



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

NLC SUPPORTS KAKADU TRADITIONAL OWNERS & CALLS FOR REVIEW OF PARKS MANAGEMENT

8 July 2020

The relationship between senior management and traditional owners at Kakadu national park requires urgent action to be resolved.

NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour yesterday wrote to Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley urging her to act decisively on the concerns of traditional owners of Kakadu as expressed in recent days on national media.

“This situation at Kakadu has been going on for too long. The NLC, which has clear statutory roles and responsibilities under both the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* and the Kakadu park lease, will heed the distress calls from traditional owners for our assistance and advice,” said Ms Scrymgour.

“The NLC has a real obligation to act, not only because of the resolutions last week by the Kakadu Board of Management, but also because we’ve been receiving serious complaints from traditional owners about mismanagement of the park in recent years. We welcome the news overnight that Minister Ley wants to meet with the Kakadu Board of Management soon to resolve these matters as long overdue. Attempts by the NLC to resolve these issues have been protracted, frustrating and difficult. We can’t let this go on any longer.”

Chairman of the NLC, Samuel Bush-Blanasi said the situation for traditional owners, residents, park staff and the tourism industry at Kakadu was “untenable” and that the NLC wanted to help find a constructive resolution that works for the traditional owners and residents, park users and staff and the tourism industry.

“Traditional owners have asked that the NLC convene a meeting ‘on-country’ so that NLC staff, Bininj/Mungguy rangers at Kakadu, senior traditional owners and the Kakadu Board of Management can sit down and talk these things through and, most importantly, chart a new way forward,” said Mr Bush-Blanasi.

Mr Bush-Blanasi continued, “There are very good reasons why Kakadu is a World Heritage area and we’ve got to reset the joint management arrangements because they clearly aren’t working with the management arrangements at Kakadu right now.

“That’s why we told Minister Ley that a root-and-branch review of the recent management of Kakadu has to be undertaken. That review must be done by people completely independent of Parks Australia who understand not only the principles, but the practice of joint management on Aboriginal land with Aboriginal people.”

ENDS

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