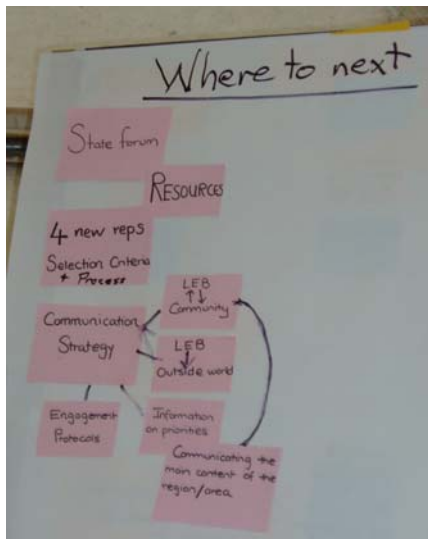


## PART 3 — ISSUES, OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Photograph: Vol Norris

# Introduction

Outcomes of the Forum were a combination of:

- specific recommendations from the Forum participants to Government, for further work and for future Aboriginal involvement and communication; and
- lists and descriptions of water and land issues in the Lake Eyre Basin that are important to Aboriginal people.

These outcomes are summarised in Figures 9 to 13, and are described in the following sections under headings that correspond to the three focus questions of the Forum:

- LEB Aboriginal Outreach Strategy
- Collaborations of Mutual Benefit
- Aboriginal priorities for Water and Land Issues

## LEB Aboriginal Outreach Strategy

The Forum attendees recommended that the critical components of a Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Outreach Strategy should be:

1. Filling the extra four Aboriginal positions on the LEB Community Advisory Committee as soon as possible
2. Holding Basin-wide Aboriginal Forums for the Lake Eyre Basin every year (instead of every two years)
3. Holding smaller LEB Aboriginal Forums each year for South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory, before each annual Basin-wide Forum.
4. Implementing an Aboriginal Outreach Communication Strategy in conjunction with the LEB Communications Strategy.

Attendees also discussed the possibility of a separate Aboriginal Advisory Group being appointed by the LEB Ministerial Forum, in addition to holding annual Aboriginal Forums with open attendance.

Figures 9, 10 and 11 provide details of these recommendations.

### **Aboriginal CAC members**

Figure 9 describes the recommended Aboriginal representation structure under the LEB Agreement with a total of six Aboriginal members of the LEB Community Advisory

Committee (i.e. an additional four new Aboriginal members).

Attendees felt that the new Aboriginal CAC members should either live in the Lake Eyre Basin or have a close connection to the Basin. Other desired characteristics for the new Aboriginal members are listed in Figure 9.

