



New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council Corporate Plan 2008-2012



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Preamble to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.



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Chairperson's Foreword



This document is designed to outline the priorities of NSWALC in pursuit of our Vision during the period 2008-2012.

We are conscious, however, that our priorities will evolve and require periodic adjustment to coincide with those social, political and economic uncertainties no organisation can fully anticipate.

The document sets out in plain English what NSWALC is, what we do, and what we seek to achieve.

It has been released to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of land rights in New South Wales.

My fellow Councillors and I are conscious of the collective responsibility we now bear as the duly elected representatives of the peak Aboriginal organisation in NSW.

We stand united in our role as community leaders and advocates on issues directly affecting our people today and in the future.

As an elected Council we rely on the views, concerns and circumstances of our people in the vast and diverse Aboriginal communities throughout NSW for guidance in our desire to work for social equality and justice.

We aim to build upon the foundations already set in place by those who came before us.

We are committed to securing a sustainable and equitable future for our people. To do so, we must be innovative and proactive in pursuing our goals.

We recognise the fundamental importance of working with governments and other key stakeholders in all sectors of the community without compromising our cultural or corporate identity.

This Corporate Plan sets out our strategic framework. It outlines the critical success factors driving our organisation. In essence, it is the road map for our organisation. It allows us to navigate a path towards creating an inclusive society in which Aboriginal people enjoy sustained cultural, social and economic empowerment. I commend the document to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bev Manton'.

Bev Manton
Chairperson, NSWALC

Chief Executive Officer's Foreword



NSWALC is committed to ensuring a better future for all Aboriginal people in New South Wales by ensuring a strong collaboration between the work of our elected Board, those of Local Aboriginal Land Councils and respective staff.

Such a sustained cooperative relationship, combined with effective leadership and good governance, illustrates our collective commitment to achieving our corporate aims and objectives.

NSWALC acknowledges and respects the diverse range of problems and issues that confront individual Aboriginal Land Councils, their members and communities.

We have identified a set of corporate priority areas in line with this. These are set out in this document.

NSWALC seeks to deliver a range of cultural, social, economic and political outcomes against these priority areas. We are strongly committed to the continued development of all Aboriginal Land Councils, their Boards and their staff through quality service, advice and support.

A dedicated and united effort is required on the part of our elected Council, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and all staff to achieve this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Scott'.

Geoff Scott
Chief Executive Officer
NSWALC

Who we are

NSWALC will continue to advocate for a better future for Aboriginal people in NSW.

NSWALC is a self-funding statutory authority formally established under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW) with a mandate to secure and develop land rights for the Aboriginal people of NSW.

As the State's peak representative body in Aboriginal affairs, NSWALC protects the interests and aims to further the aspirations and improve the lives of its members and the broader Aboriginal community by providing high quality support and advice to Aboriginal people across NSW through our Local Aboriginal Land Council network.

NSWALC will continue to advocate for a better future for Aboriginal people in NSW by upholding our fundamental social, cultural and economic rights and independence, work for the return of culturally significant and economically viable land, as well as sustain a strong political position that provides for positive influence in all government reform or policy agendas.

NSWALC functions are prescribed by the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.

It is this Act which provides NSWALC with the authority to undertake our role as the primary provider of cultural, social and economic empowerment.

Through the mandate provided by the Aboriginal people in 121 Local Aboriginal Land Council communities, the elected Council and staff are able to fulfil the functions of the Act.

Our Structure and Membership

The Council

The elected arm of NSWALC comprises nine democratically elected Councillors.

Each represents one of the 9 Regions throughout NSW.

All are elected from the Local Aboriginal Land Council network to represent their collective views and aspirations during a four year term.

The Governing Council elects its own Chairperson and Office Bearers.

Their salaries are determined, independent of NSWALC, by the NSW Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal.

The Governing Council is supported in its representative and statutory functions by a small staff contingent.

Based in Parramatta, NSWALC's Head Office, and zone offices are strategically managed and directed by a Chief Executive Officer with the delegated authority of the Council to assume responsibility for all day-to-day operations.

The organisation has traditionally been structured around a range of management and support areas including Finance and Administration, Network Services, Commercial, Legal Services, Governance, Human Resources, and Training & Development.



The Council: (from top row L-R) Neville 'Jack' Hampton (South Coast Region), Bev Manton (Central Coast Region), Patricia Laurie (North Coast Region), Stephen Ryan (Central Region), Steve Gordon (North West Region), Tom Briggs (Northern Region), Craig Cromelin (Wiradjuri Region), William Murray (Western Region), and Roy Ah-See (Sydney/Newcastle Region).

Local Aboriginal Land Councils

The principal client of NSWALC is the network of Local Aboriginal Land Councils which are located across 9 regions throughout New South Wales.

The number of LALCs within each region ranges from ten to twenty one.

There are currently a total of 121 Local Aboriginal Land Council registered across the State.

These Councils collectively manage the range of support services delivered at the local level to their communities.

These services include housing, legal affairs, employment, training and property acquisition and management.

This structure is designed to achieve the highest degree of representation and participation for Aboriginal people.

