



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

MINISTER'S EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 4 March 2019

The interim NLC CEO, Dr Jak Ah Kit, today slammed the Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator Nigel Scullion, for dismissing the NLC's decision to also meet on Thursday 7 March 2019 (the day prior to the Minister's extraordinary Full Council meeting on 8 March 2019) to discuss an Audit Committee report and a written opinion by Raelene Webb QC as "political games".

Senator Scullion's comments were reported by the ABC on Saturday 2 March 2019.

"The Full Council always has a preliminary meeting during the days prior to a Full Council meeting, especially when important or complex issues are being considered", Dr Ah Kit said.

"The Full Council is entitled to meet in any way that it sees fit, and it is not the Minister's role to dictate how that occurs."

Dr Ah Kit confirmed that the Full Council will consider both the report dated 12 February 2019, and Ms Webb's opinion dated 19 February 2019, on both days.

"This will ensure there is a level playing field, and will fulfil Minister Scullion's expressed wish that Full Council members are fully informed – and can make their own decision", Dr Ah Kit said.

"Ms Webb's opinion is scathing about both the Audit Committee report, including the "exceedingly and unrealistically short" timeline set by Senator Scullion."

"A copy of both documents have now been sent to Full Council members", Dr Ah Kit said.

Senator Scullion originally requested in a hand delivered letter on 14 December 2018 that the Audit Committee report five days later on 21 December 2018. On 20 December 2018 Senator Scullion extended the deadline to 18 January 2019, only to find – unsurprisingly – that the Audit Committee Chairman was overseas on Christmas leave and could not meet that date. On 11 January 2019 Senator Scullion was finally told by his department about the Christmas leave, and extended time to 18 February 2019 – which again was unreasonably short.

"Senator Scullion's various deadlines were a farce", Dr Ah Kit said. "Senator Scullion made it impossible for the Audit Committee to properly perform its function, and needs to be publicly held to account for his Ministerial irresponsibility in doing so", Dr Ah Kit said.