

NATIONAL FIRST PEOPLES GATHERING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Communique from the second Steering Committee meeting

30 January 2020



About the National First Peoples Gathering on Climate Change

The National First Peoples Gathering on Climate Change (NFPGCC) aims to celebrate, learn from and enhance First Peoples-led climate change action.

It will build on earlier meetings held in 2012 and 2018 hosted by Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation on their country. The report from the 2018 meeting is available at <http://nespclimate.com.au/supporting-a-national-dialogue-on-the-climate-change-science-needs-of-indigenous-communities/>

This meeting

Since the inaugural meeting in Cairns in November 2019, the NFPGCC Interim Steering Committee has now become the confirmed Steering Committee, co-chaired by Damian Morgan-Bulled and Bianca McNeair. Letters confirming this development are being sent to all organisations who have a representative on the committee.

For its second meeting, the Steering Committee met online to discuss the scope of the NFPGCC.

Participants

Steering Committee participants in attendance were:

- Djungan Paul Neal (Qld)
- Samarla Deshong (Qld)
- Kelvin Flugge (WA)
- Bianca McNeair (WA)
- Damian Morgan-Bulled (Vic)
- Jason Wilson (NSW)
- Jamie Graham (Lutruwita/Tas)
- Djarra Delaney

Apologies were received from Hilda Mosby (Torres Strait) and Jess Puntoreiro (NT).

Organising Committee members in attendance were Mandy Hopkins, Rowena Bullio, Ro Hill and Karen Pearce. Taha Cohen from the Department of the Environment and Energy was also in attendance.

Progress on the 2020 Gathering

Theme

The Steering Committee agreed that ‘**Catastrophic extreme weather events: a changing world**’ was an appropriate and timely theme for the event.

This theme will allow exploration of extreme weather events and their consequences – both cultural and environmental – as well as discussion about First Peoples sustainable preventative and adaptive practices. Water and fire will feature heavily in the program.

Outcomes

The Steering Committee agreed that strengthened kinships and cultural identity should be an important outcome from the NFPGCC. They also discussed that the Gathering should produce tangible information that could be taken back to communities to explain climate change, reduce hazards and explain how individuals can contribute to solutions. This would also remind people of their own responsibilities to country and community.

Location

Organising Committee members met with the Central Land Council in December 2019 to discuss the possibility of the NFPGCC being held in Alice Springs. Unfortunately, the CLC is otherwise committed and unable to host the event.

Discussions have been underway to hold the event in south-west Western Australia, with York proposed as a suitable location. Members of the Steering and Organising Committees will be in Perth in February for an Indigenous climate change knowledge session at the Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society conference in Fremantle. They will use this opportunity to meet with TOs and visit possible venues, with the view to confirm York (or Bunbury, with a trip to York for an on-country component of the NFPGCC) as the host community.

Dates

The Steering Committee agreed to hold the NFPGCC in the week 12–16 October. Provisionally, this will see participants arriving on the Monday, joining the Gathering Tuesday to Thursday, and a possible opportunity for a half-day event in Perth on the Friday.

This timing will also allow for the possibility of outcomes to be reported internationally at COP 22 and at CLIMATE 2020, a major climate change science conference being held in Melbourne from 9–12 November.

Participants

Discussions confirmed there was capacity to support 100 participants at the Gathering, including Committee members and facilitators. This takes into account funding, logistics and ensuring that meaningful discussion takes place. (It was agreed that with more than 100 participants, this opportunity is reduced.)

Applications will be open to community-based representatives working at the grass roots level. The application process for participants would be based on the process used for the 2018 National Dialogue, but details are still being finalised.

Next steps

The Steering Committee will review the application process out of session, so arrangements can be made to start inviting applications for the October event.

Steering and Organising Committee members will meet with representatives from York on 12 February to discuss hosting the NFPGCC.

The Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub, working with the Steering Committee, is looking to develop a visual identity for its work with First Peoples. A brief will be sent out in the coming weeks seeking expressions of interest from First Peoples designers/artists.

Important dates

- **12 February 2020** Steering and Organising Committee representatives visit to York, Western Australia to discuss hosting.
- **30 March 2020** Steering Committee meeting (via Zoom)
- **22–26 June 2020** Steering Committee meeting (face-to-face), Nipaluna/Hobart
- **August 2020** Steering Committee meeting (end of the month, date TBA) (via Zoom)
- **12–16 October 2020** National First Peoples Gathering on Climate Change.

The 2020 National First Peoples Gathering on Climate Change is being supported through the Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub of the Australian Government’s National Environmental Science Program.

For more information about the Gathering, contact Mandy Hopkins on 03 9239 4649 or mandy.hopkins@csiro.au