



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Northern Land Council elects new Chair

11 March 2024

The Full Council of the Northern Land Council (NLC) elected Matthew Ryan as its new Chair in Katherine today.

Elected by the Council of 83 members, Matthew Ryan garnered the support of his fellow councillors from across the NLC's seven regions. Mr Ryan will lead the NLC as Chair until December 2025, when Aboriginal communities from across the Top End will once again appoint representatives to the Council.

Of Barabarra, Wurrpann, and Gurindiji descent, Mr Ryan resides in Maningrida. He was first elected to the NLC in 2004 and has been serving his second non-consecutive term as NLC Executive Council member (for the West Arnhem region) since 2022.

In his acceptance address, Mr Ryan first paid tribute to the late Chair, Dr Bush-Blanasi, who led the NLC for four terms before his passing in November 2023, and vowed to carry on his legacy. Mr Ryan also highlighted the need for the organisation to continue to deliver results for constituents and emphasised an inclusive open-door approach for all members across the NLC's regions.

Through the Council and his various community leadership roles Mr Ryan has called for improvements to education, telecommunications, and health services. A staunch advocate for constitutional recognition, he has also consistently campaigned for greater electoral participation.

Mr Ryan previously worked as an Aboriginal Community Police Officer in the Northern Territory Police Force and as a Djelk Community Ranger with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC). He was elected

to the board of BAC before serving as Chairperson for two terms. He is a long-serving councillor for the West Arnhem Regional Council and is currently serving his second term as Council Mayor. He also holds positions on the boards of the BAC, Homelands School Company, and Aboriginal Housing NT.

The 126th meeting of the NLC's Full Council took place in the Aboriginal Investment Group's new Dr Bush-Blanasi Building in Katherine. It was presided over by Katherine Regional Councillor Lisa Mumbin OAM and electoral voting was overseen by the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.

Quotes attributable to Mr Matthew Ryan, Chair of the NLC

- I have been at the NLC working alongside my brother (Dr Bush-Blanasi), I acknowledge him, and I am committed to carrying on his legacy.
- I would like to thank all the other candidates, and also the members for their confidence in voting me into the Chair position.
- I am a man of words, of conversations. I won't be sitting down, but moving around the regions and my door will be open to all.
- The public recognises the strength of the NLC, other organisations recognise the value of the NLC. I look forward to providing the leadership to keep the organisation strong and delivering for Aboriginal people across the NLC footprint.

- **ENDS.** -