

Traditional owners of Elliott win native title by Consent



The Elliot native title holders on the day of the determination

In July the Gurungu Kulmintinti Group and the Jingili and Mudburra people celebrated receiving exclusive native title rights to most of the 143.9 hectares of their traditional country claimed in the town of Elliott on the Stuart Highway half way between Darwin and Alice Springs.

Elliott has a mostly Aboriginal population of approximately 800 people.

The Northern Land Council's Chief Executive, Kim Hill congratulated the Traditional Owners and now native title holders on their achievement and said it is the first time that a native title determination had been granted by consent in its region.

"This is a significant achievement for the Gurungu Kulmintinti Group and the Jingili and Mudburra peoples because it also means that, through the NLC, they have successfully negotiated with the Northern Territory Government on having their full native title rights recognised while avoiding a court battle," said Mr Hill.

"So I congratulate them for working efficiently with us, and with the Northern Territory Government, and with the Federal Court to ensure their native title rights are officially recognised.

"This determination includes most of the undeveloped land in Elliott which will ensure that the native title holders are equal partners in the future development of Elliott, and this is a good result for all Territorians."

Mr Hill also paid tribute to senior mangaya for the Gurungu Kulmintinti Group, Harry Bates, Heather Wilson and Christine Limerick; senior kulyungkulyungpi for Gurungu Kulmintinti Group, Lindsay Bostock and senior lawyer for the Jingili and Mudburra people Pompey Raymond.

"These people are important under Aboriginal law and custom and have played an important role in this claim.

"Others, including many who have since passed away, have also assisted in the progression of this claim and with NLC's work over the years," he said.



Above: Leon Puruntatameri doing his bit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Managing Tiwi fires for Greenhouse gas abatement

The economic potential of carbon is the focus of a new fire project, involving Tiwi Rangers and College students, on the Tiwi Islands, 80km north of Darwin.

Nearly half of the Tiwi Islands are burnt every year, resulting in the release of gases that contribute directly to Australia's Greenhouse gas accounts. Fire also affects the capacity of vegetation and soil to store carbon, but in ways that are not well enough understood to be included in the national accounts.

In a research partnership developed over the past two years, the Tiwi Land Council Rangers, the Tiwi College and CSIRO are working together to explore livelihood opportunities for managing fire to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while maintaining biodiversity values of the Tiwi Islands.

Tiwi Ranger mentor, Willie Rioli, said there may be future jobs and money for fire management if reductions in Greenhouse gases can be properly measured.

"That's why we have partnered with CSIRO and that's why the Tiwi College students are involved," Mr Rioli said. "We need good science to help us measure the effects of different types of fires on carbon storage in the bush, and we need our kids to learn the science so they can look after country properly in the future."

Mr Rioli said the Tiwi people wanted to develop economic opportunities, and the emerging carbon market could present some exciting possibilities for future management of their lands. "However, we want to make sure that our burning also looks after our plants and animals," Mr Rioli said.

Tiwi College Principal, Peter McNamara,

said the College's partnership with CSIRO will help students to see the relevance of science to fire management. "It's an exciting opportunity for the students to be part of science in action," he said.

CSIRO ecologist, Dr Alan Andersen said studying the effects of different fire management options on carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity is critical to quantifying the benefits from better fire management on the Islands.

"Our modelling indicates that there could be substantial increases in carbon stocks and reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases from reducing fire frequency. This could also have important biodiversity benefits," Dr Andersen said.

The Tiwi Carbon Study features a series of long-term monitoring plots that will be subject to different fire management options.

Thorpie fires a missile at Australia

Olympic swimmer Ian Thorpe had harsh words to say about Australia's treatment of its Indigenous peoples at the "Beyond Sport Summit" in London in July this year.

"The truth is for over 200 years Australian governments have neglected and patronized aboriginal people.

"The Intervention is unlikely to provide any lasting benefit to Aboriginal people because it tries to push and punish them, to take over their lives, rather than work with them," he told the summit.

