

MINUTES

ABORIGINAL REFERENCE GROUP



9:30AM ON WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 2024

PRESENT	
Cr Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery	Brendan Newton
Cr Cath Blakey	Aunty Sharralyn Robinson
Brad Anderson	

IN ATTENDANCE	
Joshua Wiffen - Chair	Emma Bedwin – Engagement Coordinator
Jacinda Marando – Minute Taker	Sophie McCrea – Engagement Officer (Acting)
Sue Savage – Divisional Manager Community Culture + Engagement	Ali Bradford – Community Support Services Manager (Acting)
Nikki Romanczukiewicz – Procurement & Supply Manager	Andrew Fuller – Inventory Supply Coordinator
Sam Crosby – Education & Outreach Specialist	Alinta Maguire – Art Curator Cadet
Trudy Costa – Coastal Environment Officer	Daniel Sandona – Strategic Projects Coordinator (Acting)

1 WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2 APOLOGIES – Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Aunty Michele Moore, Errolyn Strang, Leanne Olive and Kathleen Cambourn.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – NIL

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL 2024 – CONFIRMED

5 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

SENIOR ABORIGINAL POLICY ADVISOR POSITION – Sue Savage provided an update on the Senior Aboriginal Policy Advisor position which went out for advertisement on 16 December 2023. Interviews have been completed, and a preferred applicant has been determined. An offer will be made in the coming weeks.

6 UNIFORMS –

A Council uniforms discussion was raised for plans of Indigenous artwork on Wollongong City Council outdoor uniforms, with commission of a local artist to design the artwork, and a potential of one allocation per year for staff.

The following suggestions were provided during the meeting:

- A competition to be run with prize money for attraction.
- Suitable timeframes and criteria to be established.
- Council must avoid favouritism by undertaking a Tender process to ensure fairness and equality.
- Clear parameters to be outlined in the competition advertisement.
- Invitation solely for Illawarra artists to keep it localised.

Additional information and an update will be provided at the next meeting in June 2024.

7 RAP ENGAGEMENT –

An update was provided on the current development of Wollongong Council's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan for 2024-2026. So far, Council have shared discussions about reconciliation to children and young people from KU Corrimal East Preschool, Bellambi Public School, Nareena Hills Public School, and Illawarra Sports High School.

Council staff have also participated in reconciliation workshops and yarning circles with Elders to collaboratively coming up with actions. A total of 90 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Council staff and 10 Elders have been consulted from these engagement sessions, and a set of common themes and drafted ideas have been established. Our vision aspires to be a culturally safe workplace, where all staff take action to achieve meaningful reconciliation and have genuine relationships with the First Nation community. Ali has encouraged for everyone to review the statements and share any feedback and ideas at the next Aboriginal Reference Group meeting in June 2024.

8 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

WASTE STRATEGY – We are in the process of developing the Wollongong City Council 10-year waste strategy for 2024-2034. Internal engagement has been held with staff about the priorities and broad goals, with actions to still be set. The main priorities are to reduce waste to landfill, transition to a circular economy, reduce our waste related emissions and improve our waste management. The strategy has not commenced formally and will not be available to the public yet. The Engagement Team seek advice and guidance from the Aboriginal community on managing waste better. Suggestions of discussions on Connecting to Country workshops with principles on Country caring approach, and to minimise what we are currently using, and to focus on why it's important to Country. Council will be looking at hosting online engagement sessions and community workshops to get a successful waste management strategy. Trudy Costa shared information on an upcoming Circular Plastics Illawarra Forum at UOW Innovation Campus on 10 May. This forum will share learnings about recent advancements in soft plastics recycling and bans on single use plastics, with an overall objective to encourage a circular economy and reduce waste in the Illawarra.

WEST DAPTO – The West Dapto area delivery and operational plan will go on exhibition display until 7 May 2024, and will remain on the exhibition period for a minimum of 1 month.

PORT KEMBLA SKATE PARK – The Port Kembla skate park is currently on exhibition with a significant amount of engagement that's been held already. The closing date of the feedback from the community will be Monday 15 April 2024.

FLOOD STUDIES – Our Engagement team have closed some flood studies in light of the recent flooding in the area. The flood study will be on hold for approximately 2 weeks during this time. In recent engagement studies, the importance of the creek lines has been raised.

LAKE ILLAWARRA ENTRANCE – The Lake Illawarra Entrance project is currently underway with key stakeholders, but not for community consultation. This project is getting ready for engagement soon.

9 DEVELOPMENT OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PROVISION AT WOLLONGONG BOTANIC GARDEN

Sam Crosby shared details about the progress of Aboriginal education services at Wollongong Botanic Garden. Currently, an EOI is being prepared and will soon be made available to the public. This opportunity is open to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who are interested in contributing to the development and facilitation of programs and workshops across various locations, including Mt Keira, Puckey's Estate, Glennifer Brae, and other open spaces. The scope of these initiatives encompasses school excursions, workshops for public and community groups, evening and weekend events, tours, and programs.