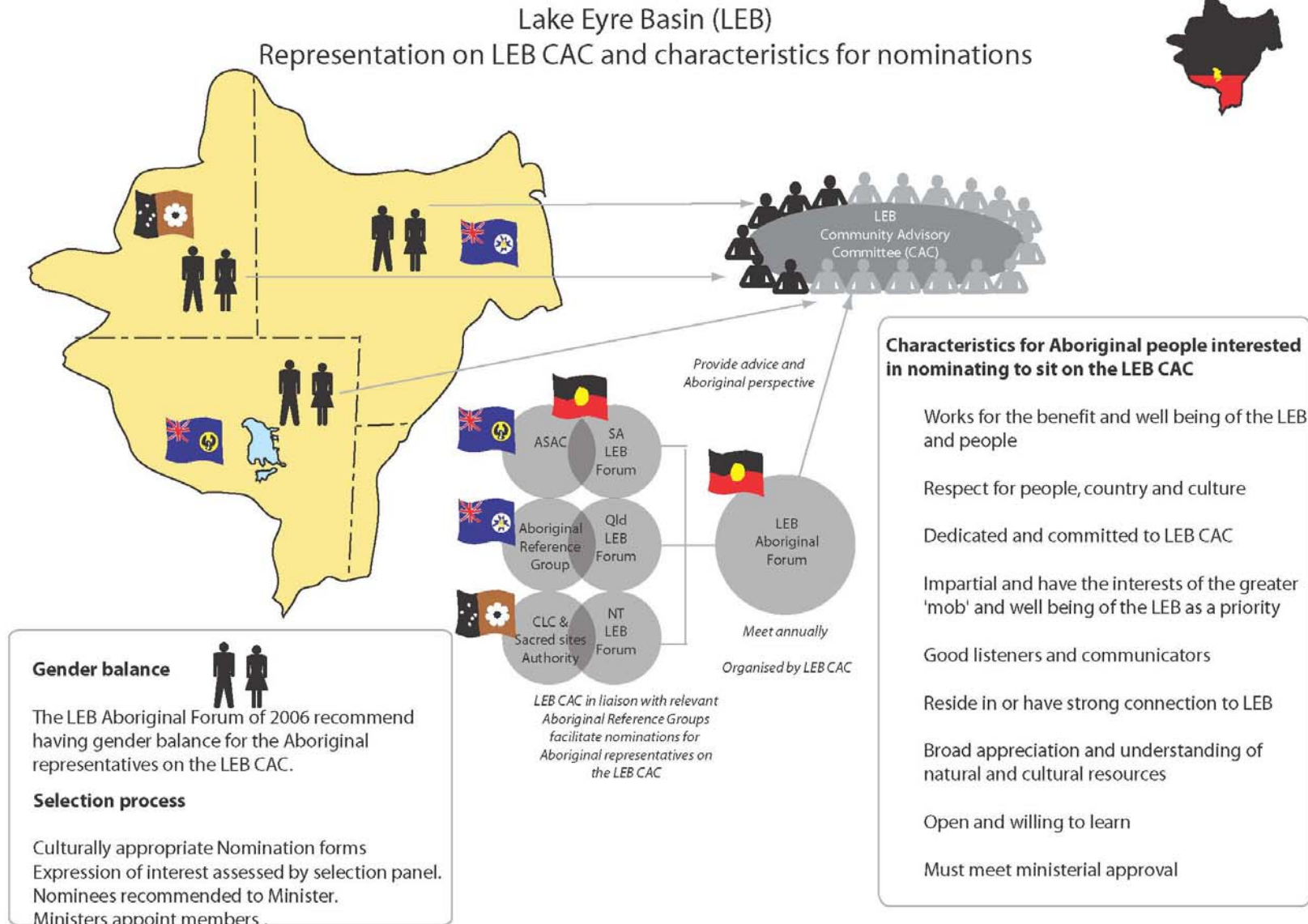
Forum participants recommended that the selection process for new Aboriginal members be fair and open, that there be both male and female Aboriginal members, and that nominations for new members be invited by word of mouth, and by post, fax and email invitations throughout the Basin.

Participants also recommended that the invitations to nominate should include clear explanations of:

- Lake Eyre Basin arrangements
- the role of CAC members
- the selection criteria for members.

### **Additional State and Territory Aboriginal Forums**

Figure 10 shows the model for LEB Aboriginal engagement and partnership recommended by the participants: a total of six Aboriginal CAC members, together with annual State and Territory Aboriginal Forums and an annual whole-of-Basin Aboriginal Forum.



