisory Group Meeting

MINUTES

Aboriginal Community Advisory Group

Report

ACAG Meeting 22nd and 23rd of October 2018





10th Aboriginal Community Advisory Group

Present:

Noel Downs-Wanaruah LALC,
John Clark- Community Member Manning,
Robert Russell- Awabakal LALC CEO,
Carol Proctor-Bahtabah CEO,
Kentan Proctor – Bahtabah LALC,
Tara Dever – Mindaribba LALC CEO
Dave Feeney – Karuah Indigenous Corporation
Robert Lester – PCWP Native Title
Jessica Wegener –NSW Aboriginal Land Council
Toby Whaleboat- Aboriginal Communities Officer HLLS
Brett Miners-General Manager, HLLS
Joe Thompson –Healthy Landscapes Manager HLLS
Eva Twarkowski – Community Engagement Officer HLLS

Guest Presenters: Kentan Proctor – Bahtabah LALC

Apologies:

Suzie Worth-Community Member Upper Hunter
Kelly King – Purfleet Taree LALC
Tony Hegarty-HLLS Board
Lyndel Wilson, NRM Team Leader, HLLS

Venue: Hunter Local Land Services Offices Paterson, 816 Tocal Road, Paterson NSW 2421

Day 1 –ACAG Meeting:

- **Induction for new members:**

Outcomes of closed session Aboriginal CAG members with Hunter LLS (Aboriginal Communities)

1. All agreed that the chair and co-chair be nominated at the next meeting. The group felt that there wasn't adequate representation from members to enable a proper election to take place.
2. It was agreed that Rob Russell will continue to act as Chair and John Clarke as Co-chair
3. Dates for the next ACAG meetings:
Tuesday 16th –Wednesday 17th April 2019 - Muswellbrook ?
Tuesday 15th –Wednesday 16th October 2019 – Taree?
4. Deb Swan is formally welcomed to the ACAG

Morning Session 1

Introduction

- Welcome to Country – Rob Russell
- Introduction by Hunter LLS General Manager Brett Miners

Brett highlighted the value and importance of the Advisory Group in the Hunter region, in particular raising awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage and facilitating multiple training programs. Brett



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provided an overview of staff roles and how these roles actively support and facilitate multiple Aboriginal community programs. There was a round table introduction of all new and existing members.

During this session a number of issues were raised and discussed and included the following points:

Cultural Heritage Legislation

There were some grave concerns and opposition to the Cultural Heritage legislation, there has been no update on the legislation since the consultation period. There is also question about the Cultural Heritage Policy and who is the Cultural Authority.

Action- Brett to look into where the legislation is at and what the main concerns are within the Hunter Region

Reconciliation Action Plan

Noel - inquired about an update on aspects of the Plan such as the cultural land management practices and whether there is scope for it to be introduced on TSRs on a larger scale – 100,000, 200,00 hectares etc

Brett: – indicated that there are two levels –i.e. the State overall action plan and the Land Services plan at a local level - Aboriginal employment engagement strategy for HLLS

Brett: There is reform around Crown Lands – for Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) –which has been drafted and will be available in the next 6 weeks for consultation

Noel: Acknowledged that the strategies are already implementing strategies

Joe: Mentioned that he will provide an overview of the NLP2 program later in the session in particular on the Upper Hunter burning practices which has already been written into the program

John: Inquired whether TSRs are contracted out to farmers

Brett: Need to keep them leased out to farmers that is where the revenue is. The leases are not exclusive – as it covers multiple land uses and activities. The community can still access them and can be managed through traditional cultural practices.

Noel: Indigenous cultural burns - Could be the dominate land use as nothing is currently being done on many of the land parcels. Other issues in the Upper Hunter include grazing management – when done well can be a useful tool.



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Action: Identify suitable TSRs –for teams to undertake cultural burns –This is considered important information for setting up some target. Also identify high, low medium values

Joe: Fire is beneficial to weed control and pest species management –can learn from the Fire sticks program. Cultural burns are part of the NLP2 program for the endangered ecological community Grassy Box Woodland, which hasn’t been done before.

