

FEBRUARY 2013

# STAKEHOLDERS BULLETIN

## A message from the Chief Executive Officer

With 2012 marking a successful year for Darkinjung on many fronts, I can only hope that this year brings similar success and with it, a number of benefits to Darkinjung's members and the wider Central Coast community.

In 2013, Darkinjung will continue to advance the organisation's purpose of strengthening our position as a leader in business through promotion and advocacy that inspires and respects Aboriginal traditions and cultural values for the whole community. We aim to do this through a number of projects and initiatives, many of which are already underway.



We are strengthening our partnership with Gosford City Council by establishing Principles of Cooperation's agreement, which aims to acknowledge our role as a key decision maker within the local community.

In addition, we continue to protect local Aboriginal land interests by identifying and objecting to development applications which have the potential to threaten sites of Aboriginal cultural and heritage significance. Recently, Darkinjung lodged a formal objection to the Calga Sand Quarry Southern Extension, after numerous site surveys revealed that the subject land and its surroundings contain culturally significant objects and places forming a larger Aboriginal culture landscape.

We are also maximising our position as the largest land holder on the Central Coast. Our most recent development, Menindee Ridge at Blue Haven is selling well after the release of Stage One A lot sales in December last year. This development promises to provide a number of direct benefits to our members, including the retaining of two lots for affordable housing or home ownership.

Darkinjung recently hosted representatives from other Local Aboriginal Land Councils, as well as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello, who accepted an invitation to discuss the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. The meeting provided an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns surrounding the legislation.

I am confident that these and other projects will further cement Darkinjung's position as a Central Coast business leader and assist us in delivering positive and mutually beneficial outcomes to the region. - Sean Gordon



Local Aboriginal Land Council  
**DARKINJUNG**

# Kincumber Mountain

A positive outcome for all



In November, Darkinjung was successful in gaining title of part of Kincumber Mountain through the NSW Land and Environment Court.

An agreement was reached regarding the management and ownership of the site, with a covenant providing the state of New South Wales with enforcement powers and Gosford City Council with management power via a peppercorn lease of \$1.00 per annum. Ownership of the land will sit with Darkinjung.

The public positive covenants and the restrictions have been imposed to ensure that the land can be managed for the benefit of the Central Coast and beyond.

We are thrilled with this outcome, having worked with Gosford City Council for some time to reach a solution that respected the cultural significance of the land, whilst also allowing the community to enjoy its geography and proximity.

The covenant is the foundation for the development of a Plan of Management Agreement between Council and Darkinjung and guarantees that the land is available for the purposes of public recreation and nature conservation as part of the Gosford Coastal Open Space System.

Gosford City Mayor Lawrie McKinna said, "Council is in no doubt that this outcome not only respects the heritage of the land and its importance to our local Aboriginal community, but continues to allow use of the land for public recreation and nature conservation," he said.

"My predecessor Laurie Maher was particularly focused on a positive result such as this and I know he will take pride in this result," he continued.

The covenant ensures that the registered proprietor of the land cannot sell or lease it to another person without offering the State government the ability to purchase the land, ensuring it will remain as a public reserve into the future.

The site is set to form part of the Memorandum of Understanding between Darkinjung and Council to address ongoing management and preservation of Aboriginal Objects and Aboriginal cultural sites.

This landmark decision demonstrates that Aboriginal ownership can occur over crown reserve, whilst providing a positive outcome for the broader community.

# Menindee Ridge

## Darkinjung's new residential development

Darkinjung's new residential development Menindee Ridge, has seen much success, with the recently released stage one lots selling quickly. The Menindee Ridge project is the only residential development currently under construction on the Central Coast.

In line with the objectives of its Community Land and Business Plan 2012/2015, Darkinjung established this residential subdivision comprising of a large triangular piece of land with an area of 8.6 hectares, located on the western side of the Pacific Highway in Blue Haven.



The site is the last major land holding yet to be developed within the Blue Haven estate and will comprise of 109 lots which will be released as part of a three stage development. Menindee Ridge Stage one involves 44 lots that front Roper Road and the extension of Menindee Avenue.

