

MINUTES

ABORIGINAL REFERENCE GROUP

9:30AM ON WEDNESDAY 14 AUGUST 2024



PRESENT	
Cr Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery	Brendan Newton
Cr Cath Blakey	Aunty Sharralyn Robinson
Brad Anderson	Leanne Olive
Aunty Michele Moore	

IN ATTENDANCE	
Sue Savage - Chair	Meegan Martinez – Community Safety Officer
Jacinda Marando – Minute Taker	Dale Wright – Community Engagement Officer
Sarah Dawson – Senior Aboriginal Policy Advisor	Sam Crosby – Education and Outreach Specialist
Alison Bradford – Community Development + Engagement Manager	Tracey Kirk-Downey – Community Development Worker - Children and Families
Natalie Nardo – Events + Functions Officer	Susan Wardle – Events + Visual Strategy Manager
Aara Welz – Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council	Dr Virginia Keft – Artist, Performer + Researcher

- 1 WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY
- 2 APOLOGIES – Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Kathleen Cambourn.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – NIL
- 4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2024 – CONFIRMED
- 5 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES –
SENIOR ABORIGINAL POLICY ADVISOR POSITION – The announcement regarding the successful appointment of the Senior Aboriginal Policy Advisor position was communicated to the Aboriginal Reference Group on 24 July 2024. It is with great pleasure that we announce Sarah Dawson's appointment to this role, during which she was warmly welcomed and introduced to the Aboriginal Reference Group by Sue Savage.
NAIDOC FUNDING RESPONSE – Kerry Hunt and Aunty Sharralyn Robinson met recently to discuss future funding of NAIDOC Grants. This is being progressed.
- 6 ILALC COASTAL CULTURAL PROTECTION –
Aara Welz from Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council presented to discuss the Coastal Resilience Project; a project about Illawarra's cultural heritage and artefacts that are being impacted by sea erosion and sea level rise. Ongoing consultations to be held with the community with programs to identify assets, manage issues on the coastline and the best way to plan for the future. Confirmed funding for technical study for the resilience project. Aara has confirmed that the next 3 months will see through 1:1 conversations, gatherings and BBQs with the community which is open to any level of involvement. Funding has been confirmed for 8 rangers to complete an accreditation drone course. Feedback being sought with Aboriginal Reference Group on how to run a better project.
- 7 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE –
CULTURE MIX 2024 – Dr Virginia Keft has been invited to the Aboriginal Reference Group meeting to discuss her participation in Culture Mix 2024 and to undertake an art project. A community program will be conducted, which will subsequently be integrated into a collaborative artwork project set to be showcased at Culture Mix 2024.

The following Aboriginal program elements have been confirmed for Culture Mix 2024:

Welcome Ceremony

- Welcome to Country – Aunty Barb
- Smoking Ceremony – Uncle Peter Button
- Dance - Kugang Djarmbi

Performance

- Bula Duraya- Dale and Eric, performance & interactive cultural dance workshop – DJ Space
- Cooee – Kirli and co – Global Stage
- Djaadjawan Dancers & Deua Duraya Dancers – Celebration Stage
- Walwaay Maayul (Young Warriors) – Yidaki Group - World Stage
- Yanggam Burri Burri dancers for Baraya Barray Whale Song – Celebration Stage

Major Creative Project

- Dr Virginia Keft - Aboriginal artist, working with older people to create installation – Town Hall
- Dylan Maguire – Young Aboriginal artist – Hoarding Mural Project – Crown Street Mall

Workshops/Displays

- Buribun Art – Weaving – Library Program
- Penny Towney – Talk, Q&A, art, screening - Library Program
- Whale Song – Poems on display – Library Program
- Coomaditchie – Drop-in activity - Crown Street Mall Bazaar TBC
- Yindyamarra – Boomerang Painting and Ochre Painting - Crown Street Mall Bazaar
- Adam Towney – Kids craft activity - Gallery Program

Retail

- Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation
- Yindyamarra Cultural Experience
- Caressa Designs
- Buribun Art
- Aussie Didg Arts and Craft
- Chocolate On Purpose

Other

- Invited Aunty Shas and women to play drums - women's circle – Creative Sessions
- Elders invite to be disseminated mid-August and transport to be arranged

8 26 JANUARY 2025 ACTIVITIES –

In 2023, revisions were undertaken for January 24 to improve its cultural sensitivity and awareness, with the colonial aspect elements of the day removed, as well as carnival rides. Some ideas for change with 26 January 2025 included: Aquathon to commence at 8am, Citizen Ceremony at 10am, and the WCC event 5pm with fireworks at 9.30pm. The event in the evening to include Aboriginal elements with Aboriginal recognition, Smoking Ceremony, Welcome to Country, Aboriginal art workshops with lantern making and paint decorating. When night falls, there will be a lantern parade. There will also be contemporary roving dance music, with Aboriginal dance performances. The plan still stands to hold fireworks, and all Australian music soundtrack including First Nations artists.

