Report from the
Second Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum
23 – 24 August 2006
Mount Serle Station
South Australia

“Together we can understand and look after the Basin”
Report from the Second Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum, 23 – 24 August 2006, Mount Serle Station South Australia

December 2006

Event steering committee

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Cover photo: Sunrise over Mount Serle Station, northern Flinders Ranges, South Australia (Photograph: Vol Norris)
Acknowledgements

The Event Steering Committee would like to thank all the participants at the 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum for their efforts to attend the Forum, many from considerable distances, and for their sincere and genuine contributions to the discussions and outcomes.

We would like to particularly thank:

Lily Neville, for the welcome to Adnyamathanha country
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SUMMARY

The second Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum was held on Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd August 2006 at Mt Serle Station in the northern Flinders Ranges, South Australia. The Aboriginal Forum is part of a program for involving Aboriginal people and interests in the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement.

Approximately 40 people attended the Forum from Queensland, South Australia, the Northern Territory and western New South Wales.

Purpose

The purposes of the Forum were to:

1. develop an Outreach Strategy to strengthen links with Aboriginal people and groups in the Lake Eyre Basin (LEB)

2. exchange knowledge and discuss Aboriginal priorities for water and related land issues

3. develop collaborations of mutual benefit in implementing the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement.

Discussions at the Forum were a mixture of large group sessions involving all participants, and smaller group sessions where people gathered with others from their State or Territory.

Principles

The following principles provided a foundation to the Forum:

1. Shared goals — we are all here for the health of the Lake Eyre Basin

2. Common ground — our approach is collaborative, based on finding common ground

3. Cross-border connections — an important secondary role of the Forum is to provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to reconnect across borders in the Lake Eyre Basin.

Outcomes

Outcomes of the Forum were a combination of:

- specific recommendations from participants to Government for further work and for future Aboriginal involvement and communication; and

- lists and descriptions of water and land issues in the Lake Eyre Basin that are important to Aboriginal people.
Key recommendations

The key recommendations made to Government by the participants at the 2006 Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum were:

1. that the 4 additional Aboriginal members of the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee (approved by the Ministerial Forum in October 2005) be recruited immediately.

2. that Basin-wide Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forums be held annually.

3. that smaller LEB Aboriginal Forums be held annually in Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, prior to the annual Basin-wide LEB Aboriginal Forums, and in close conjunction with existing state and regional Indigenous processes.

[The annual State and Territory Aboriginal Forums followed by the annual LEB Aboriginal Forum, would be the primary and most effective component of the Outreach Strategy.]

4. that an Aboriginal communications strategy for the LEB should be developed and implemented in conjunction with the whole-of-LEB communications strategy.

5. That an LEB Aboriginal document be compiled, containing:

   - The history of Aboriginal people and groups in the LEB
   - A current social and economic profile of Aboriginal groups and people in the LEB
   - A progressive summary of LEB Aboriginal engagement, and Aboriginal priorities for water and land issues in the LEB.

Such a document would provide both a context and a focal record for continuing Aboriginal involvement in the LEB Agreement.

Water and Land Issues

Issues were raised in relation to mining, tourism, pastoralism, roads and infrastructure in the Basin. In discussing these land uses, two broadly different concerns emerged:

- the impacts of the above land uses on the environment of the Basin
- the benefits that are derived from the above land uses.

The range of natural resource impacts highlighted by the participants for the above land uses in the Basin included erosion, weed invasion, feral animals, grazing pressure and water consumption.

These impacts are seen as widely affecting natural and cultural sites that are important to Aboriginal people. The protection of these sites was seen as a high priority, in particular the monitoring, protection and maintenance of both the quality and quantity of water.

Participants also felt that the current distribution of benefits derived from the natural resources of the Basin is inequitable, given the traditional Aboriginal connections to the country and natural resources that provide those benefits.

They felt that greater equity in the distribution of these outcomes and benefits is desired i.e. some share in those benefits for Aboriginal people in the Basin.

Integration and holistic health were threads that ran through the forum, and a strong emerging theme for Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal people was the inseparable integration of people, country, culture and health.
PART 1 — BACKGROUND
The Lake Eyre Basin

The Lake Eyre Basin (Figure 1) unlike other drainage basins elsewhere in Australia, does not drain to the sea. All rivers and streams in the Basin flow eventually into Lake Eyre, many of them beginning in Queensland and the Northern Territory before flowing across the border into South Australia. Covering 1.14 million square kilometres, or roughly one seventh of the Australian continent, the Basin is one of the largest internally draining river systems in the world.

