

Mr Andrew Thomas
Executive Officer
Cooks River Alliance

29th April 2026

Dear Andrew,

The members and executive of the Cooks River Valley Association place high value on the role and functions of the Cooks River Alliance. We strongly support the Cooks River Alliance as the bringing together of most of the Local Councils whose LGAs fall within the catchment of the Cooks River, plus Sydney Water.

The purpose of the Cooks River Alliance, as stated at its formation, is to facilitate *“a whole of catchment management of the Cooks River by sharing resources of its member organisations and coordinating them to this purpose”*.

The Cooks River Alliance Management Committee is the decision-making body of the Alliance. The Management Committee is made up of serving councillors nominated by each of the member Councils, plus one representative from Sydney Water. Canterbury Bankstown Council (which has the largest area in the catchment) has only one representative. Inner West Council, Strathfield Council and Bayside Council each has two representatives. (Burwood, City of Sydney and Georges River LGAs also form part of the Cooks River catchment but at this stage these Councils have not joined the Cooks River Alliance).

The Cooks River Alliance Management Committee is chaired by one of its members, elected by the Committee. The Management Committee receives executive support from your small team of council officers. One of the stated aims of this executive support group is to engage and communicate with the more than 30 community groups across the catchment, to coordinate and communicate on-the decisions, actions and advocacy of the Alliance.

Currently the Management Committee meets four times a year with agendas based on pressing issues, current or proposed projects and other topical issues. Minutes of these meetings are taken by the support team and presumably distributed back to the member organisations.

Unfortunately, the general public does not have access to the minutes of these Management Committee meetings, making it difficult for community groups, like the CRVA, to be fully informed of the input and decisions of our local council representatives on the Management Committee of the Alliance. While we strongly support the CRA's constructive approach and engagement, we remain uninformed of how decisions impacting on the catchment are made by the Management Committee.

As you know, minutes of general Council meetings are accessible to the public. We are at a loss to understand why this does not apply to the minutes of the CRA Management Committee meetings.

Members of the Cooks River Valley Association believe that this “communication silence” (no access to minutes of the Alliance Management Committee meetings), diminishes the effectiveness and engagement of the Cooks River Alliance with the community.

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We strongly urge that the decision not to publish the minutes of the quarterly meetings of the Management Committee of the Cooks River Alliance be reconsidered, with the goal of making the minutes of the Committee accessible to the general public.

Yours Sincerely,

Ann Leahy (President)

Peter Munro (Vice President)

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We are all Cooks River People caring for country.