



Media release: NSW Reconciliation Council to commemorate 200-year anniversary of Aboriginal massacre at Appin

Thursday, 14 April 2016

Aboriginal elders, activists and local community members will gather south of Sydney on Sunday to commemorate the 200-year anniversary of the 1816 Appin Massacre.

A memorial service, to be held at Cataract Dam, Appin, will remember the killing of at least 14 Dharawal Aboriginal people by British soldiers on the orders of Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

NSW Reconciliation Council Co-Chair Cecilia Anthony said that the event was an important opportunity to reflect on a disturbing moment in Australian history.

“As Australians, it is absolutely vital that we acknowledge and discuss all aspects of our nation’s history. This includes remembering that Aboriginal people have often been subjected to indefensible violence, of which the Appin Massacre is just one example.”

Ms Anthony said that ongoing commemoration of historic wrongs committed against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was important in shaping public opinion and government policy.

“The systemic disadvantage that we see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples facing today is the direct result of violence, discrimination and neglect perpetrated by many generations of Australian governments. Until we as a society grasp the full extent of various governments’ responsibility for these problems, we will not be able to achieve the real, practical outcomes needed to address them.”

Memorial organiser Peter Jones said that his local reconciliation group, Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group, had been commemorating the Appin Massacre annually for the past fifteen years. He said he was glad to be able to draw the nation’s attention to one of the great tragedies in his community’s history.

“This is a way for our community to stand in solidarity with the descendants of the Dharawal people who were massacred right here on Sydney’s doorstep,” he said.

“We want to remind people in this area that many of us are only able to live on this land because Aboriginal people were removed from it, often in a violent way. We believe that all of us should be paying respect to those people.”

The New South Wales Reconciliation Council is the peak representative body for reconciliation in NSW. Our vision is to create a reconciled, just and equitable community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. Our membership is currently made up of Reconciliation Groups and individuals across NSW – Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together to advance reconciliation in their communities.

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