

Dear Members,

This is an extract of the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Annual Report FY 2020/21.



GANDANGARA
Local Aboriginal Land Council

Annual Report FY 2020-2021



Message from the Chairperson

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**Anthony
Scholes**

OUR DISCIPLINED, BUSINESS MINDED APPROACH IS DELIVERING RESULTS

The primary duty of the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Board of Directors is to ensure the protection and effective management of our Members' assets and interests. We do this openly, and in consultation with our Members, through the development of a formal Community, Land and Business Plan that is implemented, in stages, by our Management Team led by our Chief Executive Officer, Melissa Williams. As Chairperson of the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Board I am pleased to report that everything we have spoken about with our Members, and diligently planned for over the past year, is now being implemented and starting to deliver the desired outcomes.

As a result of our disciplined, business-minded approach we, as an organisation, are continuing to grow stronger and realising more of our potential, giving us the means of providing more services and support for our Members.

By way of example, we have, over the past year, tucked our money away in a strong investment fund that is delivering very good returns, despite the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This extra income will be used to benefit Members, through improved operations, services and investments that the management thinks is best for the organisation.

Also, our land holdings at Heathcote Ridge have also been recently freed up for remedial and restoration work, after the stop work ban was lifted by Sutherland Shire Council. We can now look to executing a Deed with Sutherland Shire Council to implement our environmental plan, clean up and remove rubbish, put in fence lines and other security measures, protect the land and the significant sites on it. We can also start looking at the different options available to us for developing that land, for the future benefit of our Members.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the various government invoked restrictions, Gandangara has continued to support our Members and been there for them, making

sure our offices remained open. We ensured that our Members and the wider community were looked after, and were kept safe, by our hard working, dedicated staff in our administration offices, medical and transport services.

IN THE LONG RUN, WE WANT TO BUILD AN ENDURING FUTURE FOR OUR PEOPLE

It takes more than 12 months to create new lives and new ways of thinking, which is why we need to encourage the next generation of our community to come on board too. We also need to train and mentor them for future success.

With that in mind, we are considering policies that can develop and improve our Members' work life futures, with programs such as scholarships to be awarded to promote higher education, skill development and certification courses, and encourage more secondary school attendance amongst our young ones. Better education is the best pathway to realising your own potential, and improving your future prospects.

WE ARE NOT A PERSONAL SERVICE

The many ways we currently help Members and community are more fully described by Melissa and her management team in this report. I am personally proud of just how much we are able to do for them, and especially the self-sacrificing attitudes and personal commitment of our staff to the people they help. This is why I have to take a moment to remind everyone that the generosity of spirit and quality of service offered by our staff should not be taken for granted. Please respect that they are professionals with a kind, human touch, and the services are businesses with programs, schedules and budgets they need to abide by. They are not at the beck and call of individual Members, visitors or callers. Nobody should feel entitled to, expect, or ask for preferential treatment from any of them. We are here for everyone. Equally.

PEOPLE HAVE JOY IN THEIR HEARTS AND SOULS. THAT IS WHAT WE ARE HERE TO DO, TO MAKE OUR PEOPLE HAPPY.

As well as protecting their assets and looking after their health, it is also our

duty to bring our community together. Our Members appreciate the efforts the Board and Management are making to interact, engage and communicate more often with them. By using Facebook, newsletters, texts, emails, our soon to be launched website, regular meetings and events, we are able to keep everyone informed and up to date. All of this brings us closer together and makes us stronger.

As a result, I have seen an encouraging increase in the number of Members attending our meetings, with anywhere between 70 to 100+ coming each time, an historically high attendance. The wonderful work done by Melissa as CEO and the quality of the people she has brought in, has changed perceptions and attitudes to the Land Council. People see and appreciate the transparency within the organisation. Their view of the organisation, now, is that we are willing to help, to stand by their side and walk together. The feedback we're getting tells us that our Members are feeling more and more positive about the future.

Seeing people coming to and enjoying our events, helps me to think in a more positive way. The dynamics within our community are changing and improving towards Gandangara. I see that people are willing to change and be more co-operative than they've been in the past.

