

MINUTES OF THE 38th MURDI PAAKI REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
HELD ON 14th - 16th June, 2011 at Cobar Bowling & Golf Club, 9.00am - 5.00pm

MPRA members in Attendance	<p>Mr Alistair Ferguson, Acting Chair, Regional Assembly Ms Joan Evans, Cobar Community Working Party Mr Norman Hall Collarenebri Community Working Party Mr Ted Fernando, Coonamble Community Working Party Mr Allan Lamb, Goodooga Community Working Party Ms Fay Johnstone, Ivanhoe Community Working Party Mr William Johnson, Wentworth/Dareton Community Working Party Ms Cheryl Johnstone, Menindee Community Working Party Mr Allan Cobb, Lightning Ridge Community Working Party Ms Jeanette Barker, Brewarrina Community Working Party Ms Maureen O'Donnell, Broken Hill CWP Ms Christine Hooper, Goodooga CWP Ms Christine Corby, Walgett CWP Mr Gordon Sullivan, Enngonia CWP Mr Mick Williams, Bourke CWP</p>
Guests	<p>Mr Leonard Hill Mr Mark Conlon Mr James Christian, Chief Executive, AANSW Ms Julie Blackhall, Regional Manager, AANSW Ms Anjali Palmer, Area Manager, Greater Western - AANSW Mr Robert Salt, COAG Project Officer, AANSW</p>

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Apologies	Mr Ted Fernando, Coonamble CWP (Tues) Mr William Bates, Wilcannia CWP (Thurs) Mrs Fay Johnstone, Ivanhoe CWP (Thurs) MOVED: That apologies be accepted Moved: Mr Des Jones Seconded: Mrs Fay Johnstone CARRIED
Chair of the Meeting	Mr Alistair Ferguson
Minutes Taken By	Mr Bill Palmer, Brewarrina Business Centre (Minutes and Exec Support)

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Issue & Discussion	Action
<p>Welcome All members welcomed to this meeting by Mrs Joan Evans</p>	
<p>Minutes Silence</p>	
<p>APOLOGIES Max Sullivan from Enngonia Des Jones from Dareton Wentworth Phillip Sullivan from Bourke</p>	
<p>1. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA Question asked whether PCPOs would be attending this session confirmed that PCPOs will be attending Tues and Wed Forum sessions Request that all mobile phones be turned off during the meetings Morning tea will be 9.45am</p>	<p>MOVED: That the Agenda be accepted. Moved: Ms Christine Hooper Seconded: Mr Ted Fernando CARRIED</p>
<p>2. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Wayne Reid to be added to those attending meeting • Mr George Fernando to be added as attending meeting • Ms Christine Corby to be added as an apology for April meeting • Mr Alan Lamb to be removed as attending meeting in April • Confirm with Alistair whether all organisations had been written to or not • Add Phillip Sullivan to Second motion to silence mobile phones • Concern raised that it has been very hard for Walgett members to attend MPRA meetings but it does not mean that Walgett is not interested • Ms Corby requested details of each CWP's members to enable more inclusion • Change motion to Note expressing disappointment that at the time there was no representative from Walgett • 	<p>MOTION: Matters arising from the minutes be accepted. Moved: Mr Wayne Reid Seconded: Ms Joan Evans CARRIED</p> <p>MOTION: That the Chair is responsible for writing any letters in the timeframe of four weeks Moved: Ms Christine Hooper Seconded: Ms Christine Corby CARRIED</p> <p>MOTION: That Minutes be made available the night before at the motel Moved: Ms Fay Johnstone Seconded: Mr Alan Cobb</p>
<p>3. INWARD-OUTWARD CORRESPONDENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: Mr Bill Palmer to develop role and function of secretariat for MPRA to review and add or subtract and be tabled on Thursday to be thrashed out with two chairs 	<p>MOVED: That correspondence be accepted Moved: Mr Mick Williams Seconded: Mr Wayne Reid CARRIED</p>

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<p>4. GENERAL BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broken Hill – Concern raised that Maari Ma is unaware of how its contribution was going to be used as it was believed that funds would be used to support the Regional Assembly operations not private enterprise. General consensus was that MPRA thought that all was confirmed and OK with Board’s commitments. Mr Ferguson offered to attend a Maari Ma Board Meeting to explain what the Corporate Connect project is about. <p>General concern that an organisation coming into a community and taking funds out of the community and riding on the back of the MPRA.</p> <p>Concern that Government may be scared away from the MPRA by bringing through the private sector.</p> <p>Disagreement that MPREC has total control of any community project through this private sector mechanism. Emphasised that the MOU that MPRA has seen is only a draft and was a draft between the funding parties and Corporate ConnectAB only. At April meeting Ms Whitehead said scrap the MOU.</p> <p>Declaration of interest needs to be made and something that the MPRA needs to be wary of. CWPs are in need of more information regarding Corporate ConnectAB. Much discussion was held concerning this issue.</p> <p>Request for a regional consensus on whether corporate business should be a way forward. Corporate business to be workshopped at August meeting. Question raised why was Brewarrina Business Centre not included.</p> <p>Raised why aren’t we using secretariat to engage corporate sector rather than just being secretariat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collarenebri – tabled DVD from the Collarenebri School 	<p>MOTION: That document read out be sent to all CWPs</p> <p>Moved: Mr Alan Cobb Seconded: Mr Maureen O’Donnell CARRIED</p>
