

Northern Land Council welcomes recognition of native title rights to two Top End pastoral leases

15 September 2020

The Northern Land Council congratulates native title holders of two Top End pastoral leases for their hard work resulting in the long-overdue recognition of their native title rights to country in an emotional on-country ceremony last week.

COVID-19 restrictions prevented Justice White of the Federal Court being on-country with native title holders at the Minyerri (Hodgson Downs) community last week when he handed down native title consent determinations in relation to the Nutwood Downs and Hodgson River pastoral leases.

The consent determinations include recognition of native title holders' rights to take resources from their country and use them for any purpose, including commercial purposes.

NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour noted the importance of those rights. "It means there is recognition that native title holders had a functional economy at the time that this country was taken from them. It is long-overdue but it gives us all some small comfort to see that the Courts are finally recognising what Aboriginal people always knew - that there was a customary economy in place and that is being recognised in a modern context," said Ms Scrymgour.

The NLC congratulates the native title holders – the *Murungun Yunulalda, Budal Lirijal, Mambali Amaling-Gan, Murungun Igalumba and the Mambali Lajarirr* (for the Hodgson River pastoral lease) and the *Mambali Amaling-Gan, Murungun Igalumba, Gyal Bardi Bardi, Dumnyun-Ngatanyana, Murungun Milgawirri and Budal Yuwaran* groups (for the Nutwood Downs pastoral lease).

The NLC acknowledges the leadership of elders, past and present, who successfully fought for recognition of their families' traditional connection to country.

In an emotional address to the ceremony at Minyerri, Christine Farrar spoke on behalf of her father, Barney Ellaga and his siblings (now all sadly deceased), and spoke of the pride she felt to represent those countless generations that had gone before. "I stand here today representing my fathers for our land. My fathers would be proud. My family and I are proud," she said.

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Attached photographs & captions

1 – Christine Farrar, on behalf of the *Mambali Amaling-Gan, Murungun Igalumba, Guyal Bardi Bardi, Dumnyun-Ngatanyana, Murungun Milgawirri* and *Budal Yuwaran* groups (for the Nutwood Downs pastoral lease)

2 -Pearl Hodgson, , Senior Mingirringgi, Mambali Amaling-gan group, Hodgson River and Nutwood Downs pastoral leases.

3 – Group photograph, left to right:

Back row: Bradley Farrar (Nutwood Downs); Esau Hodgson (Hodgson River/Nutwood Downs); Stephen August (Nutwood Downs); David ‘*Bushman*’ Farrar (Nutwood Downs); Levon Farrell, Elena Zola, NLC Native Title Lawyer; Christine Farrar (Nutwood Downs/Hodgson River); Lena Watson (Hodgson River/Nutwood Downs); Esther Wilfred (Hodgson River).

Front Row: Mavis Limmen (Nutwood Downs); Julie Millar/Limmen (Nutwood Downs); May Fulton (Nutwood Downs/Hodgson River); Evelyn Fulton (Nutwood Downs/Hodgson River; Eunice Woods (Hodgson River); Pearl Hodgson (Nutwood Downs/Hodgson River); and May August (Nutwood Downs).