



Dharug Strategic Management Group - Meeting 3

Working Group (DSMG WG) Meeting Minutes

Project: Richmond Road M7 – Blacktown Native Institution

Meeting Number: WG 03/2025

Date: Thursday, 2 October 2025

Time: 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Location: In Person – TfNSW Parramatta Office, 4 Parramatta Square, Parramatta

Attendance

Present:

- Julie Jones - DSMG
- Raelene Billedo - DSMG
- Brendan Thomas - DSMG (Virtual)
- Christo Opperman - TfNSW
- Warren Steadman - TfNSW
- Noni Ross - TfNSW
- Lyndall Thornhill - TfNSW (Virtual)
- Jody Gould - TfNSW (Virtual)
- Dylan Connell - TfNSW (Virtual)
- Liam Harte - TIKAEQ
- Michael Maxwell - Blacktown City Council (Virtual Guest - Manager, Community and Cultural Partnerships)

Apologies:

- Luke McIlroy-Ranga - TIKAEQ
- Abdulbari Shaikh - TfNSW (replaced by Ian Allan, Director – Project Delivery)



1. Opening

- **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country**
 - **Housekeeping**
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2. Governance

2.1 Transition from Terms of Reference to Principles and Ways of Working

- The Group agreed to move away from the rigid *Terms of Reference* model toward a Principles and Ways of Working framework that embeds Dharug values and supports cultural safety, transparency, and flexibility.
- Development of Guiding Principles: A draft framework will be co-designed with DSMG representatives to replace the ToR, ensuring the document reflects DSMG's role, expectations and cultural authority. Next steps include:
 - Initial Drafting - Tika EQ will prepare an initial Guiding Principles document and circulate it to DSMG for review and input.
 - DSMG Input & Amendments - DSMG will be invited to provide written feedback or verbal guidance on the draft, identifying additional principles, changes to language, or areas of concern.
 - Iterative Review Process - Tika EQ will incorporate DSMG's feedback into a revised draft and return it for further review. This process of review and amendment will continue so that DSMG are comfortable that the Guiding Principles fully reflect their role, expectations, and cultural authority.
 - Final Draft - DSMG to confirm they are satisfied with the Guiding Principles.
- The new framework will define:
 - Appropriate times and methods for contact between meetings.
 - Agreed protocols for communication and document circulation.
 - Processes for decision-making and cultural input.
- DSMG reaffirmed their preference for face-to-face discussions for complex or sensitive matters, noting that written exchanges often limit meaningful cultural dialogue.
- TfNSW committed to maintaining flexibility to support DSMG decision making processes.



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- Tika EQ to discuss additional administrative and secretariat support to DSMG, including printing, distribution of papers, presenting directly to the DSMG board and preparation of presentation materials for community members to remain informed.

2.2 Quorum and Alternate Attendees

- The Group supported a more flexible approach to quorum under the new principles, recognising that cultural authority and representation of Dharug custodians are more critical than fixed numerical attendance.

2.3 Personnel Update

- TfNSW advised that Ian Allan has replaced Abdulbari Shaikh as Director overseeing the Richmond Road M7 project.
- DSMG noted appreciation for consistent points of contact within TfNSW to support continuity across meetings and design workshops.

2.4 Confidentiality Protocols

- TfNSW clarified that most working group discussions will be open for DSMG to share within their community.
- Only specific items related to commercially confidential procurement matters (such as contract pricing or tender evaluations) will be restricted.
- TfNSW will clearly identify commercially confidential information before discussion to avoid misunderstanding.
- Post-contract award, the appointed contractor will participate in DSMG sessions, enabling transparent dialogue around design and site logistics.

3. Project Updates

3.1 Current Project Status and Contractor Engagement

- Procurement is in its final stage, with contractor appointment due **10 October 2025**.
- TfNSW proposed that the first engagement between DSMG and the successful contractor occur on Country to establish mutual respect and understanding.
- DSMG endorsed this proposal, emphasising the importance of beginning all new relationships through cultural process.



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- It was agreed to host a **Walk on Country and contractor introduction** on **Thursday, 23 October 2025 at 1:00 pm**, coordinated by DSMG, Tika EQ, and TfNSW.
- The introduction will include:
 - Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country.
 - Cultural briefing about the BNI site's significance and history.
 - Discussion of contractor engagement approach and site protocols.
- TfNSW to ensure attendance by design and project leadership teams, alongside DSMG Dharug custodians and Council representatives.

