

Bandimayiya - April 2014

THE MESSENGER

A Message from the Chairperson



The first quarter of 2014 has seen us commence work on numerous projects, each of which will play a role in benefiting both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities here on the Central Coast.

We are very proud to be one of the convening

organisations of the Empowered Communities initiative, which sees 25 prominent Indigenous leaders from eight remote, regional and urban regions spanning six states and territories, come together to change the way government and Indigenous communities work together.

Through this collaboration we are uniting to inspire belief and ownership, looking to lead the way to assist our people in taking control of their own destiny, developing a new interface between Indigenous communities and the Australian Government.

These are exciting times as we band together as a collective to make a stand against the unacceptable gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. As a part of Empowered Communities we plan to move forward standing side-by-side to change this inequality.

We have also had outstanding success as we progress with Stages 1B and 1C of our Menindee Ridge residential development, testament to our vision to undertake strategic activities which succeed in both delivering tangible benefits to the community and also in ensuring we are a self-sustaining Land Council.

As the largest land holder on the Central Coast we need to commit a small portion of our land to projects which allow us to manage the remainder of our land – protecting the environmental and culturally significant lands under our stewardship, without having to call on tax-payer dollars to maintain and protect these assets.

While we have had many wins, we have recently amended our plans for the proposed over 50's development at Halekulani, based on community feedback. It is hoped that now, with greater community engagement, the true value of our proposal can be realised.

We are also still working to secure funds following the recent setback in regards to the funding for the proposed Gulgul Barang Youth and Community Centre. We are hopeful that we will find a workable alternative in order to get the project off the ground.

I'd also like to remind you, that as a member of Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, you are entitled to take advantage of our affordable Funeral Plan. You will find further information about the Funeral Fund in this newsletter or call the office for more details.

These are exciting times for Darkinjung and for the Indigenous community. Our organisation has firmed its position as a leader, setting the benchmark as an innovative and effective LALC.

We look forward to continuing to protect our cultural heritage for the benefit of our people and improving opportunities and outcomes within our communities and region - building on what we have already achieved thus far.

Until next time,
Joshua Toomey
Chairperson - Darkinjung LALC



Local Aboriginal Land Council
DARKINJUNG

Menindee Ridge, Blue Haven Stages 1B and 1C almost sold out



Darkinjung continues to play a leading role on the Central Coast with its Menindee Ridge residential development. Following Stage 1 being sold out in less than six months, Darkinjung commenced selling Stage 1B and 1C in November last year.

Following a highly successful sales campaign, 28 of the 30 blocks have been sold, with each achieving its full projected sale price.

Stage 1B and 1C has seen a good mix of people and groups secure properties in the development, with buyers ranging from first home buyers and investors to individuals downsizing and families upsizing.

It is anticipated that the next stage of the development will go on sale in the second half of 2014.

Menindee Ridge is currently the only major residential development underway on the Central Coast. Chief Executive Officer of Darkinjung, Sean Gordon, said that the success of Stage 1 and the swift sale of the blocks in

this second stage was testament that the initiative reflected the needs of the community for quality, affordable housing.

“As with the sale of the Stage 1 blocks, the sales have been conducted through Wiseberry Real Estate and the response has surpassed all our expectations.

“We have been very pleased with Wiseberry’s enthusiastic approach and the community’s support of this development; it has certainly resulted in strong sales results.

“Menindee Ridge is just one example of our vision for the Central Coast as we harness opportunities to meet the growth needs of the region. Darkinjung is proud to be planning for the future.”

Alongside Menindee Ridge, Darkinjung is also in the process of planning for its dedicated over 50’s living development at Halekulani.



Darkinjung's vision for youth on the Central Coast in doubt

Darkinjung was disappointed at the recent announcement that the Gulgul Barang Youth and Community Centre may not receive the government funding required for the project to proceed.

Sean Gordon said, "This Project was planned to address barriers identified by the Better Futures Local Solutions Local Advisory Group (LAG).

"The centre was set to provide much needed infrastructure to address critical factors within our region including social exclusion, youth dislocation from informal support networks and poor public transport for training and education.

"We see this centre as imperative if we are to offer some of the most disadvantaged young people within our community a brighter future.

"The Gulgul Barang Youth Support Centre planned to link young people to much-needed support and health facilities, job service providers, local employers and businesses, encouraging long-term sustainable employment and self-sufficiency."

The centre was an initiative of Darkinjung LALC and the former Australian Federal Government, with Darkinjung's investment in the form of land, with an estimated value in excess of \$1 million. In return, Darkinjung were seeking a \$3.2 million infrastructure grant from the Regional Development Australia Fund.