**Figure 9** Aboriginal representation on the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee

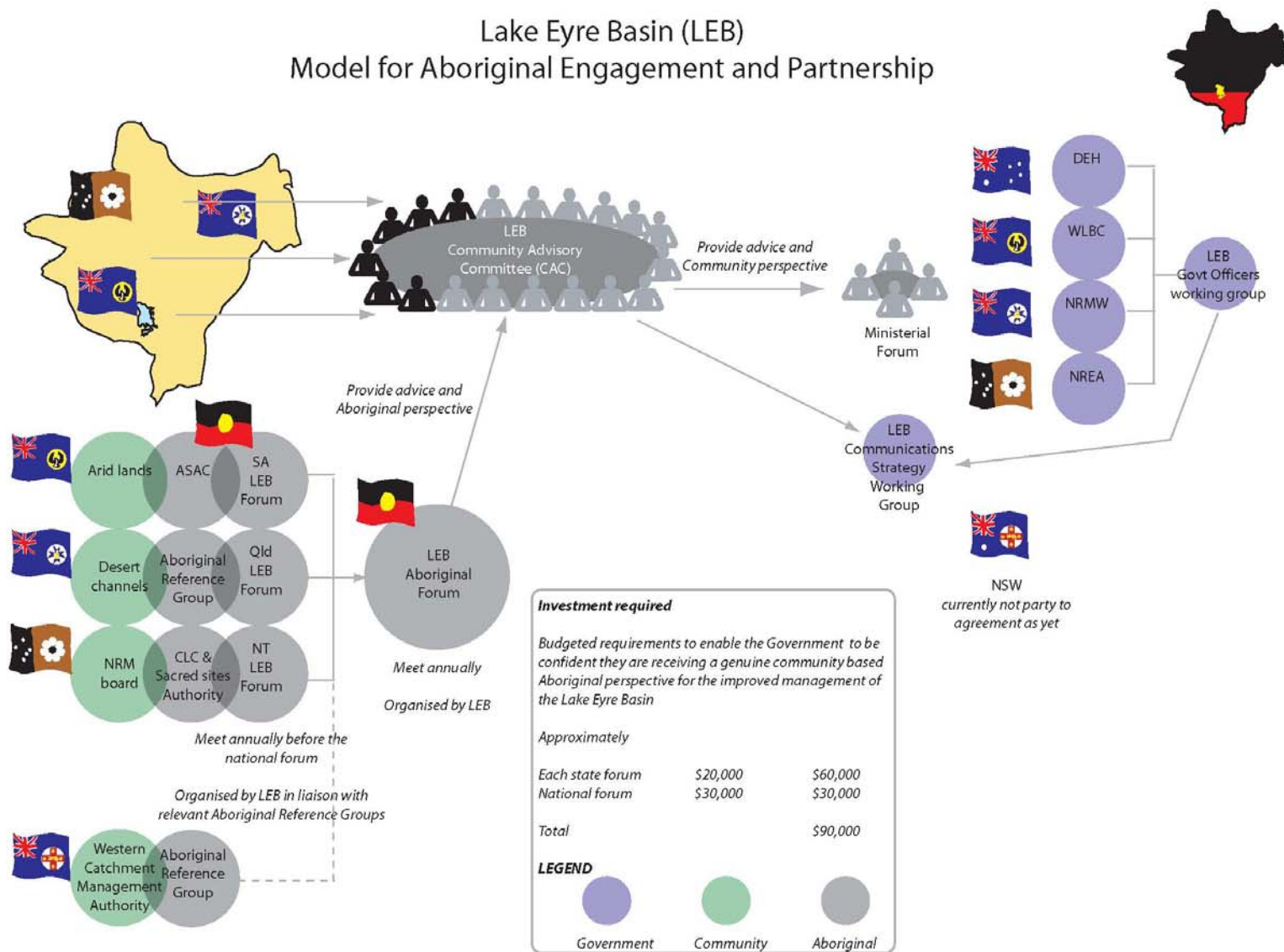


Figure 10 Model for Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal engagement and partnership

Each smaller State and Territory Aboriginal Forum should be coordinated closely with existing processes in each State or Territory. For example, an LEB Aboriginal Forum held for the South Australian part of the Lake Eyre Basin should involve the South Australian Aboriginal State-wide Advisory Committee and should be coordinated with other Aboriginal involvement work of the SA Arid Lands NRM Board.

Similarly an LEB Aboriginal Forum held for the Queensland part of the Lake Eyre Basin should be coordinated closely with the Aboriginal Reference Group being established by Desert Channels Queensland. In the Northern Territory, LEB Aboriginal Forums should be organised in close consultation with the Central Land Council and Aboriginal Sacred Sites Authority.

### ***Aboriginal Outreach Communications Strategy***

The first two boxes in Figure 11 show the core communication strategy recommended by the

Forum participants in order to maintain effective contact with Aboriginal people and groups in the Lake Eyre Basin.

