



Northern and Central Land Councils MEDIA RELEASE



NT Parks: victory for negotiation over litigation

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“I welcome the Chief Minister’s announcement today that her Government will negotiate a sensible solution to the legal uncertainty over the validity of more than 50 Territory parks and reserves,” the Director of the Central Land Council, David Ross, said today.

“We hope that the money that would otherwise be spent on litigation and adversarial high jinks can be put to much more constructive purposes.”

Northern Land Council Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu agreed, describing the announcement as “a big step in the right direction”.

“We have always said that the Government should sit down and talk with us about our involvement in parks and reserves rather than fighting us in the courts,” he said.

“This is a good opportunity for the whole Northern Territory – having Aboriginal culture recognised in national parks is good for tourism. And tourism is good for everyone. This means working together and cooperation – and that is the future I aspire to.”

“All these parks have enormous natural and cultural value which can now be fully acknowledged and promoted through the enhanced involvement of traditional owners.”

“Many Aboriginal people will be relieved that they will finally be able to have a role in caring for their important sites and protecting heritage for the future.”

Mr Ross said: “We will be working to ensure that Aboriginal people can participate in the management and promotion of Territory parks. This could be a key plank in new regional development strategies, including potential employment, training and enterprise development opportunities.”

“Aboriginal people are interested in the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. The parks system is an important aspect of the maintenance and protection of biodiversity.”