<p>5. MENINDEE ENTERPRISE PARK/CENTRAL SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan Fennell, Schools In Partnership Coordinator, Daniel only Aboriginal Male Educator in NSW Traineeships started in Yr 10 so they are completed by end of Yr 11 Starting point was from a very poor base Aboriginal Male Educator – role to work with teachers and students, even post School – available to any school as now a classified position inside Education Department. They are also part of the executive Pre-Suspension Room – used to have children reflect on their behaviour – re-offence would then result in suspension, now moving into second stage – parents are called on the phone as soon as child is sent to the room Two trains 	<p>Take in Powerpoint</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal language available throughout High School • 50 day traineeship – up to 140 days eg. Yr 1 and 2 construction are learnt in Yr 11 and 12 so that when they leave school and join a builder they are a 3rd year apprentice • Community wanted consistency with suspensions so all students are treated the same and that the 2nd offence always leads to suspensions • Traineeships are offered to all students although not all students are accepted or want a traineeship • Children have written books eg. Unsung heroes • Hookup with Lilyfield East Primary School by video link where class had purchased 30 copies of the book and videolinked with some of the heroes (Lilyfield has no Aboriginal students). Also have paid for an exchange of students with Lilyfield now returning to Menindee • Black Pride nights – recognition of Aboriginal people in school and community • This year’s night will include a musical on the life of Stolen Generation community elder • Women’s Choir formed to stop women from fighting in the community which has lead to a school band been formed • Sorry Day and Harmony Day are celebrated • Preschool room – allows preschool to come down to the school one day a week • Students employed in coffee shop on train • School opened from 6pm – 10pm to support those who are studying and providing them with access to internet and printing if need be • Confidence is high through this exposure • Leadership skills are being developed through the employment initiative • Shame factor is very low in the school • Community engagement and relationships are much better • The pride of the students is very high • Enterprise Park – very much an Aboriginal space with yarnning circle. Working Bee has from 5 – 75. Police use it as well as Drug and Alcohol services • Resistance to the establishment of the Park but has been reason why there has been so much engagement by the community in the school • Used for outdoor film nights which is engaging community members who have never stepped foot in the school since they left as students • Careful that we are not taking business from local businesses • Profits will be used to subsidise employment 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park also includes Radio Station with students of all ages participating on air • Construction trainees will build single unit apartments for \$35,000 • Enterprise Park Vision – providing infrastructure so that local businesses can train students at the Park eg hairdressing • What’s needed is accessing funding to make full vision a reality • Incorporated to get past some of the Education Department restrictions • 27th June for Black Pride Night • Mobile phones are banned at school 	
<p>4. GENERAL BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brewarrina – Major concerned raised at DoCS not having paid its bills of \$71,000. It has impacted the audit. • MOTION: That Mark Shervashidze and Wayne Flett be requested to have a meeting with the MPRA Chair to discuss outstanding debt of approx. \$72,000 (full information to be provided to chair) • Moved: Mr Wayne Reid Seconded: Ms Fay Johnstone CARRIED • MOTION: That DoCS be requested to contact Ryan and Rankmore and provide sufficient evidence that the debt will be paid to enable the qualification of the Brewarrina Business Centre’s audit to be removed. • Moved: Mr Wayne Reid Seconded: Mr Norman Hall CARRIED • Concern raised at the 8 communities who have signed up to SLAs have not had a visit since and the other 8 are still waiting to be signed up. • Ivanhoe – Concerned at the housing refurbishment. Ivanhoe CWP drafting