



Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd

ABN: 53624690277

The Secretary

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2020

ANNUAL REPORT

Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd

1 July 2019-30 June 2020

OUR MISSION

The Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd (DSMG) is a not-for-profit company and registered charity established in early-2018 as a public company limited by guarantee. It operates as an organisation for Dharug people, managed by Dharug people. Our mission is to build strong relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians to walk together along the journey of truth telling, healing and learning to belong together with Dharug Nura (Dharug Country).^{*} We value, celebrate and share Dharug culture and knowledge. We work to ensure and extend respectful recognition of Dharug people as the traditional custodians of and a continuing presence with Dharug Nura, including the Blacktown Native Institution (BNI) site, to which the company holds legal title, and to promote connection to Country and community through culture and ceremony. Specifically, DSMG will act to exercise care and stewardship over elements of Dharug Nura that return to Dharug care. We continue the journey in remembering and respecting the resilience, strength and spirit of the Ancestors.

As custodians of the BNI site, DSMG will foster environmental recovery, cultural celebration and commemoration, and economic opportunity on the site.

OUR VISION

Dharug Nura (Country) will be the heart of successful truth telling, healing and learning to belong together with Dharug Nura across the Sydney Basin. DSMG will develop as a sustainable body that oversees a multi-purpose, environmentally sound Community Hub on the Blacktown Native site. We will deliver collaborative programs supporting recognition, acknowledgement and respect for Dharug people, culture, history and wellbeing in the context of a generous, just and sustainable Western Sydney. Our programs and activities will foster cultural, artistic, educational and economic success with high levels of Dharug participation and wider community and organisational engagement with Indigenous issues.

OUR HISTORY

Dharug yura – the Dharug peoples who had possession and enjoyment of much of the Cumberland Plain and Sydney Basin – bore much of the brunt of the first phases of colonisation. It was Dharug yura who experienced the first waves of violence, discrimination and exclusion as the colony grew wealthier.

To paraphrase a former Prime Minister, it was the Dharug and our neighbours who first lost our traditional lands and had our traditional way of life smashed. We were the first to suffer the

^{*} DSMG acknowledges different spelling of Dharug language terms that reflect historical circumstances and changing community conventions. Nura is also spelled Ngurra and Ngura in different places, and DSMG has adopted this spelling until a clear community consensus on preferred spelling develops.

introduced diseases. We were the first victims of the murders committed in invasion and conquest. We were the first to lose our children when they were taken from our mothers and families. And across our generations, we continued to experience the trauma of displacement, loss, ignorance and prejudice that has produced a widespread common experience of alienation and discrimination.

In October 2018, DSMG was granted title to the BNI site. This nearly six-hectare site on the corner of Rooty Hill and Richmond Roads in Oakhurst hosted the Native Institute from 1823-1829 following the transfer of the Parramatta Native Institute, which was established by NSW Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1815. The property is currently open land bounded on two sides by major roads. Bells Creek runs through the site. It represents an important element of the colonial relationship with Aboriginal people.

The original Native Institution, established in on Dharug Nura in Parramatta in 1816, reflected Governor Lachlan Macquarie's well-intentioned ambition to civilise and assimilate Aboriginal people. In separating children from their families with a promise of education. The Blacktown Native Institution, established on the Oakhurst site in 1823, continued that tragically flawed colonial approach to First Nations and thus is one of the first known sites where Aboriginal children were removed from their parents (including under duress and by deceitful methods), and institutionalized – a practice that continued until the 1970s.

For tens of thousands of years before its removal from Dharug care, the BNI site had a Dharug history. DSMG Ltd intends to care for this precious element of Dharug Nura in ways that celebrate and commemorate the lives and struggles of the children who were institutionalized there. But we also intend to recognize and celebrate that longer, deeper history that connects us all to the Ancestors and our peoples' presence as part of Nura for countless generations before the injustices of more recent history. It is that deep history that DSMG will celebrate and support to nurture Dharug futures.

ABOUT US

DSMG was established after more than seven years of community consultation and negotiation about the future management of the BNI site. The site, which was held for the NSW Government by Landcom, has long been seen as of great cultural and historical significance by the people of the Dharug nation and its return to Dharug ownership in 2018 was the first return of Nura to Dharug care.

