

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Water

Portfolio:	Water
Witness:	Ms Lisa Neville, Minister for Water
Committee member:	Mr Tim Richardson
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Relevant text:

Mr RICHARDSON: In the 30 seconds we have remaining, what is the government doing to ensure traditional owners really drive that work?

Ms NEVILLE: Yes, a couple of things. Firstly, we have committed and are legislating for acknowledgement of traditional owner rights and entitlements to water—that is both cultural and economic. That is our overall frame, but within that we also now have an opportunity through all of these measures to be having traditional owners around the table, and they are at the ministerial advisory committees. With the Yarra they are at the table in terms of the strategic action plan and the ongoing management. We have also funded water policy officers in traditional owner organisations that will enable them to build their capacity.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I am happy for you to take the remainder of that answer on notice.

Answer:

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party for much of the Yarra River and its surrounding lands. The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung have become partners in decisions that impact the Yarra.

They are delivering on Action 26 of the Yarra Action Plan by piloting cultural mapping for the culturally significant Bolin Bolin billabong and the surrounding area. This project is well underway and will inform future cultural mapping work along the river.

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders - Aunty Margaret Gardiner, Uncle Ron Jones, and Uncle Alan Wandin are members of the Birrarung Council, the independent voice of the river, that was established in the last 12 months as another outcome of the Yarra Action Plan and the legislation.

The Wurundjeri Water Unit (the Unit) has been established by the Aboriginal Corporation with the support of government to build capacity to engage in water management decisions.

Some of the activities delivered by the Unit include:

- enabling broader participation by Elders and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung community in decisions for the Yarra River;
- producing the Wurundjeri Water Policy - Nhanbu narrun ba ngargin twarn Birrarung (Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra), which expresses their aspirations for the Yarra and was presented to Government to accompany the 50-year Community Vision for the Yarra; and
- providing content for the draft Yarra Strategic Plan.