John: Inquired about any future traineeships through LLS – which doesn’t have to be Aboriginal specific programs

Brett: It has been talked about but there is no formal program

Action: Brett will look into a formal program

Joe: The Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme involves managing levee banks and managing extensive assets. There may be an opportunity to develop an Aboriginal specific program modelled on the Georges River Keeper program. Young trainees would be involved in river management program over a three year period – using a traineeship approach. A similar approach could also be adopted in the in the Hunter and Manning Great Lakes

John: This would contribute to increasing skills through a traineeship program

Morning Session 2

- **Progress against actions from 9th Aboriginal CAG meeting – Toby Whaleboat**

Action 1	Toby to invite the IPA to the next meeting - What assistance can be provided from LLS assist this process and management of IPA’s, and how IPA’s are developed- invite IPA representatives to ACAG meeting, to learn more about IPAs(Toby)- and Indigenous Land Corporation lands and potential support opportunities	Responsible:Toby Whaleboat
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Action 2	TSR- Toby to send around list of TSR’s within HLLS regions- web site from Crown Lands	Responsible: Toby Whaleboat
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LLS recently recruited a TSR Supervisor a couple of weeks ago and have not been able to access the most updated TSR list.

Action 3	Rob suggest meeting in early October (from 2 nd) to	Responsible: Toby
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consider TSR POM to allow a combined response from ACAG.
Whaleboat
Organise a new meeting time

Action 4 Maintain ACAG member involvement in training events.
Responsible: Toby Whaleboat
Invite Guy Ballard from Office of Environment and Heritage to next ACAG meeting.

- **Three-year HLLS Aboriginal Program Deliver for 2018/2019 – Toby Whaleboat**

Create an established long term support for training programs

Two ACAG workshops have been planned to identify priorities and to be implemented over the next 3 years

Develop and implement a 3-year Fire Sticks Alliance program, which was established in NSW. This would also include TSRs - in the Upper Hunter

Traditional fire practices and training would be undertaken by Stephen Honeywood from DPI and rolled over three years. Assessment of the different vegetation communities across the Hunter region would also be incorporated into the program. This would be a part time program taking up to a maximum of 10 participants at a time

There was some resistance from the Awabakal LALC to undertake a cultural burn in the Blackbutt Reserve. Awabakal LALC should have been notified and involved in the burn. It was not appropriate for demonstration burns to be carried out by people from Cape York

Kentan: – has extensive experience in cultural burns with the Rural Fire Service in the Hunter Region. Stewart Keeth one of the traditional owners is experienced in cultural burns

There was an inquiry about when do LALCs determine whether a cultural burn is undertaken on behalf of community. Was it an open forum meeting, to ensure the community are informed

Noel: National Parks has a Cultural Burn Policy– outlines what the community needs to have if they want to do something on NPWS - can only undertake low risk burns.

Otherwise the community and LALCs need to work with the Rural Fire Service and NPWS people who have the qualifications eg RFS and NPWS to manage those risks. Link - [Cultural Fire Management Policy - Office of Environment and Heritage](#)



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Toby: – Once graduated from the 3 year course you are qualified to burn in all different vegetation types – this will elevate Aboriginal people to undertake cultural burn on Indigenous held land or contract work to other agencies.

Action: Include a copy of the Toby's presentation

Toby provided an overview of the progress of the recent Indigenous fire demonstration on Sedgefield TSR and Pioneer Roads.

A cultural burn is scheduled in the Lower Hunter next year in Buraban and Awabakal. A burn plan has already been developed and will require relevant community members to be involved in the plan

Kentan: Is happy to provide input

Rob: Is happy to go ahead with the burn

Toby: In regards to the Sedgefield and Pioneer Road burns, there are plans to go back in 6 months time to do a monitoring and evaluation and assessment. There are also plans to develop a larger burn plan for the site. Any proposed burns will be undertaken with RFS
Burning those areas with RFS.

Conservation and Land Management (CALM) training

Toby: LLS will be rolling out Certificate 3 courses in the Upper Hunter and Lower Hunter
Mindaribba and Wonaruah has also showed interest

There was a suggestion to identify fixed dates, send out an Expression of Interest for the 9 day course.

Both the Diploma and Certificate 3 is relevant and practical, which assists students in directly applying their skills or have developed a genuine interest in the course material.

Brett and Kentan: Provided examples of a young person not interested in school attending the course and is now showing interest in Indigenous Land Management. Very hands on maintains student interest and engagement in the course –so it is effective.

Due Diligence – Aboriginal Cultural Awareness

Toby: LLS is working with the archeologist in the region to train LLS staff. To increase awareness of Aboriginal Cultural heritage values. To transfer this information to Landholders. Also have an increased understanding of when to undertake cultural walk overs. Its not just about ticking a box.