An interim working group of Dharug community representatives supported by officers from GHD contracted by Landcom to provide advice and support, negotiated terms for return of the BNI site to Dharug care over a period of more than seven years. The Interim Working Group, on advice from Gilbert & Tobin, registered DSMG Ltd as a not-for-profit company and successfully applied to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission for registration as a charity.

DSMG is immensely proud to accept the role of caring for the BNI site and developing a range of activities that will commemorate the site's colonial history, recognise and celebrate its much longer Dharug history and foster its ongoing place in Dharug futures.

OUR PEOPLE

Board members, 2019-2020

Name	Position	Dates acted (if not for whole year)
Julie Jones ¹	Chair	Appointed as Director: 27/02/2018 Elected as Chair: 23/10/2018 On leave as Chair: 01/11/2019 – 20/04/2020
Dr Jo Anne Rey ¹	Director	Appointed as Director: 27/02/2018 Elected as Acting Chair: 01/11/2019 – 20/04/20 Resigned as Director: 3/10/20
Michelle Locke ¹	Secretary	Appointed as Director: 27/02/2018 Appointed as Secretary: 27/02/2018
Emeritus Professor Richard Howitt ³	Director-Finance	Appointed as Director: 29/08/2018 Appointed as Director-Finance: 19/05/2019
Corina Norman ¹	Director	Appointed as Director: 27/02/2018
Nathan Ross ²	Director	Appointed as Director: 17/06/2018
Ryan Barrett ¹	Deputy Chair	Appointed as Director: 01/07/2019 Appointed as Deputy Chair: 12/07/2020
Joel Steller ³	Director	Appointed as Director: 24/01/2020
Peter Lee ¹	Director	Appointed as Director: 05/10/2018 Resigned as Director: 16/05/2019
Marcus Hughes ²	Director	Appointed as Director: 24/02/2019 Resigned as Director: 06/06/2019

¹ Dharug community member

² Other Indigenous person

³ Non-Indigenous person

Employees

In 2019-20 DSMG had no paid employees

Volunteers

In 2019-20 all DSMG Directors were volunteers.

In addition, DSMG benefitted from pro bono support from officers of:

- GHD Ltd (governance matters)
- Gilbert & Tobin (legal matters)
- Hayes Knight (finance matters)
- pwc (grant governance and project delivery matters) (NB pwc declined to invoice for services provided in 2018-19)
- Communities First Development (strategic planning)

Consultants

In 2019-20 DSMG accepted paid consultancy services from:

- Directors Julie Jones and Corina Norman (project development and delivery services)

STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT

DSMG is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

In March 2020 the Board adopted a Strategic Plan 2020-21. This plan was revised and updated at workshop in October 2020. The plan identifies four areas of strategic focus, with a Board Committee guiding work in each area:

1. **Caring for Culture.** *In 2019-20, this work was co-led by Directors Julie Jones and Corina Norman.*

DSMG will ensure full cultural activation on the BNI site, including comprehensive use of the site for cultural events, extensive teaching and learning for all ages, signage in language, dedicated gender-specific spaces, and the embedding of cultural protocols for all activities.

2. **Caring for Nura.** *In 2019-20, this work was co-led by Directors Jo Rey and Richie Howitt.*

DSMG will work towards rejuvenation of the landscape, skilled management of the water resources, support for the site's biodiversity, and an overall fostering of the Dharug community's connection to Country through planning, construction and successful operation of a Community Hub.

3. **Caring for Community.** *In 2019-20, this work was co-led by Directors Nathan Ross and Ryan Barrett.*

DSMG will foster strong Dharug community connections to a wide range of opportunities for education, training, employment and recognition, through a range of partnership programs and collaboration with local government, state and Commonwealth agencies, industry partners and existing community organisations.

4. **Caring for Company.** *In 2019-20, this work was co-led by Secretary and Director Michelle Locke and Director-Finance Richie Howitt.*

DSMG will develop strong governance, and clear and effective management and staffing policies, that support sound financial and legal compliance. We will seek competent, professional staff and volunteers as resources allow, will ensure effective recruitment, support and training of Board, staff and volunteers, and will establish sound systems for shared responsibility, transparency and accountability.