Sam enquired with the Aboriginal community about the necessary steps to effectively engage with the Aboriginal community for business opportunities and expression of interest distribution in an appropriate manner. It was suggested that Council should ensure to draw local and to provide commitment in doing so.

Approximately 20 years ago at the Discovery Centre, a series of Aboriginal artefacts were donated to the Wollongong Botanic Gardens by a collector in South Australia, with no record of province of items. Some have been determined that they might not be artefacts from our local area.

Suggestion for the artwork to be stored properly in glass and in cabinetry to preserve the art life. In order to determine the province of the items, it is recommended to speak to the Elders and to locate the original Country by viewing markings and carvings on the wood.

10 CREATIVE WOLLONGONG YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL

CREATIVE WOLLONGONG YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL – The Lake Illawarra management project is collaborating with several project partners such as Bus Stop Films, Coequal, CareWays, Shellharbour City Council, and Screen Illawarra for a Youth Film Festival, called Creative Wollongong Short Film Competition 2024. Applicants must be 12 years and older and the key topic of the festival is Water, which can be included as an object, location, or an overall theme. Film makers are encouraged to focus on the aquatic wonders of our local environment: Lake Illawarra, beaches, rock pools or creeks in the local area. There are two categories; Category 1 is for 12-24 years, and Category 2 is for 24 years

plus. All short film submission entries are accepted via Wollongong City Council’s website and will close on Wednesday 31 July 2024. The film competition will be an outdoor screening, revealing the winner’s film of the competition on Lake Illawarra. Council is holding several free and low-cost workshops to help build skills and learn how to make film. One of the first film editing workshops will be held in Shellharbour on 4 May 2024, with 10 spots available.

LAKE ILLAWARRA COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE – Expressions of Interest for the Implementation Group are still being sought after, with two vacant positions available. Surveys with the community are being looked at to be held over the next few months. Council is looking at developing a signage master plan, and there are ideas of a public art trail, in addition to cultural education opportunities such as lake walk and talks with walk on Country to encourage education and knowledge. There have also been discussions on cultural fishing, Aboriginal fishing, and cockle harvesting. A bank erosion study was completed 1-2 years ago, and a consultation with community on nature bank methods to protect natural environments and restoring natural habitat. Input and community knowledge is required. Trudy to relay information back to the Aboriginal Reference Group once further developed.

11 ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED AT THE NEXT MEETING

SENIOR ABORIGINAL POLICY ADVISOR POSITION – Sue Savage to provide an update on the successful appointment of the Senior Aboriginal Policy Advisor position.

If anyone would like to propose an item for discussion, please forward the information to Josh Wiffen for inclusion at the next meeting.

12 GENERAL BUSINESS

NAIDOC AWARDS 2024 – The Local Government Regional NAIDOC Awards 2024 will be hosted by Shoalhaven City Council. Nominations for awards closed on Monday 25 March 2024, and will be assessed on Monday 15 April 2024.

ABORIGINAL REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERSHIP – There has been a few withdrawals of memberships for the Aboriginal Reference Group. Elections for new memberships will soon be sought after via an EOI process. Additional information will follow at an upcoming meeting.

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL – Brendan Newton shared information of a recent mountain bike trail discussion and community consultation with Aboriginal Lands Council. Two sections of land were sought with an extension of trail to Mt Kiera Road. Further information to be provided at the next meeting.

SYDNEY MUSEUM: COOMADITCHIE ART – Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery provided information of an upcoming exhibition at The Sydney Museum called Coomaditchie: The Art of Place, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation in 1993. The exhibition showcases First Nations artworks, paintings, and ceramics.

13 NEXT MEETING – **WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2024 FROM 9:30AM TO 11:30AM**

The meeting concluded at 11:06am.

Minutes to be confirmed at the next meeting to be held at 9:30am on Wednesday 12 June 2024.

2024 – Future Meeting Schedule		
Wednesday 12 June 2024	Level 10 Committee Room 2 & 3	9.30am – 11.30am
Wednesday 14 August 2024	Level 10 Committee Room 2 & 3	9.30am – 11.30am
Wednesday 9 October 2024	Level 10 Committee Room 2 & 3	9.30am – 11.30am
Wednesday 11 December 2024	Level 10 Committee Room 2 & 3	9.30am – 11.30am

ACTION SUMMARY

Item	Action	Officer	Status
8	Trudy Costa to forward an invitation to the Circulate Plastics Illawarra Forum to Josh Wiffen and Jacinda Marando to disseminate to Aboriginal Reference Group members.		Completed