



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

NLC addresses HofR Standing Committee

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NLC Chairman, John Daly, has said that Aboriginal people will continue to reject Statehood in the Northern Territory until there are good faith negotiations with the NT Government regarding land rights, and education and housing outcomes in communities.

Speaking before the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in Darwin, Mr Daly said there is a fundamental need to engage Aboriginal people in future directions of the NT.

“Aboriginal people are hostile to the idea of the transfer of power, including the power to compulsorily acquire Aboriginal land, to the Territory. Our common experience tells us that the local Legislative Assembly does not act in a responsible or fair way when it comes to land rights, and is always tempted to spend in city marginal seats rather than in communities” Mr Daly said.

“The position of the Northern Land Council in relation to the Statehood question has remained unchanged since the Kalkaringi and Batchelor Statements in 1998.

These two policy documents have been incorporated into a single Aboriginal Constitutional Strategy, and forms the starting point for engagement with Aboriginal people on the question of Statehood in the Northern Territory,” Mr Daly said.

There are two general principles that appear in the pre-amble to the Strategy, which Aboriginal people believe are pertinent when considering the question of statehood:

One:

“That we will withhold our consent to the establishment of a new State until there are good faith negotiations between the Northern Territory Government and the freely chosen representatives of the Aboriginal peoples of the Northern Territory leading to a Constitution based upon equality, co-existence and mutual respect.

And two:

“That the Northern Territory Government must provide adequate resources and negotiate in good faith a realistic time table for such negotiations.”

“I hope governments will be smart when thinking about the long-term future of the north,” Mr Daly said. “Their decision making must include Aboriginal people.”