People have joy in their hearts and souls, and that is what we are here to do, to make our people happy. People are joining in,

coming along and wanting to grow and develop with the Council. At long last, change is happening. We're moving forward as an organisation. There's a camaraderie that has emerged. People are more positive, more approachable, more accepting. With that, acceptance, unity and openness follow. We are connecting; we are getting a sense of belonging, we are beginning to thrive.

OUR IDENTITY IS OUR STRENGTH.

An essential component of our joy as individuals is our identity, our sense of self. Oppression and depression come together. Losing your rights to your land, to your culture, your language and history, losing connection to your wider families and clans, creates a literal depression, a hole, in your life. I know this from personal experience. I'm a proud Aboriginal man. My mother was Aboriginal and my father was white, but from an early age I was brought up by my white grandparents. So, growing up, I didn't have my Aboriginality, it wasn't spoken about. When I finally got to meet my Aboriginal family, I started to receive the gifts of culture, receive my Aboriginal family identity, and identified with them. It helped me grow and become strong within myself.

When you're around people who engage with you, it rubs off and you start acting like them, and thinking like them. It's the connection you have with your extended family that makes you whole, that keeps you together.

I would like to think that people who have suffered like me have had the opportunity to change for the better, through connecting with us, through unity with us at Gandangara. I hope that in some way we have helped them function better in life. To thrive as part of one big community family.

WE ARE GETTING NOTICED AND RESPECTED

People outside the organisation are also noticing the improvements. We're being asked to do more Welcome to Country/Acknowledgements to Country throughout our region. This tells me that more people are becoming aware of, and respecting the fact that, Aboriginal people are the custodians of the land. These ceremonies recognise our traditional role, respect our Elders and introduce our culture and history to a wider audience.

Gandangara is now being recognised as a primary agency and service provider throughout our region. We are a strong enterprise with an effective Board of Directors, a governance executive and a strong, professional management team. We are now seen as an active organisation that is being taken seriously.

Message from the Chief Executive

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**Melissa
Williams**

WE'RE GROWING IN STRENGTH, WEALTH, REPUTATION AND INFLUENCE

We have worked long and hard at rebuilding ourselves from within. We have improved our processes and raised our standards. We have expanded our services and enhanced our professionalism. We have made better decisions and hired an experienced team. We are now, by any measure, a more efficient and effective organisation that's growing stronger and becoming more financially independent, all for the direct benefit of our Members.

As a management team, that's always our goal. Every year.

This year, we have also significantly improved our relationships, and our standing, with our neighbouring councils, local businesses and government departments. These

Officer

improvements are just as important as our internal ones because they enable us to expand both our influence and our operations in the region, all of which means we can do more to help more people. These are some examples –

PROTECTING OUR INTERESTS AND OUR ASSETS

We have signed Deeds of Agreement with Liverpool City Council covering both Phillips and Apex Parks, which means anything that happens in those precincts of ours has to be discussed with us, and agreed by us. The principle of these agreements also extends to other areas of the Liverpool Council precincts that fall within Gandangara's boundaries.

- This arrangement formalises our relationship with the Council as an equal stakeholder with an equal seat at the management table. They are a council

and we are a council and we should share equitably in the looking after of our region and its communities, and in promoting it.

- It creates the basis for a genuine partnership between our two organisations
- It means we are being listened to, consulted with and our interests are protected

We are also now working closely with the Sutherland Shire to clean up and restore our landholdings at Heathcote Ridge. It is not only our responsibility, the land is also a wonderful landscape to be enjoyed, where we can connect to country, nature, plants, wildlife and scenery.

- We are working with independent ecologists, Shire Council scientists, and our own experts to develop the right plan for the remediation, restoration and security needed to protect our land
- Tenders are now being sought for remedial work and security implementation
- We will be putting up signage that

announces our ownership and that the land is private property, as well as signposting all the significant cultural sites there.

