



Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council

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13 April 2017

Ms Lucy Hughes Turnbull AO
Chief Commissioner
Greater Sydney Commission
PO Box 257
Parramatta NSW 2124

OUR REF: DLALCGSCChiefComm130417

Attention Mr Sean O'Toole – District Commission - West

Dear Mr O'Toole

Re: The Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council ("DLALC") and the Greater Sydney Commission ("GSC") – Outcomes from meeting convened on 12 April 2017.

Many thanks for our very helpful meeting convened at the DLALC's Parramatta Gaol site yesterday. We appreciate your clarity and goodwill in relation to issues of concern to the DLALC.

From our meeting three issues emerged for our immediate attention, we would like to add one further ancillary issue for your consideration.

1. The proposed mapping of the DLALC's land by NSW government agencies

As noted in our letter to the Chief Commissioner of 20 March 2017, an action in the GSC's district plans states that the Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Planning and Environment, and Aboriginal Affairs *"will collaborate to map Aboriginal-owned lands, places of significance, local community organisations and public art and place making projects and events celebrating Aboriginal history"*.

We respectfully ask the GSC to stop the mapping of the DLALC's land by NSW government agencies as stated in the district plans.

We would like the GSC's written confirmation that you have removed the DLALC from this proposed action. Our reason for asking for written advice is so that we can quickly answer any inquiries from NSW government agencies about this issue. We note that the DLALC stands ready to work directly with the GSC in relation to the mapping and consideration of its land holdings, we further note we have significant existing map resources (digital and otherwise) to assist this process.

2. A written agreement between the DLALC and the GSC about our engagement.

At our meeting we discussed drafting a written agreement to guide the relationship between the GSC and the DLALC generally. We broadly agreed to use our best endeavours to settle a "statement of principles" between us that can form the foundation of such an agreement.

The DLALC welcomes your offer to consider such an agreement and sees it as a respectful and appropriate vehicle for the GSC to engage with an Aboriginal party such as the DLALC.

In the DLALC's respectful view, it is simply inappropriate for the GSC and the DLALC's relationship to be in any way moderated by NSW government agencies.

As discussed, the DLALC will turn its mind to a first draft of a statement of principles and submit them to you for consideration. We hope to have a first draft to you by Friday 21 April 2017.

3. The GSC and other Local Aboriginal Land Councils ("LALCs")

In our letter of 20 March 2017 and our meeting yesterday we advised you that other LALCs within the scope of the GSC's work have similar characteristics to the DLALC. In particular; the Gandangara, Tharawal and Metropolitan LALCs.

We would strongly encourage the GSC to engage with those LALCs on the same basis as the DLALC. All, like the DLALC are major land owners in their areas.

The DLALC would be happy to assist the GSC with its engagement with these other LALCs if the GSC sees merit in doing so. At our own initiative, the DLALC will inform those other LALCs of its dialogue with the GSC, without breaching any confidence between us.

4. The GSC and Aboriginal Affairs proposed Aboriginal engagement strategy

On 3 March 2017 Aboriginal Affairs invited the DLALC to a “workshop” concerning the GSC’s work, scheduled for 8 March 2017.

We were advised;

“Aboriginal Affairs is working with the GSC to develop an Aboriginal engagement strategy. The proposed workshop was the first step in this process. Our approach has been to ensure Aboriginal interests are included in the planning instruments, including economic development consideration.”

In our letter of 20 March 2017 we informed the GSC that any such process devised by the GSC and NSW government agencies would be at best peripheral to the engagement by the DLALC of the GSC. Our reasons for this were made clear in our previous letter.

Our strong preference is to engage with the GSC by way of the agreement discussed at point 2 above.

It will be helpful if the GSC can inform Aboriginal Affairs that it has a direct, respectful and when appropriate confidential relationship with the DLALC and that the DLALC does not need to participate in the proposed Aboriginal engagement strategy.

It was clear to us at the conclusion of yesterday’s meeting that there are profound implications for the DLALC in the work of the GSC. Particularly in the West District¹, the future wellbeing and prosperity of the DLALC’s members and all Aboriginal people in the DLALC’s area are critical issues for the GSC.

¹ We note the importance of the DLALC’s Parramatta Gaol site land holding to the Central West District

We reiterate our view that the only way to properly address these critical issues is a direct relationship and dialogue between the DLALC and the GSC.

We look forward to our next meeting with you, may we suggest that the meeting is scheduled after you have considered the anticipated draft statements of principle.

Please have the relevant GSC officer contact Mr Stephen Wright, Chief Operating Officer, DLALC, if you wish to discuss this letter or arrange the meeting we suggest.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Cavanagh', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Cavanagh

Chief Executive Officer

Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council