

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between

**Bega, Eden and Merrimans Local Aboriginal Lands Council
(the Lands Councils)**

Adopted on 7 August 2019.

Introduction

1. Bega Valley Shire Council acknowledges that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants and custodians of all airspace, land and water in the Bega Valley Shire and connecting sea country, and respects their continued connection with it.
2. The Bega Valley Shire Council and Land Councils accept that in order to address the issues and effects of colonisation, which continue to have effect on Aboriginal people in the Shire today, we must first acknowledge the past, to further respect, protect and advance the continuing rights and interests of all people in the Shire Council area.
3. Bega Valley Shire Council acknowledges and respects the traditions of the Aboriginal people and respects their continued special relationship with the land and water of the Shire.
4. The Land Councils and Bega Valley Shire Council acknowledge that there is between them a mutual obligation to give effect to the spirit of this Memorandum of Understanding and for all parties to work together towards the success of this Memorandum of Understanding as part of the journey of Aboriginal, Local Government and community reconciliation.

Undertakings

5. As part of the recognition of the status of Aboriginal people, Bega Valley Shire Council commits itself to:
 - i. Recognising that the sum of the Cultural Heritage of the Aboriginal people of the Bega Valley Shire is not confined to archaeological sites and artefacts, but includes natural values such as flora, fauna, landforms, waters and other natural resources.
 - ii. Flying the Aboriginal Flag together with the Australian flag in front of the Shires main office, Council Chambers and at appropriate civic events.
 - iii. Celebrating appropriate Aboriginal ceremonies and events including Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks.
 - iv. Assisting, encouraging and promoting employment opportunities for Aboriginal people both in its own workforce and in the broader community workforce.
 - v. Making available dedicated employment positions for Aboriginal people in numbers which bear (as a minimum commitment) the same proportion of its total workforce as the Aboriginal community does to the total population of the Shire as per the current Census population statistics. Post this target being met, there will be continued sustainable Aboriginal employment opportunities actively explored.
6. As part of working in partnership, the Land Councils and Bega Valley Shire Council commit themselves to:
 - i. Developing greater community understanding of Aboriginal culture in the

- Shire and increasing opportunities for cultural tourism.
- ii. Providing ongoing support in identifying areas of land within the Shire which are of cultural significance to Aboriginal people or the subject of joint management arrangements, and recognising that, subject to legislation, Aboriginal interests require special recognition and protection.
 - iii. Acknowledging and respecting the need of the Lands Councils to have the ability to develop their lands to help overcome social and economic problems and to achieve social and economic growth, and to work together to identify development opportunities for their lands to achieve this growth.
 - iv. Reviewing and maintaining mechanisms and processes which guarantee that appropriate consultation takes place in relation to Development Applications and Councils civil works to ensure that Aboriginal culture and heritage are taken into account as part of the assessment/planning phase. The mechanisms and processes are to give effect to both the statutory requirements and the spirit of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.
 - v. Undertaking appropriate community planning to address social, economic or cultural disadvantage experienced by local Aboriginal people in the Shire.
 - vi. Promoting and supporting the needs of young Aboriginal people in the Shire and encouraging community involvement and the retention of Aboriginal people in school.
 - vii. Developing an action plan which will be a working document to identify and address relevant issues, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to reconciliation and the Memorandum of Understanding.
 - viii. Developing other appropriate processes/protocols as a part of the MOU Action Plan.
 - ix. Establishing a Council Committee, comprised of representatives of Local Aboriginal Land Councils, the elected Council and Council staff. This Committee will meet together a minimum of twice a year to review the MOU Action Plan and at other times by mutual agreement. The responsibility for setting the agenda and chairing the biannual MOU review meetings will rotate between the Shire's three Lands Councils.

Review of Memorandum of Understanding

7. The Memorandum of Understanding will be formally reviewed in line with the Local Government election cycle each four years. The Land Councils and Bega Valley Shire Council agree that the Memorandum of Understanding can be amended within that cycle when all parties agree that it is required.