



**Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation**

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Dear Members

The Wonnarua Aboriginal Nation Corporation (WNAC) has embarked upon an exciting project involving the proactive use of our traditionally owned land bank supported by a range of strategic partners in the Upper and Lower Hunter Valley. The project is well underway and we are excited to be able to provide detail about the project to the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to provide background for future discussions.

### **1. Strategic Aboriginal Culture and Enterprise Scheme**

WNAC's Strategic Aboriginal Culture and Enterprise Scheme involves the Strategic Hubs Program (SHP) which aims to address long term employment and enterprise goals, emphasising community and cultural empowerment for Aboriginal people in the Hunter Valley. The WNAC Scheme will address disadvantage by not only providing tangible employment outcomes but perhaps more importantly on going hands on management through outright ownership with the support of strategic partnerships. The WNAC has developed the Scheme to provide a sustained approach to empowering the community from within, based on a traditionally owned land bank, with strategic expert partners and a strong entrepreneurial spirit administered from a resilient governance base. The project is unique as it have been developed by and for the Aboriginal community and is based on traditional lands, focusing on cultural identity linked to commercial outcomes with a delivery mechanism supported by durable expert partners.

The SHP comprises a network of six Strategic Hubs, each contributing to the social, economic, and cultural objectives for the local Aboriginal community but also the wider Hunter Region community which includes visitors, students, tourists and industry. Significantly the network of Strategic Hubs will aim to broaden the awareness and accessibility of historical and contemporary Indigenous life and targets ongoing economic opportunities.

The modular nature of the SHP allows the development of further social hubs, not just by WNAC and the broader Hunter Valley Aboriginal community, but also allows extension to the wider community, including visitors and industry partners in the Hunter Valley. It is planned that this concept will be transferable to other Aboriginal communities throughout NSW and Australia. The SHP will be a method in which to promote a greater awareness in the region of Aboriginal culture and enhance engagement and awareness of, in a visual and experience based journey, through the Aboriginal history and culture of Hunter Valley. The commercial enterprise nature of the SHP focusses these outcomes on a social equity basis that whilst being driven internally by the WNAC extends outward to the wider Hunter Valley community.

Subsequently, the Scheme is proactive and encourages everyone to join in the journey through the songlines of the Wonnarua/Gringai people starting from WNAC successfully naming the bridges and rest areas in Aboriginal animal names along the new Federal and State Government funded RMS Hunter Expressway.

Additionally, the SHP provides a unique chance to blend enterprise with culture: it is a clear opportunity to demonstrate that Aboriginal culture is not defined by hand-outs, but rather is a combination of deep cultural beliefs and an enthusiastic entrepreneurial spirit. This is an Aboriginal led initiative based on a traditionally owned land bank that can provide thoughtful and sustainable employment outcomes through real partnerships with local and state agencies, expert NGOs and industry strategic partners. The local Aboriginal community has a vision to utilise their assets to create an integrated approach to utilising culture and knowledge to provide stronger and strategic outcomes for the region. With the current downturn in investment in the region and historically high insolvency rates the SHP provides an opportunity to the community to diversify investment and opportunities.

## **2. Our Strategic Partners**

WNAC have teamed with a number of strategic partners to provide expert assistance to ensure successful delivery of the Scheme. Our strategic partners include: Westpac, World Vision Australia, Greening Australia, RMS Roads and Maritime Services, Reconciliation Australia, Singleton Council, Muswellbrook Council, Australian Museum, Sydney University, TAFE NSW Aboriginal Learning Circle, Indigenous Land Corporation, NSW State Library, Office of Heritage and Environment, NSW Office of Communities and Aboriginal Affairs, NSW Upper Hunter OCHRE Opportunity Hubs, LWP Property Group, Glencore Mines Singleton and Muswellbrook, BHP Mt Arthur Mine Muswellbrook, Coal & Allied Mines Singleton and Muswellbrook, Ashton Coal Mine Singleton, Centennial Coal Mine Fassifern and Donaldson Coal Mine Maitland, possible other partners we are negotiating with are Hunter Valley Zoo and Hunter Valley Gardens at Cessnock, Cessnock City Council, Mark Olive [the black olive celebrity chef] NRL Indigenous Committee, Clayton Barr MP Cessnock, Steve Holtom and Des Knipe from BGS Bright Green Solutions