letter to be sent off to AHO. Letter will be provided to MPRA for the record. Concerned that this is happening in other communities. Believed that Wilcannia, Bourke and Enngonia may be having the same problem – the issue is the head contractor is employing other contractors whose ability and commitment are questionable. Request that all chairs have copy to provide back up. • One site has had 30 people on it with none of them working in Lightning Ridge. MPRA concerned that AHO are misusing the Remote funds and expending it any way possible. Case of Gulargambone LALC being ripped off by an appointed manager by Western Zone and this person was an ex-employee of NSWALC. • ACTION: The Chair to write letter to all Government Departments, NGOs and Organisations stating that the original agreement was that organisations would support chairs by still paying their wage whilst attending MPRA meetings • Broken Hill – Chair contacted Mr Bob Davis and Maari Ma has not paid any funds to CorporateConnect. Mr Davis is not on the Steering Committee and wishes to have his name removed as a member of the Steering Committee 	<p>ACTION: Both these motions need to be performed as soon as possible.</p> <p>ACTION: The Chair to contact Mr Ivan Simon</p> <p>MOTION: Letter to be sent to Laureen Campbell requesting another Housing Forum with Mr Simon cc’d. Purpose of which is reporting back from 1st Forum and seeking clarification of structure of Repairs and Maintenance in the region. Moved: Ms Christine Hooper Seconded: Ms Jenny Barker CARRIED</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulgambone – Investigated issue of not getting paid and was determined by FaHCSIA that there was no constraint in this instance by FaHCSIA preventing Mr Reid from being paid. The Chair will take up the issue on Mr Reid and Ms Hooper’s behalf. • Goodooga – Ms Hooper requested by Department of Premier and Cabinet to apply for Safe Communities award for flood relief during recent floods. The only area of support not forthcoming has been Community Services NSW. Pleased with support that has been given to Goodooga by Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service as its programs are making a difference. Had a great launch of the books developed through Communities and Early Years. SES training will commence on 2nd and 3rd of July • Collarenebri – School has developed a CD and has already been invited to sing in Sydney at the NAIDOC Ball and Brisbane. Community is frustrated with actions not being taken forward by the PCPO. Will talk more with Ms Palmer and Mr Christian. It is not clear what the PCPO’s roles are and need a duty statement so CWPs can understand what can be expected from PCPOs • . • Moved: Ms Jeanette Barker Seconded: Mr Wayne Reid CARRIED • General – Concern raised that Health Forum was over everyone’s head and lacked the community input that was necessary to make sound decision making. Could see that reports were against the core pillars of the Regional Plan but concern expressed at too much information, in a language that is not understood with too many strategies. Need to identify a single priority and work this through in a way that communities can understand. • Concern expressed at very remote communities having market rent placed on them when their cost of living is so high as they are having to travel to other towns to purchase food, supplies and medications • Dareton-Wentworth - Corporates are coming to Dareton to look at education and how they can influence this for the community. 	<p>ACTION: Mr Hausier needs to come back out to Goodooga to reinvigorate the MPAYLP program and the youth centre, as well as encourage one of them to take up the CWP secretariat position</p> <p>ACTION: Request that the issue of support for the Safe Communities award be taken up with Mr Shervashidze by the Chair</p> <p>MOTION – That the AMS’s are guaranteed as equal partners in the new Health changes. This issue to be discussed with Mr Christian</p> <p>ACTION: Ms Christine Corby to distribute an existing partnership document to the Chair for distribution to all chairs</p> <p>ACTION: That organisers of Forums on behalf of the MPRA need to be aware of speaking to the communities at a level that can be understood and that the assembly needs to hear from those who provide the services.</p> <p>Moved: Ms Christine Hooper Seconded: Mr Wayne Reid</p>
