

**Supplementary
Submission
No 14a**

**INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

Organisation: Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation

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1st April 2016

The Honourable Greg Pearce MLC
Committee Chair

Dear Greg

**Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation Recommendation to NSW Standing Committee on
Aboriginal Economic Development for Aboriginal Communities**

Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation (WNAC) has demonstrated that Aboriginal tourism in the Upper and Lower Hunter is increasingly viewed as having development opportunities that can:

- **Increase economic viability in marginalised areas;**
- **Stimulate social regeneration; and**
- **Improve the living conditions of rural Aboriginal peoples and communities in the region.**

Potential cultural tourism ventures located on Wonnarua traditional country have been identified by WNAC. We believe there are opportunities to build commercial tourism here that are similar to those that have been established in less developed countries that attract tourists in search of new and authentic experiences in areas of unexploited nature and cultural riches.

The HUBS strategy shared by WNAC includes the clustering of activities and attractions around places of cultural significance to the Wonnarua people. This strategy delivers a number of meaningful outcomes:

- **Stimulates co-operation and partnerships between local communities.**
- **Encourages important community participation.**
- **Provides visible and authentic opportunities for government and community collaboration.**
- **Provides development of small-scale Aboriginal enterprise in regional and remote areas.**
- **Strengthens tourism in general in the Upper and Lower Hunter region.**

To realise these outcomes and to effectively facilitate practical support to Aboriginal economic ideas that come from the community level the NSW Government needs to not just look, but see; and not just listen, but hear.

Therefore WNAC's recommendation is that the NSW Government helps each Aboriginal community seeking support know how to tackle and overcome unnecessary bureaucratic processes that currently exist when seeking support from the Government. More often than not, these bureaucratic processes demoralise and destroy community aspirations and hope, and as a result community ideas do not progress.

WNAC welcomes the opportunity to discuss this recommendation, and specifically the relationships, mechanisms and funding necessary to progress and achieve this recommendation. We offer the following perspectives, insights and experience to be discussed:

- **Individuals in the community have different skill levels, capabilities, education and work history. Consequently their ability to access real employment opportunities vary greatly. This is the case in the Hunter, as it is in most regional areas in Australia.**
- **The need to support these individuals is high. The amount of time, money and effort required to gain sustainable employment is generally on the individual and other agencies working to improve employment opportunities. The programs offered by big business to encourage employment typically do not support these people who are older and have little education or training.**
- **By creating our own HUBS we offer the opportunity of creating industries that are driven by our communities, are culturally sensitive and aware, and provide points-of-access to employment for these individuals that face the barriers outlined above. These points-of-access are in the form of culturally appropriate on-the-job training and working environments, and jobs that suit the individuals rather than jobs that suit big business or more traditional employment criteria. The HUBS concept offers a range of employment from low to high skill levels, plus ongoing support through partnerships within the community that can build on each individuals skill and work experience.**
- **The HUBS we aspire to develop require passion, time, effort and money. They are bigger than one person and involve the whole community to become a reality. This involves both financial and non-financial support that focuses on the various HUB entities for the benefit of individuals.**
- **We seek funding that will seed fund our ability to eventually generate our own income. We do not want to be reliant on grant funding forever.**

Yours truly

Laurie Perry

CEO WNAC