



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DELEGATE'S REPORT

9th October 2007

DR3	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ABORIGINAL NETWORK CONFERENCE	{Folio No. *}
	FILE: 388 CLR JCG KEO (NRN)	

SUMMARY:

Reporting on attendance at the Local Government Aboriginal Network Conference.

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DESCRIPTION:

The Local Government Aboriginal Network Conference was held at Coffs Harbour from 5th to 7th September 2007. I attended as the Kempsey Shire Council Representative and was accompanied by Mr M Foxwell as representative from the Kempsey Aboriginal Liaison Committee. Mr Foxwell attended on behalf of the Aboriginal Community as Kempsey Shire does not have a full time Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

This is the third conference I have attended since being elected to Council, and as a representative on the Aboriginal Liaison Committee. This year's theme, "Working Together" focused on health, education, employment, enterprise and cultural development with approximately 170 delegates attending. The traditional owners of this region opened with a Welcome to Country speech presented by a Gumbulor Julipi Elder. The official opening ceremony was conducted by Mr Keith Rhoades the Mayor of Coffs Harbour City Council and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Mr Paul Lynch MP was the government representative.

A visit for all the delegates was organised to the Yarrowarra Aboriginal Centre and Gallery with a Bush Tucker lunch supplied by the Aboriginal Centre. The centre was very impressive with a wonderful gallery full of products produced by local Aboriginal artists and Aboriginal artefacts. There were two conferences being held at the same time at the centre, so delegates were not able to view the conference facilities.

One of the presenters was Ms Allison Page from the Jalay Community Development and Merrima Design from Coffs Harbour (regular judge for ABC New Inventors). Ms Page spoke on the "Identity of Places and People" with PowerPoint display showcasing work completed by Merrima Design (Aboriginal design group), that included Girrawaa Creative Work Centre (Bathurst), Bayagus Indigenous Gallery (Power House Museum), Our Place Indigenous Gallery (Athens and Beijing) and numerous other

projects. There was also a presentation by Richard Holloway from Arts Mid North Coast.

The Conference was well presented with approximately 12 delegates presenting papers including National Parks and Wildlife, Local Government Association, Shires Association, and the Aboriginal Heritage Office.

National Parks and Wildlife Discovery Ranger Mark Flinders an Aboriginal Ranger who has worked with National Parks for approximately six years spoke about Aboriginal Meeting Places, and artefacts around the Coffs Harbour area. David Watts from the NSW Aboriginal Heritage gave a lecture on the National Parks and Wildlife Act that protects all sites and objects of Aboriginality in NSW. Mr Keith Hall Aboriginal Programs Officer Gosford City Council spoke on "Working Together with the Community" and pointed out that his position as the Aboriginal Community Development Officer was identified as a priority in both Council and Community for Cultural Planning, and that in 2004 Gosford Council allocated funds making this a permanent position. One of the initiatives to come out of this programme was an Indigenous Surf Carnival to develop a summer surf program targeting young Aboriginal people of the Central Coast Region. This year Wyong Council has joined the project allowing the whole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to take part.

It was disappointing and somewhat an embarrassment as a council representative for the Kempsey Shire to see the lack of support this council gives to its Aboriginal Community compared with other regions. Other councils noticed the absence of a designated Aboriginal Liaison Officer as representative from the Kempsey Shire Council, and many were surprised that given our large Aboriginal population that council did not feel the appointment of one such officer a council priority. This was brought home especially to myself and Mr Fox when we considered that Leichhardt council had six representatives present and their much lower ratio of Aboriginal population compared to Kempsey.

The Mayor of Coffs Harbour Mr Keith Rhoades pointed out that making people aware of Aboriginal ownership of country and recognition of regional groups was extremely important and pointed out to delegates the new "Welcome to Country" signage placed on the highways leading into Coffs Harbour. I would like to point out here that our own council has still to erect our own signage and is a constant request of the members of Kempsey Aboriginal Liaison Committee; it would seem to me a simple request to fulfil especially in light of the Coffs Harbour initiative.

Voting for next years conference was between Parramatta, Gosford, Leichhardt, with the eventual winner being Gosford.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Nil

- ***Social***

Nil

- *Economic (Financial)*

Nil

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be noted.

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COUNCILLOR JC GRIBBIN