

NATIONAL FIRST PEOPLES GATHERING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Communique from the third Steering Committee meeting

30 March 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

The Steering Committee met online to discuss the progress of arrangements for the NFPGCC, and how they would be impacted by COVID-19 disruptions.

Steering Committee participants in attendance were:

- Djungan Paul Neal (Qld)
- Samarla Deshong (Qld)
- Bianca McNeair (WA) – meeting chair
- Damian Morgan-Bulled (Vic)
- Jamie Graham (Lutruwita/Tas)
- Josh Gilbert (ESCC Hub Steering Committee)

Apologies were received from Hilda Mosby (Torres Strait), Jason Wilson (NSW) and Kelvin Flugge (WA).

Organising Committee members in attendance were Mandy Hopkins, Rowena Bullio, Marian Sheppard and Karen Pearce. Taha Cowen from the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources was also in attendance.

Steering Committee membership updates

Jess Puntoreiro (NT) is no longer able to be on the Steering Committee. The Organising Committee is in contact with Larrakia Nation to identify an alternative member from the Northern Territory. The Organising Committee is also in the process of identifying a representative from South Australia.

Steering Committee members Damian Morgan-Bulled, Bianca McNeair, Hilda Mosby and Kelvin Flugge participated in a workshop in February that provided an opportunity for Traditional Owners and atmospheric and oceanographic researchers to share experiences and advice for successful collaboration on climate change related projects. Feedback from the workshop was very positive, and a summary of the key points is available on the ESCC Hub website at <http://nespclimate.com.au/co-design-cross-cultural-communication-and-climate-change/>.

Visit to York/Northam: report back

While in Fremantle attending this year's Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society (AMOS) conference, Steering Committee members Damian Morgan-Bulled, Bianca McNeair and Hilda Mosby, travelled to York (around 1.5 hours out of Perth) with Organising Committee members Mandy Hopkins, Rowena Bullio and Karen Pearce to investigate the possibility of holding the NFPGCC in York and surrounds.

The team had some concerns about York's capacity to accommodate the NFPGCC so, on the suggestion of Oral McGuire from the Noongar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, they travelled to Northam to visit the Bilya Koort Boodja Centre for Nyoongar Culture and Environmental Knowledge to see if there were opportunities to host the Gathering there.



Exterior of the Bilya Koort Boodja Centre for Nyoongar Culture and Environmental Knowledge (BKB Centre) at Northam. (Photo: BKB Centre Facebook)

The team met with the BKB Centre coordinator, Michelle Winmar, to discuss the event and the suitability of Northam for hosting it. Michelle was very enthusiastic and helpful, with many great ideas about hosting the Gathering at the centre. She suggested Northam may not be able to accommodate everyone on its own but in conjunction with towns including York, the region would certainly be able to host the Gathering.

The Organising Committee has since been in contact with Michelle, asking for additional information for the Steering Committee to allow consideration of Northam as the venue. This includes providing indicative costs for on-ground support in Northam in the lead-up to the event.

COVID-19 impact

Gathering dates

With the uncertainty surrounding disruptions caused by COVID-19, the Steering Committee decided that it was not practical for the Gathering to go ahead in October 2020. Instead, the Earth Systems and

Climate Change Hub would seek an extension of the funding period to allow the Gathering to take place in the first quarter of 2021.

Location

Noting that January/February is likely to be much warmer than October, more thought will be given to the location of the Gathering. For example, given Tasmania's milder climate, it might be more appropriate to hold the event there than in a warmer location. This decision will be made when the timing is finalised.

Interim activities

The Steering Committee is keen not to lose momentum while the new event details are determined and discussed a number of ideas for getting information about climate change out to communities and hearing about impacts of climate change on country. Suggestions included building a social media presence as well as working with Indigenous media outlets to tell stories about climate change. The Steering Committee will continue to identify opportunities for engagement and information sharing over the coming months.

Future Steering Committee meetings

For the foreseeable future, there will be no face-to-face meetings scheduled. Instead of quarterly half-day meetings, it was decided that the Steering Committee would now meet via videoconference every six weeks for an hour and a half.

Next meeting

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on Monday, 4 May 2020, via videoconference.

The 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