



Native Title Unit
Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department

10 December 2018

By email: native.title@ag.gov.au

SUBJECT: Native Title and Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate Legislative Reform

Dear Native Title Unit,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the exposure drafts of the Native Title Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate Legislation Amendment Regulations 2018.

As the appointed native title representative body for the Central Australia region in the Northern Territory, which covers almost 777,000 square kilometres, the Central Land Council has a strong interest in the outcome of these reforms.

As outlined in our previous submission, the CLC supports the objectives of the reforms- to clarify the role of the applicant, improve claim resolution processes, streamline agreement-making, clarify the role of the National Native Title Tribunal, and assist RNTBCs to resolve internal disputes. We also strongly support amendments to permit historical extinguishment to be disregarded in areas covered by pastoral leases where the native title claimants are members of a company or members of a body corporate that holds the pastoral lease, as this drafting limitation has had a direct impact on RNTBCs in the CLC region.

We also note that the majority of the proposed amendments have been considered by the native title sector over many years, during which time the CLC has collaborated closely with the Northern Land Council and National Native Title Council (NNTC).

We reiterate the NNTC's position that significant additional resources will be required to implement reforms relating to RNTBCs. These bodies are the key structure for the management of native title rights and have the potential to be vehicles for the economic development activities of native title holders.

Significant additional funding is required to enable RNTBCs to fulfil their statutory obligations as well as development aspirations. This is particularly true of RNTBCs in Central Australia, the majority of which have low or no self-generated income and are in the early stages of building their governance capacity.

Based on CLC's experience working with RNTBCs over nearly two decades, significant time and resources will be required to support existing and new functions, such as dispute resolution, if they are going to be relevant, workable and appropriate for the local context.

We welcome the speedy passage of the proposed amendments and further discussions regarding the resources required to implement the proposed RNTBC reforms effectively.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Nugent', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Nugent

GENERAL MANAGER - LEGAL

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL