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**COMMENTS FROM GRAFTON NGERRIE LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL RE DRAFT
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GUIDELINES**

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to you as the Chief Executive Officer of the Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council (GNLALC) which is located on the north coast of NSW. GNLALC is a body corporate established under the provisions of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.

GNLALC, along with all other LALC's in NSW, has, as one of our statutory functions, the following in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage matters:

- *To take action to protect the culture and heritage of Aboriginal persons in the Council's area, subject to any other law,*
- *To promote awareness in the community of the culture and heritage of Aboriginal persons in the Council's area.*

This is a role that the GNLALC take very seriously.

On the 3rd of July 2009, I and other representatives from the GNLALC attended a meeting held by DECC at Ballina in relation to the draft Community Consultation Guidelines that have recently been developed by DECC. GNLALC understands that these guidelines may be included in regulations that may be enacted alongside the Omnibus Bill that will be considered by the NSW Parliament in September 2009.

At the outset, GNLALC would like to point out that it seems to have taken DECC several years to complete a review of the current Draft Community Consultation Guidelines yet DECC then seeks to undertake a "consultation" process within an unrealistic timeframe which provides very little meaningful opportunity for Aboriginal people to participate. There is little doubt that any revised guidelines will have a significant impact on Aboriginal people and their culture and for DECC to undertake such a rushed and limited consultation with Aboriginal people, as has been the case in this matter, is viewed as being totally unacceptable to the GNLALC.

The following points are put forward for your consideration. These points are the views of the GNLALC but were echoed by other NSWALC North Coast Region LALC's who also attended the meeting held in Ballina on the 3rd of July 2009.

- All development activities WILL impact on Aboriginal places and objects of Cultural significance as traditional Aboriginal people were nomadic moving through there country. All country is significant, in addition to this our spirituality is entwined throughout the landscape, therefore it is impossible for a development NOT to impact on Aboriginal culture and heritage;