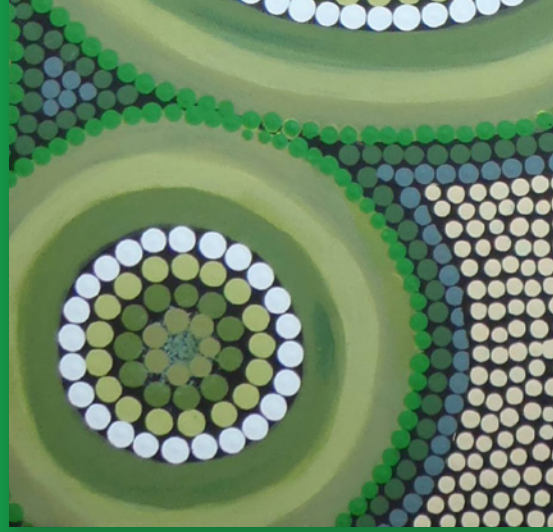


Local Aboriginal  
Land Council

NEWSLETTER

Issue 07



IN THIS ISSUE:  
**FAIR REPRESENTATION**

**NAIDOC WEEK 2023  
SAVE THE DATE**

**KOORI KNOCKOUT  
BACK ON THE COAST**

**AND MORE!**

# THE DARKINJUNG DISPATCH

## PEAT ISLAND RETURNED



Local Aboriginal Land Council

**DARKINJUNG**

[darkinjung.com.au](http://darkinjung.com.au)



# Welcome

It's been a little while since we last spoke. Yet while the Dispatch may not have been popping in your mailbox as frequently as it used to, it's important that you know that being out of sight does not mean you have been out of mind.

In fact, it's been quite the opposite, as we continue to work hard behind the scenes to ensure every discussion that is had, and every decision that is made is done with your best interests at heart.

This being said, the past 12 months have been some of the busiest we can remember.

Quite aside from the numerous day-to-day operational matters (such as resourcing requirements and members workshops) and special events (such as our annual Christmas party) which we attend to, your representatives have been working harder than ever to ensure the strengthening and empowerment of our community for all future generations.

As you will read in this edition of the Dispatch, in recent months we have successfully worked

alongside the State Government to manage the transfer of Kooroowall-Undi (Peat Island) back to DLALC ownership, staged an open day for members on Peat Island and secured two significant state government grants to be used towards developing the Peat Island Cultural Tourism Precinct and the Mangrove Mountain Cultural Tourism Park.

In addition, we have worked alongside the NSW Department of Planning and Environment to finalise our Development Delivery Plan (DDP) to outline how 30-plus sites can potentially support new homes, jobs and open space on the Central Coast.

Included in this, was DLALC's 55-hectare project at Lake Munmorah, with the proposal for between 385 and 755 homes, a new park, and the protection of 21-hectares of bushland now finalised.

During this time we have successfully advocated for the state's largest annual Indigenous sporting event, the Koori Knockout, to be hosted on Darkinjung Country at the Central Coast Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex at Tuggerah, in October.

And that's just a small part of where our attention has been directed.

It appears we will be kept just as busy in upcoming weeks as we strive to ensure our member's voices continue to be represented in all areas of cultural and heritage importance now and into the future.

## ON OUR COVER



Following the historic handing back of Peat Island, DLALC says plans for the island will be focused on Aboriginal employment, business development and economic growth but ultimately it will be transformed into a site "everyone can be proud of".

## LAKE MUNMORAH PROPOSAL ONE STEP CLOSER

DLALC is today a step closer to its goal of building an economic base for future generations, following the finalisation of its Lake Munmorah project.

As part of a broader commitment to boost housing supply in Darkinjung country, the State Government has given the green light to DLALC's proposal which will see between 385 and 755 homes and a new park delivered, and a further 21 hectares of bushland protected.

Chairperson BJ Duncan re-

ferred to it as a "historical moment" that marked the first time that an Aboriginal State Environmental Planning Policy had been used to active residential land across NSW.

Darkinjung has worked over the years to activate land to help our people and the broader community, and the DLALC was proud to be one significant step closer to this goal, he says.

