

Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Monday, 11 May 2026, 10:00am

Council Committee Meeting Room and MS Teams

MEETING NOTES

MEETING COMMENCED: 10:02am

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members:

Ben Stainer (The Chair), Kerry Boyenga, Cherie Buchert, Blaine Davies - Merriman's LALC (via MS Teams), Julie Janson, Donna Kenny - Bodalla LALC, Tashinda Kenny, Rick Callaghan - Cobowra LALC (via MS Teams), and Andrew White - Bateman's Bay LALC (via MS Teams), Layton Simon – Merriman's LALC Rangers (via MS Teams).

Eurobodalla Shire Council:

Kim Bush - Division Manager Community Development and Participation, Rhonnie South - Coordinator Community Development and Youth, Michael Lawrence-Taylor - Community Development Officer, and Melinda Rowell - Executive Assistant to Director of Community Arts and Recreation (minutes).

Guests:

James Caffery - Coastal and Flood Management Planner (ESC), and Karlee van der Meulen - Graphic Design Coordinator (ESC).

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Mick Johnson, Roslyn Field, Anita Mongta (Bodalla LALC), and Kathy Arthur - Director, Community Arts and Recreation (ESC).

1. WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Presentation by The Chair, Ben Stainer

Ben welcomed members of the committee and delivered an Acknowledgement of Country. He spoke about caring for Country and its link to community wellbeing, including housing, employment, and culture. Ben shared local oysters, noting their cultural and environmental significance as an example of the importance of Caring for Country.

Ben introduced Donna Kenny, Elder from Bodalla, who emphasised the importance of respecting Yuin Country and caring for Country, people, and culture. She raised concerns about poor housing conditions for Traditional Owners and noted limited employment outcomes, while acknowledging that ongoing discussions are beginning to make an impact.

All attendees then introduced themselves around the table.

2. CALL FOR ANY DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Presentation by the Chair, Ben Stainer

Ben called for any declarations of conflict of interest.

No conflicts were declared.

3. APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Presentation by the Chair, Ben Stainer

Ben noted apologies received.

4. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES / ACTIONS OF MEETING HELD 9 FEBRUARY 2026

Presentation by the Chair, Ben Stainer

Ben confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting had been read and were accurate. There were no objections from the other committee members.

All actions from the previous meeting were completed.

MOTION: That the minutes of the meeting held on 09 February 2026 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Julie Janson **Seconded:** Cherrie Buchert

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

5.1. CORRESPONDENCE – RESIGNATION RECEIVED FROM WALLY STEWART – ADVERTISE FOR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Presentation by Kim Bush

Kim noted the resignations of Wally Stewart, Loretta Parsley and Vivian Mason and advised that three positions are currently advertised as Expressions of Interest (EOI) on Council's website and via media.

It was noted that membership requires a formal application under the Terms of Reference, with appointments for the remainder of the current term (approximately two years).

ACTION/S:

- 5.1.a. Rhonnie South to conduct an exit survey with Wally Stewart and invite him to present on Native Title.
- 5.1.b. Michael Lawrence-Taylor to circulate the EOI link to committee members for further distribution.

6. AGENDA ITEMS

6.1. BATEMANS BAY AND MORUYA FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STUDIES AND PLANS – UPDATE

Presentation by James Caffery

James provided an update on the Flood Risk Management Studies and Plans for Moruya and Batemans Bay and sought feedback from the committee.

He explained that the studies draw on historical data and advanced modelling, including peer-reviewed analysis of previous flood events, to understand flood behaviour. The modelling identifies predicted flood patterns, low-lying areas, and high-volume flow paths, informing planning controls and mitigation measures to reduce flood risk across both towns.

James further advised that the Moruya Flood Risk Management Study and Plan will be placed on public exhibition from Wednesday, 13 May 2026, representing the next stage of community consultation. Consultation sessions will include participation from State Government representatives and key stakeholders, including the NSW State Emergency Service (SES), Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs), and local floodplain community groups. Consultation for Batemans Bay will follow. Feedback received during the consultation period will inform future actions, including potential funding opportunities. Relevant information is available on Council's website, and the community is encouraged to provide feedback.

Community consultation sessions will be held at the Dr Mackay Centre, Moruya on 25 May 2026 from 3:00pm, and on 26 May 2026 between 9:00am and 1:0 pm. Media releases will also be issued.

Committee Discussions

- Ben and Julie queried whether water from the Deua River could be monitored and review pipe size as pumping is impacting the river and cultural sites. James advised current focus is on flood impacts and road raising; water retention is out of scope but could be explored separately.
- Cherrie noted that Moruya previously experienced frequent flooding, and that highway raising and ongoing development have altered flood behaviour. James advised that, while flood patterns are generally

understood, recent events indicate fewer floods than expected, requiring further analysis. Potential infrastructure options may be investigated.