This strategy is broken into three components:

1. Communication principles (e.g. 'be consultative from the outset')
2. Communication methods (i.e. primarily the State Aboriginal Forums, plus other methods such as newsletters and web-site information)
3. Types of information (e.g. resource monitoring information, plans and directions)

The Aboriginal Outreach Communication Strategy as shown in boxes 1 and 2 of Figure 11 should be implemented in close coordination with the whole-of-Basin Communication Strategy that is being developed by the participating Governments under the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement.

## **Collaborations of Mutual Benefit — an LEB Aboriginal Document**

The Forum participants recommended that a Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Document should be developed as a high priority collaboration under the LEB Agreement. This is shown in the third box in Figure 11.

The Aboriginal Document would be compiled during future consultations in the Basin. Its purposes would be:

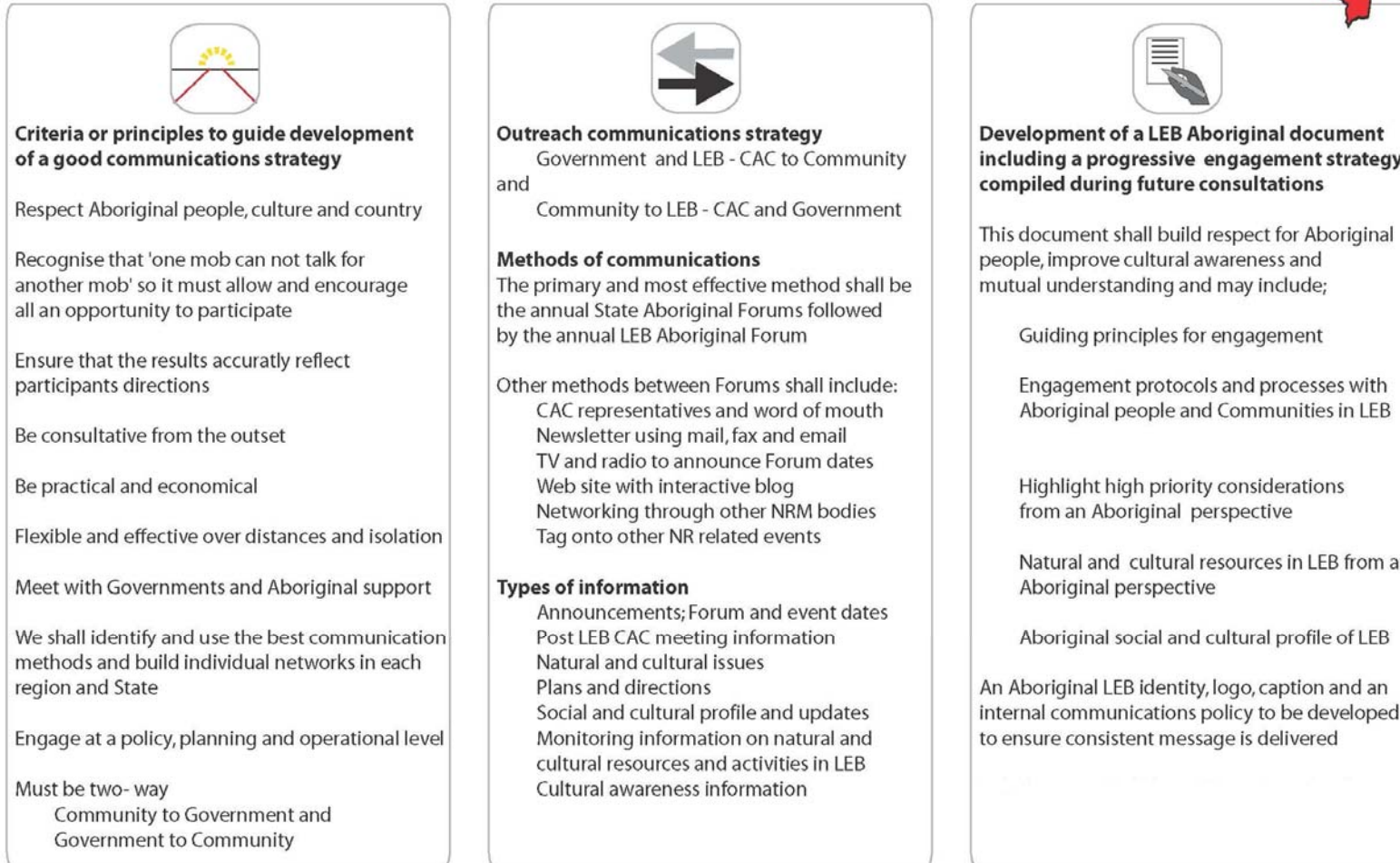
- To build respect for LEB Aboriginal people
- To improve awareness of Aboriginal culture and circumstances in the Basin, and improve mutual understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
- To provide a record of LEB Aboriginal involvement and outcomes.

