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CEO Economic development in Aboriginal Communities report and Newsletter to Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation Members

The Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation (WNAC) provides the following information. WNAC believes that the projects and initiatives outlined below add value to the strategic inquiry regarding “options for sustainability and capacity building...utilising existing community networks and structures”, “leveraging economic development support” and “establishment and sustainability of Aboriginal owned enterprises”.

Supported by a range of strategic partners in the Upper and Lower Hunter Valley, WNAC has embarked upon an exciting multi-hubs project involving the proactive use of our traditionally owned land bank. We are pleased to be able to provide details about the project to provide background for strategies to support economic development in Aboriginal communities.

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.

WNAC 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 has 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. The wider Hunter Region community which includes visitors, students, tourists and industry also benefit. Significantly the network of Strategic Hubs aim to broaden the awareness and accessibility of historical and contemporary Indigenous life and targets on-going 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 enables extension to the wider community, including visitors and industry partners in the Hunter Valley.

This concept is designed so that it will be transferable to other Aboriginal communities throughout NSW and Australia. The SHP method promotes a greater awareness in the region of Aboriginal culture and enhances engagement and awareness of the Aboriginal history and culture of Hunter Valley, through a visual and experience based journey. The commercial enterprise nature of the SHP focuses these outcomes on a social equity basis. While driven internally by WNAC the benefits extend 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. As an example, WNAC successfully named the bridges and rest areas in Aboriginal animal names along the Federal and State Government funded 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 respond positively to new opportunities.

2. Our Strategic Partners 2016

WNAC have developed and 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, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), Reconciliation Australia, Singleton Council, Muswellbrook Council, Australian Museum [Sydney] , 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, 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, Wonnarua Madoo Land Fund, Wonnarua Mine Rehabilitation Pty Ltd, BGS Pty Ltd, AHLA Cessnock, Indigenous Business Australia, Local Land Services [Hunter], Aboriginal Employment Services, Upper Hunter Community Services [Muswellbrook] Public Schools in Singleton and Cessnock.

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 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 has a primary purpose, they are not mutually exclusive and considerable interconnection of functions is encouraged and, in some cases, essential to success. All of the Hubs are developed using World Vision's Local Value Chain Analysis model and underpinned by Westpac Business Plans which are linked to the WNAC Board's 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 artefact keeping place, arts and craft shop, cafe, possum skin cloaks, DVD's, Dioramas and our history. *The Morrison Collection* which includes 129 objects 2 canoes, stone axes, clubs, spears, boomerangs and hundreds of other artefacts originally from Singleton and St Clair Aboriginal Mission is currently housed at the

Australian Museum. This Morrison collection will be relocated to the proposed Madoo Museum along with other artefacts from the region.

The Australian Museum is supportive of this and will provide advice and assistance 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.

Negotiations are underway for the land on which the Madoo Museum will be built possibly provided by LWP Property Group. Funding for the building maybe funded by WNAC through a proposed business loan with Westpac or other sources. A business model that supports loan conditions being met is being negotiated with LWP. The Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation are also seeking other land if the Huntlee proposal falls through as there is a need for the Hunter Region to have such a facility to showcase Aboriginal culture and heritage to the Hunter region.

Progress to date: 2016 LWP Property group are sending me a draft on both building plans and costs so once we get these it will give the board a heads up of where we sit in terms of where we go from here, also talking with Westpac, RDA Regional Development Australia- Hunter, Commonwealth National Stronger Regions Fund and possibly source ILC and IBA involvement to partner with costs being discussed now. It is most likely we will seek part funding for the building from the National Stronger Regions fund and other partners. Just recently Kerrie Hogan and Donna Murray members of Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation visited the National Museum in Canberra and found the missing link to the morrison collection and hopefully we can bring that home as well, the timeframe if we are successful would be possibly end of year or mid 2017 so a bit more to go and hard work to do before we have a deadline.

3.2 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 artefacts that now comprise the Morrison Collection.

The works at the Community Hub include the development of a Community Hall, Large Shed, cultural park and also include Picnic Areas, a cultural walk, corroboree ground and Former Church, and a Fishing on the Mission aquaculture enterprise, for which WNAC currently conducting a feasibility Study.

Progress to date: 2016 The St Clair Community Hub is well underway with the projects commencing in December 2014. The Indigenous Land Corporation have been approached to consider commercial development or partnership arrangements once the Fishing at the Mission feasibility study which has now been completed still waiting on there feedback. We have also made contact with Indigenous Business Australia to include them in the development of this land..... the current progress: 2016 the community hall is complete but we have come across a hurdle a Aboriginal Company based in Sydney have stopped us working on site, we met with OEH a number of times to clear this matter up and engaged Insite Heritage a archaeology company to complete the AHIP [Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit] so we can move forward with this exciting new HUB. I will keep the members updated on this progress, the good news is I applied to OEH to develop a

conservation management plan which was successful so we will keep the membership updated with this as well.

3.3 Enterprise Youth Hub: Pioneer Road, Singleton

The Enterprise Hub will support Aboriginal initiatives and provide employment and commercial outcomes to WNAC and the wider Aboriginal community. It will service the local community and industry in the Hunter Valley and our membership throughout NSW.