The on-going priority for NSWALC is to ensure that all of our Local Aboriginal Land Councils are afforded timely advice and direction on matters relevant to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, and supported through high level training and development to build their capacity to strategically plan and manage their affairs at their local level.

LALCs manage the range of support services delivered at the local level to their communities including housing, legal affairs, employment, training and property acquisition and management.

Other Stakeholders

NSWALC deals with a range of government, non-government and private sector stakeholders in carrying out its functions. The nature and extent of our dealings with relevant stakeholders vary from time to time. They are often dependent on what function each stakeholder represents and their significance to the operations of NSWALC and Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council is committed to working with all relevant stakeholders to improve outcomes for our people.

Council has resolved to:

- Maintain and strengthen existing partnerships with our LALC network to optimise performance and maximise potential for economic, social and cultural growth and prosperity at the local level.
- Maintain and strengthen existing partnership arrangements with our government and non-government stakeholders to optimise performance and maximise the potential for economic, social and cultural growth and prosperity across all regions throughout NSW.
- Maintain and strengthen existing partnership arrangements and develop new partnership arrangements with private sector stakeholders to optimise performance and maximise the potential for economic, social and cultural growth and prosperity across all regions throughout NSW.

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council is committed to working with all relevant stakeholders to improve outcomes for our people.

Our Values

NSWALC recognises and respects the diversity of the Aboriginal people of NSW and their communities.

We do, however, share a number of core values. We seek to act in accordance with these values.

These include:

- Returning land to the Aboriginal people of NSW
- Protecting culture and heritage
- Seeking the provision of adequate services and resources for our people and communities
- Seeking to ensure safe communities and social equality through areas such as education and employment
- Upholding the inherent right of all Aboriginal people to freely participate culturally, socially, economically and politically in all sectors of the community
- Ensuring long term opportunities and sustainability are available to all.

NSWALC seeks to work within these core values to:

- Perform our functions in a culturally appropriate manner and respect community diversity.
- Lead by example in the conduct of all of our operations by seeking to ensure integrity, honesty, respect and transparency in all of our dealings with our communities.
- Be accountable, wherever possible, to our clients and stakeholders..
- Uphold the principles and values of social justice.
- Be responsive to the aspirations and needs of NSW Aboriginal people and continually advocate the need for real and sustainable outcomes.
- Actively pursue the recruitment and professional development of dedicated Aboriginal staff.
- Respect and value the diversity and contributions of all NSWALC staff.

Delivering Outcomes.

As the peak representative body for the Aboriginal people in NSW, we seek to take a leading role in improving the lives of our people through sound stewardship, advocacy and economic empowerment.

In accordance with our corporate priorities, our values, and the responsibility that we have been entrusted with by our people and our communities, we seek to:

- Assist in ensuring Aboriginal people in New South Wales enjoy a sustainable social and cultural environment by seeking to close the gap on poverty and improve health and living standards through tightly targeted community benefit schemes and evidence based advocacy;
- Target and increase our advocacy towards relevant State and Federal government bodies or agencies, particularly funding agencies ;
- Assist our people in having access to, and contributing towards, a sustainable economic environment, including appropriate education and training and sustainable employment; and
- Promote safe and secure environments for our people and communities

Corporate Priorities

NSWALC has a number of key corporate priorities which are set out below along with the outcomes we seek to achieve .

Advocacy and Rights

1

As the peak representative body, NSWALC has the responsibility to pursue cultural, social and economic independence for Aboriginal people. NSWALC is committed to improving the first nations status for Aboriginal people and ensuring that fundamental human rights are recognised and sustained.

We will continue to work for:

- The return of culturally significant and economically viable land
- Seek to influence policy and reform agendas of the NSW and Commonwealth governments through leadership and reliable evidence-based advice and research.
- Continue to provide advocacy and support in attaining and upholding fundamental human rights for Aboriginal people both nationally and internationally.

Strong Leadership and Governance

2

NSWALC is committed to strong leadership, good governance, integrity and accountability in all Aboriginal organisations in NSW. We will continue to develop, promote and maintain a highly efficient, financially robust and professionally managed organisation.

NSWALC seeks to lead by example in all sectors of the community focussing on good governance, leadership and accountability.

In this crucial area we seek to:

- Lead by example throughout our organisation and network
- Demonstrate efficient and effective services in day-to-day operations of the organisation.
- Ensure ethical and responsible decision-making practices throughout the organisation and network.
- Maintain efficient and effective policies and procedures applicable to the entire network.
- Provide training and development opportunities to enhance career progression for all NSWALC and LALC staff.
- Be regarded in the wider community as an employer of choice.

Productive and Meaningful Partnerships

NSWALC is committed to the pursuit of strong, productive and meaningful partnerships with all relevant stakeholders. We believe this can assist in delivering opportunities for economic, social and cultural growth and prosperity for Aboriginal people across all regions throughout NSW.

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In this respect NSWALC will continue to:

- Identify and develop strategic partnership opportunities for economic, social and cultural growth and sustainability.
- Strengthen existing partnerships and arrangements in both public and private sectors.
- Develop training and development strategies which enhance the capacity of LALCs and their members to effectively engage in successful partnership arrangements with government, non-government and private sector stakeholders at the local community level.

