

Speak up for your mob and your country

Cooks River Aboriginal Community Engagement

The Cooks River is home to Aboriginal mobs who have looked after it since the Dream Time. Despite the impacts of colonisation, Kooris maintain strong cultural and spiritual connections to the River.

The [Cooks River Alliance](#) is a mob of four different Sydney councils and Sydney Water that have teamed up to look after the Cooks River. The Alliance is caring for country on the river and making it better for communities. It wants to respect, include and preserve Aboriginal culture and knowledge on the River and has found a grant through Landcare to engage with Aboriginal mobs on how best to include them.

The Alliance knows it needs to include and engage more closely with Wangal, Cadigal and Gameygal mobs as the Traditional Owners of the Cooks River. And it wants to include and acknowledge other Kooris and Aboriginal mobs who have made the River their home.

Aboriginal inclusion is the right thing to do. And it's crucial for looking after the River.

The Alliance has asked 100% Aboriginal-owned business [Lyrebird Dreaming Pty Ltd](#) to consult with relevant Aboriginal mobs and draw up an *Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy*. Aboriginal men Gregory Andrews and Lee Willis-Ardler will work with local community mobs to co-design a strategy. This will include informal and formal consultations with community to design, test and review a Strategy.

Gregory and Lee will be engaging on-the-ground with community from mid-June. Formal meetings will then be held in July and August - most likely at Canterbury-Bankstown City Council offices. A final Strategy endorsed by the Aboriginal community will be delivered to the Alliance in September.

If you're an Aboriginal person with connections to the River, Gregory and Lee would like to hear from you. Reach out at gregory.andrews@lyrebirddreaming.com or 0493 272 633.



Artwork by Gregory Andrews, 2023.