Aboriginal Reference Group have made suggestions that there should be truth telling stories to share history on the day of the event. Increase presence of cultural aspects

The Australia Day Awards have now been changed to City of Wollongong Awards and will be presented in early February 2025

It was acknowledged that using the term Australia Day at the ARG could be offensive and we could use 26 January instead.

9 SAFER CITIES HER WAY PROJECT –

Safer Cities: Her Way project, a collaborative partnership project between Wollongong City Council and Transport for NSW has now closed. The \$1M TfNSW funded program's aim was to improve the safety for women, girls, and gender diverse people while walking, moving to, through and within the public spaces of Wollongong CBD, Dapto and Port Kembla. From this project, there were several activations throughout such as live music events, movies in the park and exercise in the park which were successful and received positive feedback. The key recommendations from the initiatives included enhancing lighting, which was achieved through the installation of numerous fairy lights at MacCabe Park and Dapto Square, as well as festoon lights in Port Kembla. The project also involved the removal of the damaged shade canopy sail at Dapto Park, along with the installation of garden beds, bench seating, and artwork in the vicinity of Dapto Square. No additional on-going funding has been confirmed.

10 DISCOVERY CENTRE UPDATE

Sam Crosby provided an update on the Aboriginal artefacts (25 items in total) that have been stored at the Discovery Centre. These artefacts have been catalogued, and the works and condition reports have been executed. The artefacts have been carefully placed in archive boxes to preserve their condition. The next steps are to find out what to do with the artefacts. There was a prior proposal to display these artefacts in glass cabinetry, but this will not go ahead anymore.

The Wollongong Botanic Garden will also be hosting a free hands-on activity called Nature Shake on 6-7 September 2024 from 12-4pm. The event invites anyone to come along to shake up their nature knowledge. The event will have many Aboriginal cultural providers and will host several activities and games such as nature-play, bird bingo, Aboriginal cultural activities, and waste and biodiversity games. The event anticipates welcoming 300 children over the dates. If anyone would like a copy of this flyer, please contact Sam Crosby, Education and Outreach Specialist.

11 ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Dale presented an overview of his responsibilities and ongoing project at Wollongong Botanic Garden, which focuses on integrating cultural providers into the gardens with the objective of highlighting Koori and Wadi Wadi representation. Notable initiatives include IAC buggy rides and bushtuckers. Dale's aim is to acquire knowledge about the garden from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives and to relay this information to the community and Elders. Currently, there is an Aboriginal horticultural cadet at Wollongong Botanic Garden whose ambition is to explore the cultural dimensions of the garden. Dale will collaborate closely with this cadet as well.

Dale raised the idea of public art at Hill 60 and showed an image to the group. It was noted by LM that this image is not very contemporary. Sue Savage advised that acquisition of public art needs to follow the public art policy and process and, in this instance, meet the objectives of the Masterplan linked to the site. This would require further consideration and investigation. Funds would also need to be sourced.

12 GENERAL BUSINESS

No items at present. If you would like to propose an item for discussion, please forward the information to Sue Savage for inclusion at an upcoming meeting.

13 ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISSOLUTION DUE TO COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Sue Savage announced the dissolution of the Aboriginal Reference Group meeting due to the upcoming Wollongong Council elections mid-September 2024. All Aboriginal Reference Group meetings for the remainder of 2024 will not be held. Membership and representation of the Aboriginal Reference Group will be confirmed via the usual EOI process once endorsed by the new Council.

Sue Savage expressed her sincere gratitude and bid farewell to Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery upon his retirement. We extend our best wishes to Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery. Additionally, it was conveyed that Cr Cath Blakey will not be seeking re-election as Councillor in the forthcoming elections. We also extend our best wishes to Cr Cath Blakey and appreciate her valuable contributions to the Aboriginal Reference Group during her term.

14 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be set and confirmed in due course.

The meeting concluded at 11:38am.

ACTION SUMMARY

Item	Action	Officer	Status
8	Look at obtaining Survival Book to guide for use of language/text for future Comms and Marketing	Chair	In progress