- We will invite community participation in the land rehabilitation, giving our community the opportunity to care for country and the cultural sites on it – which will be a great, practical example of reconciliation in action.
- Once the land is restored its value increases significantly and so do the options of what we can do with it (for example commercial development or leasing) for the benefit of our Members.

Our land assets continue to go from strength to strength. In addition to the improvements to Heathcote Ridge, our other land assets and values increased over the past year, including two successful land claims.

PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE

The Gandangara Health Service has successfully applied for the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in order to protect those of our Members who are most at risk, and to make sure all our essential staff and Members continue to be safe during the pandemic.

The first phase of the COVID-19 Vaccine rollout is now underway, with our front line health and Transport workers at the head of the queue to receive the vaccine. Also, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50 will be prioritised for vaccination.

We have been advised that NACCHO and the Department of Health are working through

the information we have provided regarding Gandangara Health Service's readiness and capability to implement the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. We have requested assistance from NACCHO to fund an additional vaccine fridge and marquee to assist with patient flow and the effectiveness of our vaccination program.

To date, we have administered over 350 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine and the number continues to grow daily.

As we have throughout the pandemic, we will continue to keep you fully informed with all the latest information about the vaccination program and ensure that all our Members are properly protected.

However, COVID-19 is not the only health issue we have to deal with. Our community's health and wellbeing needs continue to grow. To keep up, we are continually improving and expanding the health and specialist services we offer, such as additional mental health, dental care and cancer screening programs. We are also continually sourcing increased funding that allows us to train and hire more staff.

PROTECTING OUR SERVICES

As time has passed, we all hope that we have seen the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and all the problems and disruptions it has caused to so many lives and businesses. Nevertheless, we have to ensure the safe continuation of all our essential services for

our Members, should the pandemic continue to be with us, or even get worse in the future. To do this we have developed a COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan, to ensure we are able to assess the risk, and respond effectively to any new threat from the disease to our organisation and Members.

The Plan involves having a COVID-19 Response Team made up of all our executive leaders and senior managers, and a COVID-19 Support Team made up of our portfolio managers, whose primary responsibility will be to assess the level of risk to each of our services and divisions, and the impact those risks may have on them. They will then act on those assessments with predetermined implementation strategies, and deploy the appropriate resources to deal with the risks or impacts effectively.

Last year we were caught off-guard by the severity and extent of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we survived and thrived. This year we are well and truly prepared for anything that may happen, so none of our services will miss a beat regardless of what might happen. More importantly, all our Members and all our staff can feel confident of being kept safe and well looked after.

PROTECTING OUR INTEGRITY

Over the past two years, we have worked very hard at implementing very stringent, completely transparent management processes and policies, to ensure that everybody working at

Gandangara, at every level, is held accountable for their actions and decisions. It is responsible business practice and necessary to protect the interests of our Members. Such measures are essential to building and strengthening trust in our management and Board. It is important to all of us that we were seen to be clean, above board, and have professional and personal integrity.

We continue to strengthen these safeguards of our integrity. The latest addition is a Gift Register and Policy. We have introduced this Gift Register to ensure all gifts, over the value of \$20, offered to Board Members, executives, managers and staff members are registered as a matter of public record. This follows the requirements for statutory bodies functioning as public offices to protect against perceived conflicts of interest, and out of an obligation to be transparent. It will counter any suspicion of our employees' motives and eradicate opportunities for anyone at Gandangara to be unduly influenced by the generosity, or other motives, of outside parties.

We have worked hard to restore our reputation, and we are building strong, trusting relationships with our Members, our community and our business partners. This is just another important way we continue to get stronger as an organisation.

GROWING OUR BOTTOM LINE

All our diligence, and all our plans and strategies for growth are starting to pay off

where it counts most for a business – on the bottom line. Our investment returns, land values and grant incomes have grown steadily throughout the past year.

Since January 2020 the return on our cash investments has been over \$1.7 million, which is the result of having a smart, balanced portfolio strategy.

This increased income stream has allowed us to pay off bad debts from the past and expand investment in our services for our Members. We continue to make our money work hard for us, so we don't have to spend our savings on growing our services.