It is also considered to be one of the world’s last unregulated wild river systems, being without the big dams and weirs found in the more ‘regulated’ catchments in eastern Australia.

The Basin contains areas of national and international ecological significance, and its creeks and rivers have a ‘boom and bust’ ecology … they remain dry for long periods (‘bust’), followed by times of high flow or flooding after rain, which bring intense plant and animal reproduction and growth (‘boom’). Big floods in the Basin can spread out over thousands of square kilometres.

The Basin is rich in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture and heritage, and supports valuable industries:

- sheep and cattle production
- tourism
- mining
- oil and gas production.

The population of the Lake Eyre Basin is about 57,000 people, roughly 27,000 of them living in Alice Springs.
The Lake Eyre Basin Agreement

The Lake Eyre Basin is divided by State and Territory borders; it includes large parts of Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, and a small part of New South Wales.

The governments of South Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth have all signed the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement. The Agreement (originally signed in October 2000) says:

- the Lake Eyre Basin has many values (environments, cultures, industries, communities)
- the rivers and catchments in the Basin must stay healthy if we want to maintain these values for the future;
- to keep the rivers and catchments healthy, Governments must work together cooperatively.

Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum

Water and land in the Lake Eyre Basin are managed separately by each different State and Territory. To help them work together, one Minister from each State and Territory Government, plus one Minister from the Commonwealth Government, meet once a year as the Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum.

The Ministerial Forum exchanges information about water and land issues in the Lake Eyre Basin. They discuss how these issues are being managed in each State and Territory, and how they can be managed better by working together cooperatively.

The Ministerial Forum has appointed a Community Advisory Committee and a Scientific Advisory Panel to give them advice on water and land issues. They also get advice from Government Departments in each State and Territory and the Commonwealth.

Figure 2 shows the Ministerial Forum, the Advisory Committees and the Departments.
The Community Advisory Committee

The job of the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee is to:

- provide community advice to the Ministerial Forum on water and related land issues in the Basin
- seek out community views on water and related land issues in the Basin
- inform the Basin community of the decisions and work of the Ministerial Forum.

The Committee must represent a range of community interests, including Aboriginal interests (see Figure 2).

Aboriginal Involvement

To help represent Aboriginal interests, the Community Advisory Committee currently includes two Aboriginal members. The Ministerial Forum has agreed that this should increase to six Aboriginal members, two from each State and Territory.

The Committee also communicates with Aboriginal people, groups and communities in the Basin. Six core principles guide this communication:

1. **Sustained effort**—Aboriginal involvement should be a long-term program, not a short-term project.
2. **Face to face contact** with Aboriginal people is essential—regular consultation and gatherings
3. **Coordination with other groups**—other groups in the Basin are also talking to Aboriginal people. We need to work with them.
4. **Local protocols**—the best ways to involve Aboriginal people will vary across the basin. We need to be sensitive to these differences and conform with local protocols.
5. **Mutual cultural learning**—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (including governments) need to understand each other better.
6. **Provide regular feedback**—regular communication with Aboriginal groups and communities should keep them informed of how their concerns are being acted upon.

The Ministerial Forum endorsed these six principles at its third meeting in June 2004.

Previous LEB Aboriginal Forum 2004

This year’s LEB Aboriginal Forum was the second Aboriginal Forum held since the LEB Agreement was signed. The first was in October 2004 at Hamilton Downs Youth Camp, near Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.

The objectives of the 2004 Forum were to build relationships among Aboriginal people from different parts of the Basin, talk about Aboriginal visions for natural resources in the Basin, introduce and discuss the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement, and discuss Aboriginal involvement in the LEB Agreement.

Five main issues emerged from the 2004 forum:

- partnerships, governance and communication
- Aboriginal membership on the LEB Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Aboriginal cultural awareness for non-Aboriginal people
- the need for a social and community profile of Aboriginal people in the Basin
- the importance of educating children and passing on knowledge.

The recommendations from the 2004 LEB Aboriginal Forum were conveyed to the CAC and passed on as recommendations to the LEB Ministerial Forum in December 2004. The Ministerial Forum, at its fourth meeting in October 2005, agreed to expand the Aboriginal membership of the CAC from two to six (two from each State and Territory). The majority of CAC members and several Government Officers attended an Aboriginal cultural awareness session in Alice Springs in April 2006, and a brief social and community profile of Aboriginal people in the Basin has been included as a component of the LEB Social Atlas, funded by the Australian Government under the Natural Heritage Trust.
PART 2 — LEB ABORIGINAL FORUM 2006

VENUE, ATTENDANCE AND PROGRAM
Aboriginal venue

The 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum was held on Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd August at Mt Serle Station in the northern Flinders Ranges, South Australia, (Figures 3, 4 and 5).

