



Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Re: Submission to the Inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities

**The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc and its Centre for Aboriginal Languages
Coordination and Development**

Background - NSW AECG Inc

The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) began in 1977 as a committee of Aboriginal people invited by the Department of Education to advise it on Aboriginal Education.

In 1977 the Commonwealth Schools Commission provided funds for States and Territories to seek Aboriginal advice on education. Over the next three years, the NSW Department of Education invited Aboriginal people from across New South Wales to serve on its Aboriginal advisory committee.

When the Commonwealth stopped funding in 1980, the New South Wales government took over funding the committee. At the same time the members of the committee decided that representatives should be elected from all regions in NSW, to serve for two years.

In 1981 the Minister for Education, the Hon. Paul Landa, formally recognized the NSW AECG as the principal advisory body on Aboriginal Education. All Ministers since have continued this recognition.

In 1982, the NSW AECG further extended its policy of involving Aboriginal people in education decision-making by fostering the development of local AECGS.

Also in 1982, the NSW AECG was instrumental in the development of the NSW Department of Education's Aboriginal Education Policy. This was the first Policy of its kind in Australia.

In 1983 at the Newcastle triennial meeting, it was decided to increase the length of service of representatives from two (2) to three (3) years.

Since the policy's development, the NSW AECG, through a number of conferences, had developed a series of priority areas in an attempt to rapidly implement the policy and to gain other improvements in Aboriginal Education generally.

In 1984 the AECG established an Executive committee to assist with the policy implementation within the framework of its aims and objectives.

The 1986 Triennial conference held in Dubbo saw significant developments take place:

The council structure was formulated and the rules of operation were determined.
the 1986 – 1989 new priorities were established

The NSW AECG undertook the “1986 Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use by Aboriginal students in NSW”. This project was highly successful and the results widely distributed.

1988 has seen the establishment of an incorporated body to be known as the NSW AECG Association Incorporated

Local AECG's

All the members of local communities can become members of the Local AECG but only Aboriginal adults [18years and over] can vote and hold office bearers' positions.

President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer make up the local AECG Executive. Other members make up the local committee. Meetings of the local AECG's shall be held at least three times a year at a venue, date and time to be decided upon by the members.

Regional AECG's

A nominated number of elected members (3 or 4) of each local AECG make up the Regional AECG but meetings are open to anybody. Only the two elected delegates can vote and hold office bearers' positions. Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Regional Rep make up the Regional Committee.

Meetings of local AECG's shall be held at least every second month at a venue, date and time to be decided upon by the members.

AECG State Committee

All 18 regional Reps plus the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Association. Meets two times a year.

State Committee Executive

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer Plus 5 State Committee members.

Meet minimum 4 times a year.

Office Bearers

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and State executive members. Elected annually at the meeting. President's term of office is for three years, all other office bears for a one year period.

NSW AECG INC AGM

Meets once a year for the (AGM) all Delegate who attended the meeting are to be Financial members of the Association.

The Delegates of the AGM shall be the:

- Office Bearers [4]
- All Regional Reps each Region [19]
- Three other Delegates form each of the eighteen Regional AECGs operating in accordance with the rules [54]
- Voting at the AGM shall therefore be limited to the representative group of [76] people in person, or by proxy

NSW AECG VISION

The vision of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. is to provide advice on all matters relevant to education and training with the mandate that this advice represents the Aboriginal community viewpoint.

The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. promotes respect, empowerment and self-determination and believes the process of collaborative consultation is integral to equal partnerships and is fundamental to the achievement of equality.

The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. advocates cultural affirmation, integrity and the pursuit of equality to ensure that the unique and diverse identity of Aboriginal students is recognised and valued.

AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION

To ensure that the functions and powers of members are facilitated with the premise that the most critically important part of the consultative process is the active involvement of Local AECG members and communities.

To provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to be actively involved in all decision-making that is relevant to education and training through a collaborative consultative process.

To empower members by providing appropriate and effective knowledge and skills to engage in the development of policies and programs that enhance the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal students and promote pride in Aboriginality.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

- Coordinating, facilitating and overseeing the operations of the Local, Regional and State Committee as regulated by the Rules of the Association;
- Increasing the active involvement of Aboriginal communities to strengthen the Association's networks at a local level;
- Advocating that all students and educators should understand and have knowledge of the significant issues and events in the history of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, from the view point of Aboriginal people;
- Providing appropriate training to members to enhance knowledge and skills on issues that impact on Aboriginal peoples access to and participation in education and training;
- Enhancing the involvement of members in all decision-making through collaborative processes;
- Establishing and maintaining partnerships with relevant providers to ensure improved outcomes are achieved in the education and training of Aboriginal students;
- Collaboratively developing key strategies that are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal students for effective implementation within appropriate timeframes; and
- Engaging in innovative research that examines issues impacting on Aboriginal education and training

The NSW Centre for Aboriginal Language Coordination and Development

The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (NSW AECG Inc) has successfully tendered for a 3 year project to establish the NSW Centre for Aboriginal Languages Coordination and Development (CALCD).

