

**Submission
No 15**

INQUIRY INTO WESTERN SYDNEY SCIENCE PARK AND AEROTROPOLIS DEVELOPMENTS

Organisation: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

Date Received: 27 August 2024



Via email: pawc@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Committee,

NSWALC Submission for the Inquiry into the Western Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council (**NSWALC**) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the 'Inquiry into the Western Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments'.

NSWALC is the peak body representing Aboriginal peoples in NSW and has functions to protect and promote the rights of Aboriginal peoples. NSWALC provides support to a network of 121 Local Aboriginal Land Councils (**LALCs**) in NSW, with a combined membership of over 30,000 Aboriginal people. LALCs are autonomous, elected bodies representing the interests of their members and wider Aboriginal community in their area. The core business of each LALC includes acquiring and managing lands for cultural and economic purposes and protecting and promoting Aboriginal culture and heritage. Additionally, NSWALC and LALCs are important employers of Aboriginal people in NSW.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Rights network is the key vehicle to delivering social, cultural and economic outcomes to Aboriginal communities, and is the framework for achieving self-determination in NSW. The Aboriginal land rights network has unique, first-hand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal peoples and has developed and continues to develop a range of innovative opportunities to support the economic prosperity and social and cultural aspirations of Aboriginal people in NSW.

NSWALC seeks to drive opportunities for economic development for Aboriginal people in NSW, with our Strategic Goals¹ outlining our commitment to pursuing economic independence and prosperity for our people and supporting our people and LALCs. This involves:

- The delivery of land activation programs that investigate and manage development programs in collaboration with LALCs.
- The development and activation of a state-wide property development model for NSWALC properties.
- Identifying strategic business growth opportunities with our LALCs.
- Supporting Aboriginal business owners, entrepreneurs, and job seekers to connect with business and employment opportunities across the state.
- Increasing access to education, training, and employment for Aboriginal peoples.

¹ NSW Aboriginal Land Council, 2022. NSWALC Strategic Plan 2022-2026. NSW Aboriginal Land Council

Inquiry into Western Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments

The Inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments is timely and significant. As substantial land holders in NSW, NSWALC and LALCs are critical in supporting economic outcomes in Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal Land Rights must be seen as a public outcome and a way to deliver on the key government priorities and to provide broader community benefits, including jobs growth, sustainable economic progress, stronger community connections and climate change resilience.

The Western Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments fall within the boundaries of the Deerubbin, Tharawal and Gandangara LALCs. As with any large infrastructure projects, there would have been many opportunities to generate much-needed outcomes for Aboriginal social, cultural, and economic independence and enhancing wider economic investment. The need to create and promote these opportunities was identified in the *Recognise Country Guidelines* adopted in November 2022 along with the Aerotropolis DCP 2022.

In consideration of the Public Accountability and Works Committee's inquiry into the impacts of these developments, and the above information, we provide the following for comment:

Planning/Land Use

Upon review of the available documents relating to the projects, we note that targeted engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders was undertaken in 2020 including two of the Aboriginal Land Councils whose boundaries are impacted by the Aerotropolis. The themes brought up during the process are wide-ranging however there is little consideration for how planning controls and rezonings, particularly on any Aboriginal landholdings, could deliver on both the guideline's recommendations, as well as any objectives and outcomes as set out by Aboriginal stakeholders.

As noted above, it is imperative in large-scale, planned precincts that land use and planning controls be able to deliver on tangible social, cultural and economic benefits for Aboriginal people especially in areas where Aboriginal representation is high. Additionally, we also recommend establishing and implementing an evaluation framework that interrogates whether the guideline requirements and DCP controls have, over time, been successful. At present, these guidelines focus largely on engagement and cultural values which are important but do not offer a holistic view of the desires and objectives of Aboriginal people.

Employment

Aboriginal industries and businesses are often rooted in community and NSWALC and the network of Aboriginal Land Councils have witnessed first-hand how investment in these ventures has a flow on effect that goes beyond economic outcomes, to social and cultural outcomes.

The *Recognise Country Guidelines* recognise the need for the Aerotropolis project to actively seek out and promote opportunities for economic development including employment. There are opportunities for partnership with local businesses and organisations including the Yarpa Hub.

The Yarpa Indigenous Business and Employment Hub, located in Liverpool, is a social enterprise established by NSWALC under the Indigenous Business Sector Strategy as a one-stop-shop for Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs to build their capability and connect to a wide range of business opportunities across NSW. With YARPA Indigenous Business and Employment Hub located in Western Sydney, there are many opportunities within the Western Sydney Science Park and

Aerotropolis Developments to work with Aboriginal people, within their community, to develop their business aspirations at all levels of growth.

Again, we recommend a transparent and consistent evaluation framework that is used as the projects are being delivered to ensure that that the recommendations of the guidelines are being met by relevant applications.

We hope that the recommendations made in this submission will be carefully considered.

Sincerely,

Yuseph Deen
Chief Executive Officer
NSW Aboriginal Land Council

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