Mount Serle Station is an Aboriginal owned and managed pastoral lease occupying nearly 50,000 ha of land at the foot of Mt Serle. Charlie and Marilyn Jackson of Mount Serle Station hosted and catered for the event. Most attendees were accommodated at Mount Serle Station, and some at neighbouring Iga Warta Community.
Who attended?

Participants were invited from all parts of the Lake Eyre Basin. We hoped to attract roughly equal numbers from Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, as well as interested people from western New South Wales. Members of the Community Advisory Committee, Scientific Advisory Panel, and Government officers participating in the LEB Agreement were also invited.

Thirty three people attended the Forum from various locations (see Figures 6 and 7 and Appendix 1) including Adelaide, Brisbane and Sale (Victoria). Approximately another ten people from South Australia were present at various times during the two days, but were not recorded on the attendance register.

People who attended were not specially selected, and did not speak for other people’s
country. Rather they came because they were available, were interested in water and land issues in the Lake Eyre Basin, and wanted to be involved. Transport assistance was provided from Alice Springs (NT), Adelaide (SA), and Longreach (Qld). Three of the attendees at the Forum had also attended the 2004 LEB Aboriginal Forum.
While at the Forum, all attendees were invited to sign a large, cloth map of the Lake Eyre Basin, to write inscriptions and to indicate where they were from (Figure 8).

Inscriptions included:
• “Ninti Way — doing things together from one heart to another” and
• “Everybody’s business”.

Figure 8  2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum — working map of the Lake Eyre Basin with attendee signatures, locations and inscriptions.
Purpose

The purposes of the Forum were to:

1. develop an **Outreach Strategy** to strengthen links with Aboriginal people and groups in the LEB

2. **exchange knowledge** and discuss **Aboriginal priorities** for water and related land issues

3. develop **collaborations of mutual benefit** in implementing the LEB Agreement.

To achieve these purposes three focus questions were posed:

1. Outreach strategy — How will we build and continue to maintain strong links with Aboriginal people and groups in the Lake Eyre Basin, and what resources will be required?

2. What are key Aboriginal priorities for water and related land resources in the Lake Eyre Basin?

3. What collaborations of mutual benefit are needed to help address these Aboriginal priorities under the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement?

Principles

The following principles guided our approach to the Aboriginal Forum:

1. **Shared goals**
   We are all here for the health of the Lake Eyre Basin

2. **Common ground**
   Our approach is collaborative, based on finding common ground

3. **Cross-border connections**
   An important secondary role of the Forum is to provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to reconnect across borders in the Lake Eyre Basin.
The program for the two-day forum (see Appendix 2) included five major components:

1. Substantial time for welcomes, introductions and getting to know each other

2. Background information on the Lake Eyre Basin and the LEB Agreement

3. Background on the previous LEB Aboriginal Forum in 2004

4. Discussions of Aboriginal concerns and issues for water and land management

5. Discussions about communications and outreach — keeping Aboriginal people and concerns at the table.

Discussions were a mixture of large group sessions involving everybody, and smaller group sessions where people gathered with others from their State or Territory.
Additional background information for the Forum was provided as six Aboriginal maps of the Basin, printed in poster size and displayed on boards:

- **Map A1** Indigenous proportion of population, Lake Eyre Basin
- **Map A2** Indigenous proportion of population, Lake Eyre Basin
- **Map A3** Indigenous Protected areas of Australia, December 2004, with approximate location of Lake Eyre Basin boundary
- **Map A4** Indigenous language boundaries, Lake Eyre Basin
- **Map A5** Native Title determinations, Lake Eyre Basin
- **Map A6** Land tenure, Lake Eyre Basin

Appendix 3 shows copies of these maps. All maps except Map A3 were products of the Lake Eyre Basin Social and Economic Study currently being managed by the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, and implemented by the CSIRO (Alexander Herr and Tim Lynam).

Ideas, issues, outputs and recommendations were recorded progressively on cards and butchers paper.
The program, planned over two days and three nights, included enough informal, free time to allow people to get to know each other in a relaxed, comfortable, social environment. All meals and most accommodation were provided at Mount Serle Station, and a local Aboriginal band played each evening. The contacts formed during the forum are important outcomes of the event.