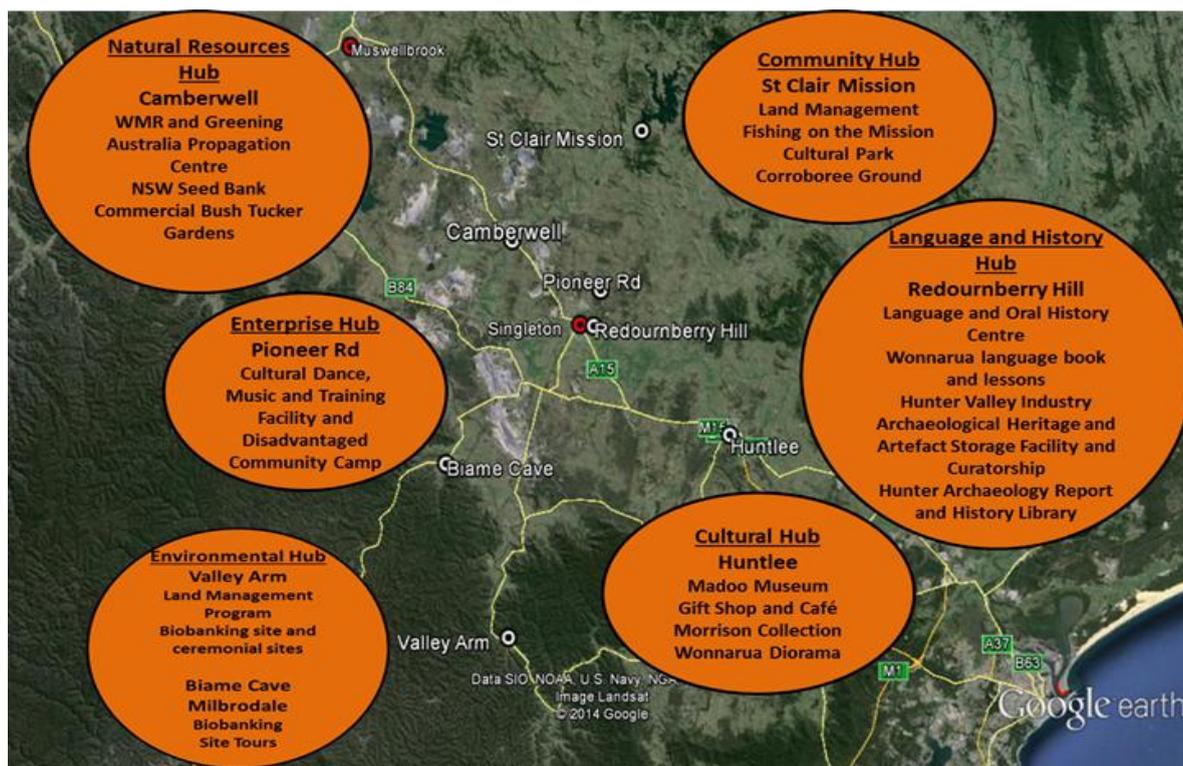
## **3. The Strategic Hubs**

The Strategic Aboriginal Culture and Enterprise Scheme is comprised of six Strategic Hubs extending through the Hunter Valley along the songline of the Wonnarua/Gringai People on largely traditionally owned lands. Each Strategic Hub facilitates a particular purpose; culture, language, community, natural resource, environmental and commercial enterprise.

The Strategic Hubs are a physical space located on real property traditionally owned or leased by the WNAC that will be provided as an in kind contribution to the SHP and will comprise land and buildings that are crafted to match their planned purpose. While each Hub will have a primary purpose, they are not mutually exclusive and considerable interconnection of functions will be encouraged and in some cases essential to success. All of the Hubs will be developed using World Vision's Local Value Chain Analysis model and underpinned by Westpac Business Plans linked to the WNAC Strategy document. Three of the Hubs have been established and are well underway with support from our partners and the Cultural Hub is in its final stages of negotiation.

