



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Land Rights Act key to cultural integrity for the Mirarr traditional owners of Jabiru

13 May 2020

The Chairman of the Northern Land Council, Mr Samuel Bush-Blanasi and Chief Executive Ms Marion Scrymgour, today welcomed the introduction of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment (Jabiru) Bill 2020* into the Federal Parliament by the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon. Ken Wyatt MP.

The Bill provides for the return of the Jabiru township to Aboriginal control through a township lease that will allow for the transition of the township from a mining town to a regional service centre and tourism hub that will drive economic activity throughout the west Arnhem region.

The Mirarr people have been planning for the shutdown of the nearby Ranger uranium mine in 2021 for many years and have developed a comprehensive masterplan that will allow for the transformation from an economy focussed on mining and ancillary services to one based on the social, cultural and natural resource wealth of the region.

NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour welcomed the introduction of the Bill. “On the passage of this Bill later in the year, these amendments to the Land Rights Act will return land to the control of the Mirarr traditional owners and allow for a long-term township lease of the town area that will provide future opportunities and economic and social certainty for businesses and residents at Jabiru,” she said.

“I am pleased that both the Federal and Territory governments have made substantial financial commitments to the Jabiru revitalisation plan. It is important to recognise the collaboration between the NT government and the traditional owners to develop Jabiru Kabolkmakmen Ltd, a company that will work closely with the NLC, other local agencies and ERA, the operator of the Ranger mine, to set the economic future of the township,” she said.

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi praised the commitment of the Mirarr traditional owners. “The Mirarr people have put up with uranium mining on their country for too long. It is a tribute to their strong cultural ties to country that they will now have a bright future for themselves, their kids and grandkids – not through mining on their land but by relying on their culture and tradition,” he said.

“This Bill proves the continuing importance of the Land Rights Act as a key to economic development and for cultural maintenance and integrity right across the Northern Territory. We look forward to joining the Mirarr mob for a celebration on country when their land is returned to them soon.”

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