



Northern Land Council

MEDIA STATEMENT

Permits not about grog running

15 September 2008

Northern Land Council (NLC) Chairman, Wali Wunungmurra, today said that current media reports seeking to associate grog running into Aboriginal communities with the permit system are misplaced.

“It is important to distinguish these two issues. Grog running is not a permits issue – it is a policing issue. The permit system is about Aboriginal people controlling their own communities and destinies,” Mr Wunungmurra said.

“Permits are about land ownership and controlling access of people onto Aboriginal land and resources on that land. They are about our cultural survival – the right of Aboriginal people to control our own futures.”

Mr Wunungmurra said that the real issues regarding alcohol abuse in many Aboriginal communities are the under-funding of local and regional alcohol treatment services and the lack of comprehensive alcohol management plans and policing.

“In relation to the media, the greatest restriction on media access to Aboriginal land has been the historic disinterest and lack of appropriate budgeting for stories on Aboriginal land by media outlets themselves.

“Since the federal intervention in June 2007 the NLC has processed more than 240 media permit applications. Prior to this the number of media permits processed has varied from 28 in 2002/03 to 56 in 2005/06 and 32 in 2006/07.

“Aboriginal land is private property and just like every other Australian, Aboriginal people have the right to permit who comes onto their land,” Mr Wunungmurra concluded.

The Northern Land Council Chairman, CEO and Council Executives are travelling to Canberra today to discuss the reinstatement of the permit system in Indigenous communities with a variety of Senators and other stakeholders.

Media Contact: Ursula Raymond – 0438 854 049 or 8920 5114.

Justin O’Brien – 0427 008 765 during Canberra visit (16/09/08).