

# Director's Report

The CLC staff have worked extremely hard this year and made significant progress in a number of areas.

Our work encouraging and supporting sustainable Aboriginal enterprises has expanded considerably.

Under the Indigenous Pastoral Program, Aboriginal properties benefit from employment programs, infrastructure funding, skills and technical advice provided by our partners in the program.

We have also negotiated six grazing licences on Aboriginal land which provide badly needed pasture for drought stricken pastoral properties.

This is of enormous benefit to all Central Australians.

It will expand the pastoral estate considerably and boost Aboriginal economic development in the bush where it is so badly needed.

Other CLC land management programs have also made important progress.

Ranger groups are becoming extremely popular for young people who wish to stay on their country, be employed and acquiring skills.

Supporting these groups is an important priority for the Land Council and the benefits are considerable.

Demand for tourism enterprises has also escalated and a partnership between Tourism NT and the CLC has brought some important skills to the Land Council and essential advice and support to Aboriginal people wishing to pursue tourism on their country.

Land management is an increasing focus for the Land Council.

Much of our area is pristine country with important environmental values.

This is recognised by Government in a number of ways, including the joint management of national parks.

The parks estate has been expanded and Aboriginal people are extremely interested in managing and working within the new arrangements.

During the last financial year, traditional owners working with the CLC have drafted a number of management plans for these areas and worked hard to become fully involved.

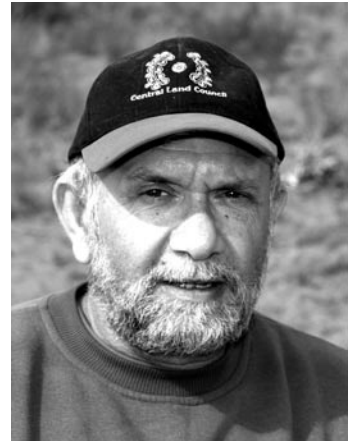
Unfortunately, the proposed Government amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act mar an otherwise positive outlook for the year ahead and represent the most radical change to the Land Rights Act in 30 years.

While the CLC welcomes the changes which improve the workability of the Act, other amendments suggested by both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments will seriously destabilise its operation.

In particular, I am concerned about the amendment which allows the Minister to delegate core Land Council functions to small groups of people who may not necessarily be landowners of the country they make decisions about.

This amendment could leave mining companies dealing with very small under-resourced and ill-informed bodies and pave the way for bitter disputes within families and communities.

It also opens the door to the possibility of corruption of the process and issues involving



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conflict of interest.

It is contrary to Government policy of amalgamating Native Title Representative Bodies to ensure they have the capacity to fulfil their administrative obligations and it seriously undermines the workability of the Land Rights Act.

The amendment dealing with 99 year leases over communities is a measure which provides little in the way of economic development for those communities who sign up.

It locks traditional owners out of any economic benefits which may flow from the community in the future and threatens to divide communities between those who receive rent and those who do not.

Finally on this matter, I must say that the Land Rights Act has served extremely well for 30 years in maintaining the delicate balance of the interests of traditional land owners with that of other interests and should not be rushed through parliament to satisfy ideologically driven perceptions of its operation.