



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Almost four decades on: ‘a bittersweet and long-overdue’ handback of Gagaguwaja Aboriginal Land Trust

26 November 2020

Traditional Aboriginal owners of land in the Northern Territory’s remote Barkly Tablelands welcomed the gesture by the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Honourable Ken Wyatt AM MP, who has delivered to them the Deeds of Title to the Gagaguwaja Aboriginal Land Trust.

Inalienable title to the 6km² of land comprising the Gagaguwaja Aboriginal Land Trust was handed back to traditional owners and their families at an emotional ceremony at Lake Mary Ann, north of Tennant Creek, earlier today 26 November 2020.

NLC General Manager, Executive Services Trish Rigby congratulated traditional owners on the long-overdue return of their country following the settlement of the Anthony Lagoon Area Land Claim (No. 74).

Northern Land Council Chairperson, Samuel Bush-Blanasi said: “This is a bitter-sweet and long overdue day, when the Wampaya people and clan groups associated with country right across the Barkly Tablelands country get a small parcel of their traditional lands back as Aboriginal Land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.”

Mr Bush-Blanasi continued: “It is a bitter day because the land won back is so small. But it is a sweet day because any day the Northern Land Council can help get land back is a good day.”

NLC member and cultural advisor Jack Green told the ceremony: “The Anthony Lagoon Area Land Claim was lodged in 1983 under the Land Rights Act. Thirty-seven years to get this land back was way too long.

“Too many of our old people who struggled and strived to get that land back have passed away. We have to honour their lives and their fight for their land. They kept our laws, our language and our lives strong. Without them we’d have nothing,” said Mr Green.

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