



NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

ABN 82 726 507 500

Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
CANBERRA ACT 2600

To the Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce,

Re: Submission in response to Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper

I write as a Councillor of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (**NSWALC**) for the Far Western Region of NSW.

NSWALC is the peak body representing Aboriginal peoples in NSW and with over 20,000 members, is the largest Aboriginal organisation in Australia. NSWALC is a self-funded statutory corporation under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)* (**ALRA**), and has a legislated objective to improve, protect and foster the best interests of Aboriginal peoples in NSW. NSWALC also provides support to, and represents the interests of, the network of 120 Local Aboriginal Land Councils (**LALCs**) across the state.

In relation to policy idea 16 '*Increasing drought preparedness*', the proposal for additional weather stations in the Far West of NSW to address gaps is supported. This will assist in improving climate information to support drought preparedness and responses, and provide an important tool to assist land holders in Far Western in decision-making about land management.

In relation to Policy idea 14 to strengthen agricultural education, it is recommended that specific approaches are developed to support Aboriginal peoples to participate in the agricultural sector. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* recognises that:

"Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security".ⁱand

"Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions".ⁱⁱ

In relation to Policy idea 19(a) that proposes amending the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* to "*remove onerous on-farm conditions*", it is important to recognise that current laws are failing to protect Aboriginal culture and heritage, and any proposals that may reduce protection of Aboriginal culture and heritage are not supported.

Head Office

Ground Floor, 33 Argyle Street
Parramatta NSW 2150
PO Box 1125
Parramatta NSW 2124
Tel: 02 9689 4444
Fax: 02 9687 1234
DX 28308 Parramatta 2150

Western Zone

2/36 Darling Street
Riverview Business Park
Dubbo NSW 2830
PO Box 1196
Dubbo NSW 2830
Tel: 02 6885 7000
Fax: 02 6881 6268
DX 4009 Dubbo 2830

Northern Zone

Suite 2-26, Park Avenue
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
PO Box 1912
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
Tel: 02 6659 1200
Fax: 02 6650 0420

Eastern Zone

50/24-26 Watt Street
Gosford NSW 2250
PO Box 670
Gosford NSW 2250
Tel: 02 4337 4700
Fax: 02 4337 4710

Southern Zone

Suite 110, Corporate Level
Riverside Plaza
Monaro Street
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
PO Box 619
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
Tel: 02 6124 3555
Fax: 02 6297 3541
DX 24202 Queanbeyan 2620

Far West Zone

Level 3, NSW State
Government Building,
32 Sulphide Street
Broken Hill NSW 2880
Tel: 08 8087 9587
Fax: 08 8087 3851

The following excerpts from the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* identify the inherent rights of Aboriginal peoples in relation to lands, waters, natural resources and Traditional Ecological Knowledge:

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article 19

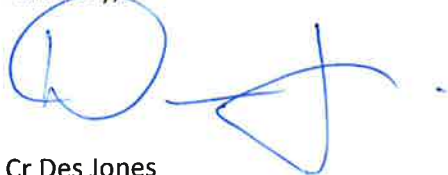
States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Article 29

Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation, protection, without discrimination.

I look forward to providing further input into the development of the Australian Government's reforms to the Agricultural sector:

Sincerely,



Cr Des Jones
Councillor for the Far Western Region
New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council

Date:

9.12.2014

ⁱ United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*; Article 21 (1)

ⁱⁱ United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*; Article 23