

20 September 2026

Councillor Benjamin Cai
The Mayor
Strathfield Council

cc The General Manager, Strathfield Council

Dear Councillor Cai

Re: Removal of Aboriginal Historical Acknowledgement from Gateway Signage

The Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society questions the recent decision by Strathfield Council to remove references to its Aboriginal history from Council's gateway signage across the Municipality.

The Aboriginal history of the Strathfield Municipality is well documented. Strathfield Council commissioned and published research into the Aboriginal history and cultural landscape of the district, titled *Strathfield: Enduring Stories of Wanne*, in 2024-2025. This research clearly identifies the Indigenous people associated with the Strathfield area as the Wangal people of the Eora nation.

Strathfield Council itself acknowledges that the local government area is situated on the lands of the Wangal people and identifies them as the Traditional Custodians of the land in multiple statements, plans and reports, which are adopted by the elected Council. The 2024/2025 Strathfield Council Annual Report contains an Acknowledgement of Country which states:

We acknowledge the Wangal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Strathfield area is located. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' continued custodianship of Country - land, seas, and skies. We acknowledge the historical stewardship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the important contribution they make to our communities and economies. We reflect on the continuing impact of policies of the past and recognise our responsibility to work with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families, and communities, towards better economic, social and cultural outcomes.

One wonders how Strathfield Council is working "towards better economic, social and cultural outcomes" with its Indigenous people by deleting reference of these same communities from its gateway signage.

In 2024, Strathfield Council also adopted a reconciliation plan to guide its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to support recognition of Aboriginal history, culture and continuing connection to Country.

It is therefore difficult to reconcile the proposed removal of Aboriginal references from prominent public gateway signs with Council's own published historical research, its stated commitment to recognising and celebrating the Wangal people, its many references in major plans and strategies to its Aboriginal history and commitments, and its adoption of a reconciliation plan.

While Strathfield Municipality is a highly diverse community, recognition of the Wangal people and its Aboriginal history is not inconsistent with recognising contributions and successive layers of local history.

For these reasons, the Society urges Council to review its decision.

For further information, please contact the Secretary by email at strathfieldhistory@gmail.com

Yours faithfully

Cathy Jones
Secretary
Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society