



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

## **‘Tears of joy for the old people’: native title holders celebrate long overdue recognition of rights in country**

29 October 2020

More than 150 native title holders and their guests gathered at Old Banka Banka Homestead on Wednesday 28 October 2020 for a native title Consent Determination over four pastoral leases in the north Barkly region.

After nearly 20 years of seeking recognition of their rights and interests, the Northern Land Council (the NLC) congratulates the native title holders of the Banka Banka (East and West), Helen Springs and Powell Creek pastoral leases whose rights and interests in that land were recognised at proceedings conducted by Justice White of the Federal Court of Australia. The native title claimants\* were represented by the NLC.

It is important to note that among the rights recognised by the court was the right to “access and take resources for any purpose” i.e. including commercial purposes, and not limited to personal or domestic purposes. This right was first recognised in the Northern Territory in the town of Borroloola in August 2016.

Quote attributable to Justice White:

“There are very few, if any, occasions when the court makes a determination of native title, which have [the] wide ranging effects which today’s determinations are going to have. The court is very pleased to [sit on country] and thanks you for your invitation.”

Quote attributable to native title holder Dick Foster:

“It was a long time you know, waiting to get our native title back. It’s really important to make sure that the sacred sites of this country are protected. I’m really pleased that we got this country back.”

Quote attributable to native title holder Mary Noonan:

“This ceremony today links up our ancestors, the current generation and future generations. We’ll remember this day in history. I’ve got tears in my eyes. I just cry because some of my old people they didn’t live to see this, the recognition today is just amazing.”

Quote attributable to native title holder David Hughes:

“I’m really happy and proud of myself and my family that I got the paper. But really that paper that judge gave us today, that’s just on the top - that country is in our heart.”

Quote attributable to native title holder Josephine Napangardi Grant:

“I’m proud that each of the 17 estate groups got recognised today and it’s really important to have it on country. Today makes me feel really good and I’d like to say thanks to everybody, the court, the NLC and all the people who turned up for this native title ceremony today.”

Quote attributable to NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi:

“The ceremony at Banka Banka Homestead represents a fulfilment of the wishes of native title holders to receive their long overdue recognition of interests in country, which they know had never been taken away.”

Quote attributable to NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour:

“The NLC thanks its staff, all of the native title holders and the Federal Court for helping to make this important day one that will stay in the memory of native title holders and will be passed down to future generations.”

Captions for photos:

Helen Springs pastoral lease Native Title Holder Dick Foster and Federal Court Justice Richard White at the Banka Banka Consent Determination hearing, Old Banka Banka Homestead, 28 October 2020.

Powell Creek pastoral lease Native Title Holder Mary Noonan and Federal Court Justice Richard White at the Banka Banka Consent Determination hearing, Old Banka Banka Homestead, 28 October 2020.

Powell Creek pastoral lease Native Title Holders at the Banka Banka Consent Determination hearing, Old Banka Banka Homestead, 28 October 2020.

\*The native title holders for the Powell Creek Pastoral Lease are held respectively by the members of the following estate groups: the Bamayu (Wurwanawanji-Yarrayarra) estate group; the Bamayu (Titirku) estate group; the Marlinja estate group; the Ngapa Jangirulu estate group; the Walanypirri estate group; and the Wilyuku estate group.

\*The native title holders for the Helen Springs Pastoral Lease are held respectively by the members of the following estate groups: the Kanturrrpa estate group; the Ngapa estate group; the Pirrtangu estate group; the Walanyja estate group; the Walanypirri estate group; the Warranangku estate group; and the Wirntiku estate group.

\*The native title holders for the Banka Banka East Pastoral Lease are held respectively by the members of the following estate groups: the Jalajirrrpa; the Kunapa estate group; and Pirrtangu.

\*The native title holders for the Banka Banka West Pastoral Lease are held respectively by the members of the following estate groups: the Kanturrrpa estate group; the Marntikara estate group; the Kunapa estate group; the Kangawarla estate group; the Ngarrka estate group; and the Pirrtangu estate group.

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