



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

## The NLC welcomes the Nature Repair Market Bill and new ‘water trigger’ changes

5 December 2023

The Northern Land Council (NLC) welcomes the successful passing of the Nature Repair Market Bill through the Senate.

With around half of the Northern Territory’s land mass and 85 per cent of its coastline owned by Aboriginal peoples under freehold title, and most of the remainder subject to native title, Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are positioned to be major providers of nature repair projects.

The CEO of the NLC Mr Joe Martin-Jard said, “This Bill will be a game changer for Aboriginal people across Northern Australia. There are limited economic opportunities across the remote communities and homelands in the Northern Territory and a nature repair market will give Traditional Owners in the NLC region new ways to activate the opportunities inherent in their Land Rights”.

The NLC region has many habitats facing major threats from feral animals, weeds, and saltwater intrusion in wetland ecosystems. Without proper management and investment, they face the risk of degradation and permanent loss.

The nature repair market will make it easier for Traditional Owners to attract the investments necessary to allow them to deliver high integrity projects to address these threats.

“This legislation will empower local communities to take on new economic opportunities while ensuring a long-lasting positive impact on our environment. Creating new environmental markets will give Traditional Owners in the Northern Territory more choice in the economic opportunities they can pursue,” said Martin-Jard.

The NLC will support Traditional Owners to lead the way in the new market, in partnership with business, philanthropists and other stakeholders that are willing to invest in the protection and restoration of country.

The NLC also welcomes the passing of the changes to the ‘water trigger’ of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*, which ensures that new unconventional gas projects will be assessed for their impact on water resources.

The existing water trigger requires a person proposing a coal seam gas or large coal mining developments that have a significant impact on water resources to refer proposals to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water for assessment and approval under the *EPBC Act*. The new amendment extends this requirement for all new unconventional gas extraction.

Water is a vital resource for NLC constituents – for cultural, domestic and industry needs. Our membership recognises the importance of this resource and the need to have appropriate oversight and protection of its use. The water trigger strengthens these protections.

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