

MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
The Hon. Paul Lynch MP**



29 April 2010

Northern Regional Partnership a step forward

The NSW Government today signaled its support for the Regional Partnership Agreement between 14 Local Aboriginal Land Councils in the Northern Region.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Paul Lynch met with NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) Northern Region Councillor Tom Briggs in Armidale today to discuss the agreement.

Mr Lynch said the NSW Government would provide \$50,000 to facilitate the agreement.

The Agreement will bring together the following Local Aboriginal Land Councils:

Amaroo	Anaiwan
Armidale	Ashford
Coonabarabran	Dorrigo Plateau
Glen Innes	Guyra
Moombahlene	Nungaroo
Red Chief	Tamworth
Walhallow	Wanaruah

Mr Lynch said the Regional Partnership Agreement would help build stronger relationships within the 14 communities.

“By identifying and agreeing on priorities and actions, governments and local Aboriginal communities can deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal people,” he said.

Mr Lynch said the NSW Government continued to work in partnership with Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

“For example, the NSW Government has entered into a 25-year, \$200 million partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to build and upgrade water and sewerage infrastructure in Aboriginal communities,” he said.

Tom Briggs, Acting Chair of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and Councillor for the Northern Region said the Regional Partnership Agreement represented the beginning of a new era of cooperative engagement with the NSW government at a local level.

“The NSW Aboriginal Land Council’s joint water and sewerage program with the Keneally Government is a great example of what can be achieved when Aboriginal communities and governments work together.

“This Regional Partnership Agreement is a logical extension of that sort of focus on practical planning and agreement making.”

Cr Briggs said the RPA would better position Aboriginal land councils in the Northern Region to work effectively with government and the private sector to achieve long-term, sustainable social and economic outcomes.

“Fundamentally, we’re about trying to improve our lot in basic housing infrastructure, in job creation, in economic development, in leadership and in education. Government is obviously crucial to that process.

“Aboriginal people have always had the solutions to their problems, and the keys to their future. This process helps empower Aboriginal people to take the lead. It’s a community driven process and what’s most heartening about it is that the NSW Government has not only recognised that too, but is actively assisting in the process.

“Governments have had a chequered past in terms of effective delivery of services to Aboriginal people, and the truth is we still have a long way to go, and a lot to learn. But in recent years, Aboriginal people are finding the state government ready to engage in the interests of genuine progress.

“This is a long haul, and we’re only at the very beginning. But it’s an excellent start, and one that should give Aboriginal people not just in my region, but throughout the state, renewed hope of better outcomes.”

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