



Australian First Peoples Newsletter



Issue: 1 - 2023.

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Welcome to the debut of the *Australian First People's Newsletter*, a publication that aims to bring awareness to issues faced by the many Indigenous groups that make up Australia. Each edition will shed light on a particular Indigenous group by presenting a case study of the current issues affecting their survival in the contemporary world.

This first edition focuses on the Guringai mob from NSW's Central Coast whose traditional lands have been annexed by peoples from neighbouring mobs operating under the banner of a misplaced land council in cahoots with the state government.



The Central Coast is rich in Aboriginal sacred sites, and they all connect in telling the story of the coastal Guringai mob, stingray people from the surrounds of Broken Bay and up through the Central Coast towards Newcastle. When native title occurred in 1983 with the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, the traditional lands of these salt-water people were recognised by the state as belonging to the nearby inland mob the Darkinung and mistakenly assigned to the newly formed [Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council](#) (DLAC) by the state government. This happened as the result of misinformation spread by enigmatic members of neighbouring mobs, claiming boundaries incorrectly set by an early mapmaker that were amended in the currently accepted [AIATSIS map](#).



Academics ([Ford, 2020](#), [Wafer, 2021](#), [Powell & Hesline, 2010](#)) and others tell us the Darkinung were an inland people, sharing close cultural ties with the Guringai, but geographically separated by mountains and rivers. The state government does not recognise the Guringai as traditional custodians, despite evidence of direct bloodlines to [Bungaree](#), the Guringai man who made Flinders' circumnavigation of Australia possible back in 1803. The wider community is being led to believe that the traditional language of the Central Coast region is Darkinung due to

misinformation spread by the DLALC and state government to this effect. Examples include the positioning of six "Darkinung Country" signs on main roads around the Central Coast, the adoption of the Darkinung language in documents like the "[Gosford CBD Project](#)", and in public "Welcomes and Acknowledgements to country" at ceremonial occasions.

Land Councils

When the Aboriginal Land Rights Act in 1983 saw the state government allocate land to Aboriginal land councils in NSW, they were often using incorrect maps and relied on misinformation. Under NSW state legislation, modern Local Aboriginal Land Councils usually do not take the names of the traditional owners, rather

most are named after a local town. They are a fabricated corporate construct under the foreign commonwealth and the Australian government. Of the 119 land councils in NSW, only about 10% have used Aboriginal words for their



names. On the Central Coast, the land council took its name from the Wollombi *Darkinung* people of the neighbouring Hawkesbury-Hunter Ranges.

Land Development

After taking the credit for years of activism by the traditional owners

for saving Kariong sacred lands from development, the Darkinjung land council now wants to reverse the land's environmental zoning and bulldoze the area for the development of a housing estate. Other reports tell of around a thousand applications currently lodged for building development by the DLALC. This combination of events has now morphed the council into the corporation that is now the DLALC, backed up by the state government and 'drip-fed' parcels of sensitive land for development resulting in DLALC becoming the richest developer on the Central Coast. The situation has resulted in a case of 'backdoor colonialism' where the traditional custodians have been dispossessed a second time by a modern colonial system.

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