



Leslie Williams

Minister for Early Childhood Education
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Assistant Minister for Education

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 2 July 2015

LAND COUNCIL DEAL SECURES WATER FUTURE

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Leslie Williams has welcomed a new partnership between the Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) and MidCoast Water that will facilitate a major water security project for the Manning and Great Lakes communities.

Mrs Williams officially witnessed the signing of the deal, which transfers ownership of 1,600 hectares of land at Nabiac from the Forster LALC to MidCoast water for the development of the Nabiac Inland Dune Aquifer. The agreement also bestows a perpetual right of cultural access to members of the Forster LALC.

The land was returned to the Aboriginal community in the 1990s through a land rights claim, and had previously been Crown Land used for sand mining.

“Today’s agreement will enable the Forster LALC to invest funds in projects that support the local Aboriginal community. The Land Council will also retain ownership of the Medika Nursery site, which will provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people,” Mrs Williams said.

“The NSW Government encourages land-based opportunities for economic development in Aboriginal communities and the agreement between the Forster LALC and MidCoast Water will be an example for many other Land Councils.”

Minister for Lands and Water Niall Blair said for too long quick fixes have been the norm for regional water security.

“This Government is determined make sure no matter whether you are in Foster or Fairfield – our communities have access to clean and secure drinking water,” Mr Blair said.

Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council CEO Dan Rose said the agreement would ensure the financial security of the Land Council.

“We are proud of the negotiation process that has taken place to bring about this land sale. Not only have we been able to work with MidCoast Water to avoid a costly adversarial process, we are proud to maintain a right of cultural access for our members to allow them to walk the land, fish and gather from the site,” Mr Rose said.

Member for Myall Lakes Stephen Bromhead said the agreement will benefit both the Forster LALC and broader community.

“This is great news for the community and comes after the recent announcement of \$19 million for the Myall Lakes Electorate from the NSW Government’s *Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program*,” Mr Bromhead said.

MEDIA:

Will Griffiths | Minister Williams | 0428 931 143
Siobhan McCarthy | Minister Blair | 0407 791 802