The Enterprise Youth Hub will possibly contain a number of buildings to support a variety of commercial enterprises, including:

- Possible 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 and possum skin cloak workshops.
- Hunter Valley Aboriginal Youth and Disadvantaged Community Camp: WNAC have teamed with World Vision Australia to develop and implement the camps through a signed partnership agreement through their leadership group. During establishment WNAC is exploring opportunities to utilise the Lake 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 plays an integral part in the Youth Enterprise Hub and provides support for this project through their Young Mobs program. This permanent camp aims to provide long term certainty for this important service. I recently met with the Upper Hunter Community Services team in Muswellbrook seeking support for the development of our hubs which was well received and particular interest in the development of our youth hub was raised.

Progress to date: 2016 Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation signed a partnership agreement with World Vision Australia by working with their current Young Mobs program. Support of this Hub and our intention is to develop our own Wonnarua young mobs program in Singleton and grow this program over the next 3 years to become self sustainable with the support of WVA. We jointly applied to the State Government and pleased to announce we were successful. We are now preparing to engage 2 local Aboriginal people from Singleton and Muswellbrook to deliver this program one male and one female and have visited both Schools in Muswellbrook and Singleton and both support the young mob program and the Singleton youth development HUB. We have had numerous meetings with Upper Hunter Community Services, Clontarf Group now based in Singleton, OCHRE opportunity HUB based in Singleton both are supportive of the development of this Youth hub. I will keep members informed of this progress.

3.4 Language and History Hub: Redournberry Hill, Singleton

The Redournberry site was settled by the Wonnarua/Gringai People in 1923. It was a common /unreserved mission. Some members of WNAC families were forced there after St Clair Mission closed. Until the 1970s 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 sent to OEH to protect this land on Crown Land.

The proposed Language and History Hub can be an important regional resource and will form a centralised location where oral history and teaching can be formalised. Sydney University, NSW Library, Singleton Council, Singleton Library, Local Land Services and WLALC have worked with WNAC on this project. The Language Hub will be a valuable centralised resource relating to

Aboriginal People and possible commercial cultural tourism and School visits to learn more about this historic piece of land. The land will provide an avenue to be properly maintained for the community for visitor viewing as well as supporting our close historical and cultural ties with this land.

Progress to date: 2016 Funding for the History Hub may be sourced from Local Land Services with support from Wanaruah LALC for further development. We have made contact with Wanaruah Land Council seeking a support letter for the AP at Redournberry Hill which we have now received and will work closely with them seeing as they have a land rights claim on the property with a AP currently sitting on the ministers desk waiting for approval, we had talks with Local Land Services and the crown lands department to manage and maintain this important Aboriginal site in our discussions and seek to work together to maintain this property with WLALC and other service providers.

3.5 WMR Pty Ltd Natural Resources Hub

The WMR Pty Ltd Natural Resources Hub has been established using WNAC's 100% owned company, Wonnarua Mine Rehabilitation Pty Ltd. We have teamed with Greening Australia to develop commercial consultancy services to mines, developers and government infrastructure clients. The NSW native seed bank and propagation centre supports 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 Youth camp and Wonnarua Culture Park at St Clair Mission.

Progress to date:2016 Since January 2015 there has been 11 Aboriginal staff working on a full time casual basis.

WMR Pty Ltd has 3 directors Paul Hinton, Rae Reed and Sandra Miller see recent business plan attached for more information on there progress.

3.6 Environmental Hubs: Valley Arm Broke and Biame Cave Milbrodale

The Valley Arm Environmental Hub is located on land owned and managed by WNAC. This Hub provides 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 organisation.**

The Biame Cave site [Private Property] can offer organised 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 applied to register this site as a State Heritage Significant site through the NSW OEH Aboriginal Place process. 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: 2016 The Environmental Hubs are well underway with the projects commencing in 2013. The Biame Cave HUB has currently been accepted as a NSW Aboriginal Heritage listed site by the NSW Heritage Council and a Conservation Plan of Management has now been accepted after our funding application was approved. We are now working on implementing the plan in

conjunction with the property owner to make sure it's managed and protected for further generations to see and enjoy.

CEO Progress to date: 2016 I was invited to Parliament House on the 18th August to discuss our role in how we may be able to help the NSW Government in their development of supporting Aboriginal Economic Development in NSW after our submission to the standing committee was successful, the meeting went well and I believe I got my point across based on the progress of our hubs and directors support, I have also been invited to speak at the 3rd National Indigenous Economic Development Forum conference in Darwin to help support growing indigenous enterprise and fostering real job pathways so we must be doing something right to be invited to this forum.

Concluding remarks

The properties identified in this submission are all in close proximity to each other and are designed to represent the ultimate Aboriginal experience. WNAC are sharing our knowledge and history of our traditional homeland with the general public, which sometimes is hard to do from an Aboriginal perspective. We are currently working with AHLA based in Cessnock as part of representing the lower Hunter region as part of our plans to develop a new HUB in this region see progress attached of where we are at with this HUB

WNAC is pursuing a collaborative approach with our partners throughout the Hunter Region in the spirit of reconciliation.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the AGM and Reunion 24th September 2016

Yours Truly

Laurie Perry

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Laurie Perry', with a stylized, flowing script.

CEO
Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation
30th August 2016