



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Northern Land Council supports PM's call for an end to voter suppression in the NT

8 June 2022

The Northern Land Council endorses Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's call for a comprehensive review of the recent Federal election in the Northern Territory seat of Lingiari.

In the lead up to the 2022 election, the NLC consistently worked for 'a fair go' for Aboriginal voters in the NT.

The NLC supported the complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2021 by two senior men from Arnhem Land who claimed the Australian Electoral Commission's (the AEC) failure to implement direct or automatic enrolment in remote Aboriginal communities was discriminatory and acted to effectively suppress Aboriginal voters.

At the time NLC Chair Samuel Bush-Blanasi said: "All our constituents in the NLC area know that the AEC has been failing them for years. This situation is unacceptable and needs to be fixed."

Later in 2021 the NLC campaigned against the proposal to introduce so-called "Voter ID" legislation. This could have been effective in suppressing the vote in remote Aboriginal communities in the NT.

In early 2022 the NLC produced a number of short films targeted at Aboriginal communities across the NT promoting enrolment to vote and voting in the Federal election.

The recent release of the disappointing voter participation figures in the seat of Lingiari confirms the NLC's deep concern about voter suppression in remote Aboriginal communities.

Mr Bush-Blanasi said: "This can never be allowed to happen again – not at the NT election in August 2024 or the next Federal election due in 2025.

"The time to fix these problems is now. We look forward to working with all parties – particularly the AEC and the NT Electoral Commission – to end voter suppression in the NT."

"We will be preparing a submission to the next election review by the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters," said Mr Bush-Blanasi.

"Hopefully, these issues will be resolved before that time. We endorse Prime Minister Albanese's wise words, 'every Australian no matter where they live, no matter who they are, has an equal right to be on the roll and equal right to vote'."

NLC media contact: Leah McLennan 0427 031 382