The NSW AECG Inc will nurture and support the CALCD to:

- Develop Regional and Local Aboriginal language networks;
- Coordinate Aboriginal projects and services;
- Advocate on behalf of the networks it represents;
- Seek financial sustainability opportunities and;
- Lead the development of policies and resources to support the revitalisation, reclamation and maintenance of Aboriginal languages throughout NSW.

The CALCD will be governed by an all Aboriginal Board of Directors (Board) who will be representatives of one (1) of eight (8) Aboriginal Languages Regions across NSW.

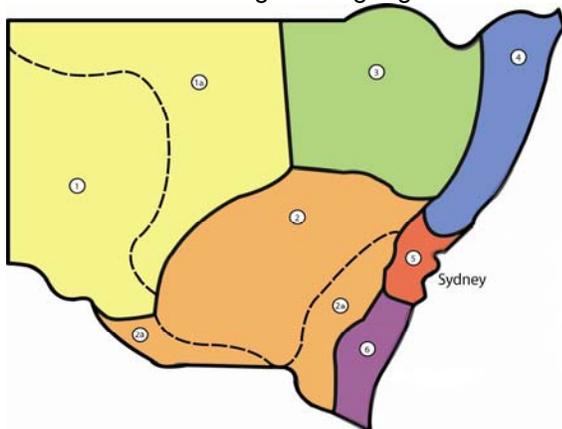
The CALCD Board functions will include:

- Oversee the development of a community-based Aboriginal language network;
- Seek funding for the CALCD and other major projects;
- Provide policy advice and direction regarding Aboriginal languages in NSW;
- Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal languages and culture; and
- Direct Aboriginal languages projects and services.

Proposed Regional Aboriginal Languages Network

The CALCD will seek to establish networks enabling a culturally sensitive and quality framework in the coordination and development of projects for Aboriginal people and communities to revitalise reclaim and maintain Aboriginal languages across NSW.

The draft diagram below provides a visual interpretation of the proposed eight (8) regions that will coordinate local Aboriginal language networks.



**CALCD
Regional Aboriginal Languages Network**

The CALCD is seeking one (1) applicant with extensive Aboriginal language experience from each Regional Aboriginal Languages Network location to make up the CALCD Board.

The CALCD Board are to be made up of no more than ten (10) Aboriginal people. The Board's membership will consist of;

- 8 members from each Regional Aboriginal Languages Network
- 1 member of the NSW AECG Inc
- 1 member of another Aboriginal Peak Organisation with interests in Aboriginal Languages

Oversee the development of community-based Aboriginal language network

Through the proposed *NSW Aboriginal Languages Network* the CALCD Board will be responsible for the coordination and support of Regional Aboriginal Languages Networks and play a central role in shaping, coordinating and supporting Local Aboriginal Language Networks.

The proposed networks will be community based and will include those who have a interest and the right skills to support the revitalisation, reclamation and maintenance of Aboriginal Languages in NSW

Seek funding for the CALCD and other major projects

Currently the CALCD has limited resources and will be required to seek additional funding to ensure its sustainability and provide resource for major projects and key priority areas. It is proposed that members of the CALCD Board will play an active role in lobbying to secure funding.

Provide policy advice and direction regarding Aboriginal languages in NSW

CALCD Board Members will provide policy advice and direction that benefits the revitalisation, reclamation and maintenance of Aboriginal Languages in NSW.

The CALCD Board will be also responsible for the development of policies and procedures that would benefit and effectively support Aboriginal communities in their language journey. These policies developed will be based and established from the Aboriginal community viewpoint.

Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal languages and culture

The CALCD Board being representatives of Aboriginal communities across NSW will have an important role in ensuring Aboriginal voices are heard.

CALCD Board members must be able to capture the viewpoints of their communities they and articulate that at a state-wide level.

The following agencies the Board will be required to advocate to include but not limited to;

- Ministers from both State and Commonwealth Government
- NSW Aboriginal Peak Organisations
- NSW Department of Education and Communities
- NSW Office of Aboriginal Affairs
- NSW Catholic Education Commission
- NSW Independent Schools
- Federation of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Languages and Culture
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Universities
- Libraries and Museums

Direct Aboriginal languages projects and services

Through the CALCD Aboriginal communities will be able to access resources and support that will assist them in strengthening and further developing their language/s. The CALCD Board is responsible for ensuring that services and projects of the CALCD are equitable, accessible and transparent.

Commitment

The Board of Directors are voluntary positions. Members of the Board would be required to commit personal time and considerable effort into the CALCD especially in the establishment phase of the project.

The Board will be supported by staff and resources of the NSW AECG Inc and its Secretariat.