



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

National Congress of Australia's First Peoples

4 May 2010

Northern Land Council (NLC) Chief Executive Mr Kim Hill says the re-creation of a national Indigenous representative body is an important step in improving the lives of Aboriginal peoples in the Northern Territory.

Members of the national executive and ethics council of the new National Congress of Australia's First Peoples were announced yesterday, giving Australia's Indigenous peoples a united voice for the first time since the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission was disbanded by the former Howard government in 2005.

"For Indigenous peoples to negotiate successful outcomes with government, we need a united voice," Mr Hill said.

"I congratulate the Federal government for following through on its election promise to establish a national Indigenous representative body and now look forward to seeing the outcomes of the first meeting of the Congress and its 120 delegates."

Mr Hill also congratulated Territorians Tom Calma and Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun, who will both serve as members of Congress's ethics council.

"Tom Calma has been involved in Indigenous affairs, at all levels, for more than 35 years, and, having recently retired from the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, he's certainly got the runs on the board to take on a role like this," he said.

"As the long-serving principal at Yirrkala School in north-east Arnhem Land Ms Ngurruwutthun was devoted to improving education outcomes for remote Indigenous students and I'm confident she'll work to ensure the Northern Territory has a robust voice on issues of local and national importance."