Community Health and Well-Being

NSWALC is appalled by the poor health, well being and lack of opportunity in our communities and the 17 year-gap in life expectancy between our people and the general population.

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NSWALC will maintain and strengthen its advocacy to ensure meaningful personal and community health outcomes are achieved throughout all regions of NSW.

We will do so by:

- Promoting Aboriginal community health and well-being as a critical priority and vigorously advocate the need for genuine reform.
- Actively contribute to annual Aboriginal community network health and well-being reviews and audits at both the state and national level.
- In collaboration with the LALC network and health providers, facilitate productive health and well-being partnerships to enhance performance outcomes at the local community level.
- Seek to improve access to social services for the LALC network.

Land, Cultural Heritage and Environmental Management

5

Land claims are core business for NSWALC, particularly given land is the only form of compensation for dispossession now available under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act. NSWALC will continue to focus on working with Local Aboriginal Land Councils to acquire cultural and economically viable land and to ensure the prudent management and development of that land.

We will do so by:

- Developing a business case for the return of all Aboriginal sites in NSW.
- Developing guidelines that identify, protect and preserve cultural heritage in accordance with the traditional customs, obligations and responsibilities of individual Traditional Owner groups throughout NSW.
- Establishing an effective communications process to monitor all land developments to ensure the culturally proficient identification, protection and preservation of all cultural heritage sites across all regions of NSW.
- Providing advice, support and direction to Local Aboriginal Land Councils in developing a culture and archival centre for NSW.

Community Development and Planning

6

NSWALC has a social and statutory obligation to develop and enhance the capacity of our Local Aboriginal Land Councils. We will continue to provide guidance and support to all Local Aboriginal Land Councils in their process of identifying specific management, planning and development needs.

We will do so by:

- Conducting annual local network training.
- Establishing community planning and business development partnership arrangements with local governments, industry and businesses.
- Actively promoting Aboriginal home ownership strategies.
- Promoting the need to develop an Aboriginal Housing Loan System to provide affordable and manageable home loans to increase Aboriginal home ownership.

Innovation, Learning and Continuous Improvement

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NSWALC will maintain a proactive approach to learning and continuous improvement. We will continue to research and develop modern and innovative methods in this area to deliver real outcomes which strengthen our communities and the capacity of Aboriginal people.

NSWALC is committed to:

- Pursuing additional funding from external sources to grow and strengthen the financial capacity of NSWALC's Education Endowment Fund and to advocate for further educational opportunities for Aboriginal people;
- Monitor performance outcomes linked to NSWALC's Education Endowment Fund, particularly in relation to the provision of scholarships; and
- Seek and retain professional and committed people in our workplace.

Wealth Generation and Commerce

NSWALC and the land council network is self funded. Taxpayers funding to NSWALC's Statutory Investment Fund ended ten years ago.

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We are committed to ensuring commercial and financial sustainability by engaging in sound commercial and business opportunities underpinned by independent professional advice.

NSWALC aims to work in collaboration with all relevant industries to maximise financial, employment and capacity building opportunities for all Aboriginal people and their communities.

We will do so by:

- Seeking to maximise financial returns and growth of NSWALC Statutory Fund through prudent management ;
- Developing community-based Aboriginal Employment Strategies ;
- Promote the development of initiatives to enhance Aboriginal employment and training outcomes ;
- Monitor the business and industry environment to identify suitable and viable commercial enterprise opportunities for Aboriginal people ;
- Pursue partnerships with key industry groups to build commercial and economic sustainability for Aboriginal people.

Commitment and Vision

By 2012, we believe NSWALC will have made a significant contribution to bringing about an inclusive society where Aboriginal people are truly represented and empowered culturally, socially and economically.

NSWALC will seek to lead by example.

We will do so by demonstrating a professional and unified commitment to working with our communities and stakeholders to develop equitable commercial outcomes and opportunities aimed at addressing past injustices and alleviating the social and economic disadvantage that continue to affect our people.

We aim to ensure:

- Aboriginal people of NSW will be living more sustainable livelihoods through improved access to essential social services.
- NSWALC will be an effective advocate, actively participating in setting the policy agenda for the Aboriginal people of NSW.
- Aboriginal people of NSW will benefit economically, socially and culturally as a result of productive partnerships established and sustained by NSWALC and our stakeholders.
- NSWALC will have contributed to significant advances in rights and status.
- NSWALC will have contributed to safe and healthy communities.
- There will be an increased Aboriginal people's presence in the commercial and political environment.
- NSWALC will have assisted in all Local Aboriginal Land Councils taking full control of and responsibility for their economic, social and cultural affairs.

NSWALC will have assisted in all Local Aboriginal Land Councils taking full control of and responsibility for their economic, social and cultural affairs.



Our logo reflects our feelings about New South Wales, our land and our people. It is painted with the colours of the Aboriginal flag.

The black represents our pride in the colour of our skin. The red is, of course, our mother earth, so crucial to our cultural, social, spiritual and economic survival. She gives life to the yellow tree, the colour of the sun and the symbol of our growing Land Council network.