As a result of our smart investments and better business practices, our net financial position has increased from \$72 million to \$74 million over the past 12 months.

Due to hard work and diligence our income from various grant sources has been steadily increasing. It is the direct result of the increased trust our investors and business partners now have in us as an organisation, and our people.

This is all good news and builds our confidence in how we are managing our finances, but we do need to continue finding new streams of income, because we want to, and will need to provide more for our Members as time passes. More money equals being able to do more for our Members. It means being able to improve our services, and improve the working and pay conditions for our staff providing those services. It means being able to train and attract experienced people, raising our standards and

improving our performance at every level. That is why we will continue investing in ourselves.

After all, everything we do as an organisation, as a professional team, and the support we get from the Board, is put into benefitting our Members.

WE ARE ALL IN THIS, BUT NOT TOGETHER

This is a unique time in Australia's history. Over the past eighteen months, the different ways governments have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic have inflicted dramatic disruptions and changes to our lives, to our cities, to our country, and to the very way the world works. Adding to our pains is that many of these changes have been for the worse. Nothing is 'normal' anymore, and we have no idea what the 'new normal' is going to be.

For the first time, many Australians feel harshly and unfairly treated by the authorities. They feel their inherent rights and freedoms have been forcibly taken away from them. They feel the heavy hand of authority controlling what they can do and where they can go. They feel forced to apply for permission to travel within their own country, and are often denied that request. Many have been put into custody for the unlegislated crime of crossing an invisible line between one state and another. Their families have been torn apart and kept apart, by an apparently compassionless, hard-hearted bureaucracy that insists it knows what is best for them and their families. Their means of living has been taken from them, their prospects diminished or destroyed. Their

hopes, their futures, their self-esteem have been obliterated.

What has particularly hurt many people is the empty claim that we are 'All in this together' while the truth has been anything but that. All of which has left many people feeling frightened, confused, frustrated and angry. As a sad result, they've become more selfish, more insular and less caring of their fellow Australians. This is easy enough to understand, but difficult to accept.

WE ARE SHARING THE PAIN, SO WE ALSO HAVE TO SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY

With all this pain and confusion swirling around us, it's natural to just think of yourself and the ones you love. But that's not how we're going to get out of this mess. We're not alone, we are all suffering in one way or another. So, how are we, how are all Australians, ever going to get our liberties, our rights, our lives back again? How are we all ever going to enjoy a genuinely happy and prosperous life? What is it going to take?

Self-interest is not going to get us there. So, what will?

It will take patience and a long-term view of our lives. It will take community unity and a desire to help each other. It will also take personal sacrifice. We have to give up our pride and stubbornness and resistance to change. We have to stop being selfish. We must all

understand that we need to be responsible, not just for ourselves but also for others around us. We have to consider their interests and not just our own. We have to be sincerely health conscious and responsible. Especially now. For example, we should get vaccinated, if medically safe to do so, to protect our ourselves and our neighbours.

This is not fantasy or wishful thinking but a necessary fact. It works. We know it works, because that's what we have been putting into practice at Gandangara for the past couple of years. We have a big, diverse, and hard-working united organisation who have proven it works, have shown it works, every day.

Together, we have all worked hard to keep our Members safe, and to provide a safe, happy place to meet, to engage with each other, to feel at home. We have brought our community closer together by being close ourselves.

Despite the terrible interruptions and damage caused by COVID-19 we have grown and thrived as an organisation, and so have our Members. However, with all the business closures, personal financial losses, health and mental issues created by the pandemic, resuming life after COVID-19, is going to take a long-term period of recovery. We have had to compromise and put some projects on hold. Nevertheless, we won't get anywhere if we don't unite on this issue, if we don't pull together as Members and as a Community.

We, of all people, know the importance of being connected, so who better to teach our

neighbours how to connect, how to belong and how to thrive, in an enduring way that only the oldest surviving culture in the world can know.

