

Cooks River Aboriginal Community Inclusion Update

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

The [Cooks River Alliance](#) is a group of local government mobs teaming up to look after the River. It wants to do better at including Aboriginal mobs and their culture in caring for country on the River. It wants to partner more closely with Wangal, Cadigal and Gameygal mobs as the Traditional Custodians. And it wants to include and acknowledge other Kooris and Aboriginal mobs who have connections to the River.

100% Koori-owned business [Lyrebird Dreaming](#) has been invited by the Alliance to yarn directly with local community to co-design an Aboriginal Community Inclusion Strategy.

We are yarning first and foremost with Traditional Custodians. But also with all interested Aboriginal peoples, Aboriginal organisations including the MLALC, and non-Aboriginal mobs like councils which employ and engage with our mob. At a time that works for community, in July and August we will also hold formal meetings with community to design, test and review a Strategy.

Who should have a say caring for country on the River?



Ideas for real partnership in caring for the River



Community members have already shared some deadly ideas. These include:

- A Joint Management Committee for the Cooks River Alliance that includes at least half and half membership between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal mobs.
- Employment of an Aboriginal community engagement position for caring for country activities on the river.
- An Aboriginal Boatshed on the river which could be a meeting place to share ideas and culture and support artistic expression, cultural activities, and educational programs focused on Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and history. The Boatshed could also provide opportunities for eco-tourism, allowing visitors to learn from and appreciate Aboriginal culture while bringing economic benefits for Aboriginal community.
- Including local Aboriginal knowledge when caring for country on the River – for example, cultural burning and other traditional land management techniques. This could also help reverse colonisation impacts which effect country as well as people.

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

There will be more ideas. And the Alliance wants to hear them all. If you're an Aboriginal person with connections to the River, Gregory and Lee would like to hear from you. If you know someone who has connections to the river and should be included, please let them know too.

Reach out to Gregory on 0493 272 633 or to Lee on 0412 243 300.

Caring for Country Aboriginal Community Map of the Cooks River NSW