Link to Australian National University Program -Talking about Stones
[Farmers unsure what to do with Indigenous stone artefacts - ANU](#)

Employment Opportunities



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Develop three year projects – eg Rocky Knob Project, where LLS is working with Awabakal and the project has been successfully funded.

The Green Team is developing a Pest Management Plan and working with Biosecurity team and Conservation Volunteers Australia

Development of a plan provides opportunity to employ Green team members to undertake the planting and pest species control

Look into developing a plan before submitting a grant application. This will provide the framework for the implementation of the on-ground activities and also increased chance of success.

Kentan: Suggested to train students as part of the CALM training program. This approach will enable the development of the plan and then you can apply for funding.

The group provided different examples and experiences with regards to applying for funds, earning an income and ensuring that the LALCs are sustainable into the future.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2018 LLS actively facilitated and promoted NAIDOC Week events and there are plans to continue and expand this event annually. Next year the Aboriginal Community will be invited.

Most of the LALCs commence planning early i.e
Mindaribba -commence at the end of the year
Wanaruah, Awabakal, Bahtabah, Karuah – hold event in the first week

- **Presentation -Australian Government National Landcare Program –Joe Thompson**

Noel: Are there any funds for on-ground works and also for bird monitoring

Tara: Suggested speaking to BirdLife Australia about monitoring

Action: Explore on-ground and bird monitoring activities including the Sandy Hollow site
Wanaruah Meeting 1st or 2nd Friday in December can attend to discuss

Good opportunity to work with private landholders to improve agricultural productivity through cultural burning at the right time of the year.

Need to identify a suitable site for training events workshops and field days
Community training – largely targeting grazing community
Need to normalise Aboriginal Land management in the grazing community

Noel: suggested to engage the Aboriginal community to survey Fairy Bells



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Climate ready Aquaculture
Support to the Oyster industry - Port Stephens

Action: Send a link to the both Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest Complex and Regent Honeyeater Recovery Plans.

Action: Look into studies on aerial wild dog and fox baiting

Afternoon Session 1

Prior to the commencement of the session, Joe announced that Jessica was the successful applicant who will be filling in for Toby while he is away. Congratulations to Jessica.

- **NSWALC Development and Economic Unit - Jess Wegener**

The LALCs can access this funding by contacting economic development

The first stage of this process is for capacity stage and feasibility concept –which is determined by the Program Implementation Unit.

Feasibility stage

Early stage investment loan – up to 500,000. There are opportunities for local government buy in –to contribute to the start up phase.

This is determined by council and advice of the Independent Assessment Panel

Things to consider -

- Equity Investment
- Developed Indigenous business hub
- Fact sheet fun,
- Land zoning,
- Biobanking, conservation

Business idea goals

- Name
- Objectives
- Asset plan development work with councils
- Mentoring and incubation
- Pre and post consultation period in line with the Aboriginal Land rights

- For example a Land management team is looking to support and extend the team
- 4 Land Councils on the south coast have entered a Biodiversity Management Stewardship agreement



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- Develop an Indigenous rangers program, with the different Land councils utilising different skills, tools etc
- Crowd funding and angel investors

Eg Jacobs in Newcastle – can buy in on an Aboriginal business – leveraging their business concept as well

Action – send Jessica's Presentation

News LALC – about employment and develop land
Offering to non-LALC businesses

There have been 8 success stories and include:

- Native bees
- Indigenous employment and management of the land
- Lucrative – Melaleuca honey
- Tourism – Mutawinji – interpretation of the site
- Goat business
- North Coast – tourism around traditional knowledge
- Camps/dampers in the bush
- Biodiversity Agreements mainly in the Hunter Region
- Partnership stewardship agreements
- Funding application is opened all the time and can be at the idea generation stage
- Restrictions – low risk assessment
- Native title restriction – need to be negotiated
- After a feasibility assessment – need to earn 1 dollar

Tara: – Indigenous business hub has the capacity to understand and pitch their idea. Need to develop a business plan

- **Firesticks Alliance Program**

- Firesticks Alliance made of 9 members from all over Australia
- National Fire Stick program from Cape York took it to southern NSW
- Approx 360 attended – discuss opportunities with Wonaruah Land Council and Corporation
- Help provide the advocacy and support in the community – which is something that has been missing
- Resources to build the business

Seasonal Calendar

- Methodology of returning health to country.
- Irrespective of the country and vegetation type
- Property management plans – check the plan

