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**Darkinjung reaches agreement over new development at Halekulani**

After almost four years of consultation, Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) has reached an agreement with Wyong Shire Council for the proposed Guruwarang Waters development at Macleay Drive, Halekulani.

The proposal, which was lodged in 2012, has undergone numerous changes and amendments in order to meet the requirements of Council, the community and the cultural environment of the region.

In a statement on Monday, Darkinjung Chief Executive Officer Sean Gordon commented on the resilience of the Land Council and their determination to have the proposed project approved.

“I’m immensely proud of all those involved in the Guruwarang Waters project. Today has been a long time coming and our members’ unwavering support for our vision has been a pillar of strength on this journey,” said Sean.

The estate at Halekulani will consist of 99 lots on a 3.5 hectare area, with a portion of the development to be retained for Darkinjung members.

“Similar to our recent residential development – Menindee Ridge at Blue Haven – a percentage of the lots will be reserved for our members to ensure that we are continuing to maximise Aboriginal housing opportunities for our community,” continued Sean.

In 2012, Darkinjung commissioned a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of the site to assess the overall design of the proposed development.

Following the results of the assessment, the proposal underwent numerous revisions including adjustments to the design and infrastructure in relation to the potential social impact.

Darkinjung Chairperson Tina West discussed the various changes to the Guruwarang Waters plan, stating that careful consideration had been taken in order to meet the needs of the community and environment.

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“Darkinjung has continued to work with Wyong Shire Council, stakeholders and the community involved in the development to ensure that we have addressed a number of different elements raised in the Social Impact Assessment,” said Tina.

“We have reduced the number of lots from 251 to 99 to lessen vegetation loss and have amended the plan to reduce the potential impact on flora and fauna.

“We have ensured that there is adequate transport and child/family friendly facilities in place to cater for all ages. Plus, as part of the site, we will implement walking paths to connect residents to the greater Halekulani suburb,” concluded Tina.

Following Monday’s agreement between Wyong Shire Council and Darkinjung LALC, the Guruwarang Waters project is now ready to proceed through the regular development process in preparation for building to commence.

Sean Gordon went on to state that Guruwarang Waters will provide a strong economic and social environment, in addition to providing vital opportunities for members of the Indigenous community.

“This project will facilitate economic independence and create employment and enterprise development opportunities, both in the short and long term.

“This type development is essential to the ongoing success of Darkinjung as an autonomous Land Council and it will deliver tangible benefits that serve not only our purpose but the broader Central Coast region,” concluded Sean.

**-ENDS-**

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