



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

## Repairing nature means Caring for Country

29 March 2023

The Chair of the Northern Land Council, Dr Samuel Bush-Blanasi, today welcomed the introduction of legislation into the Commonwealth Parliament to establish a ‘nature repair’ market.

The Nature Repair Market Bill 2023 will enable Traditional Owners and other landholders, who protect, manage or restore country, to obtain ‘biodiversity’ certificates which can then be sold.

“Aboriginal people have been caring for Country for tens of thousands of years. But so much damage has been done in the last two-hundred and fifty years. This new law will help Traditional Owners fix it,” Dr Bush-Blanasi said.

The nature repair market will operate in parallel with the existing carbon market. Many types of project will be possible under the scheme such as:

1. improving or restoring existing native vegetation by activities such as fencing or weeding
2. restoring local species to a previously cleared area
3. protecting rare grasslands that provide habitat for an endangered species.

“Traditional Owners know their Country. Indigenous Rangers have also played a key role in using traditional knowledge to manage Country through land and sea management across the Territory. This new market is good news for Traditional Owners and Rangers,” Dr Bush-Blanasi said.

NLC CEO Mr Joe Martin-Jard highlighted the progressive role that Traditional Owners have played through their application of sustainable practices, “Traditional Owners have proven to be leaders in developing market-based initiatives such as the Carbon Farming Initiative.

“Indigenous-owned and managed savanna fire management was pioneered in the NT, and is now recognised globally, contributing significantly to Australia’s emissions reduction target,” Mr Martin-Jard said.

The Northern Land Council made a submission on the exposure draft bill which is available online at the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

“With around half of the Northern Territory’s land mass and 85% of its coastline owned by Aboriginal people under freehold title, and most of the remainder

subject to native title, Aboriginal people in the NT will play a key role in the provision of nature repair credits,” Mr Martin-Jard said.

A key feature of the new legislation is ensuring the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners for projects on Aboriginal freehold or native title land.

“Making sure Traditional Owners agree to projects on Aboriginal land goes without saying. I want to see Aboriginal projects on Aboriginal land being run by Aboriginal people. This is our future,” Dr Bush-Blanasi said.

To get the new market off the ground, it will be important to develop and test methods which set out the rules for different types of projects.

Mr Martin-Jard noted that the NLC region has a vast array of habitats representative of northern Australia which face major threats such as feral animals, weeds and saltwater intrusion into the vast wetland ecosystems.

“Without the incentives and interventions available through a nature repair market, there is a high risk these once pristine ecosystems will be further degraded and lost forever. We will be working hard to promote a suitable area in the NLC region for a potential pilot site and method development for the Nature Repair Market.” Mr Martin-Jard said.

**END**