

## **ADMINISTRATOR MINUTE**

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Following an approach from several residents in the Mittagong area, I paid a visit to Mt Alexandra and Crown Land to the north and west generally overlooking the Nattai River area.

The concerns of the residents are that by virtue of multiple Managers, the land is not being maintained to an appropriate level and consolidation should be investigated.

I took the view that residents had a good point, but was beyond the ambit of Council and involvement of Local State Members would be necessary. This has occurred with the Member for Wollondilly Judy Hannan MP and Member for Goulburn, the Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP visiting and walking parts of the site to gain an appreciation of the concept, and we were joined with extremely knowledgeable local residents whose main spokesperson is Willy Hall from Woodlands.

There is general agreement that the creation of a National Park (or equivalent) that would incorporate the land Council manages in the Greater Mount Alexandra Reserve, and other Crown land parcels adjacent to the reserve has merit. This would create a link to the Nattai National Park, Jellore Flora Reserve and Bargo State Conservation Area and other lands in the National Parks estate. The matter is also complicated in that there are several parcels of private land within the potential opportunity.

The land also has significant Aboriginal Cultural value and any decision in relation to the land must take this into consideration. Our local Aboriginal communities are important stakeholders and need to have a voice in any decision making. Council officers have been in discussions with the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council (ILALC) who have advised that there are multiple land claims at foot and it is important that discussions are also held with local aboriginal communities in relation to the future of the Greater Mount Alexandra Reserve and other lands, and how best to manage the reserve into the future.

ILALC have spoken to their funding opportunities including their Ranger Program as well as the possibility of applying to Heritage NSW to have the site declared an Aboriginal Place which would also provide funding opportunities for management of the site, however until the land claims are determined it is difficult to take the matter further.

To be clear, it is not intended that land at the Mount Gibraltar Heritage Reserve be included in this proposal.

My time at Council is coming to an end but I think it is important to publicly raise the matter that continues to gain momentum and to authorise the General Manager and Council officers to continue discussions with ILALC and also engage with other local Aboriginal communities, State Local Members and the State Government and that residents who have been actively involved to date be encouraged to also participate. In this regard I am encouraging the General Manager to organise a meeting with all relevant stakeholders as soon as possible to take the matter forward.

I had intended to present to this meeting an Administrator's End of Term Report and it is 99% complete, however I think it more appropriate to deal with matters under consideration at tonight's meeting.

Accordingly, I am proposing that the Report be publicly released in early September and written into the minutes at the September Extraordinary Council meeting when Council will consider the 2023 – 2024 draft Financial Statements.