Being held on an Aboriginal-owned and managed property in traditional country, the Forum also provided an opportunity to hear local Aboriginal stories and see places of Aboriginal significance and interest. On the final afternoon of the Forum, Charlie Jackson led a tour of several sites of traditional cultural significance on and near Mount Serle Station.
PART 3 — ISSUES, OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Introduction

Outcomes of the Forum were a combination of:

- specific recommendations from the Forum participants to Government, for further work and for future Aboriginal involvement and communication; and
- lists and descriptions of water and land issues in the Lake Eyre Basin that are important to Aboriginal people.

These outcomes are summarised in Figures 9 to 13, and are described in the following sections under headings that correspond to the three focus questions of the Forum:

- LEB Aboriginal Outreach Strategy
- Collaborations of Mutual Benefit
- Aboriginal priorities for Water and Land Issues

LEB Aboriginal Outreach Strategy

The Forum attendees recommended that the critical components of a Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Outreach Strategy should be:

1. Filling the extra four Aboriginal positions on the LEB Community Advisory Committee as soon as possible
2. Holding Basin-wide Aboriginal Forums for the Lake Eyre Basin every year (instead of every two years)
3. Holding smaller LEB Aboriginal Forums each year for South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory, before each annual Basin-wide Forum.
4. Implementing an Aboriginal Outreach Communication Strategy in conjunction with the LEB Communications Strategy.

Attendees also discussed the possibility of a separate Aboriginal Advisory Group being appointed by the LEB Ministerial Forum, in addition to holding annual Aboriginal Forums with open attendance.

Figures 9, 10 and 11 provide details of these recommendations.

Aboriginal CAC members

Figure 9 describes the recommended Aboriginal representation structure under the LEB Agreement with a total of six Aboriginal members of the LEB Community Advisory Committee (i.e. an additional four new Aboriginal members).

Attendees felt that the new Aboriginal CAC members should either live in the Lake Eyre Basin or have a close connection to the Basin. Other desired characteristics for the new Aboriginal members are listed in Figure 9.

Forum participants recommended that the selection process for new Aboriginal members be fair and open, that there be both male and female Aboriginal members, and that nominations for new members be invited by word of mouth, and by post, fax and email invitations throughout the Basin.

Participants also recommended that the invitations to nominate should include clear explanations of:

- Lake Eyre Basin arrangements
- the role of CAC members
- the selection criteria for members.

Additional State and Territory Aboriginal Forums

Figure 10 shows the model for LEB Aboriginal engagement and partnership recommended by the participants: a total of six Aboriginal CAC members, together with annual State and Territory Aboriginal Forums and an annual whole-of-Basin Aboriginal Forum.
Figure 9  Aboriginal representation on the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee
Figure 10 Model for Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal engagement and partnership
Each smaller State and Territory Aboriginal Forum should be coordinated closely with existing processes in each State or Territory. For example, an LEB Aboriginal Forum held for the South Australian part of the Lake Eyre Basin should involve the South Australian Aboriginal State-wide Advisory Committee and should be coordinated with other Aboriginal involvement work of the SA Arid Lands NRM Board.

Similarly an LEB Aboriginal Forum held for the Queensland part of the Lake Eyre Basin should be coordinated closely with the Aboriginal Reference Group being established by Desert Channels Queensland. In the Northern Territory, LEB Aboriginal Forums should be organised in close consultation with the Central Land Council and Aboriginal Sacred Sites Authority.

Aboriginal Outreach Communications Strategy

The first two boxes in Figure 11 show the core communication strategy recommended by the Forum participants in order to maintain effective contact with Aboriginal people and groups in the Lake Eyre Basin.

This strategy is broken into three components:

1. Communication principles (e.g. ‘be consultative from the outset’)
2. Communication methods (i.e. primarily the State Aboriginal Forums, plus other methods such as newsletters and web-site information)
3. Types of information (e.g. resource monitoring information, plans and directions)

The Aboriginal Outreach Communication Strategy as shown in boxes 1 and 2 of Figure 11 should be implemented in close coordination with the whole-of-Basin Communication Strategy that is being developed by the participating Governments under the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement.

Collaborations of Mutual Benefit — an LEB Aboriginal Document

The Forum participants recommended that a Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Document should be developed as a high priority collaboration under the LEB Agreement. This is shown in the third box in Figure 11.

The Aboriginal Document would be compiled during future consultations in the Basin. Its purposes would be:

- To build respect for LEB Aboriginal people
- To improve awareness of Aboriginal culture and circumstances in the Basin, and improve mutual understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
- To provide a record of LEB Aboriginal involvement and outcomes.