- Julie highlighted the importance of Yuin cultural sites. James confirmed maps showing proposed road – raising works will be presented, with opportunities for community feedback.
- Ben encouraged stronger coordination with Council planning and engagement with AAC; queried governance and referenced Northern Territory irrigation models.
- Andrew emphasised the need to decongest water flow systems. James noted that blocked infrastructure can worsen flooding, citing the Soldiers Club in Batemans Bay as an example.
- Andrew highlighted the importance of addressing environmental issues holistically (including bushfires and flooding) by improving flow and building resilience.
- Ben requested renewed commitment to the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) to support planning and consideration of cultural sites.

ACTION/S:

- 6.1.a.** Rhonnie South to circulate consultation dates to members.
- 6.1.b.** Rhonnie South to coordinate AAC members feedback and suggestions with James Caffery.
- 6.1.c.** Rhonnie South to provide the relevant contact details for the LALC with James Caffery.

6.2. ART AND SIGNAGE PROJECT UPDATES

Presentation by Karlee van der Meulen

6.2.1. UMBARRA SIGNAGE INSTALLATIONS - UPDATE

Karlee provided a visual presentation, displaying images of the completed signage installations. She explained the purpose of the signage, provided a progress update, and sought feedback from the Committee.

Signage installations across six new villages have been completed at (Batehaven, Tomakin, Mossy Point, Broulee, Tilba Tilba and Central Tilba). This installation round completes the installations for our Umbarra village signage. Native gardens are next to be installed across all locations.

The final phase will focus on the installation of six town signs across the region, including northern and southern entry signs for each location. Works will commence in Narooma, followed by Moruya and Batemans Bay.

Installation of our final two Eurobodalla Gateway signs will also occur over the coming months, including one sign on Clyde Mountain and a sign for North Durras. The Dignams Creek gateway sign was completed in 2024.

Karlee advised that the project has received positive feedback from the community.

Kerry acknowledged and congratulated the Committee on the initiative, noting the importance of incorporating language into the community. She commended the quality of the artwork and thanked those involved for their efforts.

Karlee noted the significance of the project within local government, advising that the work is being recognised in other areas. She expressed pride in Council's leadership and the growing awareness of local language initiatives.

6.2.2. WAGONGA TRAGEDY SCULPTURE (NAROOMA FORESHORE) - UPDATE

Karlee van der Meulen presented an update on the Wagonga Tragedy sculpture, designed in collaboration with Walbunja Yuin artist Natalie Bateman. The project has now progressed into the fabrication stage. This project is part of the Wagonga Inlet Living Shoreline Project. The sculpture is currently in the fabrication phase and due for install over the next 6 months and will be installed along the foreshore near the new Jetty.

Karlee provided a walkthrough of the 3D model, demonstrating the final design intent. The story element associated with the sculpture will be installed in close proximity to the artwork to ensure the historical narrative is clearly communicated to visitors.

6.2.3. EUROBODALLA REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Update by Kim Bush

Kim provided an update from the Eurobodalla Regional Hospital Art Committee, advising that substantial funding has been allocated for public art within the hospital project.

The program will include a strong focus on Aboriginal cultural representation, including:

- Indigenous markings incorporated into rock features
- Extensive inclusion of Indigenous artwork across the hospital precinct

6.2.4. MUNJIP TRAIL – HERITAGE AWARDS NOMINATION

Update by Karlee van der Meulen

Karlee provided an update that The Munjip Trail Project has been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2026 National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards within the category Education and Interpretation.

The National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards recognise excellence in the conservation, protection, and interpretation of natural, cultural and built heritage.

6.3. CARING FOR COUNTRY – ACTIONS WITHIN COUNCIL’S DRAFT BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Presentation by, The Chair, Ben Stainer

Ben provided copies of the draft actions within Council’s Draft Biodiversity Strategy and presented the work on behalf of contributing committee members. The document was noted as significantly improved, with stronger inclusion of Traditional Owners and connection to Country.

Discussion focused on the use of “Yuin Country”, with concerns raised regarding its accuracy within the LGA. Andrew noted that the term “Yuin” extends along the coast and may introduce broader influences, emphasising the importance of correctly identifying specific tribal groups within the strategy. It was agreed to replace “Yuin” with specific tribal group names (walbanga, brinja and dirringanj), ensuring correct spelling and consistency throughout the document.

Motion: We the members of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee have reviewed and edited the draft Caring for Country actions within Councils Draft Biodiversity Strategy plan and strongly recommends that Council adopt the changes for public exhibition.

Moved: Andrew White | **Seconded:** Kerry Boyenga

ACTION/S:

6.3.a Ben Stainer to circulate the motion to Heritage and Environment Advisory Committees.

6.3.b Kerry Boyenga to confirm correct tribal names under Yuin Country and provide to Rhonnie South (COB 11 May 2026)

6.3.c Rhonnie South to finalise revisions to the Draft Biodiversity Strategy (Caring for Country actions) for the June Council meeting and provide to Heidi Thomson.

