



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Arnhem Land water supply improvements a positive step

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The NLC welcomes the Federal and Northern Territory governments' joint commitment to important water infrastructure upgrades in Maningrida, Numbulwar, Yirrkala, and Gunyangara.

Enhancing water infrastructure in Aboriginal communities is vital to addressing extreme water insecurity, including ensuring safe drinking water for growing remote population centres. Investment also aids in reducing water losses to improve community liveability, sustainability and climate resilience.

Yesterday's water infrastructure upgrades announcement by the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek aligns with previous commitments to improve essential services across Australia.

The Northern Land Council (NLC), together with the other Land Councils, has long emphasised how crucial it is that Aboriginal people be consulted in setting the priorities of essential services upgrades in their communities.

A number of water projects in the NLC's region will receive funding. In Arnhem Land, \$21 million has been allocated to local water infrastructure upgrades in Maningrida; \$8.9 million for the upgrade of the water pipeline in Yirrkala including a water infrastructure assessment in Gunyangara; and \$3.2 million for planning and investigation work to identify new water supplies in Numbulwar.

Despite this progress, the NLC maintains that Closing the Gap -- with regards to reaching parity in essential services (9B) -- is best directed by Aboriginal people. To meet these targets, more substantial investments totalling into the hundreds-of-millions are required.

Quotes attributable to Matthew Ryan, Chair of the NLC

- This is a positive step; the upgrades in Maningrida and Yirrkala as well as ground work in Gunyangara and Numbulwar are urgently needed.

- There is still a long way to go to ensuring Aboriginal people have access to the same standards of essential services that non-Aboriginal people have in this country.
- We've had enough of a top-down approach. The government needs to listen to Aboriginal communities if it wants to improve local water, power, and sewerage services.
- The NLC is ready to work with the Federal and Territory governments on making equality a reality.