The Document should present 'the Aboriginal Story' for the Lake Eyre Basin, and would contain:

1. The history of Aboriginal people and groups in the LEB
2. A current social and economic profile of Aboriginal groups and people in the LEB
3. A progressive summary of LEB Aboriginal engagement, and Aboriginal priorities for water and land issues in the LEB.

Such a document would provide both a context and a focal record for continuing Aboriginal involvement in the LEB Agreement, and would be a significant step forward under the Agreement.

## Lake Eyre Basin Model and ideas for an LEB Aboriginal Communications Strategy



**Figure 11** Model and ideas for a Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Communications Strategy

# Aboriginal priorities for Water and Land Issues

## Issues

Appendix 4 lists the issues raised during the group discussions sessions by Forum participants in their State and Territory groups. Figure 12 summarises the overall priorities recommended by the participants, both for water and land issues, and for Aboriginal involvement in the Lake Eyre Basin.

Issues were raised in relation to the following land uses:

- Mining
- Tourism
- Pastoralism
- Roads and infrastructure.

In discussing these land uses, two broadly different concerns emerged:

- the **impacts** of the above land uses on the environment of the Basin
- the **benefits** that are derived from the above land uses.

## Impacts

The range of natural resource impacts highlighted by the participants for the above land uses in the Basin included:

- erosion
- weed invasion
- feral animals
- grazing pressure
- water consumption.

These impacts are seen as widely affecting natural and cultural sites that are important to Aboriginal people. The protection of these sites was seen as a high priority, in particular the monitoring, protection and maintenance of both the quality and quantity of water.

## Benefits

Participants felt that the current distribution of benefits derived from the natural resources of the Basin is inequitable, given the traditional

Aboriginal connections to the country and natural resources that provide those benefits.

They felt that greater equity in the distribution of these outcomes and benefits is desired i.e. some share in those benefits for Aboriginal people in the Basin.

## Other issues

Other high priority issues discussed included:

- cultural access (e.g. ceremonies) .... all land access for Aboriginal people is 'cultural'
- continued monitoring of the health and well-being of country.

## Country and culture are integrated

The foundations of water and land priorities for Aboriginal people in the LEB are based on:

- respect and recognition of people; and
- well-being of country.

The inseparable integration of people, country, culture and health was a strong theme in discussions at the Forum. Access to country is seen as integrally linked to both the well-being of the country and the well-being of Aboriginal people.