The Document should present ‘the Aboriginal Story’ for the Lake Eyre Basin, and would contain:

1. The history of Aboriginal people and groups in the LEB
2. A current social and economic profile of Aboriginal groups and people in the LEB
3. A progressive summary of LEB Aboriginal engagement, and Aboriginal priorities for water and land issues in the LEB.

Such a document would provide both a context and a focal record for continuing Aboriginal involvement in the LEB Agreement, and would be a significant step forward under the Agreement.
Lake Eyre Basin
Model and ideas for an LEB Aboriginal Communications Strategy

Criteria or principles to guide development of a good communications strategy

- Respect Aboriginal people, culture and country
- Recognise that ‘one mob can not talk for another mob’ so it must allow and encourage all an opportunity to participate
- Ensure that the results accurately reflect participants directions
- Be consultative from the outset
- Be practical and economical
- Flexible and effective over distances and isolation
- Meet with Governments and Aboriginal support

We shall identify and use the best communication methods and build individual networks in each region and State

Engage at a policy, planning and operational level

Must be two-way
- Community to Government and
- Government to Community

Outreach communications strategy

Government and LEB - CAC to Community and
- Community to LEB - CAC and Government

Methods of communications

The primary and most effective method shall be
- The annual State Aboriginal Forums followed by
- the annual LEB Aboriginal Forum

Other methods between Forums shall include:
- CAC representatives and word of mouth
- Newsletter using mail, fax and email
- TV and radio to announce Forum dates
- Web site with Interactive blog
- Networking through other NRM bodies
- Tag onto other NR related events

Types of information

- Announcements; Forum and event dates
- Post LEB CAC meeting information
- Natural and cultural issues
- Plans and directions
- Social and cultural profile and updates
- Monitoring information on natural and cultural resources and activities in LEB
- Cultural awareness information

Development of a LEB Aboriginal document including a progressive engagement strategy compiled during future consultations

This document shall build respect for Aboriginal people, improve cultural awareness and mutual understanding and may include:

- Guiding principles for engagement
- Engagement protocols and processes with Aboriginal people and Communities in LEB
- Highlight high priority considerations from an Aboriginal perspective
- Natural and cultural resources in LEB from an Aboriginal perspective
- Aboriginal social and cultural profile of LEB

An Aboriginal LEB identity, logo, caption and an internal communications policy to be developed to ensure consistent message is delivered

Figure 11  Model and ideas for a Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Communications Strategy
Aboriginal priorities for Water and Land Issues

Issues

Appendix 4 lists the issues raised during the group discussions sessions by Forum participants in their State and Territory groups. Figure 12 summarises the overall priorities recommended by the participants, both for water and land issues, and for Aboriginal involvement in the Lake Eyre Basin.

Issues were raised in relation to the following land uses:
- Mining
- Tourism
- Pastoralism
- Roads and infrastructure.

In discussing these land uses, two broadly different concerns emerged:
- the impacts of the above land uses on the environment of the Basin
- the benefits that are derived from the above land uses.

Impacts

The range of natural resource impacts highlighted by the participants for the above land uses in the Basin included:
- erosion
- weed invasion
- feral animals
- grazing pressure
- water consumption.

These impacts are seen as widely affecting natural and cultural sites that are important to Aboriginal people. The protection of these sites was seen as a high priority, in particular the monitoring, protection and maintenance of both the quality and quantity of water.

Benefits

Participants felt that the current distribution of benefits derived from the natural resources of the Basin is inequitable, given the traditional Aboriginal connections to the country and natural resources that provide those benefits.

They felt that greater equity in the distribution of these outcomes and benefits is desired i.e. some share in those benefits for Aboriginal people in the Basin.

Other issues

Other high priority issues discussed included:
- cultural access (e.g. ceremonies) …. all land access for Aboriginal people is ‘cultural’
- continued monitoring of the health and well-being of country.

Country and culture are integrated

The foundations of water and land priorities for Aboriginal people in the LEB are based on:
- respect and recognition of people; and
- well-being of country.

The inseparable integration of people, country, culture and health was a strong theme in discussions at the Forum. Access to country is seen as integrally linked to both the well-being of the country and the well-being of Aboriginal people.

\[ \text{country} = \text{culture} = \text{people} \]

Sustainability is the same as saying:

‘healthy country – healthy people’

This theme of integration and holistic health was a strong thread through the forum discussions.