Development applications are required to be lodged before construction can begin.

## STEPS TO IMPROVE THE REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

DLALC is urging all members and the broader Indigenous community to share their thoughts on The Voice to parliament, an initiative that attempts to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a greater say in our own affairs.

Your executive is canvassing all members and encouraging you to communicate your opinions via a survey either in person or accessed by scanning the QR code below, to best determine how members feel about the initiative.

The Voice to parliament was a key recommendation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a document written and endorsed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders back in 2017 to change the Constitution to improve the representation of Indigenous Australians.

In calling for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution, The Uluru Statement notes that despite being the first sovereign Nation of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, Indigenous Australians were the most incarcerated people on the planet.

"We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

"These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness," the statement read.

A representative body made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the country, it is proposed The Voice would act as an advisory body to advise parliament and the federal government on Indigenous policy matters, including health, education and economic disadvantage.

The Voice would also guide government policy across a range of areas such as life expectancy and child mortality, enrolment and progress in school, employment levels, reduction in incarceration rates, and reduction in family violence.

Unlike the Senate and House of Representatives, it would not have a decision-making role, nor the power to veto legislation or government decisions.

It's now been 15 years since John Howard became the first prime minister to promise constitutional recognition of the special status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. However, the issue was put on the back burner after Howard lost office, and successive prime ministers made little progress.

Since its 2022 election win, Anthony Albanese's government has been determined to progress the historic reform.

Under Labor's plans, three new paragraphs would be added to the Constitution:

There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to Parliament and the Executive Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have the power to make laws concerning the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

According to the Reconciliation Australia biannual Barometer report released in November, support for an Indigenous national representative body continues to grow with 86 per cent of Indigenous people backing a change.

Albanese initially pledged to hold a referendum to canvas support for the idea between July 2023 and June 2024 but since then, has said the vote could be in late 2023.

Under Australian law, legislation setting out the proposed changes to the Constitution will have to be passed by parliament two to six months before the vote.



Scan the QR Code with your smartphone to participate in the survey

Image by Thennicke © 2023





## DLALC TEAMS UP WITH HOLIDAY PARK



DLALC has joined forces with the NRMA Ocean Beach Holiday Park to offer Indigenous tourism and cultural experiences to guests.

The pair have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, outlining a plan to increase Aboriginal cultural education and tourism, employment and cultural capability at the holiday park.

The Central Coast has one of the nation’s highest concentrations of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, with the partnership set to create a cultural landscape and a series of events that will benefit both parties.

As part of the agreement, Ocean Beach guests will enjoy welcome to Country ceremonies; smoking ceremonies and dance group performances (where appropriate); a celebration of Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and other events; culturally educational signage in the natural environment; cultural tours at the site or at selected sites across the Central

Coast; storytelling and education; and a connection to other cultural events led by DLALC.

In turn, NRMA Ocean Beach Holiday Park will provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people through traineeships and recruitment and actively seek procurement opportunities for local Aboriginal organisations and service providers.

## MANGROVE MOUNTAIN FUNDING BOOST

DLALC’s efforts to develop cultural tourism precincts at both Peat Island and Mangrove Mountain have received a significant boost after the two projects attracted over \$5.5 million in funding from the NSW Government.

The first cash injection came in the form of a \$4.99 million grant for the Peat Island Cultural Tourism Precinct as part of round two of the government’s Regional Tourism Activation Fund.

Darkinjung Chairperson BJ Duncan says the money will allow DLALC to progress the first phase of activating and opening the island.

Duncan says the establishment of a café, new jetty and cultural grounds would provide a basis for cultural tourism that all Australians would be able to enjoy but the centrepiece will be the painting of the water tower.

*“In land rights, we often say that we stand on the shoulders of giants. [Going forward] we will be able to commemorate those giants, and we take our place among them for our future generations.”*

The second grant, awarded in December, came in the form of a \$650,000 contribution also came from the NSW Government’s Regional Tourism Activation Fund.

Duncan says the investment would help Darkinjung build a cultural tourism precinct where the indigenous community can share its creation and dreaming stories, and cultural practices in Darkinjung Country.

