



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

**Federal Court finding welcomed**  
***Yunupingu on behalf of the Gumatj Clan or***  
***Estate Group v Commonwealth***

**Tuesday 23 May 2023**

Quotes attributable to Northern Land Council's Chair, Dr Samuel Bush-Blanasi:

The Northern Land Council welcomes the decision of the Full Court of the Federal Court, paving the way for the Yolŋu native title case and associated compensation claim to be heard.

Yesterday's decision, subject to appeal, is a significant procedural step.

It confirmed a range of acts historically undertaken on Yolgnu land did not extinguish native title rights on the Gove Peninsula.

It is also heartening to see the Full Federal Court uphold the decision in *Wurridjal v Commonwealth (2009)* that property in the Northern Territory, including First Nation interests in land, cannot be compulsory acquired without compensation.

This may have significant ongoing implications for Traditional Owners and native title holders.

The finding is one step on what could be a long path to just compensation for the bauxite mining on Yolŋu land.

As we mourn the loss of Yunupingu who served as our Chair for almost a quarter of a century, the decision is also a poignant reminder of his foresight, tenacity and ongoing legacy.

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\*The Northern Land Council is celebrating 50 years since the 1973 meeting of Traditional Owners who constituted the NLC's inaugural Full Council.

In June 2023, the four land councils of the Northern Territory will meet in Barunga on the 35th anniversary of the Barunga Statement.