Site-specific recommendations for Aboriginal protection of important places will emerge during future State-based LEB Aboriginal Forums, and as the LEB Aboriginal Document is compiled.
Figure 12  Lake Eyre Basin priorities from an Aboriginal Community perspective
Strong Themes and Ideas

Figure 13 shows a number of themes and ideas that emerged clearly and repeatedly from the Forum discussions. These themes and ideas provide sign-posts for the immediate future of Aboriginal involvement in the LEB Agreement, and serve as a reminder check-list to keep LEB Aboriginal involvement focussed and on track.

Summary of Recommendations

The key recommendations from the 2006 Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum can be summarised as follows.

1. that the 4 additional Aboriginal members of the LEB CAC (approved by the Ministerial Forum in October 2005) be recruited immediately.

2. that Basin-wide LEB Aboriginal Forums be held annually.

3. that smaller LEB Aboriginal Forums be held annually in Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, prior to the annual Basin-wide LEB Aboriginal Forums, and in close conjunction with existing state and regional Indigenous processes.

   [The annual State and Territory Aboriginal Forums followed by the annual LEB Aboriginal Forum, would be the primary and most effective component of the Outreach Strategy.]

4. that an Aboriginal communications strategy for the LEB should be developed and implemented in conjunction with the whole-of-LEB communications strategy.

5. That an LEB Aboriginal document be compiled, containing:
   a. The history of Aboriginal people and groups in the LEB
   b. A current social and economic profile of Aboriginal groups and people in the LEB
   c. A progressive summary of LEB Aboriginal engagement, and Aboriginal priorities for water and land issues in the LEB.

   Such a document would provide both a context and a focal record for continuing Aboriginal involvement in the LEB Agreement.
Figure 13 2006 Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum — Strong Themes and Ideas
Next Steps — An Update

Immediate priorities

At the close of the 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum, the following immediate priorities were highlighted:

- Early circulation of Forum outcomes, proceedings, report etc
- Quick recruitment of 4 new CAC members
- Seek support for annual state/NT and LEB Aboriginal Forums
- 2006 review of LEB Agreement to address Aboriginal issues and involvement
- Build strong links with government programs and funding priorities
- Need both on-ground relevance and strong strategic/policy input.

2006 Lake Eyre Basin Conference

The Forum outcomes and recommendations described in this report were presented by George Cooley to the 2006 biennial Lake Eyre Basin Conference in Renmark, South Australia, on 7th and 8th September 2006.

George’s presentation was titled: ‘Aboriginal Involvement in the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement — Second Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum’. It was part of the conference session called: ‘Possibilities — Critical Considerations for the Future of the LEB’

Reg Dodd (from Marree) and Tom Jenkin (from Adelaide) also gave a presentation at the LEB Conference on ‘Aboriginal Tourism and Land Management in the Lake Eyre Basin: Arabunna Aboriginal Tours’.

The Lake Eyre Basin Conference included several facilitated discussion sessions, in which attendees were asked to discuss what they saw as being important issues for the future of the Lake Eyre Basin, and for the LEB Agreement. Comments and recommendations arising from these discussions included:

- Replicating Reg Dodd’s model [using tourism for cross-cultural communication, livelihood creation and passing on knowledge to younger Indigenous people whilst providing them with work] (including encouragement of next generation) elsewhere.
- Clearer understanding of Aboriginal Cultural Act and other relevant legislation e.g. through Aboriginal document that came out of the Aboriginal Forum.
- Recognition of Aboriginal interests (cultural).
- Opportunity for much greater integration between Indigenous and non-indigenous people and values.
- Ensure landholders and communities must be part of the LEB consultancy. Eg engage reps of Aboriginal/pastoral/mining, etc as ‘co-consultants’.
- Clearer understanding of Aboriginal cultural issues, especially cultural site protection.

Aboriginal membership on the Community Advisory Committee

Invitations to nominate for Aboriginal positions on the Community Advisory Committee were circulated widely in the Basin by email and post on 13th October 2006. A copy of the call for nominations is enclosed as Appendix 5. Applications closed on 17th November and a total of sixteen expressions of interest were received. These have been referred to the participating States and Territory, and the four new members are expected to be selected and formally appointed early in 2007.

Recommendations to the LEB Ministerial Forum

The above five key recommendations from the 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum were passed on to the LEB Ministerial Forum during their annual discussions in early November 2006.