<p>6. AANSW/FaHCSIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACDP – presentation around 11.00am this morning. Program coming to a conclusion and would like to address some of the issues. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AANSW – Changes to machinery of Government. 13 super departments to 9 departments. DECCW has been broken up to Premiers Department and Primary Industries. Culture & Heritage is still being influenced by AANSW. Department of Communities abolished and now Department of Education and Communities which is where AANSW now resides as the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. Direct relationship with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. • Auditors General Review – Worked closely with Auditor General on the review of Two Ways Together – report was no surprise. Coalition Government had always stated that they would do Aboriginal Affairs differently. Intended outcomes of plan were not delivered. The progress and improvements were not accomplished – Government agencies were no more accountable for the outcomes across the board than prior to TWT. AANSW worked with Price Waterhouse to cost how much money was spent on Aboriginal Affairs. Auditor General’s recommendation was that every Departments Annual Report should carry a statement of the Departments impact on supporting Aboriginal communities. Have highlighted the status of Aboriginal people again so that Departments do become more accountable to delivering outcomes for Aboriginal people. Partnership Communities Program funding has been locked down for the future. Report hasn’t been all bleak for us. Solid evidence base will be used to determine the way forward – so direction will not be known for another six months. Government is on record as being disappointed that there has been no movement forward. Does mean that we have to demonstrate why we are doing what we are doing – unfortunately have little evidence particularly around the RPAs and particularly the MPRA RPA which is the oldest. Has been a lull – got the time to work out what we need to do to lift it. Need to find what will refresh the enthusiasm for the RPA and develop the three key priorities. Need for clear succinct outcomes that can galvanise accountabilities, roles etc. Need to do some planning as to what are the priorities and what is needed from NSW Government and FaHCSIA. Up to MPRA to determine next steps but very important to do so. • RESPONSE: Assembly needed this information earlier. Square one starting point would be the review of Smiley Johnstone’s RPA review as a springboard to developing those key priorities. • CWPs must have their action plans – it is theirs not Governments – FaHCSIA and AANSW can compel agencies to perform what has been identified by communities. Cannot stress how important to lock down plan, accountabilities and measures. Clear message from Government that they will be looking for evidence-based outcomes. • RESPONSE: An example is CSNSW SLAs where they are not accountable to these plans. The question is who makes them accountable? The bad mark will be on the MPRA and CWPs and not on CSNSW. • NSW agencies haven’t got their act together. There is mistrust on both sides. Take the issues head on. • RESPONSE: MPRA has always been around planning, and providing advocacy. The report indicated that Government had let Aboriginal people down not the other way around. Issue has always been – how do you make Government agencies accountable. RPA is one way through and particularly the lead agents. The nexus 	

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<p>must be broken of agencies that don't engage as the priorities are still important priorities – they need to be at the table. RPA has six months to go. Part of the drift is that some priorities have now been resolved since COAG started. MPRA itself and having sufficient funding to operate will always be a priority. The cost of providing evidence and doing the planning needs to be factored in to developing the priorities in each community – it is a costly exercise that must be done in order to provide the required evidence base. Need resources under the MPRA in order to engage the private sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The point of process – focussed on process but ensuring that it's not over engineered as well. RPA is only start of process. Agencies have to be reminded that their behaviour and the importance of the agreement needs to change • RESPONSE: Really concerned that in two communities where there will be Child and Family Centres – CSNSW is inactive and not engaging with these communities. Concern raised again that after two years only 8 communities have SLAs with the role of the person developing the SLAs finishing in six months. • AANSW will facilitate high level meetings with the new Department of Families and Communities to address the range of concerns that the MPRA has. • RESPONSE: The RPA should have been the tool to open communication thus when actions are taken outside of the RPA then it becomes fractured and unable to be monitored. • Roles and responsibilities is overdue. Represent to Government that there is a place to sit down and develop priorities. PCP has led to knowing what's not working. Looking at visiting all 40 partnership communities and sitting down with community and determining what is not working and what the issues are in each community. Not a reflection of CWP's but the need to hear from grass roots what their issues are. • NEXT STEPS: