



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DELEGATE'S REPORT

3rd February 2009

DR3	NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ABORIGINAL CONFERENCE 2008
FILE: 165 SJR (NRN)	{ Folio No. * }

SUMMARY:

Reporting on my attendance to the Local Government Aboriginal Conference held 25th to 27th November 2008

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DESCRIPTION:

The 2008 Local Government Aboriginal Conference was held in Austin College Armidale University 25th to 27th November 2008, and was the 21st conference convened. Council representatives to the conference were myself and Ms Tracy Edwards council's Indigenous Development Worker.

This is the fourth conference I have attended since being elected to council, and as a representative of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee. This year's theme 'Community, Strength, Sustainability and Resilience' focused on building stronger communities, Aboriginal Strengths and Solutions, Community Resilience, Governance and Community Cultural Development – What's its values?

There were approximately 120 delegates made up from 24 community groups attending. The traditional owners of the Region opened the conference with a welcome to all participants, and the Deputy Mayor of Armidale welcomed all the delegates on behalf of the Armidale Dumaresq Council.

The first speaker was Ms Jody Brown, Director General NSW, who spoke on the level of community work being done under the NSW Government State plan. Part of her presentation produced the following figures from 2007 data released this year. The Aboriginal Community Infant Morality rate has decreased by 21%, pre-school attendance has increased by 2%. From 2002 to 2007 TAFE attendance has increased by 22% and 78% of people completing TAFE courses are working. Aboriginal staff now makes up 2.1% of the NSW Public Service, and 7% of the employees of the Department of Community Services are Aboriginal.

All CEO's in the Government Departments have to report to Jody Brown each year on what and how the Department's are assisting the Aboriginal Community, and this type of reporting is part of the CEO's contract of employment. Also Local Communities have input into decisions made on

their behalf and that communities work together on policy that affects them as a collective.

There has been no funding removal from the Departments budget and departments have programmed the following items:-

- Koori Showcase at Tamworth Country Music Festival 2009
- An agreement with the racing industry for 100 traineeships.
- 20 new project officers
- Water and sewerage projects for 63 communities across the State,

and it was also emphasised the importance for communities to work together, instead of working against each other.

There were 19 speakers at the conference and to report on all of them would take too long, but three of the speakers who I found most interesting were firstly, Mr David Watts, Aboriginal Heritage Manager, from the Aboriginal Heritage Office who spoke on training council staff. They now have partnerships with eight councils and run training programs for council officers, visit local schools implementing school programs; organise guided walks and produce brochures for the public on local Aboriginal artefacts. To find out more of this; their website is www.aboriginalheritage.org. They also carry out interviews with Elders; compile site management reports, and potential area reports.

The second speaker that took my interest was Ms Cheryl Crawford, Administration and Project Development Officer, for the Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV).

ICV is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation that links Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with skilled volunteers. ICV works in partnerships with community's to provide access to the skills and knowledge that the community requests. ICV also recruits volunteers to complete projects with Indigenous community groups. ICV were successful in obtaining a Federal grant of \$20 million to train volunteers in the 18-70 age groups to be more productive to their communities, and will also run local workshops to demonstrate outcomes of this aim.

The third interesting speakers were Mr Robert Leslie and Ms Julie Welsh who spoke on Koori Toastmasters. The Redfern and Mt Driutt Toastmasters were developed by World Vision Australia in 2004. This was a community driven educational program implemented to build life skills, resilience and the ability to cope with urban settings through developing confidence and self-esteem. The Language, and use of Aboriginal colours, cultural protocols and making sessions appropriate to meet the needs of the community were all important contributors to the programs success. There was a real need to develop skills in public speaking and good governance, contributing to the professional development of new leaders and role models, encouraging education and increasing employment prospects, while using approaches that are accessible and culturally reinforcing.

It would be my hope that Kempsey Council seriously considers hosting this conference in the future.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS:

- *Environmental*

Nil

- *Social*

Nil

- *Economic (Financial)*

Nil

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be noted.

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COUNCILLOR J C GRIBBIN