



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

## Vale Sir Gerard Brennan, former Chief Justice of the High Court

2 June 2022

The Northern Land Council acknowledges the passing of Sir Gerard Brennan this week in Sydney, on 1 June 2022.

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi spoke about the special relationship between the NLC and Sir Gerard Brennan.

“Many people don’t know this but when the Woodward Royal Commission into Aboriginal Land Rights was being held in 1973, he represented the NLC. That Royal Commission led to the creation of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.”

NLC CEO Joe Martin-Jard noted that Sir Gerard heard many High Court appeals brought by those opposed to land rights in the Northern Territory.

“He understood the special relationship Aboriginal people have with land and sea country,” Mr Martin-Jard said.

Sir Gerard’s passing is all the more poignant occurring this week which is National Reconciliation Week, from 27 May to 3 June. These dates commemorate two significant milestones - the successful 1967 referendum, and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.

Appointed to the High Court in 1981 and becoming Chief Justice of the High Court in 1985, Sir Gerard ruled on the historic Mabo decision in 1992, 30 years ago tomorrow.

“Mabo was historic because it said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have always been here and Australia was based on the lie of Terra Nullius. Sir Gerard had a good heart, treated Aboriginal people with respect and he loved his family,” Mr Bush-Blanasi said.

“On behalf of the NLC and Aboriginal people in our region, I would like to pass on my condolences to this great man’s seven surviving children. We will always remember him.”