The company is governed by its Constitution. In the reporting period, the Board has met as follows:

- 28 July 2019 (Seven Hills)
- 18 August 2019 (Stonecutters Ridge)
- 8 September 2019 (Windsor)
- 20 October 2019 (postponed due to illness and other commitments)
- 27 October 2019 (Mt Druitt, community consultative meeting)
- 8-10 November 2019 (Lawson, strategic planning retreat)
- 22 December 2019 (Eastwood)
- 2 February 2020 (Eastwood)
- 19 March 2020 (Teleconference)
- 4 April 2020 (Zoom conference)
- 16 April 2020 (Zoom conference)
- 3 May 2020 (Zoom conference)
- 6 June 2020 (Eastwood)

Subsequent to the reporting period, the Board has continued to meet regularly, with meetings held as follows:

- 12 July 2020 (Stonecutters Ridge)
- 9 August 2020 (Zoom conference)
- 27 September 2020 (Zoom conference)
- 25 October 2020 (Lawson)

HIGHLIGHTS 2019-2020

- Meeting with Dharug community peak bodies
- Development and adoption of Strategic Plan 2020-2021 with support from Indigenous Community Volunteers (now Communities First Development)
- Signing a Statement of Recognition and Understanding with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
- DSMG Website launched
- Communities Environment Program Funding for collaboration with Parramatta Park Trust and Muru Mittigar to pursue reintroduction of Yam Daisy
- Adoption of key policies to guide DSMG governance, including an Epidemic and Pandemic Policy to guide DSMG through the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Planning for Gulbangi Dharug Nura project and involvement in the Biennale of Sydney 2020, which was disrupted by the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Parramatta Council grant to support digital delivery of Gulbangi Dharug Nura project
- Participation in Online Yarn-Up for Ventia for Reconciliation Week

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Warami budyari mullinawal

Before offering the Chair's Report, I wish to extend and pay my respects to Elders past and present and also to those who will arrive to hold those roles in the future. We are always on unceded Dharug Land.

I wish to thank all the DSMG Directors for the efforts you have all put in over the year and acknowledge the contribution is even more valuable given your time is offered in the capacity of volunteers and unpaid Board members.

I'd also like to mention the valuable contribution made by recently resigned Director Jo Rey as both a Director and Acting Chair in my absence throughout my leave. It was greatly appreciated and a job she did well.

Also, many thanks to GHD, Callum Bryan-Mathieson and Lauren Harding for their pro bono work on the Updated Plan of Management and Gilbert and Tobin for their continued support as well.

This year we have maintained our relationships with partners such as Blacktown City Council, Blacktown Arts, ICE and Parramatta Council and built new relationships with other organisations, people and groups such as Communities First Development, formally ICV with Renee Tompkins and Russell Jaffe, Rookwood General Cemetery, Casula Powerhouse, Ventia, Parramatta Park Trust, Klaus Eriksson at Makers Only and the amazing Paul Osborne from Catapult. We have through these relationships and projects, consulted with Greening Australia, Muru Mittigar and others. We have been approached by Deloitte to discuss guiding the embedding and understanding of respectful cultural practices into their company. We have sponsored awards, opened conversations around end-of-life care and held on country training. Some of these relationships are far removed possibly, from the previous targeted areas we thought DSMG would undertake and be involved in. What an evolution!! Thanks to Nathan Ross for the introductions to Ventia and Deloitte.

DSMG have this year applied for grants, some of which have been successful, some not. However, every outcome has provided an opportunity to converse and learn from.

COVID came along and heavily impacted on our year. It had a profound impact on the delivery of our Biennale Nirin Project which was part of our Create NSW funding. However, we prevailed and after combining all delayed and rescheduled events into one, held a great filming weekend combing these events and workshops into a digital delivery of the BNI as an artist in Nirin. We now need to lodge our variation and decide on a final event to deliver and complete our objectives and obligations of that grant and project. What a journey it has been and what a pleasure to work with the artists and workshop specialists we have. I'd also like to extend my personal thank you to Corina Norman and Joel Steller for their tireless work and contributions working with me on this project. Many hours, many headaches, many frustrations but always with focus, good hearts and spirits.

Obviously, another milestone was the signing of the Statement of Recognition and Acknowledgment signed with MAAS. Sadly, this has not been all smooth sailing. The Parramatta Powerhouse move has developed in a manner that sits unethically and uncomfortably with DSMG, Dharug yura and more widely the residents and community of Parramatta. On 8th Oct Uncle Richie and I testified at the Hearing into the Powerhouse move to Parramatta. Michelle Locke, DSMG Secretary and I, in different capacities, sat on the Community Reference Group and bought all feedback to DSMG and community. I wish to say thank you Michelle for the commitment, knowledge and education you offered at the table. I also wish to thank Uncle Richie for a brilliantly prepared response to the EIS which was tabled at the hearing as evidence. It is an extremely important and now widely referenced document on behalf of DSMG.