**country = culture = people**

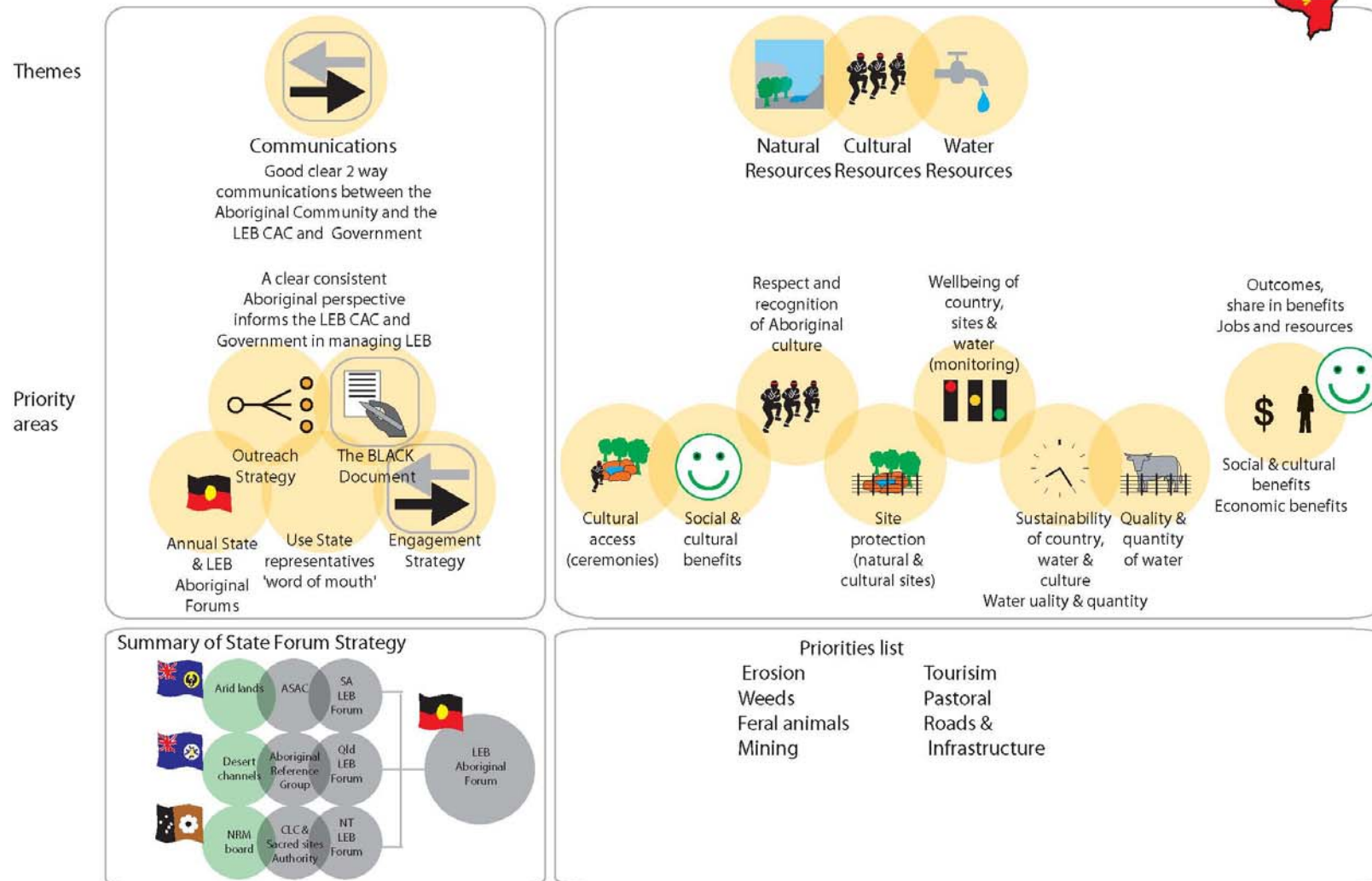
Sustainability is the same as saying:

**'healthy country – healthy people'**

This theme of integration and holistic health was a strong thread through the forum discussions.

Site-specific recommendations for Aboriginal protection of important places will emerge during future State-based LEB Aboriginal Forums, and as the LEB Aboriginal Document is compiled.

## Lake Eyre Basin Priorities from an Aboriginal Community perspective



**Figure 12** Lake Eyre Basin priorities from an Aboriginal Community perspective

## Strong Themes and Ideas

Figure 13 shows a number of themes and ideas that emerged clearly and repeatedly from the Forum discussions.