SHOW IT IN OUR LIVES

The strongest, most effective way to teach others the wisdom of connecting, of belonging and of thriving, is to show it at work in our lives. We have to be the living proof, and we are. Our continued existence proves it. No other people have endured as much, suffered as much, lost as much as we have, but we're still here, still strong, still proud of who we are.

We are still here because we know what it takes to survive. We know the importance of our mob, our family, our country, and we know how to never let go of them. What we are enduring now, during this pandemic and restrictions that have come with it, is nothing new to us. We have survived worse, and we'll survive this, just the same way, by sticking close and never letting go of each other.

Gandangara was here for you yesterday; we are here for you today; we will be here for you tomorrow and for as long as you need us.

TRANSPORT

We're very fortunate to have our own transport service, to be able to have our own team out there to ensure the Elders were not alone, to look after our most vulnerable. We also had to pick up and deliver the care packages to them.

To reach the younger ones we used social media, texts, phone calls, all means of communicating and keeping in contact with everyone. Also making regular calls to check on people to make sure everything was ok.

We have been able to show the Aboriginal community, and the wider community, that we have a responsible community and showed that responsibility while being amongst some of the worst hotspots. And in turn we got lower transmissions.



Our Members: Who we are

Our Land Council has a large and growing membership base comprising Aboriginal people from all across the country, who now live in Our Land Council's area.

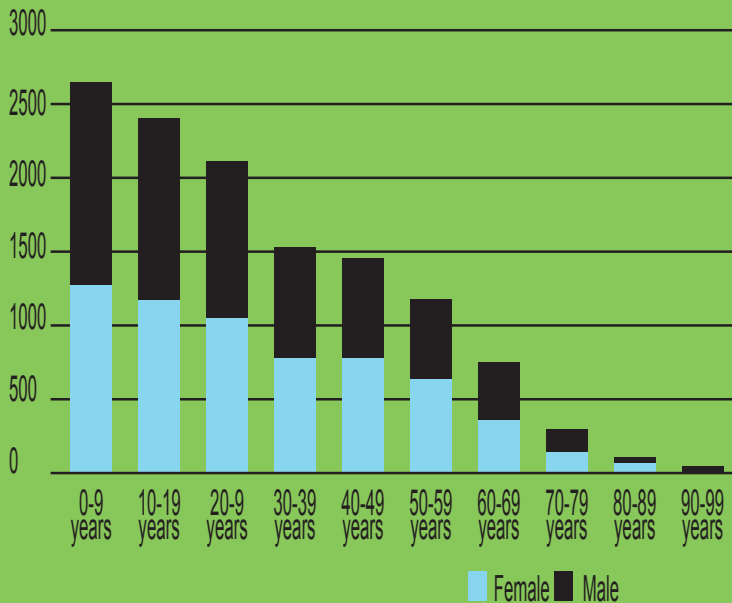
We have over 700 Members. Our strategic direction has been developed to increase our Land Council's engagement with, and to ensure that our services and operations are working to meet, the needs of Our Members and the broader Aboriginal community.

738 Members

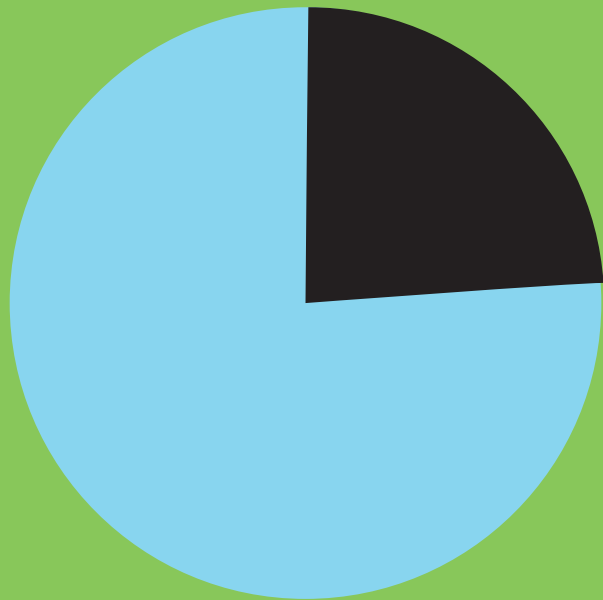
***Applicants must be aged 18 years & over to become a Member of GLALC**

