

OUTPUT GROUP 2

LAND CLAIMS & ACQUISITION SUPPORT

The Central Land Council aims to provide Aboriginal landowners with information, advice and support to enable them to manage their land in a sustainable and productive way.

OUTPUT

2.1 LAND CLAIMS

2.2 OTHER LAND ACQUISITION



OUTCOMES

Enhanced social, political and economic participation and equity for Aboriginal people in the Central Land Council’s area as a result of the promotion, protection and advancement of their land rights, other rights and interests.

OUTPUT 2.1

LAND CLAIMS

Wakaya Alyawerr

Originally heard by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner in 1989; this land claim has been awaiting a decision from the NT Government on a final settlement agreement. The tenure detail within the area of the Canteen Creek community has prevented a resolution; though the CLC received final instructions from traditional landowners in May 2013, the NT Government has yet to consider the settlement.

Frances Well

Traditional land ownership is not disputed in this matter but outstanding issues of detriment, largely between the NT Government and the owners of Maryvale perpetual pastoral lease (PPL) land claim, resulted in a hearing before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner in July 2013.

Following final submissions by the parties a decision by the commissioner is anticipated shortly.

Yurkurru / Brookes Soak

This small but important soakage, the scene for the events that sparked the Coniston Massacre, has been long fought for by the traditional landowners.

The report of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner into this claim was published in 1992; however, the matter has remained unresolved due to the detriment asserted by the proprietors of Mt Denison Pastoral Lease which surrounds the claim area.

The CLC made a detailed submission in support of a request that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs recommend the grant of the claim area to a Land Trust in 2011. This was followed by submissions from the Mt Denison proprietors and the NT Government.

In March 2014 the Minister advised that he was satisfied that the claimed area should be granted. The Yurkurru Aboriginal Land Trust, which was established to hold title to Northern Territory Portion 4153, contains an area of approximately 241.9 hectares.



Court meeting in country near Titjikala for the Frances Well Hearing before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner in July 2013. (Photo: Lily Moulton)

OUTPUT 2.2

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Pursue all other appropriate avenues to achieve the acquisition of land for the benefit of Aboriginal people.

LAND ACQUISITION: HENBURY PASTORAL LEASE

The CLC continued to represent the interests and aspirations of the Pertame traditional owners of Henbury Station in the transfer of ownership to RM Williams Agricultural Holdings (RMWAH) as a result of an Australian Government assisted purchase through the National Reserve System in 2011 for carbon farming.

Significant progress had been made toward satisfying persistent traditional owner efforts to purchase this long-standing land acquisition priority in constructive negotiations with RMWAH and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC). However, this suffered a serious set back following RMWAH being placed into administration in June 2013.

The CLC continued to make every effort to facilitate a transfer of title to Aboriginal ownership. It facilitated two meetings of the Henbury Station traditional owner reference group, one attended by an ILC representative, to gather further information to support the CLC's successful land acquisition application to the ILC to secure the funds required. Staff also attended a meeting with the ILC and PPB Advisory (RMWAH's administrators) regarding the public sale of Henbury Station and the traditional owners' interests.

The CLC collaborated with the ILC in submitting an expression of interest (EoI) to PPB Advisory for the Henbury purchase and met with representatives of the Department of the Environment (DotE) to brief them on the history of the traditional owners' interests in and aspirations for Henbury. It also continued to liaise with DotE and ILC about the stalling of the EoI process due to negotiations initiated by PPB Advisory with DotE and the NT Government on the conservation covenant and related grazing restriction issues applicable.

A written request to meet with the Environment Minister to discuss the interests and aspirations of traditional owners and to seek his support in the purchase of Henbury on their behalf was unsuccessful. A subsequent response from the Minister supported the CLC's continued engagement in the process



Henbury traditional owners gather to meet with RM Williams at Henbury Station. (Photo: Kumanjaye Hodson)

with the added encouragement that 'the Australian Government is supportive of an outcome that achieves both conservation and indigenous outcomes'.

The CLC submitted a funding application to the Working on Country program on the advice of the Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet to establish a Henbury-based Aboriginal ranger program in expectation of a successful purchase. It also collaborated closely with the ILC and sought urgent additional assistance from the Minister for Indigenous Affairs to enable a revised purchase bid to be made in response to a second EoI process. This followed PPB Advisory's success in negotiating a reintroduction of grazing on the property, which significantly increased the property's value.

Regrettably, after failing on a number of occasions over the past four decades to have their land returned to them, including three years of persistent effort in this attempt, the aspirations of Pertame traditional owners were again dealt a bitter blow with the announcement by PPB Advisory of the sale of the property to a consortium of established Central Australian pastoral interests for an unconfirmed figure of \$7.5 million.

LAND ACQUISITION: OTHER PASTORAL INTERESTS

The CLC continued to respond to ongoing interest among Yuendumu-based traditional owners in acquiring a priority pastoral lease in the Tanami region. Previous purchase efforts have been unsuccessful and the property is not currently for sale.