These themes and ideas provide sign-posts for the immediate future of Aboriginal involvement

in the LEB Agreement, and serve as a reminder check-list to keep LEB Aboriginal involvement focussed and on track.

## Summary of Recommendations

The key recommendations from the 2006 Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum can be summarised as follows.

1. that the **4 additional Aboriginal members** of the LEB CAC (approved by the Ministerial Forum in October 2005) be **recruited immediately**.
2. that **Basin-wide LEB Aboriginal Forums** be held **annually**
3. that **smaller LEB Aboriginal Forums** be held annually in **Queensland, South Australia** and the **Northern Territory**, prior to the annual Basin-wide LEB Aboriginal Forums, and in close conjunction with existing state and regional Indigenous processes.
4. that an **Aboriginal communications strategy** for the LEB should be developed and implemented in conjunction with the whole-of-LEB communications strategy.
5. That an **LEB Aboriginal document** be compiled, containing:
  - a. The history of Aboriginal people and groups in the LEB
  - b. A current social and economic profile of Aboriginal groups and people in the LEB
  - c. A progressive summary of LEB Aboriginal engagement, and Aboriginal priorities for water and land issues in the LEB.

[The annual State and Territory Aboriginal Forums followed by the annual LEB Aboriginal Forum, would be the primary and most effective component of the Outreach Strategy.]

Such a document would provide both a context and a focal record for continuing Aboriginal involvement in the LEB Agreement.