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**Total Aboriginal Population by Age and Gender:
South Western Sydney**

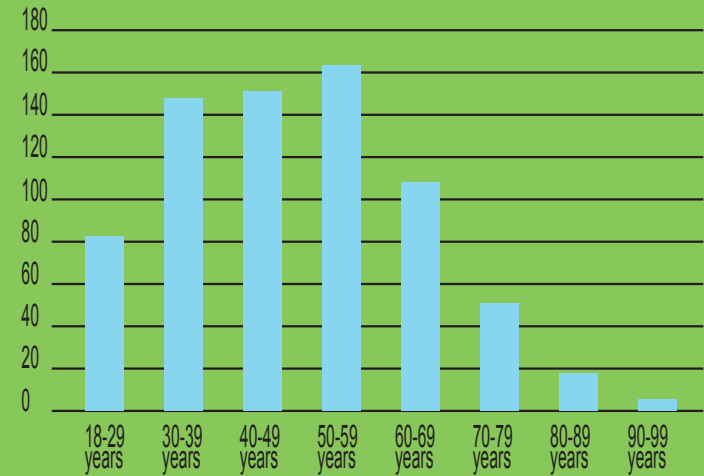


Residence of Our Members



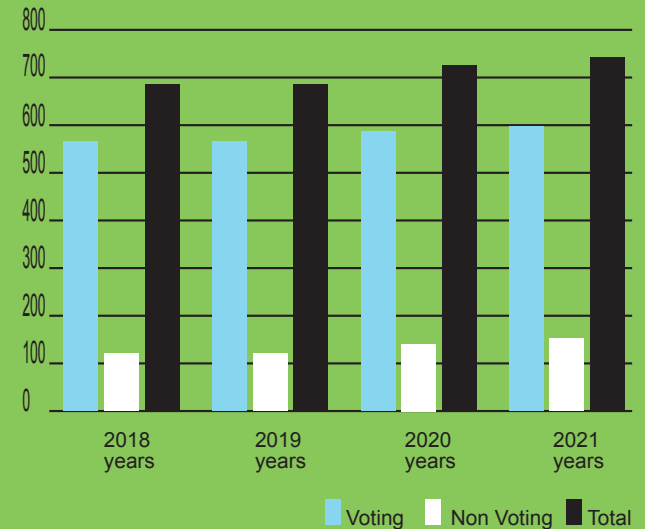
■ Out of Boundary ■ In Boundary

Our Members by Age Range as of April 2021



Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Members' Meetings FY 2020/2021	
Meeting	Date
Ordinary	22/07/2020 (Cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions)
Ordinary	23/09/2020 (Cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions)
Ordinary	18/11/2020 (Cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions)
Extraordinary	23/11/2020 (held)
Ordinary	20/01/2021 (held)
Ordinary	17/03/2021 (held)
Ordinary	19/05/2021 (held)

Breakdown of Members by Type, Number and Year



Current Board Members elected 18 September 2019



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Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Board of Directors

Top left to bottom right: Tanya Ellis, Wendy Morgan, Anthony Scholes (Chairperson), Steve Ingram, Diane Van Aken (Deputy Chairperson), Bernie Compton, Norma Burrows, Barry Brooker, Gail Smith, Matthew Fellingham.

