

# Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW

2012



# Introduction

The Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW represent 152 general purpose councils and 14 special purpose councils and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

## **The Associations represent the views of their members by:**

- Presenting councils' views to government.
- Promoting Local Government to the community.
- Providing specialist advice and services.

## **Vision statement**

To be recognised as the voice of Local Government in NSW.

## **Our Mission**

- Provide leadership to and advocacy for Local Government, for the benefit to local communities.
- Deliver outstanding services to members.
- Anticipate the needs and desires of Local Government in leading sustainable communities.



# Advice to Councils

- A key function of the Policy Division is the provision of up to date information and advice to councils.
- The Associations protect the interests of Local Government by actively monitoring legislative and other developments in government to ensure they do not adversely affect councils.
- We also assist councils by advising on current developments in government and council management.



# LGSA- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Policy Statement

**Local Government recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a right to self-determination, practical reconciliation and quality of life to the wider community.**

- acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of their own lands by including Aboriginal people in official councils ceremonies using local customary protocols such as “welcome to country” and by flying of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
- Recognises the establishment of council Aboriginal Consultative Committees is important in providing a mechanism for direct consultation with and participation of Aboriginal communities
- Recognises the importance of including Aboriginal people in council social/community planning under the regulation
- Acknowledges that it has a role to play in the improvement of both the environment of villages and existing infrastructure in villages
- recognises the role of regional and local Aboriginal authorities in planning and providing for local communities and acknowledges the need for an integration of resources between these authorities and other agencies of all spheres of government
- encourages greater participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Local Government political life, seeking to facilitate election campaign initiatives within the community facilitates access to facilities, services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- supports initiatives that bring about a profound reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community



# Aboriginal Liaison/Community Development Officers NSW

**Many councils have found the employment of Aboriginal Liaison Officers, or Community Development Officers, to be particularly effective in developing strong linkages with local Aboriginal communities.**

The following are some of the areas they have been engaged in:

- Creating links between the Aboriginal community and Council
- Ensuring from Council's end that the needs of the Aboriginal community are met
- Ensuring that mainstream services to the general community are accessible and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal people
- Assisting and enhancing the Reconciliation process
- Developing a local cultural protocols document
- Leading and facilitating projects that are Aboriginal-specific, giving greater awareness to the broader community of Aboriginal people and their culture
- Developing Aboriginal networks, including Aboriginal Land Councils and Aboriginal Elders, as sources of advice for councils
- Breaking down barriers between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people
- Building partnerships between NSW councils and Aboriginal communities through Local Agreements
- Clarifying what services NSW councils should, and can, provide to the Aboriginal community
- Encouraging the Aboriginal community to work closely with NSW councils
- Providing sound knowledge of access pathways to Aboriginal organisations
- Facilitating Consultative Committee meetings on a regular basis
- Assisting in Aboriginal heritage impact assessments, interpretation of heritage values, and explanation of legislation relating to Aboriginal heritage etc.



# Cr Pat Dixon Memorial Scholarship

**The Cr Pat Dixon Memorial Scholarship is for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Local Government councillor, or community development/liaison worker to undertake part-time studies in either a Bachelor of Social Studies or any relevant course where the applicant can develop their community development, political, or professional career education through the study of politics, political science, or governance.**

The late Cr Dixon was a role model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were either employed by Local Government or were interested in serving on councils. In recognition of the significant role played by Cr Dixon, the LGSA established a Leadership Program in her honour to be made available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Government community development/liaison workers, mentees and councillors. The purpose of the program is to provide support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders who have responsibilities at community, Local Government and regional levels to develop their knowledge, skills and networks to lead communities and organisations on a local and regional level.

The Scholarship was established in 2002 with contributions from councils and support from the NSW State Government. The Scholarship is administered by LGSA. The Scholarship Fund Committee comprises of Local Government representatives who administer the funds and award the Scholarship to the successful candidate.

Since the scholarship was established there have been two Aboriginal candidates both were staff of councils in NSW, Dubbo and Gilgandra councils, the scholarship was very successful for the both of them, both gentleman have moved on from working in Local Government and have secured positions with first being NSW Aboriginal Land Council and second being Dubbo Aboriginal Medical Centre.

2012 the LGSA made changes to the scholarship, the scholarship now allows four Aboriginal councillors or community development/liaison workers to do a short course of there choice with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) or Local Government Learning Solutions NSW.



## Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program

The Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program (EDAEP) was established in 2001 as an initiative of the NSW Government to encourage job opportunities and career advancement for Aboriginal Australians. The aim of the program is to promote diversity, innovation, and service responsiveness in the NSW workforce by reducing barriers to employment and promotions for Aboriginal Australians. The EDAEP has five elements: permanent employment, temporary placement, career development, partnership programs, and graduate work experience.

The Associations have been involved in the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment program since 2001. We promote the program to councils through the *Local Government Weekly*. The Associations have participated as a member of the state panel. State panel members review applications under the five elements, and make funding recommendations to the Minister for Education and Training.