*“Darkinjung is proud to lead the development of a cultural park that will help people experience these things, here on the doorstep of Sydney rather than feeling like they have to travel to the Northern Territory to experience Aboriginal culture,”* he says.

## PEAT ISLAND RETURNED

DLALC chairperson BJ Duncan has signalled plans for an “economically-productive and culturally-appropriate” future for Kooroowall-Undi (Peat Island) following its historic ownership transfer to DLALC.

Following 10 months of intense negotiations, which came after an eight-year process, Kooroowall-Undi and a portion of the mainland foreshore at Mooney Mooney on Deerubbin (Hawkesbury River), has now been secured by DLALC.

The island was the subject of a 2016 land claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW). While that claim was originally rejected, recent negotiations have seen the DLALC secure it freehold from the NSW Government.

There are several conditions attached to the transfer including a commitment to the ongoing management of site security for two years, the demolition of two condemned buildings, liability for hazardous materials for three years, and the NSW Government continuing to lead the island and broader precinct’s rezoning process.

The eight-hectare island, which has been sitting unused for the past 12 years, has an infamous recent past. It was an asylum from the turn of the 20th century and later used as a facility for people with

intellectual and mental disabilities, before finally being decommissioned in 2010.

The DLALC chairperson says plans for the island will be focused on Aboriginal employment, business development and economic growth but ultimately it will be transformed into a site everyone can be proud of.

“Kooroowall-Undi has languished for too long. We believe the benefits that we can create here are not just for the Aboriginal people but for all Australians. Showcasing, preserving and celebrating the ancient history, the contemporary Aboriginal history and the modern history of non-indigenous Australia.

“The Peat Island history over the last century or so isn’t only about sorrow, it’s about resilience. We want to do justice to the strength of the ex-residents and staff of the former facility. Acknowledging their experiences with respect, will also assist with the island’s deep spirit into the future,” he says.

While it is still early days, clearing work has already begun. A Bunya Pine has also been planted, to signify a nourishing connection between the Darkinjung Ancestors, and the bright economic and cultural future of the island.







# FOR OUR ELDERS

## NAIDOC WEEK 2023 THEME

The National NAIDOC Committee has announced that 'For our Elders' will be the theme of the 2023 NAIDOC Week celebrations.

National NAIDOC Week will be celebrated from Sunday 2 July to Sunday 9 July 2023, and the National NAIDOC Week Awards Ceremony will be held in Meanjin (Brisbane) on Saturday 1 July.

This year's theme recognises the prominent place that elders have in the past and continue to hold in our communities and families.

In announcing this year's theme, the NAIDOC Week committee said not only are our Elders the cultural knowledge holders, but they are also the trailblazers, nurturers, advocates, teachers, survivors, leaders and hard workers.

They are also our loved ones who pick us up in our low moments and celebrate us in our high ones, they cook for us to comfort us and pull us into line when needed, the committee noted.

"They guide our generations and pave the way for us to take the paths we can take today. Guidance, not only through generations of advocacy and activism but in everyday life and how to place ourselves in the world.

"We draw strength from their knowledge and experience, in everything from land management, and cultural knowledge to justice and human rights. Across multiple sectors like health, education, the arts, politics and everything in between, they have set the many courses we follow."

"The struggles of our Elders help to move us forward today. The equality we continue to fight for is found in their fight. Their tenacity and strength have carried the survival of our people."

**The committee used the occasion to announce that nominations for the 2023 National NAIDOC Week Awards have also opened. Categories for the 2023 instalment include:**

- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Female Elder Award
- Male Elder Award
- Sportsperson Award
- Youth Award
- Creative Talent Award
- Caring for Country and Culture Award
- Education Award
- Innovation Award

## EOI SOUGHT FOR PROJECT CONTROL GROUPS

The DLALC Board is seeking expressions of interest from members and the broader community passionate about helping to oversee the delivery of two of DLALC's most exciting upcoming tourism projects.

Known as a Project Control Group (PCG), Darkinjung chairperson BJ Duncan has announced there is a vacancy for a Darkinjung member on both the PCG for the Mangrove Mountain Cultural Tourism Park and the Peat Island cultural Tourism Precinct.