The six Strategic Hubs include:

- Cultural Hub
- Community Hub
- Enterprise Hub
- Language and History Hub
- Natural Resources Hub
- Environmental Hub



### **3.1 Cultural Hub: Huntlee, Branxton**

Wonnarua country is rich with Aboriginal culture, but paradoxically, there is little public access showcasing it. Typically artefacts are stored on mine sites out of sight or displayed sparingly at Local Aboriginal Land Councils which are rarely, if ever, accessed by the public. The Cultural Hub will focus on the Madoo Museum and contain a cultural artifact keeping place, arts and craft shop, cafe, possum skin cloaks, DVD's, Diaromas and our history. The Morrison collection which includes 2 canoes, stone axes, clubs, spears, boomerangs and hundreds of other artifacts originally from Singleton and St Clair Aboriginal Mission is currently housed at the Australian Museum and will be relocated to the proposed premises. The Australian Museum is supportive of this and will provide advice and assistance site for the relocation and curatorship of the objects in conjunction with Macquarie University. Furthermore Singleton Council strongly supports the return of the Morrison Collection to the Hunter region.

The land on which the Madoo Museum will be built is being provided by LWP Property Group and funding for the building itself is being half funded by WNAC through a proposed business loan with Westpac that will be supported by agreed annual rent from LWP.

**Progress to date:** LWP Property group are currently drafting both building plans and costs, also talking with Westpac, RDA-Hunter, NSRF and possibly source ILC involvement to partner with costs for either option.

### **Community Hub: St Clair Mission, Singleton**

St Clair Mission operated until 1918 when it was taken over by the Aborigines Protection Board and renamed Mt Olive. At this time, strict oversight was introduced by the Manager of the Mission and many people were removed from Mount Olive for not following the imposed rules. By 1923, Mount Olive Reserve was closed to Aboriginal people, throughout this time the people living at St Clair farmed the land and also used traditional Indigenous means of subsistence including making artifacts for the Morrison Collection.

The works proposed for the Community Hub include the development of a Community Hall, Large Shed, cultural park also includes Picnic Areas, a cultural walk, corroboree ground and Former Church, and a Fishing

on the Mission aquaculture enterprise, WNAC currently conducting a feasibility Study.

**Progress to date:** This Hub is well underway with the projects commencing in December 2014, The ILC may be interested in commercial development or partnership once fishing at the Mission feasibility study complete.

### **Enterprise Hub: Pioneer Road, Singleton**

The Enterprise Hub will support Aboriginal initiatives and provide employment and commercial outcomes to WNAC and the wider Aboriginal community and service the local community and industry in the Hunter Valley and throughout NSW. The Hub will contain a number of buildings to support a variety of commercial enterprises, including:

- Dance, art and a training studio that will focus on cultural dance, arts and crafts initiatives (that will support the Madoo Museum Gift Shop), a meeting place for archaeological and heritage field studies to the mining industry, a genealogy program and possum skin cloak workshops.
- Hunter Valley Aboriginal Youth and Disadvantaged Community Camp: WNAC have teamed with WVA to develop and implement the camps through a signed partnership agreement through their leadership group. WNAC members have previously successfully undertaken Gringai Aboriginal Culture Tours, camps for Aboriginal youth from Redfern, disadvantaged people from NSW, Schools, Canadian/ French Indians and representatives from the 2000 Olympic Games Committee in the past at Singleton. This permanent camp would provide long term establishment of this important service. During establishment there is an opportunity to utilise the Liddell Recreation Centre facilities in Muswellbrook, Lake St Clair Dam near Singleton currently being developed by Singleton Council and Glenbawn Dam Recreation centre near Aberdeen. World Vision Australia will play an integral part in this activity and provide support through their Young Mobs program for this project.

**Progress to date:** WNAC are in the process of signing a MOU with World Vision Australia and working with their Young Mobs program for support of this Hub. Funding for this Hub is being sourced and could form part of discussions with ILC.

