



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

'It's always been in our hearts' – an emotional day at Elliott for native title holders for Buchanan Downs and Hidden Valley pastoral leases

30 October 2020

The Northern Land Council congratulates the native title holders of two Barkly Region pastoral leases for their hard work resulting in the long-overdue recognition of their native title rights to country in an historic ceremony at the Northern Territory town of Elliott yesterday.

Justice White of the Federal Court of Australia joined native title holders and their families on Thursday to hand down native title consent determinations in relation to the Buchanan Downs and Hidden Valley pastoral leases.

These determinations include recognition of native title holders' rights to take resources from their country and use them for any purpose, including commercial purposes. This right was first recognised in the town of Borroloola in August 2016.

NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour noted the importance of those rights. "What this means is recognition that native title holders had a functional economy – based on traditional rights and responsibilities at the time that this country was settled. It is important that the Court is recognising what Aboriginal people have always known - that there was a customary economy in place, which is being recognised in contemporary times."

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi acknowledged the hard work by NLC staff and the close cooperation with the Federal Court, the NT government and pastoral lease-holders and particularly congratulated the native title holders and their estate groups – the *Narrwan* and *Badpa* estate groups for the Hidden Valley pastoral lease and the *Narrwan*, *Ngayirrimi* and *Kinbinginggu* estate groups for the Buchanan Downs pastoral lease.

Mr Bush-Blanasi said: "The leadership and efforts of native title holders - past and present – needs to be acknowledged by us all. After many years of hard work to win recognition for native title holders across the Top End pastoral lands we've got a good idea of the native title jigsaw puzzle - we've put together more than 70 pieces of that puzzle so far and we've got a fair few more to go yet."

Quote attributable to native title holder and applicant Raymond Dimakarra Dixon:

“It is a special day for us to get our native title back for our country. We got this title for Hidden Valley and Buchanan Downs and we are so connected to it. It makes us proud of who we are. It’s been a long journey for my people and that country has always been in our hearts and we’re going to cherish it and pass it on to the next generations.”

Quote attributable to native title holder and applicant Jeremy Jackson:

“To actually get the title is pretty emotional. It’s also sad because a lot of our old people passed away and they gave us that knowledge, but I’m really proud and happy to get this paper in my hands. We’ve got sacred sites and a lot of dreaming stories in that Buchanan Downs and Hidden Valley area. Our younger generation will carry on. This is really important to us because we won’t be here forever.”

NLC contact: Leah McLennan 0427 031 382

Attached photographs & captions

- 1 – Group photo of members of the *Badpa, Narrwan, Ngayirri* and *Kinbingingu* estate groups for the Hidden Valley & Buchanan Downs pastoral leases at Elliott, NT.
- 2 – Native title holder Raymond Dixon with Justice White of the Federal Court of Australia.
- 3 – Native title holder Claudette Albert with Justice White of the Federal Court of Australia.
- 4 - Native title holder Jeremy Jackson with Justice White of the Federal Court of Australia.