BJ says members who wish to be considered for the above positions, will need to adhere to a strict application process, with the selection process to be merit-based.

Eligible members will be required to read a large volume of development materials and actively participated in PCG meetings.

PCG members will be paid for their time and contributions.

If you are interested in applying for one of these positions, please email [Darkinjung@dlalc.org.au](mailto:Darkinjung@dlalc.org.au) or call the Darkinjung office on 4351 2930 for more information or a copy of the application form.

**Applications close Friday 24 March 2023.**

The Darkinjung team is also looking to increase the number of Aboriginal-owned businesses that it engages to design, develop and deliver its major planning and developmental projects. It is seeking these contacts as part of its objective to stimulate growth opportunities for our people in this industry, while promoting entrepreneurship, business investment and economic development for mob.

### This specifically applies to the following services:

- Access, traffic and transport engineer
- Acoustic engineer
- Arborist
- Asbestos specialist
- Infrastructure accessibility advisor
- Archaeologist
- Architect (building or landscape)
- Building Code of Australia advisor
- BASIX advisor
- Bushfire specialist
- Civil engineer
- Crime prevention through environmental design advisor

- Ecologist
- Electrical engineer
- Flooding specialist
- Geotechnical engineer
- Heritage advisor
- Hydraulics engineer
- Planner
- Project manager (planning & development)
- Quantity surveyor
- Social impact assessment advisor
- Structural engineer
- Surveyor (land)
- Urban designer
- Waste management specialist
- Visual impact assessment advisor

The leads received, together with those obtained from consultations with Darkinjung's wider professional network, NSWALC, Supply Nation, the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and Indigenous Business Australia, will be used to establish Darkinjung's first planning and development Aboriginal business register.

This register will be updated regularly and will be a

key tool guiding the future engagement of planning and development consultants by Darkinjung in line with our Aboriginal procurement policy.

If you know of any Aboriginal-owned businesses delivering any of the services in the above table, please email [Darkinjung@dlalc.org.au](mailto:Darkinjung@dlalc.org.au) or call the office to provide the relevant business details.



# KOORI CUP TO BE PLAYED IN TUGGERAH

DLALC has played a significant part in ensuring the 2023 Koori Knockout will be staged locally.

Central Coast Council has been announced as host of the Cup, officially titled the NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout, in partnership with the Newcastle All Blacks team who took out last year's title.

The state's largest annual Indigenous sporting event will be held at the Central Coast Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex at Tuggerah from 29 September to 2 October.



The event is set to attract at least 150 participating teams and thousands of spectators while providing an estimated \$6 million boost to the local economy.

## VALE TO CHERISHED COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The DLALC board wish to express their sadness at the recent passing of two valued community members – Aunty Jan McKinnon and Aunty Neita Scott.

DLALC chairperson BJ Duncan says as well as being a former board member of The Glen, Aunty Jan was a dedicated member of DLALC, who attended many meetings until ill health prevented her from doing so.

Aunty Jan touched all she came into contact with, he says.

“Up until her passing she had an infectious smile

and ‘can do’ attitude. The Darkinjung community has lost an amazing individual.”

He says members were also mourning the passing of prominent Wiradjuri woman, Aunty Neita Scott.

Tireless in her work to support Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, Aunty Neita was a board member of the Aboriginal Housing Office, a member of the Aboriginal Housing Development Committee, as well as a member of the Premier's Council for women, the Rural Women's Advisory Council and Naromine Health Council.

## THAT'S ALL FOR THE MEANTIME

Your executive would like to take this opportunity to wish all members all the best for a happy and healthy 2023.

With a new year comes new beginnings and as such, we would like to take this opportunity to announce the departure of our CEO Brendan Moyle.

Brendan is leaving to return to his hometown of Canberra, in Ngunnawal country, to be closer to family. We wish to pass on our gratitude to Brendan for all

of his hard work while wishing him all the best for the opportunities that lie ahead.

While Brendan will be sorely missed, his solid leadership skills, his dedicated service and commitment to improving outcomes for our members have ensured Darkinjung is in a strong position to forge ahead with the many exciting initiatives DLALC has slated for the year ahead and beyond.