These recommendations will also be taken into consideration during the first five-year review of the LEB Agreement. The review commenced in November 2006 and is scheduled to be completed in April 2007.
Appendix 1 — List of Attendees, 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum, Mount Serle Station, SA

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<th>Ms/Mr</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Ms</td>
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<td>Ms</td>
<td>Joyleen Booth</td>
<td>via LEIGH CREEK</td>
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<td>Mr</td>
<td>David Brook</td>
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Appendix 2 — 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum Program

Basic Outline

Monday 21st August — Travel day
Attendees arrive at Mount Serle Station, followed by a short gathering, dinner and a social evening.

Tuesday 22nd August — Day 1
Opening, welcome to country, introductions. Where are we all from?
Purpose of the Forum. What is the Lake Eyre Basin? Where are the rivers? What’s the country like? What is the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement?
The previous LEB Aboriginal Forum 2004 — overview
What are your concerns? → Aboriginal water and land issues in the Lake Eyre Basin. What are the issues in your area? What are the big priorities? What is most important?

Wednesday 23rd August — Day 2
Common ground and collaborations — what do we need to do together? How do we deal with the important issues?
Aboriginal out-reach strategy for the Lake Eyre Basin — how do we keep Aboriginal people and their concerns at the table?
Forum wrap-up and where to from here.

Thursday 24th August — Travel day
Breakfast, pack up and travel home.
Appendix 3 — Background maps: LEB Aboriginal information

Map A1 Indigenous proportion of population, Lake Eyre Basin
(Source: Alexander Herr and Tim Lynam, CSIRO, Lake Eyre Basin Social and Economic Study)
Map A2 Indigenous proportion of population, Lake Eyre Basin

(Source: Alexander Herr and Tim Lynam, CSIRO, Lake Eyre Basin Social and Economic Study)
Map A3 Indigenous Protected areas of Australia, December 2004, with approximate location of Lake Eyre Basin boundary

(Source: Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage)
Map A4 Indigenous language boundaries, Lake Eyre Basin

(Source: Alexander Herr and Tim Lynam, CSIRO, Lake Eyre Basin Social and Economic Study)
Map A5 Native Title determinations, Lake Eyre Basin

(Source: Alexander Herr and Tim Lynam, CSIRO, Lake Eyre Basin Social and Economic Study)
Map A6 Land tenure, Lake Eyre Basin

(Source: Alexander Herr and Tim Lynam, CSIRO, Lake Eyre Basin Social and Economic Study)
Appendix 4 — A list of issues raised by forum participants in State and Territory groups

What are the key Aboriginal Priorities for water and related Land Resources in the Lake Eyre Basin?

**Northern Territory**

**Discussion**
- Access - some places we can go, others we can’t; also related to access for tourists and locals
- Pests – flora and fauna; Athel Pine, Mexican Poppy, Buffel Grass
- Mining – cruelty
- Water usage, some orchards, winter and summer consumption, water for cattle from troughs

**Priorities**
- Celebrate good Aboriginal results locally, our knowledge of our water, controlled watering, using the water properly.
- Erosion

**South Australia**

**Discussion**
- Acknowledgement of skills, and values of Aboriginal people
- Resources availability, not just money but capital
- Communication
- LEB Indigenous Advisory group
- Recognition of knowledge, science of Aboriginal knowledge

**Priorities**
- Housing, health, resources, employment (especially from mining)
- Language barriers, cultural heritage
- Maintenance of roads and infrastructure

**Queensland**

**Discussion**
- It’s up to traditional owners to uphold values and traditional culture
- Commitment and unity to a common cause is important
- Use of surface water for town water supplies
- Preserve cultural sites from feral animals and mining companies
- Interests of people in the catchment being taken seriously
- Need a website to have a forum to deal with issues (popular idea)

**Priorities**
- Our reason to exist is to uphold the laws that are handed down through generations. We have the right and responsibility to do this.
Appendix 5 — Call for Aboriginal nominations to the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee, 13th October 2006.

Call for Aboriginal Members of the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee

The Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum, at its 4th meeting on 14 October 2005, approved the creation of an additional four positions on the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee, to be filled by Aboriginal candidates.

There are two existing Aboriginal members of the Community Advisory Committee (the full Committee has 15 members). The four new positions will bring the Aboriginal membership on the Committee to a total of six (two from each participating jurisdiction — South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory).

Further information and an application form are attached. Please distribute this information through your networks, as appropriate.

Candidates will be assessed against the criteria attached in the information document under the heading ‘What Kind Of Person Are We Looking For?’