We also had the joy of welcoming Ryan to the Board and his acceptance as Deputy/Co Chair which is another step towards good Black Governance and Cultural practice.

In summing up, I'm beyond privileged to know and work with every single one of you on this Board. Sincerely from my heart, you are some of the most genuine, respectful, committed and loving humans I know. You foster positivity, you raise spirits, offer endless support to each other and community and give your time generously often sacrificing precious family time to progress DSMG and the BNI. It's truly humbling.

May we have an even more successful year ahead as we chase down funds and partnerships and work towards protection and awareness for the BNI and Dharug yura and nura.

Sincere regards and best wishes to all.

Didjurigur



Julie Jones
Chair
6 December 2020

DSMG'S OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The company was established in February 2018 in order to receive title to the Blacktown Native Institution site from the NSW Government and to advance the culture and wellbeing of the Dharug people and promote reconciliation, respect and harmony between Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and non-Aboriginal Australians. The scope of the company's activities at establishment was focused on:

- (a) Remembering and respecting the resilience, strength and spirit of the ancestors on their paths already walked;
- (b) Recognising the Dharug people as the traditional custodians of Dharug Nura and undertaking the responsibilities and obligations as custodians to care for Country and all life;
- (c) fostering strong relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians to walk together along the reconciliation journey;
- (d) undertaking cultural responsibilities on Country and promoting the connection to their land and community. This involves the rights for and between Dharug people to practise and participate in traditional knowledge, culture and ceremony; and
- (e) celebrating and sharing the culture and traditional knowledge of the Dharug people with the broader community

The majority of the Board identify as Dharug and the position of Chair and Secretary have always been held by Dharug Directors. In 2019-20, two new Directors were appointed to replace Peter Lee and Marcus Hughes, who resigned earlier in 2019.

- *Ryan Barrett* is a young Dharug man completing legal qualifications at UNSW.
- *Joel Steller* is a former employee of GHD and supported the Interim Working Group during negotiations with Landcom leading up to the transfer of title for the BNI site.

CreateNSW funding was secured in 2019 to support participation in the Biennale of Sydney 2020 in partnership with Blacktown Arts (Blacktown City Council), Museum of Contemporary Art and the Biennale of Sydney. The original proposal anticipated a series of events in which the BNI site was an artist in its own right. In 2020 the project has been led by Directors Julie Jones, Corina Norman and Joel Steller, but the schedule was completely disrupted by restrictions on public gatherings arising from Covid-19. The project is continuing in revised form, with digital delivery and rescheduled events in preparation. Parramatta Council provided a small grant to support digital delivery.

Away from the BNI site, DSMG's commitment to healing Nura was supported by a Communities Environment Grant, supported by the Federal Member for Parramatta, Julie Owens. That project involves collaboration with the Parramatta Park Trust and Muru Mittigar to reintroduce yam daisies and other culturally valued flora into a section of Parramatta Park along Domain Creek.

Blacktown Council has informed DSMG of proposed stormwater management developments adjacent to the BNI site affecting Bells Creek. DSMG prepared comment on the proposed work and is working with Blacktown Council to coordinate our own site planning and revegetation with Blacktown Council activities. GHD has provided pro bono support to refine the landscape masterplan for the BNI site which will assist in the collaboration with Blacktown Council. Progress on that project was significantly delayed by Covid-19, with funding approval not finalised in the reporting period.

A key goal for DSMG has been development a stronger and more effective web presence. Following valuable assistance from student interns from Macquarie University, our website (www.dsmg.org.au) was launched in February 2020.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Director-Finance, Emeritus Professor Richard Howitt BA (Hons), Dip Ed (1978) *University of Newcastle*; PhD (1986) *UNSW* PGCert Ed Leadership (HEd) *Macquarie* (2004), GAICD, AMICDA, JP

CORPORATE INFORMATION

ABN 53 624 690 277

Bankers ANZ (Mt Druitt Branch)

Auditors Hayes Knight Sydney

The company was registered for GST effective 1 July 2020. Hayes Knight has agreed to manage administration of our GST reporting without charge.

