



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

NLC welcomes amendment to Land Rights Act

26 November 2018

The Northern Land Council welcomes the amendment to the Land Rights Act passed through the Senate this evening.

The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2017 allows areas in the Kakadu region to be granted as Aboriginal land. The Bill also provides for the leaseback of the Kakadu Land to the Director of National Parks.

NLC CEO Mr Joe Morrison said: “Kakadu is Bininj/Mungguy land of immense cultural and economic importance to its Traditional Owners. A long overdue measure of justice is finally being provided by this Bill.”

The Senate approval is a final step towards the resolution of four land claims: Ngombur, Alligator Rivers Area III (Gimbat and Goodparla), Kakadu (Jim Jim) Area and the Kakadu Region Repeat Claim. Some of the claims date back to 1978.

“This means that some 39 years after the first stage of Kakadu National Park was declared (5 April 1979) the whole of the Park will finally become Aboriginal land and be jointly managed as originally envisaged,” Mr Morrison said.

“The Park is a World Heritage area under the World Heritage Convention, recognised as parts of Australia’s National Heritage and includes wetlands of international importance under the RAMSAR convention.”

The Bill also adds areas in the town of Urapunga that are subject to the Township of Urapunga Indigenous Land Use Agreement (Urapunga Land) to the schedule of Aboriginal land. The township of Urapunga was created in 1885. Lots in the town were not sold and the town failed to develop. Surrounding areas have been recognised as Aboriginal land. The town was the subject of a native title determination in 2001 and an agreement was reached in 2005 with the Northern Territory Government to provide for land within the town to become Aboriginal land. In exchange, security of tenure was provided to a local business.

The Bill also settles long standing claims over a stock route and bore reserves on Anthony Lagoon Station (NT Portion 5010) which were unalienated Crown land by the recognition of an area of land for a community living area within the boundaries of the pastoral lease. This Bill provides secure tenure for Traditional Owners over a small portion of their country and is by agreement with the pastoralist and the NTG.

The Bill must now be agreed to by the House of Representatives before it is presented to the Governor-General for assent.

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