To apply for one of these positions, please complete the attached application form and send to:

Vol Norris
Facilitator
Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee
PO Box 519
LONGREACH QLD 4730

Or via fax: 07 4658 2702

Closing Date for applications:
Monday 27th November 2006

If you have any enquiries, please contact Vol Norris on phone (07) 4658 4435, mobile 0427 440 799, or by email vol.norris@deh.gov.au
The Lake Eyre Basin

- 1.14 million square km (one seventh of Australia)
- Population: 57,000 people
- Among the world's largest internally draining river systems
- Boom and bust ecology — creeks and rivers have long periods with zero flow ('bust'), then high flows or flooding after rain, and intense plant and animal reproduction and growth ('boom')
- One of the world's last unregulated wild river systems; contains areas of national and international ecological and environmental significance
- High value for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture and heritage
- High value for pastoralism, tourism, oil and gas extraction, mining
CALL FOR ABORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE LAKE EYRE BASIN COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE – APPLICATION FORM

Background – What is the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement?

The Lake Eyre Basin Agreement is a joint undertaking of the Australian, Queensland, South Australian and Northern Territory Governments, in close communication with the Basin community and with the assistance of world class scientific and technical advice. The purpose of the Agreement is to ensure the sustainability of the Lake Eyre Basin river systems, in particular to avoid or eliminate cross-border impacts.

The Ministerial Forum established the Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum, comprising a Minister from each jurisdiction. The Ministerial Forum is the decision making body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement.

The Ministerial Forum has established a Community Advisory Committee to provide community advice on implementation of the Agreement, and to ensure continuing community participation in the Agreement. The Ministerial Forum has also established a Scientific Advisory Panel to advise on scientific and technical issues related to the sustainable management of the Basin.

The Lake Eyre Basin Agreement is supported by a Secretariat located in the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage in Canberra, and by a Community Advisory Committee facilitator (Vol Norris) located in Longreach, Queensland.

What is the Community Advisory Committee?

The Committee provides community advice to Government on water and related natural resource issues in the Lake Eyre Basin.

Many of the members live and work in the Lake Eyre Basin, and represent a wide range of community interests. The Committee provides the main link between the people, communities, industries and interested groups in the Basin and the Ministerial Forum.

A key part of the Committee’s role is to maintain close contact with communities and groups in the Basin. This is guided by principles of inclusiveness, trust, openness and shared benefit.

The Committee meets two to three times per year and inter-session work is often carried out in ad-hoc subcommittees. These may include planning and facilitation of the Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum and other Indigenous engagement activity.

What kind of person are we looking for?

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What kind of person are we looking for?
What Kind Of Person Are We Looking For?

We are looking for somebody who:

- is dedicated and has the greater interests of Aboriginal people at heart
- lives in, or has a strong connection to, the Lake Eyre Basin
- understands land and water issues for Aboriginal people in their region
- is broadly accepted among people in their region
- has good communication skills
- is willing to learn
- is willing and able to participate freely in discussions of water and land issues in the Lake Eyre Basin
- is able to relate local Aboriginal issues to broader land and water issues across the Lake Eyre Basin
- is able to attend committee meetings held in different locations in or near the Lake Eyre Basin (meetings since November 2003 have been held in Longreach (Qld), Adelaide and Innaminka (SA) and Alice Springs (NT))

Conditions of Membership

Members are appointed for a term of three years.

Members of the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee are paid under the Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973.

An allowance is paid at the category 2 rate of $335 per day for formal meetings more than three hours long.

Travel allowance (of $335 per day) is paid for travel exceeding three hours that is not on a formal meeting day on which the allowance is already paid.

A motor vehicle allowance is also paid if you drive your own car to a meeting.

How to apply

Please send your completed application to:

Vol Norris
Facilitator
Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee
PO Box 519
LONGREACH QLD 4730

Or via fax: 07 4658 2702

If you have any questions, please contact Vol on telephone 07 4658 4435, mobile 0427 440 799 or email: vol.norris@deh.gov.au
APPLICATION FORM 2006

Personal details

Name: 

Gender: Male / Female

Address:

Mailing Address (if different from above):

Telephone: Fax: 

Mobile: Email:

After-hours: 

Position you are nominating for:

- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia

Skills, Knowledge and Experience

Please provide information about your skills, knowledge and experience as they relate to the requirements outlined on the front page. Attach further pages if necessary.

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Education and Career Highlights and Milestones

Please provide a chronological list of positions held and career highlights, including details of any schooling, training and/or academic qualifications and the dates they were obtained – attach further pages if necessary.

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Any other information?

Interests, associations, community organisation memberships etc.