The NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 establishes the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) and Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs). The Act requires these bodies to:

- take action to protect the culture and heritage of Aboriginal persons in the council’s area, subject to any other law
- promote awareness in the community of the culture and heritage of Aboriginal persons in the council’s area.

Local Aboriginal Land Councils are responsible for enhancing, improving and protecting the best interests of all Aboriginal persons within the council’s area as well as any other Aboriginal people who may be members of the council. There are 121 LALCs covering most of New South Wales (see map overleaf).

Opportunities for LALCs to be involved in the Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements

LALCs can:

- assist a proponent to identify Aboriginal people who may have an interest in the proposed project area through step 4.1.2 of the Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010 (the consultation requirements).
- where the LALC has cultural knowledge relevant to determining the significance of Aboriginal objects and places in the proposed project area, register an interest to be involved in the consultation process through step 4.1.6 of the consultation requirements.

In the case where LALCs have not registered an interest in becoming involved in the consultation process through step 4.1.6 of the consultation requirements, LALCs with the necessary skills and experience may be commissioned by a proponent to provide any of the following services:

- administration, such as organising meetings and arranging venues, transport etc
- facilitating aspects of the consultation on behalf of the proponent, especially stage 2 – presentation of information about the proposed project
- assisting registered Aboriginal parties to contribute to the consultation process, e.g. assisting in writing submissions.