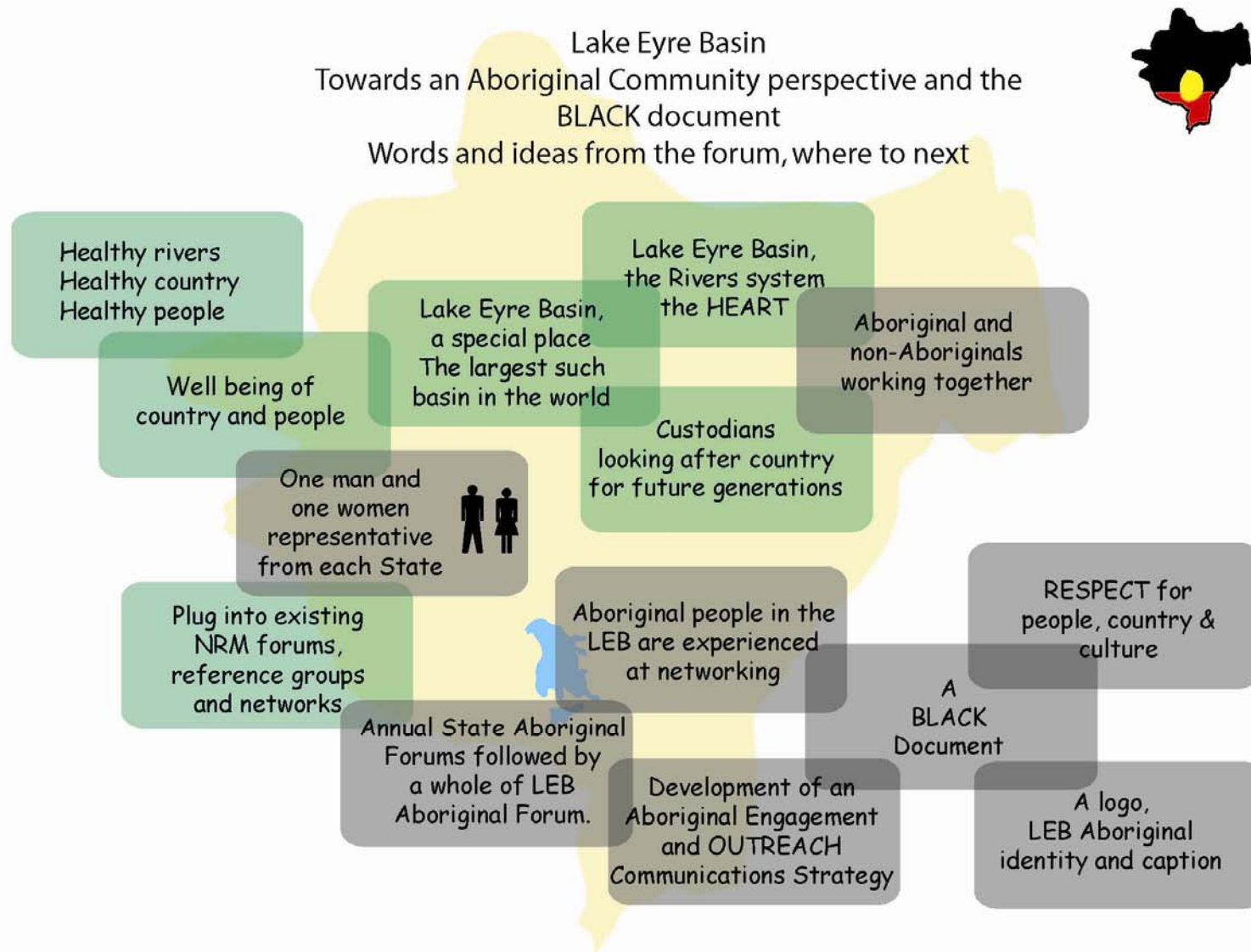


Figure 13 2006 Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum — Strong Themes and Ideas

# Next Steps — An Update

## ***Immediate priorities***

At the close of the 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum, the following immediate priorities were highlighted:

- Early circulation of Forum outcomes, proceedings, report etc
- Quick recruitment of 4 new CAC members
- Seek support for annual state/NT and LEB Aboriginal Forums
- 2006 review of LEB Agreement to address Aboriginal issues and involvement
- Build strong links with government programs and funding priorities
- Need both on-ground relevance and strong strategic/policy input.

## ***2006 Lake Eyre Basin Conference***

The Forum outcomes and recommendations described in this report were presented by George Cooley to the 2006 biennial Lake Eyre Basin Conference in Renmark, South Australia, on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

George's presentation was titled: 'Aboriginal Involvement in the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement — Second Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum'. It was part of the conference session called: 'Possibilities — Critical Considerations for the Future of the LEB'

Reg Dodd (from Marree) and Tom Jenkin (from Adelaide) also gave a presentation at the LEB Conference on 'Aboriginal Tourism and Land Management in the Lake Eyre Basin: Arabunna Aboriginal Tours'.

The Lake Eyre Basin Conference included several facilitated discussion sessions, in which attendees were asked to discuss what they saw as being important issues for the future of the Lake Eyre Basin, and for the LEB Agreement. Comments and recommendations arising from these discussions included:

- Replicating Reg Dodd's model [using tourism for cross-cultural communication, livelihood creation and passing on

knowledge to younger Indigenous people whilst providing them with work] (including encouragement of next generation) elsewhere.

- Clearer understanding of Aboriginal Cultural Act and other relevant legislation e.g. through Aboriginal document that came out of the Aboriginal Forum.
- Recognition of Aboriginal interests (cultural).
- Opportunity for much greater integration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and values.
- Ensure landholders and communities must be part of the LEB consultancy. Eg engage reps of Aboriginal/pastoral/mining, etc as 'co-consultants'.
- Clearer understanding of Aboriginal cultural issues, especially cultural site protection.

## ***Aboriginal membership on the Community Advisory Committee***

Invitations to nominate for Aboriginal positions on the Community Advisory Committee were circulated widely in the Basin by email and post on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2006. A copy of the call for nominations is enclosed as Appendix 5. Applications closed on 17th November and a total of sixteen expressions of interest were received. These have been referred to the participating States and Territory, and the four new members are expected to be selected and formally appointed early in 2007

## ***Recommendations to the LEB Ministerial Forum***

The above five key recommendations from the 2006 LEB Aboriginal Forum were passed on to the LEB Ministerial Forum during their annual discussions in early November 2006.

These recommendations will also be taken into consideration during the first five-year review of the LEB Agreement. The review commenced in November 2006 and is scheduled to be completed in April 2007.