We released the sale of the first 14 lots in Stage One A to the public in November 2012 with land selling from \$155,000.

Development of the subdivision provides a real opportunity to meet the growth needs of the Central Coast region. This land release is located in the popular suburb of Blue Haven and is sure to be of great interest with first home buyers with the latest government incentives.

Menindee Ridge lots will also appeal to investors looking to build properties that have a good return on investment, with Blue Haven's rent prices continually increasing. Darkinjung has established a plan to ensure that the area can meet the needs of the new residential development.

Existing roads will be extended to accommodate the estate, additional landscaping will be incorporated and buffer measures adjacent to the Pacific Highway will be put in place. The design of the Menindee Ridge subdivision will also be consistent in character with the already established Blue Haven estate and will promote a secure and safe residential environment.

Darkinjung is working closely with Darin Butcher and the team at Wiseberry Heritage Real Estate to promote the sale of the land and we have been very pleased with the enthusiastic response achieved to date.

# Protecting lands of Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Significance

Darkinjung has lodged a formal objection to the Calga Sand Quarry Southern Extension, due to the high Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage significance of the proposed extension area.



Darkinjung LALC has been actively engaged in this Proposed Development Application for the past seven years and we are greatly concerned about the detrimental impact that the extension would have on cultural objects, sites and places as well as the broader cultural significance of the land.

Throughout this time, we have been conducting site surveys and night recordings, preparing Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessments and identifying new Aboriginal sites within the proposed extension area.

To date, Darkinjung has conducted eight site surveys within the proposed development area and has formally responded to a number of other professionally produced reports.

Our site assessments have revealed that the subject land and its surroundings contain culturally significant objects and places for Aboriginal people, with one of the sites being of immense cultural significance to Aboriginal women.

It is as a result of these findings that we have lodged a formal objection to the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure recommending that the development should not proceed.

Darkinjung has consistently opposed mining proposals upon the Somersby, Peats Ridge and Kariong plateau, due to the interrelationship of individual sites within the broader cultural landscape.

We trust that our formal objection will be met with understanding, empathy and consideration of our region's Aboriginal community and cultural history.

# Principles of Agreement between Gosford City Council and Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council

## PREAMBLE

Traditionally, Aboriginal people saw land as an extension of themselves and believes in the concept of "My Land, My Mother". Aboriginal dispossession of land and breakdown of culture as a result of the invasion decimated traditional lifestyles and has changed the environment forever. Gosford City Council (GCC) and Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC) see it as a joint responsibility to undertake the follow directions in the pursuit of mutual understandings between the Aboriginal community and the general community.

## PRINCIPLES OF AGREEMENT

### (a) Aboriginal sites

The maintenance protection and preservation of Aboriginal sites and cultural heritage are central to an Aboriginal persons being and as such both parties will collaborate to ensure that all of the sites and Aboriginal cultural items in the local government area are protected and cared for as appropriate.

### (b) Cultural Heritage and Environment

That both parties will view land development as mutually beneficial and that any development reflects the core values of each party. Gosford City Council will recognise the unique situation of Darkinjung LALC as being the biggest land holder within Gosford City Council boundaries and consider these values in its deliberations.

(c) Community Participation and Wellbeing includes participating in shaping all aspects of Aboriginal life and how it relates to the wider community. GCC will respect the right of its Aboriginal constituents to pursue their own values, goals and principles consistent with Councils support of recognising all cultures within its area. Gosford City Council in partnership with Darkinjung LALC will also ensure that Aboriginal Culture and Heritage is promoted to the wider community in a sensitive manner

### (d) Land, Business and Economic Development

Identifying and strengthening the above three elements is vital to long term sustainability. Both GCC and DLALC will support each other in the pursuit of financially beneficial projects and work with other government and non government organisations to achieve this goal.

### (e) Co-Management and Coordination

Where possible both parties will in a sense of co operation will jointly manage (with others if needed) sensitive areas of mutual benefit such as common public areas, parks and gardens and other areas which benefits the wider community as a whole and warrants joint consideration. A partnership approach will be taken wherever possible.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The development of a comprehensive Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) will be the next phase in this partnership approach between GCC and DLALC.