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- Access everything on the website

Jessica: provided an overview of the fire management plan template and property management plan template

- The Living Knowledge Place – provides examples – including Biraban and Sedgfield
- Can support and join the Firestick Alliance
- Educational resources for schools – embedded traditional strategy around fire management and ensure that continued knowledge passed on.
- Management resources for IPAs
- Relationship with the different seasons eg. purple flowering season indicates that there are echindas
- First time working with Fire stick alliance with the Sedgfield burn
- Research project CSIRO – TRADITIONAL FIRE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PROTOCOLS
- Incorporate cultural law into traditional methodology
- Main projects start in April
- National Conference July 2019 – traditional fire management

Afternoon Session 2

- **Opportunity for sharing/learning: Presentation HLLS CLM course students**

Diploma project – Kentan and Toby presentation

- 1st Workshop
Ecological Burn plan assessment with ecologist Dan Pederson
3 day workshop both flora and fauna
Important way to make connections and experience in the field
Both practices – scientific and Aboriginal methodologies
Blue uniforms - Outside brigade – training community trailer
- 2nd workshop – natural area restoration and project planning workshop – 3 day workshop
Assessing the vegetation types and collating the data
- 3rd workshop – 3 day Pest Management workshop
Bahatabah – near Caves Beach -pest control – rabbits issue with dog walking tracks on conservation lands
- 4th Workshop - 3 day Due Diligence – provided an opportunity to create good connections, learn about the different geology and landscapes in the different areas in the Hunter. This was undertaken at Hollydene TSR.
- 5th Aboriginal Land Management business plan

Action - Check to see if there is a Cultural Heritage Plan at Port Stephens Council
Assessment process to cater for the level of skill

Last point - Successes of ACAG

- In 2014 HLLS started with only nine members from the community

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- The second meeting set the strategic priorities
- The program started out as a series of short workshops and has now developed into a diploma courses set for the next year.

General Business – Date and location for the 11th ACAG meeting on Tuesday 16th to Wednesday 17th April 2019 - Location to be confirmed.

Updating the **Aboriginal Culturally Significant Landscapes Booklet and CD**. This booklet was produced in 2009 by the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority. It was proposed that a working group could be established to update the booklet and include more relevant and Hunter species examples.

3:00pm: Meeting Close

Day 2: Field Trip

9.15am – 12.00pm: The Aboriginal CAG group visited the Hunter Economic Zone near Kurri Kurri and is part of the Watagans National Park and Mindaribba Conservation Lands. These unique and highly diverse Cessnock Forests contains 29 different Eucalytus species and is important nesting and foraging habitat for the Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater, both listed as critically endangered under Federal Legislation. Lucas Grenadier from Office of Environment and Heritage and Mick Roderick from BirdLife Australia covered the history, significance and importance of this site. Tara Dever also provided an overview of the main management issues of the site and described some of the on-ground activities undertaken to protect and maintain the condition of the conservation reserves. This was followed by a short walk and discussion through the forest.

Close of Field Trip 12pm

Summary of Actions from this meeting (meeting #9):

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| Action 1 | Toby to invite the IPA to the next meeting - What assistance can be provided from LLS assist this process and management of IPA's, and how IPA's are developed- invite IPA representatives to ACAG meeting, to learn more about IPAs(Toby)- and Indigenous Land Corporation lands and | Toby Whaleboat |
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	potential support opportunities	
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Action 3	Rob suggest meeting in early October (from 2 nd) to consider TSR POM to allow a combined response from ACAG. Organise a new meeting time	Toby Whaleboat
Action 4	Maintain ACAG member involvement in training events. Invite Guy Ballard from Office of Environment and Heritage to next ACAG meeting	Toby Whaleboat
Action 5	Cultural Heritage Legislation – look into where the legislation is at and what the main concerns are within the Hunter Region	Brett Miners
Action 6	Future traineeship programs - look into a formal program	Brett Miners
Action 7	Include a copy of the Toby's presentation	Eva Twarkowski
Action 8	Explore on-ground and bird monitoring activities including the Sandy Hollow site Wonaruah Meeting 1 st or 2 nd Friday in December can attend to discuss.	Eva Twarkowski
Action 9	Send a link to the both Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest Complex and Regent Honeyeater Recovery Plans	Eva Twarkowski
Action 10	Look into studies on aerial wild dog and fox baiting	Joe Thomspen
Action 11	Circulate Jessica's presentation	Eva Twarkowski