Need to get communication with CSNSW back open in order to move forward. The relationship has changed and needs to be addressed. SLAs are not sufficient – actions appropriate to SLA must be taken. MPRA will have discussion and then get back to Mr Christian about way forward. • NEXT STEPS: Need plan on planning in order to collect the evidence which includes resources and timeframes. Ownership must be undertaken where priorities in local communities are reflected at the Regional level. Opportunity to present a different accountability structure to Government to bring about a change in how funding is brought to communities • FaHCSIA – Issue of RPA needs to be addressed for improving their operation and accountabilities. Budget has announced that CDEP contracts will be extended until 2013 to allow consultation on the full employment services market (July - September). Family support services funding has primarily been through Family Relationships Centres – changes being introduced for all providers to develop indigenous access plans. • Constitutional recognition – panel has been put together and will be conducting consultations throughout Australia. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will know within a couple of weeks whether Mr Brian Stacey will be coming back or not. • 10% efficiency dividend will cause the State office to review what it can and cannot deliver • FaHCSIA has been ensuring that communities have input into the design, location, operation of Child and Family Centres • Locations for Constitutional recognition will be held in Dubbo, Walgett, Brewarrina, and Wilcannia • Census – asking that all communities become involved in getting Aboriginal people to work with the census • National tenders being run and given to groups who then go to communities and say we have money for this which may or may not be needed or employ the wrong people who Aboriginal people won't work with. Communities need advanced warning of National tenders and community buy-in must be a factor in the tender • Priorities of subgroups needs to communicated to NGOs – for probity reasons current structures don't allow for NGOs to sit at table. AANSW will be convening NGO Forum before end of the year with the MPRA. • NGOs have a role to play. Also need to acknowledge that FACS was the only department to make a commitment to fund RA meetings post-COAG. 	
<p>7. GHD / Antonia Krautz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now in implementation phase • Workplace Development Plan is a living planning document • Key is having enough lead time to identify and plan for employment opportunities • Framework is now complete identifying attraction, retention and skill development strategies • Seeking to meet with each CWP/Chair between June 29 – July 1 and July 20 -27 • Is permanent employment on offer? This is about assisting communities to identify where employment strategies are now so that they can be capitalised on • Consultation with the Chairs is essential to the plan • Concerns that small remote communities have little opportunity for employment • Percentage Aboriginal employment in each sector will provide basis for increasing participation rates • Concern raised that need background material circulated before meeting with chairs • Steering Committee meeting next week will approve the material for distribution • Businesses and enterprises can be created in each community to support construction through ancillary services like building trusses, roofing/tiling teams and linking them into the trade training centres 	TAKE IN POWERPOINT
<p>8. SAFE FAMILIES / Carol Vale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Safe Families Model is being conducted and the purpose of this session is workshop the review with the MPRA members • In last 15 months of the program with some results but again time frames are tight to embed in local 	TAKE IN POWERPOINT

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<p>communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation has been undertaken on all programs addressing Child Sexual Assault in NSW – Focus communities and Safe Families and included site visits, effectiveness, literature review and explore variations between programs • Key themes evolved of unrealistic timeframes, lack of community ownership, concern that it was NT intervention style program, lack of access to competent and effective staff, appropriate government agency buy-in (not DoCS), LARG members all have to go through probity checks • Program is about community empowerment. Accountability is two ways firstly to community but also with partner agencies • Very much about relationship building, strengths based program designed to ENGAGE at risk families with removal only as a last resort • Research shows that abusers are often abused themselves and often will be working with adult victims • Unlocking the complex areas such as male victims • Concern raised the mechanism only