

Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests

NSW AECG Inc. Q&A Factsheet



New South Wales
Aboriginal Education
Consultative Group Inc.

Where have the NSW Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests come from?

The NSW Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests (ALCNs) have been established because of Aboriginal people who have led a long and ongoing struggle for recognition of the value of Aboriginal languages and cultures.

As the peak advisory group on Aboriginal education in NSW, the NSW AECG has, since its establishment in 1977, played a significant leading role in advocating for Aboriginal languages and culture to be included in NSW education.

During 2012, the NSW AECG coordinated a series of Aboriginal Language Forums at locations across NSW in Nambucca Heads, Sydney, Condobolin, Gunnedah, Newcastle, Broken Hill and Moruya. In 2014 the NSW AECG, in partnership with TAFE Western, coordinated a statewide Languages and Culture Forum held in Dubbo. And in 2015 another statewide Language and Culture forum was held in Sydney. These events attracted over 160 participants from diverse language backgrounds and focused on the stories of successful language initiatives.

In 2013-14, the ALCNs along with the Connected Communities Strategy became a part of the NSW Government's Plan for Aboriginal Affairs, OCHRE.

What are the NSW Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests?

The NSW ALCNs are networks of communities bound together by their connection through an Aboriginal language¹. The broad idea behind the NSW ALCNs is to support, continue and increase Aboriginal language teaching and learning within Nest communities and schools.

¹ <https://education.nsw.gov.au/aec/language-culture-and-communities/aboriginal-language-programs-in-public-schools-nsw>

In NSW there are currently 5 ALCNs:

North West Wiradjuri Language and Culture Nest

The North West Wiradjuri Language and Culture Nest has been established and includes the communities of Dubbo, Narromine, Peak Hill, Trangie, Gilgandra, Wellington and Mudgee and all the schools located within these communities.

Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture Nest

The Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture Nest was launched in Coffs Harbour on 19 February 2014. It includes the South Grafton, Bellingen, Urunga, Dorrigo, Northern Beaches, Sawtell Toormina, Nambucca Valley and Orara communities.

Bundjalung Language and Culture Nest

The Bundjalung Language and Culture Nest (Lismore) was launched in Lismore on 20 February 2014. It includes the Kyogle, Tweed Heads, Ballina, Evans Head, Woodenbong, Grafton, Tabulam, Coraki, Casino and Bonalbo communities.

Paakantji/Baakantji Language and Culture Nest

The Paakantji/Baakantji Language and Culture Nest is located at Wilcannia Central School and includes the Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Menindee, Bourke, Mildura and Coomealla communities. There are 13 schools within these communities.

Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay Language and Culture Nest

The Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay Language and Culture Nest was launched in Lightning Ridge on 2 May 2014. It includes the communities of Collarenebri, Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Goodooga.²

Who owns the NSW Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests?

The NSW ALCNs are not owned by any one individual, community, institution or organisation. The NSW ALCNs are networks of communities bound together by their connection through an Aboriginal language.

Through the NSW Government's OCHRE initiative, funding has been provided to the NSW Department of Education (DoE) and recently the NSW AECG to support the five NSW ALCNs' objectives to increase teaching and learning of

² <http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal-language-and-culture-nests>

Aboriginal languages. This does not mean the NSW Government, the Department of Education or the NSW AECG own the ALCNs but it does mean each have accountability to support the Nests.

What is the NSW AECG's current involvement with the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests?

In June 2016 the NSW AECG received funding from the NSW DoE to support:

- the development and publishing of materials that support the teaching of Aboriginal languages
- a full range of Aboriginal language learning opportunities are accessible
- facilitation of access to qualification based learning in Aboriginal Languages for the Nest communities
- the establishment of Language and Culture Reference Groups in each Nest

An overview and updates on the NSW AECG's work on the above points to support the ALCNs can be found on our website at <https://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/languages/>

What about Intellectual and Cultural Property?

Increasing the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages in NSW involves Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) through the development of language teaching resources, programs, teaching pedagogies and workshops. The NSW AECG has ensured that the NSW DoE has agreed that the ownership of any ICIP will remain with the relevant traditional custodians of such ICIP.

Who is accountable for the NSW Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests?

The NSW ALCNs are a major education, government and community based initiative so there is not one individual, organisation, institution or community that is solely accountable. But in terms of the funding that has been allocated to the ALCNs initiative, accountability lies with:

- The NSW Government made a commitment to fund the ALCNs and so they are accountable to work to ensure that the funding they have provided is spent on achieving the objectives of the Nests

- The NSW DoE - Aboriginal Education and Communities has been given responsibility for leading the NSW ALCNs initiative and are accountable for supporting and increasing teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages in schools within the ALCNs
- The NSW AECG received funding from NSW DoE in June 2016 to work with and support the networks of communities involved in language teaching and learning in each Nest, we are accountable for this and to work on the points identified under the section in this paper titled 'What is the NSW AECG's current involvement with the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests?'

How are the NSW Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests governed?

The ALCNs are governed by a State Steering Committee and Local ALCN Reference Groups.

State Steering Committee – A State ALCN Steering Committee meets quarterly to review performance outcomes and risk management. The State Steering Committee includes the following representatives of the NSW DoE and the NSW AECG.

- NSW DoE - Manager, Languages, Cultures and Communities
- NSW DoE – Director, Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement
- NSW AECG – President
- NSW DoE – Executive Director, Aboriginal Education and Communities

ALCN Reference Groups – ALCN Reference Groups have been established in each of the Nests. ALCN Reference Groups are committed to discussing and setting their local Nest direction and priorities. The ALCN Reference Groups include representatives who are passionate about teaching and learning their language. They generally include Elders, Regional and/or Local AECG Members, language teachers and tutors and community leaders.

For further information about the NSW AECG's work with the ALCNs visit <https://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/languages/> or contact us on (02) 9550 5666