"While we feel let down by this latest development, we are exploring other avenues to rectify the situation, with hope that all is not lost."

"Clearly the needs of the community outweigh any political agenda. Given the growing population of North Wyong, there is a huge need for community infrastructure that supports the growing demands of the community in the form of employment, education, training and health," added Sean.



Darkinjung challenges recommendation to extend Calga Sand Quarry



Despite Darkinjung's formal objection to the Calga Sand Quarry Southern Extension in February last year – due to the cultural significance of the proposed extension area - on 23 December 2013 the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure passed its recommendation supporting the project.

In response, Darkinjung is calling on all local NSW Aboriginal Land Council's and the state's peak representative body in Aboriginal Affairs, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, to join forces and challenge NSW planning laws in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The detrimental impact that the extension would have on the cultural significance of the land is of great concern. Darkinjung's comprehensive site assessments

have identified that the area in question, and its surroundings, contain culturally significant objects and places for Aboriginal people, with one of the sites being of immense significance to Aboriginal women.

Darkinjung LALC has been actively engaged in the Proposed Development Application at the Calga Sand Quarry for almost eight years, conducting site surveys and night recordings, preparing Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessments and identifying new Aboriginal sites within the proposed extension area.

In light of this, Darkinjung plans to continue to execute its right to fight to protect Indigenous culture and heritage, advocating for this development not to proceed.



Amended plans for Halekulani site presented to the community

An overview of the amended plans for the Halekulani site were presented at an on-site meeting with community members in March.

Approximately 60 residents were in attendance at the meeting, facilitated by Councillor Greg Best.

Chief Executive Officer Sean Gordon was given the opportunity to explain the amended proposal, with plans available for viewing and documents summarising the proposal circulated to attendees.

Sean also had the opportunity to answer a number of questions from the audience, with many staying for a more in depth conversation. Local representatives also advised that they would circulate information to their networks.

Sean Gordon is excited at opportunities the proposed new development at Halekulani will bring to the Central Coast community.

"Our Halekulani project – along with the rest of the development projects being undertaken by Darkinjung - will facilitate economic independence and create employment and enterprise development opportunities, both in the short and long term.

"It also ensures that as a Land Council, we can effectively manage the 7,000 hectares of land under our stewardship across the Central Coast, enabling us to be self sufficient in managing and protecting our assets, without needing to rely on government funding and tax-payer dollars.

"Strategic developments, such as the one proposed at Halekulani allow us to achieve our commitment to protecting environmental and culturally significant land for generations to come. By harnessing the value of small pockets of our land which are suited to development projects we can add value to our region.

"In reality, this type of development is essential to the ongoing success of Darkinjung as an autonomous land

council. It will deliver tangible benefits that serve not only our purpose, but the broader Central Coast as a region – a priority that is always at the heart of the projects we seek to undertake," he said.

The estate at Halekulani will be dedicated to over 50's living, with very affordable rates making the homes an attractive proposition for this market segment.

Research into similar developments has demonstrated that with an ageing population, coupled with the current economic environment, the market requires affordable housing that is within reach of the general population. 10 per cent of the development will be retained for Darkinjung members.

Careful consideration has gone into the development, with the current plans reflecting changes based on community feedback, "We have listened to the community and in response have made amendments to the plans.

"We believe in this project and would like to see Halekulani build on the success of our other residential development, Menindee Ridge, which is currently under way at Blue Haven. This development is testament to what effective planning and development can result in for the community."

Key changes to the plan include:

- removing the entire northern end of the site – which reduces the number of proposed dwellings by more than 25 per cent from 251 to 184
- tailoring the development to 50+ living, in line with community feedback
- allocation of 27 ha. of Darkinjung-managed conservation land at Lake Munmorah as a conservation offset area, despite this not being a requirement for development. This represents an offset area three times larger than the proposed development site
- relocation of storm water and water quality basins.

Empowered Communities

Darkinjung is leading the way by participating in the Empowered Communities reform initiative.

The Empowered Communities group is led by Indigenous leaders from eight regions across Australia, all of which have come together to challenge the status quo of Indigenous disadvantage and dysfunction within our communities.

Sean Gordon said, "We have collectively agreed that the disparity between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians is not acceptable.

"We represent our regions, but also believe strongly in the importance of collaboration and sharing of learning across our regions."

"In particular, we believe that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 'Close the Gap' targets are not being achieved fast enough across Australia:

- To close the life-expectancy Gap within a generation
- To halve infant mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade
- To ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities within five years
- To halve the Gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade
- To halve the Gap in Indigenous Year 12 achievement by 2020
- To halve the Gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade."