GLALC Board of Directors who held office in the reporting year

The names of the Directors in Office at the date of this report and throughout the entire financial year of 2020-2021 are as follows:

Anthony Scholes	(Chairperson)	Tanya Ellis	Director
Diane Van Aken	(Deputy Chairperson)	Matthew Fellingham	Director
Barry Brookery	Director	Steve Ingram	Director
Norma Burrows	Director	Wendy Morgan	Director
Bernadette Compton	Director	Gail Smith	Director

GLALC Board Meeting Attendance

Board Member	Meetings Attended	Meetings Eligible to Attend	Date Appointed
Anthony Scholes	5	7	30/09/2015
Diane Van Aken	4	7	01/05/2019
Barry Brooker	5	7	18/09/2019
Norma Burrows	1	7	18/09/2019
Bernadette Compton	5	7	18/09/2019
Tanya Ellis	3	7	18/09/2019
Matthew Fellingham	5	7	18/09/2019
Steve Ingram	5	7	30/09/2015
Wendy Morgan	4	7	30/09/2015
Gail Smith	5	7	30/09/2015

Elections for GLALC Board members are held every four years. Board Members hold office for four years or until the election of the next Board. The current Board Members were elected at the Annual General Meeting of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council which was held on 18 September 2019, the next election is expected to be held in September 2023.

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GLALC Board Meetings held within the reporting year

Meetings	Date
Ordinary	20-Jul-20
Ordinary	21-Sep-20
Extraordinary	29-Oct-20
Ordinary	16-Nov-20
Ordinary	18-Jan-21
Ordinary	15-Mar-21
Ordinary	17-May-21

Gandangara The Group Team Members

Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council (GLALC)

Positions

●	Melissa Williams, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Finance & Business Operations	
●	Mark Spithill, Associate Director of Enterprise Investment & Corporate Services
● ●	Katrina Rorison, Property Manager
●	Christine Torres, Finance and Project Support Officer
●	Dianne Davis, Cleaner
●	Accountant
Gandangara Transport Services Limited	
●	Ann Apaola, Gandangara Transport Services Manager
●	Renee Smith, Booking & Assessment Officer
●	Jessica Baxter, Transport Driver
●	Janey Bown, Transport Driver
●	Josh Kumar, Transport Driver
●	Brett Miller, Transport Driver
Policy, Strategy, Research & Communications	
●	Dr Ruth Sheridan, Policy, Research and Communications Group Manager
●	Tracey Fitzgibbon, Community Development Manager
●	Darren Duncan, Culture, Heritage and Land Management Officer
●	Dr Justin Garnsworthy, Media, Events and Publications Officer
●	Debbie Cummings, Project & Administration Officer
●	Site Officers x4

Program Management Office

●	Kelly Nichols, General Manager
●	Project Manager
●	Trudy Healey, Project Support Officer
●	Business Administration Traineeships x2
Gandangara Health Services Limited (GHS)	
●	Angela Spithill, Health Services Manager
●	Dr Viet Duc Dang Ho, General Practitioner
●	Dr Fiona Gifford, General Practitioner
●	Dr Robert Kennedy, General Practitioner
●	Dr Prudence Kirby, General Practitioner
●	Dr Sheila Knowlden, General Practitioner
●	Dr Isabel Hanson, General Practitioner
●	Dr Ludmila Helene Ferrera de Freitas, General Practitioner
●	Alex Budlevskis, Exercise Physiologist – SEWB
●	Rachael Ingrey, Medical Practice Coordinator
●	Caitlan Ingrey-Ferris, Medical Practice Receptionist
●	Jasna Morales, Medical Practice Receptionist
●	Emma Guan, Registered Nurse
●	Melissa Sonter, Registered Nurse*
●	Kim Moutia, Registered Nurse*
●	Khloe Bolton, Trainee Aboriginal Health Practitioner
●	Jestyn Nand, Trainee Mental Health Care Practitioner
●	Sarah Robinson, Trainee Aboriginal Health Practitioner
●	Luke Buchtmann (Contractor), Podiatrist
Marumali	
●	Fay Daniels, Aboriginal Health Practitioner/ Team Leader
●	Harry Callaghan, Aboriginal Health Outreach Worker
●	Deegan Hunter, Aboriginal Health Outreach Worker
●	Kim Moutia, Health Promotion and Project Support
●	Litia Anu, Trainee First Peoples Health

KEY:

- Position approved by Board, non-grant funded
- Outsourced contracts approved by the Board
- Position approved by Board, fully or partially funded by grants

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Connect. Belong. Thrive.