3.2 AHIP and Salvage Works Update

- TfNSW confirmed that the Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) has been issued by Heritage NSW.
- Salvage excavations commenced in the northern area of the BNI precinct, uncovering a large number of silcrete artefacts and materials.
- Finds are currently held in safe storage by Kelleher & Co. (KNC) pending formal repatriation arrangements.
- DSMG requested that a documented repatriation process be developed to ensure DSMG decision-making authority is prioritised over the generic RAP processes.
- TfNSW supported this position, noting the need to align the repatriation procedure with both heritage legislation and cultural needs, ensuring clarity, transparency, and accountability.
- Lyndall Thornhill to provide a summary of storage and handling arrangements for DSMG review prior to next meeting.

4. General Discussion Items

4.1 BNI Vision and Master Plan

- DSMG reiterated that revising the long-term BNI Vision or Master Plan is not a current priority, as the immediate focus remains on managing access, safety, and continuity of community use during the RRM7 works.
- Members noted that previous design iterations by consultants require review and redesign once project impacts are clearer and better known.
- DSMG emphasised that broader community consultation must precede any redesign, as cultural, environmental, and practical implications cannot yet be fully assessed.



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- Blacktown City Council reaffirmed its alignment with DSMG’s multi-generational vision and indicated strong support for co-planning of access and cultural landscape interfaces.
- TfNSW noted that new project opportunities (such as improved access and utility relocation) may later inform updates to the master plan post-construction.

4.2 Access Planning and Workshop Arrangements

- The Group confirmed two key upcoming engagements:
 - **Thursday 23 October 2025** – Walk on Country and cultural induction with the contractor.
 - **Friday 7 November 2025** – Dedicated on-site design walk - following workshop to be hosted by **Blacktown City Council** (10:00 am–2:30 pm).
- The workshop will:
 - Identify temporary and permanent access points over short, medium and long-term time horizons.
 - Address road safety, traffic impacts, and construction interface management.
 - Consider opportunities for landscaping and shared use during construction.
- Outcomes will directly inform design updates, contractor programming, and Council’s access infrastructure planning.
- DSMG to lead the cultural briefing component.

4.3 Cultural Induction for Contractors

- DSMG confirmed their commitment to lead cultural induction for all site personnel.
- This will be face-to-face and delivered before any site works commence in November 2025.
- TfNSW and DSMG agreed to complement the session with a “train-the-trainer” approach for ongoing induction of new staff.
- DSMG clarified their position against filming or reusing the induction material outside the project, to preserve cultural integrity.
- Lyndall Thornhill to integrate cultural induction requirements into construction management and safety planning.

4.4 Project Timeline and Communications

- TfNSW confirmed early works (northern section) will begin **November 2025**, with the southern construction commencing **late 2026**, targeting completion by **2028**.



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- DSMG highlighted the need to communicate this clearly to community, given anticipated three-year impacts on site access and events.
 - TIKAEQ to produce a visual project timeline and infographic illustrating phases of work and community milestones.
 - DSMG raised concerns regarding site access during peak community events, these will be included in future coordination plans.
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5. Other Business

5.1 Community Authority and Representation

- DSMG reaffirmed that the Blacktown Native Institution lands are Dharug-owned and culturally governed, and no other Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander groups hold custodial authority for decisions.
- TfNSW acknowledged this and committed to removing any language from project documents implying shared or external cultural authority.
- Future governance frameworks and agreements will reflect this position explicitly.

5.2 Finances and Meeting Cadence

- TfNSW to prepare a written addendum confirming reimbursement arrangements for DSMG travel and meeting attendance, ensuring clarity and timeliness.
- Payment cycles expected to reduce to within two weeks following the new Purchase Order process.

5.3 Confirmed upcoming dates:

- The Group confirmed fortnightly meeting cadence through December 2025, with additional out-of-session meetings arranged for critical approvals.
- 16 October - WG04
- 23 October - Walk on Country
- 7 November - Workshop at Blacktown Council
- 13 & 27 November - Regular meetings
- 11 December - Final 2025 meeting
- 8 January 2026 - First meeting of the new year



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