"As a member of the Empowered Communities reform initiative we will act as an interface to better support Indigenous authority and play an active role in closing the gap - empowering Indigenous Communities."



"On the Central Coast the 'Gaps' of disadvantage range from our Indigenous children being less likely to complete high school, to our community members living, on average, nine-years less than non-Indigenous community members."

Reading Gap – 25% of our Year 3 children are reading below standard levels. (NAPLAN 2012)

Year 12 Gap - 12% of our Indigenous children are less likely to complete High School. (ABS 2011)

Employment Gap - 10% - 16 of our community members in every 100 are actively seeking full time or part time work vs. 6% for non-Indigenous people. (ABS 2011)

Life Expectancy Gap - Our Indigenous community members live nine years less than non-Indigenous community members. (ABS 2011)

Obesity Gap – Our Indigenous community members are 60% more likely to be or become obese. (ABS 2011)

Teenage Pregnancies - 18% of our young women are likely to have a baby during their teens. (ABS 2011)

Rental Stress - 48% - Almost 1 in every 2 of our community households suffer rental stress (where rental outgo exceeds 30% of income). (ABS 2011)

We believe Indigenous-led leadership is the key to closing the Gaps. Together and united, our community organisations provide a foundation to nurture and grow our culture, health, education and employment opportunities.

Affordable Funeral Fund

Darkinjung is committed to improving, protecting and fostering the best interests of our members, and all Aboriginal people, within our boundaries.

Darkinjung runs an affordable Funeral Fund on behalf of our members, their spouse and dependant children.

The Funeral Fund covers site fees, headstone, medical certificates, choice of cremation or burial, shared sites, coffin, Clergy/Celebrant/Elder, an indigenous ceremony, press notice, condolence book, hearse, organist fees, floral tributes and bereavement payment.

Paying a small amount on a regular basis toward your Funeral Fund will offer you peace of mind that the expenses of your funeral will be covered at the time of death. This reduces the financial burden on family and friends already coping with the loss of a family member or friend.

Linking with Bara Barang

Darkinjung is proud to be in partnership with Bara Barang (formally known as Koori Connect), an innovative Aboriginal organisation which aims to engage young Aboriginal people in a range of cultural activities intended to improve community connection, school retention and provide vocational learning opportunities.

Bara Barang offers intensive case management support for participants. Case management compliments the cultural activities available which includes performance, art, craft, visitation to significant cultural sites and cultural camps.

The organisation also has its own football and netball team and encourages a balanced healthy and culturally appropriate lifestyle.

Bara Barang links Aboriginal apprentices with 'The Way Ahead' and other mentoring programs to ensure positive employment and training outcomes. Aboriginal youth in need of additional support are linked with an Aboriginal mentor and are encouraged to participate in the variety of community activities that occur weekly in the region.

DLALC Office Staff:

Chief Executive Officer:

Sean Gordon

Executive Assistant:

Jodi Shannon

Finance Officer:

Lisa Bourne

Finance and Administration Manager:

Melinda Watson

Planning and Development Manager:

Lynne Hamilton

Project Officer:

Cara Lake

Project Officer Culture & Heritage:

Sharon Hodgetts

Receptionist:

Feona Sales

Casual Trainee Culture and Heritage:

Emma Hardcastle

DLALC Business Contacts

Bungree Aboriginal Association

Community Services

P: 02 4397 – 7700

Central Coast AECG

E: ccaecg@hotmail.com

Eleanor Duncan

Health Service

P: 02 4351-1040

Gibalee – University

Education Services

P: 02 4349-4500

A: University of Newcastle -
Brush Road Ourimbah NSW

Mingaletta

Community Services

P: 02 4351-7515

Mirring

Aboriginal Womens Group

P: 02 4355-4637

Central Coast Aboriginal Mens Group

P: 0413-338-440

NAISDA

Dance College

P: 02 4340-3100

A: 31 The Avenue Mt Penang Parklands
Kariong NSW 2250

Clr Roy Ah-See

NSW ALC Syd/Newcastle

P: 02 4353-5536

NSW ALC

P: 02 9689-4444

A: PO Box 1125

Parramatta NSW 2124

Bara Barang Corporation Ltd

Youth and Community Services

T: 4346-1111

E: denise@barabarang.com.au

W: www.barabarang.com.au



168 Pacific Highway Watanobbi NSW 2259

PO Box 401 Wyong NSW 2259

Phone 02 4351 2930 Fax 02 4351 2946

www.darkinjung.com.au