addresses individual communities and the model itself from the start should have been addressing the issues raised by the evaluation • The hard part of this program has been establishing a way of agencies working together when they haven't traditionally worked together • The challenge is identifying what to take from this program to use with other communities • Question asked what is being heard on the streets in the five communities • Revised model must include education both public and private and include safe, unsafe behaviours, acting out, bullying etc. Male role models are critical. Training must be at a local level – concerns at sexual assault worker training and support for them. Crises do not happen 9-5 – most often a disclosure will be after hours. If services aren't there then the skills DO need to be parachuted in. Media can be used to advocate for safe families. • Safe Families participating in the Regional Mens Yarn up to advocate for greater male engagement – Mens groups may be the answer or a group of men – not an individual. What is the support mechanism for when debriefing is needed? What is the risk management of this program and in particular the risk management of unintended consequences? Evidence for fracturing of communities over generations when the risk of unintended consequences hasn't been managed. • Exit plans after a disclosure need to be developed to support communities to heal • Healing programs are a critical part of this. • Do MPRA chairs become part of the process? How do you protect those who do speak up from being targeted by the community • Link-up do a lot of this work providing emotional support 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political leadership hasn't been there to say CSA is a problem and talk about it as the way it is and that it is unacceptable. The question has to be asked can we rely on the political leadership to support us? • Concerned that the support for taking responsibility isn't there when Aboriginal communities do take responsibility • MP Child Sexual Assault Plan should inform this review and if necessary realign Safe Families. MP CSA Plan will be included in each community's CAP Plan by the PCPOs • Clear that there is a common and shared concern. Needs to be aligned to the concerns of the MPRA. 	
<p>7. SAM JEFFRIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Chairs and New Board have been elected after first congress meeting in Sydney last week • Sam is on panel looking at constitutional reform • Mr Jeffries will be returning to the assembly at the next meeting • Interpretation will need to be clarified regarding "detriment" and "benefit" as part of the constitution • Preamble doesn't exist – so preamble if determined is required would have to be drafted but drafted to cover all Australian values not just Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders • Huge education program to inform people of what the changes to the constitution are trying to accomplish • Glad to be back next meeting although it will take some time • Thanks to Alistair and the MPRA for continuing to do business in his absence • Lot of pressure for congress to comment on the intervention. May be that congress may not have a position as those communities where the intervention is has such mixed and varied responses that it may not be possible to comment 	
<p>6. GENERAL BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coonamble – Ted had to leave early to attend to his community's social plan • Anthony Knight is also an apology • Letter from Blanche was requested to be tabled. • Inward/Outward Correspondence - Concern raised that not full email trail was included in correspondence • Concern expressed that agenda has MPRA business as an afterthought and appears to be driven by Government not by the MPRA. Should be sufficient time before hand to establish a position and should not have to air business in front of Government agencies. Need for a planning stage. • Question asked whether insurance covers death and funeral costs – Volunteer insurance • Formalising partnerships needs to be undertaken. • Question raised regarding copyright of MPRA device – left in abeyance to next meeting • Question asked whether Healthy Families and Communities Forum be held in August or at another date. 	<p>MOTION: That apologies be accepted Moved: Mr Gordon Sullivan Seconded: Ms Wayne Reid CARRIED ACTION: Letter to be written to the Steering Committee outlining its concern that there is insufficient Aboriginal representation on the Murdi Paaki Strong Women's Project Moved: Ms Joan Evans Seconded: Ms Cheryl Johnstone CARRIED ACTION: Mr Ferguson to be an agenda item at next assembly meeting so that he can</p>

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	address the challenges of his role as chair as the support mechanisms often appeared to be working against him.
NEXT MEETING: 16th – 18th August, 2011 – Cobar Bowling and Golf Club	

