



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

Full Council backs development initiatives

18 November 2002

Three new mineral exploration licences, a buffalo harvesting contract and a safari hunting agreement are just some of the outcomes from the Northern Land Council's 83rd Full Council Meeting, which took place in Jabiru from 11 to 14 November.

The licences will open up a further 900 square kilometres of Aboriginal land for exploration by prominent mining companies De Beers Australia Exploration and Cameco Australia, adding to the 20 per cent of Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory's Top End already under exploration. There are now 66 exploration licences current in the NLC's region.

NLC Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said council members were keenly aware of the need to promote economic activity on Aboriginal-owned land in the Top End as a means of establishing economic independence for Aboriginal people.

"Too often we hear that Land Councils are standing in the way of economic development," Mr Yunupingu said. "The latest Full Council Meeting has demonstrated once again that, when presented with credible, environmentally sustainable development opportunities, Aboriginal traditional owners will take up the challenge."

"Business conditions across the Top End are improving and the NLC has positioned itself to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise. This Full Council has been fully briefed on a range of new infrastructure and mining developments coming close to fruition and we are negotiating with the proponents in a co-operative fashion – as we have always done."

"The wider community can most clearly see the benefits of this approach in high-profile projects such as the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link, Darwin's East Arm Port development and the urban expansion of Darwin."

"However, there are hundreds of other business arrangements in place across our region that have benefited from the full and proper consultation procedures overseen by the NLC, and which are transferring real skills and real employment opportunities to our people."