### **Language and History Hub: Redournberry Hill, Singleton**

The Redournberry site was settled by the Wonnarua/Gringai People in 1923 it was an unreserved mission some members of my family were forced there after St Clair Mission closed. Until the 1970's they lived in harsh conditions without electricity or running water. Redournberry Hill represents a vital stepping stone in the Aboriginal struggle to gain recognition as a people who were alienated, but who now form a strong, vital and vibrant society within the Hunter Valley. Some WNAC members have a close affiliation with this land and an AP Aboriginal Protection application has been put in to OEHL to protect this land as it is crown land.

The Language and History Hub that will be established will be an important regional resource and will form a centralised location where oral history, language books, teaching and the Hunter Valley Cultural Heritage and Archaeology Library will reside. Sydney University, NSW Library and Australian Museum have teamed with WNAC on this project and previous projects. The Language Hub will be housed in a community centre at the site and will be a valuable centralised resource relating to Aboriginal language, culture, archaeology and commercial reports for mines, industry, tourists and the community.

The Hub will also establish the Hunter Valley Industry Archaeological Heritage Artefact Storage and Curatorship Storage Facility. The WNAC has teamed with the Australian Museum and Macquarie University to provide a commercially operated keeping and storage place for Hunter Valley Aboriginal artefacts collected during industry operations. These artefacts are currently stored in an unregulated and haphazard manner on industry sites and they will be rehoused within the storage facilities at a cost to industry. The storage facility will provide an avenue for artefacts to be properly maintained for the client and presented for community and

visitor viewing and education as well as supporting our close historical and cultural ties with this land.

**Progress to date:** Funding for this hub is being sourced and could form part of discussions with ILC.

### **Natural Resources Hub**

The Natural Resources Hub has been established using WNAC's 100% owned Wonnarua Mine Rehabilitation Pty Ltd company and we have teamed with Greening Australia to develop commercial consultancy services to mines, developers and government infrastructure clients and the NSW native seed bank and propagation centre to support the seed collection, rehabilitation, propagation and planting services.

In addition to these commercial nursery activities Commercial Bush Tucker Gardens will be established for commercial and retail sale and will be linked to the Madoo Museum Café and support the community camp and Wonnarua Culture Park.

**Progress to date:** This Hub is well underway with the projects commencing in 2013.

### **Environmental Hubs: Valley Arm Broke and Biame Cave Milbrodale**

The Valley Arm Environmental Hub is located on land owned and managed by WNAC and provide for the management and conservation of native flora and fauna through the OEH bio-banking scheme. The Valley Arm site near Broke Village was the first bio-banking site established in Australia by an Aboriginal Organization. The Biame Cave site [Private Property] offers organized site tours allowing for community access to a spiritually important Aboriginal site and the opportunity to view extensive cave art. Recently WNAC in conjunction with the property owner Noelene Smith applied together to register this site as a State Heritage Significant site through the NSW AP process and now waiting their decision. These sites will link with the NSW OEH Save our Species initiative and support outcomes of the Federal and State Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment.

**Progress to date:** These Hubs are well underway with the projects commencing in 2013.

As noted all these properties are in close proximity to each other and are designed to give the ultimate Aboriginal experience as we are parting and now sharing our knowledge and history of our traditional homeland to the public arena which sometimes is hard to do from an Aboriginal perspective. We are currently talking with Hunter Valley Zoo and Hunter Valley Gardens based in Cessnock as part of representing the lower hunter region as part of our plans to develop an Aboriginal experience on their properties throughout the Hunter Region in the spirit of reconciliation.

### **Bright Green Solutions**

We have a new partner called BGS Bright Green Solutions who we have been working with for the past 6 months and see this project as a way forward in social and economic advantage including Aboriginal training and employment, we look forward in identifying a solid working relationship with the ILC in purchasing land or joint ventures with ILC through WNAC purchasing more land to deliver this project for remote communities see attached presentation.

WNAC are currently drafting a MOU with BGS and have signed a non compliance document with BGS.

I look forward to an opportunity to discuss our Scheme/ Idea in more detail with the ILC and can provide detailed costings for the Hubs with outstanding funding arrangements.

Yours Truly

Laurie Perry  
CEO WNAC