



**NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL**

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

8 March 2018

Audit Committee exonerates NLC Executive Council over conflict of interest claims

The NLC interim CEO, Jak Ah Kit, today welcomed the NLC Audit Committee's recognition that Executive Council members properly handled concerns about conflicts of interest.

"I thank the Audit Committee for confirming that the NLC Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Executive Council members, properly and appropriately handled perceptions of a conflict of interest, in relation to leasing of the NLC Darwin office, and mustering and safari hunting agreements," Mr Ah Kit said.

"We always knew there was never any conflict of interest, and the Full Council is pleased that that issue has been put to bed."

Mr Ah Kit also welcomed today's agreement with the Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator Nigel Scullion, that there would be a collaborative review by an external financial consultant of the Aboriginal Investment Group (AIG) in collaboration with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the NLC Audit Committee.

"This is a positive outcome which sets AIG up for the future, and I thank Senator Scullion for his contribution", Mr Ah Kit said.

"The review will result in improved operations and reporting, and consideration of options for structural reform."

"The NLC and AIG are not afraid of change", Mr Ah Kit said.

"This is an important opportunity for AIG to deliver more practical outcomes to improve the lives of Aboriginal people in remote communities, such as the Barunga laundry project announced last week."

A copy of today's resolution by the NLC Full Council is attached.

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RESOLUTION

8 MARCH 2019

That the Full Council of the Northern Land Council (NLC):

1. Thanks the former CEO, Joe Morrison, for his years of service to the NLC and traditional owners.
2. Welcomes the opportunity provided by the Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator Nigel Scullion, to meet and discuss matters of common interest.
3. Notes that on 24 October 2018 the Aboriginal Investment Group (AIG) offered to resolve the question of rent for the Darwin office by AIG and the NLC agreeing to that the question be referred to binding arbitration, and instructs the interim CEO as a matter of urgency to appropriately and promptly resolve the issue of rent.
4. Notes that the Audit Committee confirmed today that Executive Council members properly and appropriately handled perceptions of a conflict of interest in relation to leasing of the NLC Darwin office due to being AIG directors.
5. Notes that the Audit Committee confirmed today that the NLC Chairman and Deputy Chairman properly and appropriately handled perceptions of a conflict of interest due to having a traditional interest in mustering and safari hunting agreements.
6. Notes AIG advice that its financial position is stable and secure.
7. Instructs the interim CEO in consultation with the Chair of the Audit Committee and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to engage an external financial consultant with funds provided by the Indigenous Affairs Minister to prepare a report assessing AIG's financial position, options for improved governance and reporting arrangements, and any potential exposure of the NLC for consideration by the Audit Committee and the Full Council.

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