

**Submission  
No 6**

## **INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

**Organisation:** Greater Taree City Council

**Date received:** 9/10/2015

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9 October 2015

The Chair  
Standing Committee on State Development  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Ref: S418  
Enquiries: Margie Kirkness

Dear Hon Greg Pearce MLC

Please see below the submission from Greater Taree City Council to the Legislative Council Committee for State Development:

### **Inquiry into economic development in Aboriginal Communities**

#### ***Options for sustainability and capacity building of NSW Aboriginal communities into the future, utilising existing community networks and structures***

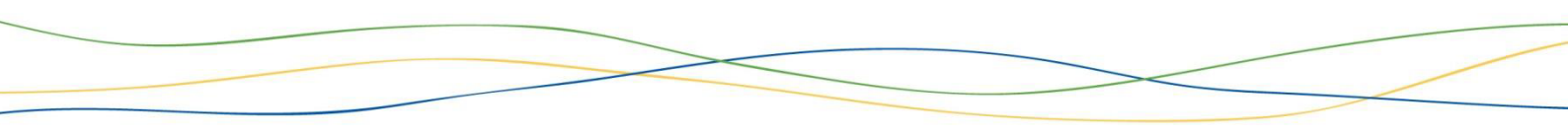
#### Background

Prior to the establishment of the Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party (MACWP), consultation and engagement with the Aboriginal community has been difficult for government agencies in the Greater Taree area. Due to divisions in the community it was hard to know who to engage, and engagement with one group sometimes meant leaving out another.

#### Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party

Taree is one of 40 partnership communities in NSW. The Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party (MACWP) was recognised under the Partnership Community Program in September 2010. The group has grown to 38 members including representation from all Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and groups in Taree/Purfleet, Elders, Traditional Custodians, community men and women.

The MACWP has developed its own code of conduct specifying the ways in which they want their meetings conducted to allow all participants to feel safe and respected. As a result meetings are orderly, productive and well-attended. Differing viewpoints are respected and decisions are made by consensus. The MACWP is working with government and non-government agencies to improve service delivery and outcomes for our local Aboriginal community. Following devolution from Aboriginal Affairs, the working party is co-ordinated by Greater Taree City Council's Aboriginal Community Officer.



Now that the Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party is established, government and non-government agencies now have a group they can come to with confidence, knowing that it is truly representative of the broader Aboriginal community rather than just a section of it.

The MACWP has facilitated improved information sharing in the community due to the working party's contact list being used to promote information and events.

Recent achievements of the MACWP include:

- Development of a protocol for approval of the use of Gathang language by agencies in signs and written documents
- Joint project with the One Place One Plan committee (FACS) to address current barriers to Aboriginal people accessing mainstream services. Funding was secured to run 3 yarning circles with Aboriginal community.
- The working party has been consulted by multiple agencies including: FACS (One Place One Plan); Community Services; Manning Entertainment Centre; TAFE; IVTEC consultant; Saltwater Freshwater Alliance; Street Beat (GTCC); Woombarra Wunggan Youth Service (GTCC); NSW Police.
- The MACWP worked with Community Services to facilitate a fair and transparent process for transitioning the auspice of Woombarra Wunggan Youth Service from Council to an Aboriginal organisation.
- The MACWP organised a visit from Indigenous Business Australia which enabled Aboriginal people to find out about Aboriginal home loans
- Increased links with the broader community have been established by holding meetings at a variety of community venues.
- Since 2013, the implementation of one NAIDOC celebration instead of multiple completing events.
- Submission prepared for the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs.
- The working party has been assisting with the rewriting of the community education plan of the Purfleet-Taree Interagency Response to CSA Working Party.
- The MACWP has also been instrumental in bring a range of training to the working party members and the broader Aboriginal community some of these are: TAFE – Governance, Communication, leadership and negotiation skills; Leadership – A 2 day course for Taree Elders; DV Alert –frontline Aboriginal Workers Training on Domestic Violence delivered by Lifeline.
- The Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party will be part of the Local Decision Making Committee at a regional level linked to OCHRE.
- Engagement and consultation for the Cultural Integrity Framework

The MACWP has become the local forum the Aboriginal community uses to discuss community business and make joint decisions. It is the right place for agencies to come to consult the Aboriginal community and has a demonstrated record of achievement on which to build.

Greater Taree City Council supports the role of the Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party and/or similar organisations that contain wide representation from the Aboriginal community across multiple sectors in a consultative and coordination role as a sound structure through which to build capacity in the Aboriginal community.

### ***Leveraging economic development support, including provided by the Commonwealth Government and the private sector***

Locally and historically by far the biggest players in this are the Lands Councils who hold the land on behalf of their members, not all the Aboriginal community. This model does not necessarily sit well with all Aboriginal people within community. Some of the issues and known risks include lack of strong leadership in governance and management, poor decision-making and financial management and siloed interests with factional agenda.

Better outcomes will be achieved with stronger partnerships between community groups such as has been demonstrated through the work of the Manning Aboriginal Community Working Party.

Attention should be given to addressing the impact of competition for funding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal NGOs.

Partnerships can be established between all levels of government, but the impact of budget cuts at the federal level should not be underestimated.

### ***Establishment and sustainability of Aboriginal owned enterprises***

The following principles should be given consideration:

- Exploration of future business opportunities should be undertaken in consultation with traditional custodians/elders
- Local Aboriginal people need to be engaged with projects in the early stages of planning and development.
- Barriers to employment such as criminal records linked to juvenile incarceration need to be addressed.
- Attention should be given to enhanced legal protection for traditional cultural knowledge holders to guard against exploitation.
- Programs need long term funding to create project continuity. This can be recurrent funding based on ongoing review of performance and community outcomes.

There are strengthening connections at a local level within Greater Taree between the arts and cultural community and the Aboriginal community. Some outstanding local projects have involved partnerships with arts organisations, libraries and performing arts organisations.

Locally various opportunities have been identified these include: cultural tourism such as cultural walks, cultural arts centre. Projects such as the Cattai Wetlands Interpretive Signage project represent a strong foundation for future collaborations with existing organisations such as the Biripi Elders Council and Gangga Marrang Arts.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission on behalf of Greater Taree City Council. If you require any further information on this submission, please contact me on the details below.

Yours sincerely

Margie Kirkness  
**Senior Leader Cultural Services**

On behalf of the General Manager – Ron Posselt