6.4. LIBRARY UPDATES

Presentation by Kim Bush / Rhonnie South

6.4.1. LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN – SEEKING FEEDBACK

Kim provided an update on recent employment of Council’s new Library Coordinator, Alana McHale.

Kim provided a single-page document containing questions and invited feedback from committee members. Key areas for input included: What improvements can be made, enhancing online services, increasing program attendance and improving literacy outcomes.

Michael added the questions to the chat function on MS Teams for those committee members logged online.

Committee Discussions

- Kerry noted that she delivers talks on Aboriginal culture and NAIDOC Week and is always willing to assist.
- Kim highlighted several focus areas, including:
 - Increasing the number of Indigenous authors within the library collection
 - Encouraging greater participation and visitation from Aboriginal community members
 - Supporting rhyming and literacy development through story time sessions and related activities
 - Promoting access to free computers to support internet use

6.4.2. LIBRARY EVENTS – HISTORY WEEK – SEEKING FEEDBACK

Rhonnie discussed History Week and advised that information will be circulated to the committee for feedback. She will coordinate with Alana McHale to liaise with Elders to deliver storytelling focused on Aboriginal history and requested that committee members nominate suitable local participants. Relevant contact details will be shared with Alana to support this engagement.

Layton Simon enquired about barber services for children with autism. Kim Bush will follow up with Children's Services.

ACTION/S:

6.4.2.a. Rhonnie South to follow up with the committee to obtain contact details of Elders for storytelling.

6.4.2.b. Kim Bush to email Layton Simon regarding contact details for local barbers supporting children with autism.

6.5. DHURGA CORNER – CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL'S LIVING IN EUROBODALLA NEWSLETTER

Presentation by Rhonnie South

Rhonnie advised she met with Council's Communications team regarding the "Dhurga Corner" feature, noting it has not appeared in recent editions. Communications advised newsletter content has been reduced and may be reduced further, with feedback being sought.

Kerry, who previously supported content development, indicated she would be willing to assist again but stressed the need for content to remain accurate, simple, and culturally appropriate, noting earlier contributions became overly technical and did not reflect correct Dhurga language.

The group discussed reframing the feature to focus on Caring for Country and Embracing Language and Culture, incorporating simple language, environmental terms, and cultural education (e.g. Yuin Country, significant dates and sites).

ACTION/S:

6.5.a. Rhonnie South to work with Kerry Boyenga and Council's Communications team to develop suitable, ongoing content.

6.6. CULTURAL UPDATES

Presentation by Michael Lawrence-Taylor

6.6.1. SORRY DAY BRIDGE WALK – BATEMANS BAY, TUESDAY 26 MAY

Michael shared a brochure for the upcoming Sorry Day Bridge Walk to be held in Batemans Bay on Tuesday, 26 May 2026 from 10:30am to 2:00pm and requested regarding the Committee circulate the brochure.

ACTION/S:

6.6.1.a Rhonnie South to contact Tashinda Kenny regarding Flag raising arrangements.

6.6.2. COUNCIL'S NAIDOC WEEK FLAG RAISING CEREMONY WTC

Michael advised he has contacted Cobowra LALC and Trish (surname to be confirmed) regarding representation for the NAIDOC Week Flag Raising Ceremony but has not received a response and is seeking recommendations for a Welcome to Country. The Committee noted the need to broaden participation beyond usual representatives, including opportunities to involve young people and local schools, aligned with the theme "50 Years: Strong, Proud, and Deadly." Tashinda expressed interest in learning to deliver a Welcome to Country, with Kerry offering coaching and mentoring support.

ACTION/S:

6.6.2.a Kerry Boyenga to provide coaching and mentoring to support Tashinda Kenny to deliver a Welcome to Country.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1. CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT

Presentation by Julie Janson

Group discussions focused on concerns around the Crown Land Management Amendment, particularly the lack of communication with traditional owners and the role of Native Title. As highlighted in relation to the recent march, concerns were raised that individuals involved were not Traditional Owners and were seeking to claim unused land, with limited community awareness or engagement if it proceeds, creating issues regarding the recognition of Native Title holders. The committee also noted missed opportunities for community involvement.

7.2. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Presentation by Tashinda Kenny

Tashinda raised concerns about limited employment opportunities for young people and the need to increase youth-targeted jobs. Rhonnie highlighted the importance of building relationships with organisations and facilitating conversations to create pathways. It was noted that while opportunities may exist, young people require support to apply, including assistance with applications.

7.3. POSSUM ART COMPETITIONS

Presentation by Julie Janson

Julie Janson reminded the committee to put the word out for Aboriginal people aged 15–30, noting that only one painting has been received to date. The competition is seeking small artworks.

ACTION/S:

7.3.a Michael Lawrence-Taylor to liaise with Council's Communications Team to arrange promotion and publish competition details on the Council website.

NEXT MEETING: 12:27pm

MEETING CLOSED: TBA