

23 September 2008

## **Aboriginal language groups in the Western Catchment mapped**

The Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group (ARAG) today officially launched a map of the Aboriginal language groups of the Western Catchment.

Chair of the Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group, Ben Flick, officially launched the map at the Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group's meeting held in Bourke today.

The map also appears on a poster produced by the ARAG, which explains the group's role.

Ben Flick said the map and poster were produced to make people more aware of the group.

"The Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group is made up of 19 people who represent the majority of Aboriginal language groups in the Western Catchment," Mr Flick said.

"The map shows people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the area we cover and how we can assist them.

"Our group provides advice to the Western Catchment Management Authority Board so that their decisions take into account Aboriginal culture and values.

"People can contact us if they'd like to talk about areas of significance, cultural heritage areas, native animals, bush tucker, river health or other issues they are concerned about.

"By ringing the Western CMA on the freecall number 1800 032 101, they can be put in contact with their local ARAG member.

"Aboriginal people make up about 20% of the Western Catchment's population, which is a sizeable proportion. If people want to have a say in how our country is managed, the Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group can make sure that their voices are heard," Mr Ben Flick said.

Copies of the map and poster and further information about the Group, its role and members can also be obtained by ringing the freecall number or by visiting [www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au)

Western Catchment ARAG Member, Joe Flick said producing the map and poster developed over a number of months as a result of extensive research and negotiation.

"The map shows a contemporary understanding of Aboriginal boundaries. We used local knowledge to fill in the gaps in some of the other maps we've seen and over a series of ARAG meetings developed a finished product that reflects the language groups recognised by people on the ground," Mr Joe Flick said.



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"Obviously there may be people who have different interpretations of areas and we respect their opinions and hope that people won't be offended by our map but we feel we've been able as conciliatory as possible to get to this point.

We've included alternative spelling of language groups as well and we've limited our map to the current Aboriginal language groups recognised by people today.

"Looking after our country is everyone's responsibility and we want people to know that they can be involved and have a voice through the Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group," Mr Joe Flick said.

Chair of the Western Catchment Management Board, Rory Treweeke, says the Western CMA values highly the information and input from the Western Catchment ARAG.

"The members are to be congratulated on producing the map and poster to better inform Catchment residents on the locations of Aboriginal language groups," Mr Treweeke said.

"This is an important part of the process the Western Catchment ARAG is undertaking to document and evaluate Aboriginal knowledge of land management and inherent cultural values in the landscape," he said.

The group meets every three months. One of the key aims of this meeting is for the ARAG to provide advice to the Western CMA about its development of a system for compiling knowledge about Aboriginal land management practices and values.

One of the Western CMA's 14 management targets is to develop a process for the documentation, evaluation and ownership of Aboriginal knowledge of sustainable land management and cultural values in the Western Catchment.

At the ARAG meeting, the members will provide specific direction about the types of information they believe should be collected and the best way to undertake that task.

On the basis of that advice, the Western CMA will be working towards setting up that system over the next two years.

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Further information:

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Joe Flick, Western Catchment ARAG Member on 0428 101577

Captions:

ARAG\_Group\_Map2: Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group members with the map of the Catchment launched today. Joe Flick, Gordon Sullivan, Bill Kennedy, Max Sullivan (seated Edna Kelly), Ben Flick, Guy Gibbs, Roger Hartnett.



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Joe&Ben: Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group member Joe Flick with Chair of the Group, Ben Flick, who officially launched the map of the Catchment in Bourke today.

Bourke\_ARAGmap: Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group member Guy Gibbs of Bourke with the map of the Catchment which was launched today.

BrokenHill\_ARAGmap: Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group member Edna Kelly of Broken Hill and Western CMA Aboriginal Community Support Officer, Dot Stephens with the map of the Catchment which was officially launched today.

Cobar\_ARAGmap: Western CMA Catchment Officer, Aboriginal Communities, Alan Holt of Cobar with the map of the Catchment which was officially launched today.

Enngonia\_ARAGmap: Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group members Gordon and Max Sullivan of Enngonia with the map of the Catchment which was launched today.

Weilmoringle\_ARAGmap: Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group member Roger Hartnett of Weilmoringle with the map of the Catchment which was launched today.

Walgett\_ARAGmap: Western Catchment Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group member Bill Kennedy and Western CMA Aboriginal Community Support Officer, Blackie Gordon, both of Walgett, with the map of the Catchment which was launched today