### **The following program elements:**

#### ***Permanent Employment***

aims to get Aboriginal people into permanent careers in the NSW public service and local government.

#### ***Temporary Placement***

aims to improve career development for Aboriginal employees in the NSW public service and local government.

#### ***Career Development***

offers funds to make it easier for NSW public service departments and local councils to give Aboriginal employees training or other career development experiences.

#### ***Partnership Project***

Funds special projects to create jobs for Aboriginal people within any sector.

#### ***Graduate Work Experience***

encourages employers to give new Aboriginal graduates a start in the workforce by subsidising a work experience placement (maximum 12 weeks) in the person's field of training. Any employer is eligible to apply, subject to the conditions in the Guidelines.



# Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program

The following table outlines council participation under the EDAEP (Permanent Employment element) from its commencement in 2001/2002 to 2009.

Funding Period	Name of Participating Council	Position(s) Funded	Comments
2001/2002	Bega Valley Shire Council	Aboriginal Community Development Officer	Employee retained at end of funding period.
	Blacktown City Council	Aboriginal Community Development Officer	Employee retained at end of funding period.
	Macleay Shire Council	Team Member, Minor Roadworks Team Care Assistant (part-time)	All employees retained at end of funding period.
	Parramatta City Council	Aboriginal Community Development Worker	Employee resigned/terminated during the funding period, no further recruitment action undertaken by Council.
2002/2003	City of Albury Council	Aboriginal Liaison Officer	Employee retained at end of funding period.
	South Sydney City Council	Children's Activity Worker	Employee retained at end of funding period.
	More Plains Shire Council	Library Assistant	Employee retained at end of funding period.
	Wellington Council	Water Services Labourer	Employee retained at end of funding period.



## Elsa Dixon continued

2005/2006	Blue Mountains City Council	Aboriginal Community Development Officer	Employee retained at end of funding period.
	Holroyd City Council	Community Development Officer Customer Service Officer Depot Clerical Assistant	All employees retained at end of funding period.
	Shellharbour City Council	Administration Assistant Environmental Officer	All employees retained at end of funding period.
2006/2007	Byron Shire Council	Aboriginal Administration Officer	Employee retained at end of funding period
	Gilgandra Shire Council	Public Relations Assistant	Employee retained at end of funding period
2007/2008	Clarence Valley Council	Administration Assistant (Grafton Community & Function Centre) 2x Customer Service Assistant 2x Field Operator (Parks & Maintenance) Field Operator (Waste & Wastewater) Field Operator (Roller)	Final Reports due 30/04/2009.
	Coffs Harbour City Council	Aboriginal Community Development Officer	Final Reports due 30/04/2009.
2008/2009	Coffs Harbour City Council	Bridge Maintenance Team Member	Final Reports due 31/05/2009.



# Shellharbour Council case study

## Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Development Assessment Toolkit

Shellharbour City Council, in partnership with Wollongong City Council and Kiama Municipal Council, are in stages of developing an Aboriginal cultural heritage management development assessment toolkit.

This work is being funded by a grant from the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, and Shellharbour City Council (as project sponsor).

**As an example** – a builder approaches Council with a development application for, say, a group of six townhouses on an existing house site and adjoining vacant block. The Toolkit will provide Council with the framework, guidelines and information to determine that because the house site and vacant block has '*these*' known or possible Aboriginal heritage/cultural values and the expected impacts of the townhouse development will probably be '*those*', then the most suitable type and level of heritage/cultural assessment needed for Council to make sure that Aboriginal cultural values have been adequately considered in determining the application is '*this*'.

The Toolkit would work within existing planning laws, and the Councils' local environmental plans, as well as the laws around the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Importantly the Toolkit will apply to works being undertaken by the councils themselves.

The Toolkits intended framework or approach would provide a greater degree of certainty and reasonableness in the consideration of development applications for all stakeholders- the Aboriginal community, councils, developers and the general community.



# Conclusion

The Associations acknowledge that there need to be better incentives and affirmative strategies to attract Aboriginal people into the Local Government sector apart from specific funding positions for Aboriginal identifies positions, unfortunately when grant funded positions cease there is no guarantee of permanent employment, this has been an issue for many years.

It is important that Aboriginal communities and major stakeholders in NSW are aware of the potential benefits of working in the Local Government sector. Local Government is a diverse employer that encourages the development of its staff who in turn deliver quality services to their clients, the public. Employees feel that they are contributing to the local community and making a difference in peoples lives whilst working in a dynamic, fair and flexible environment, working in Local Government gives you the opportunity not only to develop your future career path but also improve other lives within the community, most of all employees will have job security.

Another effective possibility of attracting Aboriginal people into the Local Government sector is councils approach to developing an Aboriginal employment and professional development strategy. An Aboriginal employment and professional development strategy is a blue print for the development, implementation and maintenance of specific actions by councils, every Aboriginal employment strategy is different and the extent of the strategy will generally depend on the size of a councils potential for employment, the needs of council and the Aboriginal community. (*NSW Premiers Department, Public Employment, Workforce Planning: a Guide for NSW Public Sector Agencies 2003*).



# Thank You

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