This project will come under the direction of a Joint Council Partnership Co-ordinating Committee which will comprise the following;

The Mayor, General Manager and two staff form Gosford City Council and the Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer and two staff/members of Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council with secretarial services being supplied by Gosford City Council. Meeting venues will be by mutual consent.

# Jawun

## Supporting Indigenous Communities



Darkinjung is proud to be part of the Jawun program - an innovative Aboriginal business and corporate expertise partnership model, working in several Central Coast Aboriginal organisations to assist in building the capacity of the organisations.

Over recent months, Darkinjung has played host to secondees from corporate Australia and the Australian Public Service, who have been working with us across a variety of areas.

The Jawun model focuses on people helping each other, a two way skills sharing/transfer exercise that builds capacity within Aboriginal organisations and provides professional and personal development opportunities to the secondees.

Importantly, a by-product of the model is the breaking down of stereotypes and the realignment of perceptions within both cultures, as well as assisting Aboriginal communities to drive their own change.

It is very important to us that we build the capabilities of Indigenous people and organisations. This unique program allows us to use corporate and government involvement to do so, not just for the benefit of Indigenous people on the Coast, but the greater community.

# Taskforce established to review North Wyong Shire Structure Plan



Following Darkinjung's recent opposition to the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan, a taskforce has been established to review iconic sites within the Plan.

The taskforce was set up by Chris Hartcher, Minister for the Central Coast and is chaired by Alan Blackman Regional Coordinator of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The structure plan is a strategic document intended to guide future local planning and development, ensuring sufficient

land exists to meet regional housing and employment targets to 2031 and beyond.

A significant portion of Darkinjung's 7000 hectares of land is located within the plan's area.

In November 2012, Darkinjung presented a formal objection to the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Office of Environment and Heritage, raising concern that it denies the Darkinjung people the ability to manage our current land portfolio in a manner that will achieve the objectives of our land council. In particular, we believe that the plan discriminates against its holdings by not recognising existing industrial zoned land and failing to identify its land as having potential for future residential or employment usage. We are eager to review the findings of the taskforce and assess any recommendations that are put forward.

## Meeting with Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

On Monday 4 February, representatives from a number of Local Aboriginal Land Councils met with Mr Victor Dominello, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, to discuss the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. The meeting was hosted by Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council at the University of Newcastle's Ourimbah Campus.

Representatives from Gandangara, Tharawal, Deerubbin, La Perouse, Metropolitan, Bahtabah, Biriban, Awabakal, Mindaribba and Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Councils were all in attendance to discuss the Act and its significance. On behalf of the Local Aboriginal Land Councils involved, we would like to thank the Minister for accepting our invitation to attend this important engagement.

# Project Update – Halekulani Development



Darkinjung is looking to develop its land at Halekulani through the future establishment of a Manufactured Home Estate (MHE).

The MHE will comprise of 251 dwelling sites, offering affordable and sustainable residences to the local community. Significantly, the project will create a number of employment and enterprise development opportunities and will deliver significant outcomes for the growth of the region.

"Research into similar developments has demonstrated that in the current economic climate and with an ageing population, the market demands affordable housing and as the cost of establishing MHE is far less than a full residential estate, we are able to offer housing at a very competitive rate," said Sean Gordon.

This development promises to offer a number of benefits to Darkinjung's members as well as the Central Coast community and Darkinjung is comfortable that this project will come to fruition," he continued.

## Establishing Relationships with Central Coast leaders

As the largest non-government land holder on the Central Coast, Darkinjung is eager to establish partnerships with a number of Central Coast leaders who share our interest in providing positive outcomes to the Central Coast community.

Sean Gordon, Chief Executive Officer of Darkinjung was pleased to meet with Mr Darren Webber, Member for Wyong, to discuss the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan and is looking forward to meeting with Member for Swansea, Mr Garry Edwards in the near future to further discuss the Structure Plan.

In addition, given the establishment of a Principles of Agreement between Darkinjung and Gosford City Council, Sean is looking forward to meeting with General Manager of Gosford City Council, Paul Anderson to further strengthen our partnership.