Only one grants was received in the reporting period:

- a Commonwealth grant of \$18,000 under the Communities Environmental Program

Expenses incurred were:

- Insurance costs –\$ 5,000.00
- Site maintenance costs - \$10,450.00
- Consultant fees (incl artist costs) - \$103,122.501
- Reimbursements -\$771.77
- Workshop Venue charges – \$954.00
- Audit costs - \$4,400.00

I note that the company paid two Directors as consultants in 2019-20 to provide services required by the Gulbangi Dharug Nura project funded by a CreateNSW grant. The company's constitution (Rule 8.6(b)) permits payments to Directors for goods and services. On the recommendation of an external consultant and following extensive efforts to secure a Project Manager for the project, it was agreed that Julie Jones and Corina Norman should be contracted to provide project management services that they were uniquely qualified to deliver. I note the company's appreciation that the Directors' in-kind contribution (uncharged work) totalled over 200 hours, representing more than \$49,000 of value to the project.

In 2019-2020 DSMG's financial focus was framed by development of a strategic plan and efforts to secure grant income for specific projects. With support from the Federal Member for Parramatta, we secured a small Communities Environment Program grant to pursue work in Parramatta Park. Significant effort was put into applying for funding from the NSW Environmental Trust under the Protecting Our Places program. While this application involved significant Board time, it was not successful, and we were informed that we had been found ineligible for funding under the scheme only after the announcement of successful grants. This was a great disappointment. The ineligibility ruling arose from the program's narrow eligibility guidelines that did not include recognition of Indigenous not-for-profit corporations. With the increasing diversity of the Indigenous sector, restriction of eligibility to Local Land Councils, Aboriginal Corporations and a limited range of others seems both patronising and inappropriate and we have urged reconsideration of eligibility for future funding rounds. As steward and custodian for an important Dharug heritage site, it was frustrating to find that our effort to secure funds to commence revegetation to heal the site had been fruitless. We have advocated variation of the eligibility guidelines for future funding rounds.

Our experience emphasised the need for DSMG to reduce our reliance on program-based grants and to secure both a modest revenue stream to support our basic operations and site

maintenance obligations, and wider fundraising options to pursue our ambitions for healing and activation at the BNI site. We have commenced both elements in 2020.

Following successful trialling of an on-site cultural experience with senior staff of Ventia, DSMG is developing a fee-for-service program that will offer cultural awareness and related training to corporate partners on the BNI site. We have also adopted a fee schedule to allow off-site participation in consultative and other processes. This and related social enterprise development activities will allow DSMG to meet its ongoing operational costs.

Fundraising for larger projects to heal the site, activate it with cultural and ceremonial activities and to install facilities on site to support these projects is a greater challenge. While we will continue to seek funding through various grant programs, we have decided to seek DGR status and revisit our Strategic Plan to sharpen our fundraising focus.

DECLARATION

As the Director-Finance and the person responsible for the company's finances, I declare that in my opinion:

- (a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and
- (b) the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.



Richard Howitt
Director-Finance
18.11.2020

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (1.07.19 – 30.06.20)

OPENING BALANCE at 1 July 2019		\$337,538.12
REVENUE		
Cash receipts		nil
Grant receipts		
	Communities Environment Program – Grant Payment	18,000
Interest		nil
TOTAL REVENUE		\$ 18,000
EXPENSES		
Bank fees and charges.		300.00
Payments		124,698.27
	Insurance costs –\$ 5,000.00	
	Site maintenance costs - \$10,450.00	
	Consultant fees (incl artist costs) - \$103,122.50 ¹	
	Reimbursements -\$771.77	
	Workshop Venue charges – \$954.00	
	Audit costs - \$4,400.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 124,998.27
CLOSING BALANCE @ 30.06.20		\$230,539.85
BALANCE at BANK @ 30.06.20		\$230,539.85

NOTE 1:

Following failure to recruit suitable staff and on advice from *pwc* that use of internal capacity at market rates was the appropriate strategy to fulfil obligations under contract to CreateNSW in the Gulbangi Dharug Nura project grant, the Board approved contracts for consultant services for two Directors to perform the Project Management tasks. Total payments to Directors were \$89,180.00. The Directors provided in-kind unpaid time on the project of xxx hours equivalent to cost of \$xxxx.

CONTACT US

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