



MEETING NOTES

FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2024 | 10:30AM – 12:30PM

Attendees:

First Nations Advisory Group Members:

Alison Page (Chair)
Peter White
Bryce Liddell (online)

Harbour Trust:

Janet Carding, Executive Director
Kathryn Roberts, Director Marketing & Visitor Experience
Susan Thompson, Head of Engagement & Experience
Eloise Damas, Community Engagement Officer

Invited Guests for Macquarie Lightstation discussion:

Gujaga Foundation (Elizabeth Tierney)
Libby Bennett, Director Heritage and Design
Catherine Macarthur, Heritage Architect

MEETING OPENING

1. Welcome and apologies

Alison Page (AP) opened the meeting with a Welcome to Country. AP noted apologies for Jessie Longbottom, Lloyd Walker, Chris Ingrey, Donna Daly and Nathan Moran.

The First Nations Advisory Group (FNAG) approved the notes from the previous meeting (August 15) with no comments.

2. Executive Director Update

The ED provided the Group with an update including:

- The annual report is currently with the Minister for sign off, once endorsed this will be sent to all FNAG members.
- The Harbour Trust (HT) has welcomed two new board members: Brad Manera and Helen Lochhead.
- The FNAG were updated on the recent Global Nature Positive Summit which introduced summit attendees to both North Head Sanctuary and Cockatoo Island. The event received great reviews and was supported by many staff, Board and the First Nations Advisory Group - Lloyd Walker led the Welcome to Country at North Head Sanctuary and attendees on the Cockatoo

Island/Wareamah visit arrived on Tribal Warrior and were treated to informative presentations by Alison Page both on the boat trip over to the island and then once again on the island. The event was an invaluable opportunity to bring together federal and state organisations with business, financial, scientific and environmental communities with a focus on the desire and need to repair and present nature under different regulations.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

3. NSW Curriculum Change 2027

A Briefing Paper was circulated prior to the meeting and discussed. It outlines the upcoming curriculum changes and the impacts on the Harbour Trust education offerings. Existing Harbour Trust education programs will be either updated or rewritten to incorporate curriculum changes. While the new curriculum focusses on colonial history, this provides the opportunity to highlight the importance of connecting pre-colonisation stories to post-colonisation history.

At present the majority of education programs are based at Cockatoo Island, with the curriculum change the HT will extend education programs across more sites. It was discussed that many similar organisations are grappling with these upcoming changes and are actively discussing how they may approach and respond. The HT will look to engage with key stakeholders, as well as other government organisations to better understand their approach to the change.

ACTIONS:

- The HT to come back to the FNAG in February 2025 to inform of any progress.
- Discussion with Museums of History NSW for cross collaboration on this reform.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Draft COAST History Report - Macquarie Lightstation

Elizabeth Tierney (ET) led the discussion around the various design outcomes of the report as well as the manner in which the report can inform the Harbour Trust on its future interpretation of this site. One key takeaway from the discussion pertained to the importance of site-specific stories and their role in culturally-appropriate storytelling. It was reiterated that place-based storytelling needs to remain accurate to the correct location. The report's objectives are not to change the physical design of the site but to bring about cultural accuracy to the stories told at Macquarie Lightstation.

The report and discussion proved helpful for the Design & Heritage team in determining works moving forward. The Design & Heritage team were advised that it would be useful to engage with community in an oral history project to gain knowledge of First Nation's peoples who worked at the Lightstation as well as those who were involved with Council and land management.

The importance of this report was echoed by various members of the group specifically in its ability to teach "real history", its ability to create a deeper broader connection to Country through the telling of these deep histories and the foundational points raised regarding history pre-1789.

The Group advised it would be appropriate to continue key engagement with Gujaga Foundation and to engage early on interpretation.

ACTIONS:

- ET will provide a table of remarks and community response to the Design & Heritage team regarding the "Connecting with Country Report"

5. First Nations Strategy Progress Report

KR presented the updates to the Draft First Nations Strategy and advised that the vision statement and commitments of this strategy need further work. The HT requested that the FNAG review and consider the update and provide feedback.

An action plan will be discussed internally which will focus on the next three-year period. Once this has been undertaken it will be circulated to the group out of session. The Group also discussed that guidelines for language also be included in this document. The final draft will be circulated to the FNAG, including a draft timeline of dates where possible.

ACTIONS:

- FNAG to provide feedback on Draft First Nations Strategy vision statement and commitments.
- Internal staff action plan to be sent to all FNAG members on completion for comment.

6. Discussion on the Middle Head Masterplan Implementation- Stage 1 Engagement

The HT is engaging a First Nations consultant regarding First Nation's design of the site. Stakeholder engagement workshops are planned and the outcomes will feed into the design process. The HT requested the group's feedback on how they would like to feed into the design process, via workshop or via other formats. The Group agreed that the First Nations consultant have an initial discussion with the Chair to discuss options. The HT will support the First Nations consultant by facilitating meetings and discussions with other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the right community groups are engaged with.

7. AOB – Woolwich Dock and Parklands Management Plan

The HT are keen to confirm engagement with FNAG for Woolwich Dock review, as well as the most appropriate people in Community to hold discussions with. This discussion will be continued in 2025 in addition to a walk on Country for Woolwich Dock, which will also incorporate Cockatoo Island.

The FNAG were notified of the Chair's Christmas Celebration on 9 December and were also invited to attend the Board Meeting in public which falls on the same day.

ACTIONS:

- 2025 FNAG meeting dates to be sent to the group.