



NSW Premier
Hon Gladys Berejiklian

3rd June 2020

Dear Premier,

**Local Aboriginal Land Council concerns regarding
Guringai claims of Traditional Ownership of Northern Sydney and Central Coast**

We are a collection of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) from the Sydney/Newcastle Region (also known as the Eastern Zone). LALCs are statutory bodies whose objects are to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal people in their area. Our functions include to take action to protect Aboriginal culture and heritage in our areas and to promote awareness in our communities of Aboriginal culture and heritage.

Our areas cover, broadly, the Sydney, Northern Sydney, Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Cessnock, and Maitland areas.

We refer to the Native Title Registrar's recent public notification on 27 May 2020 of a notice to register an area agreement over Crown land adjacent to the St Ives Pistol Club on the Register of Indigenous Land Agreements. That area agreement was allegedly authorised by persons claiming to be the 'Awabakal and Guringai People' at a meeting on 15 February 2020.

We submit this joint statement in response to that notice and the alleged authorisation and its implicit claim to Traditional Ownership of land in the Northern Sydney and Central Coast areas by people of Guringai or Awabakal descent. We advise that:

1. There are no registered Native Title holders or applicants within our areas in the Sydney/Newcastle Region.
2. The Native Title application made by the 'Awabakal and Guringai People' on 13 May 2013 was discontinued in the Federal Court on 28 June 2017. That discontinued application overlapped the boundaries of all our areas. It occurred after the State decided that it would contest the claim to native title on the basis of an absence of credible evidence to support the claimants' connection to the areas claimed.

3. Guringai people are acknowledged and accepted as being the original custodians of the Dungog, Williams River and Gloucester areas.
4. The name 'Awabakal' refers to the Aboriginal people occupying the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle areas (see <https://downloads.newcastle.edu.au/library/cultural%20collections/awaba/culture/anthropology.html>).
5. Any reference to Guringai or Awabakal being a description of the Aboriginal people originally from the Northern Sydney and Central Coast areas (as is implied in the ILUA proposed with the St Ives Pistol Club and the Crown on the Northern Beaches of Sydney) is the cause of an **illusory truth effect** and needs to be corrected.
6. We do not recognise those persons, with exception of two claimants being Kerrie Brauer & Shane Frost being members of Awabakal LALC, claiming to be the 'Awabakal and Guringai People' as being of Aboriginal descent; nor, are they active members of our Aboriginal communities in the Sydney/Newcastle Region.
7. We have observed that several spellings of 'Guringai' have been used over many years (e.g. Gooringai, Goreengai, Kurangai, Kuringai, etc); however, these spelling all refer to the same group.

We unconditionally support the actions of Aboriginal people who seek to exercise and assert their genuine Traditional, Cultural and Human Rights (including their connection to their lands); however, **any** claim that Guringai or Awabakal people are from the Northern Sydney or Central Coast areas is false and should be rejected.

We strongly encourage you to rigorously investigate the substance of any claim that the Guringai or Awabakal people are from or connected to the Northern Sydney or Central Coast areas and any claim to Traditional Ownership based on such connection.

If you have any queries, please contact Mr. Nathan Moran CEO on (02) 8394 9666.

Yours in Unity

Nathan Moran
CEO Metropolitan LALC for and on behalf of Awabakal LALC, Bahtabah LALC, Biraban LALC, Darkinjung LALC, Mindaribba LALC and Worimi LALC.